

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: Anne E. Nelson
 2. E-mail: njonanne593@msn.com
 3. Address: 1908 E. Blaine St.
 4. City: Seattle
 5. State: WA
 * 6. Zip Code: 98112

CommentDate: 4/15/2010 18:22
 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-332-001** | The 2nd drawbridge across the Montlake cut will destroy the view of the original Montlake bridge, which is a Seattle historical landmark. The image of the Montlake bridge is a trademark of Seattle and views of it will be destroyed if a 2nd drawbridge is built. This 2nd bridge will also require the removal of some beautiful, older homes. And won't a 2nd bridge require Montlake Blvd. to be widened? There are multiple reasons why a 2nd drawbridge is terrible idea.
- I-332-002** | The bus connections do not work for bus riders. The existing 520 (with the flyer stops) works. It doesn't make sense to spend billions of dollars on a new 520 that will not work as well as the existing one. The new 520 design discourages people from riding the bus. The interchange in Montlake is very intrusive on the Montlake area and does not solve any traffic problems. Montlake area residents, businesses, and the arboretum will be negatively affected. Why are there 6 lanes? When you add lanes of highway, you add more cars. There is not enough room on I-5 and Seattle's streets for all of these additional cars. We should be trying to encourage and motivate (or compel, if necessary, via tolls) drivers to carpool or ride mass transit. The new 520 should solve transportation issues, not make things worse. What is the point of getting across the bridge faster, only to sit in traffic on I-5 or Seattle's streets?
- I-332-004** | In general, the design for the new 520 has not been well thought out at all and does not solve our area's transportation problems. Please do not spend billions of dollars to build something that is so poorly designed. Go back to the drawing board and come up with a good design.

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-332-001

The design of the new bascule bridge would be context sensitive to minimize its effects on the setting and view of the historic Carl F. Gould Montlake Bridge. The design would complement the historic bridge and would not detract from the views of the historic bridge, or of the area surrounding the bridge. Stipulations are provided in the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (Attachment 9 to the Final EIS) to ensure that the proximity of the new bascule bridge would not diminish the integrity of the existing Montlake Bridge.

The Section 106 Programmatic Agreement will also outline WSDOT's mitigation for removal of 2904 and 2908 Montlake Boulevard NE, and for the resulting visual impact to surrounding historic properties.

To accommodate the new bascule bridge, Montlake Boulevard would be restriped and reconfigured between SR 520 and the Montlake Cut to include two general-purpose lanes and one HOV lane for improved transit connectivity. The second bascule bridge would benefit traffic flow and improve traffic operations compared to the No Build Alternative by allowing for lane continuity between the Montlake Cut and the SR 520 interchange. Overall delay related to bridge openings would also decrease for all vehicles because the additional capacity would allow congestion to clear more quickly.

I-332-002

The Montlake freeway transit stop was removed from all of the design options considered in the SDEIS through a decision-making process set up by the ESSB 6099 Mediation Workgroup. This workgroup consisted of members from adjacent neighborhoods, transit agencies, jurisdictions, and State agencies. Removing the freeway transit stop from the design, resulted in a narrower footprint over Portage Bay bridge and over the Arboretum area. The mediation workgroup did not recommend any design options that included the Montlake Freeway Transit Station stops.

The Preferred Alternative includes a modified Montlake Boulevard interchange and lid. Modifications include a full lid from Montlake Boulevard to the Lake Washington shoreline, and bus stops on the lid for both eastbound and westbound buses. The intent is to provide greater pedestrian amenity in the central part of the Montlake neighborhood while simultaneously providing a better location and environment for the regional bus stops incorporated in the transit/HOV direct access ramps (see Chapter 2 of the Final EIS). At the option of the transit agencies, SR 520 buses will be able to exit at the Montlake interchange during the off-peak periods to service passengers to/from the Montlake lid transit stop.

I-332-003

The SR 520, I-5 to Medina project would complete the HOV lane system in the corridor, improving reliability and efficiency for transit and carpools, but would not add general-purpose lanes. Thus, the project is aligned with improving the overall efficiency of the transportation system by creating incentives for people to choose an alternative to driving alone. 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. 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 of the Final EIS provides further discussion of how the project can accommodate high capacity transit.

I-332-004

Comment noted.