



Seattle Community Design Process Oct. 1, 2011 Public Session Public Comment Summary

Overview

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) hosted the first public session of the Seattle Community Design Process (SCDP) on Oct. 1, 2011 at Mary Gates Hall on the University of Washington campus in Seattle. Approximately 110 people attended the event and approximately 420 individual written comments were received.

At the session, attendees were able to view a WSDOT presentation and a series of informational boards that provided the following information:

- SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV program overview
- SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV project overview
- Basic project features of the I-5 to Medina preferred alternative
- Seattle Community Design Process overview
- SR 520 sustainability goals and objectives
- Background information on urban design and sustainability
- How to participate in the workshop

Members of the public were also able to view information at a series of work stations organized by key geographic areas along the Seattle side of the SR 520 corridor. These areas included:

- Region-wide
- Roanoke
- Portage Bay Bridge
- Montlake
- West Approach Bridge

Workshop focus

At each work station, visuals showed existing conditions and basic project features for each geographic area in plan and sectional views. Participants were able to view these materials and share their feedback on potential design refinements by drawing on trace paper, placing comments on post-it notes and comment cards, and talking with project staff.

Workshop accomplishments

Participants indicated they were pleased by the open format of the event and that it provided a substantive opportunity to speak and be heard by WSDOT staff and other community stakeholders. Many comments and conversations pertained to:

- Perceived challenges posed by specific elements of the basic project features.
- Requests for additional information on topics such as noise, traffic, and air quality within each key geographic area.

Below is a summary of the general themes of public feedback organized by key topics and geographic areas. This summary is meant to capture the larger themes of the public's written

comments and conversations with staff and *is not inclusive of all the individual comments received*. All verbatim comments have been recorded in a separate document that is being used by WSDOT and the SR 520 design team to inform their design decisions as they continue to explore possible design refinements through the Seattle Community Design Process.

Key topics

Traffic

- Traffic is a primary concern in each of the geographic areas, and particularly in the Montlake area.
- People are concerned about traffic back-ups, bottlenecks, and local cut-through traffic that will cause negative impacts to the local streets and nearby neighborhoods.
- There were many questions about how traffic will operate and function in particular areas.

Noise

- Noise from traffic is another primary concern in each of the geographic areas.
- People would like more noise walls, quieter pavement, taller noise walls, and transparent noise walls in different areas.

Bicycle, pedestrian, and transit connections

- There are concerns regarding bicycle/pedestrian safety, access, and connections.
- Safety concerns are primarily based on bicycle/pedestrian conflicts on shared use paths, conflicts with vehicles, and difficult connections, intersections, and site conditions including steep slopes and poor sight lines.
- People provided a wide variety of suggestions for desired connections, routes, and ways to improve safety. Examples of specific suggestions include:
 - A bicycle trail through the Arboretum.
 - Curb-separated pedestrian sidewalk and dedicated bicycle path on Montlake Boulevard.
 - Separate bicycle/pedestrian bridges to help avoid conflicts with vehicles.

Wetlands and trees

- People expressed concerns about retention of mature trees, and protection and access to shorelines and wetlands.

Bridge structures

- People have a variety of concerns regarding the bridge structures, which primarily include:
 - Height and views
 - Width
 - Noise from bridges sources
 - Safety under structures

Public health and safety

- People are concerned that there will be an increase in idling vehicles that will worsen the local air quality and affect the health of those living nearby.

- Safety is important, and people have concerns for the lids, bicycle/pedestrian paths, and under bridge areas. People provided a wide variety of suggestions for how to improve safety along the corridor. Examples of specific suggestions include:
 - Put art under the Portage Bay Bridge to help activate the space. A skateboard park or zip line could also activate this area.
 - Provide vehicle access for patrol cars under the west approach of the Portage Bay Bridge.
 - Provide good lighting on the Montlake lid.

Sustainability

- Attendees discussed how sustainability is measured on the project. People suggested that a sustainable design should provide the greatest possible access for all transportation modes (including bikes, pedestrians, and watercrafts) and should also promote affordable transportation.

Geographic areas

Roanoke area: (includes 10th and Delmar lid and I-5 interchange)

- **Noise**
 - Traffic noise is an important issue in this area and people provided various suggestions to reduce and mitigate noise, such as:
 - Create a bigger lid.
 - Do not allow studded tires to go through the area or on the floating bridge.
- **Traffic and parking**
 - Roanoke area community members indicated that there are problems with traffic congestion and parking in this area and are worried that these problems could become worse, especially with the development of the lid.
- **Bicycle and pedestrian connections and access**
 - This is a key area for bicycle/pedestrian connections, although they are currently difficult due to steep slopes.
 - People want these connections to be improved and provided various suggestions for how to improve connections and routes, such as:
 - Create a “T” intersection at 10th Avenue East and Delmar Drive.
 - Add dedicated bicycle lanes.
 - Create a bicycle to bus station on the west side of the I-5 interchange.
 - Provide shoreline access from the lid to Portage Bay.
- **Lid**
 - People provided various suggestions for activities and uses for the lid that include both active and passive programs. Examples of specific suggestions include:
 - P-patches
 - Dog parks
 - Children’s play structures
- **Safety**
 - Safety is a main concern in this area, particularly at specific intersections and areas under the bridge structure.

- This area could feel safer if it is activated.
- Safety concerns for bicyclists include:
 - Potential for vehicle conflicts
 - Steep slopes
 - Difficult connections
- **I-5 interchange**
 - People expressed concerns that this interchange will have to be rebuilt in the future so the design should take into consideration current and future projects and trends.
 - People provided various suggestions to make this interchange safer and more efficient, including:
 - Eliminate one express lane on I-5 to avoid weaving problems.
 - Provide dedicated HOV lanes in each direction as opposed to reversible lanes.

Portage Bay Bridge area:

- **Traffic**
 - There is a general concern about potential traffic back-ups and bottlenecks in this area and the impacts to nearby neighborhoods and local streets.
- **Wetlands and natural areas**
 - People indicated they would like to see wetland mitigation happen directly in the Portage Bay area rather than off-site.
 - Several people expressed that Portage Bay is an important natural area and the natural functions should be maintained.
- **Bridge structure and aesthetics**
 - People provided various suggestions regarding desired bridge structures and aesthetics. Examples of specific suggestions include:
 - Eliminate the landscaped median.
 - Do not use a false arch.
- **Connections**
 - Several people indicated they would like the bridge to provide bicycle/pedestrian connections and transit/HOV/light rail connections.

Montlake area:

- **Noise**
 - Traffic noise is a primary concern in this area and people provided a wide variety of suggestions for reducing or mitigating noise.
- **Traffic**
 - There are many questions about how traffic will operate in the Montlake area and nearby neighborhoods.
 - People are concerned about cut-through traffic and additional traffic back-ups on local streets and ramps.
 - People provided a wide variety of suggestions for how to improve and operate traffic in this area. Examples of suggestions include:
 - Prohibit or limit, left turns onto Lake Washington Boulevard from 24th Avenue East.

- Use diverters or barriers to prevent 22nd Avenue East from (further) becoming an alternative arterial route to 24th Avenue East.
 - Several people suggested that the current configuration of the ramps at the north edge of the lid is an obstacle to accessing and using the lid.
- **Bicyclists and pedestrians**
 - People want buffers between bicycle/pedestrian paths and street traffic. A variety of suggestions were provided, which frequently include separated, dedicated lanes and vegetation.
 - People are concerned about safety for bicyclists and pedestrians while on designated paths and making specific connections. Various safety features were suggested, including lighting and separated bicycle and pedestrian paths.
 - Connections are important and participants provided a variety of ideas regarding suggested connections and routes. Examples of specific suggestions include trails and connections along the shoreline and through the Arboretum.
- **Lid**
 - Several people suggested that the current design will not allow the lid to be a useful space for people to make connections to and from surrounding neighborhoods (particularly for pedestrians). A primary reason is that they believe that there will be too much traffic surrounding the lid.
 - Participants provided a variety of suggestions for activities and possible uses for the lid, including:
 - Park areas without roads
 - Athletic fields
 - Areas for public art
- **Landscaping and natural elements**
 - People indicated that they wanted to see more natural elements along the corridor. Participants provided a wide variety of suggestions for how to develop these features, which often included enhancing the Arboretum and retaining and planting more trees throughout the area.
- **Other project elements**
 - There were a wide variety of suggestions regarding development of specific project elements including the second bascule bridge, stormwater facility, and recreational parking areas. Examples of specific suggestions include:
 - Redesign the stormwater facility to fit further north and east into the park area.
 - Build a second bascule bridge as soon as possible.
 - The new bascule bridge should respect the historic character of the existing bridge.

West Approach Bridge area:

- **Noise and traffic**
 - People are concerned about increasing noise and traffic in this area and possible impacts to the nearby neighborhoods.
- **Views**
 - There are concerns about the height of the structure and potential impacts on maintaining views.

- **Bicycle, pedestrian, and transit connections**
 - There were requests for more information on how light rail could work and that it be added as part of the project.
 - People indicated they want screening to help shield bicyclists and pedestrians from debris and particulates.

- **Bridge structure and aesthetics**
 - People provided a variety of ideas regarding the configuration and aesthetics of the bridge structure, including:
 - Bridge height that will not obstruct views
 - Shift the abutment west
 - Submerge shafts below the water