



## Meeting Summary

**SR 520 Legislative Workgroup Meeting #1**  
**Wednesday, July 29, 2009**  
**11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
**Sound Transit Union Station – Ruth Fisher Board Room**

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### **In attendance:**

- Speaker Frank Chopp, 43<sup>rd</sup> District
- Representative Scott White, 43<sup>rd</sup> District
- Senator Rodney Tom, 48<sup>th</sup> District
- Representative Ross Hunter, 48<sup>th</sup> District,
- Representative Deborah Eddy, 48<sup>th</sup> District
- Senator Eric Oemig, 45<sup>th</sup> District
- Representative Larry Springer, 45<sup>th</sup> District,
- Senator Mary Margaret Haugen, Senate Transportation Committee Chair
- Representative Judy Clibborn, House Transportation Committee Chair
- Representative Dan Roach, 31<sup>st</sup> District
- Transportation Commissioner Richard Ford
- Washington Transportation Secretary Paula Hammond

### **Not in attendance:**

- Senator Ed Murray, 43<sup>rd</sup> District
- Senator Dan Swecker, 20<sup>th</sup> District
- Senator Ken Jacobsen, 46<sup>th</sup> District
- Representative Jamie Pedersen, 43<sup>rd</sup> District

### **Introductions (Barbara Gilliland)**

Barbara Gilliland, Workgroup Administrator, welcomed the group to the meeting. She reviewed the agenda and asked the Workgroup members to introduce themselves. Barb noted that Rep. Pedersen was on paternity leave and Sen. Swecker was on a previously-scheduled vacation.

### **Opening Remarks (Paula Hammond)**

Barbara Gilliland noted that Governor Chris Gregoire could not attend the meeting as she had planned because she was welcoming troops home at McChord Air Force Base. In her absence, Secretary Paula Hammond read a [letter](#) to the Workgroup from the Governor. Key points from the letter include:

- The SR 520 corridor is critical for the safety and economy of the region.
- We need to maintain the progress and commitments made to date, including:

- Replacement of the existing bridge with a six-lane corridor that has the ability to be expanded in the future.
- Starting pontoon construction in Grays Harbor in 2010.
- Constructing a new floating bridge that will be open to drivers by 2014.
- Completing the entire corridor as close to 2016 as possible.
- Completing the project within the legislatively-mandated \$4.65 billion
- She appreciates the Workgroup members' commitment over the next several months to reach a conclusion on the west side interchange.

**COMMENT:** We made the commitment to not preclude the ability to expand the bridge and tunnel for high capacity transit (HCT). (Rep. Hunter)

**RESPONSE:** *The current design will not preclude the ability to outfit SR 520 with HCT in the future.*

**COMMENT:** We need to be careful about the language. There are many people in the surrounding community that are concerned about the projected capacity. What we agreed to was six lanes and if there is other language beyond that that affects the west side, we need to be careful how we work with this issue. (Spkr. Chopp)

**COMMENT:** We need to be careful about the language used to describe the final configuration of the bridge; we need to be clear that we're not building a new bridge and connecting to what is there today on both sides of the lake. (Rep. Clibborn)

### **ESHB 2211 Requirements (David Munnecke and Kelly Simpson)**

David Munnecke, House Transportation Committee staff, and Kelly Simpson, Senate Transportation Committee staff, presented the following requirements of Engrossed Substitute House Bill (ESHB) 2211:

- Imposes tolls on the SR 520 corridor, which is defined as the portion of SR 520 between Interstate 5 and SR 202.
- Require the tolling authority to set a schedule of toll rates to maintain travel time, speed, and reliability in the corridor as well as support the issuance of bonds. The tolling authority is allowed to increase the toll rates as necessary to reflect inflation and meet the payments on the bonds.
- Restricts the expenditure of the proceeds of the bonds to construction of the replacement floating bridge.
- Creates the SR 520 Workgroup, which consists of among others the Secretary of the Department of Transportation, the chairs of the legislative transportation committees, all the legislators from the 43rd and 48th legislative districts, two legislators from each of the 46th and 45th legislative districts, and the member of the Transportation Commission representing King County.
- The Workgroup must develop a financing strategy for the SR 520 corridor and, working in Eastside and Westside Subgroups, design options for the SR 520 corridor, with recommendations on both issues due to the Legislature by January 1, 2010.

- Grants the Washington State Department of Transportation a variety of responsibilities and authorities regarding the administration of the SR 520 corridor tolling program.

### **SR 520 Program Overview (David Dye and Julie Meredith)**

Barbara Gilliland introduced David Dye, WSDOT Deputy Secretary and Julie Meredith, SR 520 Program Director. David and Julie presented a general overview of the project to the workgroup members. *The complete PowerPoint [presentation](#) is available on the SR 520 Legislative Workgroup Web [site](#).*

**QUESTION:** How far does the funding for the floating bridge section extend on the Eastside? (Rep. Hunter)

**RESPONSE:** *Available funding covers the floating bridge section and the connections to both sides of the floating bridge. On the Eastside, the connection is just west of 84th Street on land. On the west side the floating bridge would initially connect to the existing approach structure.*

**QUESTION:** When can drivers expect to drive across a new floating bridge section of SR 520? The schedule shows that only four lanes will be open in 2014. (Rep. Springer)

**RESPONSE:** *WSDOT made the commitment that a six-lane structure will be open to drivers by 2014, and WSDOT will continue to work on the bridge to make it operational for six lanes as soon as possible after. WSDOT is anticipating using a design-build contract for the floating bridge section, and schedule acceleration will be emphasized.*

**COMMENT:** The sales tax deferral is applied to the state and not locally, correct? (Sen. Tom)

**RESPONSE:** *That is correct.*

**QUESTION:** Is WSDOT pursuing other federal money? (Sen. Haugen)

**RESPONSE:** *Yes, the current finance plan advance future bridge funds as part of the improvement program.*

**QUESTION:** That \$1.99 billion in secured funding does not include other applications for federal grants? (Rep. Clibborn)

**RESPONSE:** *That is correct, WSDOT is submitting a proposal for a federal TIGER grant for the Eastside project and will continue to pursue other federally available money.*

**COMMENT:** The Workgroup needs to coordinate information sharing with the Joint Transportation Committee about their plan for tolling and toll rates under analysis for the SR 520 bridge. (Rep. Eddy)

**QUESTION:** Are the three west side design options being evaluated in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS)? (Sen. Haugen)

**RESPONSE:** *Yes, all three design options are being evaluated.*

**FOLLOW-UP QUESTION:** How much more will it cost WSDOT to complete the environmental review of the three west side interchange? (Sen. Haugen)

**ANSWER:** *WSDOT will provide information about the costs of the environmental process related to the west side design options.*

**COMMENT:** The word “retrofit” is confusing when referring to floating bridge construction and the capacity of the bridge. Some people may think that a “retrofit” is the next step in the program to construct the bridge for eight lanes. Use the word “completed” instead. (Rep. Clibborn)

**QUESTION:** Will all the pontoons for a six-lane bridge be in place by 2014? (Rep. Hunter)

**RESPONSE:** *That is the goal if WSDOT can complete construction faster than currently planned.*

**COMMENT:** We understand what you mean when you say six lanes: four general purpose lanes and two HOV lanes. When you say eight lanes, people immediately in my community begin to think about additional general purpose lanes. So, there is no assumption that we will ever add any more general purpose lanes? (Spkr. Chopp)

**RESPONSE:** Correct. Only HCT. There will not be additional general purpose lanes. Most people use the phrase eight lanes to talk about a wider bridge, but I’ll stop using that phrase.

**FOLLOW-UP COMMENT:** People are trying to assume what is going on, and it is one thing if it HCT, which is a different proposal than added general purpose lanes, which is what most people are concerned about. I’d also like a specific definition of what you mean by HCT. If it is assuming light rail, then that is pretty clear, but if it is something else, it would be helpful to clarify that. (Spkr. Chopp)

**QUESTION:** Would the floating bridge need additional flanker pontoons for HCT? (Sen. Tom)

**RESPONSE:** *Yes, there would need to be more pontoons to support the extra weight.*

**QUESTION:** How many tribes are involved in the west side project? (Sen. Haugen)

**RESPONSE:** *The Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, Snoqualmie Tribe, [Suquamish Tribe, Tulalip Tribe,] Yakima Tribe, and the Duwamish are all involved. The most significant agreement needed will be with the Muckleshoot Tribe.*

**FOLLOW-UP QUESTION:** How many tribes are involved with Foster Island? (Sen. Tom)

**RESPONSE:** *Foster Island is recognized by the Muckleshoot, Snoqualmie, and the Duwamish. The Muckleshoot tribe recognizes Foster Island as an ancient (tree/aerial) burial ground.*

**QUESTION:** What resource agencies are involved in the project? (Sen. Haugen)

**RESPONSE:** *Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries, Department of Ecology, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, and the tribes.*

**COMMENT:** The cost figures do not add up to \$4.65 billion with some of the west side design options. It seems as though only one of the west side options is feasible when you evaluate the costs. (Sen. Tom)

**RESPONSE:** *Different design elements, risk contingencies, and other factors have formed WSDOT's cost estimates. The resource agencies involved are concerned about whether some of the west side design options can be permitted. After we have more conversations with the resource agencies, we will know more about what the agencies are able to permit, which will inform the cost estimate of each option.*

**FOLLOW-UP QUESTION:** What is an example of permitability? Do you mean building a tunnel under the Montlake cut? (Rep. Hunter)

**RESPONSE:** *That is a good example of permitability. Would those permits be granted to construct the tunnel under the Montlake Cut is a good question. There are certain factors and scenarios that WSDOT is still discussing with cooperating agencies.*

**QUESTION:** Are you going to talk with the agencies to get additional information while the Workgroup is meeting? (Rep. White)

**RESPONSE:** *The environmental analysis in the SDEIS will help answer some of the questions with the agencies. The resource agencies will have access to these documents by the time they meet with this group. They will also review and comment on the SDEIS.*

### **Action Items (Barbara Gilliland)**

#### **Election of co-chairs:**

Richard Ford, State Transportation Commissioner, led the election of the co-chairs of the Workgroup. Sen. Rodney Tom was elected co-chair of the Eastside, and Rep. Jamie Pedersen was elected co-chair of the west side. Due to a prior engagement, Rep. Pedersen was not at the meeting. Rep. Scott White will assume the co-chair duties if Rep. Pedersen is unavailable.

#### **Workgroup operating rules:**

The Workgroup operating rules were adopted by the members. As stated in the operating procedures, the Westside Subgroup will consist of the West side legislators. If necessary, it may include one Eastside legislator and one other Workgroup member representing the interests outside the corridor. The Workgroup agreed to the subgroup membership with the expectation that other Eastside legislators are welcome to attend as needed.

### **Proposed work plan:**

The group discussed next steps for the Workgroup outlined in the work plan.

**QUESTION:** How will the Workgroup view the public comments? It is important for us to see the comments and ask questions about the comments before submitting the final report. (Rep. Clibborn)

**RESPONSE:** *There will be a compilation of comments that will be distributed periodically throughout the process. Also, some of the community groups will be invited to the sub-workgroup meetings to share their comments and concerns.*

**COMMENT:** The Workgroup will need to know who the customers are that use the bridge. It would be helpful to have the comments grouped in a way to evaluate who the users of the bridge are. (Ford)

**QUESTION:** Who will be developing the draft recommendations report if it is not the members? (Rep. Hunter)

**RESPONSE:** *The draft recommendations report will be developed in the subgroup meetings and through individual coordination with Workgroup members and the Workgroup administrator.*

The group discussed next steps for the work plan, including adding at least one more meeting (between November 20 and December 18) to review preliminary comments received on the draft recommendations to ensure there is an opportunity to comment before the recommendations are finalized. Workgroup members and staff will review and confirm the updated work plan in August.

### **Follow-up items (Barbara Gilliland)**

- Provide Senator Haugen with more information on costs and funding, specifically the cost of conducting the environmental documentation for the west side project.
- Contact members regarding comments on the outreach plan.
- Contact members regarding updates to the work plan to reflect an additional meeting to ensure the workgroup is engaged throughout recommendations report development.
  - Add at least one more meeting to review preliminary comments received on the draft recommendations report before it becomes final.

Barbara thanked the members for attending the meeting. She said she would be contacting them about updates to the work plan and outreach plan.