



**Meeting Summary**  
**SR 520 Legislative Workgroup Meeting #4**  
**Tuesday, December 8, 2009**  
**10 a.m. to 12 noon**  
**Sound Transit, Ruth Fisher Board Room**

**Attendees:**

**In attendance:**

- Representative Scott White, 43rd District, Co-chair
- Senator Rodney Tom, 48th District, Co-chair
- Speaker Frank Chopp, 43rd District
- Representative Jamie Pedersen, 43rd District
- Representative Ross Hunter, 48th District
- Representative Deborah Eddy, 48th District
- Representative Larry Springer, 45th District
- Senator Ken Jacobsen, 46th District
- Senator Eric Oemig, 45th District
- Representative Dan Roach, 31st District
- Representative Judy Clibborn, House Transportation Committee Chair
- Washington Transportation Secretary Paula Hammond
- Senator Mary Margaret Haugen, Senate Transportation Committee Chair

**Not in attendance:**

- Senator Ed Murray, 43rd District
- Senator Dan Swecker, 20th District
- State Transportation Commissioner Richard Ford

**Welcome and Introductions (Rep. White and Sen. Tom)**

Rep. White and Sen. Tom, Workgroup co-chairs, welcomed the group to the meeting and reviewed the [meeting agenda](#). Sen. Tom stated that today's meeting would focus on finalizing the recommendations that will be submitted to the Washington State Legislature and Governor Gregoire by Jan. 1, 2010. Rep. White mentioned that the Workgroup has been working hard with proponent groups and WSDOT during this process and noted that the Workgroup would be entertaining any amendments to the recommendations during the meeting.

**Overview of Public Comments on Draft Recommendations (Barbara Gilliland)**

Barbara Gilliland, Workgroup Administrator, presented the [results of the public comment](#) period for the draft recommendations made by the Workgroup on November 17. She stated that the public comment period began on Nov. 20 and ended Dec. 4 with a total of 479 individuals participating. Of the 479 comments, 377 individuals completed one or

more questions on the online comment form, 71 people provided verbal comments, and 31 submitted handwritten or e-mailed comments. The most comments came from the Montlake zip code, with 217 total comments. Participants were asked a total of three questions and Ms. Gilliland provided an overview of findings for each question.

**Question 1: What do you think of Option A+, the Legislative Workgroup's draft recommended design option?**

A total of 427 comments were received related to the Workgroup's draft recommended design option. Three general responses are presented: opposition to Option A+, support for Option A+ and no preference identified.

291 noted opposition to Option A+ citing the following reasons:

- Neighborhood impacts – noise, proximity of new bridge to private properties, visual impacts, and aesthetics.
- Traffic and mobility impacts.
- Impacts of a ramp connection to Lake Washington Boulevard.
- Some comments mentioned a specific preference for Option K, L or M.

88 noted support for Option A+ citing the following reasons:

- Cost – Most affordable option, within overall program budget.
- Transit and mobility – allows for improved transit connections.
- Less environmental impacts than other options.
- Many notes support Option A+ while expressing opposition to the ramp connections at Lake Washington Boulevard.

Additionally, 57 comments noted no design preference.

**Question 2: What would you like the SR 520 Legislative Workgroup to consider about the finance methods that are under consideration?**

Of the 257 comments received on question two, 188 specifically provided feedback on the tolling component of the finance recommendations.

143 comments noted support for considering additional tolling, for the following reasons:

- Tolling results in improved mobility and increases transit use.
- Users of the roads should pay to improve roads.
- Tolling seems like the most realistic method to address the funding gap.

45 comments noted opposition for considering additional tolling, for the following reasons:

- Drivers shouldn't have to pay a toll on I-90 to pay for SR 520.
- Construction of the new bridge should be paid by increased taxes, not tolls.

Other common themes related to support for pursuing maximum state and federal funding opportunities and suggestions to replace vulnerable sections first until future funds become available.

**Question 3: What other comments would you like to share to help the Legislative Workgroup refine recommendations as it deliberates and offers input to the Washington State Governor and Legislature?**

While many individuals used this question to re-state comments made to the earlier questions, other key themes included:

- Keep the project moving forward.
- Support for selecting an option that improves local traffic and mobility.
- The state should not proceed with a design option until the project is fully financed.

A complete [summary of comments](#) is available on the Workgroup's Web site.

**QUESTION:** How were the comments split up geographically? (Sen. Oemig)

*RESPONSE: Generally, the majority of comments came from the neighborhoods in the corridor. I am unsure if the overall tenor of the comments changes outside the SR 520 corridor or in one area compared to another. (Barbara Gilliland)*

**QUESTION:** Is there a report or summary available about the Seattle City Council Committee of the Whole meeting? (Spkr. Chopp)

*RESPONSE: Yes, I provided a summary of both the Council meeting and the town hall meeting to Workgroup members. It will also be included in the report. (Barbara Gilliland)*

**Agreement on Design and Finance Plan Recommendations/Draft Recommendations Report Review (Workgroup members)**

**QUESTION:** When was the Independent Cost Expert Review Panel summary completed? (Rep. Springer)

*RESPONSE: The review was completed just before the recommendations were made in mid-November. The Executive summary was specifically done for this report. The independent cost review panel is in the process of finalizing the full report. (Barbara Gilliland)*

**QUESTION:** Will comments from the King County Council's nine to zero vote in favor of Option A+ be included in the report? (Rep. Hunter)

*RESPONSE: The resolution as well as other public agency letters that have been received will be included in the public comments section of the report.*

**QUESTION:** Depending on what we decide for the Lake Washington Boulevard ramps, could the final decision on the ramps still be revisited during the environmental impact statement (EIS) process? (Sen. Jacobsen)

*RESPONSE: Currently, the Workgroup will be adopting the report that will go to the Legislature as input into the supplemental draft EIS. In January, as part of the supplemental draft EIS (SDEIS), Options A, K and L and a qualitative discussion of the workgroup process Options A+ and M will be included. All of them will be open for public comment as part of the SDEIS. (Barbara Gilliland)*

**QUESTION:** The decision about the Lake Washington Boulevard ramps could be made through the SDEIS process. The Workgroup decision is only part of the normal design process? (Rep. Hunter)

**RESPONSE:** *The Seattle City Council is going through the process to evaluate the various options. Their recommendation will go to the Legislature in January after they come to some consensus. I think it is very important for the city to weigh in on the ramp issues that would affect city of Seattle streets. (Sec. Hammond)*

**RESPONSE:** *The supplemental draft environmental impact statement (SDEIS) does evaluate a sub-option with the Lake Washington Boulevard ramps. So, procedurally, the ramps in or out of the Arboretum are covered in the SDEIS. (David Dye)*

Sen. Tom acknowledged the [minority statement](#) submitted by Spkr. Chopp and Rep. Pedersen. Sen. Tom asked Spkr. Chopp and/or Rep. Pedersen to provide remarks related to their minority statement.

**COMMENT:** The minority statement echoes what we've said about the chosen design option in previous meetings. And as we've seen today in the review of public comments, concerns are also shared by a large portion of the public that took the time to comment on the draft recommendations. (Rep. Pedersen)

Barbara Gilliland outlined the structure of the [draft recommendations report](#) and asked members if there were certain sections that needed to be discussed.

**COMMENT:** I would like to complement all the work that has been done. This has not been an easy process. This is the end of the end of a very long number of years where work like this wasn't done. So, I am very pleased that we have done this. We haven't made everyone happy, and that is a painful place to be when you can't make everyone happy. Even people in my own district are not happy about some of the things we are talking about. But, the region is well-served by moving forward with this decision. I am thrilled that through the SDEIS process we will have an opportunity to hear from even more people about the project. I hope we don't change too much about what we already have on the table. I would like to hear from the city of Seattle and the transit agencies about the ramps. It would be better if the people that are directly involved be more prominent in the decision making. I'd also like to thank Barbara for her fine work. (Rep. Clibborn)

**COMMENT:** A lot has been learned through this process. I remember over at the Town Hall meeting at the Center for Urban Horticulture, it was a discourse in how to have public debate. These are very heated and passionate arguments that people are making, but they never took it to the role that too often you see in politics where you personalize it, "I'm good and you're bad." Everyone has dealt with this in a respectful manner. This is one more step in the process as we move forward to build a new bridge. I'd also like to reiterate Rep. Clibborn's comments about how well this process has gone. I'd also like to thank WSDOT for their great work on this as well – whether it's an e-mail at 9 p.m. at night or 7 in the morning, WSDOT has gone above and beyond in being responsive. I'd also like to thank the members for their time invested in this process, especially Sen.

Swecker and others who have traveled a long way to participate to these meetings. (Sen. Tom)

**COMMENT:** I would like to thank all the members of the Workgroup, Barbara Gilliland, and WSDOT for all of their excellent work. I would also like to thank the members of the public that have participated in this process and trying to identify a solution. This has been a difficult process of trying to get a solution. This has been a process that has been going on for years. Our goal is to try to identify a design and finance option. While there have been attempts in the past, we did find a solution that was within the parameters set forth in Engrossed Substitute House Bill (ESHB) 2211. I look forward to working with the rest of you in the coming session and hope to get this bridge project moving forward for mobility and safety for those who travel on it. (Rep. White)

**COMMENT:** I want to thank you all for all the work you have put in to this. We know we have a lot more work to do to make the conclusions from this study and the final EIS work for the neighborhoods and community, and work for the transportation system of Puget Sound. You have our commitment. We appreciate the time that you all have put in to this to get good conclusion and really review the data that we have. (Sec. Hammond)

#### **Next Steps and Action Items (Barbara Gilliland)**

Barbara Gilliland outlined the next steps to submit the final report to the legislature.

- Comments on Draft Report due Dec. 11
- Draft Final Report due Dec. 16
- Final comments by Dec. 18
- Editing and production on Dec. 21
- Final report due to Gov. Gregoire and the Washington State Legislature on Jan. 1, 2010.

**QUESTION:** Are we voting again? (Rep. Roach)

**RESPONSE:** *No, we voted on the recommendations at a previous meeting. (Sen. Tom)*

**COMMENT:** There may be value in voting on the report as a whole. I don't think we need to change the recommendations. I don't think the well-structured fluff around the recommendations needs to be changed. If there is not major change to the draft recommendations, then we don't need to vote again. I like the report the way it is. (Rep. Hunter)

**COMMENT:** I'd like to move forward with a motion to take the report, in its entirety, as presented, including the minority report from Spkr. Chopp and Rep. Pedersen, and all other the parts to go forward to the Legislature. (Rep. White)

**COMMENT:** I second that motion. (Rep. Eddy)

**COMMENT:** I don't oppose this because of the minority report that was submitted. I think it is a good thing that we have made a decision and that we are going forward. I think the decision we have made is a good thing. I want to go on record for that. However, I do have other concerns. I have problems with the general purpose lanes on I-

90. I also think our finance strategy lacks creativity, with no public-private partnerships or private operations. Other concerns financially about the lids on west side for \$230 million and on the Eastside as well. That is a lot of money to make things look nice. I know they are important. But, my job as a Legislator is to make sure the basic things are taken care of. While I am happy that we are at least moving forward and the taxpayers would like a decision, I personally will be voting no on the draft recommendations. (Rep. Roach)

**This motion passes.** (Nine votes in favor to three against; Spkr. Chopp, Rep. Pedersen, and Rep. Roach voting against; Sen. Murray, Comm. Ford, and Sen. Swecker not in attendance; Sec. Hammond is a non-voting member)