West Approach Bridge North Project
Summary of Summer Outreach 2013

Project overview

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is preparing for construction of the West Approach Bridge North (WABN), the next funded phase of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project.

The WABN structure will extend transit/HOV access and a new bicycle/pedestrian path from east of Lake Washington to the Montlake area while improving seismic safety and meeting all regulatory requirements.

Construction is scheduled to begin in summer 2014 and WSDOT plans to open WABN to drivers in fall 2016. For more detailed project information, including renderings, traffic movements and construction plans, visit our website at www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/WABN/.

Summer 2013 public involvement

During summer 2013, WSDOT hosted community drop-in sessions and a web-based construction outreach survey to provide information about the WABN project, and ask what communication tools and forums the public prefers to receive information and provide project feedback. By understanding how those who will be affected by construction (including both residents and commuters) would like to receive information about construction activities, future outreach efforts can be tailored using appropriate communication tools and forums.

Approximately 24,500 people and community organizations were invited to participate in the community drop-ins and fill out the survey through email and direct mail. A summary of participation and feedback is provided on the following pages.
Community drop-in sessions

In June 2013, WSDOT hosted three community drop-in sessions in the Montlake area to reach those who live, work, and commute near upcoming construction. SR 520 Program staff shared key project details about WABN, as well as related SR 520 Program elements like the West Connection Bridge, to provide a broader context for planned west side construction. During the series of drop-in sessions, program staff met with approximately 100 members of the public.

The table below includes an overview of the event details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Drop-in Session #1</td>
<td>June 24</td>
<td>5:00 – 7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle Public Library Montlake Branch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Connection Bridge Pre-Construction Meeting</td>
<td>June 26</td>
<td>4:30 – 7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Pioneer Hall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Drop-in Session #2</td>
<td>June 27</td>
<td>12:00 – 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Washington Health Sciences Center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The casual setting of each drop-in session facilitated direct dialogue and allowed the public to share their questions and opinions about the project. All three events were staffed by technical and communications staff, who answered questions and discussed concerns the public had. Following the drop-in sessions, WSDOT also placed the WABN informational display kiosk at the Montlake branch of the Seattle Public Library for the month of July.

Additional printed materials, graphics, maps, and visualizations were available to the public to further explain the WABN design and planned construction. All drop-in session materials can be found online at www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/Library/meeting.htm
Construction outreach survey

In addition to community drop-ins, WSDOT also conducted a construction outreach survey to receive feedback from a broad set of stakeholders. The intent of the survey was to better understand the public’s preferred methods of engaging with the project team about construction activities. The construction outreach survey was posted online from June 10 to July 12, 2013. The survey sought information regarding how individuals would like to provide and receive feedback, and also the location of their residence and employment.

During the five-week-long survey period, WSDOT received over 740 responses. The results of the surveys are listed on the following pages. Participants also were given the opportunity to provide any additional comments, which are summarized in general themes. This feedback will be used to help craft future outreach strategies.

What we heard

In general, conversations with the public were informative and positive. The outreach survey provided WSDOT with helpful information about how the public would like to offer feedback and receive information about construction activities.

WSDOT learned that the highest proportion of respondents would like to receive information and provide feedback about construction through email and the project website. Approximately 42 percent of respondents prefer email, 19 percent prefer direct mail, 15 percent prefer the project website, and 13 percent favor community meetings. See the graphs on the following page for additional detail.
How would you like to receive information?

- **Email**: 588 responses (42%)
- **Direct mail**: 269 responses (19%)
- **Project website**: 208 responses (15%)
- **Neighborhood meetings**: 186 responses (13%)
- **Drop-in discussions**: 84 responses (6%)
- **Social media**: 47 responses (3%)
- **Information kiosks**: 34 responses (2%)

Total responses received: 1,416
(Note: Participants chose multiple options)

How would you like to provide feedback?

- **Email**: 520 responses (47%)
- **Direct mail**: 117 responses (11%)
- **Project website**: 193 responses (17%)
- **Neighborhood meetings**: 153 responses (14%)
- **Drop-in discussions**: 62 responses (6%)
- **Social media**: 45 responses (4%)
- **Information kiosks**: 13 responses (1%)

Total responses received: 1,103
(Note: Participants chose multiple options)
Survey respondents were given the opportunity to make additional comments after answering the basic questions. Approximately 240 people chose to do so. The section below summarizes additional general comments received through the survey, which also largely reflect the key discussion topics addressed during public drop-in sessions.

- **Traffic concerns**
  Approximately 28 respondents were concerned about traffic congestion in the Montlake area and through the Arboretum. Concern was also expressed about potential traffic impacts associated with removal of the Lake Washington Boulevard on- and off-ramps.

- **Construction impacts**
  Approximately 15 survey responses expressed concern about potential construction impacts on local neighborhoods, including construction noise. At public drop-in sessions, WSDOT staff talked with neighbors about a variety of construction activities, including potential haul routes and tree and vegetation removal.

- **General support**
  Approximately 15 survey responses expressed appreciation about current communications methods, and looked forward to participating in future outreach events.

- **Suggestions for future public involvement**
  Some respondents suggested that more opportunity for community dialogue with WSDOT would be helpful, noting that formal meetings with affected communities would be more beneficial than broader public meetings. Approximately 11 survey responses provided suggestions about forums to support public involvement, including a community stakeholder group.

- **Funding**
  Approximately six survey responses requested that WSDOT obtain full project funding before continuing west side construction work, expressing concern about the unfunded portion of the west side corridor and the future of the I-5 to Medina Project. WSDOT staff also discussed funding and construction of unfunded SR 520 corridor elements with many drop-in session visitors.

- **Bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access**
  Neighbors were interested in bicycle routes, including safe access across the Montlake Cut and SR 520. In addition, several responses addressed the use and need for bicycle/pedestrian accessibility. Members of the public were also interested in maintaining access to the Montlake freeway transit stop.

**Who we heard from**

WSDOT heard from a wide variety of residents, commuters and business owners. The majority of respondents lived or worked in the Madison Park and Montlake neighborhoods. The graphs on the following page illustrate where respondents live or work, and how they would describe their relationship to the SR 520 corridor.
Location of your residence or place of employment

- Montlake: Shelby-Hamlin area (108 responses) - 15%
- Montlake: Lake Washington Boulevard area (48 responses) - 22%
- Montlake: other area (65 responses) - 14%
- Madison Park (120 responses) - 16%
- North Capitol Hill (107 responses) - 9%
- Laurelhurst (53 responses) - 6%
- Portage Bay/Roanoke Park (42 responses) - 6%
- University District/University of Washington (38 responses) - 5%
- Other (161 responses) - 9%

Total responses received: 742

I would describe myself as:

- Resident of the Montlake area (295 responses) - 42%
- Commuter to the Montlake area (160 responses) - 32%
- Business owner in the Montlake area (26 responses) - 4%
- Other (229 responses) - 22%

Total responses received: 710
(Note: Participants chose multiple options)
Figure 4: WSDOT received over 740 responses, including from other states like Alaska and Texas.

Figure 5: WSDOT received the majority of the survey response along the SR 520 corridor, but also from the entire greater Seattle region.
Future public participation

WSDOT will use this data to inform pre-construction outreach activities related to WABN. As WABN construction approaches, WSDOT will design and host forums to do the following:

- Share information about the upcoming construction schedule
- Inform the community about what to expect during construction
- Describe best management practices the contractor will use to minimize construction effects
- Provide information about how to stay informed during construction

Additional information

Email: SR520bridge@wsdot.wa.gov
Phone: 206-770-3500
Infoline: 1-888-520-NEWS (6397)
Mail: SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program
      999 3rd Avenue, Suite 900
      Seattle, WA 98104

Online:

SR 520 Program: www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge
WABN Project: www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/WABN/