

SR 520 Program – Additional Montlake Project questions and answers

Below are WSDOT answers to questions the SR 520 Program received from the community as part of the Nov. 7, 2018, Montlake properties public meeting. This Q&A relates to the Montlake Project but does not directly involve the Montlake Market.

ENGINEERING / CONSTRUCTION / STAGING**1. What will happen if the contractor is unable to keep traffic flowing on Montlake Boulevard?**

Maintaining all lanes of traffic on Montlake Boulevard is a basic requirement of the Montlake Project contract. By submitting a proposal, all three contractor teams that presented bids committed to meeting the requirements of the contract. The contract allows for lane and roadway closures during certain periods of the day/night and on weekends. The Montlake Project contract also has significant financial penalties for failure to reopen these closures on time or for extending the closures beyond the allowable windows. Prior to closing lanes of traffic the contractor is required to submit traffic control and work plans that will be monitored by WSDOT to make sure the lanes stay open as required. We are also working with the city to see what can be done to optimize the signal-timing operations on Montlake Boulevard.

2. Will King County's work on a Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) in Montlake Park have any effect on WSDOT's needs for the property relating to the large sewer line under SR 520 next to Montlake Boulevard?

No, the projects are not related. It's our understanding that King County's CSO Control Plan and storage tank project near the Montlake Playfield functions as a treatment and holding area for CSO effluent, and is not a replacement for the existing CSO line near Montlake Boulevard. WSDOT hopes to avoid the two parallel, large CSO lines that run under SR 520 – one is 108 inches in diameter, the other 42 inches – and not have to replace them. We do not expect any impacts on the Montlake Project from King County's work in the playfield area.

3. Will there also be a transition to the north of SR 520 related to raising Montlake Boulevard by 4.5 feet?

At the midpoint of the new overpass over SR 520, the street will be about 4.5 feet higher than it is today and transition on both the north and the south sides to match existing grade. For the north transition, Montlake Boulevard is expected to be about 2 feet higher than today's street surface at the westbound ramps intersection, and the roadway will continue to transition to existing street level near the NOAA driveway. For the south transition, Montlake Boulevard will be approximately 2 feet higher than today's grade as it passes by the 76 station's gas pumps, and continue to transition to its current elevation near East North Street and the Montlake Market. The raised street elevation will not have a direct effect on the Montlake Market building.

4. How will the homes on East Hamlin Street and East Shelby Street be affected by raising Montlake Boulevard?

We expect that Montlake Boulevard will taper down to meet the existing grade near the driveway to the NOAA facility, well south of East Hamlin Street. Homes on Hamlin and Shelby streets won't be directly affected by the raised street elevation. The home's residents, and the broader community, will experience construction activity, including some weekend street closures and weekday traffic diversions, during the work. But the final configuration should have no ongoing effect on the nearby homes.

5. How much emphasis do you have on the aesthetics of the west side projects, i.e. landscapes, special concrete designs, sound barriers, lines of sight, etc.?

The aesthetic aspects of the improvements we're making in Seattle are a core element of the project. Our Seattle Community Design Process, initiated in 2011-2012, solicited community input on the overall vision and initial, conceptual designs for the corridor's west side infrastructure. In addition to seeking input from the general public, WSDOT worked with many partner agencies, including the Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board, Seattle City Council, Seattle Design Commission, Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board, Sound Transit, King County Metro, and the University of Washington. In 2016, we published a final concept design report ([available in our online library](#)) that further refined corridor designs, including designs for lids in the Montlake and Roanoke neighborhoods, shared-use pathways, and bridge structures.

After we published the final concept design report, we conducted another public process with the Seattle Design Commission, in 2016, to further refine the conceptual design for the Montlake Project. During this process, we further developed the design for the Montlake lid, land bridge, SR 520 trail segments in Montlake, and other project elements, focusing heavily on aesthetics – including landscaping and wall treatments, for example. The Seattle Design Commission published a final report from this process in December 2016, and you can find it on [their website](#). We used this report to inform the Montlake Project RFP.

Moving forward, WSDOT will continue to engage the community on design features as our contractors complete final project designs. This collaborative work will involve all key aspects of constructed infrastructure, including concrete treatment, landscaping, lighting, rest areas, and so on.

6. If the bike lane on 520 extends beyond the Montlake area, where would it go? I-5?

During construction of the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project, WSDOT will extend the regional SR 520 Trail west from Montlake across a new Portage Bay Bridge. We also will build a new, 30-foot-wide bicycle and pedestrian crossing over I-5 along East Roanoke Street. Once complete, the SR 520 regional trail will extend from I-5 in Seattle to SR 202 in Redmond, with connections along the way to other local and regional trails.

7. Why would you eliminate Lake Washington Boulevard (Arboretum eastbound) on ramp? That would put more traffic on 23rd (and Montlake Boulevard). Why would you do that?

The ramp's pending removal is based on the strong community support this action received during the project's environmental planning process and public comment period. Comments supporting ramp removal outnumbered those opposed by more than 6 to 1. Ramp-removal advocates included the Seattle City Council, Mayor's Office, and then-Gov. Gregoire. The primary basis for their position was to enhance the Washington Park Arboretum. Additionally, the current on-ramp won't connect to the rebuilt, taller West Approach Bridge that will be constructed during the Montlake Project.

As part of the contract for the Montlake Project, WSDOT is requiring the contractor to make a number of improvements to the eastbound SR 520 on-ramp at Montlake Boulevard. These improvements, such as adding an additional general-purpose lane to the existing eastbound loop on-ramp, should help increase capacity and reduce the impact from the additional traffic on Montlake Boulevard.

Graham Contracting, the Montlake Project contractor, submitted a preliminary design for the project that includes a new, temporary eastbound on-ramp from East Lake Washington Boulevard to the new West Approach Bridge North (which will carry both eastbound and westbound traffic during construction of a parallel West Approach Bridge South for eastbound-only traffic). Construction of this temporary on-ramp would delay some of the planned changes to the Montlake interchange, which potentially helps reduce the project's impact to the Montlake Market building.

This on-ramp is temporary and cannot be made permanent because it will connect into the West Approach Bridge North, during construction of the parallel, West Approach Bridge South. Once the southern bridge is complete, it will carry eastbound traffic. The temporary on-ramp wouldn't be able to connect to this southern bridge. Additionally, the on-ramp conflicts with the new bicycle/pedestrian land bridge that will be built over SR 520.

8. The welcome slide showed a picture of the transit hub. The agreement with the community was to create a park-like space and it seems to no longer look like a park, but a glorified transit hub. Transit is critical but so is walking, biking and community activities. Why did the design change?

Since the early days of SR 520 design, the Montlake lid has been planned to meet two purposes, one of which is to provide an open green space in the middle of the Montlake community to connect the neighborhoods on both sides of SR 520. The south side of the lid is still planned to be a large, landscaped open public space. Additionally, the rest of the lid will be landscaped, as will the 70-foot-wide bicycle and pedestrian land bridge just to the east.

The lid was also designed to serve as a mobility hub for the Montlake neighborhood. The lid is in a unique space – it sits at the convergence of a major highway, over a dozen transit routes, and many local and regional trails and walkways. With this in mind, a portion of the lid will have a transit hub, adjacent to the landscaped open space and designed with a parklike feel – including benches and landscaping. There will also be several bicycle and pedestrian paths that connect local trails on and around the lid.

ENVIRONMENTAL / MITIGATION

9. What kind of mitigation will be provided to the homeowners south and east of the market triangle? How will WSDOT take steps to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the effects of construction?

WSDOT's contract with the design-builder establishes numerous requirements and construction best management practices to limit the effects of the project on the neighborhood. These include:

- WSDOT and the contractor will use noise meters to monitor noise throughout the entirety of Montlake Project construction to verify that nighttime activities remain within the decibel limits set by the city. Weekly and annual noise monitoring reports will be provided to the city of Seattle to demonstrate compliance. These reports will be made available to the public as well.
- An independent noise monitor, working for WSDOT, will oversee noise monitoring and reporting of the contractor's work at night, and will report on compliance directly to the city of Seattle. The independent noise specialist will be on-site during all periods of scheduled nighttime work. If noise exceeds the limits set by the city, the specialist will have the ability to halt work.

- The contractor will not conduct impact work, such as auger shaking, jack hammering and impact pile driving, during nighttime hours from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. on weekdays and from 10 p.m. to 9 a.m. on weekends and legal holidays.
- The contractor will control dust using a variety of methods, such as paving construction access roads, spraying exposed soil with water, using wind fencing to reduce wind disturbance of soil, providing wheel washers, and covering dirt, gravel and debris piles as needed to reduce dust and wind-blown debris.
- For periods of especially noisy nighttime, extended nighttime and weekend work, the contractor will offer hotel accommodations to nearby neighbors.

In addition to the above requirements and best practices, Graham has committed to the following practices in order to minimize or avoid construction impacts:

- Graham's design reduces the number of pilings needed for the work bridge by 70 percent (from 1,000 to about 300), reducing the need for pile driving.
- Reduce the duration of construction by up to one year.
- Utilize precast columns and other bridge components, constructed off-site, to reduce the amount of on-site construction.

Additionally, WSDOT is providing up to \$3,500 in noise-mitigation products and services to front-line residences to help mitigate for the construction noise they may hear during the project.

WSDOT is also offering a number of financial incentives in the contract to encourage the contractor to go above and beyond the contract requirements when it comes to neighborhood and mobility impacts:

- During construction, our contractor can earn up to \$1 million in bonuses by exceeding requirements to maintain freeway and local-street travel, transit operations, and to maximize bicycle and pedestrian access.
- WSDOT is also offering the contractor incentive bonuses of up to \$1 million for maintaining positive community interactions, such as responsiveness to neighborhood concerns about noise, dust, lights, and work-site appearance.

Public feedback will be considered as part of this quarterly evaluation. WSDOT will make the determination as to whether the contractor has exceeded contract requirements and met the terms of the incentive program. We will review both the quantity and severity of public comments, such as hotline calls and emails regarding noise, dust, lights, mobility, etc.

10. How will WSDOT visually screen its construction areas?

Our Montlake Project design-build contractor is required to provide fencing around all staging areas and submit a "Maintenance During Construction Plan." The plan will outline how the contractor is performing additional site maintenance and taking additional measures to protect the public and contractor personnel. WSDOT will review and comment on the plan before it is finalized. Also, the Montlake Project contract's community and environmental incentives encourage the design-builder to go above and beyond these requirements. In addition, the 12-foot-tall chain link fence adjacent to East Park Drive East and the length of the alley north of the Old Canal Reserve will have an acoustical screen attached to the fence.