



SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program



I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project

SR 520 West Approach Bridge North Project Monthly Public Meeting – Summary

Wednesday, October 5, 2016, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Graham Visitors Center

2300 Arboretum Drive East, Seattle, WA 98112

Attendees

WSDOT

- Dave Becher, SR 520 Construction Director
- Steve Strand, WABN Project Engineer
- Jon Vannoy, WABN Assistant Project Engineer
- Todd Harrison, ROTW Deputy Engineering Manager
- Suryata Halim, ROTW Disciplines Manager
- Suanne Pelley, SR 520 Communications Manager
- Ethan Bancroft, ROTW Communications
- Emily Durante, WABN Communications Lead
- Kathryn Murdock, WABN Communications

City of Seattle

- John Arnesen, WABN, Seattle Department of Transportation
- Bernard Van de Kamp, ROTW, Seattle Department of Transportation
- Kevin Shively, Mayor's Office

Meeting overview

On October 5, the WSDOT hosted a monthly, public meeting and invited the local community to learn about upcoming construction activities on the SR 520 West Approach Bridge North Project (WABN) and updates on the next phase of SR 520 construction, the Montlake Phase.

Approximately 105 members of the public attended.

WABN progress overview: Steve Strand

WSDOT is constructing a 6,000-foot-long bridge which will connect three westbound lanes of the new floating bridge to the Montlake area. Over the past month, crews have made significant progress on the permanent WABN structure, including:

- Completing the construction of all 95 columns.
- Continuing to set girders. As of Oct. 5, crews had set 198 of the 353 girders needed for the WABN structure.
- Continuing to place isolation bearings. As of Oct. 5, crews had set 73 of the 104 isolation bearings needed for the permanent WABN structure.
- Continuing to place roadway deck. As of Oct. 5, crews had placed 13 of the 41 sections of roadway deck needed for the WABN structure.

Full SR 520 closure (Oct. 7 to 10): Steve Strand

A weekend closure of SR 520 is scheduled from 11 p.m. Friday, Oct. 7, to 5 a.m. Monday, Oct. 10 between Montlake Boulevard and 92nd Avenue Northeast. Key highlights regarding the weekend closure include:

- **Paving work in Montlake area:** Paving work was canceled for the weekend due to inclement weather. He noted that this was the reason the weekend closure for eastbound SR 520 was no longer extended to I-5.
- **Handrail at the westbound SR 520 freeway transit stop:** WABN crews plan to install handrail at the westbound SR 520 freeway transit stop during the day on Saturday.
- **Intermediate diaphragms:** WABN crews plan to pour concrete on Saturday to place intermediate diaphragms east of the temporary work bridge, which stabilize girders.
- **Improving the westbound merge on the new floating bridge:** Crews on the Floating Bridge & Landings Project (FB&L) plan to re-stripe the westbound SR 520 merge on the new floating bridge.

Rest of the West Project overview: Todd Harrison

- The Rest of the West is now fully funded via the 2015 Connecting Washington package.
- This legislation includes a funding cash flow, which spreads out funds from 2015 through 2029 and drives the schedule of the project. As a result of the cash flow, WSDOT will construct the Rest of the West in phases.
- These planned phases will use a design-build contracting approach. The Legislature strongly encouraged WSDOT to pursue the design-build method for large projects over \$2 million in value, including the 520 Rest of the West.
- The Rest of the West will be split into three phases:
 - **Phase one – the Montlake phase:** This phase includes the West Approach Bridge South and the Montlake Lid. Our team is currently working on the contract for this phase that is scheduled to be released to bidders next year. Construction is expected to begin in 2018.
 - **Phase two – Portage Bay Bridge and 10th and Delmar lid:** This phase includes construction of a new Portage Bay Bridge between Montlake Boulevard and I-5, and a new lid at 10th Avenue East and East Delmar Drive.
 - **Phase three – Second bascule bridge:** WSDOT is still discussing this phase with the city of Seattle (City).

Montlake Market: Todd Harrison

- The project's 2011 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) identified the need to remove access from three driveways on the property along the eastbound off ramp and Montlake Boulevard where the Montlake Market and 76 gas station are located.
- WSDOT began a more detailed engineering design at the start of 2016 and determined that it would need to acquire the property to close the driveway accesses and build some of the project's planned improvements, such as retaining walls and fill, sidewalks, connections to shared-use trails, and utility relocations and modifications. WSDOT may also use the property for construction staging, traffic shifts and transit access during construction.

- There is currently a combined sewer that runs under SR 520 west of Montlake Boulevard and connects to other sewer lines near the eastbound SR 520 on- and off-ramps to Montlake Boulevard. The existing sewer under SR 520 is very shallow and may need to be replaced to accommodate the new Montlake Lid.
 - WSDOT is trying to avoid the sewer as much as possible in the 30% design but the contractor may need to relocate the sewer to the 76 gas station area.
 - In a design-build contract, WSDOT finishes the design to 30% and the contractor finishes the remaining 70% of the design. Since the sewer may need to be relocated for construction purposes, WSDOT plans to acquire the property for the contractor and the contractor will determine if the sewer needs to be relocated.
- Our intent is to work with the Montlake Market tenant on the property to see if they are able to operate successfully in a smaller footprint. We will keep you updated as this process moves forward.

Montlake Phase: Todd Harrison

- The next planned phase for SR 520 construction in Seattle is known as the Montlake Phase, which is scheduled to begin construction in 2018 and includes the:
 - **West Approach Bridge South:** A bridge parallel to the WABN that will carry three eastbound lanes of traffic when complete.
 - **The Montlake interchange and lid:** A new lid that provides open space and a multi-modal transportation hub. The interchange will also include a new “land bridge” connection over SR 520 to the east of the lid and Montlake Boulevard improvements.
- With the funding from Connecting Washington, WSDOT has determined that they will need the following staging areas for future phases:
 - **WSDOT Peninsula:** WSDOT will use this staging area near the Arboretum for all three phases of the “Rest of the West.”
 - **MOHAI staging area:** After using this area for staging in the Montlake Phase, this area will become a storm water treatment pond.

Public outreach and upcoming outreach opportunities: Todd Harrison and Bernard van de Kamp

- In 2016, WSDOT conducted outreach to share WSDOT’s final preliminary design and obtain feedback from the community:
 - ✓ **January – June:** Seattle Design Commission process
 - ✓ **June 22 – July 8: Online Open House** website live to view design information from home (2,838 visitors, 514 comments)
 - ✓ **June 28: Open House Event** at St. Demetrios Hall in Montlake, Seattle to view display boards and a corridor model, and speak with project staff (292 attendees, 110 comments)
 - Note: a summary of public comments and feedback at these events is available online at: www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/sr520bridge
 - ✓ **July 18:** Seattle City Council presentation
 - ✓ **September:** Launched frontline neighbor outreach
 - ✓ Presented at **approximately 17 briefings** to various community organizations in 2016.

- As WSDOT selects a contractor and moves toward construction of the Montlake Phase, key upcoming public outreach includes:
 - **Fall 2016**
 - Sharing updates at select monthly SR 520 construction meetings.
 - Meeting with neighbors adjacent to the construction site.
 - A Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan (NTMP) public comment period.
 - Continuing to work with the City and other partners and project stakeholders.
 - Meeting with community councils and local groups as interest exists; please request a briefing or meeting if you're interested.
 - **Early 2017**
 - Reporting out on what we heard and next steps.
 - Ongoing WABN construction progress outreach.
 - **2018**
 - A Community Construction Management Plan public comment period.
 - A published Tree and Vegetation Management and Protection Plan.
 - A pre-construction open house with the contractor.
 - Sharing tools of how the community can stay informed and engaged throughout construction.
- Bernard van de Kamp noted that while this public outreach was focused primarily on the Montlake Phase, these processes would be followed for phase two and three as well.

Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan (NTMP): Todd Harrison and Bernard van de Kamp

- The Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan (NTMP) is a commitment from the 2011 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and WSDOT. This plan is a strategy to look at mobility and safety in the Montlake corridor of all modes. A NTMP was created for the WABN phase of construction, and it is being updated for the Montlake Phase of construction.
- An example that came out of the WABN NTMP was widening the westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard to two lanes and adding a signal to the westbound SR 520 off-ramp to improve safety for bicycles and pedestrians.
- The major issues we have heard in public comments up to this point are safety, emphasis on non-motorized connections and traffic operations.
- The NTMP covers elements in the 520 project and also considers what the City has planned near the 520 corridor.
- Bernard van de Kamp noted that residents in the neighborhoods closest to 520 know traffic patterns best and WSDOT and the City want to hear from neighbors to inform the Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan.
 - All comments from the meeting were taken into consideration for the Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan.
 - There will also be a public comment period for the Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan in late 2016.

Other Community Plans

- **Community Construction Management Plan (CCMP):** Outlines key information about construction effects and requirements, along with opportunities for public input to inform construction management decisions that avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate construction activities.
 - The design-builder will update this plan based on their means and methods prior to construction.
 - There will be a public comment period on this plan in 2018 after the contractor is on board.

- **Tree and Vegetation Management Plan (TVMPP):** The purpose of this plan is to describe the standards and project-specific best management practices that will be used as guidance to preserve and protect trees and vegetation within the limits of project construction.
 - Preserving trees on this project is quite a challenge because we are constructing a project in a tight space and will need to remove vegetation and trees to accommodate construction. The project will have restoration and landscaping on the Montlake Lid after construction is complete.
 - The plan will be shared with the community prior to construction after a Design-Build contractor is selected.

Key comments and questions

The summary below highlights key comments, questions and responses posed during the discussion. The summary is not verbatim but represents the themes of the comments and responses. For questions and answers from the “Rest of the West” June Open House, please see our [Question and Answer](#) document online.

WABN

- **Question:** Are the bicycle/pedestrian lights on the regional shared-use path the same on WABN as they are on the new floating bridge?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** In the current design, the lights are oriented to shine south on WABN and are located in the kick plates.

- **Question:** What steps is WSDOT taking to address camping on WSDOT Right of Way?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** When WSDOT began construction, the WABN contractor cleaned up the WSDOT Peninsula and areas underneath the SR 520 bridge. WSDOT already had a process laid out in the contract which was: giving 72 hours advance notice to the residents living there to let them know that the contractor would be cleaning up the area; working with Seattle Police Department when cleaning up the area; collecting personal belongings to keep onsite for individuals to retrieve. As always, WSDOT balances being compassionate towards those camping near our construction zone with ensuring the safety of the campers, workers and the public.
 - **Update as of 10/18:** Over the past few months, WSDOT and the city of Seattle have clarified and established new procedures to address the removal of illegal encampments in WSDOT Right of Way. The encampments in Montlake have been added to their list and will be cleaned up based on priority of the other clean-up requests received.

Rest of the West

Montlake Market

- **Question:** I have a process question. I am the lawyer for the Montlake LLC, the owners of the property under the 76 gas station. In the original Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project, the plan was to acquire the gas station. In the preferred alternative which was adopted by WSDOT, the three driveways were noted as being needed for construction access but both the 76 gas station and Montlake Market were noted as not being needed for construction. In the final record of decision, WSDOT adopted this preferred alternative. This language persisted through at least 2015 when the legislature fully funded the project. In June of 2016, WSDOT announced that it would need to acquire the Montlake Market and 76 gas station for construction purposes. WSDOT has discussed some of the reasons that it needs to acquire both properties such as the grade elevation and the sewer issues. However, the access points being closed have been an issue since the original EIS for the project and were never a reason in the past for WSDOT needing to acquire the property. What further environmental process will WSDOT pursue before making the final decision to acquire the properties?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** WSDOT updates its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and we have done that for this upcoming Montlake Phase of construction. In addition, the EIS document lays out the impacts of the project and clearly says that the property is impacted by construction. The EIS documents do not preclude design refinements that happen over the course of a project. Our design refinements do not change the record of decision.
 - **Question:** So you don't believe there is any additional process necessary to acquire the property?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** No, updating the NEPA documents covers our environmental documentation.
 - **Question:** Every single document shows the Montlake Market. Has the decision already been made to acquire the Montlake Market and tear it down?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** No, while WSDOT needs to acquire the property, our intent is to work with the Montlake Market to see if the tenants are able to operate successfully in a smaller footprint.
- **Question:** If the Montlake Market and 76 gas station are acquired, will that area be used for staging? Should we expect 24/7 lighting, and constant loading and unloading of trucks?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** It could be used as a staging area but it is much smaller so they may stockpile material or put trailers in that area. We are meeting with frontline neighbors to discuss issues such as screening and other strategies given the long duration of construction in your neighborhood.
 - **Question:** What about dust, debris and air quality?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** WSDOT would require the contractor to control dust. WSDOT has done some things to control dust on the WABN project such as paving haul roads that may be incorporated into the next contract.
 - **Question:** Will we be informed of this as you approach construction?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** Yes, absolutely. The Community Construction Management Plan is a very important plan for you to comment on in 2018 after

our contractor is on board. As I noted earlier, we are also meeting with frontline neighbors to implement strategies to help during construction.

- **Question:** Do we know the fate of the Montlake Market when 30% design is complete and transferred to the design-build contractor?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** Yes. We are moving forward with acquiring the property before the design-builder is hired. As I mentioned, our intent is to work with the Montlake Market to see if the tenants are able to operate successfully in a smaller footprint. However, the relocation of the utility could have a significant impact to their operations.
- **Question:** Have you looked at other alternatives for relocating the sewer besides relocating the sewer to the gas station?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** Yes. One possibility is to put the sewer in the loop ramp but it will affect the storm water. The other possibility is to put it near the parking and island in front of the Montlake Market.
- **Question:** Are there other properties that WSDOT plans to acquire for construction of the next phase?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** There are a number of locations where WSDOT needs to acquire access rights with property owners. We held a formal hearing in early July with property owners. We will also need access rights to the NOAA property.

NTMP

- **Question:** What are the boundaries for the NTMP?
 - **Response (City):** We look at any area that is directly or somewhat impacted by the project. The City does not draw a line at the WSDOT Right of Way. The NTMP is really driven by the 520 project. The City also coordinates the NTMP with planned, upcoming City projects. If a City project is affecting a neighborhood, we want to hear about that.
 - **Comment:** As it is now, there are a lot of neighborhoods not in the current boundaries that are impacted by SR 520 traffic. There are a lot of neighborhoods around Boyer Avenue East, Fuhrman Avenue East and East Madison Street that should be included.

Foster Island Trail

- **Question:** What is the status of the Foster Island Trail during the next phases of construction?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** WSDOT understands that Foster Island gets a lot of use. In the WABN contract, WSDOT puts restrictions on the number of days that the Foster Island Trail can be closed. WSDOT is also restricted by the work that can happen on Foster Island as it is an archaeologically sensitive area. The same restrictions will likely be enacted for future contracts.
 - **Question:** Are the restrictions for Foster Island written out somewhere?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** They are written out in our contract specifications which can be found [online](#).

Montlake Lid construction

- **Question:** How will the change in grade on Montlake Boulevard impact side streets and alleys?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** The elevation changes will happen south of the NOAA driveway and north of East North Street. They should not significantly impact the alleys or side streets.
 - **Question:** What will the elevation of the grade difference be on Montlake Boulevard?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** It will tie into the existing grade but be approximately three to five feet different from the current grade of Montlake Boulevard over SR 520.
- **Question:** How will you build the Montlake Lid and not reduce capacity?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** The Montlake Lid is a structure over SR 520. The west end of the lid is at Montlake Boulevard so the challenge for the design-builder will be maintaining traffic while building that portion of the lid.

Other

- **Question:** When will the eastbound SR 520 on-ramp be removed?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** It will be removed during the Montlake Phase of construction. Improvements at the Montlake Boulevard interchange will have to be made prior to the removal of the ramp.
- **Question:** How are you adding an extra turn lane onto eastbound SR 520 from Montlake Boulevard without taking out trees or impacting property?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** We will be making the intersection tighter by decreasing the right turn lane onto East Lake Washington Boulevard. The trees will likely need to be removed at that location.
- **Question:** How are you going to make sure access for emergency access for vehicles is maintained?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** We coordinate with emergency vehicles throughout construction and ensure they know about road closures. There may be a loss of capacity at night during lane closures but emergency vehicles will be able to navigate where they need to go.
- **Question:** As you are traveling north on Montlake Boulevard, across SR 520, the signalized lights significantly back up. Are there any solutions to make traffic better in this area
 - **Response (City):** Traffic in this area is a combination of WSDOT and City issues. The purpose of the signal at the westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard was for the safety of bicycles and pedestrians. This signal was a result of the WABN NTMP as a focus on non-motorized safety through the corridor. However, the additional signal has also resulted in one more signal in an already constrained corridor. There is also more pressure on this interchange with the relocation of the westbound SR 520 Lake Washington off-ramp to 24th Avenue East. SDOT signal engineers are working to synchronize these signals to balance the traffic on Montlake Boulevard and from SR 520.
- **Question:** There is a rumor in Montlake that Montlake Boulevard will be reduced to one lane, north of Madison.

- **Response (City):** SDOT has funding to rehabilitate the parts of Montlake Boulevard that are currently failing such as broken concrete panels and sidewalk problems. There has also been consideration of a three-lane cross-section on Montlake Boulevard with one lane in each direction and a turn lane. SDOT has heard from the Montlake business community some interest in traffic-calming measures south of Roanoke to narrow the lanes and add curb bump outs. SDOT is still scoping this project out and it has not been finalized. SDOT is taking into consideration what is happening on 520 and will meet with the neighbors before making final decisions.
- **Question:** There is total gridlock in front of the Montlake Market in the left-turn lane getting onto eastbound SR 520. During rush hour, there will be times where during two to three lights, no cars are moving so cars are cutting through the neighborhoods.
 - **Response (City):** As I noted early, there is more pressure on this interchange with the relocation of the westbound SR 520 Lake Washington off-ramp to 24th Avenue East and the signal at the westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard. SDOT recognizes there is a problem and is working with signal engineers to balance the traffic on Montlake Boulevard and from SR 520. The next phase of SR 520 should also improve some of this traffic with a double left-turn lane onto eastbound SR 520.
- **Comment:** I live on East Miller, on the east side of 24th Avenue East. I have lived there 17 years and we have tried to get two stop signs and speed bumps to slow down the traffic that is cutting through our neighborhood when there is traffic on Lake Washington Boulevard. With WSDOT closing the eastbound SR 520 on-ramp from Lake Washington Boulevard, the traffic will increase. Our community on East Miller has tried for years and years and has signed petitions but we have not been able to get the two stop signs or speed bumps.
 - **Response (City):** SDOT is looking into situations like this right now. We receive many complaints about this. Part of the issue that SDOT is hearing from the traffic management team is that if you start restricting turns in one area, it will affect traffic in other areas.
 - **Comment:** SDOT gave us a speed gun and we were told we didn't have enough speeders to warrant a stop sign. We were also told speed bumps were coming.
 - **Response (City):** As we talk more about the NTMP, we would like to hear from you and see what we can do in this location.
- **Question:** Is there a plan to change lighting on the new floating bridge? Can you turn the lights off at night?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** We are looking at options with our designer to see if there are ways we can modify the lighting. The process is not as simple as changing out lightbulbs. We have already done that once, we adjusted the bulbs from a 100-watt bulb to a 50-watt bulb.
 - **Question:** Can you turn the lights off?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** Turning the lights off while the path is open presents safety and liability concerns for WSDOT.