



SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program



I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project

SR 520 West Approach Bridge North Project and Rest of the West Monthly Public Meeting Summary

Wednesday, December 7, 2016, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Graham Visitors Center

2300 Arboretum Drive East, Seattle, WA 98112

Attendees

WSDOT

- Dave Becher, SR 520 Program Director of Construction
- Steve Strand, Project Engineer, West Approach Bridge North Project
- Jon Vannoy, Assistant Project Engineer, West Approach Bridge North Project
- Todd Harrison, Deputy Engineering Manager, Rest of the West
- Suryata Halim, Disciplines Manager, Rest of the West
- Suanne Pelley, SR 520 Program Communications Manager
- Emily Durante, Communications Lead, West Approach Bridge North
- Kathryn Murdock, Communications, West Approach Bridge North
- Ashley Selvey, Communications, West Approach Bridge North
- Ethan Bancroft, Communications, Rest of the West
- Jacquie Ptacek, Communications, Rest of the West

City of Seattle

- John Arnesen, Seattle Department of Transportation, WABN Coordination Lead
- Bernard Van de Kamp, Seattle Department of Transportation, SR 520 Lead
- Kevin Shively, Seattle Mayor's Office

Meeting Overview

On December 7, 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 100 members of the public attended the meeting.

SR 520 Program overview and timeline: Suanne Pelley

- The [Eastside project](#), spanning from I-405 to Medina, opened to traffic in 2014, providing an improved transit/HOV system and other community benefits.
- The [new floating bridge](#) opened to traffic in April of this year. As of Dec. 7, crews have already moved 17 of the old pontoons off Lake Washington, and the remaining 14 are all on the north side of the new bridge, awaiting transport from the lake. The public will continue to see progress through the end of 2016 as crews continue decommissioning the bridge.
- The West Approach Bridge North, which will carry westbound traffic from the floating bridge into Montlake, is currently under construction and expected to open to drivers in summer 2017. The bridge will also connect the new regional shared-use bicycle/pedestrian path from the floating bridge into Seattle.
- The remaining corridor enhancements from Lake Washington to I-5 are now fully funded through the 2015 Connecting Washington package. We call this segment "the Rest of the West". The next phase of construction will include the south half of the West Approach Bridge, and a new lid and land bridge in Montlake.

Full SR 520 closure (Dec. 9 to 12): Steve Strand

A weekend closure of SR 520 is scheduled from 11 p.m. Friday, Dec. 9, to 5 a.m. Monday, Dec. 12, between Montlake Boulevard and 92nd Avenue Northeast. The SR 520 bicycle and pedestrian path on the floating bridge will also be closed during the weekend closure. Key highlights regarding the closure include:

- **Begin removing segments of the old westbound SR 520 off-ramp:** During the weekend closure, crews plan to remove five of eight girders of the portion of the decommissioned westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Lake Washington Boulevard that spans over SR 520.
- **Restripe lanes:** Crews will evaluate lane striping during the closure. If weather permits and additional striping is needed, crews will restore striping.
- **Pour concrete:** Crews plan to take advantage of the weekend closure to place concrete for sections of the WABN bridge deck.
- **Adjust corridor lighting:** Crews on the Eastside plan to replace bulbs on the underside of the Evergreen Point Road and 84th Avenue East lids.

WABN progress overview and look-ahead to 2017: Steve Strand

- Girder delivery will continue through early January 2017. Crews have 46 girders remaining to install.
- All casings, shafts and columns have been completed. Crews have installed 106 out of 108 isolation bearings and have placed 21 of 41 deck spans.
- In spring 2017, the WABN westbound SR 520 off-ramp lanes will open to traffic. The exit lanes for the newly-aligned westbound SR 520 off-ramps will begin just west of the floating bridge and extend to Montlake Boulevard and Lake Washington Boulevard East.
- In summer 2017, the WABN structure is scheduled to open to traffic. This includes both the westbound transit/HOV and general-purpose lanes.
- In fall 2017, the SR 520 bicycle and pedestrian path will open. The regional path along SR 520 will cross Lake Washington connecting Montlake and Bellevue.
- 24th Avenue East is scheduled to reopen to bicycles and pedestrians after the SR 520 bicycle and pedestrian path connects to Montlake in fall 2017. However, WSDOT expects that the path will need to close to bicycles and pedestrians during the Montlake Phase of construction for construction access into the old MOHAI site, and to ensure safety for bikers and walkers in the area. WSDOT and the City of Seattle will continue to coordinate on this topic moving forward.

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 cashflow, which allocates funds from 2015 through 2029 and drives the schedule of the project. As a result of the cashflow, WSDOT will construct the Rest of the West in phases.
- The first two of these upcoming phases are planned to be delivered via the design-build contracting approach. This includes the Montlake Phase and Portage Bay Phase. The third and final phase's contracting method has not yet been determined.
- Design-build is a contracting method in which WSDOT completes a preliminary design, releases a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) followed by a Request for Proposals (RFP), and selects a contractor based the best apparent value which is determined by price as well as technical credits determined by their design proposal. 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. Benefits of design-build include an opportunity for greater innovation and efficiencies and a potentially faster project delivery.
- The Rest of the West will be split into three phases:
 - **Phase One – Montlake Phase:** This phase includes the West Approach Bridge South and the Montlake lid and land bridge. 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 Phase:** 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. Construction is expected to begin in approximately 2020-2022.
- **Phase Three – Montlake Cut Crossing Phase:** WSDOT is continuing its discussions about this phase with the city of Seattle, to resolve remaining technical and policy questions prior to construction. It is expected to begin construction as early as 2024.

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 working to avoid major impacts to the sewer near the 76 gas station area. However, the contractor may impact the sewer, based on their construction means and methods. The contractor will still need to meet project permit requirements.
 - In a design-build contract, WSDOT advances the design to 30 percent and the contractor completes the design to 100 percent. Because the sewer may need to be relocated for construction purposes, as well as other impacts to the property, WSDOT plans to acquire the property for the contractor to use. The contractor will determine if the sewer needs to be relocated.
 - In order to both minimize impacts to the existing Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) utility and meet today’s safety and design standards, the project’s design increases the height of Montlake Boulevard over SR 520 to be approximately five feet higher than the Montlake Boulevard overpass today. With this height increase, the Montlake Boulevard street grade remains five percent or less, which meets ADA requirements. WSDOT has not found that the change in the grading of Montlake Boulevard would cause additional safety concerns for bike riders and pedestrians compared to the Preferred Alternative design. Additionally, no impacts to traffic patterns are caused by this adjustment of the Montlake Boulevard grade.
- We have been working with the Montlake Market tenant on the property to see if they are potentially able to continue to operate in a smaller footprint and with impacts to parking, access, and other project effects. We do know that the gas station will no longer be able to continue operations. We will keep the community updated as this process moves forward.

Construction preparation timeline: Todd Harrison

- **2016**
 - ✓ Early/spring 2016: City of Seattle design coordination and public outreach
 - ✓ Summer 2016: Public open house and Online Open House, Seattle City Council update
 - ✓ Fall 2016: Neighborhood outreach about upcoming Montlake Phase construction
- **2017**
 - Early 2017: Report out on public feedback and steps WSDOT plans to take to minimize construction impacts
 - Spring 2017: Begin contract procurement process
 - Late 2017: Award contract
- **2018**
 - Early 2018: Host pre-construction open house with contractor
 - 2018: Construction begins – stay informed with a variety of tools and resources

Public outreach and upcoming outreach opportunities: Todd Harrison & Suanne Pelley

- Throughout 2016, WSDOT has conducted numerous outreach events in order to provide the public information about the next phase of construction in Seattle. This outreach builds on years of previous outreach and design involvement including the 2015 Final Concept Design, and was held to showcase the results of our detailed coordination with the Seattle Design Commission and other stakeholders earlier in the year.
- From September to November 2016, we completed four frontline outreach meetings with neighbors who will be closest to construction. We discussed strategies that could minimize construction impacts and we are currently analyzing and evaluating the strategies that we heard from these groups. We plan to report back to these groups in early 2017.
- As WSDOT selects a contractor and moves toward construction of the Montlake Phase, key upcoming public outreach opportunities include:
 - **Early/spring 2017:**
 - Report out on what we heard during frontline neighbor outreach and next steps for measures that WSDOT plans to implement as part of the Montlake Phase
 - Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan (NTMP) public comment period and community meeting
 - Periodically attend WABN monthly meetings with Montlake Phase updates
 - WABN construction progress outreach
 - Continue to implement a variety of communications tools such as website, email updates, phone and comment responses
 - **2018:**
 - Pre-construction open house with the contractor
 - Share the Community Construction Management Plan for public comment
 - Begin construction of Montlake Phase, ongoing opportunities to stay informed about activities

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

- The NTMP, or Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan, is a living document which is updated for each phase of SR 520 construction. It is being developed by WSDOT and the city of Seattle to catalog and develop solutions for community traffic concerns in the Montlake corridor and surrounding neighborhoods. The plan will define traffic management measures to proactively reduce project construction effects and develop long term traffic management strategies.
- In early 2017, the City and WSDOT plan to publish the updated draft NTMP, including a list of potential traffic measures and hold a comment period. Public input will be used to inform WSDOT and SDOT which traffic measures will be implemented in the Montlake area.
- The removal of eastbound SR 520 on-ramp through the Arboretum is expected to put more pressure on Montlake Boulevard. The NTMP will aim to help minimize this pressure through a variety of local traffic management measures in the Montlake area.
- In summer and fall 2017, the city of Seattle will be making significant changes to the intersection of 19th Avenue East and East Lynn Street in order to help slow down traffic and improve pedestrian safety.
- The city of Seattle is currently conducting speed studies, traffic counts and traffic modeling on 23rd Avenue East, south of the SR 520 interchange. A variety of potential options are being considered in an attempt to minimize pressure on residential neighborhoods.

Key comments and questions

West Approach Bridge North

- **Question:** What time is noisy work allowed to take place during the weekend closure?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** WSDOT has received a Temporary Noise Variance (TNV) that allows the contractor to exceed typical noise levels at night. Loud equipment such as hoe rams are allowed to operate from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. However, WSDOT is working

with the contractor to try to minimize the amount of work that occurs overnight during the closure.

- **Question:** Will the expansion joints used on WABN be the same as on the Eastside? If the expansion joints are different, how are they different and how can we be assured that they will not be as loud as the Eastside joints?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** The new West Approach Bridge North (WABN) structure will have the next generation of expansion joints, designed and constructed by the same manufacturer as those installed on the new floating bridge. The new WABN expansion joints, however, are slightly different from those currently on the floating bridge. The WABN joints will be covered with interweaving plates that are intended to (and we are hopeful that they will) reduce noise by allowing vehicle tires to remain in continuous contact with the surface of the joint. This “sinus plate” technology is new in the United States, but has been implemented previously in Europe.
 - **Response (WSDOT):** We’re currently working with neighbors in Medina to address the expansion joint questions. We have looked into adding sinus plates to the existing expansion joints, but it would be very expensive and would result in a short term closure of the bridge. We are still investigating other options.
 - **Comment:** We have heard that the noise made by expansion joints meets WSDOT noise standards but does not meet federal standards.
 - **Response (WSDOT):** The current expansion joint noise is in compliance with all state and federal standards.
- **Question:** The lighting on the new bicycle and pedestrian path is brighter than anticipated. Can WABN lights be tested before they are permanently turned on in case adjustments need to be made?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** The lighting on the bicycle and pedestrian path along WABN is in a different location than along the floating bridge. WABN’s lights will be located in the “kick plates” at the bottom of the handrail on the north side of the path. The lights will point south towards the barrier, rather than pointing north across the bike path.
 - **Comment:** There is an existing agreement called the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement that stipulates that all lights on the bridge must point downward and may not shine into homes or across the water.
 - **Follow-up Response (WSDOT):** Part VII, Section F of the [Section 106 Programmatic Agreement](#) (page 24 of the PDF) states:
 - **For construction lighting:** *“WSDOT will limit use of construction lighting as much as possible and keep necessary lighting shielded, directed downward, and pointed away from residences and other sensitive areas to the maximum extent practicable.”*
 - **For permanent lighting:** *“WSDOT will ensure that permanent lighting and lighted signage throughout the corridor is designed to minimize glare into homes and parks and out over the water.”*
 - **Follow-up Response (WSDOT) (continued):** The design of the lighting along the bicycle and pedestrian path on the new floating bridge is primarily based on the lighting design along the path on I-90. It is designed to direct the light onto the path and not onto the water. Based on measurements taken in May and July 2016, the design is working as intended, however this design does not prevent neighbors from seeing the bulbs from certain locations. WSDOT is currently evaluating several options to reduce the visibility of these lights while also maintaining safety for those who are using the path.

Rest of the West

Montlake Market

- **Question:** We have heard that there are some potential alternatives to taking the Market. Are there any other sites that could be used for WSDOT’s purposes other than the Montlake property?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** We need the Montlake property site for very specific reasons including sidewalks, slopes and the elevation change on Montlake Boulevard. We are not acquiring this site simply to use for staging.

- **Question:** If WSDOT acquires the property and removes the gas station, what will happen to the site after the Montlake Phase project is complete?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** Parts of the property will be used for project improvements. Property that is not needed after the completion of these project improvements will be surplus and sold through WSDOT's Real Estate Services department.
- **Comment:** If the gas station is removed, neighbors who live in this area will have to drive much further to get to another gas station.
- **Comment:** The business owner has said that he can move the gas pumps and keep the gas station open. These businesses have been in the family for a long time and it's important that we keep both businesses open.
 - **Response (WSDOT):** This is a complex situation, and we do not believe it will be possible for the gas station to remain open moving forward.
- **Question:** Will the Montlake Market property be used for staging?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** The site is needed for a number of reasons including sidewalks, slopes and the elevation change on Montlake Boulevard. In order to build these elements we will need space in this vicinity and we anticipate that this property may be used for staging.
- **Questions:** I have a copy of the water and sewer main relocation feasibility study that details the potential effects to the sewer line. Has WSDOT settled on King County's preferred protect in place option?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** Yes, we are currently planning to protect the sewer line in its current location. Although we are trying to avoid any major impacts to the sewer line, the contractor could identify construction means and methods that could have impacts. These would be determined once the contractor is onboard. The contractor will still need to meet project permit requirements.
 - **Question:** If you don't need to acquire the property in order to relocate the sewer line, then what are the specific reasons you need to acquire the property?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** There are impacts to the businesses from closing the driveways. The site is needed for other project improvements, including the grade change of Montlake Boulevard, the construction of a bicycle and pedestrian path as well as other project improvements.
- **Question:** Do you expect that the Montlake Market building will need to be demolished?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** We anticipate that project's physical improvements may not require demolishing the building. However, project impacts such as potential relocation of a nearby sewer line, could require the building to be removed.

Traffic and Transit

- **Question:** Can you provide more information about the Central District to UW Bus Rapid Transit project? Why isn't this project being started as soon as construction of the next SR 520 phase begins?
 - **Response (City):** There are numerous bus rapid transit projects throughout the city. The project from Rainier Beach to the Central District to UW is planned to begin in 2023. The Move Seattle Levy prioritized other rapid ride corridors due to higher ridership. We expect that existing transit service will continue to grow.
- **Question:** How is data being collected and what data is being considered in the development of the NTMP? How old is the data?
 - **Response (City):** We are using a combination of data sources including some from WSDOT and we are currently collecting data. Some of the data is a few years old, but other data is much more recent.
 - **Question:** With the growth that Seattle is experiencing, data that is a few years old may no longer be accurate. Are there any plans to gather or request more recent data?
 - **Response (City):** We take regular traffic counts on SR 520 and the SR 520 ramps, but this is something that we can take into further consideration.
 - **Response (WSDOT):** We are continually updating our data which includes analyzing how conditions continue to change.

- **Question:** Northbound Montlake Boulevard is a major chokepoint as you approach SR 520. Do you have data regarding how traffic flows have changed in this area? The new signal at the Montlake Boulevard westbound off-ramp has made traffic worse.
 - **Response (City):** Part of difficulty is that we are currently in an interim condition. The new traffic signal at the westbound off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard was a result of the last NTMP process for the WABN project. It was intended to improve safety for bicycles and pedestrians that cross that intersection. It's a very complex situation, but we are working to time signals to reduce backups at peak travel times. We are also trying to balance ramp backups with backups on Montlake Boulevard. Currently, drivers also need to make a U-turn at East Hamlin Street to access westbound SR 520. When the Montlake Phase is complete there will be two left turn lanes on northbound Montlake Boulevard East so that drivers can turn directly on to westbound SR 520.
- **Question:** Please provide more information regarding the potential changes happening on 23rd Avenue East. Traffic is already congested with four lanes, and I heard about a proposal to reduce 23rd Avenue East to two lanes.
 - **Response (City):** The project on 23rd Avenue East is attempting to improve safety. The city is looking at various options and completing speed studies and performing data analysis. We are not trying to make traffic worse, instead we are trying to improve multimodal connectivity and safety for all users.

Other

- **Question:** How did you determine the timeline for the various project phases?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** Our funding from the legislature includes a cashflow, which spreads out funds from 2015 through 2029 and drives the schedule of the project. The phases were based on the amount of funding that is available each state biennium.
- **Question:** What areas will be used for staging after the old MOHAI site is no longer needed?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** The WSDOT Peninsula will be used as the main staging area. This site will be used throughout the rest of the SR 520 Program. We will also stage materials within our WSDOT right-of-way.
- **Question:** How are you working to address traffic problems on east-west routes such as Boyer Avenue East, Fuhrman Avenue East and the University Bridge? Backups on the University Bridge are much worse than even two years ago. We would like to see traffic counts done in these locations as well as more outreach to community councils.
 - **Response (City):** We understand that traffic volumes have increased city-wide due to construction and continued growth. This NTMP is focused on the SR 520 corridor and Montlake area only. There are other city projects that are trying to improve mobility in other areas of the city.
 - **Response (WSDOT):** We have done outreach with many community councils already this year. We are always happy to meet and present to community council groups.
- **Question:** We are interested in saving one piece of the R.H. Thomson Expressway. In which project phase are these ramps planned to be demolished?
 - **Response (WSDOT):** The ramps are planned to be demolished as part of the Montlake Phase. The contract will be put out for bid this spring and the contract is planned to be executed by the end of 2017. We are aware that the City Council recently passed a resolution about saving one of the bents. We continue to coordinate with the city on this topic. The city is taking the lead on implementing the next steps associated with the city resolution. There are still key questions that have to be answered before further decisions can be made.