

WHAT'S NEXT?

2007 will include expanded efforts in design, environmental review and coordination, financing, and public involvement in order to strengthen the Project's implementation plan and prepare for construction. Some key activities are listed below.

- Continuing environmental analysis, including the development of responses to Draft EIS comments for publication in the Final EIS
- Coordinating with affected jurisdictions and local agencies on Phase 2 of the catastrophic failure plan
- Refining 6-lane design, including roadway and structure design, plus geotechnical, stormwater, and lid analyses
- Testing quieter pavement technology on the Eastside
- Moving forward with Eastside and floating bridge design
- Supporting the City of Seattle's efforts in determining an interchange location as directed by the Governor
- Working with state and regional leaders to identify solutions for the Project's funding gap

ADA Information: Individuals requiring reasonable accommodation of any type may contact Paul Krueger, Environmental Manager, WSDOT, at (206) 381-6432. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may call WA State Telecommunications Relay Service (TTY) at 711.

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For additional information about the SR 520 Project:

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**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

See Inside for 2006
Project Highlights

SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project

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YEAR IN REVIEW 2006

SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project

Winter 2007

Governor Endorses 6-Lane Corridor

Project reaches milestones, moves ahead

Governor Chris Gregoire released her findings on the Project on December 15, stating that replacing the SR 520 corridor "is a matter of urgency for the safety of the traveling public and the needs of regional transportation." She directed WSDOT to move forward with the 6-Lane Alternative design and environmental review process. The Governor asked for ongoing collaboration with elected officials and communities in the development of SR 520 interchange concepts in Seattle.

The SR 520 Project continued to gain attention from officials at all levels. National, state, and local elected officials toured the facility throughout the year, including U.S. Senator Patty Murray, U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, and staff from U.S. Senator Cantwell and Governor Gregoire's offices. The tours were great opportunities for the Project team to explain how the new facilities will improve safety, reliability, and transit connections in the Puget Sound region.

Thousands of people participated in activities during the past year. Thank you to all who contributed to the Project and helped us make great strides in 2006.



The bridge's increasing vulnerability to windstorms and earthquakes was again highlighted by stormy weather in 2006. Bridge crews were forced to shut down SR 520 to traffic on February 5, March 8, and December 14 in response to weather conditions. Crews also closed the Evergreen Point Bridge after the February windstorm to replace a five-ton piece of equipment necessary for the continued operation of the drawspan.

Replacing the aging and vulnerable SR 520 bridges and structures is critical for the safety and mobility of the Puget Sound region. During 2006, we made significant progress on this complex six-mile project.

Design & Engineering

Moving forward with the design of the new floating bridge and the corridor is a crucial element of the Project. Completing the preliminary design activities listed below allowed the engineers to gather information needed prior to construction.

- Completed the SR 520 Corridor Aesthetics Handbook
- Conducted technical review of the compatibility of high-capacity transit options in the SR 520 corridor east of Lake Washington
- Conducted soil sampling along the corridor to determine groundwater levels in order to further design stormwater treatment plans
- Continued geotechnical drilling of the Lake Washington lake bed in order to determine soil structure for bridge support locations

Environment

The environmental team focused on releasing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in August, which is a major milestone required by the National and State Environmental Protection Acts. This team was also responsible for the following activities.

- Continued environmental permitting and mitigation discussions with resource agencies and jurisdictions
- Completed initial environmental analysis and compiled technical reports for the Draft EIS, which was released in August

Public Involvement & News Events

Public input has been an important aspect of the Project since the beginning. In 2006, project visibility continued to grow as we discussed the Project with groups, individuals, elected officials, and the media. Key public involvement highlights are described below.

- Held over 250 meetings or briefings with community organizations, jurisdictions, and project committees

- Talked with approximately 3,800 people at over 30 community fairs and festivals
- Received more than 2,100 public comments, including over 1,700 comments on the Draft EIS
- Provided 11 tours for local, state, and federal elected officials
- E-mailed project updates to approximately 1,700 people each month
- Installed traveling display at 15 locations throughout the SR 520 corridor
- Briefed and provided a tour of SR 520 for U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Mary Peters and U.S. Senator Patty Murray

Costs & Funding

Construction costs and inflation rates continued to rise in 2006. WSDOT worked with the Governor's Expert Review Panel to update project costs and close the existing funding gap.

- Provided information and SR 520 tour to the Governor's Expert Review Panel to assess the Project's implementation and financing plans

- Updated project costs based on the Expert Review Panel's recommendations to reflect increases in inflation and the cost of construction materials
- Received support from 2006 State Legislature requiring that the 2007 RTID ballot measure include a proposal that "provides full Project funding for seismic safety and corridor connectivity on SR 520 between I-5 and I-405"

Preferred Alternative

Two replacement alternatives are described in the Draft EIS, in addition to a No-Build Alternative. At the end of 2006, the Governor determined that WSDOT should continue to move forward with one alternative, the 6-lane replacement. Additional details about this decision are provided below.

- Coordinated with jurisdictions, permitting agencies, and Tribal Nations regarding their recommendations on a preferred alternative
- Governor announced the selection of the 6-Lane Alternative; more work needs to be done to determine a Seattle interchange location and corridor design options

Open houses created strong public interest



Crews conducted monthly bridge inspections



Media provided year-round coverage



Stormy weather battered the floating bridge span forcing three bridge deck closures



Tours provided an up-close look at SR 520



Senator Patty Murray toured SR 520