

SR 520

Seattle Community Design Process



2011 Progress update

August - December 2011

Seattle Community Design Process overview

The Seattle Community Design Process (SCDP) is a collaborative effort of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), the City of Seattle, other partnering agencies, and neighborhood stakeholders to develop **comprehensive, sustainable urban design approaches** to reconnect Seattle neighborhoods and improve the SR 520 corridor.

This progress update captures the work conducted from August to December 2011 and provides the following:

- An overview of the Seattle Community Design Process.
- A summary of the contributions of participating stakeholders.
- A snapshot of the preliminary design ideas developed from feedback collected to date.
- An outline of key critical steps toward the construction of the I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project.



The Seattle Community Design Process addresses WSDOT's commitment made by a 2010 multi-agency workgroup to continue to work collaboratively with the City of Seattle and Seattle neighborhood stakeholders to expand and refine the aesthetic vision of the project.

Public comment summaries and all public session materials are posted online at

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/I5ToMedina/scdp.htm>

For questions or comments please email us at

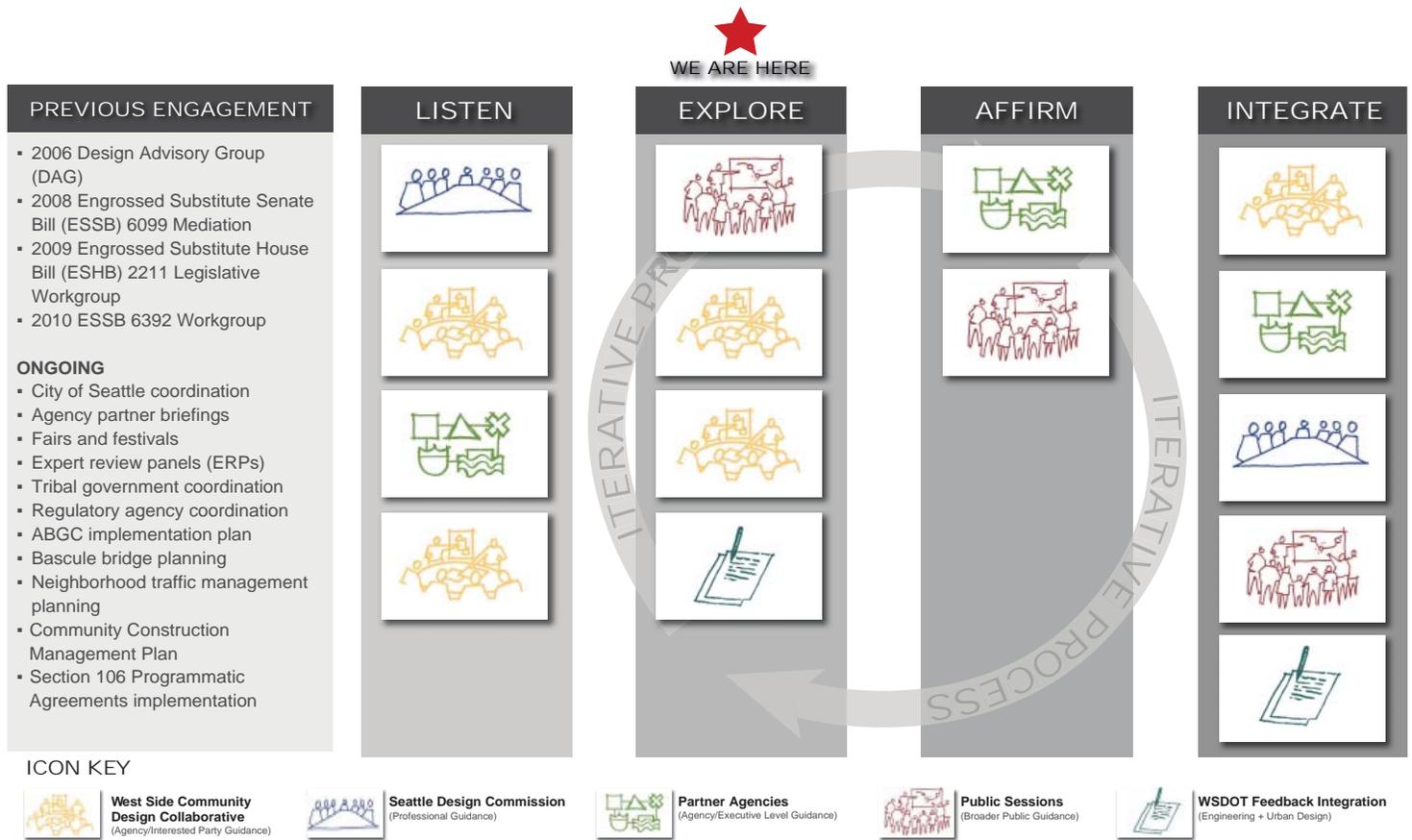
SR520CommunityDesign@wsdot.wa.gov

An iterative and inclusive process

The SCDP provides the framework for WSDOT to advance the design of the I-5 to Medina project preferred alternative through an **iterative and inclusive approach** by:

- **Listening** to design professionals, our partner agencies, and regional and neighborhood stakeholders.
- **Exploring** new design ideas based on feedback from stakeholders and the broader public.
- **Affirming** the direction of our design exploration through continued outreach and development of design ideas.

- **Integrating** urban and sustainable design ideas into the I-5 to Medina project.
- Continue **listening** to input from design professionals and community stakeholders as the process moves forward.



SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project overview

The SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program is a long-term investment in one of the region's busiest corridors, connecting population and employment centers in Seattle and the east side of Lake Washington. The SR 520 program currently includes three projects that will replace the aging floating bridge across Lake Washington, and complete critical safety and mobility improvements along the corridor from I-5 in Seattle to SR 202 in Redmond.

The I-5 to Medina project replaces vulnerable floating and fixed bridge structures and improves safety, connectivity and efficiency of the SR 520 corridor between I-5 in Seattle and Medina. The project will enhance regional and local mobility with a new six-lane corridor that includes transit/HOV lanes, regional and local bicycle/pedestrian paths, landscaped lids, open space, and improved transit facilities.



SR 520 west side project map



The Montlake interchange baseline design, identified in the Record of Decision, is the starting point for our conversations

In summer 2011, the project was granted federal approval from the Federal Highway Administration through the Record of Decision. This federal approval includes important project commitments to surrounding communities before, during and after construction. These commitments include noise reduction measures, traffic-calming strategies, construction management planning, park and natural environment mitigation and a focus on context-sensitive urban design approaches.

WSDOT is now working to **identify and refine the project's urban and sustainable design elements** through the Seattle Community Design Process. The design ideas explored to date are consistent with the approved environmental footprint, baseline design features and previous project commitments. As the project moves forward, WSDOT will continue to listen to stakeholders and include this input in design development.

Where did we start?

The SCDP process started with a baseline design and urban design principles developed through previous public processes and conceptual design efforts. This current design phase of the I-5 to Medina project was initiated to develop design ideas based upon **previous and continued feedback** from partner agencies and neighborhood stakeholders. Ultimately, WSDOT hopes to build community support and stewardship of project elements that support **healthy communities and regional mobility**. The SCDP relies upon both design professionals and public voices to inform this iterative and inclusive process.

How did we collect feedback?

The SCDP process engages with multiple stakeholders including:

- An **Urban Design and Sustainability Expert Review Panel** to gain a wide range of perspectives from city planning, urban and sustainable design, and large-scale public infrastructure project professionals with regional and national experience.
- A **West Side Community Design Collaborative (WSCDC)** group made up of neighborhood participants and partner agency staff to serve as a sounding board to discuss community feedback and direct the development of new design ideas.
- The **Seattle Design Commission** to seek input from design professionals who bring a regional and city-wide perspective on projects that specifically affect Seattle neighborhoods.
- The **broader public** through community sessions that targeted a range of stakeholders, including corridor neighbors, commuters, bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders and drivers. More than 130 people attended each of three lively public sessions held between October and December. These meetings, along with electronic and written input, represented a primary avenue for broader public participation.



August Expert Review Panel

Who's involved in the West Side Community Design Collaborative?

Public members

- Cascade Bicycle Club
- City of Bellevue planner
- Forterra (formerly Cascade Land Conservancy)
- Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce
- Laurelhurst resident
- Madison Park resident
- Montlake resident
- Ravenna-Bryant resident
- Roanoke Park / Portage Bay resident
- Seattle Yacht Club
- University District resident

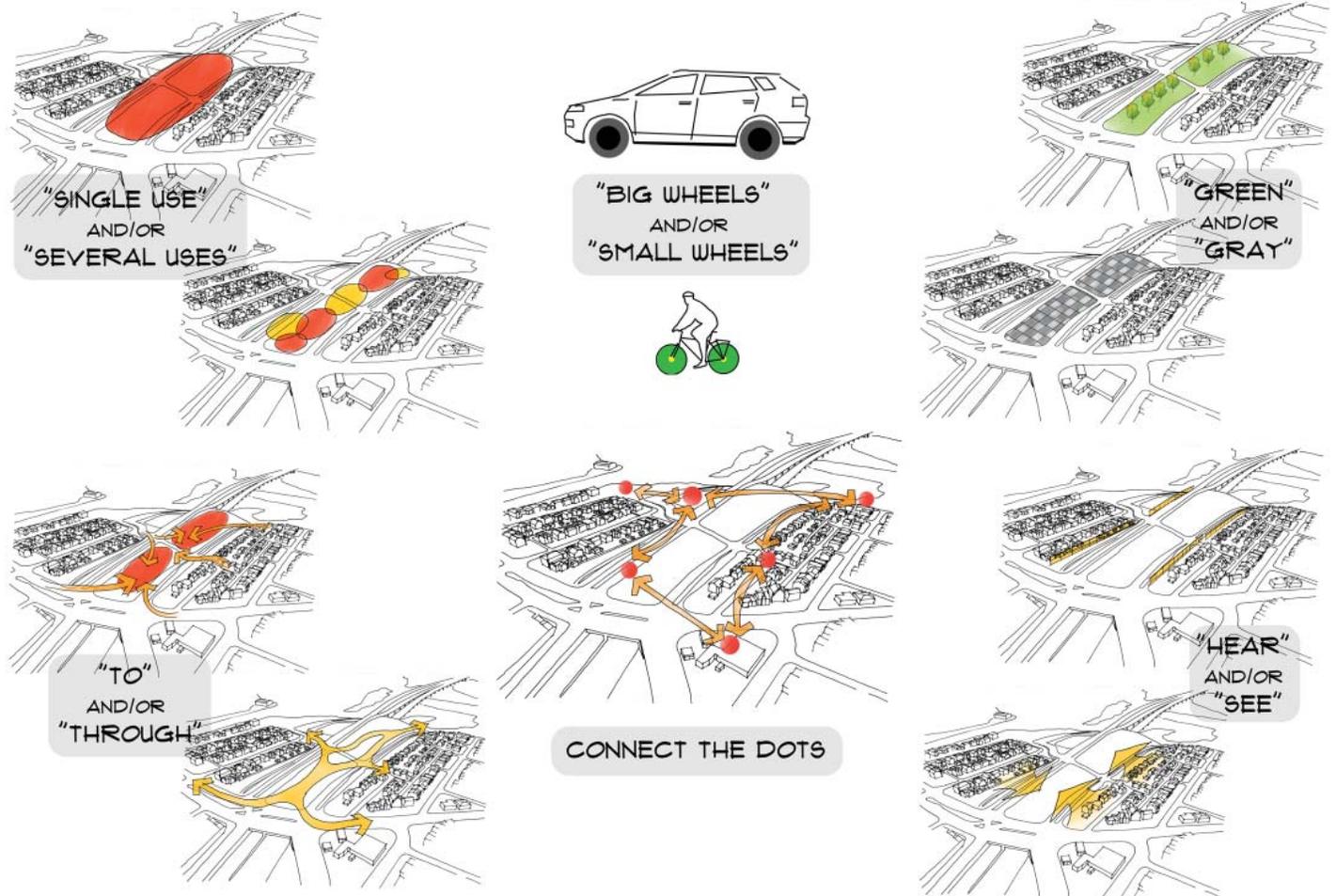
Partner agency members

- King County Metro
- Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board
- Seattle City Council
- Seattle Department of Transportation
- Seattle Design Commission
- Seattle Parks and Recreation
- Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board
- Sound Transit
- University of Washington

Key considerations for the region and SR 520 neighborhoods

In order to build a common understanding for our stakeholders and the public, WSDOT developed materials to summarize the baseline design, or conceptual project elements. Materials shared at the October and November 2011 public sessions outlined the project requirements at both the regional scale and within four specific neighborhood subareas. The subareas included the Roanoke area, Portage Bay Bridge area, Montlake area and West Approach Bridge area.

With the input of the West Side Community Design Collaborative, the design team also developed a series of icons to represent **key design principles** for the public to consider regarding circulation, connectivity, gathering spaces, landscaping, structures, activities and ownership in these subareas. These principles were applied to specific areas of the I-5 to Medina project and informed the development of preliminary design ideas shared at the December public session.



Key design principles

Exploring design opportunities

The regional vision of the I-5 to Medina project is vital to the overall completion and continuity of the SR 520 corridor. At the same time, participants in the public process focused their comments on specific subareas along the corridor relating to where they live, work and play.

Responding to both public input and design experts, the project team prepared preliminary design ideas for the December public meeting focused on both regional connections and gaps, as well as on specific subareas.

What follows is a summary of the design opportunities and materials presented at the third public meeting, organized by subarea. Each subarea includes:

- A bird's-eye view of the baseline design.
- Feedback collected between August and December 2011.
- Conceptual sketches of key design opportunities.

As this process continues, these ideas will be investigated by the design team to **affirm and integrate** into urban design and sustainability refinements. WSDOT will share these refinements with the WSCDC, partnering agencies and the public, and **listen to continued feedback**.



Community and WSDOT staff at October public session



Community and WSDOT staff at November public session



Community and WSDOT staff at December public session

Exploring design opportunities - Regional and local neighborhood connections

What we heard

- Create continuous linkages to connect gaps in existing Seattle and regional paths and trails.
- Connect recreation sites and other community amenities with water trails, and bike and pedestrian access.
- Ensure safe places under bridges with connections and activities that activate the space.

Design opportunities

- Coordinate with the City of Seattle to enhance or create links between communities and recreation areas.
- Provide spaces that offer visual and physical connections in Portage Bay, Union Bay and across Lake Washington.
- Activate areas at Portage Bay Bridge with connecting paths and community spaces for safety.

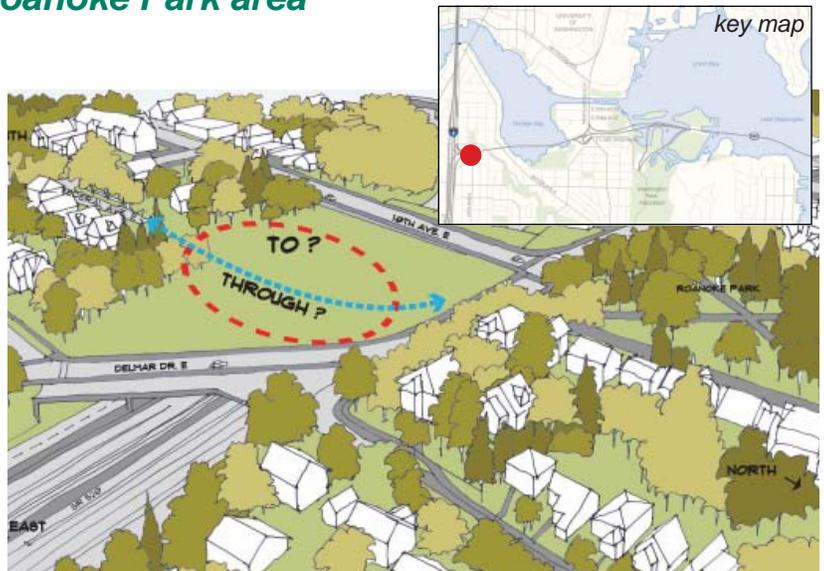


SR 520 west side project vicinity connection/gap analysis

Exploring design opportunities - Roanoke Park area

What we heard

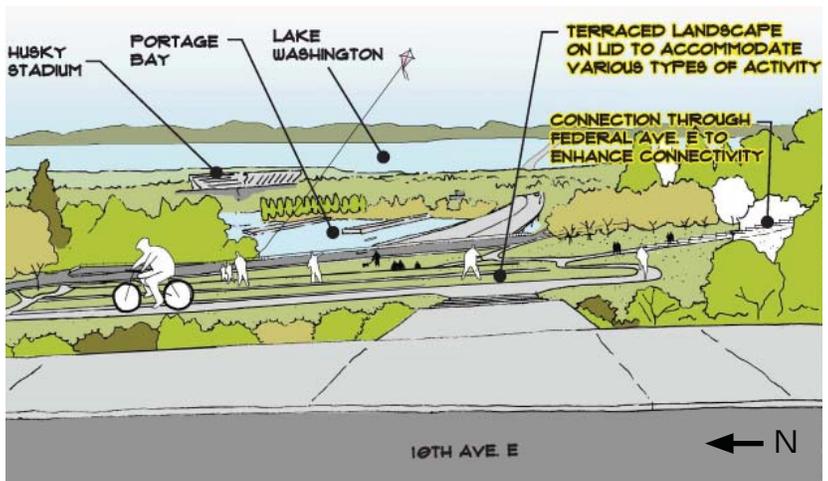
- Provide safer bike/pedestrian travel.
- Provide easy access to lid to encourage community ownership.
- Develop places for small-scale recreational activities.
- Maintain privacy for neighborhoods.
- Explore the opportunity for connection between the new lid space and existing Roanoke Park.



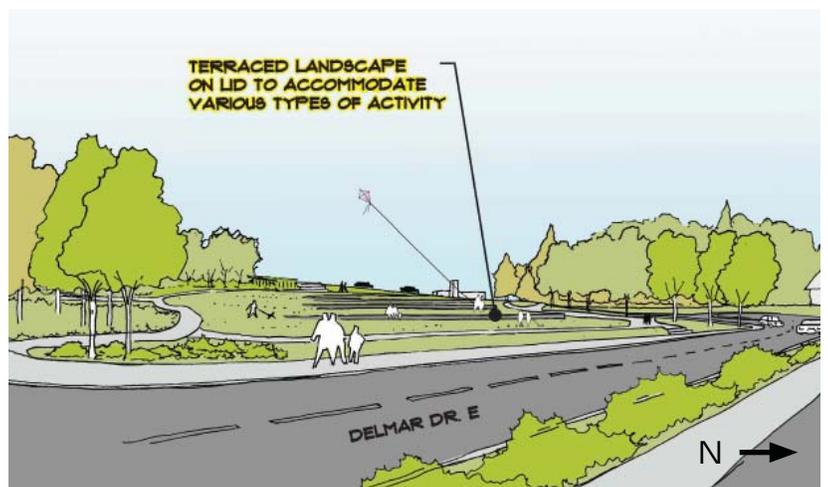
Baseline design: Conceptual rendering of 10th and Delmar lid looking southwest

Design opportunities

- Create multiple options for pedestrians and cyclists with accessible paths to and through the lid.
- Terrace the lid to create level areas for small-scale and community activities.
- Encourage community ownership and eyes on the street by providing easy and safe access to and from the neighborhoods, such as providing a connection from Federal Avenue East to the lid.
- Maintain privacy for residents by retaining mature vegetation and planting trees for privacy screening.



Design opportunity: Conceptual rendering looking east from 10th Ave. E



Design opportunity: Conceptual rendering looking northwest from Delmar Dr. E

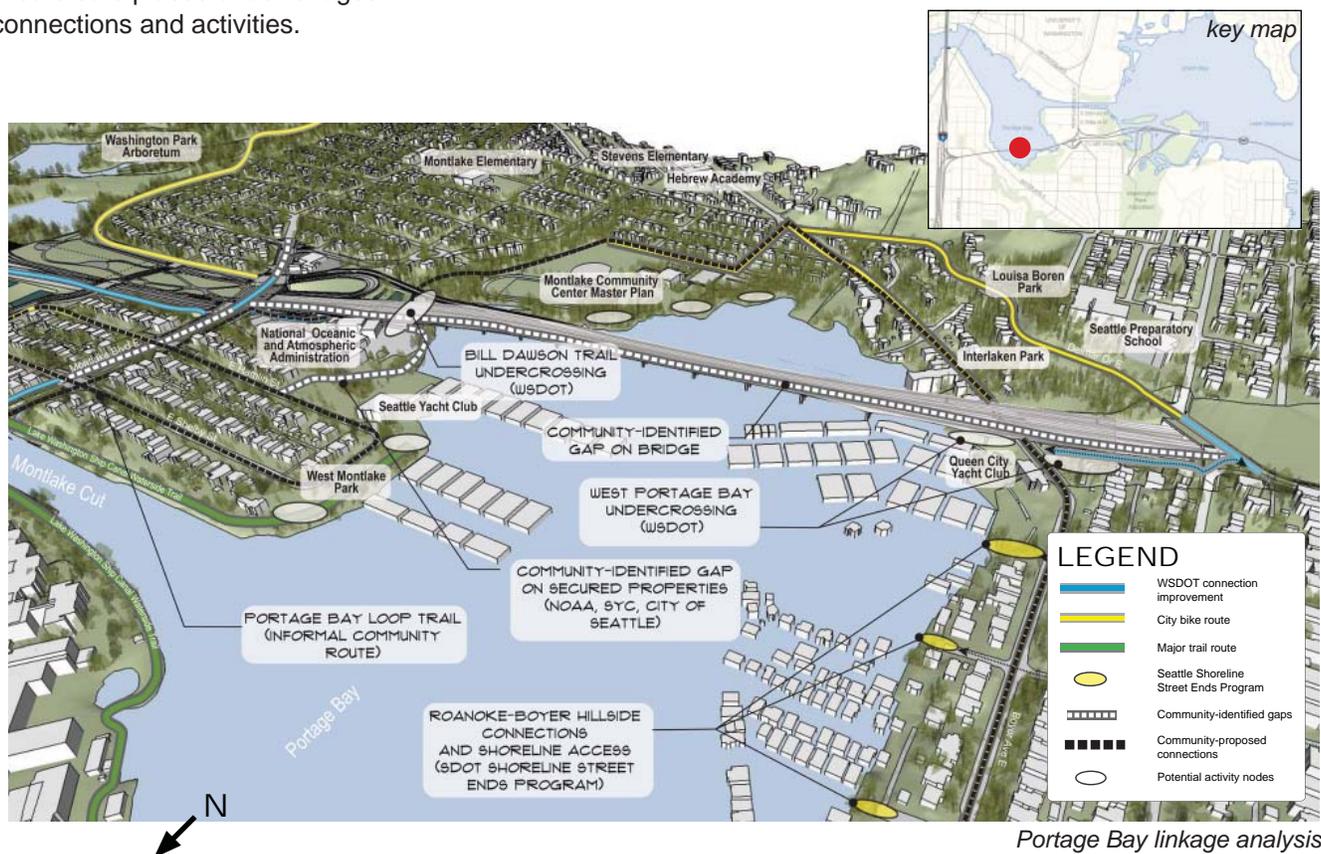
Exploring design opportunities - Portage Bay Bridge area

What we heard

- Make the Portage Bay Bridge structure blend into the surrounding historic neighborhoods.
- Consider existing and future bike/pedestrian path connections on and around Portage Bay.
- Develop a continuous green linkage from the Montlake lid to Montlake Playfield and 10th and Delmar lid.
- Keep the loop trail around Portage Bay in mind as trails/paths are developed with connections to the Arboretum.
- Provide a continuous trail connecting Portage Bay kayak launch, Bill Dawson Trail, Seattle Yacht Club, West Montlake Park, and Arboretum Waterfront Trail.
- Create safe places under bridges with connections and activities.

Design opportunities

- Work with the WSDOT bridge architect consultant to explore appropriate bridge structures that blend with the neighborhood, while allowing a signature bridge across Portage Bay.
- Connect places by emphasizing destinations and thruways.
- Create continuous and green connections by building on the existing formal and informal trail infrastructure using the City of Seattle's and neighborhood plans.
- Address gaps by coordinating with the City of Seattle.
- Activate areas under Portage Bay Bridge with paths and community spaces for safety.



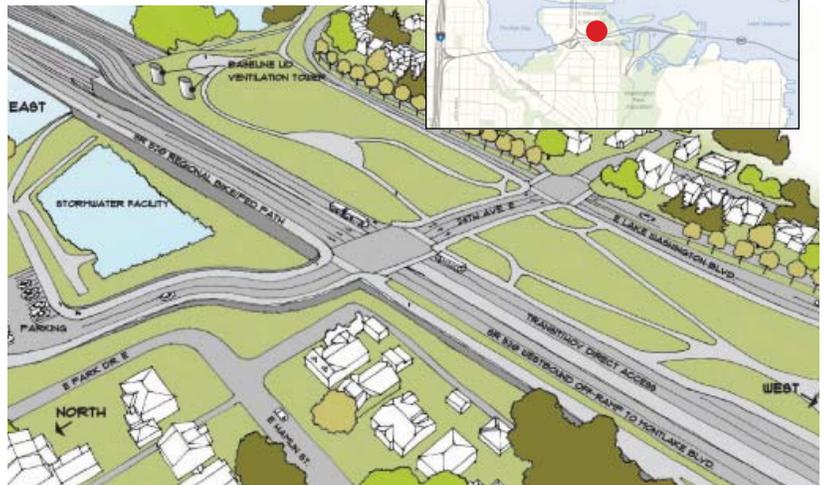
Exploring design opportunities - Shelby/Hamlin area

What we heard

- Minimize noise and visual impacts at residences.
- Provide a safer bike/pedestrian environment.
- Address cut-through traffic on neighborhood streets.
- Preserve the scenic viewpoints.
- Improve linkages to the Arboretum and neighborhoods.
- Maintain privacy for residents by retaining mature vegetation and planting trees for privacy screening.

Design opportunities

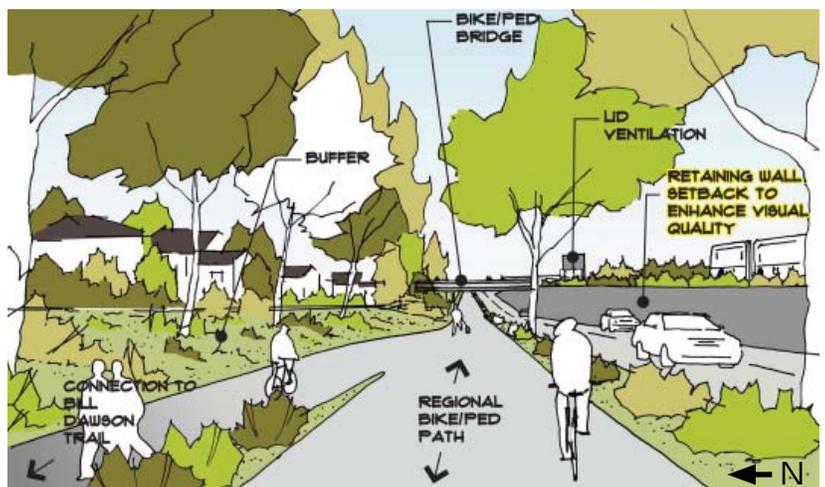
- Shield residences from noise and visual impacts by including landscaped buffers or noise reduction where appropriate.
- Address cut-through traffic by coordinating with City of Seattle.
- Provide a safer bike/pedestrian route in the neighborhood by terminating 24th Avenue East at the north side of the lid and/or lowering the ramps under 24th Avenue East.
- Improve the connection between Shelby/Hamlin and the Arboretum under SR 520.
- Include a gateway component at Montlake Boulevard and East Lake Washington Boulevard to acknowledge Olmsted legacy.



Baseline design: Conceptual rendering of Montlake lid looking southwest



Design opportunity: Conceptual rendering looking south over 24th Ave. E

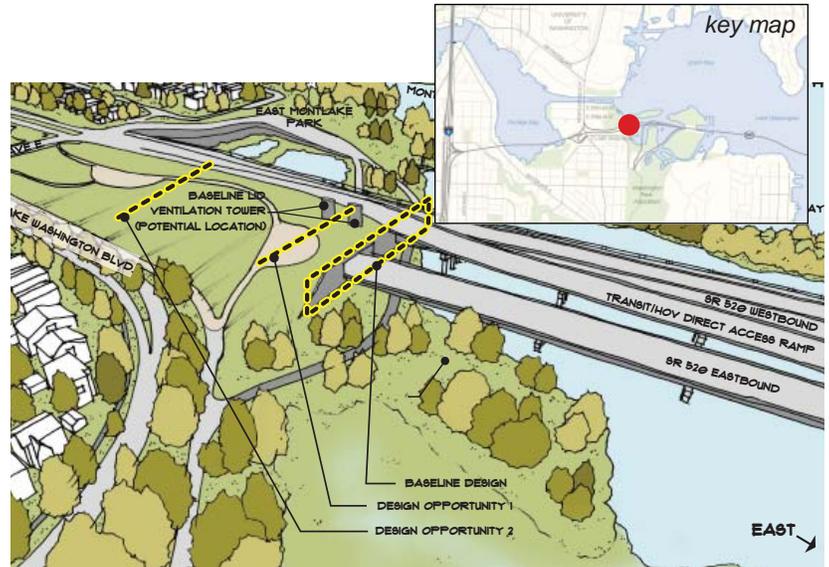


Design opportunity: Conceptual rendering looking east on regional bike/ped path

Exploring design opportunities - East Montlake water's edge area

What we heard

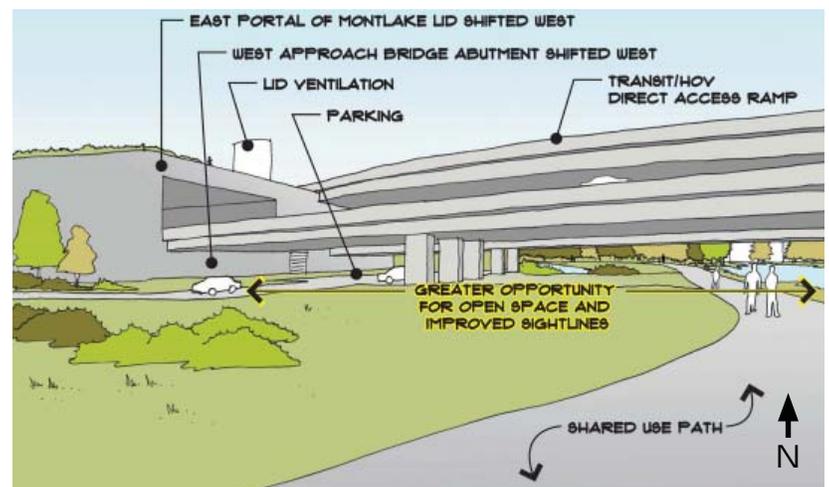
- Fit the highway more gracefully into the shoreline landscape.
- Create a safer, more pleasant and accessible shoreline experience.
- Integrate the stormwater facility more naturally into the park and shoreline setting.
- Make a safe connection between East Montlake Park and the Arboretum.
- Provide access for a kayak and canoe launch.



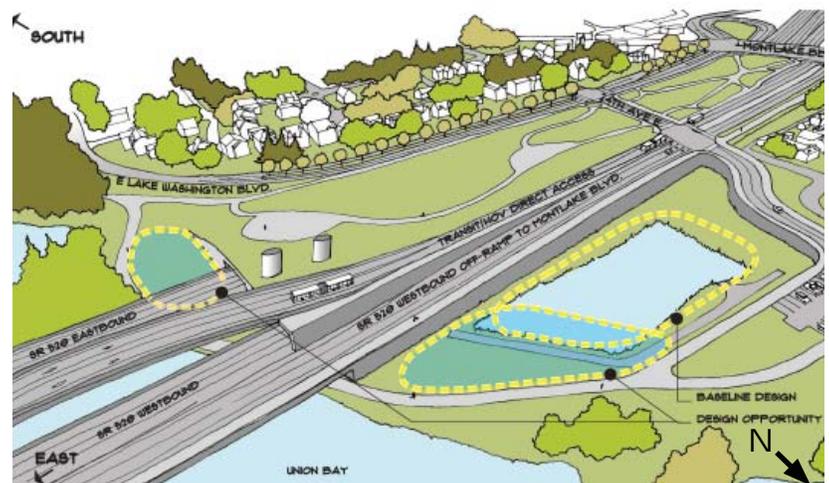
Baseline design: Conceptual rendering of east Montlake lid looking northwest

Design opportunities

- Create a more open path with improved sightlines by moving bridge abutment and lid edge west.
- Put activities, such as path, viewing areas, and kayak launch under the bridge to create a destination area along the shoreline.
- Make the stormwater facility fit more naturally in the shoreline setting by moving it closer to the water's edge and exploring different configurations.
- Use design methods to ensure safe connections for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Create a better use of park space by putting the recreational parking under the bridge.



Design opportunity: Conceptual rendering of Opportunity 1 looking northwest



Design opportunity: Potential stormwater facility locations

Exploring design opportunities - East Lake Washington Boulevard

What we heard

- Prevent traffic congestion on neighborhood streets.
- Screen noise and visual impacts from residences.
- Provide a safer, more pleasant pedestrian/ bike environment.
- Preserve the historic character of the boulevard and connections to Arboretum.

Design opportunities

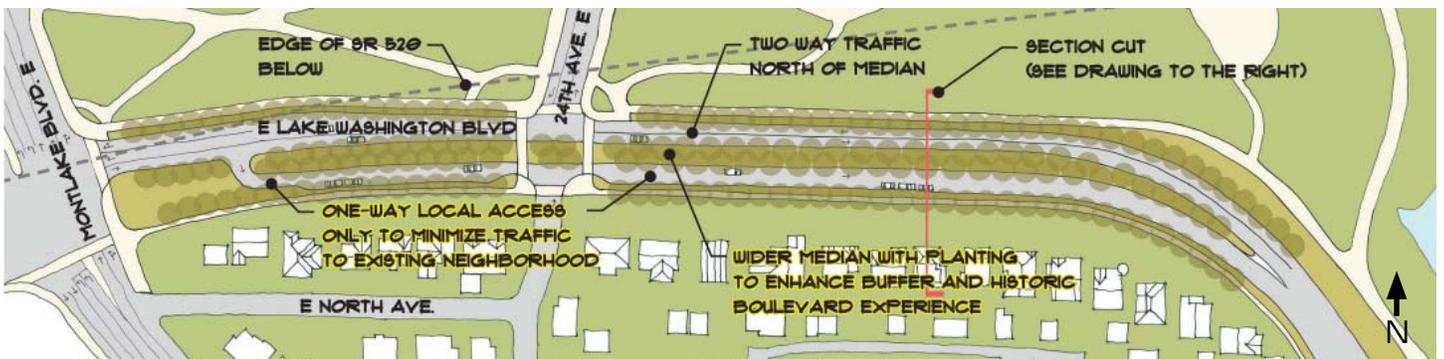
- Separate local (residential) traffic from regional (through) traffic on Lake Washington Boulevard with planted median.
- Add landscaped medians to enhance boulevard character and screen views of traffic.
- Improve bike/pedestrian linkages between the Arboretum and Shelby/Hamlin neighborhood by providing different connecting options.
- Develop an Arboretum gateway component.



Baseline design: Conceptual rendering of E Lake Washington Blvd. looking southwest



Design opportunity: Conceptual rendering of a section looking east



Design opportunity: Conceptual rendering plan view of E Lake Washington Blvd.

Summary

Through the Seattle Community Design Process, WSDOT has actively engaged a broad group of interested stakeholders. The project team has collected valuable feedback about how WSDOT could better improve the connectivity, safety, efficiency, and livability of the Seattle side of the SR 520 corridor.

- The West Side Community Design Collaborative provided vital perspectives as new design ideas were developed. The WSCDC will continue to support ongoing design exploration and stakeholder engagement in 2012.

- The Seattle Design Commission will continue its meaningful role in the design process. Key among the SDC's guidance has been to encourage WSDOT to incorporate both a city-wide and regional perspective.
- The public is generally supportive of and invested in moving forward with the community design process and indicates interest in providing ongoing input on developing design ideas. Specific interests include the potential implications of new design ideas on noise, traffic and visual quality.



WSDOT continues to work closely with the Governor, Legislature and City of Seattle to secure construction funding. The SCDP is an important step in preparing WSDOT to be ready for construction when funding is received. It also provides the opportunity to stay engaged with our key stakeholders, facilitate important dialogue about project refinements and build community ownership for the project.

Next steps

In 2012, the WSDOT team will:

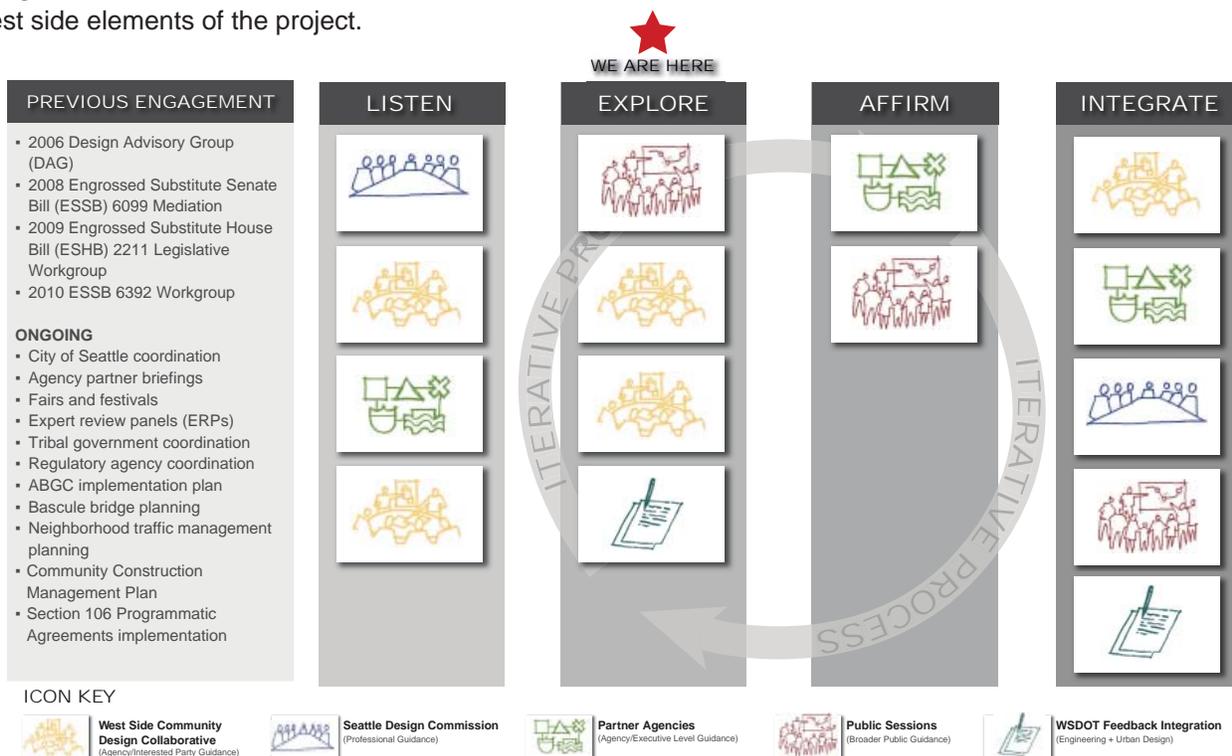
- Further **evaluate the range of design opportunities** developed in 2011 and their neighborhood effects, such as noise, traffic and visual quality.
- Work with the Urban Design and Sustainability Expert Review Panel, West Side Community Design Collaborative, bridge architecture consultant, Seattle Design Commission and the broader public to **discuss the trade-offs and benefits** of the range of design opportunities.
- **Integrate urban and sustainable design refinements** into the project design that support healthy communities and regional mobility within the project area.

In the new year, WSDOT will also continue to partner with the City of Seattle through the activities outlined in the October 2011 Memorandum of Understanding, including:

- Secure a formal commitment on the project's key design elements and WSDOT's intent to build the west side elements of the project.

- Acknowledge the joint WSDOT/City of Seattle effort to establish a formal Memorandum of Understanding relating to the decision to construct and timing of construction of a second bascule bridge over the Montlake Cut.
- Clarify mitigation commitments that are both required as part of the environmental process and that WSDOT has agreed to implement to meet the City's goals and objectives for the project.
- Ensure that the City of Seattle maintains a meaningful role and continued involvement throughout the project design process.
- Establish the intent of the City and WSDOT to endeavor to meet SR 520 timelines for project completion.

Work in the Seattle area is not yet funded for construction. WSDOT continues to work closely with the Governor, Legislature, and City of Seattle to **secure construction funding**.





Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Materials can be provided in alternative formats for people with disabilities by contacting Shawn Murinko at 360-705-7097 or murinks@wsdot.wa.gov. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may contact the Office of Equal Opportunity through the Washington Relay Service at 711.

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