

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.

1. Name: Robert E. Hayden, Ph.D. CommentDate: 3/31/2010 18:25
 2. E-mail: Comment Source: Online Comment
 3. Address: 1836 E. Hamlin St.
 4. City: Seattle
 5. State: WA
 * 6. Zip Code: 98112

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-230-001** | Here are comments related to the Social Elements Discipline Report: The scope of the study area does not take into consideration enough of the area that the new highway will impact. The primary issue in Seattle is not only the movement of cars and people along the 520 corridor but what happens when they exit 520. This was not adequately addressed in this report. What was outlined in the report is that traffic will not be enhanced in the North/South Montlake corridor with the A or A+ option, and anyone who uses public transit to move through this corridor will find the A+ plan as not making any significant changes from the no build option. Movement to and from the NE section of Seattle will not be enhanced. The University Village and Seattle Children’s Hospital will still not be adequately connected to the Montlake interchange, especially as it relates to public transit as no buses travel to the U Village directly from the Montlake interchange.
- I-230-002** | Major social institutions in the immediate area of the project have been omitted from the report: The Seattle Yacht Club and the Queen City Yacht Club are not even mentioned, even though they are two of the social institutions most impacted by the new and old 520 corridor.
- I-230-003** | The raising and lowering of the Montlake Bridge is not addressed in this study and how it impacts the Montlake neighborhood in its current configuration nor in Option A’s plans for a new Montlake Bridge and Montlake interchange. Without this being taken into consideration the plans are completely insufficient, because 18 hours of our life in this corridor are not being addressed. The assumptions that gridlock in Montlake will continue under Option A as it is with

I-230-001

The limit of intersection analysis was determined by looking at the change in traffic volumes on the local streets and including those intersections where traffic volumes increased more than 5% between the No Build and Preferred Alternatives. Five percent was selected as the criteria because a change in traffic of that amount typically results in measurable operational changes. If traffic volume increases were less than 5%, the adjacent intersection was not included in the analysis. In other words, for any intersection beyond those studied, the overall change in traffic volumes through that intersection during the a.m. and p.m. peak hours was less than 5%. Please see the Final Transportation Discipline Report, Chapter 6 for descriptions and exhibits of the effects of the Preferred Alternative on traffic patterns in the Montlake interchange area.

As described on page 6-1 of the SDEIS Transportation Discipline Report, “...freeway and local transportation systems should operate in a way that does not adversely affect each other. The intent of making changes to either system is to improve traffic conditions in one or both without adversely affecting the other.” To that end, the Preferred Alternative would improve freeway operations and would not degrade local intersection and arterial operations during either peak hour compared to the No Build Alternative.

I-230-002

For the Draft EIS and SDEIS, WSDOT reviewed the neighborhood characteristics and identified community services within the study area radius. Community services include schools, religious institutions, social institutions, government facilities, fire stations, emergency medical facilities, police stations, and utilities. Private facilities such as yacht clubs are not considered community services in NEPA and SEPA analyses. However, effects on the Seattle Yacht Club and the Queen City Yacht Club are included in the Recreation Discipline Report

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I-230-003 | the No Build scenario should not be acceptable as an outcome for this project, and to say that this will not effect any of the social elements in Montlake is also unacceptable.

I-230-004 | WSDOT's social elements study is really showing that WSDOT never properly mitigated any of the effects from the original building of 520, and so the new project will have little effect on changing any of the current issues. And because it will change few of the existing conditions, it will thus have little or no effect on social elements in the area.

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.

Addendum and the Land Use, Economics, and Relocations Discipline Report Addendum (both in Attachment 7 to the Final EIS). Additional information related to the Seattle Yacht Club and its historic designation is in the Final Cultural Resources Assessment and Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS).

I-230-003

The effect of Montlake Bridge openings on traffic operations during the off-peak hours was included in the analysis performed for the Preferred Alternative. Please see the Final Transportation Discipline Report, Chapters 6 and 8.

The Final Transportation Discipline Report indicates that with the Preferred Alternative, transportation operations would be improved in the Montlake area compared to the No Build Alternative. The second bascule bridge would create 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 help clear congestion more quickly. The ESSB 6392 workgroup considered priority treatments for transit in the project area and the Montlake corridor. Since the SDEIS was published, WSDOT, in collaboration with the City of Seattle, King County Metro, and Sound Transit, has evaluated transit signal priority in the Montlake interchange area. Chapter 6 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report describes the changes in traffic volume and operations on the local streets in the Montlake interchange area with the Preferred Alternative. 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 during a.m., p.m., and off-peak periods, and rider connections.

The new bascule bridge could change the visual quality of the historic Montlake Bridge, and of the historic properties with a view of the new bridge that would diminish their integrity. The new bascule bridge would also require the removal of two residential properties that contribute to the Montlake Historic District. However, the new bascule bridge would not obscure the view of the existing bridge, and the context-sensitive design would limit the visual impact of the new bridge, thus minimizing negative effects. Please see the Visual Quality and Aesthetics Discipline Report and Addendum, and the Final Cultural Resources Assessment and Discipline Report, both in Attachment 7 to the Final EIS, for further information.

I-230-004

NEPA does not require analysis of the effects of prior projects as part of environmental review of direct effects for a proposal; however, effects of the existing SR 520 corridor are considered and discussed in the Indirect and Cumulative Effects Discipline Report. However, since the SDEIS was published FHWA and WSDOT have identified a Preferred Alternative for the proposed project which is similar to Option A but with a number of design refinements to address community and stakeholder concerns. The Preferred Alternative includes an expanded and enhanced Montlake lid, extending approximately 1,400 feet from the Montlake interchange to the Lake Washington shoreline. It is also a full rather than partial lid. 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 project would also result in long-term improvements to noise conditions, air quality, and community cohesion, all positive effects for the neighborhoods adjacent to it.

WSDOT will continue to work with affected communities and develop mitigation measures for the Preferred Alternative where needed.