

## SR 520 Issues which need to be resolved before an RFP is issued.

Status 8/31/2016

On 7/26 the communities of Roanoke Park, Portage Bay, Montlake, North Capitol Hill, and Laurelhurst sent a letter enumerating specific issues which need to be resolved. On 8/18 we received a response from WSDOT. This (inadequate) response appears in italics under each issue below. Our response to WSDOT is in red immediately below each heading.

Central issue; in order to have mobility for anyone going north or south of the ship canal, ( pedestrians, bikes, transit and cars), it is necessary to develop a plan for moving people during and after construction. A realistic plan does not exist. In order to get one, it will be necessary for high-level people at the city and the state to negotiate with each other. This must be done before an rfp is issued.

More specific issues are enumerated below.

### **1) Consultations with local community organizations and the public**

Communities 8/31: **WSDOT statement below is an inadequate response. We need real dialogue, not repetition of WSDOT talking points. The communities feel they have been given the run around. The city needs to have a high –level boss (or council subcommittee) empowered to develop the city’s vision of what it wants and to negotiate with WSDOT.**

*WSDOT 8/18 ; We are aware that there is interest in more frequent opportunities for public involvement and engagement with the project. We are currently planning a number of community engagement opportunities in the coming months. This is planned to include:*

*· Sharing "Rest of the West" information at the WABN monthly construction update meetings*

*· Attending local community council monthly meetings on a regular basis, as interest exists*

- *Providing project briefings/presentations by request, to help answer questions*
- *Conducting outreach to residents living adjacent to the corridor to help plan ahead for construction near their homes*

*We also have a variety of ongoing tools and resources to help provide answers to community questions, including [regular email updates](#), the [project website](#), email responses, a [24/7 construction hotline and office phone](#) during business hours.*

## **2) Coordination with the City of Seattle during planning**

Communities 8/31: **More is needed. Perhaps a subcommittee of the city council or a high level person reporting to the mayor, working with an ombudsman who reports directly to the governor.**

**SDOT has to provide vision and guidance. Someone with broad vision, an open mind, and negotiating skills is needed.**

**The City Council has promised a point person on SR520 since May.**

*WSDOT 8/18: WSDOT and the City of Seattle continue to coordinate at a staff and leadership level on a wide variety of technical and policy topics, as has been the case for many years on the SR 520 Program. We meet on a regular basis with several City departments, including SDOT, on comprehensive transportation planning, including safe bicycle and pedestrian connections, signalization plans, and local traffic configurations as part of the project. We also brief the Seattle City Council on the project, to share updates and answer their questions.*

## **3) Safety for bicyclists and pedestrians**

Communities 8/31 : **This answer ignores the specific requests and problem areas cited in our letter of 7/26. If the Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan is underway, it has not involved the neighborhoods, who have intimate knowledge of the issues and good ideas of how to resolve them. If the Community Construction Plan is underway, it also has not involved the communities.**

**WSDOT below is not factually accurate. In Montlake, The plan for access from and to the west/SW are anything but safe for pedestrians. The Roanoke/Montlake Blvd intersection is already unsafe, and if the Montlake Market is removed it will get much worse. There are no planned adjustments for the increased traffic already impacting the Roanoke/10th/Harvard intersection.**

**The Bill Dawson trail plans are upside down: cars on top, people in trenches and tunnels where they can't be seen or protected. It's a criminal design.**

**The HCT project is currently planning to eliminate the left turn from southbound Eastlake to Fuhrman. This loading of traffic onto Harvard would make the Harvard/10<sup>th</sup>/Roanoke intersection unmanageable.**

**A plan for all three major intersections is needed: the Montlake interchange area, the Harvard/10<sup>th</sup>/Roanoke intersections, and the University Bridge/Fuhrman/ Harvard intersections. In addition, all of these need traffic cameras with fines, to keep the intersections from being blocked.**

*WSDOT 8/18. Public safety is the number one priority for WSDOT. We are building a corridor that will enhance regional safety for drivers by replacing vulnerable bridge structures. The interchange has also been designed to allow safe access for transit riders, bicyclists and pedestrians. Many of the details of these safety improvements will be outlined in the updated Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan (NTMP) and Community Construction Management Plan (CCMP), both of which are in development in collaboration with the City of Seattle, and will be shared with the public for their feedback prior to construction.*

*We are building local safety and connectivity improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians, including several improved connections to local and regional trails, as well as opportunities to separate non-motorized users from traffic, such as via the new land bridge over SR 520.*

#### **4) Bill Dawson Trail and NOAA coordination**

Communities 8/31: **"Continues to work with" is not adequate. The city and the state need to co-ordinate on ways to design a safe and pleasant link from Montlake Park to Montlake Blvd. Once the end result is specified, our elected officials can help with NOAA, if needed.**

**The impact on NOAA is tied to a refusal to provide safe pedestrian and bike connections at or above street grade. All planning for BD trail and north south connection on the west mini-lid was interrupted by WSDOT while the designers were actively looking for solutions. Any change to the BD trail plan may impact the lid design to which it connects. So, as long as the BD trail issue is not properly resolved, the lid is not planned either.**

**We can't have a pedestrian route made up of 2 trenches and 2 tunnels. The city needs to specify the end result desired.**

*WSDOT 8/18: WSDOT continues to work with NOAA through regular, ongoing meetings to find a solution to a number of issues related to the SR 520 construction, including providing a safe bicycle and pedestrian connection from the new Regional Shared Use Path to the Bill Dawson Trail, and connections to other local trails nearby.*

## **5) Haul routes**

**Haul routes and restrictions must be spelled out BEFORE the rfp goes out. We can not let the contractor say It's too expensive!**

**Likewise, the city must carefully examine the "deviations" section in the specifications. Defects can arise from an approach WSDOT uses called "Deviations". Buried in the design documents will be a listing of those items where WSDOT design standards are not met because it is too expensive to do so. These deviations are items that will be corrected if and when funds are available. This rarely happens.**

*WSDOT 8/18. Transporting construction vehicles, equipment, materials and staff is critical to construction of planned project improvements. We understand concerns about truck traffic on local streets. The design-build contractor will develop the construction means and methods for the next phase of construction, including their plan to haul these items. While barges may be an option for some items, the mainline highways including I-5 and SR 520 will be the primary haul routes. Local arterials will need to be used to some degree, in order to provide sufficient construction access. Additional details and information will be provided in the NTMP and CCMP documents, and shared in pre-construction meetings once the contractor is on board.*

## **6) Buses and transit**

Communities 8/31. **We disagree with WSDOT's statement below. It is necessary for the city to have a pretty clear idea of how transit will function in the area. City tax payers are the customers of this transportation product. The city has a responsibility to see that a good product is provided. All negotiations must be run by the city in the context of a holistic and coordinated transportation plan.**

*WSDOT 8/18: Transit is essential for public access to local and regional destinations. WSDOT is closely coordinating with King County Metro and Sound Transit on a regular basis regarding transit infrastructure and planning for construction and future operations. While the SR 520 Program will build new transit infrastructure, including the Montlake lid direct-access ramps and transit shelters on the new Montlake lid, the future operations of buses will be determined by these two transit agencies.*

## **7) Montlake lid**

Communities 8/31: **What is the current plan for the number of buses to stop on the Montlake Lid each day? What will be their noise impact? From the west, how will they enter and leave the lid?**

**What do these buses connect? Are our neighborhoods well served or is this simply a UW to MSFT bus system?**

**Since the Light Rail has started operating and bus service in the area has been cut, pedestrian traffic patterns have changed. The lid was designed before these changes took place. Before the lid gets planned, these new patterns must be studied.**

**The landbridge has no value whatsoever for pedestrians commuting to work or shopping via the light rail or the bus system. Julie's position is totally off base. Pedestrians will travel primarily on the shortest routes: on the Montlake overpass (never on the lid, and only for recreation purpose on the land bridge).**

**The lid is viewed by Parks as a glorified bus stop. In fact, the lid has no relevance at all in terms of pedestrian and bicycle route.**

*WSDOT 8/18. The Montlake lid has been redesigned and refined over the past several years via multiple public processes. In 2007-2008, as directed by the*

Legislature in ESSB 6099, WSDOT hosted a design mediation process for the west side of SR 520 in Seattle. This was followed by a 2010 Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement and a 2011 Final Environmental Impact Statement. The lid was further refined during the [2012 Seattle Community Design Process](#) and [2014 ESSB 6001 design process](#). In 2015, the conceptual design was endorsed by the Seattle City Council. The lid design provides access to transit, an open plaza and green space for community use. Transit connections have been placed on the lid in order to minimize the width of the corridor. The adjacent land bridge will provide a new, safe connection for bicyclists and pedestrians to cross over the highway without mixing with vehicle traffic.

## **8) Speed limits in Seattle : not just Portage Bay!**

Communities 8/31: **The EIS specified a 45 mph speed limit not just over Portage Bay, but from the highrise to I-5. We have requested that this speed limit be monitored by cameras, with speeding tickets for excess speed. Please ensure that the 45 mph speed limit covers the full length promised, and is monitored by cameras.**

*WSDOT 8/18. As identified in project plans for several years, the Portage Bay Bridge is planned to have a 45 mile per hour speed limit. This speed limit is still the plan for traffic on this bridge, as communicated during the design and planning process.*

## **9) Contractor Request for Proposals**

**BEFORE the rfp is issued for WABS it is essential to resolve all the outstanding issues we have brought to your attention, and all other outstanding issues in process... e.g. access to and from 520 in Seattle, preparations and plans for city-critical traffic during and after construction , the costs of ongoing maintenance, limits on construction activity, visual impact of barriers, dust, noise and lights, ped/bike access around the triangle used by Montlake Market, etc. These issues must be decided by the city and the state; they can not be left to a contractor, or left unresolved.**

*WSDOT is moving forward with development of contract documents for the next phase of construction in Seattle. The feedback that we have gathered up to this point has informed the current design of the project and will also inform construction. In order to ensure that the contractor meets WSDOT's commitments to the community we are also planning a number of opportunities for public outreach including:*

- *Sharing the Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan (NTMP) that is being developed to address neighborhood traffic concerns.*
- *Previewing the Community Construction Management Plan (CCMP) that is being developed to address neighborhood construction concerns*
- *Sharing "Rest of the West" information at WABN monthly construction update meetings*
- *Attending local community council monthly meetings on a regular basis, as interest exists*
- *Providing project briefings/presentations by request, to help answer questions*
- *Conducting outreach to residents living adjacent to the corridor to help plan ahead for construction near their homes*

## **10) Montlake Boulevard Market**

**Communities 8/31: See above. The rfp must not be issued until issues of ped, bike, and vehicular traffic around this site are resolved. It is already necessary to install a traffic-compliance camera at Roanoke and Montlake Blvd,, at Eastlake/Fuhrman, and at the Harvard/10<sup>th</sup>/Roanoke intersections, and the need will become greater. It is not acceptable to remove a market/community center/ barrier between the highway and nearby houses. WSDOT should provide alternatives to using this site so any tradeoffs are known to the city as well as WSDOT.**

**WSDOT's response below is a big change from the EIS.**

*WSDOT 8/18. The project's 2011 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) identified the need to remove access from driveways on the property where the Montlake Boulevard Market and 76 gas station are located. WSDOT only began the more detailed engineering design at the start of 2016, after full funding for the remaining project elements in Seattle was provided in summer 2015, when the Connecting Washington transportation package was signed into law. In recent evaluations, WSDOT determined that it would need to acquire the property to build some of the project's planned improvements, such as retaining walls and fill, sidewalks, connections to shared-use trails, and utility relocations and modifications. We may also use the property for construction staging, traffic shifts, and transit access during construction.*

*We are just beginning discussions with the owner of the property and the owners of the two businesses about WSDOT acquisition of the site. We know these businesses, especially the market, are important to many people in the*

*Montlake area. We intend to work closely with the market tenant to see whether it is possible for the market to stay open during SR 520 construction. The market's future could depend not just on WSDOT's construction needs on the site, but also on the market's needs in light of the fact that vehicle access to the property will be limited and there could be fewer parking spaces for customers, as well as other effects to business operations. We'll keep the community updated as this process unfolds.*

## **11) Bridge lighting**

**Communities 8/31: Per the 106 PA, all lighting must be aimed down and shielded so that the light does not go up, across and into homes, or into the water. All lighting must be completely shielded. The current objectionable lighting must be retrofitted. The designs for the "rest of the west" must have only shielded, downward lighting... no sentinels.**

Issues with existing lighting on the new westbound 520 :

**Current lighting on the shared use path is a "flawed design", and not what was submitted for NEPA/SEPA reevaluation by WSDOT.**

**Remedy options can include: install hoods over existing lights, dimmer system or install a opaque screen along the railing to capture the excess light that is reflecting onto Lake Washington.**

**The solution must keep dark nighttime pathways of juvenile salmonoids, and reduce night time lighting pollution to residents and in-water users. State cannot waste energy/ funds on over --lighting a non-transportation corridor now. Lighting solution should match the renderings in the 10-22-14 NEPA/SEPA Environmental Reevaluation Form submitted for the Floating Bridge and Landings by WSDOT.**

*WSDOT 8/18: WSDOT has heard several concerns regarding the brightness of the lights along the floating bridge's new bicycle and pedestrian path. Our staff has been working to investigate these concerns, which is a two-fold effort to maintain safety on the path while reducing light visibility for our project neighbors.*

*Recently, crews installed lower wattage bulbs to help reduce the light that can be seen north of the bridge. This resulted in about a 50 percent reduction in the measurable light from the path; however, we understand that the lights still appear visible to some who live north of the bridge. We are coordinating with the engineering team and the contractor to determine if there are*



*practical and reasonable operational or technical options that might produce a further reduction of light while still maintaining a safe environment on the path. There will also be bicycle and pedestrian safety lighting on the extension of the Regional Shared Use Path (RSUP) on the West Approach Bridge North, which is currently in construction. This design as the lighting installed in the railing pointing south toward the barrier, as opposed to north-facing lights on the floating bridge.*

## **12) Bridge noise**

Communities 8/31: **All commitments in the 106 Programmatic Agreement and the EIS must be honored. If the planned baffles on the inside of the 4' barriers are judged unworkable, other equivalent measures must be substituted. Compliance with the EIS and the PA 106 is not optional.**

**Existing Megeba joints on Floating Bridge and Landings need to be replaced, or retrofitted with sinus plate system as will be done on WABN.**

*WSDOT 8/18: As you likely know, there are very few floating bridges in the world, most of which are located here in Washington State. The complexity of a joint which must attach the floating portion of the structure to the fixed portion is very complex. Not only does the joint need to move east-west in this case, but also up and down as Lake Washington's water levels change throughout the year. Lastly, these particular joints must also be able to withstand a significant drop in water should a catastrophic event occur. Over the decades, expansion joints for floating bridges have progressed in their ability to reduce noise production, allowing WSDOT to install quieter joints for each floating bridge we have constructed.*

*While current sound readings show the new floating bridge's joints are below federal and state regulations, we continue to work with the City of Medina regarding their recent concerns. Because significant construction is continuing on the Seattle side of the floating bridge, the traffic is still traveling on both the old and new bridge structures. As a result, it is difficult for noise studies to discern whether the new expansion joints may be a cause of similar concerns for Seattle residents at this time. WSDOT, however, will continue to monitor the joints over time.*

*I'd also like to share with you that the bridge expansion joints which will be installed on the West Approach Bridge North, because it is not a floating bridge, allowed WSDOT to implement a smaller and simpler joint type. When installed next year, these expansion joints will be the latest generation of approved quieter joints for this type of structure.*

*In addition, for the SR 520 corridor's next phases of construction in the Montlake and Portage Bay areas, the following noise reduction elements will be implemented for Seattle, as included in the project's environmental documentation:*

- Installing taller, 4-foot concrete traffic barriers along both sides of the SR 520 project alignment*
- Using quieter concrete pavement, also known as Next Generation Concrete Surface*
- Installing acoustically absorptive materials around lid portals (to be constructed in the Montlake area) above the impact zone*
- Reducing the speed limit on the Portage Bay Bridge*

### **13) Portage Bay Bridge design**

**Communities 8/31: The Roanoke Park/ Portage Bay/ North Capitol Hill /Montlake community wants to be actively involved in this process. The uses of the large space under 520 near Boyer must be an integral part of it, as well as maintenance of all open spaces.**

*WSDOT 8/18 The Portage Bay Bridge is still at a conceptual level of design. We plan to continue our work to develop it further in the future, and will engage the community and the public in this future design process. This work is part of a future phase of the Rest of the West, which is not expected to begin construction prior to 2020. We look forward to working collaboratively with the community in this future design process.*

### **14) Removal of the old floating bridge on Lake Washington**

**Lawsuits are underway. Ignoring the EIS is not acceptable.**

**WSDOT should have this work done off site, in an encapsulated facility, not in open barges on Lake Washington and in Union and Portage Bays due to the pollutants, including arsenic found in the sections of the old bridge.**

WSDOT 8/18. This work is critical in order to remove the vulnerable structure prior to storm season hitting later this year. We don't want the old bridge to pose a risk to the new floating bridge, which is just 10 to 50 feet away from the old bridge in some locations. With several segments of the old bridge already removed, the structure is now at heightened risk from storms. This linked document provides a [summary of the bridge-removal work](#) completed so far. WSDOT should have this work done off site, in an encapsulated facility, not in open barges on Lake Washington and in Union and Portage Bays due to the pollutants, including arsenic found in the sections of the old bridge.

As noted above, decommissioning the existing bridge on the planned schedule—prior to storm season arriving later this year—is imperative to the safety of the public. WSDOT and its contractor will proceed to decommission the bridge under the permits that have been issued.

## 15) Maintenance and safety of green areas

Communities 8/31: **The 520 project is creating additional sites that will need to be maintained, and the funding for maintaining these places must come from WSDOT. To date WSDOT has done an extremely poor job of maintaining spaces near 520; we believe the city would do a better job, with WSDOT permanent funding.**

WSDOT 8/18. As part of ongoing coordination and discussions, WSDOT and the City of Seattle, along with the regional transit agencies, are meeting regularly to plan for future maintenance of the corridor and project improvements. Roles and responsibilities for maintaining the area, such as the Montlake lid, transit stops, local streets, and utilities, will be confirmed via maintenance agreement(s) that are in development. These agreements will help to ensure that maintenance is thoughtfully planned, funded, and clear moving forward to ensure that the corridor remains well maintained in future years.

## 16) Next steps

**Next step: Resolve the issues BEFORE issuing an rfp!**

**The city needs to let WSDOT know promptly that the issues must be resolved before any rfp is issued for WABS.**

*WSDOT 8/18. As stated earlier, we are interested in maintaining an open dialogue with the community about this critical transportation project, and plan to continue to reach out and strengthen our public engagement program and relationships with the community. If you are interested in meeting for future discussions, please feel free to contact us moving forward.*

*We look forward to your continued engagement throughout the next phase of SR 520 construction in Seattle. As always, if you have additional questions please feel free to [send us an email](#). Thank you for your ongoing involvement in this process.*

This paper is created by the most impacted communities:

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