Special Studies Update: May 2005

Quieter Pavement

WSDOT has been asked to consider whether new pavement technologies—referred to as "quieter pavements"—could be applied to WSDOT projects to reduce pavement noise. To address this, WSDOT launched a study titled "*Quieter Pavements: Options and Challenges for Washington State*." The study is nearing completion and will be released this summer.

The study is a literature review of quieter pavement research and summarizes experiences and results from other locations that have utilized quieter pavement technologies. The study notes several areas that remain unanswered regarding the long-term performance of quieter pavements in urban environments:

- Durability (of both noise pavement and noise reduction)
- Noise reduction
- Studded tire resistance
- Installation challenges

Next steps include further exploration of noise reducing paving types, researching locations for trial projects of quieter pavement, obtaining funding to implement testing, developing a sound intensity (close proximity) method for measuring the noise, and continuing to monitor efforts in other states and applicability in Washington state.

Lake Washington Blvd. Ramp Closure

At the request of groups interested in the Arboretum and the Olmstead Parks, WSDOT was asked to analyze the results of permanently closing the Lake WA Blvd Ramps.

The Project team has worked with the City of Seattle to gain an understanding about how traffic would re-distribute through the local roadways to gain access to their final destinations. They have also discussed what modifications would be required on the local arterials to service the changes in traffic distribution.

Initial findings are similar to the findings from earlier studies that showed the majority of trips would use the Montlake Boulevard corridor to access Madison Park and the Capital Hill area. Major modifications to the Montlake corridor and possibly the Lake Washington Boulevard corridor would be necessary to service the new trips. Additional westbound off-ramp width would also be required to service a much higher left turn movement at the ramp terminus.

The Project team is coordinating with the City of Seattle to finalize the traffic distribution and design modifications required to serve the traffic volume should the option to permanently close the Lake Washington Boulevard ramps be pursued.

Madison Park Bike/Pedestrian Connection

Bicycle groups have long-advocated for a bicycle/pedestrian connection from SR 520 to the Madison Park area so that they could access areas south of 520 without needing to go to the Montlake interchange to exit. The Madison Park Community Council has testified on several occasions that they are opposed to this connection.

WSDOT agreed to conduct the technical and cost analysis of this proposed connection, while the City of Seattle's Department of Transportation agreed to conduct the community outreach necessary to determine the pros and cons of this proposal and to gather community feedback.

The first community meeting was held on May 17th at the Madison Park Bath House. Participants included a mix of neighborhood and bicycle/pedestrian advocacy organizations. Initial feedback from the first meeting showed support for the connection from the bike/ped organizations, and mixed reaction from surrounding neighborhood representatives. They all expressed support for conducting the analysis and sharing the information with the representatives as it became available.

South Kirkland Park & Ride Transit Access

In order to improve transit connections at 108th Avenue NE, WSDOT undertook an operational and design study to determine whether there could be transit direct access at the 108th Avenue NE on-ramp to SR 520. WSDOT has met with jurisdictions on the Eastside on several occasions to review the options and the traffic operations for transit access at 108th Avenue NE and a new option at Bellevue Way. These two transit access options will both be carried forward in the new Appendix that will be issued in July.

Origin/Destination Study

As part of the development of design alternatives for the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project, WSDOT conducted an Origin/Destination Study at transit stops along SR 520 in order to better understand current usage of the Montlake, Evergreen Point, and 92nd Avenue NE transit flyer stops. Data collected during surveys will identify current travel patterns served by existing freeway flyer stops, provide information on whether or not the utility of these stations can be provided differently when the SR 520 facility is reconstructed, and allow WSDOT, Sound Transit and Metro to analyze service options in coordination with the North Link light rail station proposed at Husky Stadium. The Origin/Destination summary report will be issued in June.