



## Seattle Permitting – Frequently Asked Questions January 2012

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In July 2011, following several years of coordination, WSDOT submitted City of Seattle shoreline permit applications for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina Project. Permit applications were submitted for the four (4) separate bridge structures: Portage Bay Bridge, Montlake Bridge, West Approach Bridge and Floating Bridge; and for five (5) mitigation sites: Magnuson Park, the Union Bay Natural Area, the WSDOT Peninsula, Taylor Creek and Seward Park.

On January 17, 2012, following extensive review and public comment, including a public meeting held in October 2011, the City of Seattle issued conditional approvals of the I-5 to Medina shoreline permit applications and published formal decision documents.

### Background

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#### Why are City of Seattle shoreline permits needed?

- Under the City of Seattle's land use code and Washington State Shoreline Management Act, shoreline permits are required for any work within 200 feet of local shorelines, or in adjacent shorelands.

#### Why apply for multiple shoreline permits?

- WSDOT submitted a total of nine (9) master use permit applications for the four (4) separate bridge structures and the five (5) associated mitigation sites. As each of the four bridge projects are unique structure types and occur in distinct shoreline environments, Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and WSDOT staff agreed that it would be appropriate to submit separate permit applications for each of the bridge projects and their associated mitigation sites.

#### Why submit applications for City of Seattle shoreline permits for the entire SR 520, I-5 to Medina Project when there is not full funding in place?

- WSDOT must obtain all local shoreline permits for the entire SR 520, I-5 to Medina Project prior to constructing any single phase of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina Project:
  - In order to build the floating bridge, which is fully funded, WSDOT must obtain a Section 401 Water Quality Certification and Coastal Zone Management Certification (CZM) from the Department of Ecology (Ecology), a Section 404 and Section 10 permit from the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), and a General Bridge permit from the U.S. Coast Guard.
  - Before the Federal Corps and U.S. Coast Guard permits can be issued, the State Section 401 Water Quality Certification and CZM must be issued by Ecology.
  - Before issuing the CZM, all local shoreline permits must be issued and submitted to Ecology.
  - The Federal and State permits cover the SR 520, I-5 to Medina Project in its entirety. This means local shoreline permits must cover the entire project action (even those components that are not yet fully funded) before the CZM can be issued to satisfy the Corps and U.S. Coast Guard requirements to issue their permits.



# SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program



## I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project

- In the event that the project is not funded for construction in time for the opening of the floating bridge, WSDOT plans to build an interim west connection bridge that will provide the connection from the new floating bridge to the existing west approach. This west connection bridge was included in the Floating Bridge shoreline permit application that was submitted to the City of Seattle and is also a funded element.

### Were the permit applications based off of the preferred alternative design?

- Yes, the permit applications were based upon the design and anticipated impacts of the preferred alternative, which was evaluated in the final environmental impact statement.

### What's included in the permit decisions?

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#### How can I view the permit decisions?

Seattle DPD has posted the permit decisions online. They can be accessed by clicking on the links below:

- **Portage Bay Bridge**  
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/LUIB/AttachmentProject3012585ID44893012585.pdf>
- **Magnuson Park mitigation site**  
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/LUIB/AttachmentProject3012591ID44933012591.pdf>
- **Montlake Bascule Bridge**  
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/LUIB/AttachmentProject3012586ID44903012586.pdf>
- **West Approach Bridge**  
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/LUIB/AttachmentProject3012587ID44913012587.pdf>
- **Union Bay Natural Area mitigation site**  
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/LUIB/AttachmentProject3012592ID44943012592.pdf>
- **WSDOT Peninsula mitigation site**  
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/LUIB/AttachmentProject3012593ID44883012593.pdf>
- **Seward Park mitigation site**  
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/LUIB/AttachmentProject3012594ID44953012594.pdf>
- **Taylor Creek mitigation site**  
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/LUIB/AttachmentProject3012595ID44963012595.pdf>
- **Floating Bridge**  
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/LUIB/AttachmentProject3011843ID44923011843.pdf>



### **How long are the permits valid and what happens if the design of the project changes?**

- Seattle DPD published shoreline permit decisions on January 17<sup>th</sup>. However, final Master Use permits authorizing construction will not be issued until relevant permit conditions have been met and all appeals have been resolved.
- Seattle DPD has included numerous conditions in the shoreline permit decisions. These include the submission of final design and construction mitigation plans and the completion of Community Construction Management Plans, both of which will involve substantial opportunities for additional public input. WSDOT will be required to meet these conditions prior to issuance of the final Master Use permits.
- The shoreline permits will be valid for a minimum of five years, but can be extended, if needed, in order to accommodate the complexities of project construction. Seattle DPD will determine the length of the shoreline permits upon final issuance of the Master Use permits.
- In the event that WSDOT is not able to build the project within this timeframe, or if the design of the project were to change, WSDOT would work with Seattle DPD to request a permit extension or to apply for permit modifications, respectively.

### **When can construction begin?**

- Once all local, State, and Federal permits are obtained, construction can only begin on funded elements of the project. At this time, the only funded element of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina Project is the replacement of the floating bridge and landings. WSDOT is working closely with the legislature and seeking other funding opportunities for the remaining portions of the corridor.
- All mitigation must be completed concurrent with project construction. Where possible, mitigation activities may begin in advance of construction. No clearing of vegetation or construction will begin if the mitigation sites are not approved and funded for construction as outlined in the MOU.

### **How will any design changes be incorporated?**

- WSDOT is currently working with the community on a number of design refinements through the Seattle Community Design Process (SCDP).
- Prior to moving forward with project construction, WSDOT must submit final design plans to Seattle DPD to ensure that they comply with all City permit regulations and requirements. Any design changes implemented through the SCDP or other processes will be included in the final design plans and are subject to review and approval by Seattle DPD.

### **Does the issuance of permits mean the second Montlake Bascule Bridge will be built?**

- No. As called for in the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (Section 2.3.1) between WSDOT and the City of Seattle, WSDOT is currently working closely with the City to identify a process for determining whether the second bascule bridge is needed, and if so, the timeline and process for construction.



### **What is happening in the work between the City and WSDOT related to the second Montlake Bascule Bridge, and will the general public have an opportunity to review and comment on the work?**

- A technical working group made up of representatives of the City of Seattle, WSDOT, and King County Metro have been meeting on a regular basis to assess conditions on the Montlake Bridge for bicycles and pedestrians, transit, and general purpose traffic on SR 520. These modes are of high priority for the City as established by City Council resolutions and language contained within the Memorandum of Understanding.
- The work group is assessing, from a technical perspective, the current conditions for each mode, a look-ahead to what conditions may change for each of those modes over the next several years, and the degree of impact or benefit a second bridge might have for each of those modes, if it were to be constructed.
- Once the analysis is completed, the intent is to present the information as a basis for a policy discussion on the need to construct, or not construct, a second Montlake Bridge.
- That presentation and the policy discussion will be held in a way that allows the community to review, comment, and provide perspective on the trade-offs inherent in the policy decision. We expect the public conversation to begin later this spring.

### **What is the bridge height included in the West Approach Bridge permit decision document, and what does it measure? Is it consistent with the project's final environmental impact statement?**

- Included in the Seattle shoreline permit application was a height measurement of 21 feet to 60 feet for the west approach bridge. To clarify, this measurement is indicative of the varying height of the new west approach bridge, from the waterline to the top of the barrier (not to the bottom of the structure, as in the final environmental impact statement which states 45 feet).
- Due to the design of the West Approach Bridge, the thickness of the bridge structure will vary from approximately 8 to 16 feet.
- The west channel navigation opening would have a minimum overhead clearance of 44 feet above normal high water, the same as it is today. This is consistent with the final environmental impact statement.

### **Who can I contact with questions or comments?**

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- For additional information on the SR 520 City of Seattle shoreline permit decisions, please contact Ben Perkowski, with Seattle DPD Land Use Planning Division. Ben can be reached at:

Phone: 206-684-0347

Email: [ben.perkowski@seattle.gov](mailto:ben.perkowski@seattle.gov)

- For additional information or questions related to the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program please contact Kerry Pihlstrom, SR 520, I-5 to Medina Engineering Manager, at:

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