

SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project



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PART 1: WHAT THE PROJECT IS AND HOW IT CAME TO BE

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SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement

ABSTRACT

The existing Portage Bay and Evergreen Point bridges on SR 520 are at the end of their useful life and must be replaced. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and Sound Transit, in cooperation with 15 resource agencies and local jurisdictions, plan to replace the existing facilities in order to provide structures capable of withstanding wind-storms and earthquakes and to improve mobility and access for people and goods along the corridor.

The SR 520 corridor provides vital transportation connections between downtown Seattle and the Eastside, as well as to other destinations in the region and Washington state. It serves a large share of cross-lake commuter and commercial trips in the region. Failure of either or both of the Portage Bay and Evergreen Point bridges would create severe hardships for Seattle, the Eastside cities, and the region, and could result in loss of life, injury, and/or substantial economic loss.

For these reasons, the draft environmental impact statement evaluates two build alternatives and seven options for their potential effects on the natural and built environments. The analysis also considers construction and cumulative effects. A preferred alternative is not identified.

SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO:

National Environmental Policy Act
(42 U.S.C. 4322(2)(c))

State Environmental Policy Act
(Chapter 43.21C, Revised Code of
Washington)

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7/14/06

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Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information

Individuals requiring reasonable accommodation of any type may contact Paul Krueger at 206-381-6432. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may call Washington State Telecommunications Relay Service (TTY) at 711.

Title VI

WSDOT assures full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, national origin, and sex in the provision of benefits and services. For language interpretation services please contact WSDOT at 206-381-6432. It is necessary to speak at least limited English so that your request can be appropriately responded to. For information on WSDOT's Title VI Program, please contact the Title VI Coordinator at 360-705-7098.

Fact Sheet

Project Title

SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project

Project Description

The SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project proposes to replace SR 520's Portage Bay and Evergreen Point bridges and improve the existing roadway between I-5 in Seattle and Bellevue Way or 108th Avenue Northeast on the Eastside. The new bridges would improve resistance to windstorms and earthquakes, while the new roadway would have wider shoulders to help reduce congestion by improving roadway operations and driver safety. The project would also include a new regional bicycle/pedestrian path across Lake Washington that would link to other elements of the regional trail system.

The proposed action is necessary to ensure the continued integrity of the Portage Bay and Evergreen Point bridges. The Portage Bay Bridge, the approaches to the Evergreen Point Bridge, and the bridges over 10th Avenue East and Delmar Drive are vulnerable to earthquake damage because of their hollow columns and the way in which these columns are connected to the main structure of the bridge. The floating portion of the Evergreen Point Bridge is susceptible to damage by high winds; storms over the years have required many bridge closures, and the bridge is riding a foot lower in the water than when it first opened.

Both structures are at high risk of failure in the next 20 years and need to be replaced to maintain public safety. In addition, as one of the two main east-west routes across Lake Washington, SR 520 is vital to keeping the region moving—and, as a result, supports the health of the regional economy.

This draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) analyzes a No Build Alternative and two build alternatives. The 4-Lane Alternative would replace the existing roadway and bridges with new facilities that would have four general-purpose lanes, like today's facility, but would include wider shoulders. The 6-Lane Alternative would add continuous HOV lanes and would also include five landscaped lids over SR 520 to reconnect neighborhoods that are now separated by the highway. WSDOT has also evaluated several optional variations of the 6-Lane Alternative that would improve traffic operations and/or reduce neighborhood effects.

Co-Lead Agencies (NEPA and SEPA)

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WSDOT is the project proponent and the SEPA lead agency. FHWA is the NEPA lead agency. Sound Transit is the co-lead agency under SEPA.

Responsible SEPA Official

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Document Availability

The Draft EIS can be accessed at www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/sr520Bridge. Readers can then follow a link from that page to www.sr520deiscomments.com, where you can submit comments online. The Draft EIS is also available on CD-ROM and can be obtained by contacting the SR 520 project office:

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Printed copies of the Draft EIS are available at select City of Seattle public libraries and neighborhood service centers, King County public libraries, and other locations in the affected communities (see the Distribution List attached at the end of this document). Related appendices (discipline reports and technical memoranda) are available at libraries in communities along the project corridor. These documents are also available for purchase at the SR 520 Project Office,

414 Olive Way, Suite 400, Seattle, WA 98101.

CDs and Executive Summaries are available at no charge. The price for the hard copy Draft EIS is \$40.

Comment Period

The comment period on the Draft EIS will begin on August 18, 2006, when notice of the Draft EIS issuance will be published in the Federal Register. WSDOT will accept comments through October 2, 2006.

Review Comments and Contact Information

All written comments should be sent to:

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414 Olive Way, Suite 400
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Comments can be e-mailed to:
sr520deiscomments@wsdot.wa.gov

The public can access the Draft EIS and comment online at:
www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/sr520Bridge

Public Hearings

Public hearings to provide information and accept comments on the Draft EIS will be held on:

- September 18, 2006
Museum of History and Industry
2700 24th Avenue East, Seattle
4:00 - 7:00 p.m.
- September 21, 2006
St. Luke's Lutheran Church
3030 Bellevue Way Northeast,
Bellevue
4:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Because Grays Harbor is the potential location of a special projects construction site where

the Evergreen Point Bridge pontoons could be constructed, a public hearing will also be held in Hoquiam:

- September 14, 2006
Hoquiam High School
501 West Emerson, Hoquiam
5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Anticipated Permits and Approvals

Anticipated permits and approvals that would be required for the project include the following:

Federal

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:
 - Section 404, Individual Permits
 - Section 10, Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899
- U.S. Coast Guard: Section 9, Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries:
 - Section 7, Endangered Species Act Consultation
 - Magnuson-Stevens Essential Fish Habitat Consultation
- Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation: National Historic Preservation Act Consultation (Section 106)

State and Regional

- Puget Sound Clean Air Agency Clean Air Conformity Certification
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Hydraulic Project Approval
- Washington Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Lands Use Authorization
- Washington State Department of Ecology
 - 401 Water Quality Certification

- 402 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
- Coastal Zone Management Act

Local

City of Seattle

- Master Use Permit
- Shoreline Substantial Development Permit

City of Medina

- Shoreline Substantial Development Permit
- Critical Areas Review

Town of Hunts Point

- Shoreline Substantial Development Permit

City of Clyde Hill

- Critical Areas Review

Town of Yarrow Point

- Critical Areas Review

City of Kirkland

- Critical Areas Review

City of Bellevue

- Critical Areas Review

Authors and Principal Contributors

See the List of Preparers at the back of the Draft EIS.

Date of Issue of Draft EIS

August 18, 2006

Subsequent Environmental Review

The comment period ends October 2, 2006. After the comment period ends, the lead agencies will respond to comments. A Preferred Alternative will be identified, and issuance of a Final EIS is anticipated by fall of 2007. Following issuance of the Final EIS, a Record of Decision will be issued by the Federal Highway Administration.

SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project



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IN MEMORIAM

WSDOT staff wish to acknowledge that publication of this document would not have been possible without the dedicated leadership of Maureen Sullivan, our past project director.

We will carry forward her spirit and commitment toward providing neighborhood-supported and environmentally sensitive transportation projects in her memory.

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PART 1:
What the project is
and how it came to be