

## **Community Stakeholder Workshop #2 – Aug. 15, 2019 Summary of Participant Comments**

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### **Background**

WSDOT is seeking the perspectives of corridor users, neighbors, and stakeholders to help refine certain design features of the SR 520 Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project. Participants' feedback will inform and advance the project's conceptual design as we coordinate further with the city of Seattle and the [Seattle Design Commission](#).

During summer 2019, WSDOT is hosting three community stakeholder workshops to seek feedback from community members and SR 520 stakeholders on specific design details. The first workshop, held July 11, focused on a planned Roanoke lid over SR 520 and bike/pedestrian connections between the SR 520 Trail and Seattle's local trail network. The second workshop on Aug. 15, focused on two areas under the new Portage Bay Bridge – the Bill Dawson Trail area and the Boyer Avenue East area. At the third workshop, on Sept. 12, participants will reflect on the feedback received to that point and provide additional input on the project's conceptual design.

These workshops are part of a broader effort throughout the summer and fall of 2019 to share the latest project information and seek input from the community and stakeholders. The outreach kicked off June 20 with an in-person open house and the launch of a summer-long [online open house](#). This specific outreach effort will conclude in October with a second in-person open house. All input will be shared on the SR 520 website, as well as with the Seattle Design Commission and SR 520 design team to help inform a final conceptual design of the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project.

This document summarizes the discussion and feedback from the second (Aug. 15) community stakeholder workshop.

### **Workshop #2 Overview**

The workshop focused on two areas under the Portage Bay Bridge:

1. Bill Dawson Trail area (under the east end of the bridge)
2. The Boyer Avenue East area (under the west end of the bridge)

Over 20 participants attended the workshop, including community members, representatives from a variety of stakeholder organizations, and staff from Seattle Parks and Recreation, and Office of Planning and Community Development. WSDOT staff shared a presentation to orient workshop attendees to the SR 520 Program and the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project, and outline where WSDOT is seeking feedback.

SR 520 project staff facilitated small-group discussions at four break-out tables: two focused on the Bill Dawson Trail area and two focused on the Boyer Avenue area. The workshop included two 30-minute discussion sessions where participants rotated between two topics.

The following sections outline the feedback received on each of the discussion questions. Comments have been categorized by topic and summarized for clarity and to remove duplicate responses.

## **Bill Dawson Trail area**

### **Question 1A – How do you use the Bill Dawson Trail today?**

- Neighborhood residents taking leisurely walks
- Bike commuting
- Some avoid using the trail:
  - Due to safety concerns – especially at night
  - Preference for surface street alternatives
  - Preference for using the SR 520 under bridge trail near the Arboretum

### **Question 1B – What are the key destinations and connections in the area?**

- Local connection to University of Washington (UW)
- Arboretum
- UW light rail station
- Burke Gilman Trail
- Montlake playfield
- Portage Bay and Roanoke Park neighborhood
- Connection to the University Bridge and Montlake Bridge traveling along Portage Bay

### **Question 1C – Do you have other points/considerations you would like to add?**

- What will happen to the trail access during construction?
- Safety is a concern due to dark and enclosed environment
- Make trail welcoming to use at night
- Currently, there is very little maintenance of graffiti and garbage
- The trail is very noisy due to highway traffic overhead

### **Question 2 – What would improve the user experience of this area?**

#### Safety

- Safety should be prioritized
- Lots of lighting, beyond just minimum standards
  - Light the area day and night
- Make the trail feel safe for walkers
- Keep open views and sightlines
- Make the path non-slip
- Include surveillance cameras and signage noting cameras are present
- Add emergency phone locations

#### Maintenance

- Minimize opportunities for graffiti and garbage accumulation
- Use surface treatments that deter graffiti and are easy to maintain
- Support for using cobbles and rocks along the ground next to the trail as an aesthetic treatment that may also deter camping
- Improve maintenance of vegetation near the trail

#### Aesthetics

- Make the space inviting and interesting
  - Interesting patterns and lighting (like lighting at Chicago O'Hare Airport) – to make the area pleasant to travel through
  - Something fun and artistic that attracts people to the destination, like the Fremont Troll
- Make the abutment wall into something special
  - Support for the sloped abutment style
  - Art treatments on wall/abutment
- Incorporate art referring to Native American tribal history
- Incorporate mural of salmon swimming
- Add wayfinding signage with integrated art that refers back to the communities that are being connected
  - Signage could include the elevation changes between different destinations
  - Include the Montlake Bridge tower – referring to the “Montlake Welcomes You” signs
  - Signage identifying the highway and other landmarks to help orient people using the trail
- Preference for white or lighter colored concrete because it is brighter and reflects light

Other considerations

- Ensure the amenities fit within project budget
- Ensure WSDOT can keep its commitments/promises to the public
- Look at noise mitigation underneath the bridge
- The trail should be forward compatible with a trail going along Portage Bay shoreline in front of the Seattle Yacht Club connecting to West Montlake Park
- Expect an increase in the number of users, particularly when the SR 520 Trail connects to the Bill Dawson Trail
- Separation of faster commuters and slower leisure riders and walkers
- Improve the connections from Montlake to Eastlake along Portage Bay
- Support for stair connection from the trail to East Roanoke Street

**Question 3 – How many of you will experience this bridge as a water user? Would any of the feedback you've shared so far would be different as a water user?**

- Open sightlines to the water; connect the land to Portage Bay
- Add lawn down to water's edge
- Manage/reduce the water lily's on the south side of the Portage Bay Bridge
- Create a destination that would bring a water user to this area, for example a bird-watching area or boat launch
- Provide environmental and wildlife habitat enhancement of the South Portage Bay restoration area
- Incorporate a water trail around South Portage Bay that includes interpretive and wayfinding signage, focusing on Native American history. The trail could connect with existing park areas around Portage Bay.

## **Boyer Avenue East area**

### **Question 1A – How do you use the existing connection between Boyer Avenue East and Delmar Drive East (e.g. commuting, exercise, leisure)?**

- The stairs provide a connection from Boyer Ave E to 10th Ave E and E Roanoke St for bus access
- Existing pedestrian connections between Boyer Ave E and Delmar Dr E are very important, but they are not currently well-used because of safety concerns and the steepness of connecting roads
- Many walkers and runners (including many families & strollers) loop Portage Bay and use the sidewalks on Boyer Ave E
- Stairs could also be good for Seattle Prep students accessing this area

### **Question 1C – Is it a helpful connection for the broader city and regional nonmotorized network?**

- The staircase as shown would make a good connection to the new Roanoke lid

## **Other key discussion points**

### User experience considerations

- Use lighter gray or white concrete on the underside of the bridge—that makes a big difference in safety and visibility for people passing under the bridge
- It gets dark and unsafe where the current stairs are located to the north of SR 520
- Consider other ADA options as opposed to switchback design.
- ADA ramps may potentially be used by skateboarders
- Existing trees are important to the character of the neighborhood.

### Geotechnical questions and considerations

- Will WSDOT regrade the slope during construction?
- What is the elevation gain between Boyer and Delmar?
- Is there a concern about liquefaction in this area?

### **Question 2 – Given the key considerations, what would improve the user experience of the under bridge area for pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and other users?**

#### Safety

- Lighting is important. Incorporate the right lighting features in the right places:
  - Down-lighting to be non-intrusive for nearby residents
  - Lighting under the bridge with the goal of safety for users
  - Be mindful of fish passage and other aquatic life in Portage Bay (no down-lighting aimed towards the water)
  - Well-illuminated stairs and ramp for safety
- Incorporate low vegetation under the bridge to encourage safety
- Keep lights on (i.e. in some projects they include lights but don't have them on to save energy—this defeats the purpose of installing the lights)
- Enclose the abutment area with fencing

- Sightlines on the path and stairs are important

#### Connectivity

- Have consistently wide sidewalks along Boyer Ave E (current sidewalks are wide under the bridge but constrained in other locations along the road)
- Incorporate bike lanes on Boyer Ave E (there currently are none)
- Improve connections and infrastructure for recreational water users (kayakers, paddleboarders, etc.)
- Incorporate a boardwalk design for the ADA ramp under the bridge to connect Boyer Ave E and Delmar Dr E to help account for geotechnical issues
- How will the under-bridge area interface with the Roanoke lid and connect pedestrian/cycling routes?
- Need rest areas along the stairs
- Add bike racks and a place for bicyclists to rest with shelter for rain protection
- Boyer Ave E is experiencing more and more traffic moving east to west, using the road to access UW. The increase could also be due to Waze directing drivers along Boyer Ave E

#### Programming and aesthetic treatments

- Incorporate public amenities under the bridge, for example:
  - Dog park
  - Mini-fountain or water park
  - Sport court with seating
  - Plaza-type area to get out of the rain
  - Seating
  - Half basketball court
- Recognize the cultural history of the area w/ design treatments, plaques, informational signage, etc.
- Consider the elevation/slope of connections to the SR 520 Trail and make them intuitive and accessible for all users
- Include texture on walls, like by the Tacoma Dome

#### Other considerations

- The new concept looks better than the current stair connection
- Look at other under-bridge areas around Seattle and see if there are any wins/success stories that can be adapted or emulated
- Consider how parking will work in the neighborhood. There may be an increase in weekday daytime parking for individuals taking transit downtown.
- WSDOT should meet with Seattle Prep to review all these plans since they are such a close property owner and their students use this area
- Incorporate the appropriate plantings under the bridge (durable and low maintenance)
- Prevent homeless encampments with plantings, slopes, and cobbles

### **Question 3 – How many of you will experience this bridge as a water user? Would any of the feedback you've shared so far would be different as a water user?**

- Incorporate platforms under the bridge to allow small hand-carry boats to access Portage Bay
- Incorporate amenities to support recreational water users (e.g. parking, picnic tables, benches, etc.)
- Create a street-end park environment to support water uses
- Create a passive space similar to Pocock Rowing Center underneath I-5 Ship Canal Bridge
- Connect to Aqua Verde and the new SR 520 mitigation park (Fritz Hedges Waterway Park) across Portage Bay

- There is currently a lack of infrastructure in the area for launching kayaks, paddleboards, etc.
- Review SR 520 Environmental Impact Statement/Record of Decision (EIS/ROD) commitments about overlook along Boyer and access to the shoreline at Portage Bay underneath the bridge

### **Other key discussion points**

- Include a viewpoint of the water near the Portage Bay shoreline
- Will there be a bioswale west of Boyer Avenue to collect stormwater?
- Will there be a boardwalk to/from Montlake Playfield?
- Will there be irrigation to help plants get established, like on Foster Island?