



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
SEATTLE DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 3755
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98124-3755

Regulatory Branch

APR 30 2010

Katie DeLeuw
SR 520 Bridge Replacement Project
Plaza 600 Building
600 Stewart Street, Suite 520
Seattle, WA 98101

Reference: SR 520 Bridge EIS

Dear Ms. DeLeuw:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

We have only two comments on the document:

F-005-001

- Under Option K, tunnels would carry vehicular traffic underneath the Montlake Cut. The top surfaces of tunnels under any portion of the Lake Washington Ship Canal (LWSC) would need a minimum clearance of 15 feet below the authorized 30 foot depth of the navigation channel.

F-005-002

- Section 4.14, titled Navigation, begins with the statement "The U.S. Coast Guard is responsible for identifying and maintaining navigation channels in U.S. waters such as Lake Washington and Puget Sound." The U.S. Coast Guard operates the Puget Sound Vessel Traffic Service, and administers a permit program for bridges spanning navigable waters. They also maintain channel-marking buoys and other navigation aids, and carry out marine safety and law enforcement duties. But it is the Corps of Engineers that maintains navigation channels. The Corps built the LWSC and the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks, and has operated the system as a Congressionally authorized navigation project since 1916. We have active, major dredging projects to maintain navigation in the Snohomish, Duwamish, and Columbia Rivers, Grays Harbor, various Commencement Bay waterways in Tacoma's Port Industrial Area, and occasional maintenance dredging from Bellingham to Willapa Harbor. We also maintain waterways with our Regulatory Program, which ensures that structures built over or in navigable waters will not have an adverse effect on navigation. We suggest adding the Corps as a second subject in the sentence, so it reads

The U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are the two federal agencies responsible for identifying and maintaining navigation channels in U.S. waters such as Lake Washington and Puget Sound.

F-005-001

Since the SDEIS was published, FHWA and WSDOT have identified a Preferred Alternative that is similar to Option A, but incorporates design refinements that respond to community and stakeholder reaction to the alternatives and design options analyzed in the SDEIS. The design of the Preferred Alternative does not include a tunnel under the Montlake Cut as was proposed with Option K. If Option K or L were identified as the Preferred Alternative in the future, WSDOT would complete the necessary documentation as part of final design and permitting and ensure that negative effects associated with the tunnel are mitigated to the extent practicable.

F-005-002

Section 4.14 of the Final EIS has been updated to recognize the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as one of the two federal agencies that are responsible for identifying and maintaining navigation channels in U.S. waters, and the Navigable Waterways Discipline Report has been updated through the errata sheet, which is contained in the Navigable Waterways Discipline Report Addendum (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS).

F-005-003

At this point, we realize that the Seattle District has limited regulatory jurisdiction over the replacement bridge. The jurisdiction we do have is over the fill components of the structure to be placed in waters of the United States: Lake Washington, Union Bay, Portage Bay, and their associated wetlands. We look forward to reviewing and finalizing the wetland delineation and coming to an understanding of the physical placement of bridge and ramp components. I remain the Corps point of contact for this case, and if you have any questions, please call me at (206) 764-6907 or use e-mail jack.kennedy@usace.army.mil.



Jack Kennedy
Transportation Liaison Team

F-005-003

WSDOT has continued to coordinate with the Corps of Engineers and the Coast Guard to clarify jurisdiction responsibilities. At an August 25, 2010 meeting with both agencies, WSDOT verified the applicable permits and approvals required for the demolition of the floating and Portage Bay bridges, and for the construction of the new bridges and maintenance facility. Both the Corps and the Coast Guard participated from June to October 2010 in a Natural Resources Technical Work Group process with WSDOT and other jurisdictional agencies to identify and define aquatic habitat and wetland effects and potential mitigation. WSDOT continues to coordinate with the Corps of Engineers in finalizing the wetland delineation and performed a site visit November 30, 2010 with Corps of Engineers technical staff to review the preliminary wetland delineation. WSDOT will continue to coordinate with the Corps throughout the remaining project implementation steps.