City of Seattle
Department of Transportation

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS). SDOT's interests and concerns on this project fall into the areas of permitting, managing traffic, multi-modal access, and traffic modeling.

Permitting

L-011-001

SDOT's primary role on this project relates to the issuance of street use permits. All closures within City of Seattle street right-of-way will require a street use permit. Please consult with SDOT early to reduce conflicts between proposed closures related to this project and other projects in the area (e.g., 45th Street Viaduct replacement, U-Link station construction). When developing your permit applications, please consider the following:

- City of Seattle streets and state routes that act as city streets (like Montlake Boulevard) must be designed to the standards set forth in the City of Seattle Right-of-Way Improvements Manual.
- Designated haul routes for the project must be approved as part of the street use permitting process.

L-011-002

Managing Traffic

The use of active traffic management (ATM) and transportation demand management (TDM) can help manage congestion in the project area. Specific comments are listed below:

- Develop a comprehensive intelligent transportation system (ITS) program for Montlake Boulevard and 23rd Avenue. Key features of this program should be dynamic message signs, signal system upgrades, emergency vehicle preemptions, and live travel time information.
- Implement a traffic management plan (TMP) for Lake Washington Boulevard that includes traffic calming measures, improved pedestrian crossings, etc.
- Utilize TDM tools to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in an effort to meet the state mandated reduction targets.
- Dedicate a portion of the tolling revenue to transit to ensure high-quality transit service across the corridor.

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L-011-001

WSDOT will obtain street use permits as required and will design streets to meet applicable standards and regulations. WSDOT will consult with SDOT to reduce any potential conflicts between proposed closures related to the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project and other projects in the vicinity.

WSDOT understands that haul routes in the city of Seattle must be approved during project permitting. Please see Section 6.1 of the Final EIS for an evaluation of potential haul routes.

L-011-002

WSDOT has worked collaboratively with the City of Seattle to address several of the recommendations outlined in this comment. Many of these ideas were discussed as part of a workgroup established in early 2010 by Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6392, which directed WSDOT to work collaboratively with the City of Seattle, University of Washington, regional agencies such as King County Metro Transit and Sound Transit, and other stakeholders to consider design refinements and transit connections within the Preferred Alternative. The ESSB 6392 workgroup process assisted with refinement of the design of the Preferred Alternative evaluated in the Final EIS, and the group's recommendations will continue to shape the project during design development. Please see the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) for detailed information about how the Preferred Alternative would affect the movement of people along the SR 520 corridor.

The findings of the workgroup are presented in the ESSB 6392: Design Refinements and Transit Connections Workgroup Recommendations Report (Attachment 16 to the Final EIS). Some of the ideas proposed in the comment and discussed in the workgroup would be implemented by WSDOT, while others would be under the jurisdiction of the City of

L-011-003

Multi-Modal Access

The project should improve the bicycle and pedestrian environments near the corridor and consider priority treatments for transit in the project area to ensure a socially equitable outcome. Specifically, the project should:

- Ensure connectivity between the new regional bicycle path on SR 520, the Burke Gilman Trail, and the nearby designated City of Seattle bicycle routes. All newly designed bicycle routes should be designed to City of Seattle standards.
- Improve pedestrian safety in the interchange area around SR 520 and Montlake Boulevard by reducing crossing distances and providing state-of-the-practice pedestrian treatments.
- Add transit priority treatments, such as queue jumps and bus-only lanes, to help both local and regional transit in the project area.

L-011-004

Traffic Modeling for City Streets

The current level of traffic modeling for City of Seattle streets, as presented in the SDEIS, should be updated prior to final design. SDOT requests a fully calibrated VISSIM-like model for Montlake Boulevard, Pacific Street, 23rd Avenue, and Lake Washington Boulevard. Given the complexity of the city street network and the tendency for queue back-ups through several intersections, the existing SYNCHRO analysis is insufficient.

Seattle, separate from the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project. The status and "next steps" for each of the traffic management ideas are as follows:

- Intelligent transportation system (ITS) for Montlake corridor: If undertaken, neighborhood traffic management in the Montlake Boulevard and 23rd Avenue corridor would be under the jurisdiction of the City of Seattle, separate from the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project. Please see the ESSB 6392: Design Refinements and Transit Connections Workgroup Recommendations Report (Attachment 16 to the Final EIS). The Preferred Alternative would improve transit reliability along Montlake Boulevard by providing HOV lanes on Montlake Boulevard between SR 520 and the Montlake Triangle.
- Traffic management planning for Lake Washington Boulevard: The Preferred Alternative would reduce traffic volumes on Lake Washington Boulevard with removal of the existing Lake Washington Boulevard ramps that connect to SR 520, and reconfiguration of access to Lake Washington Boulevard for westbound SR 520 traffic via a new intersection on the Montlake lid at 24th Avenue East. WSDOT has committed to fund traffic calming measures along Lake Washington Boulevard and to work with the Seattle Department of Transportation on additional measures to manage traffic in the Washington Park Arboretum. More details are provided in the SR 520 Arboretum Mitigation Plan (Attachment 9 to the Final EIS).
- Transportation demand management (TDM): TDM consists of ongoing programs rather than constructed project elements, and includes a variety of strategies that provide alternatives to single-occupant vehicles. WSDOT supports planning and implementation of TDM through its Public Transportation Division, which coordinates extensively with corridor projects and provides a variety of assistance to other organizations that implement transportation demand management programs throughout the region. The new

infrastructure provided by the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project will help to manage travel demand on SR 520. As described in the Final EIS, the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project would reduce VMT in the corridor, both through tolling and through greater travel time reliability for transit and carpools using the new HOV lanes. The new regional bicycle/pedestrian path crossing Lake Washington on SR 520 will also help reduce VMT by promoting cycling as a transportation option.

- Use of tolling revenues for transit service costs: Tolls collected from SR 520 users, including both preconstruction tolling of the existing bridge under ESSB 2211 and tolling following completion of the new bridge, by law can be used only for SR 520 improvements, operations, and maintenance. Redirecting tolling revenue to support transit service would require legislative changes that are unlikely in the foreseeable future. For more information, please see Section 1.12 of the SDEIS or the SR 520 costs, funding, and tolling information available at http://www.wadot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/financing.htm.

L-011-003

In accordance with the requirements of ESSB 6392, WSDOT has worked collaboratively with the Seattle Department of Transportation, the City of Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board, and the Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board to develop design refinements for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The ESSB 6392 workgroup process described in the response to comment L-011-002 included the development of recommendations to improve the bicycle and pedestrian environments near the SR 520 corridor. The resulting design refinements are described in the ESSB 6392: Design Refinements and Transit Connections Workgroup Recommendations Report.

The Preferred Alternative includes an expanded Montlake lid, which would improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity across SR 520,

reduce crossing distance for many pedestrians, and improve pedestrian safety. Improved bicycle connections with the Preferred Alternative would include the regional trail across the bridge; an undercrossing beneath SR 520 between the Washington Park Arboretum and East Montlake Park; and an undercrossing beneath Montlake Boulevard connecting the new regional trail to the Bill Dawson Trail. Bicycle and pedestrian connections are described in Chapter 2 of the Final EIS; their effects are described in Chapter 7 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report and in the Recreation Discipline Report Addendum (both in Attachment 7 to the Final EIS). Bicycle and pedestrian access will be provided across the new Montlake Bridge to facilitate connections to the Burke-Gilman Trail on the University of Washington campus.

Recommended improvements for which implementation would be under the jurisdiction of the City of Seattle include a connection between the regional trail on SR 520 and the new bascule bridge, which would involve bicycle/pedestrian improvements along Montlake Boulevard. WSDOT will continue to work with the City of Seattle through final design and construction to ensure that new bicycle routes that are part of the project are designed to City of Seattle standards and that pedestrian facilities provided as part of the project include appropriate treatments. The ESSB 6392 workgroup also considered priority treatments for transit in the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project vicinity and the Montlake corridor. The workgroup process resulted in a number of recommendations for improving transit speed and reliability between East Roanoke Street and the proposed Montlake Multimodal Center at Montlake Boulevard and Pacific Street. Additional transit priority treatments beyond those included in the project could be implemented by the City of Seattle and King County Metro. For more information, please see the response to comment L-011-002 and the ESSB 6392: Design Refinements and Transit Connections Workgroup Recommendations Report (Attachment 16 to the Final EIS).

L-011-004

The transportation analysis in the Final EIS has been expanded to include a VISSIM (PTV AG 2010) analysis of the Montlake interchange area, along with the Synchro analysis presented in the SDEIS. Together, these two traffic analysis tools provide more detailed information regarding local street operations, congestion, and travel times. Travel time estimates are provided for a.m., p.m., and off-peak periods. Please see section 5.1 of the Final EIS and Chapters 6 and 8 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) for descriptions and exhibits of the effects of the Preferred Alternative on local traffic volumes, intersection operations, congestion, and travel times in the Montlake interchange area.