SOUNDTRANSIT

April 15, 2010

Jenifer Young
Environmental Manager
SR 520 Project Office
Washington State Department of Transportation
600 Stewart Street, Suite 520
Seattle, WA 98101

Dear Jenifer:

R-002-001

Sound Transit staff has reviewed the Supplemental Draft EIS (SDEIS) for the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV project and have identified several concerns. The agency's objective is to ensure that transit impacts are avoided, minimized or adequately addressed and mitigation measures are included in the project to address those impacts. Our review of the SDEIS focused mainly on project and construction effects to transit service, riders and facilities.

Transit Service, Operations and Access

R-002-002

Removal of Montlake Freeway Station: This was not fully discussed in the SDEIS document in terms of the impacts to transit service provision and riders. It was discussed mainly in the context of the removal of the facility. The reason why the Montlake Freeway Station is being removed –to narrow the project footprint in the Montlake area—should be included in the document. This removal of the Montlake Freeway Station has the consequence of removing a critical transfer point and access to SR 520 transit service. The Montlake freeway station provides all-day, two-way frequent connections between downtown Seattle, the University District and the Eastside.

Service provision is impacted significantly by the removal of the Montlake freeway station. Riders traveling to and from the Eastside and the University District will lose access to 355 bus trips per day provided now. Currently, the Montlake freeway station functions both as an origin/destination and a transfer point. Eastside riders bound for the University of Washington and the University District can ride transit service operating on SR 520 between the Eastside and downtown Seattle and get off buses at the Montlake freeway station. They can then transfer to local buses, walk or bike to their destinations.

With the removal of the freeway station, downtown Seattle buses operating on SR 520 can no longer serve this function. Existing SR 520 transit service operating between the Eastside and downtown Seattle serves both Westside destinations (the University District and downtown Seattle) through utilization of the Montlake

Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority • Union Station
401 S. Jackson St. • Seattle, WA 98104-2826 • Reception: (206) 398-5000 • FAX: (206) 398-5499 • www.soundtransit.org

R-002-001

Since the SDEIS was published, FHWA and WSDOT have identified a Preferred Alternative that is similar to Option A, but incorporates design refinements that respond to community and stakeholder reaction to the alternatives and design options analyzed in the SDEIS. In addition, in early 2010, the Washington State Legislature passed and Governor Gregoire signed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6392. Through the ESSB 6392 process, WSDOT and the City of Seattle co-led a joint design refinements and transit connection workgroup effort that included King County Metro Transit and Sound Transit. The responses to comments R-002-002 through R-002-024 provide more information on how the Preferred Alternative and the ESSB 6392 workgroup process relate to Sound Transit's comments.

R-002-002

The Montlake Freeway Transit Station would be removed to minimize the width of the freeway through the Montlake area, which could be reduced by up to 40 feet with removal of the station. Please see Attachment 8 to the SDEIS, Range of Alternatives and Options Evaluated, for a discussion of how and why removal of the Montlake Freeway Transit stops was considered.

Modifications for the Preferred Alternative include changes to the Montlake Boulevard interchange and lid to better accommodate transit. Bus stops on the lid would accommodate both eastbound and westbound buses traveling between the University District and the Eastside, allowing convenient access to and from those routes via transfer or other modes of transportation. During off-peak times, buses traveling between Downtown Seattle and the Eastside would be able to serve the stops on the Montlake lid. University Link light-rail service is expected to be operational in 2016 and would accommodate some of the trips that now use the Montlake Freeway Transit Station. Through the joint agency development process of the SR 520 High Capacity Transit

R-002-002

freeway station. This efficiency will be eliminated with the removal of the Montlake freeway station. To respond to the removal of this access, additional direct service between the Eastside and the University District is needed. This is an impact that needs to be addressed in the document, and mitigation proposed to address the removal of the Montlake Freeway Station. Transit riders will want to know the details about how they will be impacted by the removal of this facility and how they will reach their destinations in a timely manner during the peak periods, midday, evenings and weekends, without it.

The SDEIS states on page 5-23 that service will be provided between the University District and the Eastside at frequent intervals during peak periods. It does not state the level of service that would be provided in the mid-day, evenings or weekends. Off-peak service between the University District and the Eastside will be significantly reduced or eliminated with the removal of the Montlake transit freeway station. Connections between the University District and the SR 520 Corridor will only be provided on Sound Transit Route 540 which operates weekdays only with basically 30-minute headway during the mid-day with some additional trips and 60-minute headways in the evenings. King County Metro Route 271 currently provides service every 30 minutes in the mid-day, 60 minutes in the evening and 30 to 60 minutes on weekends. However, with its current routing, it will not serve either of the Eastside transit freeway stations, so no access would be provided to SR 520 corridor riders.

The description of service between the Eastside and the University District on page 5-24 states that:

> "With relocation of the HOV lanes and transit freeway stations to the inside median of SR 520, King County Metro routes 261 and 271 will no longer be accessible from the Evergreen Point freeway station. These routes use the SR 520/84th Avenue NE interchange which, with the project would prevent them from being able to access and serve riders using the new median transit station at Evergreen Point. On weekends, no University District bus service would be accessible from the new transit station with the current transit service and routes."

What is proposed to address this impact? No access to weekend service between the Eastside and the University District is a significant impact to transit riders. Please describe the mitigation that is proposed. Sound Transit could develop a proposal for Eastside-University District service to address this impact but funding would be needed for the service.

The SR 520 High Capacity Plan (2008) developed by WSDOT, Sound Transit, King County Metro and the University of Washington, as directed by the state legislature, mitigates the removal of the Montlake Freeway Station. The HCT Plan is only partially funded. Funding is unresolved for the full HCT Plan.

Page 2-6. Brief details should be added for the reader that support the general statement that all options would "place an emphasis on multimodal transportation by decreasing reliance on single-occupancy vehicle travel and facilitating transit connections." In the description of alternatives, it would be useful to the reader to identify how each of the alternatives facilitates transit connections and where they differ (use of Transit-only of Transit/HOV-only ramps, HOV/Transit-only lanes; location of proposed transit stops).

Pages 5-23 to 5-24: This section describes the effects of the Montlake Freeway Transit Station on eastbound and westbound riders. To place the information in context for the reader, please provide in the Final SEIS comparisons of project transit service frequencies to current conditions (information provided in Transportation Discipline Report). The point should also be made that potential transfer requirements, changes in station locations, and reduced frequencies could increase transit travel times for some riders.

Page 5-24: This section describes University District-Eastside bus routes. Please note in the text that the elimination of the Montlake Freeway Station would result in need for additional bus service in order to

Plan (2008), in which Sound Transit participated, future transit service needs for the Montlake area were identified based on the assumption that the Montlake Freeway Transit Station would be removed.

Upon completion of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project, HOV lanes would be continuous between SR 202 and I-5, allowing buses to bypass congestion reliably and operate more cost effectively (less time lost due to congestion) and more fuel efficiently (steady speeds versus stop-and-go) than with the No Build Alternative, particularly for bus trips to and from the Eastside. People traveling between the Montlake area and downtown Seattle who currently use the Montlake Freeway Transit Station would not be able to use the same bus routes in the future. However, these commuters will have several options. Once the University Link light-rail is operational, that option will result in improved travel times. Another option would be to use other local bus routes (Routes 43, 48, and 25), and a third option would be to catch one of the Seattle-bound buses at the new Montlake lid stop during off-peak periods. Please see Chapter 8 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) for a description of the effects of removal of the Montlake Freeway Transit Station under the Preferred Alternative; a discussion of off-peak transit service; a more detailed evaluation of travel times; and information to address the other matters mentioned in this comment.

Additionally, as required by ESSB 6392, the workgroup evaluated the transit connections at the Montlake interchange and lid and made recommendations to ensure an adequate level of midday service between the University of Washington, Montlake, and the Eastside, following closure of the Montlake Freeway Transit Station. Please see the ESSB 6392: Design Refinements and Transit Connections Workgroup Recommendations Report (Attachment 16 to the Final EIS).

R-002-002 accommodate demand. In addition, please state that service needs will be developed in coordination with transit providers during the preparation of the Final SEIS.

Page 5-167, Table 5.16-1: The section summary identifies the removal of the Montlake Freeway Station and the need to replace its function at other transit stops as well as potential effects on passenger travel routes. The reduced service frequencies that would result along the corridor should be referenced. The effect of these potential changes, reduced transit options and longer transit travel times for some, should be included in the Final EIS.

R-002-003 **Montlake Multimodal Center:** The document did not include information about the Montlake Multimodal Center which was identified and developed jointly by WSDOT, Sound Transit, King County Metro and the University of Washington to provide a location for multimodal connections in the area. It is a key component of transit service provision between the University District and the Eastside. Key bus stops provide connections between cross-lake service and local service in addition to nearby connections to light rail at the University of Washington light rail station. Information needs to be provided in the environmental documentation about how the Montlake Multimodal Center will function and the plans that were identified for it, as included in the SR 520 High Capacity Transit Plan (2008) developed by the partners identified above as directed by the state legislature in ESSB 6099.

R-002-004 **SR 520 High Capacity Transit Plan:** The HCT Plan is mentioned on page 5-25 as part of the discussion of the University Link Light Rail Station. It should be described in its own section as a component of the requirements of ESSB 6099. The purpose of the plan was to "plan for high capacity transit in the SR 520 corridor. The parties shall jointly develop a multi-modal transportation plan that ensures effective and efficient coordination of bus services and light rail services throughout the SR 520 corridor". Update this in the Final EIS. The purpose of the HCT Plan was not, as noted in the SDEIS, "to determine the effects of different transit service structures" in the SR 520 corridor.

R-002-005 **Traffic on Montlake Boulevard and NE Pacific Street to/from SR 520:** Do traffic volumes on these streets increase with the SR 520 project? Exhibits 5.1-11 and 12 show traffic at screen lines on these streets but they don't show traffic volumes by direction. Are additional general purpose or HOV lanes needed to accommodate traffic demand to and from SR 520, for example southbound on Montlake Boulevard south of NE 45 Street and on NE Pacific Street east of 15th Avenue NE? Sound Transit's interest is to ensure that buses are able to operate efficiently between SR 520 and the University District once they leave the SR 520 corridor.

Following construction of the University of Washington Link Light Rail Station, the reconfigured driveway into the parking lot located just north of the Montlake Bridge will operate as a signalized, east leg of the Pacific Street / Montlake Boulevard intersection. Seattle DOT will require a protected left turn from southbound Montlake Boulevard eastbound into the parking lot. Traffic analysis prepared for the University of Washington, Seattle DOT, and Sound Transit related to the Rainier Vista Plan indicates that the traffic model prepared for the SDEIS does not accurately account for future traffic operations at this intersection. Please revise the traffic analysis and explain any impacts to traffic movement in this vicinity in the Final EIS.

Construction Impacts

R-002-006 **Sound Transit's University Link Light Rail project:** Please include information about how University Link construction will be accommodated by WSDOT during the SR 520 Westside construction period. The University Link project construction was initiated in 2009 and will continue until 2015 in this area. University Link will be in operation in 2016. Please include Sound Transit and King County Metro in the development and review of proposed detour routes in this area, along with the City of Seattle.

R-002-003

Please see Chapter 8 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) for information about the various transit functions served around the Montlake Triangle. The future Montlake Multimodal Center is not part of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project, but it is a part of the project's affected environment. Nonetheless, as part of the ESSB 6392 process, WSDOT coordinated with transit agencies, the City of Seattle, and the University of Washington during refinement of the Preferred Alternative. This coordination ensures that the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project will not adversely affect transit, pedestrian, and nonmotorized facilities and operations at the future Montlake Multimodal Center, nor will it preclude future transit facility and service improvements.

R-002-004

Please see Section 5.1 of the Final EIS for revised text that reflects the change suggested in this comment.

R-002-005

Traffic on Montlake Boulevard and NE Pacific Street to and from SR 520 would have increased with Options K and L, and decreased slightly with Option A. Please see Chapter 6 of the Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the SDEIS) for exhibits providing traffic volumes by direction with Options A, K, and L; see Chapter 6 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) for exhibits showing traffic volumes in this area with the Preferred Alternative; and see Chapters 6 and 8 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report for the effects on local street traffic operations and transit in this area with the Preferred Alternative. WSDOT used planned and programmed projects as background assumptions when developing the SDEIS and Final EIS. The changes to the Montlake Boulevard/NE Pacific Street intersection described in this comment were not identified in any jurisdiction documentation reviewed by WSDOT. If the intersection

R-002-007 Please describe how Sound Transit's University Link project construction schedule will be maintained. In addition, please discuss how the University Link tunnel spoils and materials haul route on Pacific Street/Pacific Place and Montlake Boulevard will be maintained during SR 520 project construction. Construction material and haul routes were identified and discussed with WSDOT staff. Please describe how the University Link materials and haul routes will be maintained during SR 520 construction.

R-002-008 The discussion of project effects on transit on pages 6-9 to 6-11 does not address potential project construction effects on the UW Station that may occur *after* University Link is opened for service, now scheduled for 2016. Such effects could include changes or limitations on pedestrian access, and air quality, noise, and visual impacts experienced by light rail users. Chapter 1 indicates that the non-floating bridge portions of the project would be completed in 2018, subject to the availability of full funding. Please confirm that project construction in the UW Station area would not occur after the Station's 2016 opening. It appears that construction in the UW/Montlake area would occur later under the Phased Implementation Scenarios. Please consider whether effects on the operational UW Link Station should be evaluated in the Final EIS with respect to the Phased Implementation Scenario. This discussion could be incorporated into the transit operations discussion on pages 6-9 to 6-11, which currently focuses on bus transit facilities.

R-002-009 **Bicycle Access:** To ensure that non-motorized access continues to occur when the existing 54 bicycle lockers are removed from the Montlake Freeway Station area, relocate those bicycle lockers to the vicinity of the Montlake Multimodal Center at the Montlake Triangle. This will provide access to cross-lake service by bicycle riders who wish to store their bicycles and continue their trips on transit.

R-002-010 **Eastside Transit Freeway Stations:** In order to ensure that riders can access service between the University District and the Eastside, one freeway station on the Eastside needs to remain open during SR 520 Eastside construction. And this one freeway station needs to provide access to transit service operating between the Eastside and the University District. This is especially important if Eastside construction overlaps with the closure and removal of the Montlake Transit Freeway Station.

R-002-011 **Construction Effects on Transit Service and Riders:** Please describe how transit service will be maintained during construction of the SR 520 project. In particular, the identified closure of Pacific Street for 9 to 12 months associated with options K and L will impact all cross-lake and local transit operations through the Montlake triangle area. The document needs to identify how and where transit would operate during this period and how the identified detour route on NE Pacific Place would operate with the level of bus service and traffic that is projected. For transit operations during the construction period, please discuss proposed mitigation measures to maintain or improve transit speed, reliability and access.

R-002-012 **Bus Stops and Access to Service by Riders:** Page 5-32: Please expand the discussion of transit mitigation measures, which currently focuses on the replacement, relocation, or removal of existing bus stops. The text should clarify that ongoing coordination with transit service providers will also address issues such as providing adequate access to transit facilities, and the potential need for additional transit service. As discussed in further detail below, the summary tables included in this chapter as well as the Executive Summary should briefly identify the full range of transit effects, as well as potential mitigation measures.

R-002-013 **Cumulative Effects:** As agreed previously by WSDOT, include the voter-approved Sound Transit 2 Plan in the 2030 No Build alternative in the analysis for the SR 520 project Final EIS. Ensure that the effects of the projects included in the ST2 Plan are included in the existing conditions for the SR 520 project. Ensure that the East Link project and associated light rail service on the I-90 corridor is included.

R-002-014 **Travel Time:** Page 5-157. The references to afternoon HOV westbound and eastbound travel times are not consistent with the information provided on pages 5-11 (e.g., Table 5.15-4 states that the Westbound HOV No

modification was included in the analysis as an undocumented part of the University Link project, or if it were to be included in the analysis as a separate project, it would be a background condition in both the No Build and Preferred Alternatives; it would not substantially change the project effects that are reported.

As part of the design refinements and transit connection workgroups required by ESSB 6392, WSDOT has worked collaboratively with Sound Transit, King County Metro Transit, and the City of Seattle to determine how to improve transit operations between East Roanoke Street and the future Montlake Multimodal Center. For the suggested design refinements resulting from this process, please see the ESSB 6392: Design Refinements and Transit Connections Workgroup Recommendations Report (Attachment 16 of the Final EIS). Completion of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project would enable SR 520 buses to use HOV lanes on Montlake Boulevard NE between the Montlake interchange area and the Montlake Multimodal Center. Additional transit priority treatments beyond this could be implemented by the City of Seattle and King County Metro.

R-002-006

Please see Chapter 6 of the Final EIS for a discussion of potential effects of concurrent construction activities, including effects associated with the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project and the Sound Transit North Link project. WSDOT will prepare a construction traffic management plan in coordination with Sound Transit and other agencies before construction begins; the plan will include detour routes and address the concerns identified in this comment. WSDOT will continue to coordinate with Sound Transit and King County Metro Transit throughout construction.

The Sound Transit University Link light rail project is scheduled have their hauling efforts completed before the end of the year 2015. The SR 520 I-5 to Medina project preliminary construction schedule does not

R-002-014 Build Average peak period travel time would be 16 minutes; Exhibit 5.1-8 on page 5-11 depicts a travel time of 20 minutes). Please revise narrative as appropriate.

R-002-015 Page 5-167: This summary table should fully identify project effects on transit as well as appropriate mitigation. For example, the transit section should include a cross-reference to improved transit travel times, including details of the differences between sub-options. This information would highlight project benefits for transit as well as the operational differences between the sub-options.

R-002-016 In addition, please note that the Transportation Mitigation section of Table 5.16-1 (p. 5-167) is limited to design modifications that limit effects on traffic. Please indicate whether design modifications directed specifically at transit operations will also be provided. The Summary Table should also reference WSDOT's commitment to ongoing coordination with transit providers, as well as the need for additional bus service between UW and the Eastside that would result from the elimination of the Montlake Freeway Station. The summary that is included in the Executive Summary for the final SEIS should also be revised to include these additional details.

R-002-017 **Chapter 6: Effects during Construction:** Pages 6-9 to 6-10: Please provide additional information in the Final SEIS regarding the transit effects that would result from the transit stop relocations and transit priority lane closures. For example, inform readers how many routes would be relocated to NE Pacific Place. Provide details on the scope of the expected transit delays referenced on page 6-9. The text should note that the relocation of the transit stops described in this section could result in longer walking distances for transit users, depending on their starting locations and/or destinations, and that the transit and traffic delays would increase transit travel times. This discussion could cross-reference the traffic discussion that is provided earlier in this chapter. The effects on traffic are described in terms of LOS for affected intersections. Can information in terms of time delays also be provided? This information would be more familiar to readers seeking to understand traffic and transit effects.

R-002-018 Pages 6-10 to 6-11. Please inform readers that point-to-point travel times for some transit users could increase as a result of the closure of the Montlake Freeway Transit Station. This increase could stem from the need to transfer between routes, the reduced frequency of service, and possible increased walking distances.

R-002-019 Page 6-15. This section describes future coordination with transit service providers largely in the context of the contractor's Traffic Management Plan. Please reiterate in the introductory section WSDOT's continuing commitment to coordinating with transit service providers to identify and address project effects on transit and transit users. This commitment is stated in table 6.16-1.

R-002-020 Page 6-113. Table 6.16-1 (Summary Comparison of Construction Effects of 6-Lane Alternative Options) should include summary information regarding the transit effects associated with the closures and relocations that are identified (for example, longer transit travel times due to project-related congestion; longer walking distances for some users accessing transit; reduced SR 520 transit service options; and potential increased transit travel times for some transit users).

R-002-021 Page 6-129. As discussed above, the discussion of the Phased Implementation Scenario should address potential effects on an operational UW Light Rail Station, if construction would occur after the Station's opening in 2016.

Chapter 7: Indirect and Cumulative Effects

R-002-022 Page 7-17. As discussed above, ST2 project components, approved by voters in 2008, should be included in chapter 5 transportation effects analysis.

R-002-023 Page 7-18. Please clarify for the reader that transit demand with the project would increase an *additional* 14 percent over the No Build Alternative by 2030 and explain why. Further, rather than stating that demand for light rail will enable expansion of the Sound Transit light rail line to Lynnwood (a component of ST2), please state

include any haul routes north of the SR 520 interchange until mid-way through the year 2016. The schedules for the two projects show that there would not be concurrent haul route traffic on Montlake Boulevard between the SR 520 interchange and areas to the north.

R-002-007

The SDEIS provided a comprehensive analysis of project effects based on information available at that time when the SDEIS was published. The effects are analyzed to a level of detail that allows decision-makers to compare the environmental effects of the alternatives and design options. Options K and L would require closure of NE Pacific Street and traffic revisions on NE Pacific Place. SR 520, I-5 to Medina project construction hauling to and from the Montlake area is expected to occur on SR 520 with access via the Montlake interchange. For the Preferred Alternative, WSDOT is not evaluating haul routes north of the new bascule bridge. WSDOT will continue to coordinate with Sound Transit regarding construction scheduling for both the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project and Sound Transit's University Link project. If Options K or L were identified as the Preferred Alternative in the future, additional information would be provided as appropriate during final design and permitting and WSDOT would ensure that negative effects associated with the construction closure and traffic revision are mitigated to the extent practicable.

R-002-008

For an updated description of effects on transit during construction of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project for the Preferred Alternative, please see the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS). The effects are described in terms of conditions likely to be experienced by travelers in the project vicinity, some of whom would use the University of Washington Station. No unique effects to the University of Washington Station are expected, and therefore none are reported. Please refer to Chapter 10 of the Final EIS, Construction Effects, for

R-002-023 how the project will affect demand for this service. Finally, p. 7-19 states that the East Link Light Rail project as well as other improvements would mitigate potential increases in traffic on SR 522 and I-90 resulting from the proposed tolling of SR 520. The fact that these projects could change the SR 520 project effects illustrates why they should be included in the chapter 5 effects analysis, rather than discussed in terms of mitigation in this chapter.

R-002-024 **Executive Summary:** Please expand the discussion of operational and construction-related transit effects and mitigation to include more detailed information described above. The Executive Summary tables should also include a qualitative discussion of the Phased Implementation Scenario and how it would change the effects analyses provided.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss Sound Transit's comments. I can be reached by phone at 206-398-5070 and by email at greg.walker@soundtransit.org.

Sincerely,

Gregory A. Walker, AICP
Director
Planning and Development

Cc Perry Weinberg, Director, Environment and Sustainability
James Irish, Deputy Director, Environment and Sustainability
Ron Endlich, Manager, Project Support/3rd Party Agreements and Permits
Andrea Tull, Senior Transportation Planner, Planning and Development
Mike Bergman, Program Manager, Transportation Services
Tracy Reed, Project Manager, University Link
Steve Kennedy, Senior Environmental Planner, Environment and Sustainability
Kent Hale, Senior Environmental Planner, Environment and Sustainability
Julie Meredith, SR 520 Program Director, WSDOT

additional information. Also see the responses to comments R-002-007 and R-002-008 regarding coordination with the University Link project.

The SDEIS discussed the possibility of constructing the project in separate phases over time, with the vulnerable structures (the Evergreen Point floating bridge, west approach bridge, and Portage Bay bridge) built first. This "Phased Implementation scenario" was analyzed for each environmental resource. As discussed in Section 2.8 of this Final EIS, due to the funding shortfall, FHWA and WSDOT still believe it is prudent to evaluate the possibility of phased construction of the corridor should full project funding not be available by 2012. Currently committed funding is sufficient to construct the Evergreen Point floating bridge and landings; a Request for Proposals has been issued for this portion of the project, with proposals due in June 2011. Accordingly, this Final EIS discusses the potential for the floating bridge and landings to be built as the first phase of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project. This differs from the SDEIS Phased Implementation scenario, which included the west approach and the Portage Bay bridge in the first construction phase.

R-002-009

WSDOT continues coordination with King County Metro, Sound Transit, the City of Seattle, and others to refine the project design and determine how to address issues such as the best way to replace the bicycle parking facilities near the Montlake Freeway Transit Station. The request for new bicycle parking facilities near the Montlake Triangle was identified in the ESSB 6392 coordination process and requires additional interagency planning.

R-002-010

Please see page 10-40 of the Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the SDEIS). The freeway transit station at 92nd Avenue NE would be needed during a closure of the Evergreen Point Freeway Transit Station to provide access to routes traveling between the

University District and the Eastside. One freeway station will be open on the Eastside at all times during construction.

R-002-011

The SDEIS described the anticipated effects of construction on transportation at a level of detail needed for comparison of the design options. The temporary closure of Pacific Street is not required for construction of the Preferred Alternative. If Option K or L were identified as the Preferred Alternative in the future, WSDOT would develop additional details regarding the closure as part of final design and permitting and would ensure that negative effects are mitigated to the extent practicable. Please see Chapter 10 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report for the estimated effects of the Preferred Alternative on transportation. The Preferred Alternative does not require long-term road closures affecting transit. WSDOT analyzed the preliminary construction plans for the Preferred Alternative to estimate transportation effects and refined the plans to minimize effects based on the results of analysis. WSDOT will continue to coordinate with the transit agencies, including Sound Transit, to develop a plan for managing effects during construction. The WSDOT construction traffic management process includes ongoing multiagency coordination throughout construction. This process identifies construction conditions on short- and long-term timelines and addresses them through an established coordination and communication process.

R-002-012

Please see Chapters 7 and 8 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) for a more detailed description of effects on transit, which has been refined for the Preferred Alternative. WSDOT has worked collaboratively with the City of Seattle, King County Metro Transit, and Sound Transit, as part of the design refinements and transit connection workgroup required by ESSB 6392, to determine how to improve transit speed and reliability between East Roanoke Street and

the future Montlake Multimodal Center. Please see the ESSB 6392: Design Refinements and Transit Connections Workgroup Recommendations Report for more details.

R-002-013

The updated SR 520, I-5 to Medina project travel demand model for the Final EIS analysis includes the full Sound Transit 2 Plan package in the No Build Alternative. Thus, these projects are also reflected in the Preferred Alternative analysis. These projects are not included in the existing conditions analysis, because they have not been implemented.

R-002-014

The westbound HOV travel times reported for the No Build Alternative on page 5-157 of the SDEIS were incorrect. For the correct information, please see page 5-11 of the SDEIS and Section 5.1 of the Final EIS.

R-002-015

Section 5.1 of the Final EIS summarizes effects on transit times for the Preferred Alternative and No Build Alternative.

R-002-016

The measures suggested in the comment were not included in the Mitigation section of Table 5.16-1, or the corresponding table in the Executive Summary, because they are general measures relative to both transit and vehicle traffic, and WSDOT would coordinate with the appropriate transit agency for implementation. The Preferred Alternative includes a number of design features to improve transit travel times and reliability, as well as modifications that allow for replacement of functions currently provided by the Montlake Freeway Transit Station. In addition, University Link light-rail service, once operational, would replace some of the trips that currently use the station. Please see the response to Comment R-002-002 for more information.

WSDOT coordinated with transit agencies through the ESSB 6392 process to identify design refinements desired by the agencies and incorporate them into the Preferred Alternative, as described in the response to Comment R-002-002.

R-002-017

This comment refers to effects of Options K and L. Please see the response to Comment R-002-011 regarding transit effects during construction. The Preferred Alternative would not require the temporary relocation of the transit stops on NE Pacific Street and Montlake Boulevard and the temporary closure of the transit priority lane that are discussed on pages 6-9 and 6-10 of the SDEIS. If Option K or L were identified as the Preferred Alternative in the future, WSDOT would develop additional details regarding the stop relocations and lane closure as part of final design and permitting and would ensure that negative effects are mitigated to the extent practicable. For the Preferred Alternative, descriptions of transit effects during construction are updated and reported in more detail, including information about travel times. Please see Chapter 10 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) for more information.

R-002-018

Please see Chapter 8 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS).

R-002-019

Please refer to Section 5.1 of the Final EIS for information about WSDOT's construction traffic management process for the Preferred Alternative. WSDOT will continue to work with transit agencies to manage transportation effects during construction.

R-002-020

The summarized project effect information noted as missing from Table 6.16-1 is described in detail in the corresponding sections of the SDEIS and in Section 6.1 of the Final EIS which includes information about transit travel time during construction. Please see the responses to comments R-002-011 regarding transit effects during construction, and R-002-017 regarding Options K and L. Descriptions of transit effects during construction are updated and reported in more detail for the Preferred Alternative. Please see Chapter 10 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) for more information.

R-002-021

Please see the response to Comment R-002-008 regarding revised potential phasing. Effects of revised potential phasing are described in sections 5.15 and 6.16 of the Final EIS. The construction schedule presented in this Final EIS for full buildout, when compared with the Sound Transit schedule, showed that some work on the I-5 to Medina project would be under way in the Montlake vicinity before the U Link Station is fully constructed. However, major construction activities of the two projects are not expected to happen concurrently. Phasing the I-5 to Medina Project as discussed in this Final EIS would further minimize any concurrent construction effects in the area and along Montlake Boulevard in particular.

The construction effects to transit described in Section 6.1 of this Final EIS would occur at a later time if the project is phased. There would not be any unique effects to operation of the University-link station that aren't already described in the construction transit effects. Some transit riders who currently use the Montlake Freeway Transit Station to travel to downtown Seattle could benefit if closure of the Montlake Freeway Transit Station occurs when University link is fully operational.

R-002-022

As described in the response to comment R-002-013, the Final EIS analysis includes the full Sound Transit 2 Plan package in the No Build Alternative. Thus, these projects are also reflected in the Preferred Alternative analysis. These projects are not included in the existing conditions analysis, because they have not yet been implemented.

R-002-023

Chapter 7 of the SDEIS, Indirect and Cumulative Effects, did not present the transit demand results for the cumulative effects scenario. Chapter 7 of the Final EIS presents the indirect and cumulative effects analysis differently from the Chapter 7 of the SDEIS, and does not include the referenced statement regarding transit demand. Peak-period transit demand on SR 520 in the cumulative effects scenario would be about 60 percent of the No Build Alternative demand and 45 percent of the 6-lane alternative demand. (Please see Chapter 11 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report.)

The reported 14 percent growth in transit demand on SR 520 compared to the No Build Alternative was associated with the direct effects of the 6-lane alternative as analyzed for the SDEIS. Pages 2-13 and 8-34 of the SDEIS Transportation Discipline Report stated that this increase is attributed to the HOV lane completion and a toll on general-purpose traffic.

The analysis of cumulative effects on transportation in the SDEIS described the effects on regional transportation of the SR 520 corridor improvements combined with other reasonably foreseeable future actions. Therefore, the analysis evaluated the North Link light-rail improvements and other regional projects in combination with the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project improvements. This analysis was not intended to evaluate other future actions individually, and it was not intended to evaluate demand for such projects. The statement on page 7-18 of the

SDEIS that “Demand for light rail will enable expansion of the Sound Transit light rail to Lynnwood” was intended as an example of future action associated with a regional transportation trend.

In the SDEIS, Link light-rail expansions associated with the Sound Transit 2 Plan were reasonably foreseeable future actions according to the approved analysis methodology. (Please see Chapter 11 of the SDEIS Transportation Discipline Report for a description of this methodology.) Because they were not programmed at the time of analysis, these expansions were not included in the direct effects analysis in Chapter 5 of the SDEIS. However, the Final EIS transportation analysis does account for the Sound Transit 2 Plan in the project travel demand model. Therefore, the analysis of indirect and cumulative effects on transportation in the Final EIS treats the Sound Transit 2 Plan as part of the No Build Alternative, rather than as reasonably foreseeable future actions. Please see the response to Comment R-002-013 for more information.

The discussion of reasonably foreseeable future actions mitigating potential increases in traffic on SR 522 and I-90 that may result from proposed tolling of SR 520 was intended as a discussion of how planned projects fit within the regional planning context and together contribute toward meeting regional planning goals. However, in the Final EIS analysis of transportation-related indirect and cumulative effects, this discussion is revised for clarity, and the Sound Transit 2 Plan, including East Link, is no longer discussed in this way.

R-002-024

Please see the revised Executive Summary in the Final EIS, which provides more information on construction and operation effects on transit, as well as mitigation measures, and describes effects associated with potential construction phasing.

Please see the response to Comment R-002-008 regarding the Phased Implementation Scenario and revised potential phasing.