



SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program



I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project

August 2016

SR 520 Wetland Mitigation at the Union Bay Natural Area

What is the UBNA project?

The Union Bay Natural Area (UBNA) is located on the north end of Lake Washington's Union Bay, west of the SR 520 floating bridge. The property is owned by the University of Washington (UW) and managed by the College of the Environment. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is constructing a wetland mitigation project at this site to mitigate for adverse effects from the SR 520 West Approach Bridge North project, which is currently under construction.

The UBNA project includes:

- Enhancing existing wetlands.
- Creating new wetlands.
- Removing invasive and non-native species.
- Planting native wetland species.
- Protecting wetlands by improving the areas that buffer them from adverse effects.

The mitigation supports and continues work previously begun by the UW as part of the UBNA Shoreline Management Guidelines.

Conceptual design for the UBNA mitigation site



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| Created wetlands | Wetland buffers with low growing native shrubs planted in clusters with grassy space between |
| Enhanced wetlands | Modified wetland buffer with grasses and herbaceous plants only |
| Wetland buffers | Existing shorebird habitat |
| Enhanced wetlands with native sedges and rushes with 25% shrubs in clusters | |

UBNA mitigation site vicinity map



Why are we doing wetland mitigation?

SR 520 highway construction will have some effects to wetlands. Where possible, WSDOT adjusted the highway project design to avoid or minimize effects to these resources. To comply with a variety of local, state and federal regulations, WSDOT will establish and enhance wetlands in the UBNA.

How did we select the site?

When planning transportation projects, WSDOT first seeks to avoid or minimize effects to the environment. If a project has unavoidable effects, we must mitigate for those effects. WSDOT has undertaken a comprehensive process in coordination with local, state and federal regulatory agencies, stakeholders, and tribes to identify mitigation sites for effects to wetlands associated with the I-5 to Medina project.

The UBNA site was selected by looking for mitigation opportunities that are important to Lake Washington and that would provide similar functions as those at the wetland-impacted sites. WSDOT is committed to constructing the wetland mitigation sites as documented in the Final Wetland Mitigation Report, published December 2011, which can be found on the SR 520 Program website.

What to expect during construction

WSDOT and the UW are committed to construction management practices that avoid, minimize and mitigate the effects of WSDOT construction activities on neighbors, park users and the traveling public. You can expect:

- **Trail closures:** In order to maintain safety for trail users, the contractor will need to intermittently close the trail along Wahkiakum Lane and the Loop Trail. The contractor is allowed up to 50 days of trail closures and is required to keep trails open over weekends.
- **Restricted construction areas:** The contractor will install orange fencing and/or stakes around project boundaries, research plots and key areas that need additional protection during construction.
- **Construction staging:** In order to minimize impacts to park users, the contractor plans to stockpile materials, such as woodchips, in specified locations onsite. They also plan to stage construction equipment and offices in the E4 parking lot and near Douglas Road Northeast.
- **Vegetation removal:** In order to provide access for construction equipment to the work areas within UBNA, the contractor will prune select trees and vegetation. The contractor will also remove select non-native plants and replant with native wetland plants.
- **Restricted construction during bird nesting season:** In order to protect nesting birds, between March 1 and July 31, the contractor will not be permitted to conduct certain construction activities such as vegetation removal and excavation. Some activities such as material stockpiling and other staking activities will be permitted as long as these activities do not disturb nesting sites. All construction activities will be monitored by WSDOT and the contractor to ensure that construction activities do not disturb nesting sites.

What is the project timeline?

- **May 2016:** Began construction
- **Spring 2017:** Complete construction
- **Approximately 10 years following completion:** Monitoring and maintenance period to verify mitigation goals have been met



UBNA's trails are enjoyed by a wide range of users.



Views of Union Bay and Lake Washington can be seen from UBNA.

For more information

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SR 520 Program Website:

wsdot.wa.gov/projects/SR520Bridge



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

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