

From: Margery Moogk [mailto:margerym@comcast.net]
Sent: Tuesday, March 02, 2010 3:24 PM
To: SR 520 Bridge SDEIS
Subject: 520 and Montlake

I-141-001 We urge you to resist the legislature's push to move forward on the 520 project with the A+ alternative. The incredible size of the west side exchanges at Montlake is unacceptable. The neighborhoods that are negatively impacted by this project have worked hard and in good faith to find solutions to the problems while respecting the region's needs for safe and effective transportation across the lake.

I-141-002 We hope you will agree to take time to reconsider building now to accommodate light rail. We believe it is short-sighted to build this new 520 bridge without light rail capacity. The benefits to the environment seem obvious to us. We understand this is a major change, but it makes so much sense to do it now rather than retrofitting later.

I-141-003 Whether or not you can support the light rail option, please support these changes to whichever plan prevails.

- Revise the connections for 520 bus commuters so they can conveniently transfer to the UW light rail.
- Delete the new A+ westbound exit that crosses the lid and dead ends into E Lake Washington Blvd. If there must be a southbound exit option, return both lanes of the westbound exit to 24th Ave to mitigate the negative impact on the charming Montlake city neighborhood and the Arboretum.
- Remove the eastbound entrance from LWB thru the Arboretum.
- Reconsider the placement of a second bridge across the cut at Montlake, if it is necessary to build one at all.
- Revisit the rationale for raising the roadway so dramatically where it passes along the islands and Arboretum.

I-141-004 First, we urge you not to proceed with a plan that does not provide easy and direct connections between the 520 bus lanes and the light rail station at the University. We must encourage commuters to get out of single-occupancy vehicles by making it as convenient as possible to do so.

I-141-005 Secondly, as residents of Montlake, we are appalled by the size of the west side exchanges. Design A, as it stands, does not adequately address the mass transit issues, but it does have the benefit of reducing traffic flow through the neighborhood and the Arboretum.

The A+ design that came out of the legislative committee is much worse. For eastbound traffic, it adds a southbound exit that dead-ends onto East Lake Washington Blvd. It comes right across the lid that is intended to mitigate the negative impacts of the 11 lanes of traffic. We've heard estimates of 9,000 cars a day arriving at that junction, turning left or right into what is already a very busy arterial. This will create another major bottleneck.

It's hard to believe that there must be two exchanges within less than a half-mile stretch. In the morning, the merging traffic from the I5 northbound, I5 southbound, and Mountlake lanes is just beginning to move when it stalls again for the LWB merge. We hope you will support reversing the decision in A+ that retains a LWB exchange.

We don't see the logic of building a second parallel bridge across the cut. Unless 24th/Montlake is also widened, how will that alleviate the congestion at the intersections, beyond University Village, and onto 520 when they open? If there is to be a second bridge, it makes more sense that it be further east and dedicated to lanes exiting from or entering 520. That would significantly

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Comment noted. WSDOT received a number of comments in support of and in opposition to Options A, K, and L and the associated suboptions. These opinions are summarized in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement Summary of Comments (WSDOT, April 2010), available at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/SDEIS.htm>.

Since publication of the SDEIS, WSDOT has identified a Preferred Alternative, which is similar to Option A but with a number of design refinements that would improve mobility and safety while reducing negative effects. Chapter 2 of the Final EIS describes the Preferred Alternative and Chapters 5 and 6 describe its environmental effects.

I-141-002

Section 2.4 in the Final EIS explains why initial implementation of light rail transit on SR 520 is not planned. The decision to locate Sound Transit's initial east-west light rail transit corridor on I-90 rather than SR 520 has been made through extensive regional deliberation (see Table 2-2 of the Final EIS). However, while WSDOT believed that the design of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project already accommodated potential future light rail, the agency worked with the City of Seattle and Sound Transit to identify changes that would enhance the corridor's rail compatibility. The Preferred Alternative reflects these design changes. Light rail could be accommodated either by converting the HOV lanes for rail use or by adding light-rail only lanes. Both approaches would require the addition of supplemental floating bridge pontoons to support the additional weight of light rail, should the regional decision to add rail be made and funded. Such a decision would need to be planned and programmed by regional land use and transit agencies, funded by a public vote, and evaluated in its own environmental analysis. See Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for further information.

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alleviate backups at the exchange when the current bridge opens. 520 traffic coming from or going to neighborhoods to the north could bypass the other local congestion.

The new high-profile for the stretch of roadway along the approach to Lake Washington is also a negative change. No one we've talked to has been able to explain what benefits of it outweigh the intrusiveness of it. Everyone has been looking forward to the removal of all the "lanes to nowhere." Please don't raise a new towering roadway along the Foster Island waterside trail and the Arboretum.

I-141-006

Finally, we'd like to suggest installing warning lights and signage on all the streets where traffic backs up to alert everyone when the bridge is open and to advise them to turn off their engines. All those idling cars are having an unnecessary negative impact on air quality.

We are as anxious as anyone to get this project underway and completed. Between the 520 and light-rail-to-UW projects, Montlake, Roanoke, and Shelby-Hamlin are going to be experiencing all the negative impacts of heavy construction for many years to come. We urge you to help make sure that the results make it worth it for all of us, and the region gets a forward-looking bridge that offers good public transit options.

Thanks in advance for considering our concerns and suggestions. We are more than willing to help in any way we can.

Sincerely,

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I-141-003

As part of the planning process required under Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6392, which was passed by the Washington State Legislature in 2010, WSDOT coordinated with Sound Transit, King County Metro Transit, the City of Seattle, and the University of Washington during the refinement of the Preferred Alternative. This coordination ensures that the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project will not adversely affect transit, pedestrian, and nonmotorized facilities and operations at the future Montlake Multimodal Center (currently known as the Montlake Triangle), nor will it preclude future transit facility and service improvements. The Preferred Alternative would improve transit reliability in this area by providing HOV lanes on Montlake Boulevard between SR 520 and the Montlake Multimodal Center and direct access HOV ramps to and from the east; the eastbound HOV access would be via the lid rather than the via the loop ramp. See Chapter 1 of the Final EIS for a description of the ESSB 6392 process, and Chapter 2 for a description of the Preferred Alternative.

Modifications for the Preferred Alternative also include changes to the Montlake Boulevard interchange and lid to better accommodate transit. Please see Chapter 8 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report for a discussion of which transit facilities are included in the Preferred Alternative as a result of the coordination efforts, and an updated evaluation of the effect of removing the Montlake Freeway Transit Station. The evaluation includes a discussion of changes to transit facilities and rider connections/transfers within the Montlake area.

The Preferred Alternative would reduce effects on the Arboretum, compared to No Build Alternative, by physically removing the existing Lake Washington Boulevard eastbound on-ramp and westbound off-ramp and the R.H. Thomson Expressway ramps. Access to Lake Washington Boulevard by westbound SR 520 traffic would be moved to a new intersection located on the Montlake Boulevard lid at 24th Avenue

East. The profile of the roadway in the west approach has been revised to a constant-slope profile. See Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for additional information.

I-141-004

Modifications to the bus stop locations were considered as part of the ESSB 6392 transit connections and design refinements workgroup effort. The results of that work effort are summarized in the ESSB 6392 Transit Connections: Bus Stop Locations white paper. It was determined that a bus stop location on the north sidewalk of Pacific Street between Montlake Boulevard and Pacific Place is the best location to assume in the SR 520 Medina to I-5 Final EIS. Other locations for bus stops are not precluded by the SR 520 project and can be considered by the transit agencies as they identify additional needs. See the white paper at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/6392workgroup.htm>.

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See the response to comment I-141-005 regarding the Lake Washington Boulevard Ramps, transit issues in Montlake, and the modified profile of the west approach. The Preferred Alternative includes a considerably larger Montlake lid than any of the SDEIS options. Running from Montlake Boulevard to the Lake Washington shoreline, the lid would provide better pedestrian amenities in the central part of the Montlake neighborhood, enhanced transit facilities, and better connections to the Arboretum, including a pedestrian crossing beneath the lid that would link the Arboretum to East Montlake Park. The ESSB 6392 workgroup process resulted in design refinements for the lid and interchange to address some of the concerns in the comment. The Montlake Interchange and connections across the Montlake Cut are key to both local and regional transportation patterns. With a total daily traffic volume of 53,000, the Montlake Interchange accommodates about 55% of all SR 520 traffic.

The Final Transportation Discipline Report demonstrates improved transportation operations with the Preferred Alternative in the Montlake area, compared to No Build. The second bascule bridge would allow for lane continuity between the Montlake Cut and the SR 520 Montlake interchange, which would improve traffic operations compared to the No Build Alternative. The bridge would provide additional capacity for transit/HOV, bicycles, and pedestrians across the Montlake Cut. Most notably, overall delay related to bridge openings would decrease for all vehicles because the additional capacity would allow congestion to clear more quickly. Chapter 6 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report describes the changes in traffic volumes and operations on the local streets in the Montlake interchange area. Chapter 7 describes the effects of the Preferred Alternative on nonmotorized transportation facilities and connections. Chapter 8 describes the effects of the Preferred Alternative on transit service, facilities, ridership, travel times, and rider connections.

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In 2011, neighborhoods along the SR 520 corridor are being invited to help develop a community construction management plan. This gives affected residents an opportunity to be involved in how potential effects from construction (including air quality) are managed and mitigated. The suggestion in the comment including use of lights and signage to reduce idling are noted.

During construction, best management practices would be used to minimize construction emissions. For construction effects, state law requires construction site owners and/or operators to take reasonable precautions to prevent fugitive dust from becoming airborne. Fugitive dust may become airborne during demolition, material transport, grading, driving vehicles and machinery on and off the site, and wind events. WSDOT will comply with the procedures outlined in the Memorandum of

Agreement between WSDOT and the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency for controlling fugitive dust (WSDOT 2008).