Washington State Department of Transportation

SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program

I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project

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	Carl Stork	**CommentDate:**	4/13/2010 5:17
2. E-mail	carl@ciconiaco.com	**Comment Source:**	Online Comment Form
3. Address:	4451 91st Ave NE		
4. City:	Yarrow Point		
5. State:	WA		
*** 6. Zip Code:**	98004		

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 have two primary comments:

I-282-001

1. The roadway design through the Montlake interchange should provide for the "Montlake Flyer Freeway station" to continue to serve transit riders. The transit mode supported on the 520 bridge is bus transit, and the roadway design needs to enable efficient transit service, not just at peak periods but also evenings and weekends. With the addition of tolls, the provision of efficient transit service becomes even more important. Enabling transit operators to provide direct routes from Eastside destinations which allow a transfer at Montlake while providing direct service to Seattle is the only way to allow for efficient bus routes during evening and weekend periods. There is not sufficient demand to provide high frequency service on separate routes to the U-District and to downtown Seattle, and the entire transfer experience has not been designed to terminate buses at Husky stadium for transfers to downtown. With several good bus routes going from Montlake to the U-District, as well as to Capitol Hill and the Central District, the transfer option should be retained at Montlake for buses coming from Kirkland and Redmond and headed downtown and vice versa.

There is no reason, with a $4 billion investment in a new bridge that will last 75 years and has a vastly greater footprint, that transit users should have to give up an excellent facility that has worked well for 40 years. In fact, it is not a realistic reallocation of real estate away from transit, given that the importance of transit will increase as the region grows and energy must be used more efficiently.

I-282-002

2. The bridge structure should be built from the beginning to support light rail operation on

I-282-001

The Montlake Freeway Transit Station stops were removed in all of the design options considered in the SDEIS, based on a decision making process that was part of Westside mediation. The mediation process was mandated by Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6099 and is described on pages 1-17 through 1-19 of the SDEIS. The mediation workgroup consisted of members from adjacent neighborhoods, transit agencies, jurisdictions, and State agencies. Removing the Montlake Freeway Transit Station would minimize the width of the freeway through the Montlake area, reducing the width by up to 40 feet compared to keeping the station. The mediation workgroup did not recommend any design options that included the Montlake Freeway Transit Station stops. See Attachment 8 to the SDEIS, Range of Alternatives and Options Evaluated, for further discussion of how and why removal of the stops was considered.

The Preferred Alternative includes removal of the Montlake Freeway Transit Station stops; however, it also includes a modified Montlake Boulevard interchange and lid. Modifications include a full lid from Montlake Boulevard to the Lake Washington shoreline, and bus stops on the lid for both eastbound and westbound buses (see Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for a description of the Preferred Alternative). The intent is to provide greater pedestrian amenity in the central part of the Montlake neighborhood while simultaneously providing a better location and environment for the regional bus stops incorporated in the transit/HOV direct access ramps (see Chapter 2 of the Final EIS). At the option of the transit agencies, SR 520 buses will be able to exit at the Montlake interchange during the off-peak periods to service passengers to/from the Montlake lid transit stop. University Link light-rail service, expected to be operational in 2016, will accommodate some of the trips that now use the bus stops. Chapter 8 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) provides further discussion of expected transit operations with the Preferred Alternative, including expected

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I-282-002

the bridge. That means the width of the structure and pontoons should support light rail, and there should be provision for light rail to leave the center roadway in the Foster Island area. It may be 20 years before we build light rail but eventually light rail will be needed to provide high capacity transit across the 520 corridor. I don't think there will be another Lake Washington crossing, and I can't imagine it will be possible to add more pontoons or widen the bridge without causing massive disruptions; therefore this relatively small cost should be spent now and the bridge should be build with the capability to support light rail.

Carl Stork

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.

transit travel times, rider connections, and how future transit would incorporate service currently provided at the stops.

I-282-002

Section 2.4 in the Final EIS explains why initial implementation of light rail transit on SR 520 is not planned. 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:

- Option 1: Convert the HOV/transit lanes to light rail. This approach would accommodate light rail by converting the HOV lanes to exclusive rail use. Trains would use the direct-access ramps at Montlake Boulevard to exit, or could utilize a 40-foot gap between the eastbound and westbound lanes of the west approach to make a more direct connection to the University Link station at Husky Stadium.
- Option 2: Add light-rail only lanes. This approach would allow several connections—via a high bridge, a drawbridge, or a tunnel—to the University Link station.

Without a specific light rail transit alignment and service plan for the SR 520 corridor, the design options accommodate a number of potential configurations. However, full build out of light rail transit in the corridor would require modifications provided as a future project, including the addition of supplemental floating bridge pontoons to support the additional weight of light rail under either option. Since rail transit in the SR 520 corridor is not programmed in current regional transit plans, any future project to add rail in the corridor would need to undergo an extensive planning and environmental review process by the responsible transit agency prior to implementation. It is clear that there would be a

need for construction and additional costs to add light rail to the SR 520 corridor, but the costs and risks associated with such an addition have been minimized by the design elements included in the Preferred Alternative. Section 2.4 in the Final EIS provides additional information on planning for high capacity transit in the SR 520 corridor.