

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-151-001

The existing freeway through the Arboretum is ugly as sin. Yet WSDOT is proposing to double its width and further raise it? The lids, while expensive, are hostile pockets of green pockmarked by offramps. The Montlake intersection is today a dangerous intersection between vulnerable pedestrians and bicyclists and irritated commuters distracted by cell phones. How do you propose to make this safer for vulnerable users despite increasing traffic volumes by 50%? Removing the Montlake flyer stop is wanton disregard for public transit. You managed to find an additional 60' ROW for breakdown and additional traffic lanes, but it's impossible to squeeze in an existing facility at one of the most-used exits of the entire freeway?

The current proposals are designed with the convenience of the long-distance commuter as top priority. WSDOT shows no respect for the existing natural, residential or pedestrian environments, which would dictate a slimmer design. The threat of winter storms is slim justification for a traffic engineer's wet dream of lanes, concrete and traffic. Go back to the drawing board and make this megaproject as demure and respectful as possible. If vehicle-miles-traveled or SOV commute times increase, then so be it -- it's in a city, after all. With some restrained engineering, you could even save money in the process.

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-151-001

Since the SDEIS was published, FHWA and WSDOT have developed a Preferred Alternative that is most similar to Option A, but includes a number of design refinements that minimize the effects presented in the SDEIS. These refinements respond to comments made on the SDEIS and to WSDOT's work with many project stakeholders under Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6392, which was passed by the Washington State Legislature in 2010.

The Preferred Alternative has been designed to minimize SR 520's footprint in the west approach and across Foster Island to the maximum extent possible while accommodating potential future light rail through the corridor. Lane and shoulder widths have been reduced as much as possible to keep the footprint of the bridge as narrow as possible while allowing room for HOV lanes and the shoulders required to satisfy current safety standards regulated by FHWA and the Association of American State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

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. See Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for a description of the Preferred Alternative.

With implementation of the Preferred Alternative, bus stops on the lid would accommodate both eastbound and westbound buses, replacing the current Montlake Freeway Transit Station stops for buses traveling between the University District and the Eastside. The Montlake lid stop would also function as a flyer stop during the off-peak periods so that passengers could access the SR 520 buses traveling between the

eastside and downtown Seattle. University Link light-rail service, expected to be operational in 2016, will accommodate some of the trips that now use the bus stops. See Chapter 8 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report for an updated assessment of how removal of the Montlake Freeway Transit Station would affect transit service, rider travel times, and connections.