

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 CommentDate: 4/15/2010 15:06
2. E-mail dmahan@drizzle.com Comment Source: Online Comment Form
3. Address:
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-323-001

I think that there should be no rush to put in place a badly designed highway. I think that more needs to be done about the potential impact of the current design on adjacent neighborhoods, especially Montlake. Design A simply adds more concrete and more noise to the 1962 bridge, while alleviating not at all the Montlake Mess of southbound Montlake Boulevard traffic, and failing to link mass transit between bridge and light rail. I think that more of the route should be placed underground, or lidded, and that sound walls should be built along the entire above ground length. I agree that the issue of placing light rail in lieu of HOV lanes should be explored, specifically how to link with planned underground rail.

I-323-002

I-323-003

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.

I-323-001

Comment noted. WSDOT received a number of comments in support of and in opposition to Options A, K, and L and the associated suboptions. These opinions are summarized in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement Summary of Comments (WSDOT, April 2010), available at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/SDEIS.htm>.

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 and Chapters 5 and 6 describe its environmental effects.

I-323-002

Design features included in the Preferred Alternative that help reduce noise levels include a 4-foot concrete traffic barriers with noise-absorptive coating; reducing speed limits through the Portage Bay area to 45 mph; encapsulating expansion joints; and using noise-absorptive materials around the Montlake and 10th Avenue East/Delmar Drive East lid portals. Because of the noise reduction that would result from these strategies, noise walls are not recommended in Seattle with the Preferred Alternative, except potentially along I-5 in the North Capitol Hill area where the reasonableness and feasibility of a noise wall is still be evaluated (see Section 5.7 of the Final EIS). Noise walls are still recommended for areas in Medina; however, installation and locations of noise walls would be decided with input from the community. Information on noise modeling results for the Preferred Alternative can be found in Section 5.7 of the Final EIS and the Noise Discipline Report Addendum (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS).

I-323-003

Section 2.4 in the Final EIS explains why initial implementation of light

rail transit on SR 520 is not planned. The decision to locate Sound Transit's initial east-west light rail transit corridor on I-90 rather than SR 520 has been made through extensive regional deliberation (see Table 2-2 of the Final EIS).

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.

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. See Section 2.4 of the Final EIS for more information.