Summary of 2019 community and stakeholder engagement

Conceptual Design Refinements for the SR 520 Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project

January 2020
Table of contents

Section 1: Background / introduction ....................................................................................................... 2
  Community and stakeholder engagement process .............................................................................. 3
Section 2: Purpose and objectives of 2019 public engagement .......................................................... 5
Section 3: Outreach activities and timeline ............................................................................................. 6
  In-person outreach activities .................................................................................................................. 6
  Open houses........................................................................................................................................ 6
  Community stakeholder workshops ..................................................................................................... 7
  Online outreach activities ...................................................................................................................... 7
  Online open houses............................................................................................................................... 7
  Email correspondence .......................................................................................................................... 8
  Other design coordination ..................................................................................................................... 8
    City of Seattle.................................................................................................................................. 8
    Seattle Design Commission ............................................................................................................. 8
Section 4: Stakeholder feedback and WSDOT’s refined conceptual design ........................................ 10
  Roanoke lid “look and feel” .................................................................................................................. 11
  Bicycle/pedestrian connections ......................................................................................................... 13
  Boyer Avenue East under-bridge area ................................................................................................. 14
  Bill Dawson trail under-bridge area ..................................................................................................... 15
  Other topics........................................................................................................................................ 16
Section 5: Next steps for the project ..................................................................................................... 18
  Design next steps................................................................................................................................. 18
  Next steps for public engagement ...................................................................................................... 18

Appendices ................................................................................................................................................ 19
  A. Community Stakeholder Workshop summaries ............................................................................. A-1
    Workshop #1 (July 11, 2019)
    Workshop #2 (Aug. 15, 2019)
    Workshop #3 (Sept. 12, 2019)
  B. Community Stakeholder Workshop discussion guides and supporting materials ..................... B-1
    Workshop #1 (July 11, 2019)
    Workshop #2 (Aug. 15, 2019)
  C. Verbatim comments from SR 520 Online Open House .............................................................. C-1
Section 1: Background/Introduction

The SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program is building major safety and mobility enhancements along the SR 520 corridor between I-405 in Bellevue and I-5 in Seattle. Several projects in the program have been completed to date, including constructing a new Eastside corridor, a new floating bridge, and the first of two parallel bridges connecting Montlake and the new floating bridge.

The remaining SR 520 Program improvements, which we call "Rest of the West," are composed of the following series of projects:

- **The Montlake Project** includes an improved Montlake interchange, a landscaped lid over SR 520, a bicycle/pedestrian "land bridge" east of the lid, and a three-lane West Approach Bridge South over Union Bay, for eastbound traffic.

- **The SR 520/I-5 Express Lanes Connection Project** will extend SR 520's new transit/HOV system onto the I-5 express lanes, creating a direct bus and carpool connection between SR 520, South Lake Union and downtown Seattle.

- **The Montlake Cut Bascule Bridge Project** includes legislative funding for a second, parallel drawbridge over the Montlake Cut. WSDOT plans to bring together project partners, stakeholders, and the public to review current transportation needs, identify potential options for improving mobility in the Montlake Boulevard and SR 520 corridors, and discuss this project's scope.

- **The Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project** will replace the old bridge with a seismically stronger structure, build a landscaped lid over the highway in Seattle's Roanoke neighborhood, extend SR 520's transit/HOV system from Montlake to I-5, and extend the regional bicycle and pedestrian trail from Montlake over Portage Bay.

In 2015, the Legislature provided funding to complete the Rest of the West. The focus of this report is the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project.

This project – slated to begin construction in 2023 and take six years to complete – will provide several key improvements to the SR 520 highway as well as to the surrounding neighborhoods.
Community and stakeholder engagement process

Between June and November 2019, WSDOT met with community members and stakeholders on a monthly basis to refine the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project’s conceptual design. This outreach effort included two public open houses, three community stakeholder workshops, and an online open house posted from June 20 through Nov. 13. WSDOT also coordinated with the Seattle Design Commission and the city of Seattle during this time to further advance the design of project elements.

Participants in the community and stakeholder engagement process included residents living near the project area, local community councils, city of Seattle staff and advisory groups, bicycle and pedestrian advocates, and other interest groups.

This conceptual design effort built upon previous design processes for the SR 520 corridor in Seattle, most notably:

- 2011-2012 Seattle Community Design Process
- 2014-2015 West Side Design Refinements Process
- 2015 community design report, funded by the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods using the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.
The 2019 engagement process provided valuable information to WSDOT, and this report focuses on documenting both the outreach activities that took place, the feedback WSDOT received from the community, and the specific refinements incorporated into the conceptual design as a result. The updated conceptual design will help to inform WSDOT’s design-build contracting documents.

**What is design-build?**

Design-build is a contracting method in which one contractor both completes the final design and constructs the project. This contracting method creates opportunity for greater innovation and efficiencies with a combined designer and builder. WSDOT plans to use a design-build contracting method for the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project.

WSDOT has used design-build contracting on the SR 520 Eastside Project, the Floating Bridge Project, and the Montlake Project.

Before: WSDOT’s conceptual design for the 92nd Ave NE lid.

After: The lid after it opened in 2014.
Section 2: Purpose and objectives of 2019 public engagement

The purpose of engaging the community and project stakeholders in 2019 was to further refine the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project’s conceptual design. The community’s feedback and perspectives (detailed in later sections of this report) provided WSDOT and the Seattle Design Commission with critical information about community preferences and priorities.

Previous design-focused public engagement processes – particularly the 2011-2012 Seattle Community Design Process and the 2014-2015 Westside Design Refinements – helped to define some of the major elements of the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project.

To build on this previous engagement and begin preparing contracting documents, WSDOT identified remaining design elements that needed further refinement based on additional community and stakeholder input.

WSDOT provided a range of opportunities for public participation to obtain a robust and diverse set of perspectives. Specific outreach activities, detailed in the next section of this report, included in-person open houses, stakeholder workshop discussions, a five-month online open house, and email communications.

---

Elements defined during previous public engagement processes

- The general footprint and alignment of a new Portage Bay Bridge structure
- The bridge’s structure type, selected as a box-girder bridge
- Fewer in-water columns and longer bridge spans
- A passive, open-space area on a new Roanoke lid (previously called the 10th and Delmar lid)

2019 public engagement focus areas

- The look and feel of a new Roanoke lid, and how people would like to use the lid
- Nonmotorized connections throughout the project area
- The areas under the Portage Bay Bridge around the Bill Dawson Trail and Boyer Avenue East
Section 3: Outreach activities and timeline

WSDOT began the public outreach process in June with a project briefing to the Seattle Design Commission (SDC) and a public open house with information on all four SR 520 Rest of the West projects. The public outreach and design coordination process continued through summer and fall 2019, and consisted of three community stakeholder workshops, an additional in-person open house and a five-month online open house (June 20 – Nov. 13).

In-person outreach activities

Open houses

The SR 520 team hosted two Rest of the West open houses, on June 20 and Oct. 29.

June 20 open house: 54 attendees

- Kick-off event for summer/fall engagement effort, including online open house and sign-up opportunity for upcoming Community Stakeholder Workshops.
- Review and comment opportunity for Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project conceptual design.

Oct. 29 open house: 76 attendees

- Recap of 2019 public engagement, including workshops and online open house.
- Review and comment on updated project conceptual design that resulted from the summer’s public engagement process.
- Share project next steps.

Community Stakeholder Workshops

Between the two open houses, WSDOT hosted three Community Stakeholder Workshops. The workshops provided an opportunity for stakeholders and community members to dig deeper into the project’s conceptual design and give their feedback and perspective on certain design elements. Overall, 55 individuals participated in at least one of the three workshops.

Workshop format

The first two workshops, held on July 11 and Aug. 15, began with a brief presentation and question and answer session. Participants then divided into small breakout groups to discuss specific project areas with a table facilitator and SR 520 design staff. After the first breakout session, participants switched tables to discuss a different design topic. At the end of the breakout discussions, each table facilitator reported out on key themes and gave participants an opportunity for additional comments.

Workshop #3, held on Sept. 12, was organized as a roundtable discussion. WSDOT project staff walked through the key themes that arose from the two previous workshops and discussed how WSDOT had incorporated those themes into updated conceptual designs. Participants were invited to share thoughts and feedback on the updated conceptual design. Staff also provided a summary of the feedback heard from the SDC design coordination process.
Community Stakeholder Workshops by the numbers

Workshop participants
Representatives from the following organizations and city of Seattle departments:
- Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board
- Cascade Bicycle Club
- Seattle Neighborhood Greenways
- Friends of Seattle’s Olmsted Parks
- Queen City Yacht Club
- North Capitol Hill Neighborhood Association
- Portage Bay/Roanoke Park Community Council
- Laurelhurst Community Club
- Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
- Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks)
- Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD)

Workshop #1 Overview: 45 participants
- Gather input on the preferred user experience for neighborhood open space, paths, outlooks/viewpoints, and other aesthetic features on a new Roanoke lid.
- Gather input on proposed bicycle and pedestrian connections between the regional SR 520 shared-use trail and the city of Seattle's trail network.

Workshop #2 Overview: 24 participants
- Gather input on the user experience for areas under the Portage Bay Bridge, focusing on:
  - The SR 520 Trail/Bill Dawson Trail areas.
  - The area beneath the bridge along Boyer Avenue East.

Workshop #3 Overview: 19 participants
- Share and discuss design refinements based on community feedback from workshops #1 and #2.
- Provide an update on conceptual design refinement discussions with the Seattle Design Commission.
- Provide further updates on the Portage Bay Bridge project’s design (i.e. past public engagement led to current design and latest design concepts).
- Gather additional feedback in advance of the October open house.

Online outreach activities

Online open house
WSDOT hosted an online open house from June 20 to Nov. 13 to provide information about upcoming engagement activities and updated conceptual designs. Through the online open house, WSDOT solicited design feedback and provided meeting summaries for those who were unable to attend the three in-person workshops. WSDOT received 57 online open house submissions related to the Portage Bay Bridge Project. These verbatim comments are included in appendix C of this report.
**Email correspondence**

WSDOT maintains an ongoing email inbox for public correspondence regarding the SR 520 Program.

During the summer and fall public engagement process (from June 20 through Nov. 13, 2019), WSDOT received and responded to 79 project-related emails submitted to the SR 520 inbox.

Comments and design recommendations from these emails are incorporated in Section 4 (Stakeholder feedback) of this report.

**Other design coordination**

**City of Seattle**

WSDOT coordinated closely with the city of Seattle throughout the conceptual design refinement process. WSDOT held biweekly meetings with staff from the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks), and Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD).

**Seattle Design Commission**

WSDOT met with a subcommittee of SDC staff and commissioners five times throughout the summer and fall. These meetings allowed the SR 520 design team to discuss project elements and design refinements with a small group of commissioners and city staff. At each meeting, WSDOT updated the commissioners on community and stakeholder feedback received.

SR 520 staff also held recurring coordination meetings with the city to begin development of a long-term maintenance agreement for elements of the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project. Defining responsibility for long-term maintenance and operations was a key consideration when developing the conceptual design of the project.

WSDOT and the city held quarterly executive meetings with interested city departments to monitor the performance of a 2011 memorandum of understanding (MOU) between WSDOT and the city. The MOU directs WSDOT and the city to work together on the planning, design, and construction of the SR 520 Program.

**2019 SDC and public engagement timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle Design Commission (SDC)</td>
<td>June 6: SDC meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public and neighborhood outreach</td>
<td>July 11: Workshop #1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The design updates that resulted from these subcommittee meetings, in turn, were shared with Community Stakeholder Workshop participants at each subsequent workshop. This back-and-forth exchange was a bridge between the community’s feedback and the SDC.

The team also gave three presentations to the full SDC. Full SDC meetings are open to the public and on public record. These meetings provided an opportunity for the SR 520 team to hear additional feedback and design considerations from the full commission. On Nov. 7, 2019, the full commission voted to endorse the project’s conceptual design. This report includes a summary of SDC feedback in section 4.

WSDOT will continue to meet with the SDC subcommittee through contract development, the procurement process, and as the design-builder finalizes the project design.
The following section outlines the community and stakeholder feedback provided to WSDOT from the 2019 engagement process, including in-person and online engagement. As noted in section 2, WSDOT identified three design elements that needed further refinement and additional community and stakeholder input.

### 2019 public engagement focus areas

- The look and feel of a new Roanoke lid, and how people would like to use the lid
- Nonmotorized connections throughout the project area
- Areas under the Portage Bay Bridge around the Bill Dawson Trail and Boyer Avenue East

WSDOT and the city of Seattle identified the following key considerations for developing the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project's conceptual design. The SR 520 design team considered these factors when incorporating community feedback.

### Key design considerations

- **Safety:** Prioritizing safety, particularly in under-bridge areas, and using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles where feasible.

- **Accessibility:** Prioritizing design concepts that are accessible to all ages and abilities and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- **Landslide risk:** Consideration of landslide risks and unstable slopes. The SR 520 team identified a significant landslide risk on the slope between Boyer Avenue East and Delmar Drive East.

- **Maintenance:** Prioritize design elements that can be maintained with current and planned funding, and identify the agency responsible for long-term maintenance and operations. WSDOT and the city of Seattle are developing a maintenance agreement for the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid project elements.

In some cases design ideas and feedback were evaluated and deemed infeasible due to these considerations. In other cases, feedback may not have been incorporated because it related to an element that will be finalized by the design-builder or requires further coordination between WSDOT and the city of Seattle.
Roanoke lid “look and feel”

Below are key themes and recommendations from community and stakeholder feedback related to the Roanoke lid’s neighborhood open space, paths, landscaping, and viewpoints.

Feedback incorporated into conceptual design

A  Balance dense plantings for privacy with more open plantings to improve sightlines and viewpoints.
B  10th Avenue East viewpoints: Buffer from highway and provide access to business district.
C  Federal Avenue viewpoint: Connect to neighborhood and provide unique views.
D  Bagley viewpoint: Incorporate historic character of area into new design.
E  Provide water fountain.

Feedback not incorporated into conceptual design

- **Restrooms on the lid.** This was not incorporated due to maintenance considerations and proximity of other public restroom facilities.
- **Support for active uses, for example, off-leash dog park.** WSDOT, in coordination with the city, did not incorporate this recommendation in part due to maintenance considerations. This is also inconsistent with previous outreach processes that prioritized passive, unprogrammed open space and guidance from Seattle Parks based on other parks and recreational opportunities in the neighborhood.

SDC feedback on conceptual design

- Support for design of the lid as a passive neighborhood open space.
- Ensure paths on the lid accommodate slower-speed users, for example people walking and jogging.
- Support for proposed design concepts for viewpoints.
Conceptual rendering of the 10th Avenue East viewpoint looking east toward the Roanoke lid and Portage Bay. Concept under refinement.

Conceptual rendering of the Federal Avenue viewpoint looking north into the Roanoke lid’s neighborhood open space. Concept under refinement.
Bicycle/pedestrian connections

Key community and stakeholder themes related to the city nonmotorized network on the lid, the connections west of the lid, and the connection from the lid to the SR 520 Trail.

Bicycle and pedestrian connections in the Roanoke area

Feedback incorporated into conceptual design

A Federal Avenue: Emphasize safety and comfort for cyclists and consider tying into future neighborhood greenway on Federal Avenue.

B East Roanoke Street and 10th Avenue East: Improve safety and user experience at crossing.

C Harvard Avenue connection: Ensure safe and open environment in tunnel and throughout trail.

D Prioritize safety in areas where many people biking and walking converge.

E Make connection from SR 520 Trail to Roanoke lid direct and intuitive.

Feedback not incorporated into conceptual design

- Separate faster commuter cyclists from leisure riders and pedestrians. Generally, modal and speed separation was not incorporated, but user separation is planned in the Bill Dawson Trail under-bridge area, and the gravel path for people walking and jogging on the Roanoke lid.

SDC feedback on conceptual design

- Consider ways to reduce the visual impact of the SR 520 Trail connection from the Portage Bay Bridge to the lid.
- Create as intuitive and direct connection from SR 520 Trail to Roanoke lid as possible.
- Use pavement markings and other design cues to communicate area where many users converge.
Boyer Avenue East under-bridge area

Plan concept for Boyer Avenue East under-bridge area

Feedback incorporated into conceptual design

A Maintain connection between Delmar Drive and Boyer Avenue East: particular support for connection to 10th Avenue East transit. *Stair connection under review for American with Disabilities Act compliance.*

B Incorporate lighting to increase safety for all users.

C Maintain or increase the sidewalk width on Boyer Avenue East for people walking and biking.

D Add an outlook to the water from Boyer Avenue East.

Feedback not incorporated into conceptual design

- **Activate the space** – potentially ball courts or a dog park. Active uses are not suitable for this area due to geotechnical and maintenance challenges.

SDC feedback on conceptual design

- Allow forward compatibility with future community artistic treatments in under-bridge area.
- Maintain intuitive stair connection on northside of SR 520.
- Use lighting to create welcoming through space for people walking, biking, and driving.

Example concept of potential fencing type to be included in Boyer under-bridge area
Bill Dawson Trail under-bridge area

Plan concept for Bill Dawson Trail under-bridge area

Feedback incorporated into conceptual design
A. Enhance safety and comfort for all users.
B. Incorporate artistic treatments to create a destination.
C. Separate faster commuter cyclists from leisure riders and pedestrians.

Feedback not incorporated into conceptual design
- Integrate artistic or creative elements into wayfinding signage. Interpretive and wayfinding signage will be completed by the design-builder, and will be consistent with the design of Montlake Project wayfinding signage.

SDC feedback on conceptual design
- Use lighting to create a welcoming environment for people walking and biking.
- Support for separation of bicycles and pedestrians.
Other topics

I-5 crossing

Opportunities for refining the conceptual design of the I-5 crossing were limited due to maintenance and constructability constraints. While this element was not included as a topic for discussion during the workshops, the latest design concept was shown at the Oct. 29 open house and on the online open house between Oct. 29 and Nov. 13.

Plan concept for I-5 crossing

Feedback relevant to this project element

- Support for previous design concept using plantings to create buffer between shared-use path and I-5.

Feedback not incorporated into conceptual design

- **Create separation between pedestrians and cyclists.** To be consistent with the approach to shared-use paths throughout the corridor, user separation was not incorporated. The planned paths on either side of the I-5 crossing do not separate bikes and pedestrians. The I-5 crossing is the same width as the SR 520 Trail (14 feet), which provides ample space for people biking and walking.

Shoreline and water access

During the workshops and via email, community members expressed support for providing public water access and shoreline improvements in the south Portage Bay area. Key community themes included:

- Desire for water access and park-like features along the Portage Bay shoreline.
- Support for incorporating boardwalk along Montlake Playfield and other recreational improvements from previous SR 520 shoreline permit.

These recreational improvements were included as conditions of the a Shoreline Master Use Permit granted by the city of Seattle in 2012. Because the city has updated its shoreline code, WSDOT must apply for a new shoreline permit for the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project. This community feedback has been shared with the city for its consideration in determining new permit conditions. WSDOT is coordinating with Parks to develop potential recreational mitigation measures in the south Portage Bay area that will be included in the permit application to Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI). Proposed measures will be evaluated and finalized for inclusion in the permit by SDCI.
Portage Bay Bridge
As discussed in section 2, WSDOT refined the concept for the Portage Bay Bridge during the 2011-2012 Seattle Community Design Process and the 2014-2015 Westside Design Refinements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bridge elements defined during previous public engagement processes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The general footprint and alignment the new bridge structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The bridge's stucture type, selected as a box-girder bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fewer in-water columns and longer bridge spans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2019, WSDOT consulted with the Seattle Design Commission on bridge architectural features. This work focused on refining column and pier shape and developing a framework and rhythm of above-bridge features, including lighting and signage.

The Seattle Design Commission recommended, through subcommittee workshops and full commission meetings, using distinct light fixtures to help create a more urban "boulevard" feel – to aid in slowing vehicle speeds and creating a unique user experience. WSDOT, in coordination with the city, is considering the tradeoffs of both recommendations as well as potential maintenance challenges to determine the final lighting design on the Portage Bay Bridge.

At this summer’s workshops, WSDOT heard feedback to reduce the visual impact of lights on the bridge.

Conceptual rendering of the Portage Bay Bridge looking southwest from the Seattle Yacht Club.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDC feedback on conceptual design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Support for flared column design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure that lights, signage and other above-bridge features are organized to avoid visual clutter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lower height of light fixtures to promote a “boulevard” feel.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parking
Via email, WSDOT heard feedback to maintain existing street parking on 10th Avenue East on the west side of the lid. WSDOT and the city determined that including parking on the lid was inconsistent with city street design guidelines and the intended use of the lid – primarily open space and nonmotorized/transit connectivity. Parking in front of the 10th Avenue East business district will be maintained.
Section 5: Next steps for the project

Design next steps

WSDOT will begin preparing the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project’s request for proposals (RFP) in 2020 based on the conceptual design refined through public engagement and Seattle Design Commission coordination. The design-builder will finalize the project design based on contract requirements informed by the 2019 conceptual design and previous design refinement processes. See Section 1 of this report for more details on the design-build process.

This public comment summary will help inform development of the design-build contracting documents. WSDOT will continue to coordinate with the city of Seattle and Seattle Design Commission throughout RFP development and as the contractor finalizes the project design. The design-builder will also share design refinements with the public.

Estimated dates for key upcoming project milestones:

- **2020**: Develop contracting documents
- **Mid-2021**: Issue RFP
- **Mid-2022**: Design-build phase – design-builder finalizes the project design
- **2023**: Begin construction
- **2029**: Complete construction

Next steps for public engagement

WSDOT will work with the community and key stakeholders in 2020-2021 to develop a Community Construction Management Plan and a Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan for the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project. The plans will help define best management practices during construction and measures to reduce local traffic impacts associated with project construction. There will also be opportunities for public engagement when WSDOT applies for a Major Public Project Construction Noise Variance and a Shoreline Master Use Permit from the city of Seattle. Once the design-builder is selected, the contractor will provide additional preconstruction public engagement opportunities.