



SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project

Advisory Committee Meeting Summary May 23, 2005 4:00 – 5:30 PM Museum of History and Industry

Introduction

Julie Meredith, WSDOT, began the meeting by welcoming the committee members to the meeting. She also introduced Paul Krueger and John Milton, both members of the WSDOT SR 520 project team.

Julie shared the project team's excitement over the Governor Gregoire bridge tour on March 29th. She explained that the Governor's ability to see the damage to the columns firsthand and understand the vulnerability of the structures was important to solidifying her commitment to the project and to the gas tax package, which includes \$500 million for the SR 520 project.

Project Update

Julie announced that three changes for the SR 520 project were included in the legislation passed in Olympia. The Transportation Partnership Package (TPP), which includes \$500 million for the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project, was approved by the legislature in May. The inclusion of the \$500 million for the project is a strong recognition of the need for this project. Three changes have resulted from legislation passed in Olympia: 1) WSDOT is a cabinet-level agency reporting to the Governor as opposed to reporting to the Transportation Commission; 2) language in the TPP requires the project to "reach agreements with the incorporated towns or cities that represent the communities affected by the SR 520 project" ¹; and 3), if regional funding is not obtained by January 2007, the funds in the TPP could be re-allocated.

Special Studies

WSDOT informed the committee members that they are in the process of considering a number of studies including:

- Quieter Pavement
- Lake Washington Boulevard Ramp Closure
- Madison Park Bike/Ped Connection
- Origin and Destination Study (O/D study)

Questions / Comments

¹ Sec. 305 (3) The department shall not commence construction on any part of the SR 520 bridge project until agreements have been reached with the incorporated towns or cities that represent the communities affected by the SR 520 project.



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Jean Amick, Laurelhurst Community Club, asked why the re-pavement of SR 520 stopped at Foster Island.

Not sure why that stopped.

Barbara Culp, Bicycle Alliance of Washington, asked about banning snow tires.

There is a lot of resistance against banning snow tires. Groups have lobbied against a ban.

Eugene Wasserman, North Seattle Industrial Council, asked why the project is not including tollbooths.

The project has assumed that the tolls will be electronic. Electronic toll collection has been growing rapidly across the nation and the world. The project feels that by the time the bridge is built the technology will be far enough along and tollbooths will not be necessary.

Eugene Wasserman stated that WSDOT thinks 100,000 people are going to acquire passes. He said that he feels WSDOT is lying to people and that its regional pass won't work because this is one bridge, not the whole city. He asked to know one place that handles 100,000 cars with no tollbooths.

The City of London currently tolls everyone that drives into the center of London.

Barbara Culp asked if the Madison Park bike connection study would be included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

David Allen, Seattle Department of Transportation, said that it was a possibility.

Bob Tate, Clyde Hill, asked when the last O/D study was.

The last study was conducted late in 1999, early 2000. However, it was a basic study looking at travel patterns.

Seattle Parks Workshop

The SR 520 team has held several workshops with the Seattle Parks Department, the University of Washington, and the Arboretum Foundation. The purpose of the workshops has been to develop ideas for what the Arboretum and the adjacent parks could look like after the SR 520 project is built. These will be displayed at the open houses at the end of June.

Questions/Comments

Jonathan Dubman, Montlake Community Council, asked why the focus is on the Arboretum rather than the park by Roanoke.

There are many interests around the Arboretum, East Montlake, and McCurdy Parks. Since the project is planning on taking the MOHAI facility and building a stormwater treatment wetland adjacent to the MOHAI facility, there are many

opportunities for future use and development of that area. The footprint of the project is not affecting Roanoke Park.

Refining the 6-Lane Alternative

Julie Meredith discussed the work that the SR 520 team has done since January to refine the 6-Lane Alternative and develop additional options that can be considered for this Alternative. WSDOT initiated this effort when it became clear that the 6-Lane footprint developed for the Draft EIS was too big, especially through the Portage Bay, Montlake and Arboretum areas.

The goal of refining the 6-Lane Alternative was to reduce the footprint while retaining its functionality. In addition to WSDOT's efforts to reduce the footprint, the Montlake community also suggested a high-level bridge through Portage Bay with a new bridge to Pacific Street. These additional options require the release of the Draft EIS to be postponed until later in the year.

Eastside Options

John Milton, WSDOT, reviewed the following Eastside options that will be included in the Technical Appendix:

- Bicycle/Pedestrian Path to the North
 - Gentler grade compared to double crossing under 520
- No Evergreen Point Freeway Transit Stop
 - Highlights bus property acquisition
 - Smaller footprint
 - Not a stand alone option
 - Combines two freeway transit stations into one
- South Kirkland Park-and-Ride Transit Access – 108th
 - Benefits include the decrease in routing time
 - Drawbacks are the increased footprint, not optimal geometric design, effects to streams and wetlands
- South Kirkland Park-and-Ride Transit Access – Bellevue Way
 - Benefits include the bi-pass for transit resulting in reduction of travel time

Questions/Comments

Eugene Wasserman asked when the draft of the technical appendix would be released.

The technical appendix for the draft environmental impact statement will be released in July.

Jean Amick asked who makes the decision after the EIS is released?

The Executive Committee is looking at the technical appendix outcome. All of the options will be discussed.

Eugene Wasserman asked who makes the decision of what goes into the technical appendix?

The project team makes this decision. Likely, all of the information will go forward unless there is a fatal flaw with an option. Clarified options are then paired with the alternatives.

Rich White, Boeing, asked if the north alignment of the bike/ped path would replace the existing Points Loop bike/ pedestrian trail.

The north alignment would be an addition to the existing Points Loop Trail, with a barrier between paths. A local path would be mainly for pedestrian use, and a regional path mostly for bicycle commuters.

Mark Weed, EGIS Real Estate Services, asked where the residents of Medina and Clyde Hill would get on the north alignment bike/pedestrian trail.

It is assumed that residents on the south side of SR 520 would enter the trail at Evergreen Point Road, 84th, or 92nd.

Jonathan Dubman asked for verification that the park and ride at Evergreen Point would be taken away.

It is not a WSDOT decision because WSDOT does not own the property.

Eugene Wasserman asked where the HOV lane would be located.

The HOV lane would be down the center, transit vehicles would have to merge to get to it.

Jonathan Dubman asked what the travel-time savings is to the South Kirkland Park and Ride from Seattle.

The travel time savings to the park and ride is 16 minutes.

Jonathan Dubman asked if Bellevue Way is projected to have heavy congestion and if it could be fixed.

While congestion is projected to be heavy, the study did not consider possible solutions at this time.

Mark Weed asked if a park and ride could be built, with a structured parking lot, on the existing DOT property, near 108th Ave. NE.

That was studied in the Translake Area study, along Northup and 108th. There is a creek to consider and how it could be buffered and a maintenance facility is needed for SR 520 and I-90.



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Jonathon Dubman asked if parking at the South Kirkland Park and Ride is at full capacity.

Projections indicate that it will be at capacity soon.

Eugene Wasserman asked how many people park at the South Kirkland Park and Ride.

There are 595 spaces.

Jean Amick asked how the 108th option would change the intersection.

There would no longer be signals, and the location to get onto the ramp would change.

Larry Sinnot, Ravenna/Bryant Community Association, asked how far the traffic is projected to back up if a metered ramp is built.

Traffic is projected to back up to Bellevue Way.

Jean Amick asked if the goal of changing the South Kirkland Park and Ride is to increase its use.

No, to clarify, the goal is to maintain rider-use at this park and ride.

Seattle Options

John Milton, WSDOT, reviewed the following Seattle design options that will be included in the technical appendix:

- No Montlake Freeway Transit Stop
- High 6-Lanes with Pacific Street Interchange
- 6-Lane Alternative with Pacific Street Interchange
- Second Montlake Bridge

The project team is looking into the option of eliminating the Montlake Freeway Transit Stop as a way to reduce the lane-width through Montlake and Portage Bay. John stated that this option saves approximately 40' through Montlake.

Another design option is the addition of a second bascule bridge across the Montlake Cut just east of the current Montlake Bridge that would be similar in design to the existing bridge.

The project team is looking at the possibility of removing the SR 520/Montlake Interchange and replacing it with a new interchange at Pacific Street. Eliminating the Montlake interchange would narrow the 6-Lane Alternative across Portage Bay. There would be a new crossing of the Ship Canal from SR 520 to Pacific Street, with the interchange occurring adjacent to the Arboretum near Marsh Island. The Pacific Street Interchange could be applied to either a high-level



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structure or the currently proposed 6-Lane Alternative. The interchange over Marsh Island would be a full diamond interchange with three traffic signals.

Intersection design considerations could include separate pedestrian traffic that travels above Montlake with a lowered intersection at Pacific Street and Montlake.

Questions/Comments

Jonathan Dubman asked how many lanes would go from Montlake to I-5. 8 lanes, and two 10' shoulders.

Mark Weed asked if the box girder bridge design would go over Montlake. Yes, about 55' above.

Barbara Culp asked if the Montlake interchange would have to close during construction. Yes.

Eugene Wasserman asked what the grade would be for the off ramps accessing the Pacific Interchange. He also asked if a third acceleration lane has been considered.

The grade would be -7%. There are Coast Guard restrictions that have to be considered when designing the crossing, thus affecting the ability to build additional acceleration lanes.

Bob Tate asked what ships need 110' clearance.

The University's Tommy Thompson research vessel and its sister ship owned and operated by NOAA need a clearance of 110'.

Bob Tate asked about the grade restrictions for light rail.

Not an issue with grade, but the length of that grade. WSDOT is working with Sound Transit to figure out this issue.

Bob Tate followed up on his previous question by asking why free flowing ramps were not being considered for the Pacific Interchange.

Free flowing ramps would have to be stacked with extra width allowed. In addition the environmental impacts are greater.

Mark Weed asked how the Pacific Interchange is going to make traffic better for people coming from the south.

Traffic will be better because it will be more removed from freeway traffic.

Jean Amick asked if on the 110' bridge, there would be a guided line of cars.



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When WSDOT builds a new facility, double left lanes and double through lanes are provided. Still additional lanes are provided to get through on the same signal areas. WSDOT is at 1% design right now. This alternative has a very long way to go until the design options are chosen.

Mark Weed asked who embraces this plan.

Jonathon Dubman responded that there are many supporters, pointing out that the key benefits would be fixing the Montlake bridge bottleneck, and opening the area up for more green space. The Montlake Community believes the Pacific Interchange option is the element that will make this project work with the neighborhood.

Larry Sinnot asked if Lake Washington Boulevard is park property. He suggested that with 19,000 cars/day on Lake Washington Boulevard and 18,700 cars/day on 23rd Avenue, we are barking up the wrong tree.

Bob Tate, how does the Second Montlake Bridge cost compare to the high-level bridge.

It is too early to say at this point, a study would have to be done to compare the cost and functionality of both.

Jonathan Dubman stated that the Montlake Community is opposed to a second bascule bridge, because it requires a bigger footprint, and adding two lanes doesn't fix the traffic problem.

2005 Near Term Schedule

Open houses are scheduled for the end of June 2005, and Executive Committee Meetings are scheduled in September and November. Jurisdictional Meetings, regarding the preferred alternative, are ongoing and are being scheduled throughout the summer. The 6-Lane Design Options Appendix is scheduled for release in July and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is scheduled for release at the end of 2005.

Questions/Comments

Jean Amick stated that she would like to attend the Technical Committee meetings.

Eugene Wasserman asked if all of the information would be available by the June open houses.

No, WSDOT will have most of the up-to-date materials available then.



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Eugene Wasserman followed up his previous question by asking why WSDOT was not looking at redirecting the interchange at I-5 and SR 520. He commented that no one would vote for an option that doesn't include a new 520/I-5 interchange.

ATTENDEES:

Advisory Committee Members

Jean Amick, Laurelhurst Community Club
Barbara Culp, Bicycle Alliance of Washington
Adam Miles, City of Medina
Jonathan Dubman, Montlake Community Council
Bertha Eades, City of Redmond
Fred Hart, Greater University Chamber of Commerce
Kingsley Joneson, Portage Bay/ Roanoke Park Community Council
Larry Sinnot, Ravenna/Bryant Community Association
Eugene Wasserman, North Seattle Industrial Association
Mark Weed, EGIS Real Estate Services
Roland White, Kirkland Transportation Commission

Public Attendees

Zhang Guohin
Richard Tait

Project Team Members

Julie Meredith, WSDOT
John Milton, WSDOT
Paul Krueger, WSDOT
Brad Phillips, Parametrix
Suanne Pelley, EnviroIssues
Bryan Jarr, EnviroIssues
Elizabeth Faulkner, EnviroIssues
David Allen, SDOT