



**Meeting Summary**  
**SR 520 Legislative Workgroup - Westside Subgroup Meeting #1**  
**Tuesday, September 15, 2009, 9 a.m. to noon**  
**Seattle Center Northwest Rooms, Fidalgo Room**

**Attendees:**

**In attendance:**

- Representative Scott White, 43rd District, Subgroup Chair
- Speaker Frank Chopp, 43rd District
- Representative Jamie Pedersen, 43rd District

- Representative Larry Springer, 45th District
- Senator Ken Jacobsen, 46th District
- Senator Dan Swecker, 20th District

**Not in attendance:**

- Senator Ed Murray, 43rd District

**Welcome and Introductions (Scott White)**

Rep. White introduced himself as the chair of the Westside Subgroup. He reviewed the agenda and asked the Subgroup members to introduce themselves. Rep. White also recognized other Workgroup members in the audience and introduced Sen. Tom, Workgroup co-chair, and Rep. Eddy.

**SR 520 Independent Cost Review (Don Forbes)**

Don Forbes, panel chair, [presented preliminary findings](#) from the three-day SR 520 Independent Expert Panel convened to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the cost estimating process and assumptions used in fall 2008 to estimate the costs for west side interchange options A, K, and L.

**QUESTION:** How can moving some of the tunnel costs to other parts of the project lower the estimate? (Rep. White)

**RESPONSE:** *Some of the costs in the tunnel cost estimate are not only associated with the tunnel. This means that for these elements a higher risk factor is being applied than may be warranted. The panel members are recommending that these costs be redistributed to other more related categories to develop a revised tunnel cost that could be more easily compared to other tunnels costs on other projects. The result could potentially lower the cost of the tunnel segment, and because the risk factors of other elements of construction are inherently lower than risk factors for the tunnel the risk-loaded costs on the project could lower the overall option costs.*

**QUESTION:** Did the cost estimate model include litigation risks? (Rep. Pedersen)

**RESPONSE:** *WSDOT did not specifically model litigation risks because it is too speculative. The team included litigation as a risk in the base schedule, but there is no specific duration of time included.*

**COMMENT:** The cost panel also did not include in their discussion the new features of design K that community members plan to present. (Spkr. Chopp)

**RESPONSE:** *Correct – they are not yet completely defined.*

**QUESTION:** What was the purpose of your cost review if you cannot propose other ways of saving money? (Spkr. Chopp)

**RESPONSE:** *The charge of the cost review panel was to analyze how the costs of the options have been assembled so far to provide a baseline for future decisions as they are developed.*

**QUESTION:** Why was the cost panel convened now instead of later to analyze the new proposed options from the community that may reduce costs? (Spkr. Chopp)

**RESPONSE:** *There were only three official options on the table when the cost panel was convened.*

**RESPONSE:** *The panel was evaluating if the costs were gathered fairly. If there are other costs saving ideas to propose to the cost panel during any of these Subgroup meetings, they will be available to review them.*

**COMMENT:** Conducting an independent review of the options is appropriate. But, the charge of the Subgroup is to recommend options and suggestions for reducing cost. It would make sense to have a brainstorming session for cost saving ideas before the cost panel was convened. The Subgroup is supposed to come up with new solutions within a realistic budget. (Spkr. Chopp)

### **Community presentations on Westside interchange Options A, K, and L (Option A, K and L proponents)**

Representatives from community groups presented the three west side interchange options A, K and L that they developed during the mediation process.

Option A – Larry Sinnott, Virginia Gunby, Jorgen Bader: [Handouts](#)

**QUESTION:** Who answers questions about the Montlake bridge operations and extending the number of hours during which the bridge cannot open? (Rep. Pedersen)

**RESPONSE:** *The Coast Guard. They have to issue a permit for bridge operation.*

Option L – Mark Weed

**QUESTION:** Has the chamber voted on which option it supports? (Spkr. Chopp)

**RESPONSE:** *Yes, they have voted and support Option L. They would also support an option that is slightly different than the current Option L configuration that meets the intent and spirit of what the Workgroup is trying to accomplish.*

Option K – Fran Conley, Gary Stone, Jonathan Dubman, Ted Lane: [Handouts](#)

**QUESTION:** If the tunnel will be built shallower across the Montlake Cut, would it be subsurface or on the surface of the cut? (Sen. Swecker)

**RESPONSE:** *It would be built just below the surface of the cut.*

### **Discussion on option refinements**

The Subgroup discussed the attributes and characteristics of the design options.

**QUESTION:** Why can't the tunnel option be permitted? (Sen. Swecker)

**RESPONSE:** *The resource agencies have expressed concerns with the potential effects of the tunnel. That question would be better asked of them. The resource agencies are aware of the proposed tunnel, and will be presenting at the 9/22 full workgroup meeting.*

**QUESTION:** What would have to be done to retrofit the existing bridge? Can it solve safety? I am concerned that the Workgroup will not be able to meet all of the objectives of the project. (Rep. Pedersen).

**RESPONSE:** *There are two bridges in the corridor: the floating bridge and the Portage Bay bridge. The Portage Bay bridge is very susceptible to earthquake activity. The floating bridge is susceptible to wind and wave action. It is not an effective option to retrofit due to cost and time. There are some options to retrofit the Portage Bay bridge that may be available, but it would still require extensive construction.*

**RESPONSE:** *We have evaluated the cost of retrofitting the bridge. It would cost about 75 percent of what it would cost to build a new bridge. This would not include the cost of rehabilitating the existing deck when needed in about 10 years.*

**QUESTION:** What is the Recommendation development process and when will the Subgroup need to make a decision on a west side design option? (Rep. Springer)

**RESPONSE:** *These first meetings are to gather information on cost, design, and environmental impacts. The Subgroup should try to refine these options in October and November. Recommendations will be developed in later November. The goal is to draft recommendations at the full Workgroup meeting in November.*

**QUESTION:** I have questions regarding project and financial phasing? (Sen. Swecker)

**RESPONSE:** *This question could be addressed at the next Subgroup meeting. There is a difference between construction phasing and project staging. The beginning of the financial discussion will occur at the Workgroup meeting on September 22.*

**QUESTION:** Can we shape the revenue stream from tolls to cover any additional cost? (Sen. Swecker)

**RESPONSE:** *We can ask the State Treasurer's Office to address this topic at the 9/22 Workgroup meeting.*

**QUESTION:** I'm curious if you have included an increase in telecommuting in your traffic analysis? (Sen. Jacobsen)

**RESPONSE:** *Telecommuting, carpooling, transit services, and vanpooling are vital to the success of the new six-lane corridor so we do not have to continue building more*

*lanes across the lake in the future. There are assumptions about drivers choosing different modes of travel in the model.*

**COMMENT:** The Subgroup needs to make sure that there is an apples-to-apples comparison. Options A and L do not include costs through the arboretum while Option K does. (Spkr. Chopp)

**COMMENT:** A table should be developed with attributes of each option, including transit capacity and bridge openings. The transit implications are important to note. (Rep. White)

### **SR 520 Project environmental effects (Jenifer Young)**

Jenifer Young, SR 520 Program Environmental Manager presented an overview of the local, state and federal regulatory requirements, government-to-government consultation process and permitting considerations for the I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project.

WSDOT regularly coordinates with environmental resource agencies at our Resource Agency Collaboration process (RACp) meetings to discuss to permitting and other regulatory issues related to the project. Throughout the mediation process RACp members were continually briefed on the west side options.

The SR 520 program must comply with many federal, state and local regulations. WSDOT also has coordinated with the following tribal nations throughout the project on issues relating to cultural resources and fishing rights:

- Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
- Suquamish Tribe
- Snoqualmie Tribe
- Tulalip Tribes
- Yakama Nation
- Duwamish Tribal Community (not federally recognized)

**QUESTION:** Are there opportunities for mitigation at the historical sites? (Sen. Swecker)

**RESPONSE:** *Yes. The Section 106 process has a memorandum of agreement regarding mitigation that will be signed by WSDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation, and tribes.*

**QUESTION:** Is there a multi-agency permit process for the project? (Sen. Swecker)

**RESPONSE:** *Yes. There is a multi-agency group of resource agencies that address specific topics. Permitting is not yet imminent, so discussions are closely focused on potential problems or issues with the project that can be addressed before the permitting process begins.*

**QUESTION:** Is there an appeal process for each one of the regulations that the project has to follow? (Rep. Pedersen)

**RESPONSE:** *Yes. Each one has a separate appeal process.*

**COMMENT:** I would like to consider looking at ways we might be able to streamline the appeals processes for the project. (Spkr. Swecker)

**Follow-up Items (Barbara Gilliland)**

- WSDOT to invite the appropriate representative of the Coast Guard to the next meeting on October 8 to answer questions about bridge openings.
- Barbara Gilliland/WSDOT to invite Sound Transit and King County Metro to the next meeting on October 8.
- Barbara Gilliland/WSDOT to invite representative from the Washington Park Arboretum to the next meeting on October 8.
- WSDOT to prepare a comparison matrix for each option, including traffic operation information.
- WSDOT to develop a conceptual drawing of the modified Option K.
- WSDOT to assemble the tunnel information from COWI that was gathered during mediation and provide on Web site.
- WSDOT to coordinate with the Attorney General's office to develop a listing of all of the appeals and identify possible streamlining.
- WSDOT to explain difference between staging and phasing in regard to financing and construction sequencing at future meeting.
- Barbara Gilliland to provide community group contact information to the Westside Subgroup members.