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From: Warren Yee [mailto:wyeridesrailtransit@earthlink.net]

Sent: Thursday, April 15, 2010 12:57 PM

To: SR 520 Bridge SDEIS

Subject: SR-520 SEIS comments

Comments on the SEIS for the SR-520 Bridge

I-303-001

(1) Does the proposed I-5 lid near Roanoke St preclude any future move for moving the westbound SR-520 to southbound I-5 mainline ramp from the left to the right to fix current problems with drivers coming off WB SR-520, and switching lanes quickly to exit off Mercer St.

I-303-002

(2) Though the Montlake freeway transit station is scheduled to be removed in all alternatives in the present location, has there been any thoughts of maybe reinstating the station not at the current location, but west of Montlake Blvd instead? Your diagrams seem to indicate there may be space to place a transit station WEST of Montlake Blvd. It should be noted that moving the transfer operations as proposed to north of the Montlake Cut by the light rail station will probably cause ridership to fall, due to extra time to transfer and the possibility of the Montlake Bridge going up (and the lack of HOV lanes on Montlake Blvd, see 3 below), thus increasing travel time even more for transit riders (even twice, if coming from the south).

I-303-003

(3) Lack of HOV lanes on Montlake Blvd between SR-520 and NE Pacific St/PI north of the bridge will insure that transit will get stuck in the 3 general purpose lanes. One lane in each direction needs to be designated HOV.

I-303-004

(4) Though your SEIS process for the SR-520 east of the bridge is done and complete, there might be an idea to maintain the connection between Route 271 and other Eastside routes east of the bridge. Current designs do not allow Rt 271 to stop at the new Evergreen Point Freeway Transit Station, which will be in the middle of the freeway and the 271 must exit off at 84th Ave NE to head to Bellevue.

Here is a possible idea:

(a) Eliminate both Evergreen Point (76th Ave NE) and Yarrow Point (92nd Ave NE) Freeway Transit Stations, and consolidate into one station at Hunts Point (84th Ave NE).

(b) The Hunts Point Station will be similar to the 142nd Ave NE HOV off and on ramps on I-90, and would provide HOV/Transit direct access to/from SR-520 at 84th Ave NE. Since Hunts Point station is on the ramp itself and not at freeway grade level, no elevators/ramps or stairs would be needed, unlike Evergreen Point and Yarrow Point Stations, which would be located at freeway grade level.

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Since publication of the SDEIS, WSDOT has identified a Preferred Alternative that includes an enhanced bicycle and pedestrian crossing of I-5 at East Roanoke Street instead of a lid over I-5.

The I-5 configuration with the Preferred Alternative would not preclude potential future changes in access for general purpose vehicles from southbound I-5 to eastbound SR 520 and westbound SR 520 to southbound I-5; nor does the proposal preclude future expansion in access to and from the SR 520 HOV lane to the I-5 reversible express lanes to the north.

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The Montlake Freeway Transit Station stops were removed in all of the design options considered in the SDEIS, based on a decision making process that was part of Westside mediation. The mediation process was mandated by Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6099 and is described on pages 1-17 through 1-19 of the SDEIS. The mediation workgroup consisted of members from adjacent neighborhoods, transit agencies, jurisdictions, and State agencies. Removing the Montlake Freeway Transit Station would minimize the width of the freeway through the Montlake area, reducing the width by up to 40 feet compared to keeping the station. The mediation workgroup did not recommend any design options that included the Montlake Freeway Transit Station stops. See Attachment 8 to the SDEIS, Range of Alternatives and Options Evaluated, for further discussion of how and why removal of the stops was considered.

The Preferred Alternative includes removal of the Montlake Freeway Transit Station stops; however, it also 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 (see Chapter 2 of the

I-303-004

(c) Bus stops would be on the ramps, west of 84th Ave NE so Rt. 271 can use this stop, in addition to all other transit routes serving SR-520, and maintain that connection between U. Dist and Eastside routes that exist today at Evergreen Point Station

(d) Though transit buses would have to exit the freeway to access the Hunts Point Station/Stop, there should be no time difference, since Evergreen Point and Yarrow Point Stations are to be eliminated.

(e) There is a very small parking lot for Evergreen Point, and none at Yarrow Point. These freeway stations are predominantly neighborhood stops, and some of these riders could be reaccommodated at Hunts Point station instead.

(f) This proposal would not require a special (new) bus route to continue to provide direct Eastside-U. Dist service, since it would allow Rt 271 to continue this function, as it does today.

Sincerely

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Final EIS for a description of the Preferred Alternative). 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. University Link light-rail service, expected to be operational in 2016, will accommodate some of the trips that now use the bus stops. Chapter 8 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) provides further discussion of expected transit operations with the Preferred Alternative, including expected transit travel times, rider connections, and how future transit would incorporate service currently provided at the stops.

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The Preferred Alternative would improve transit reliability in the area mentioned in the comment by providing HOV lanes on Montlake Boulevard between SR 520 and the Montlake Multimodal Center (currently known as the Montlake Triangle) at NE Pacific Street/NE Pacific Place.

I-303-004

WSDOT has coordinated with King County Metro and Sound Transit throughout the planning and design of SR 520 improvements to incorporate recommendations that support efficient transit operations. The transit agencies may adjust service to utilize the SR 520 improvements. For example, Metro Route 271 is planned to be rerouted to Bellevue Way so it can serve the Evergreen Point Transit Station.

The engineered design of a project evolves after the project purpose and need is established, and after the physical limits of improvement for the project are identified. The limits of physical improvements of the SR 520,

I-5 to Medina Project are at Evergreen Point Road, where the I-5 to Medina project ties in to the Medina to SR 202 project. The changes to Eastside SR 520 freeway transit stations at Evergreen Point and 92nd Ave NE suggested in the comment are outside the scope of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina Project. The types of considerations suggested in the comment are more appropriately directed at the Medina to SR 202 project, which focuses on physical eastside improvements and reducing transit and HOV travel times while enhancing travel time reliability, mobility, access, and safety for transit in areas along the SR 520 corridor east of Lake Washington.