



MEMORANDUM

To: SR 520 Program Files

From: Randy Everett, FHWA Major Projects Oversight Manager;
Allison Hanson, WSDOT ESO Mega Projects Environmental Director

Date: October 29, 2012

Copies To: Dave Becher, WSDOT SR 520 Floating Bridge & Landings Construction Engineering Manager;
Kerry Pihlstrom, WSDOT SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Engineering Manager;
George Fies, SR 520 Floating Bridge & Landings Design Engineering Manager;
Margaret Kucharski, WSDOT SR 520 Environmental Lead;
Rona Spelleccacy, SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Environmental Planner

**Subject: SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project –
Installation of Additional Moorage Buoys**

The purpose of this memorandum is to document National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), and Section 106 and 4(f) compliance for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project (Project) associated with proposed installation of additional moorage buoys for use during construction of the floating bridge and landings phase of the project.

Environmental documentation for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project includes the Final Environmental Impact Statement (June 2011) and supporting discipline reports, the Record of Decision (August 2011), SEPA Addenda (October and November 2011), NEPA Environmental Reevaluations (December 2011, January 2012, July 2012, and October 2012), as well as subsequently filed memoranda. As the project proceeds with final design and moves toward construction, proposed modifications to design and delivery methods have been compared to findings in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Record of Decision (ROD), and other existing reports and documentation.

The Final EIS describes the presence of construction equipment, barges, tug boats, tall cranes and work bridges within the limits of construction for the Floating Bridge and Landings phase of the project, but does not discuss how pontoons and/or construction equipment would be anchored while supporting construction activities on the lake. WSDOT later determined that the preferred method to secure this equipment during project construction would consist of utilizing single-

point moorage buoys. WSDOT prepared a memorandum to the project files in May 2012 which described these buoys, approximately 30 of which would be located within the limits of construction.

WSDOT has recently determined that there is a need for up to eight additional moorage buoys that would be located outside the limits of construction, both to the north and south of the existing floating bridge. The attached exhibit identifies five buoy locations. At this time, the locations of three potential additional buoys have not been identified. If these buoys are needed in the future, the locations would be anticipated to have effects similar to those described in this memorandum. Any additional analysis deemed necessary for the additional buoys would be documented in a separate memorandum.

These buoys would be used primarily for staging of construction equipment and would be located outside the limits of construction. The buoys would be located far enough from the existing bridge and ongoing floating bridge construction activities so as to 1) reduce traffic congestion within the limits of construction, and 2) ensure there is no damage to existing or new bridge structures during a storm event. The buoys would likely be used for the duration of the floating bridge and landings phase of the project, approximately through 2016.

The buoys will be used primarily for staging of barges and derrick barges (barges with cranes) during the construction phase of the floating bridge and landings project. Barges could also be moored at these buoys prior to, during, and/or after a storm event. When a barge is moored at a buoy, the typical swing radius (distance the barge could extend from the buoy in a given direction) would be approximately 400 feet to 1000 feet. During normal weather conditions, the swing radius would be at the low end of this range, while during a storm, the swing radius could extend towards the high end depending on the size of the barge.

On rare occasions, and for very short periods of time, pontoons could be moored at these buoy sites. Pontoon moorage would only occur prior to, during, and/or after a storm event. When a pontoon is moored at a buoy, the swing radius could extend up to approximately 1,000 feet. No construction activities would occur on pontoons or equipment at buoy locations outside the limits of construction.

Similar to the buoys described in the May 2012 memorandum, the use of these additional buoys would minimize the amount of temporary benthic disturbance compared to the placement and removal of anchors each time a barge or other equipment was moved. The single-point moorage buoys would remain stationary for periods of construction and equipment would be connected or detached as needed. The buoys would be anchored in water depths of approximately 40 feet or deeper, where habitat use by aquatic species is limited due to lack of sunlight and dissolved oxygen. The buoys would be placed outside of shoreline areas principally used by outmigrating juvenile salmonids. The buoys will be marked and approved under the authority of the United States Coast Guard. A right of entry would also be acquired from the Washington Department of Natural Resources prior to placement of buoys in their jurisdiction.

A WSDOT Biologist has reviewed the potential changes, and has provided an update to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (Services). Through this

update, the Services and WSDOT have determined that reinitiation under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) would not be required for ESA compliance. The proposed activities would not warrant an amendment to the existing Biological Opinion; therefore, the Project will continue to operate under the existing Incidental Take Statement, Reasonable and Prudent Measures, and implementing Terms and Conditions.

The proposed additional buoys would be located outside the limits of construction that were identified in the Final EIS, and were referenced in the Memorandum of Agreement among WSDOT, FHWA, and the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe (MIT). WSDOT is engaging in government-to-government consultation with the MIT regarding potential effects of the buoys on tribal fisheries. No additional impacts to tribal fisheries are expected beyond those previously described in the Final EIS and ROD. FHWA and WSDOT will continue to engage in appropriate coordination with the MIT. This coordination would allow tribal concerns associated with the proposed changes to be properly considered and addressed. This commitment regarding continued coordination is documented in the Final EIS, and has been maintained throughout the government-to-government consultation.

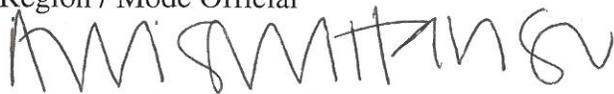
The proposed construction changes are located away from known historic properties and have minimal potential to affect previously undocumented cultural resources. A WSDOT Cultural Resources Specialist has determined that no additional analysis or consultation is necessary for Section 106 compliance or Section 4(f) compliance.

The proposed construction changes are not expected to result in effects to navigable waterways or visual quality beyond those described in the Final EIS or subsequent reevaluations. The buoys would be located a sufficient distance away from navigable waterways to avoid potential conflicts with navigation channels. The temporary nature of the buoys and their proposed uses and the distance of the buoys from the shoreline would minimize effects on visual quality. The buoys would be perceived as part of the overall construction activities ongoing in the lake.

As documented above, the project remains compliant with current federal, state, local, and departmental regulations and directives with regard to NEPA/SEPA processes, the Endangered Species Act, Section 106 and 4(f). Therefore, no additional environmental review is required.

We have reviewed and agree with the contents of this memorandum.

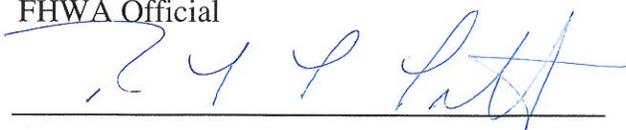
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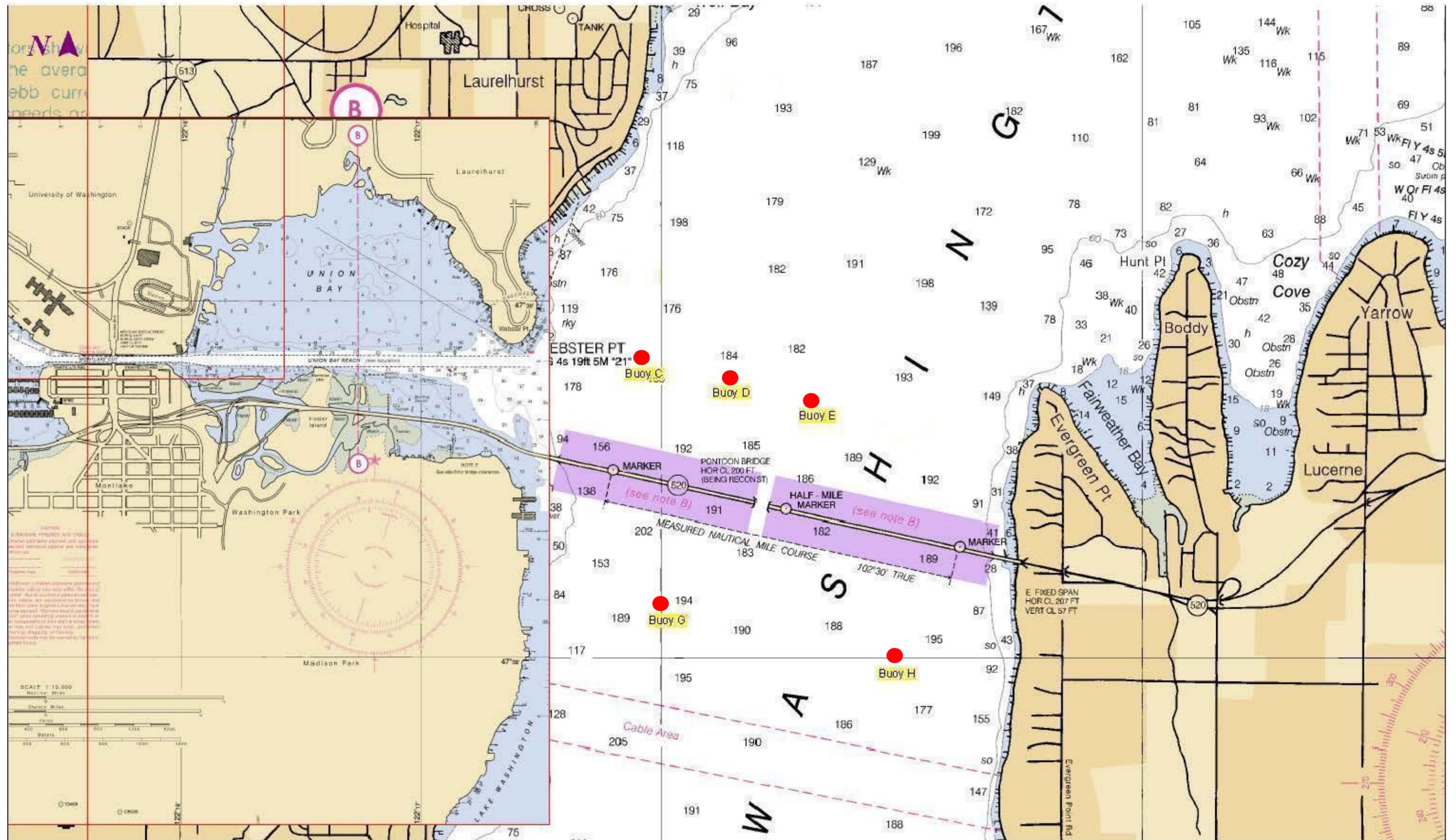


FHWA Official



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DO NOT USE FOR NAVIGATION