MEETING SUMMARY
SR 520 BRIDGE REPLACEMENT AND HOV PROJECT
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
St. Lukes Lutheran Church, Bellevue WA
October 23, 2003 1:00 – 3:00 P.M.

Welcome and Meeting Objectives

Aubrey Davis, Washington State Transportation Commission Chair, opened the meeting by welcoming the Executive Committee and members of the public. The objectives for the meeting were as follow: update the Committee on status of work in response to guidance provided at the July 2003 meeting, including the decision to extend HOV from Montlake Boulevard to I-5; bring the committee up to speed on project status, including the alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS; provide an update on the SR-520 tolling assumptions for the environmental impact statement (EIS) and current tolling study; describe upcoming community outreach activities; and report on a water quality workshop.

Maureen Sullivan, WSDOT, described recent staffing changes. Les Rubstello, previous SR-520 project manager, left WSDOT for a traffic engineer position with the City of Lynnwood. Julie Meredith has replaced Les as project engineering manager. Also, Kinyan Lui has joined WSDOT as a project engineer to work on SR-520. Consultants are also back onboard since nickel package restored funding to the project.

Project Update

The nickel gas tax took effect on July 1, 2003. The Nickel Funding Package has allowed the project to move forward into the EIS phase. The tax allocates $53.2 million for the SR-520 EIS, right of way (ROW) and design work. An additional $3.5 million was set aside for a separate I-5 noise wall project that is scheduled to be complete by July 2005.

The draft EIS is due out in 2005 with the record of decision (ROD) being issued in 2006. Also occurring in 2005 are early right of way purchasing and design. In 2005, money would have been approved for the continuation of the project. Construction would start in 2008 and be completed in 2014. The current Evergreen Point Floating Bridge has a design life through 2020. The difference between the estimated end of construction in 2014, and the end of the current bridge's design life in 2020, gives the project a six-year period of flexibility to deal with timeline delays. Issues that could reduce that six-year window include: earthquakes, windstorms, delays in funding, and problems in schedule.

Last year the committee recognized the difficulty of the 8-lane alternative. This September the project started looking at what improvements could be made to I-5 to handle the additional traffic caused by the 8-lane alternative. The project is looking at

improvements on I-5 that can be made within the existing right of way with minimal impact and cost. This will be difficult because it is a tight corridor and the cost will be significant. The project will present the definition of the 8-lane alternative to the committee next year.

Julie gave an update on each of the three alternatives proposed for the SR-520 bridge replacement:

4-lane Alternative

The 4-lane alternative looks very much like what the Executive Committee reviewed in July 2003. The alternative would build a HOV/transit ramp to connect with the I-5 express lanes for the morning west bound traffic only. The Portage Bay Bridge will be rebuilt with 5 to 6 lanes and full shoulders. The Montlake interchange would be rebuilt with 4 lanes and full shoulders under Montlake Boulevard. Montlake Boulevard over SR-520 and interchange ramps would also be rebuilt. Flyer stops would be rebuilt on the outside and a signal would be added at the westbound ramp terminus. A continuous bicycle/pedestrian lane would be constructed from Montlake Boulevard across the lake to 96th Avenue NE and NE Points Drive. The floating bridge will be rebuilt with 4 lanes and full shoulders. There is also an option to build the pontoons to allow for future HCT. From Evergreen Point to Bellevue the roadway will be rebuilt with 4 lanes and full shoulders and an option for a toll plaza.

6-lane Alternative

The 6-lane alternative would build a reversible HOV/transit ramp between SR-520 and the I-5 express lanes. The ramp would serve westbound traffic in the morning and eastbound traffic in the evening. A lid would be built over SR-520 from 10th Avenue East to Delmar Street. The Montlake interchange would be rebuilt with new ramps and Montlake Boulevard over SR-520. Under Montlake Boulevard the roadway would be rebuilt with 6 lanes and full shoulders. A signal would be added at the westbound ramp terminus. A lid would be constructed over SR-520 and inline transit stops would be built on the inside. A continuous bicycle/pedestrian lane would be constructed from Montlake Boulevard across the lake to 96th Avenue NE and NE Points Drive. The floating bridge would be rebuilt with 6 lanes, full shoulders, and pontoons that would allow for future HCT. From Evergreen Point to Bellevue Way the roadway would be rebuilt with 6 lanes and full shoulders. Lids would be constructed over SR-520 at 76th, 84th, and 92nd. Inline transit stops would be built on the inside and there would be an option for a toll plaza. From Bellevue Way to 108th there would be rebuilt interchange ramps and Bellevue Way would be rebuilt over SR-520. The new roadway would connect to existing 6 lanes at 108th. The 6-lane alternative would have a re-stripe on the entirety of SR-520 to bring HOV lanes on the inside.

8-lane Alternative

The 8-lane alternative would add a reversible ramp from SR-520 to the I-5 express lanes to and from the south. I-5 would also be widened as needed to accommodate SR-520 traffic. The widening of I-5 is currently being studied, and has not been included in the WSDOT Cost Estimation Validation Process (CEVP). There would be 9 lanes between

Roanoke Park and Portage Bay. There would also be a lid over SR-520 at 10th Avenue East. There would be 6 lanes under Montlake Boulevard and a rebuilt interchange with a wider eastbound on-ramp and westbound off-ramp. A signal would be added at the westbound ramp terminal. A lid and inside flyer stops would also be constructed at the Montlake interchange. There would be a pedestrian/bicycle lane from Montlake Boulevard to 96th Avenue NE. There would be inside HOV lanes from I-5 to Bellevue Way with a re-stripe of HOV lanes to the inside from Bellevue Way to West Lake Sammamish Parkway. The floating bridge would be rebuilt with 8 lanes and pontoons sized to allow for future HCT. On the east shore an eastbound HOV lane would be added along with a rebuilt westbound HOV lane. Shoulders would be added along with lids at 76th, 84th, and 92nd. There would also be rebuilt flyer stops on the inside and a toll plaza. The area east of Bellevue Way is being studied to identify what changes are necessary to accommodate 8 lanes of traffic. The changes necessary east of Bellevue Way have not been included in the CEVP. The 6 and 8-lane will not function the same, but they will have some of the same characteristics.

Comments/Questions

Aubrey Davis, Washington State Transportation Commission, asked why the EIS is not scheduled to be completed sooner.

There has been a 9-month delay in working on this project because of lack of funding. Also, more time is needed to look at the 8-lane alternative and its impacts on I-5.

Rosemarie Ives, City of Redmond, commented that she had not heard about an engineering solution for the I-405 and SR-520 interchange and stated that this needs to be fixed. At the bare minimum there needs to be connection of the HOV lanes to I-405.

The 8-lane alternative will look at impacts to I-405. After consideration of project budget constraints, the I-405/SR-520 interchange is not a priority at this time.

Mayor Ives stated pointed out that Redmond has been supportive of many transportation projects and she does not understand why at the very least the HOV connections cannot be made.

David Asher, City of Kirkland, asked if the 8-lane alternative is adding about a year to the EIS.

It is adding about 8 to 9 months and then some additional for traffic modeling.

Richard Conlin, City of Seattle, asked if there would be 5 lanes at Portage Bay.

There will be an auxiliary lane for the on-ramp and transit. Since the distance is so short, there will be a lane from Montlake to I-5.

Councilmember Conlin asked if the level of service would be b or c.

Most likely d, but that will come out in the EIS. You are taking a substandard current situation then adding a ramp, lanes, shoulders and everything becomes much bigger.

Commissioner Davis asked how HOVs and transit would get over to the HOV lane.

They will have to weave across general-purpose lanes.

Grace Crunican, City of Seattle, asked if level of service is going to be c or d then what will be different in the spring.

Information will come from modeling. The 4-lane alternative will be much different than current situation.

Ms. Crunican asked how a single occupant vehicle driver heading north on I-5 would get onto

I-5.
They would merge.
Councilmember Asher asked if we could look at two-way expressways the whole time.
That has been investigated, but problems have been identified. The I-5 corridor EIS will look at that starting next spring.
Connie Marshall, City of Bellevue, commented that the re-striping of HOV all the way to Redmond needs to be included.
Tom Paine, City of Redmond, asked what cost the project will be using.
Rob McKenna, King County Council, responded that the project is looking at the budget from the east, west, Sound Transit phase two, tolling, federal funds, among others.
Jeanne Berry, Town of Yarrow Point, commented that the bike lane stopping at 96th Avenue must be a misprint because there is nothing there.

Tolling Study Update

Brent Baker, Parsons Brinckerhoff, gave an update on the ongoing SR-520 Toll Feasibility Study. They have completed the tolled traffic and revenue projections for the 6-lane alternative, based upon an opening year of 2014. In this scenario HOV 3+ are considered toll free. Projections using the 4-lane alternative are being studied currently. In the 4-lane scenario, HOV 3+ vehicles are assumed to be tolled. They are also examining the revenue yields of two different bookend pricing strategies or tolling objectives.

There are many interrelated factors that influence travel demand, and thus, toll revenues. Economic growth, population and employment, and the future network of alternative routes and modes impact travel demand for a tolled SR-520. The toll schedule will depend on the operating policy and objectives for the facility and is influenced by value users place on their time. In either case, it is assumed that the toll rates would be adjusted by time of day to manage demand for reasonable flow conditions. Preliminary study results based on travel modeling using value of time estimates from a stated preference survey of current SR-520 users, show a lower bound toll range of $0.00 to $3.00 each way and an upper bound range of $0.75 to $4.60 each way for the six lane alternative. These one-way toll rates are based upon 2014 demand conditions in 2014 dollars.

Because tolls divert some trips from the bridge, it is useful to consider the nature of this toll diversion behavior. There are several types of toll diversion, including mode change to HOV or transit, choosing an alternate route and/or time of travel, change of trip destination, lowering trip frequency, and eliminating the trip altogether. Preliminary study results are showing a potential toll diversion between 18% and 33% of 2014 peak demand depending on toll rate assumptions and alternative. This results in a relatively minor increase in I-90 traffic during PM peak due to limited capacity on this facility. Route diversion to I-90 is much higher during off-peak times and is more sensitive to the SR-520 toll rate.

The study includes preliminary annual gross revenue projections for 2014. The upper bound figure is $82 million and the lower is $54 million. Both incorporate a 5% deduction for electronic toll collection errors and violations. Net annual revenues available for bonding need to include a deduction for maintenance and operations. Until more refined estimates are available this assumed to be about 20% of gross revenues, giving an upper bound estimate of $66 million and lower bound estimate of $43 million. The 20% figure used for deductions is only a rough estimate. The study is currently trying to identify the correct figure to use for operations and maintenance deductions.

An upcoming report in November 2003 will include an analysis of the 4-lane alternative with all HOVs paying a toll, toll collections and operations cost estimates, and a financial analysis looking at construction funding that could be supported by toll revenue bonds under various scenarios.

Questions/Comments

George Martin, City of Clyde Hill, asked if there was a written analysis that shows where the toll plazas will be on the whole system.

There is no written report. There has been some assumption that they will be placed on the eastside near where they were before. We are looking at one option that is fully electronic and can be placed anywhere on the corridor with no footprint issue. The hard part is adding manual toll plazas. If 20% of the users do not use electronic tolls, there may be a need for 2 or 3 toll plazas.

Mayor Martin commented that if there has been some determinations that toll plazas will be placed near the old toll location they need to adhere to the highest design standards.

Aubrey asked for the effect of license plate photography.

That is currently used in other places for enforcement. There are different options available such as free passes for the first couple of times through or sending someone a bill in the mail, if they went through without paying a toll.

Councilmember McKenna asked if people would get billed from outside the area.

In Amsterdam, they do not track the people that come from outside the area.

Jim Horn, Washington State Senate, asked if there was data showing the cost of a toll compared to driving another route.

We do not have an exact comparison. The model has certain assumptions that make that decision for people. We could do a chart that shows the time that it would take to use a different route.

Mayor Ives asked how the proposed tolls compare to other tolls around the nation.

We will have the Tacoma Narrows Bridge to compare to and we can produce a chart that compares toll rates around the country.

Councilmember Asher asked if the study only assumes tolling on the SR-520.

Just improvements in the nickel package have been included in this study. Regional tolling is a different question.

Councilmember Conlin asked if tolls could be used to expand TDM. He also commented that it would be good to keep tolls in place so that the next time you have to put tolls in place you can avoid the shock of tolling to the public.

They are using toll revenues to expand TDM in San Diego, California.
Fred McConkey, Town of Hunts Point, asked if tolls would be variable or dynamic and if they would go away.
In the model the tolls are variable. Right now, the law requires tolls to be removed once the project has been paid for.
Mayor Martin asked if the assumption is to use tolls just to pay for the bridge or to put other money into the system.
The study is currently looking at what financing and funding alternatives are and could possibly be included to pay for other activities.
Senator Horn commented that the assumption has already made in the RTID that the tolls are just temporary. He also commented that this must go in front of the people and it will be interesting to see if tolls enhance or hurt the project.
Mayor Ives made the point that revenues from SR-520 tolling should not be used for other things in the overall network.
Councilmember Conlin pointed out that based on the graph, it is efficient to raise the tolls.

Other Issues

Julie gave the group a brief update on the Bridge Design Workshop that took place on October 14th that looked at water issues on the west end of Lake Washington. The workshop found that participants preferred a storm water treatment facility at the current MOHAI site and they like deep-water runoffs.

Public outreach meetings are scheduled for October 29th at MOHAI and October 30th at Saint Lukes church in Bellevue. Each event will be held from 4:30-7:30 pm. In addition to this public outreach the team will work to coordinate roundtable discussions with communities adjacent to SR-520.

Regarding the sunken vessels, there are two barges and one ship that are about 160 feet in length. The barges are empty with no engines. The divers saw the word Aberdeen on one of the barges.

The Coast Guard has changed the times when Montlake Bridge is not required to open for vessels. The bridge will not have to open from 7-10 am and 3:30-7 pm between September 2nd and the end of April.

The project will meet again with the Executive Committee in January 2004 with the tolling study and an update on the 8-lane alternative.

<u>Committee Members</u>

Present	Last	First	Organization
X	Asher	David	City of Kirkland
	Becker	Daniel	City of Medina

Present	Last	First	Organization
X	Berry	Jeanne	Town of Yarrow Point
X	Burleigh	Mary-Alice	City of Kirkland
	Cairns	Bryan	City of Mercer Island
	Ceis	Tim	City of Seattle
	Crawford	Jack	Sound Transit
X	Crunican	Grace	City of Seattle
X	Davis	Aubrey	WSDOT
X	Dye	Dave	WSDOT-UCO
	Earling	Dave	Sound Transit
	Edwards	Bob	Puget Sound Regional Council
	Fiske-Zuniga	Anne	City of Seattle
X	Horn	Jim	Washington State Senate
X	Ives	Rosemarie	Redmond Mayor
	Jacobsen	Ken	Washington State Senate
	Jahncke	El	Mercer Island Mayor
	Kargianis	George	Washington State Transportation Commission
	Krochalis	Rick	Federal Transit Administration
	Leonard	Jim	Federal Highway Administration
X	Marshall	Connie	Bellevue Mayor
X	Martin	George	Clyde Hill Mayor
	Mathis	Daniel	Federal Highway Administration
X	McConkey	Fred	Hunts Point Mayor
X	McKenna	Rob	King County Council
	Murray	Ed	WA State House of Representatives
X	Noble	Phil	Bellevue City Council
X	Paine	Thomas	Redmond Council
	Pflug	Cheryl	WA State House of Representatives
	Rourke	Philip	City of Clyde Hill
	Rutledge	Steve	Town of Yarrow Point
	Sullivan	Cynthia	King County Council
	Sullivan	Maureen	WSDOT-UCO
	Taniguchi	Harold	King County
	Wills	Heidi	Seattle City Council

Public Participants

- Sheldon Jahn, City of Medina
- David Allen, City of Seattle
- King Cushman, Puget Sound Regional Council
- Goran Sparmann, City of Bellevue
- Chris Johnson, King County
- Natalie Singer, Seattle Times
- Terry Marpert, City of Redmond
- Randy Banneker, City of Seattle
- Jeff Switzer, King County Journal
- David Hull, King County Metro
- Virginia Gunby, 1000 Friends of Washington
- Jay Alexander, Washington State House of Representatives
- Steve Broback, ECRD

Project Team Members

- Maureen Sullivan, WSDOT-UCO
- Julie Meredith, WSDOT-UCO
- Helen Kennedy-Smith, WSDOT
- Kinyan Lui, WSDOT-UCO
- Brad Phillips, Parametrix
- Michael Horntvendt, Parametrix
- Lorie Parker, CH2M Hill
- Brent Baker, Parsons Brinckerhoff