

From: Kelly Charlton [mailto:kellycharlton@msn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 31, 2010 3:25 PM
To: SR 520 Bridge SDEIS
Subject: Comments on 520

Dear Sirs,

I-213-001

I would like to suggest that the design of the SR520 look forward to the transportation needs of the region over the next 50 to 100 years.

While it is certainly not easy to predict the future, I believe it is safe to say that simply building a replacement for today's traffic demands would create a situation where the replacement would likely be inadequate after 10 or 20 years.

Since the population density will likely increase over time, and modes of transportation will change, we should be short sighted about the design or the cost.

I also believe that the cost of wasted fuel and wasted productivity would easily pay for a larger replacement than has been discussed up to this point in time.

Please design the SR520 replacement to last 100 years.

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I-213-001

As described in Chapter 1 of the SDEIS and in the Range of Alternatives and Options Evaluated Report (Attachment 8 to the SDEIS), an extensive range of alternatives has been evaluated for this project. Alternative corridors, technologies (e.g. tubes and tunnels), and travel modes, as well as many design variations within the existing corridor, were evaluated as part of the Trans-Lake Washington Study and again after the initiation of NEPA review in 2000. Chapter 2 of the Final EIS provides additional information on how alternatives were developed and evaluated, and why some solutions were determined not to be reasonable alternatives.

An 8-lane alternative was among the original SR 520 roadway configurations advanced by the Trans-lake Washington Study Committee in 1999 for further study, and WSDOT evaluated an 8-lane alternative several times from 2002 to 2005 during the planning and development phases of the Draft EIS. An 8-lane alternative was dropped from further evaluation because choke points at the I-5 and I-405 interchanges and traffic volumes in those corridors would limit how many people could move through the SR 520 corridor and how fast they could travel; it would carry about the same number of people as the 6-lane Alternative, but many more of them would be in single-occupant vehicles, which is contrary to regional and local policies encouraging greater use of transit and HOVs; and substantial rebuilding of portions of I-5 and I-405 would be needed to make the 8-lane Alternative work. Such rebuilding would likely affect numerous residential and commercial buildings in downtown Seattle, and would also require reconstruction of the SR 520/I-405 interchange. See Attachment 8 of the SDEIS for further discussion.

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, but would not add general purpose lanes. Thus the project is aligned with improving the overall efficiency of the transportation system by

creating incentives for people to choose an alternative to driving alone. The SR 520, I-5 to Medina project would result in immediate benefits for transit speed and reliability in the corridor by providing high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes across the floating bridge and better HOV connections at the Montlake and I-5 interchanges. The transportation effects of the project were evaluated for the design year of 2030. Section 5.1 of the SDEIS and Final EIS show improved conditions compared to the No Build Alternative.

In Washington state, mandated growth management planning under the Growth Management Act ensures that growth and development are managed through comprehensive planning at local and regional levels, and transportation projects must be compatible with this planning. WSDOT transportation improvement projects are designed to be consistent with community growth targets. The proposed 6-lane alternative is consistent with regional land use and transportation plans. See Section 5.2 in the SDEIS and Final EIS for further discussion.

The HOV lanes would allow for the near-term implementation of bus rapid transit, as called for in the SR 520 High-Capacity Transit Plan. Section 2.4 of the Final EIS provides further discussion of how the project can accommodate high capacity transit.