

**SR 520 West Approach Bridge North Project  
Monthly Public Meeting #4 – Summary**

Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2015, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Graham Visitors Center  
2300 Arboretum Drive East, Seattle, WA 98112**Attendees****Flatiron West, Inc.**

- Justin Allington, Project Manager
- Dan Jordan, Environmental Compliance Lead

**WSDOT**

- Brian Dobbins, WABN Construction Engineering Manager
- James VanSteenburg, WABN Deputy Construction Manager
- Kristin Sandstrom, WABN Communications Manager
- Emily Namiki, WABN Communications
- Kathryn Murdock, WABN Communications

**City of Seattle**

- John Arnesen, Seattle Department of Transportation

**Meeting overview**

On Feb. 4, WSDOT and the contractor, Flatiron West, Inc., cohosted a monthly public meeting and invited the local community to learn about upcoming construction activities on the [SR 520 West Approach Bridge North Project](#) (WABN). Approximately eight members of the public attended. The monthly meeting is an informal forum where community members can learn about progress on the WABN project and ask WSDOT staff and the contractor questions about construction activities.

**West side design public comment period: Kristin Sandstrom**

- Last summer, WSDOT worked closely with the Seattle Design Commission and other design professionals to further refine the design of unfunded SR 520 west side corridor elements including a new Montlake lid, Portage Bay Bridge and bicycle and pedestrian connections around the Seattle corridor.
- The [draft design report](#) is now posted on the SR 520 website for public comments. Public comments can be submitted through an [online survey](#), via [email](#), or by mail. The comment period is open until Feb. 13.

**Montlake interchange overview: Brian Dobbins**

- Crews continue to work in the Montlake interchange area and have started construction of local street improvements. Montlake interchange improvements include:
  - Constructing American Disability Act (ADA) improvements, including curb cuts.

- Narrowing and lengthening the bus stop island near the eastbound SR 520 on-ramp to allow room for crews to widen the eastbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard and add a dedicated right-turn lane.
- Improving sidewalks on the eastside of Montlake Boulevard by widening from eight to 10 feet.
- Constructing a new westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard at the location of the removed northbound bus shelter.
- As a result of discussions at the last monthly meeting, WSDOT created a graphic that showed connections from the 16-foot-wide sidewalk on 24th Avenue East to the Shelby-Hamlin neighborhood.
  - The new graphic was shared at the monthly meeting and is [online](#), titled “Key improvements to Montlake Boulevard and 24th Avenue East.”
  - A paved entrance at East Hamlin Street will be used to access the 16-foot-wide path on 24th Avenue East.
  - From that same entrance, you can also access the 14-foot-wide bicycle/pedestrian path on the new SR 520 floating bridge.

**Construction overview – work completed to date: Justin Allington**

- Crews began work on East Lake Washington Boulevard on Feb. 3 to prepare for the addition of a westbound lane to Montlake Boulevard. Construction activities include:
  - Trimming tree branches on the south side of the street to meet city of Seattle (City) clearance regulations for the temporary lane configuration in place during construction.
  - Shifting traffic lanes south and removal of on-street parking.
  - Removing trees on the north side of the street between Montlake Boulevard and 24th Avenue East.
  - Repairing potholes as needed.
- Crews have removed the northbound bus stop near the westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard in preparation for construction of the new westbound SR 520 off-ramp. The Montlake freeway bus stops located on the SR 520 mainline will remain open during WABN construction.
- Within the next two weeks, Flatiron plans to connect the temporary work bridge on Foster Island with the work bridge that launched from the shoreline of the former Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) site. Flatiron began installing the first finger piers on the temporary work bridge east of Foster Island.

**Construction overview – upcoming work: Justin Allington**

- Crews began demolition of the former MOHAI building on Feb. 3. Demolition crews will:
  - Work 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekends. Crews are working long shifts to demolish the building as quickly as possible.
  - Take approximately four weeks to completely remove the building.
  - Haul out up to 30 truckloads of demolition debris per day.
  - Use the footprint of the former MOHAI building as additional staging area.
- WSDOT has an updated [Flickr album](#) with pictures of MOHAI demolition progress.
- Crews plan to complete demolition of the northern section of the R.H. Thomson “Ramps to Nowhere” by Feb. 13 to clear space for other construction activities including:
  - Widening the existing SR 520 mainline to construct a westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard.
  - Constructing the new 24th Avenue East off-ramp.
- Upcoming nighttime activities include:
  - Single-lane closures on Montlake Boulevard to rebuild sidewalks and curb ramps to meet ADA standards. Upgrades will be done in phases so that access can be preserved.

- Utility installation along East Lake Washington Boulevard.
- Drainage installation work on the eastbound SR 520 ramps to and from Montlake Boulevard.
- Shoring and building a new stairway where the bike lockers were previously located.
- Materials deliveries to the temporary work bridge.
- Nighttime demolition of the R.H. Thomson “Ramps to Nowhere.”
- Upcoming closures include:
  - Single-lane closures on Montlake Boulevard that can begin as early as 7 p.m. with lanes reopening by 6 a.m. Crews may use impact tools like jackhammers between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m.
  - Full westbound closure of SR 520 from 11 p.m., Feb. 9 to 5 a.m., Feb. 10.

### **Sidewalk detours: James VanSteenburg**

- Sidewalk detours will be implemented during ADA improvements and widening of the sidewalks along Montlake Boulevard. Flatiron currently plans to split the detours into three phases and take about two weeks per phase:
  - **Phase one:** Sidewalks will be closed north and south of East Hamlin Street.
    - Pedestrians traveling from the SR 520 eastbound and westbound flyer stop will have to travel south, cross at the Montlake Boulevard and East Lake Washington Boulevard intersection, and travel north on the west side of Montlake Boulevard to go to the University District.
  - **Phase two:** The southeast corner of East Lake Washington Boulevard will be closed.
    - Pedestrians traveling westbound from East Lake Washington Boulevard will be detoured south to East Roanoke Street, cross at the E Montlake Place East intersection in front of the Montlake Market, and travel on the west side of Montlake Boulevard.
    - From the flyer stop, pedestrians will be detoured up to East Shelby Street, cross Shelby and come south on the west side of Montlake Boulevard.
  - **Phase three:** The bus stop and transit island area on Montlake Boulevard by the SR 520 eastbound on- and off-ramp will be closed.
    - Pedestrians will be detoured to the east side of Montlake Boulevard.
    - There will be bus stop reroutes during the bus stop closure.

### **Key comments and questions**

The summary below highlights key comments, questions and responses posed during the discussion. The summary is not verbatim but represents the themes of the comments and responses.

#### **Former Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) building**

- **Question (Montlake neighbor):** What exactly does demolition cover during construction hours?
- **Response (WSDOT):** Up until 5 p.m., the contractor can do any type of construction activity at any level of noise. From 5 to 10 p.m., the noise ordinance begins and the contractor can do construction activities up to 80 decibels. Impact tools like jackhammers are allowed between 5 and 10 p.m. as long as the noise stays under 80 decibels.
- **Response (Flatiron):** After 10 p.m., demolition of the former MOHAI building is not planned. Dickson, the subcontractor assigned to demolish the former MOHAI building, plans to use jackhammers between 5 and 10 p.m. on the south side of the building closer to SR 520. The building will shield some of the noise traveling to your home. Dickson plans to use jackhammers to speed up the demolition timeline so that it takes approximately four weeks to demolish the

building instead of eight weeks. From a construction standpoint, in-water work will end by April 15 in Lake Washington and April 30 in Union Bay for the fish window restrictions to protect salmon migration. Since the MOHAI staging area is the only launch point for our work bridge, we need all available staging area to store equipment to construct the temporary work bridge and the permanent structure. We need the additional staging area in the footprint of the former MOHAI building to complete work before the fish window.

- **Question:** What is the route for trucks hauling out demolition debris from MOHAI?
- **Response (Flatiron):** Trucks will be hauling materials from MOHAI via 24th Avenue East and go eastbound or westbound. It will be a short duration to haul out up to 30 truckloads of demolition debris per day from the MOHAI staging area.
- **Question:** Can you open the parking spaces on the west end for public use?
- **Response (WSDOT):** No, WSDOT's agreement with Parks is that there will be no access between East Park Drive and East Montlake Park during construction.

#### **New westbound SR 520 off-ramp to East Lake Washington Boulevard at 24th Avenue East**

- **Question:** Will the 24th Avenue East bridge change as part of the WABN project?
- **Response (WSDOT):** The existing 24th Avenue East bridge will be extended north to include the new SR 520 westbound off-ramp to East Lake Washington Boulevard.
- **Response (Flatiron):** The sidewalk will be widened to 16 feet on the west side of the bridge.
- **Question:** Will bikes still be able to use 24th Avenue East during sidewalk improvements to Montlake Boulevard?
- **Response (WSDOT):** Yes.

#### **Local street improvements**

- **Question:** You are doing a fair amount of work along East Lake Washington Boulevard including shifting traffic south into the parking strip. Will you change the sidewalk along East Lake Washington Boulevard?
- **Response (WSDOT):** No, Flatiron will not work on the sidewalks on East Lake Washington Boulevard.
- **Question:** When you widen the sidewalk along Montlake Boulevard to 10 feet, will you remove trees?
- **Response (WSDOT):** The existing sidewalk is eight feet so we just have to widen the sidewalk one foot on each side. The contractor will work with an arborist to assess the condition of the roots of the trees and protect as many trees as possible. It is possible that some trees will be removed.

#### **Local traffic concerns**

- **Question:** How will drivers be discouraged from traveling south into local neighborhoods from the 24th Avenue East off-ramp?
- **Response (WSDOT):** There will be a "Local Access Only" sign and a raised section of the road that will both discourage cut-through traffic.
- **Question:** What can be done in the future if the neighborhood decides that it's not sufficient?
- **Response (City):** The City coordinated on the final design to discourage drivers from traveling south on 24th Avenue East. Drivers will quickly discover that it is not a good street to take as a shortcut as it quickly turns into an alley.
- **Comment (24th Avenue East neighbor):** We see drivers turn down our street with some regularity to avoid traffic.
- **Response (City):** The City will monitor traffic and put up additional signs if needed.

- **Response (Flatiron):** The additional westbound lane on East Lake Washington Boulevard also helps to accommodate additional traffic from the new 24th Avenue East off-ramp.
- **Question:** Was there concern about the additional traffic to East Lake Washington Boulevard after the new 24th Avenue East off-ramp is built?
- **Response (City):** Traffic effects were studied. The new westbound SR 520 off-ramp at 24th Avenue East will shift traffic to a new location. Slightly more traffic will travel on East Lake Washington Boulevard than there is today but not more than the street can handle. The new off-ramp should also improve the flow of traffic by having two lanes whereas the current SR 520 off-ramp in the Arboretum has only one lane. The four-way stop at East Lake Washington Boulevard should also keep traffic flowing. There is a three-way-stop at the existing SR 520 off-ramp in the Arboretum and it functions well; drivers will have a shorter waiting period overall with a stop sign than with a traffic signal.
- **Question:** If both ramps in the Arboretum are relocated, aren't you shifting too much traffic from that location in the Arboretum to East Lake Washington Boulevard?
- **Response (WSDOT):** The eastbound SR 520 on-ramp in the Arboretum remains open during the WABN phase of construction.
- **Comment (Montlake neighbor):** I'm concerned about the increase in traffic because I live close to East Lake Washington Boulevard and can hear the traffic.

#### **R.H. Thomson "Ramps to Nowhere"**

- **Question:** Are you taking the request from the community seriously to save sections of the R.H. Thomson "Ramps to Nowhere" to memorialize the community's activism to stop the R.H. Thomson Expressway Project?
- **Response (WSDOT):** Yes, we worked with the city of Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks) to save sections of the ramps. WSDOT plans to give Parks the section of the bridge with the date stamp and rubble from the demolition debris for a monument that they are planning.

#### **Temporary work bridge**

- **Question:** How does drilling in the lake bed work?
- **Response (Flatiron):** Crews will embed 8', 10' or 12' diameter casing into the glacial till, both in Union Bay and Lake Washington. Crews will then excavate out the materials in the casings anywhere from 75 feet to 150 feet below the lake level. Finally, crews will install a rebar cage in the casing and fill the shaft with concrete. This creates the solid columns for the permanent bridge.

#### **Arboretum Waterfront Trail closure**

- **Comment (Montlake neighbor):** I wanted to thank you for chaining the gate along the Arboretum Waterfront Trail between SR 520 and the Foster Island temporary work bridge, I have only seen it left open twice. Also, the new gravel on the Arboretum Waterfront Trail is really nice.
- **Response (Flatiron):** You can also thank Parks for the new gravel path. Flatiron is not permitted by our contract to fix the path, but WSDOT passed along comments about the muddy trail for Parks to address.
- **Question:** When is the next time you will close the north end of the Arboretum Waterfront Trail?
- **Response (Flatiron):** Crews will not close the trail prior to April 30, but anticipate sometime in May.
- **Question:** How long will you close the Arboretum Waterfront Trail?
- **Response (Flatiron):** The length of the closure depends on the work schedule and methods to install the bridge casings.

- **Question:** Can we keep the boardwalk on the Arboretum Waterfront Trail open during future closures?
- **Response (Flatiron):** If you can find a foolproof way to keep people out of the jobsite, I'm willing to entertain ideas. Flatiron is restricted on where we can place fencing along Foster Island and can't cross the normal high maximum lake level (NHMLL) line. The closure of the entire trail is necessary to protect trail users from the pile installation activities taking place near SR 520 on Foster Island. Once the temporary work bridge is complete in that area, the trail will be reopened.

### **Vibration monitoring**

- **WSDOT (Comment):** The reflective devices on the existing bridge are called ATS (Automatic Total Stations) to monitor and ensure construction does not damage the current bridge.
- **Comment (Montlake neighbor):** Can we get one for our house to monitor vibrations from construction activities?
- **Comment (WSDOT):** The contractor installed on-land vibration monitors throughout the Montlake and Madison Park neighborhoods to check vibration levels caused by construction activities. The thresholds for those monitors have even smaller parameters than the monitors on the existing bridge to protect neighboring homes.

### **WABN design**

- **Question:** Can you elaborate on the decision to get rid of the free right-hand turns on the westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard and on other streets?
- **Response (WSDOT):** Free right-hand turns on Montlake Boulevard and East Lake Washington Boulevard will not be eliminated during WABN construction. A free right-hand turn was eliminated from the westbound SR 520 off-ramp design to improve pedestrian safety. This intersection is designed as a "T" to improve driver sightlines and improve safety with a traffic signal.

### **Remaining west side unfunded elements**

- **Question:** There seem to be a number of undecided elements in the final design. Will there be any other opportunities to have questions responded to besides by email?
- **Response (WSDOT):** The draft design report is open for public feedback until Feb. 13. There is a survey online. You can request to meet with project staff to walk through the designs by emailing the project inbox ([SR520Westside@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:SR520Westside@wsdot.wa.gov)). There are currently no plans for additional public meetings on the draft designs.
- **Question:** Is there a place I can go to see a cross-section of the height of the pavement and of the off-ramps of the new section of SR 520 that comes through Montlake?
- **Response (WSDOT):** We can forward your comment to the west side team and they can follow up with additional information.