

From : Priscilla Arsove [mailto:parsove@execpc.com]
Sent: Friday, April 09, 2010 8:00 AM
To: SR 520 Bridge SDEIS
Subject: Comment on SR 530 Bridge Environmental Impact

To the Washington DOT:

I-229-001

I was born and raised in the Montlake neighborhood of Seattle, where I continue to visit frequently. I am appalled that plans for the 520 replacement bridge include so many adverse environmental impacts that would irreversibly damage the Montlake neighborhood and City of Seattle. Specifically:

I-229-002

- You must develop alternatives to a huge interchange in Montlake and a broad swath across Portage Bay. A new bridge structure parallel to the existing bridge is a ridiculous "solution" that completely compromises the existing scenic landscape and historic neighborhood. Massive interchanges are an urban blight. YOU CAN DO BETTER THAN THIS!

I-229-003

- You must find ways to preserve the existing green spaces and bays, which are a vital to the quality of the urban environment for generations to come. Once overrun by hideous ramps and concrete, they are gone forever. Is this truly the legacy our planners want to leave? YOU CAN DO BETTER THAN THIS!

I-229-004

- You need to focus on ways to move more people in public transit, NOT cars. More vehicular congestion in an already congested neighborhood and city is not what is needed. Please, PLAN FOR THE FUTURE – do not replicate the principles and concepts of 1950s transportation planning. YOU CAN DO BETTER THAN THIS!

Sincerely,

Priscilla Arsove

I-229-001

Comment noted. Since the SDEIS was published, FHWA and WSDOT have identified a Preferred Alternative that is similar to Option A, but incorporates design refinements that that respond to community and stakeholder reaction to the SDEIS. The modifications included in the Preferred Alternative are intended to minimize the effects presented in the SDEIS.

WSDOT will continue to work with communities affected by the SR 520, I-5 to Medina Bridge Replacement and HOV Project to minimize, avoid, and/or mitigate the effects of construction and operation.

I-229-002

The Preferred Alternative includes a considerably enhanced and expanded Montlake lid, and refinements to the Portage Bay Bridge that would reduce its effects. The Montlake lid is a full, rather than partial lid. The Portage Bay Bridge would have a reduced footprint compared to Option A, and a landscaped median.

The second bascule bridge across the Montlake Cut 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.

I-229-003

While this project would affect ecosystems in several ways, some of the effects would be beneficial, such as the removing the R.H. Thomson Expressway ramps, providing stormwater treatment facilities where none

currently exist, and raising the height of overwater structures. Negative effects would include filling and shading of wetlands and aquatic habitats. To reduce these effects to wetlands and aquatic habitats, WSDOT has developed a Preferred Alternative with a number of design refinements. Additionally, WSDOT will provide compensatory mitigation for all project effects, which is intended to fully mitigate for project effects on wetlands and aquatic resources. For more information on proposed mitigation, please see the Wetlands and Aquatic Resources mitigation plans in Attachment 9 of the Final EIS.

I-229-004

In an effort to improve the SR 520 I-5 to Medina Project's transit functionality and future compatibility, several design modifications were developed for the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative includes several transit specific features such as the following:

- Rail compatible for several potential rail alignments
- Transit stop on the new Montlake lid
- Full SR 520 bus access to Montlake lid transit stop during off-peak hours
- HOV lanes on Montlake Boulevard
- Transit signal priority compatible

These options were developed and refined through the ESSB 6392 workgroup process that included stakeholders from the State, City of Seattle, University of Washington, and the transit agencies.