



Washington State  
Department of Transportation

# SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project



Spring 2008

## Understanding the SR 520 project mediation process

Every major transportation project has challenges. One key challenge for the SR 520 project is identifying the interchange design, community enhancements, and mitigation for the Seattle side of the corridor.

A mediation process is underway to make timely decisions so the new SR 520 bridge can be opened to drivers in 2014. The goal is to select west-side design options for the 4+2 configuration to analyze further in a supplemental draft environmental impact statement (EIS) and produce a project impact plan in December 2008.

In addition to the mediation process, WSDOT continues to develop floating bridge designs and, in cooperation with Eastside communities, Eastside designs.

### Why is there a mediation process?

Recognizing the difficulty and the urgency of choosing a west-side interchange, the state legislature passed Senate Bill 6099 during the 2007 legislative session. The bill directed the state Office of Financial Management to hire a mediator to facilitate an agreement on the interchange.

### Who are the mediators?

The Office of Financial Management hired The Keystone Center in Colorado to serve as mediators. For more information about The Keystone Center, visit their Web site at [www.keystone.org](http://www.keystone.org).



*The mediation includes elected officials, agencies, neighborhood representatives, local organizations and WSDOT.*

### What is being considered in the mediation process?

The mediation group is focusing on west-side interchange options and their effects on neighborhoods, quality of life, traffic and the environment. The legislation that established the mediation requires that they also consider the effects on parks, the Washington Park Arboretum and the University of Washington.

### What will be the end result of mediation?

The result of the mediation process will be a project impact plan identifying the group's recommended west-side interchange configurations. The plan will also include project effects and mitigation recommendations, and incorporate the analysis from a health impact assessment.

### What has happened so far?

The mediation group has been evaluating west-side interchange design options. On Apr. 1, 2008, the group narrowed the list of interchange recommendations to three main concepts with several variations. More information about these design options is available at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge).

### What's next?

The mediation group is continuing to meet to refine their recommended design options. They will also be developing the project impact plan. The final plan must be submitted in December 2008, to the governor and the Joint Transportation Committee of the state legislature.

### What is mediation?

Mediation is a negotiation facilitated by a neutral party to help interested parties reach a decision or resolve a conflict.



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## Who is participating in the mediation process?

- Office of the Governor
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Federal Highway Administration
- Sound Transit
- King County Metro
- University of Washington
- NOAA Fisheries
- U.S. Coast Guard
- City of Seattle Mayor's Office
- Seattle City Council
- City of Seattle Design Commission
- The Arboretum Foundation and the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee
- Cascade Bicycle Club
- Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks
- Transportation Choices Coalition
- Boating Community
- Seattle neighborhoods: Montlake, Madison Park, Roanoke/Portage Bay, Laurelhurst, University District, North Capitol Hill, Eastlake, Ravenna/Bryant
- Eastside jurisdictions: Yarrow Point, Medina, Clyde Hill, Hunts Point, Bellevue, Kirkland
- Seattle Chamber of Commerce
- Bellevue Chamber of Commerce
- Freight Advisory Committee

There is also an executive oversight committee whose members include Gov. Gregoire, state and local lawmakers, UW president Mark Emmert, Sound Transit Executive Director Joni Earl, and Transportation Secretary Paula Hammond. The committee provides direction to the mediation group, including schedule, corridor decisions, and budget requirements.

## What is WSDOT's role in the mediation?

We are:

- Providing information to the mediators and participants as requested.
- Performing technical analysis on ideas developed through the mediation process.
- Preparing planning-level cost estimates for interchange concepts, in coordination with independent consultants.
- Identifying when decisions are needed to maintain the project schedule.
- Participating in discussions about west-side interchange concepts.

### What is Senate Bill 6099?

The Washington State Legislature passed Senate Bill 6099 during the 2007 legislative session. Gov. Chris Gregoire signed the bill into law in May 2007. The law requires:

- A mediation process to produce a project impact plan addressing various project issues that affect the west side of Lake Washington.
- A project finance plan that identifies funding sources for the full cost of the project and evaluates the funding contribution from tolling.
- A high-capacity transit plan for the corridor developed cooperatively by King County Metro, Sound Transit, the University of Washington and WSDOT.
- A health impact assessment developed by the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency and Public Health - Seattle & King County.

For more information about this and other legislation, visit [apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo).

## For More Information

### Project and Mediation Web sites:

[www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/SR520Bridge](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/SR520Bridge)  
[www.keystone.org/spp/520mediationprocess.htm](http://www.keystone.org/spp/520mediationprocess.htm)

**Phone:** 1-888-520-NEWS (6397)

**E-mail:** [SR520Bridge@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:SR520Bridge@wsdot.wa.gov)



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