

SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project June 2004 Open Houses and Public Comment Summary

The SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project held two open houses on June 15 and 17, 2004 to update the community on the project, share the latest information on the alternatives, and solicit public input.

Purpose

The open houses were designed to offer another opportunity for community members to meet with the project team, learn the latest information and ask questions. Locations were chosen on the east and west side of the lake to provide added convenience for residents. The objectives were:

- To highlight the differences between the 4- and 6-Lane alternatives and also show proposed improvements to bridge safety and cross-lake travel
- To inform the public what was learned about the 8-Lane alternative
- To describe how tolls will help pay for the new bridge
- To receive feedback on concerns that should be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Notification

The public was notified of the open houses in several ways:

- Postcard mailed to project mailing list of 9949
- Email announcement and reminders sent to project email list of 1123
- Display advertisements placed in North Seattle Herald, King County Journal, and the Seattle Times and PI
- Posters hung in libraries, community centers, storefronts, and university bulletin boards
- Spanish posters were also posted at Casa Latina and the University of Washington
- Project web site
- Community calendars
- Press release distributed to selected Puget Sound newspapers

The majority of respondents noted on comment forms that they were made aware of the open houses from the postcard or email announcement. A few also noticed the newspaper ads or heard via friends about the events.

Meeting Format

The format of the open houses was identical each evening. Community members entered the facility and were asked to sign-in. They were presented with several handouts including the room layout, a new brochure (including the vulnerability diagram) and the EIS alternatives summary. They wove their way through the room, stopping at

various stations that were staffed by the project team. The stations covered the following topics: purpose, schedule and process of the proposed action, the 8-Lane Alternative and cross-sections of other alternatives, traffic data, information on the upcoming draft EIS, rollplots of both the 4- and 6-Lane alternatives, 4- and 6-Lane GIS drawings, current cost estimations, funding options, tolling information and community-designed lid enhancements. Comment stations, as well as refreshments, were set-up in appropriate locations. There were no presentations at either event.

Participation

Over 150 people attended the open houses, which ran from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm. The first was held at the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) in Seattle on June 15th and the second was held at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Bellevue on June 17th. Nearly 80 people were in attendance at each location, with approximately 30% of the attendees being new to the project mailing list.

Title VI

Two individuals completed Title VI forms. The information provided was noted and included in the Environmental Justice file for the project.

Public Comment

Comment forms were available at both venues. Community members were invited to let the project team know what should be addressed in the Draft EIS and what other comments they may have. Boxes were positioned on tables in order for people to submit their forms immediately. Comments could also be mailed in after the event.

Twenty-eight comment forms were submitted the first evening and twenty-seven the second evening. The full-text of the comments is located in the appendix, with some general themes captured below.

Noise

Several individuals expressed concerns regarding current and future noise from SR 520, as well as during construction. The proposed lids were considered a positive addition and some individuals requested that they also be part of the 4-Lane alternative.

"I prefer the 6-Lane alternative to re-build the SR 520 bridge, so that it will be less congested and because it will add lids to the highway or parts of it."

"The 4-Lane alternative needs to have a lid also. Lest you forget, a lid was promised with the initial 520 construction. It never happened. Please make good on that original promise."

"What is the maximum height of the proposed sound walls?"

Bridge high-rise profile

The design of the bridge raised several questions with some interest expressed in the community for obtaining a better visual representation of the bridge profile. The aesthetics and noise levels of a “high” bridge were of concern. And one individual expressed discontent with the impact on boat traffic due to the bridge design.

“Surely you’re not seriously proposing a massively high structure immediately north of Broadmoor, with all it’s attendant view and noise implications, just to save a little more pipe and pumps for stormwater control?”

“Keep the crown in design of new bridge as low as possible but still ensure run-off of stormwater.”

HOV

A few people expressed their opinions on the HOV plans, though they were variable from support for and against HOV.

“HOV is not currently enforced (it is not enforceable with the current roadway). Seems like we’re adding lanes for people with tinted windows.”

“I worry about political pressure causing DOT to reduce the number of hours the HOV lane is “on”...”

“I prefer the 6-Lane alternative with HOV lanes. Why spend such money to barely improve the commute?”

Light Rail

Some Westside community members expressed their desire to have a light rail stop in Montlake. One individual wanted a better understanding of HCT plans.

“The project must accommodate a light rail station at 520 and Montlake Blvd.”

“Show drawing of how future HCT would connect to the pontoon structure.”

Bike Path

The bike/ped path seemed to receive the highest number of comments. Everyone was very much in favor of the path and felt that it was a positive addition to the bridge. Several people had comments on the design of the bike path and offered suggestions on ways to improve the design for safety. There were also various ideas on bike linkages to trails.

“Bike lane needs to be on the southside of the bridge. Storm winds from South (prevailing) blow intense spray from cars and trucks to south cyclists (as on I-90).”

"I prefer the bike/ped path on the north side since the prevailing winds are from the south."

"Consider a barrier between bicycle and vehicles that would keep trash from hitting cyclist."

"I'm also pleased that it appears you are planning to feed into the Arboretum Master Plan's bike trail plan, rather than create your own route/plan."

"I love the bike/ped facility – 14' is great. It is critical that the 520 facility provide a direct link to downtown."

"I am more concerned about bicyclists negotiating 90 degree turns than by grades greater than 5%."

Follow-up

Specific questions raised by community members were passed on to the WSDOT communications director to be answered by the project team. All materials at the open houses will be posted on the website. Comments were added to the database and are available for queries.

Appendix A: Open House Comments

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

Why are there no provisions for light rail? Please let me know. Thanks.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

1. How loud will the eastbound buses be as they climb to the flyover east of Montlake in the 6-Lane Alternative?
2. Can your noise analysis handle the specific noise source of a loaded bus climbing a 3% grade?
3. What noise walls can be installed to take care of that?
4. What are the noise and aesthetic consequences of a high-level bridge over Foster Island?
5. What will that bridge do to traffic flow?

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

Contingent design for Sound Transit connection (station stop? Moving sidewalk in tunnel.) To Montlake station flyer stop. (EIS address increase tunnel footprint, air-noise, etc.) I like the idea of "lids". "Lids" should be designed to avoid increasing air and noise pollution to surrounding areas due to wind funnel effects. Plant as many trees as possible in the right of ways.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

You need a response to the "Vulnerable points of the Existing Evergreen Point..." document. This document lists some serious structural flaws in the existing design, but nothing on display today indicates how the new bridge could be different (drilled-shaft pylons rather than sunk, non-hollow piles, etc.)

On the usage numbers, it would be useful to have today's numbers to contrast with the projected 4-Lane option and an explanation of "7% more trips with 13% fewer vehicles" as nowhere do you indicate why. It appears that the "why" is simply the tool itself, which could be applied to the existing lanes. It looks like you are fudging

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

Surely you're not seriously proposing a massively high structure immediately north of Broadmoor, with all its attendant view and noise implications, just to save a little more pipe and pumps for stormwater control?!!!

How's about a short section of HOV preference land on the eastbound SR520 access for the northbound through Arboretum traffic?

The Madison Park Community Council still supports a 6-Lane option, but only if the extra two lanes are for transit/vanpools, taxis. No more cars.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

The effect of transportation demand thru tolling, vanpools, and transit needs to be better represented in the vehicle through puts and people moved under each alternative.
Keep the HCT excess capacity design in the bridge and approach roadways at either end.
Drainage improvements in new bridge need to be offset with construction impacts in wetlands.
Keep the crown in design of new bridge as low as possible but still ensure run-off of stormwater.
Consider narrower shoulders as cost-saving measure; still much better

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

Impacts of construction to local access area around I5 and Roanoke, University district.
Adequate capacity on all roads during construction. Noise mitigation - during construction; pile driving, dirt and dust - construction hours.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

Need to address impacts to Seward School on Westside of I-5. Construction, noise, vibration, air pollution.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

Please continue to keep in mind - out years and improved possibilities. Examples:
1.) 6-Lane and 8-Lane seem very viable as 405 and I5 are improved
2.) I5 flow through downtown improved from 2 lanes to ?? since traffic appears to be going thru Seattle and not exiting into Seattle
3.) I405 increase in lanes going both North and South.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

Better information about the sound (noise) abatement alternatives and effectiveness.
Good presentation except no good visual presentation of bridge high-rise profiles. Hard to "see" the scale.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

Toll fees and cards very important - maybe could be placed on car's mirror - so they would be permanent.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

Bike lane needs to be on the Southside of the bridge. Storm winds from South (prevailing) blow intense spray from cars and trucks to south cyclists (as on I-90). Any wall to protect cyclists would leave cyclists in the dark and out of view from cars and create danger of ground frost in

winter. South side trail would link up with east side trail. Blow cleaner air on bikes instead of 4-6 lanes of exhaust from roaring engines. Use Lake Washington Blvd. Exit for cyclists - then trace back to the U.W. with proposed trail from Lake Washington to MOHAI.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

How many of you live in the area affected? Where the bridge will be build?
Concerns: the height of the future bridge; sound pollution; the impact on nature and neighbors close to it; the waste of energy and resources. I would like to see just an addition to the bridge, a bike path, a lower one. Why not talk to Bill Gates and make him build offices for all of those who have to drive everyday through the bridge to Microsoft? Fremont is a great place for it!
Train system? Why not? Demand does not really show how good it is. Why wait for tolls, do it right now! The proposed light is too light! I live next to the Arboretum and I can hear the 520 bridge now, so do I have to see it also? Maybe the bike path could have a safer design for pedestrians and bicycles.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

Bike paths that are 1.) shielded from traffic and pollution, 2.) have a view across the bridge, 3.) avoid driveways and streets and 4.) connect to other trails.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

The tradeoff of noise-reduction walls to the visual impact of those walls for adjacent residents (Note that homes on East Lake Washington Blvd. face towards the freeway.) HOV is not currently enforced (it is not enforceable with the current roadway). I don't see any difference with the "new & improved" bridge. Seems like we're adding lanes

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

Keep the roadway footprint as small as possible. 4-Lane alternative is best. Bicycle lanes from Seattle to Microsoft. Sound mitigation in Montlake.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

Noise mitigation is crucial on this (West) side. The current pavement is very noisy. What will be the road surface? Asphalt? Then the lid should extend to Boyer, not stop at Delmar. There is a lot of noise from Delmar on!

We do not support the 6-Lane because there is too little evidence of attention to community needs, to mitigating the greatly increased impact that a 6-Lane alternative would have on the Seattle side. Remember-mitigation was not done the first time around. Get that taken care of with the 4-Lane alternative (read: lid - quiet pavement) and maybe we'll trust planners in the future.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment



This project must accommodate a light rail station at 520 and Montlake Blvd.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

I cannot understand why if safety and maximum throughput are your primary goals, your plans include increasing the speed limit 20+%.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

I'm very pleased to see the bike trail fly-over to Madison Park is not included in the non-motorized plan. I'm also pleased that it appears you are planning to feed into the Arboretum Master Plan's bike trail plan, rather than create your own route/plan.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

I am against the lid plan for Roanoke if it re-routes Delmar to the South of 520 between 11th and 10th Ave. This would be a major detriment to houses on Federal Ave. East, 10th and 11th on the Southside of 520.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

Concerned that hillside under the west end of the P.B. viaduct is improved to a park-like configuration. WSDOT should work with the RP/PB community council regarding making this hillside complement the residential nature of RP/PB neighborhoods.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

The 4-Lane alternative needs to have a lid also. Lest you forget, a lid was promised with the initial 520 construction. It never happened. Please make good on that original promise. I won't be seduced into going along with the 6-Lane approach only because it has a lid. The lid also needs to extend to Boyer - not just Delmar. The current noise level at our house (1625 E. McGraw St.) is unacceptable. The lid to Delmar won't address that. Then it is insane that there is not a better linkage with light rail for people that want to make transfers. People will not use public transportation if it is not convenient.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

I like the 6-Lane alternative with dedicated HOV lanes the best. I worry about political pressure causing DOT to reduce the number of hours the HOV lane is "on", as happened with I-80/I-580 through Berkeley, CA.

Bike path across Lake Washington is an excellent idea!

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

I prefer the 6-Lane alternative to re-build the SR 520 bridge, so that it will be less congested and



because it will add lids to the highway or parts of it, although it's a bit more expensive and I would have preferred the 8-Lane alternative if it were considered.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

Funding? \$2 billion - \$700 million in tolls? = 1.3 billion

1.3 billion = \$52 million (nickel tax) x 25 years....

So in 2014, what will the price of gas be? George Bush's energy advisor claims that our Peak oil will occur in 2008. Yet, gas prices would go up anyway because China, Brazil and Russia are increasing their car ownership. To the point. Our expenditure on this public project will not only waste money-encouraging traffic for those who afford themselves to drive. But the money will not be available, then, for useful more environmentally sound projects.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

4-Lane version must include the lid in Montlake. The HOV braided ramp will be too damned high. Also too expensive.

Comment Date 6/15/2004

Comment

The HOV westbound exit @ Montlake. How does it operate with the SOV/GP exit ramp? Montlake Blvd (SR 513) needs an HOV southbound lane so NE Seattle can access a new bigger bridge since we have to look at it and listen to the noise.

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

That HCT options be the primary ingredient in any alternative. I.E. if 6-Lane alternative is chosen, then it should be built with HCT (rail) in mind.

The graphics for the AM/PM peak period traffic operations, volume & mode choice were very good. I would be interested in obtaining a printed version of these graphics. Very informative. Good job!

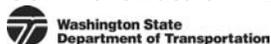
Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

Please call or email me for local input. I am very active in our township meetings.

On the 6-Lane proposal, you have changed the Weatherhill Nature Preserve entrance to the end of 33rd St. (entering from 92nd). My property sits next to the proposed site. This newly proposed pathway is not conducive for many reasons. The street, which is a dead end, is steep. There are sidewalks present and will be very dark with the surrounding trees from the W.N.P. You would need to cut through the Bairds private property and get approval to cut through the nature preserve. If your proposal is to keep this design, I promise I will be very active in fighting it. The 92nd lid needs to be longer than the proposed 300 feet. Because of the landscape being different levels (height), a longer design is needed. If air circulation units are needed, so be it. It needs to bring Yarrow Point and Clyde Hill together as a community-gathering place. 300 feet won't do it.

Comment Date 6/17/2004



Comment

Have lived above Yarrow Bay for 43 years. Over 40 years ago, our neighborhood asked for a wall or sound barrier, but we never got anything while other places have. How about doing something about it?

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

- 1.) I live at 3265 - 103rd. Pl. NE. With the 6-Lane option, the road will move to within 15-20 feet of my house. The sound is too loud now. How do I change the proposed 6-Lane design (520 Bellevue Way exit) so it does not expand into my yard?
- 2.) If it does go into my yard, will the state purchase my home?
- 3.) Are there any Federal or State regulations that say how close a highway can be to a house (or decibel level)?
- 4.) What is the max. height of the proposed sound walls? I will need approximately 25-foot walls.

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

I want to see 520 built correctly as interstate 195 from Redmond to Seattle. Connecting interstate 405, interstate 5 and interstate 90 by making interstate 195. Also, replace the Alaska viaduct and mercer st. mess. Interstate 195 should go also to the airport and back to interstate 5. This can be economically funded under the national defense highway systems original plans.

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

I am concerned that the 8-Lane option is off the table before the I-5 study is done. Taxpayers would get more value for their money flushing \$2 billion down the toilet than they get from the 4-Lane option.

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

6-Lane bridge with shoulder from I5 to I405 west and east. You must start work now at 2006 to have it up and running by 2012 (it takes 6 years to build).

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

I just want to indicate my support for the 4-Lane alternative. It's cheaper, less destructive, a big improvement over the existing structure, and is a good balance between single occupancy vehicles on the one hand and other modes of transportation on the other.

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

What Richter seismic level can new bridge sustain?

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment



I love the bike/ped facility - 14' is great. I prefer the 6-Lane alternative. Major concern is the lack of bicycle/pedestrian connection from Montlake to Roanoke/Eastlake Ave. It is critical that the 520 facility provide a direct link to downtown. Carry bike/ped facility up viaduct-off at Roanoke and then down hill to Eastlake. This would be most direct to S. Lake Union and downtown. The grades may be at the limit (~5%) but if we use a switchback like on Mt. Baker/I90, we can make it work.

The 90+90 degree turns at Evergreen Pt. Landing is a concern. Probably would be better to soften those to 45+45 maximum. Unclear that this section would not be in a tunnel. Would prefer not. Similar concern about turns at east end. Careful decision is important. This will be a major commuter route and efficiency and directness are

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

520 is a 50-year plan. Only 8 or more lanes make sense. The current environmental impact of having thousands of stationary cars should be a great concern, as well as the decrease in people's standard of living.

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

We understand that eastside SR 520 lids will be 500' (fire suppression system not required). If I-90 upgrades detour flammable local tanker trucks to SR 520, increasing hazards to life and private property and school. What are plans & cost of fire suppression?

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

My main concern is having a 12'-15' bike/ped path all the way across the Evergreen Point Bridge to Roanoke so the trail can be used by Seattle bike commuters. We need access to Eastlake Avenue for those who work in that area or downtown. I am more concerned about bicyclists negotiating 90 degree turns than by grades greater than 5%. I like the idea of a separate "commuter" path for the faster bicyclists that is separate from the pedestrian paths in Evergreen Point area. I prefer the 6-Lane alternative with HOV lanes. Why spend such money to barely improve the commute? A 10' lane for breakdowns and to provide distance between vehicles and bikes is great. You may need to consider a taller barrier between the bike/ped facility and the cars to protect the cyclist from flying objects. However, I would hate to block the view of Mt. Rainier.

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

I live on Evergreen Point Road facing west and I am very concerned about all the boat traffic coming by my house. Why get rid of the high rise for boat traffic on the Seattle side. It is very congested now - what will it be like with only one high rise? We need lids to help with traffic noise! Will there be tolls?

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

Slowness of the process and lack of full funding (concerns). Must have HCT during this construction project.

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

1. We are the only metropolitan city of our size in the U.S. that doesn't have a beltway.
2. We need a beltway for through traffic.
3. 40% of traffic would be removed from both I5 & I405, thus putting less traffic on 520.
4. Get off the 520 enlargement.
5. Build I-605 Marysville East to below Centralia. No off & on ramps except at SR 522, SR 2, I90 to control development east of existing developments.

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

Bike connection from Montlake to Eastlake (Lk Union) needs to be available and energy efficient (moderate grades less than 5%).

Keep the bike-2 way trail at 14-foot width - consider a barrier between bicycle and vehicles that would keep trash from hitting cyclist.

Any additional connectivity is needed for bicycles - to get from the new bike/ped trail on the SR520 Bridge to the 520 trail (116 Ave SE to Redmond).

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

SR 520 needs to fly over I-5 going south to enter on the right. We've had too many deaths, accidents, etc. with drivers trying to get off at Mercer and the next two off ramps. Signage need improvement from Mercer off ramp south on I-5.

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

Sight screening on north and south side of bridge as it reaches the water. Like proposed negative screening!

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

The curves/turns in the bike lane at the east end landing where it crosses from the north side to south side look very tight. If they could be smoothed out, it would help.

Also, the state/Bellevue should work together to link the new 520 bike lanes to the 520 bike lanes that start at 124th. The current plan leaves a break in the trails from Bellevue Way to 124th - that does not make sense to encourage bike commuting.

It makes no sense to consider anything less than a six-lane bridge. Any bridge should have HOV and bike lanes & best-case light rail capacity. Also, the current toll plan is too high and would be a regressive toll for working class folks. It seems very unfair. A one or two dollar toll would seem better.

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

Use a large toll - greater than \$2 per car and up to \$3.40.

Bike/ped trail at east end - use caution - use flat grade and flat pad at curves



Remove old, unused ramps to nowhere at Foster Island.
Show drawing how future HCT would connect to the pontoon structure.
Make/add bike trail along 520 to connect Montlake I/C trail to Eastlake.

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

I would like an 8-Lane alternative proposed.
How about 8-lanes from I405 to Montlake and 6-lanes from Montlake to I-5?

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

The bikeway on the east end of the bridge goes to the south side and then back to the north side (in the Medina - Clyde Hill area). This is an unnecessary and costly complexity! Similarly, costly lids with their fancy amenities are not necessary and drive up the costs. If the communities that are requiring them are serious, let them bear the added costs (they are well able to afford it!). It's too bad that the 6 lanes east of Bellevue Way can't be carried west across the bridge while construction is being done. Taking traffic from and to the south Lake Union area is very logical.

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

Charts of the HOV travel speeds, in the format presented for general-purpose travel speeds, is essential in evaluating the relative merit of the alternatives. Please disclose this information.

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

The 520 replacement shows the greenbelt on the North & South side of the 520 highway at the connection to the bridge. Please retain these greenbelts.

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

The DEIS contains 16 discipline reports. What is the schedule for discipline reports? Who is preparing? What is the response time for comments?

Comment Date 6/17/2004

Comment

I have previously suggested a robust TDM program, as we previously defined for the Trans-Lake Washington program. More definition is required - variable with alternatives - see my recent PSBJ article.