

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.

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CommentDate: 4/15/2010 18:14
Comment Source: Online Comment Form

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-330-001

Help our region get transportation right: The 520 project is an opportunity to invest wisely for a greener environment and economy, not a place to save money. Please, work for the good of future citizens: Build a transportation corridor, not a 1950s style highway.

To that end I invite you to focus on these issues:

Build Six lanes with two devoted to transit, or make it four lanes and a train. The 520-bridge replacement must be designed to get people out of their cars. The as-built bridge must accommodate bus rapid transit and light rail connections. Make transit backbone from Ballard to Microsoft possible from the start not as a retrofit. Besides, there's not enough capacity on I-5 to accommodate six lanes of bridge traffic.

There's a University and light rail station north of the ship canal, thus access to 520 needs to be north of the ship canal.

I-330-002

Onramps and exits should be located on the north side of the ship canal where 60,000 students staff and faculty travel each day. Ramps north of the canal offload traffic to the UW and Sound transit. (Ramps south of the canal offload freeway congestion onto neighborhood streets.)

I-330-003

A second drawbridge across the Montlake cut solves nothing. Bridge openings stop traffic. Traffic stops on Montlake Blvd. interferes with bus rapid transit connections to the Eastside, access to hospitals and cause backs-up on the freeway and residential streets.

I-330-004

Link green spaces and protect the arboretum. The Westside 520 solution can reconnect the greenbelt from North Capital Hill to Lake Washington and protect the parkland, especially the arboretum. Note:

I-330-001

The SR 520 project would complete the HOV lane system in the corridor and add a bicycle/pedestrian lane to the corridor. The project would not add general-purpose lanes.

The HOV lane will be for vehicles with 3 or more passengers, as specified by ESHB 6392. This assumption was evaluated in the Draft EIS, SDEIS, and Final EIS, and has been shown to result in free flow operations in the HOV lane with bus service levels near 600 vehicles per day. The State's HOV lane operations policy would be used to identify when the HOV lanes' operational thresholds were met and when an adjustment to the occupancy requirement would be recommended; however, the State would need to request legislative approval to make any modifications.

The project would result in immediate benefits for transit speed and reliability in the corridor by providing 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 (see Section 2.4 of the Final EIS for more information). Because the project would improve reliability and efficiency for transit and carpools, it would create incentives for people to choose an alternative to driving alone.

Through the ESSB 6392 design refinements and transit connections workgroup, WSDOT worked with the City of Seattle and other stakeholders to refine the design of the project in the Montlake area, including a larger lid, relocated bus stops, and refined pedestrian connections. Although the Preferred Alternative removes the Montlake Freeway Transit Station, transit connectivity would be improved on the Montlake lid with additional bus stops and enhanced access between neighborhoods and to the Eastside. Additionally, the Montlake

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I-330-005 | Real traffic lids don't have roads.

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.

Multimodal Center, in the area currently known as the Montlake Triangle, which was collaboratively planned as part of the 2008 High Capacity Transit Plan under ESSB 609, and will serve as a major transfer point between the University Link rail station, proposed SR 520 bus rapid transit lines, and local bus service. See Section 2.4 of the Final EIS discusses high capacity transit on SR 520, including bus rapid transit. Chapter 8 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) provides updated information regarding the Montlake Multimodal Center and the effects of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project on transit connections in the Montlake area.

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. These options would allow for connection to the University Link station at Husky Stadium. See Section 2.4 of the Final EIS for further discussion.

While WSDOT is not the agency responsible for implementing light rail in the Puget Sound region, WSDOT will continue to work with Sound Transit as ST studies the potential for long-term implementation of rail in the SR 520 corridor.

I-330-002

Comment noted.

I-330-003

Comment noted.

I-330-004

Since the SDEIS was published, WDSOT has identified a Preferred Alternative that is similar to Option A, but with a number of design refinements. The Preferred Alternative reduces the land acquisition in the Arboretum from all options evaluated in the SDEIS. The Preferred Alternative includes a narrow footprint across Foster Island, with reduced right-of-way acquisition in the Arboretum compared to the SDEIS options.

In early 2010, the Washington State Legislature passed and Governor Gregoire signed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6392, which directed WSDOT to develop a mitigation plan for the Washington Park Arboretum. To develop that plan, WSDOT worked collaboratively over an eight-month period with the Arboretum and Botanical Gardens Committee to develop mitigation for the Preferred Alternative and identified a number of potential mitigation projects for the Arboretum. See Attachment 9 of the Final EIS for a copy of the Arboretum Mitigation Plan.

WSDOT has also worked with the City of Seattle in refining the design of the Preferred Alternative to avoid effects to recreational resources where possible. The footprint of the Preferred Alternative minimizes park impacts, compared to all options presented in the SDIES. The Preferred Alternative also maintains the connectivity of area parks. The final design of the Montlake lid would also be designed to include open space and enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connectivity features, recommended by the ESSB 6392 workgroup. Please see the ESSB 6392: Design Refinements and Transit Connections Workgroup Recommendations Report (Attachment 16 of the Final EIS) for more information.

I-330-005

Comment noted.