

SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Supplemental Draft EIS Comment Form

Please use this form to share your comments on the content provided in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement document. WSDOT will consider all comments received between Jan. 22 and April 15, 2010 in making its final decision in the environmental review process. Thank you for your comments.

You can provide comments using one of the following methods:

- Complete this form.
- Mail your comments to Jenifer Young, SDEIS Environmental Manager, Washington State Department of Transportation, 600 Stewart Street, Suite 520, Seattle, WA 98101.
- E-mail your comments to SR520Bridge_SDEIS@wsdot.wa.gov.
- Speak to a court reporter at an environmental hearing scheduled for 5 – 7 p.m., Feb. 23, at Lake Union Park Naval Reserve Building, 860 Terry Ave. N., Seattle.

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7. Do you have any comments on the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement?

- I-150-001** | While the build transportation alternatives suggested are all well and good for single vehicle motorized transportation (buses, trucks, cars), it is extremely short sighted to not include any design features for immediate or future inclusion of rail mass transit. There would be high ridership for a rail based mass transit route from Redmond to Seattle, and not planning for such a route at this time is completely irresponsible.
- I-150-002** | Secondly, many of the noise and land issues could be mitigated through the use of double decked corridors through the eastern segment from Medina to the 405 corridor, and on the western segment over Foster Island through to the I-5 corridor.
- I-150-003** | Thirdly, very little was indicated as how the project would improve salmonid habitat improvement over the current project. All I saw was how it would degrade it. With the current problems affecting salmonid environment in the Puget Sound region this is completely unacceptable.
- I-150-004** | Lastly, very little mention was made in the executive summary as to how bicycle and pedestrian access to the bridge would be made available at either end. Downloading the pertinent section of the detailed document was extremely slow and failed several times.

These comments will become part of the public record for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Personal information is voluntary and will become part of the public record if provided. The Washington State Department of Transportation is a public agency and is subject to the State of Washington's Public Records Act (RCW 42.56). Therefore, comments may be made available to anyone requesting them for non-commercial purposes.

I-150-001

The SR 520, I-5 to Medina project would complete the HOV lane system in the corridor, improving reliability and efficiency for transit and carpools, thereby creating incentives for people to choose an alternative to driving alone.

Section 2.4 in the Final EIS explains why initial implementation of light rail transit on SR 520 is not planned. The SR 520 High-Capacity Transit Plan, which was endorsed in 2008 by the state, King County Metro Transit, and Sound Transit, found that until at least 2030, demand for transit in the 520 corridor could be satisfied by bus rapid transit that runs in HOV/transit lanes—complementing Sound Transit's East Link on I-90. At the same time, the plan acknowledges that after 2030 significant increases in cross-lake travel may warrant dedicated HCT facilities in both I-90 and SR 520. Therefore, the new SR 520 bridge and associated interchanges will be built in a way that allows the structure to accommodate a two-way light rail line or busway at a future date. 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 and allows for two potential future rail options as discussed in Chapter 2 of the Final EIS.

I-150-002

WSDOT looked at double-decked designs in an effort to minimize the overall width and maximize the efficiency of the bridge for the same reasons that you have mentioned. What we found is that as the pontoons became narrower they needed to have much more depth with significant ballast to make them stable. We also found that the taller double-deck structure raised the center of gravity of the bridge and presented a larger area for the wind to catch, increasing the load on the bridge and decreasing stability. The double-deck roadway also created

problems off of the ends of the floating bridge where the ramps from the lower roadway would have to weave through the columns of the upper roadway creating a taller structure with larger girders and foundations. Regarding SR 520 on the Eastside, please see the SR 520, Medina to SR 202 project Environmental Assessment, which can be accessed at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/EastsideEA.htm>.

I-150-003

The Preferred Alternative would reduce the number of piers in the water, compared to the existing bridge, and raise the height of the overwater structure in the area that salmonids tend to pass under the bridge. These factors would tend to reduce the potential for effects on salmonids compared to the other action options. The overall effects of the project are likely to result in some degradation of salmonid habitat conditions in the area. However, the project area represents a very small portion of the habitat used by salmonids during their lives, and they also spend a very small portion of their lives in the project area (hours to days). Therefore, the effects of incremental changes in the project area habitat and not expected to have a measurable effect on the reproductive and overall survival rates of salmonid populations in the Lake Washington watershed.

I-150-004

The effects of the Preferred Alternative on pedestrian and bicycle access are described in great detail in Chapter 7 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report. As described in this chapter, the Preferred Alternative would allow pedestrians and bicyclists to connect via the Montlake and 24th Avenue East lid to the SR 520 bridge path to the east, Burke-Gilman Trail to the northeast and west, Bill Dawson Trail to the southwest, and Lake Washington Boulevard/Arboretum trails to the southeast. This area will become a primary crossroads for nonmotorized routes and provide many transit connections for nonmotorized users.