



Seattle Community Design Process Nov. 9, 2011 Public Session Public Comment Summary

Overview

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) hosted the second public session of the Seattle Community Design Process (SCDP) on Nov. 9, 2011 at the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) in Seattle. Approximately 180 people attended the event and approximately 270 individual comments were received.

At the session, attendees were able to view a WSDOT presentation and a series of informational boards to provide the following:

- SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV program overview
- SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV project overview
- Seattle Community Design Process background information
- SR 520 sustainability goals and objectives
- Public feedback received in the SCDP to date
- Background information on key topics of interest including noise, traffic, and air quality
- Introduction to value choices for healthy, sustainable communities
- Information on how to participate in the workshop

Information on the SR 520, Floating Bridge and Landings Project and Community Construction Management Planning was also available in a separate area.

Members of the public were able to view information at a series of work stations organized by key geographic areas along the Seattle side of the SR 520 corridor. These areas included:

- Roanoke
- Portage Bay Bridge
- Montlake
- West Approach Bridge

Workshop focus

Per public requests, WSDOT provided information on noise, regional context, and existing and potential connections at each work station. In addition, urban design drawings explored how space could be used based upon feedback provided by the public for each particular geographic area. There was also an activity area where people could learn more about spatial concepts. People were able to view all materials and provide their input through drawing on trace paper, placing comments on post-it notes, and having conversations with project staff.

Value choices

The Nov. 9 public session also focused on a list of value choices for sustainable communities developed from feedback from the previous public workshop. These value choices can serve as

useful conceptual frameworks for the public and the design team when developing design refinements. The value choices include:

- **See and/or hear** – The desire for noise reduction can clash with desires for views in particular locations. Which is a priority?
- **To and/or through** – Is a particular feature or facility intended to be a destination or a place that people pass through?
- **Green and/or gray** – Where can we use natural materials and reduce the use of carbon-intensive materials such as concrete?
- **Single and/or several** – Does a facility have only a single function or can multiple functions be layered to create more value for the investment?
- **Few and/or many** – Does a feature or facility benefit only a few constituents or does it provide benefits to many?
- **Big wheels and/or little wheels** – While considering the needs of vehicles and bicyclists, how are special needs being addressed?
- **Connect the dots** – Are surrounding and existing neighborhoods, parks, paths, and community plans, etc. being considered in a meaningful, integrated and useful way?

The value choices were shared and discussed throughout the event, and people were encouraged to consider these value choices when evaluating potential design refinements in particular areas.

Workshop accomplishments

In general, participants indicated they appreciated the range of materials shown at the event and the materials that were used to help people understand and articulate potential uses of space. There was often conflicting feedback in particular areas regarding aspects such as desired activities, configuration, and size, which helped participants understand the complexity of competing desires. People continue to express concern on certain topics including:

- Traffic
- Noise
- Views
- Air quality
- Timing of project funding and construction activities

Below is a summary of the general themes of public feedback organized by key topics and geographic areas. This summary is meant to capture the larger themes of the public's written comments and conversations with staff and *is not inclusive of all the individual comments received*. All verbatim comments have been recorded in a separate document that is being used by WSDOT and the SR 520 design team to inform their design decisions as they continue to explore possible design refinements through the Seattle Community Design Process.

Roanoke area: (includes 10th Avenue and Delmar Drive lid and I-5 interchange)

- **Traffic and I-5 interchange**
 - Traffic is an important factor in this area, and people have indicated particular concern regarding the I-5 interchange, including how the transit/HOV lanes will operate.

- The I-5 interchange should be efficient and safe, and people provided a wide variety of suggestions for its configuration, including lowered I-5 express lanes and dedicated HOV lanes in each direction.
- **Bicycle and pedestrian connections**
 - Bicycle and pedestrian connections should be safe and easy, and improve areas where there are conflicts with vehicles.
 - People want this area to provide connections to other existing networks.
 - The Roanoke steps are heavily used by pedestrians and should be maintained.
- **Lid**
 - People provided a wide variety of suggested lid activities that include both active and passive uses. Some people see this as a “through” area, while others see it as a place to go “to.” Examples of specific suggestions include:
 - Dog park
 - Soccer field
 - Play structures
 - Seating areas
 - Crime and safety are key concerns in this area. The design needs to allow for “eyes on the street”, and promote community ownership. People provided a variety of ideas for increasing safety and community ownership, including increasing local access.
 - The area should connect and relate physically and visually to other nearby green spaces and parks.

Portage Bay Bridge area:

- **Traffic**
 - People are concerned that reduced speeds on the bridge will result in traffic back-ups.
- **Bridge structure**
 - People want a “signature” or iconic bridge.
 - The area under the bridge needs to be attractive and safe.
 - There were a variety of comments regarding the types of bridge structures and elements that are preferred, some of which were conflicting. Specific examples include:
 - Add a bicycle lane.
 - Remove the planted median.
 - Include lighting on vertical bridge elements.
- **Noise and views**
 - The “see and/or hear” value choice is particularly relevant in this area. Views to and from the bridge are important, but people are also very concerned about traffic noise.
 - Some people believe views are more important while others believe that reduced noise is more important.
- **Bicycle and pedestrian access and connections**
 - People want bicycle and pedestrian connections and access throughout the area and across the bridge.

- WSDOT should build upon the existing trail networks in this area. This network should also connect to other existing and proposed green spaces to create a continuous “greenbelt” and regional trail network. People identified many parks, trails and other areas they would like connected including: Montlake Playfield; Bill Dawson Trail; Arboretum Waterfront Trail; and West Montlake Park.

Montlake area:

- **Traffic**

- People are concerned that an increase in traffic back-ups will overflow onto the local streets. Neighbors are concerned that the increase in traffic on local streets will have negative effects to their homes.
- People provided a wide variety of suggestions for how to configure the roads and improve traffic operations in the area. Specific suggestions include:
 - Place the westbound off-ramp underneath 24th Avenue East.
 - Move 24th Avenue East further to the east.
- People expressed a variety of concerns about Lake Washington Boulevard becoming a major arterial.

- **Views**

- Views are important in this area and there is an interest in preserving specific historic views.

- **Bicycles and pedestrians**

- Designs should improve bicycle connections through reducing bicycle, pedestrian and vehicle conflicts and creating safe, comfortable areas for bicyclists that are easy to navigate.
- The bicycle/pedestrian path should connect into the larger regional trail system.
- Design should incorporate a bicycle facility on the lid.

- **Lid**

- People commented that the visual and physical impacts of the ramps in this area should be minimized.
- Participants provided many specific suggestions for ways to configure and connect the lid to adjacent areas, as well as types of activities or uses for the area. Many of these suggestions were often conflicting. For example:
 - Some people want the lid to be smaller, while others believe it should remain as large as possible.
 - Some people believe this should be a “to” area, others want the area to be a place to go “through”, while some believe the area should serve both purposes.
 - People want the lid to be an area for bicycle/pedestrian connections, remain as open as possible, be an extension of the Arboretum, be a place for family activities, and/or host vendors and other services for commuters and bicyclists.

- **Connections**

- Transit, bicycle, and pedestrian connections should be safe, easy and tied to existing facilities in the area and region. These connections should also provide access to and from the lid.

- People provided a wide variety of suggestions for how to improve transit, bicycle, and pedestrian connections. Examples of specific suggestions include:
 - Connected bicycle access from the Montlake area, through the Portage Bay/Roanoke areas, and continuing to Capitol Hill
 - Transit connections from the Montlake lid to the University of Washington light rail station
 - Separated bicycle and pedestrian paths wherever possible
- **Landscaping and art**
 - There were several requests for landscaping and art along various features such as paths, lids, and noise walls.
- **Stormwater**
 - People commented on the stormwater facility and want it to be integrated into the surrounding environment. Participants provided a variety of suggestions for how to integrate the facility and often mentioned coordination with King County's proposed Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) project.

West Approach Bridge area:

- **Traffic**
 - There is general concern that there will be an increase in traffic, back-ups and cut-through traffic in the nearby neighborhoods.
 - People are worried that an increase in traffic will result in greater noise and worsened air quality for the nearby neighborhoods.
- **Bicycle and pedestrian access**
 - Bicycle and pedestrian connections should tie into the larger regional network.
- **Bridge structure**
 - People want an attractive bridge structure, and several suggested that it appear "soft and smooth".
 - The under bridge area should be attractive and safe.