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Sent: Wednesday, April 14, 2010 9:43 PM
To: SR 520 Bridge SDEIS
Subject: SR520 SDEIS Comment

April 14, 2010

I-294-001 This is to supplement comments submitted previously by me and my wife Annie. This comment supplement is provided in response to additional information gained through further review of the SDEIS, review of the March 2010 Nelson Nygard Report and after listening to testimony at two City of Seattle hearings.

1. I support letters sent by representatives of the Fuhrman and Boyer Neighborhood Improvement Association and the Portage Bayshore Condominium.

I-294-002 2. The project seems quite costly with little benefit in terms of reduced congestion or travel times. I request a cost benefit analysis be provided comparing the A+ option to an option that provides light rail. Light rail might improve the benefit vs cost aspects of the project because of the increased number of trips accomodated.

I-294-003 3. The need for 6 lanes west of the Montlake interchange does not seem well established in the SDEIS. I suggest reconsideration of the need for 6 lanes west of the Montlake Interchange unless features that would increase through put benefits such as light rail or improvements to I-5 are made part of the project.

I-294-004 4. A blind person testified in front of the Seattle City Council that it was hazardous to cross roads that do not intersect at 90 degrees. It seems appropriate to consider a more pedestrian oriented design for the Montlake - SR 520 intersection.

I-294-005 5. Testimony and exhibits submitted by Mr. Connely before the Seattle City Council on April 9, 2010 clearly established the presence of a unique chain of parks in the Montlake/Portage Bay area of the project. This park system and pedestrian connections should be maintained by the project design. The SDEIS should include an analysis of the impact to the individual park sites and system of parks identified in Mr. Connely's testimony.

I-294-006 6. Please consider measures of "per household" or "per capita" rather than "per mile" when evaluating the costs and benefits the project and mitigating measures. Highway 520 passes through an unusually dense urban area. Costs per mile for construction and mitigation would be expected to be high relative to other projects to produce "per capita" costs and benefits comparable to other projects.

I-294-007 7. The area from Madison Park to North Capital Hill is a unique pedestrian oriented section of the City of Seattle with many parks, sidewalks, stairs and trails and substantial wildlife and fish habitat. It has taken over 100 years for this area to develop a rich, fine grained urban environment that is enjoyed and envied by tourists, boaters, students and business people from around the world. The attributes of this type of area

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Comment noted.

I-294-002

Since the SDEIS was published, WSDOT undertook additional analysis to help answer public questions about how rail in this corridor might operate and the ridership it might generate. The analysis revisited the potential for implementing light rail transit on SR 520 in place of the planned HOV/transit lane between the Montlake interchange and the Eastside. The analysis concluded that light rail would not provide mobility benefits before 2030 because of service duplication with East Link. Thus, light rail transit service on SR 520 before 2030 would have relatively low ridership and would likely fail to meet cost-effectiveness criteria used by FTA in ranking projects for grant funding. See Section 2.4 in the Final EIS for further discussion.

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 (see Section 5.1 of both the SDEIS and Final EIS). 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 in the Final EIS provides additional information on planning for high capacity transit in the SR 520 corridor.

I-294-003

Since the SDEIS was published, FHWA and WSDOT have identified a Preferred Alternative with 6 lanes and a managed shoulder across Portage Bay. Section 5.1 of the Final EIS describes the freeway operation and travel time benefits that would result from these improvements. A 4-lane Portage Bay Bridge would not allow for HOV lanes which provide express lane connectivity, or for a managed

I-294-007 creates an economic benefit as evidenced by recent statistics showing property values rising in walkable Seattle while they continue to fall in areas with less walkability. The detailed design for the roadway through Seattle should be carried out with a great deal of thought given to avoiding, minimizing and mitigating the impacts created on the local economy, walkability, wildlife and fisheries, recreation and boating opportunities.

I-294-008 8. After considering the information in the SDEIS and other sources it may be more appropriate (reduce costs and improve benefits) to design the Seattle segment of SR 520 using urban arterial or parkway standard rather than interstate freeway standards.

Thank you for the opportunity to supplement my previous comments related to Pedestrian Connectivity, Silt in Portage Bay and Noise.

Carl Stixrood

shoulder in the westbound direction, which is needed to address congestion.

I-294-004

Since publication of the SDEIS, WSDOT has identified a Preferred Alternative, which is similar to Option A but with a number of design refinements that would improve mobility and safety while reducing negative effects. Chapter 2 of the Final EIS describes the Preferred Alternative.

In accordance with the requirements of ESSB 6392, WSDOT has worked collaboratively with SDOT, the City of Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board, and Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board to develop design refinements for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. These design refinements would improve safety and enhance the pedestrian and bicycle experience in the Montlake interchange area. The resulting design refinements are included in the 6392: Design Refinements and Transit Connections Workgroup Recommendations Report (Attachment 16 of the Final EIS) and described in Chapter 7 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report.

I-294-005

The Recreation Discipline Report Addendum (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) provides analysis of the Preferred Alternative's effects to all recreation resources, recognized by the City of Seattle, located in the study area. The Preferred Alternative maintains the connectivity of area parks and also enhances open space and pedestrian/bicycle connectivity through the proposed lid features.

A connection from south Portage Bay to West Montlake Park and the Arboretum would be maintained by way of the Bill Dawson Trail. After crossing under SR 520 on the Bill Dawson Trail, the same access as today would be available to both West and East Montlake Parks, where

access would remain for the Ship Canal Waterside Trail and the Arboretum Waterfront Trail.

The Montlake lid was specifically designed to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between areas north and south of SR 520. A workgroup convened to fulfill the requirements of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6392 recommended features to be incorporated to final design that would further enhance these connections. See the ESSB 6392: Design Refinements and Transit Connections Workgroup Recommendations Report in Attachment 16 of the Final EIS.

WSDOT has read and responded to all of the comments in Fran Conley's letter, which was submitted in response to the SDEIS. Please see WSDOT's response to item C-040 in the SDEIS Comments and Responses (Attachment 11 of the Final EIS).

I-294-006

Costs of the project disclosed in the EIS documents were developed through the Cost Estimation Validation Process (CEVP®).During the CEVP process, analysts use systematic project review and risk assessment methods to identify and describe cost and schedule risks, and evaluate the quality of the information available. An important part of the process is that analysts examine how risks can be lowered and cost vulnerabilities can be managed or reduced. Costs estimated during the process account for a host of project components and risks, including design, construction, mitigation efforts, potential delays at each step of project delivery, costs for legal challenges and litigation, and inflation. The process provides opportunities for WSDOT to improve final cost and schedule results. The output of the CEVP® process is a probabilistic range of costs. The range accounts for uncertainties defined in the workshop for cost and schedules. By WSDOT policy (IL 4071.01) the 60th percentile estimate number is used for the budgeting process.

The costs disclosed in the EIS documents account for design, delivery, and maintenance of the proposed project at year of expenditure. See Chapter 1 of the Final EIS for an updated discussion about the cost of the Preferred Alternative. The economics analysis presented in the SDEIS and the Final EIS is consistent with WSDOT and FHWA guidance on reviewing the potential economic effects resulting from the project, and focuses on:

- The economic impacts on the regional and/or local economy such as the effects of the project on development, tax revenues and public expenditures, employment opportunities, accessibility, and retail sales. Based on the analysis, no substantial impacts on the economic viability of affected municipalities are likely to occur.
- The impacts on the economic vitality of existing highway-related businesses (e.g., gasoline stations, motels, etc.) and the resultant impact, if any, on the local economy.
- Impacts of the proposed action on established business districts, and any opportunities to minimize or reduce such impacts by the public and/or private sectors.

The data as presented is consistent with other transportation analyses, and provides a common platform to understand and compare cost and economic impacts. While there are many ways to present data, as indicated by the comment, the data contained in this EIS is consistent with WSDOT and FHWA guidance supporting a full evaluation of the options.

I-294-007
Comment noted.

I-294-008
The Preferred Alternative includes a boulevard-like design for the

Portage Bay Bridge, with a 6-foot wide landscaped median planter box, and a 45 mph posted speed limit, in order to reduce noise effects and improve visual quality. The bridge also includes 4-foot concrete traffic barrier with noise-absorptive coating, designed to further reduce noise.