

**SR 520 West Approach Bridge North Project  
Monthly Public Meeting #3 – Summary**

Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2015, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Graham Visitors Center  
2300 Arboretum Drive East, Seattle, WA 98112**Attendees****Flatiron West, Inc.**

- Justin Allington, Project Manager
- Tom McMillan, Project Engineer
- Dan Jordan, Environmental Compliance Lead

**WSDOT**

- Brian Dobbins, WABN Construction Engineering Manager
- James VanSteenburg, WABN Deputy Construction Manager
- Kristin Sandstrom, WABN Communications Manager
- Emily Namiki, WABN Communications
- Kathryn Murdock, WABN Communications

**City of Seattle**

- John Arnesen, Seattle Department of Transportation

**Meeting overview**

On Jan. 7, WSDOT and the contractor, Flatiron West, Inc., cohosted a monthly public meeting and invited the local community to learn about upcoming construction activities on the [SR 520 West Approach Bridge North Project](#) (WABN). Approximately 10 members of the public attended. The monthly meeting is an informal forum where community members can learn about progress on the WABN project and ask WSDOT staff and the contractor questions about construction activities.

**Project overview: Brian Dobbins**

- WSDOT is constructing a 6,000-foot-long bridge which will connect two general purpose lanes and one HOV lane of the new floating bridge into the Montlake area. Other [key design features](#), changes and improvements of the WABN project include:
  - Removing the westbound SR 520 Arboretum off-ramp and replacing its function with a new off-ramp at 24th Avenue East.
  - Extending a new 14-foot-wide regional shared-use bicycle/pedestrian path from the new floating bridge to 24th Avenue East in Montlake and existing city of Seattle (City) paths.
  - Building a new two-lane off-ramp from westbound SR 520 to Montlake Boulevard.
  - Noise reduction components including 4-foot-high concrete traffic barriers that are taller than standard barrier.
  - A new stormwater treatment pond at the former Museum of History and Industry site.

- In December, Flatiron began work in the Montlake interchange area and will continue local street improvements into 2015. Activities include:
  - Improvements to the intersection at East Lake Washington Boulevard and 24th Avenue East to accommodate the new off-ramp including the following:
    - Modifying to a four-way stop.
    - Adding a westbound lane between 24th Avenue East and Montlake Boulevard East on East Lake Washington Boulevard.
    - Constructing a raised crosswalk on 24th Avenue East to discourage cut-through traffic.
    - Adding a 16-foot-wide path for bikes and pedestrians across SR 520.
  - Widening the eastbound SR 520 ramps to and from Montlake Boulevard. Flatiron began this work in December 2014 and will continue through Jan. 29, 2015.
  - Narrowing and lengthening the bus stop island near the eastbound SR 520 on-ramp to allow room for crews to widen the off-ramp and add a dedicated right-turn lane.
  - Adding a new traffic signal at the westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard East.
  - Temporary removal of the bike lockers and northbound bus stop until the new westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard is built (planned for summer 2015).
  - Constructing ADA improvements, including curb cuts and expanding sidewalks from 8 to 10 feet on Montlake Boulevard.

**Construction overview – work completed to date: Justin Allington**

- Flatiron reopened the Arboretum Waterfront Trail on Foster Island on Dec. 19, 2014. Areas underneath the work bridge are fenced off at all times for public and worker safety.
- Flatiron continues to make progress on the temporary work bridge at the MOHAI shoreline and on Foster Island. The plan is to connect the section of the temporary work bridge at MOHAI to the temporary work bridge at Foster Island. All work bridge construction will pause beginning April 15 to protect salmon migration through Lake Washington. It will start back up in the Fall.
- Demolition on the R.H. Thomson “Ramps to Nowhere” is ongoing. Once the northern sections of the “Ramps to Nowhere” are removed, Flatiron will be able to build the new westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard adjacent to the existing mainline.
- In December 2014, ramp improvements began on the eastbound SR 520 ramps to and from Montlake Boulevard. Crews will add a dedicated right-turn lane on the eastbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard. Access to SR 520 will be maintained at all times during this work. This work will take place overnight, Mondays to Thursdays from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. until Jan. 29. Drainage and other site preparation work includes the use of loud equipment. WSDOT was permitted a temporary noise variance by the city of Seattle.

**Construction overview – upcoming work: Justin Allington**

- Starting in January, Flatiron will begin preparing for work along East Lake Washington Boulevard. **UPDATE: This work has been rescheduled to February.**
- East Lake Washington Boulevard activities include the following:
  - Post “no parking” signs 72 hours in advance of work. On-street parking will be removed for approximately six months.
  - Trim trees on the south side of East Lake Washington Boulevard to meet City clearance regulations for the temporary lane configuration that will be in place during construction.

- Remove trees on the north side of East Lake Washington Boulevard between 24th Avenue East and Montlake Boulevard East to accommodate the additional westbound right-turn lane.
- Add a westbound right-turn lane between 24th Avenue East and Montlake Boulevard East.
- Repair potholes as needed along East Lake Washington Boulevard.
- Install power and sewer utility improvements.
- Flatiron will also begin the following work in the Montlake interchange over the next few months. Crews will:
  - Temporarily remove bike lockers and the northbound bus stop near the westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard. The bike lockers and bus stop will be closed approximately six months until the new westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard is realigned.
  - Replace current access to the Montlake Freeway Stop near the westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard to meet ADA standards.
  - Widen sidewalks on Montlake Boulevard from 8 to 10 feet. Crews will also upgrade the transit islands and sidewalks to meet ADA standards.
  - Close the 24th Avenue East bridge for up to 180 days to lengthen the bridge across SR 520. The bridge will be modified to accommodate a new westbound off-ramp to East Lake Washington Boulevard and a 16-foot-wide bicycle and pedestrian path. The off-ramp will include a dedicated left-turn lane and a lane for through and right-turning vehicles.

#### **Public involvement opportunities and resources: Kristin Sandstrom**

- Project staff informed meeting attendees of the opportunities and resources to stay informed during construction, including:
  - [WABN construction email updates](#)
  - [SR 520 Orange Page](#)
  - SR 520 hotline: 206-708-4657
  - [SR 520 inbox](#)
  - Monthly meetings

#### **Key comments and questions**

The summary below highlights key comments, questions and responses posed during the discussion. The summary is not verbatim but represents the themes of the comments and responses.

#### **Location and time of future monthly meetings**

- **Question:** Where will you hold your February meeting?
- **Response (WSDOT):** All monthly meetings through 2015 will be at Graham Visitors Center on the first Wednesday of the month from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

#### **Completion date**

- **Question:** Is the completion date for WABN in 2017?
- **Response (WSDOT):** Yes, Summer 2017.
- **Question:** Is there an incentive in the contract to move the date up?
- **Response (WSDOT):** No, but there are disincentives for not meeting the deadline.

### **New westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard**

- **Question:** When will the new westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard be built?
- **Response (Flatiron):** The new westbound off-ramp should be built by July 2015. Before the new off-ramp is complete, crews must remove the northern sections of the R.H. Thomson “Ramps to Nowhere,” install piles and build the new off-ramp. All piles for the new off-ramp are anticipated to be installed before April 15 and after August 2015 to protect the salmon migration through Lake Washington.
- **Question:** Will it be easier to get from the new off-ramp over to the far left lane on Montlake Boulevard to make the left U-turn?
- **Response (Flatiron):** Yes, because the off-ramp will be signalized and moved slightly south.

### **New westbound SR 520 off-ramp to East Lake Washington Boulevard at 24th Avenue East**

- **Question:** Will you close the 24th Avenue East bridge during the 180 days it takes to lengthen it?
- **Response (Flatiron):** Yes, crews have to work very quickly to complete the work in six months. The work involves extending the existing structure by installing a new retaining wall with anchors and building new foundation walls.
- **Question:** Is the footprint of the existing 24th Avenue East bridge going to move?
- **Response (Flatiron):** The existing bridge will stay in the same place. Flatiron will just extend the bridge about 100 feet to the north.
- **Question:** Will the lane configurations on the new 24th Avenue East bridge change?
- **Response (Flatiron):** Yes, the lane configurations on the new bridge will accommodate for an off-ramp and a 16-foot-wide bicycle and pedestrian path.
- **Response (City):** Flatiron will make the existing 24th Avenue East bridge longer by building another section onto it. The added section will extend the bridge north to south. They are not replacing the bridge.
- **Question (Shelby-Hamlin neighbor):** If you are excavating on the MOHAI side to extend the new 24th Avenue East bridge, will neighbors hear it?
- **Response (Flatiron):** Yes, the retaining wall will be fairly close to your house in the Shelby-Hamlin neighborhood. We’ll do our best to minimize the noise but there will be a lot of activity close to your home.
- **Question:** When the 24th Avenue East bridge is finished, will there still be access to the alley from the eastside like there is now?
- **Response (WSDOT):** It will look almost exactly as you see it today. Neighbors, garbage trucks and the fire department will still be able to access the alley.
- **Question:** Are you keeping the dead-end street in the Shelby-Hamlin neighborhood?
- **Response (WSDOT):** Yes, the dead-end street will be there and the bicycle/pedestrian path on the SR 520 bridge will be very clear. If you are on the bike path on SR 520, you can travel south to the new 16-foot-wide bicycle/pedestrian path on the 24th Avenue East bridge, to E Shelby Street and through “the meadow” to Montlake Boulevard.
- **Question:** Does the 16-foot-wide bicycle/pedestrian path widen at 24th Avenue East?
- **Response (WSDOT):** No, Flatiron will remove the existing sidewalk and move traffic over to the east. On the west side, crews will make a 16-foot-wide sidewalk with barriers between the sidewalk and traffic.
- **Response (City):** There will no longer be a sidewalk on two sides. The sidewalk will be consolidated to the west side.

### **Construction noise outside typical hours of construction**

- **Comment (Shelby-Hamlin neighbor):** I could hear construction equipment beginning at 6:50 a.m. this morning.

- **Response (Flatiron):** They were likely cars entering the work site, but we can talk more after the meeting and I will also remind crews of their start times.

#### **Bicycle/pedestrian path on the new SR 520 bridge**

- **Question:** What kind of barrier will be between the traffic and bicycles on the new bridge?
- **Response (WSDOT):** The standard 4-foot-tall traffic barrier.

#### **Eastbound SR 520 ramps to and from Montlake Boulevard**

- **Question:** I see that you have orange cones on the ramp to the Portage Bay Bridge. Are you working there and closing it off?
- **Response (Flatiron):** Yes, we are working on the eastbound SR 520 ramps to and from Montlake Boulevard, Monday to Thursday nights to widen both ramps.
- **Comment:** I've heard people talk about how the traffic is pretty bad coming off the eastbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard.
- **Response (WSDOT):** The eastbound SR 520 off-ramp to Montlake will be widened to add an additional lane for right turns onto East Montlake Place East and through traffic onto East Lake Washington Boulevard. This additional capacity should help clear traffic at the intersection more quickly.

#### **Ramp removal**

- **Question:** I live on 24th Avenue East and normally get onto SR 520 heading east at Lake Washington Boulevard East. Will that ramp be removed?
- **Response (WSDOT):** The eastbound Lake Washington Boulevard on-ramp to SR 520 will not be removed as part of the WABN project. The westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Lake Washington Boulevard East will be removed later this year, but only after we build a new off-ramp to 24th Avenue East.

#### **Tree removal**

- **Question:** What is happening to the trees that are marked on East Lake Washington Boulevard?
- **Response (WSDOT):** Trees that are wrapped in orange mesh will be protected.
- **Response (Flatiron):** Trees that are on the north side of East Lake Washington Boulevard with a sign that says "to be removed" will be removed to make room for an additional westbound right-turn lane between Montlake Boulevard and 24th Avenue East.

#### **Local traffic concerns**

- **Question:** Have there been any studies of improvements to the intersection of Lake Washington Boulevard East and Boyer Avenue East?
- **Response (City):** The WABN project will not change the configuration of the intersection and the City also does not have any plans to change the intersection at this time.
- **Question:** Has there been a traffic study done to look at the results of a three-way-stop at Boyer Avenue East and Lake Washington Boulevard East?
- **Response (City):** I'm not sure if the City has looked into that. If you do add a three-way-stop, you will draw more traffic onto Boyer Avenue East.
- **Comment:** It seems like WABN will increase traffic on 24th Avenue East.
- **Response (City):** Traffic will likely not increase on 24th Avenue East south of Lake Washington Boulevard. Traffic may increase north of the existing Lake Washington Boulevard SR 520 off-ramp, but not significantly. The new off-ramp will shift traffic a few blocks over, but there will generally be the same volume of traffic.
- **Response (WSDOT):** The City requested WSDOT to build a raised sidewalk on 24th Avenue East to discourage off-ramp traffic from going through the local neighborhood.

- **Response (City):** The raised sidewalk is a traffic calming feature to discourage people from using residential streets as arterials. It may take time for people to get used to and the City will continue to monitor the intersection.
- **Question:** Why is there a four-way-stop sign at the intersection of 24th Avenue East and East Lake Washington Boulevard instead of a light?
- **Response (WSDOT):** The four-way-stop will be safer for bicycles and pedestrians. The City will monitor the intersection to ensure it is working well. WSDOT assessed traffic volumes for the off-ramp and they were not high enough to warrant a traffic signal.
- **Response (City):** There is a three-way-stop at the existing off-ramp at Lake Washington Boulevard East and it functions well. Drivers will have a shorter waiting period overall with the stop signs than with a signal.
- **Question:** Does this project mitigate for congestion on Montlake Boulevard?
- **Response (WSDOT):** No, this project does not mitigate for congestion on Montlake Boulevard.

#### Remaining west side unfunded elements

- **Question:** Will the buses come up on a raised deck?
- **Response (WSDOT):** Not as a part of the WABN project. WSDOT and the City are still working on the final design of the Montlake lid and the remaining unfunded west side elements.
- **Question:** Is there an assurance that the eastbound on-ramp in the Arboretum will continue forever for those who are concerned about increased traffic on 24th Avenue East?
- **Response (WSDOT):** I hear what you are saying, but I can't make that promise. In the current designs, the ramp is planned to be removed in future phases.
- **Question:** Is it true that there is no funding from Montlake to I-5 and that the funding depends on action from the legislature?
- **Response (WSDOT):** Yes, this is the last funded phase of the project. There are currently different options being considered for funding the remaining portions of the project.
- **Question:** This whole project started because of worries about safety – why isn't Portage Bay being replaced? It's also vulnerable to earthquakes.
- **Response (WSDOT - Communications):** The floating bridge is also a vulnerable structure that is currently being replaced. WSDOT needs additional funding to replace the vulnerable Portage Bay Bridge and existing West Approach South. Last summer, WSDOT worked closely with the Seattle Design Commission and other design professionals to further refine the design of specific west side corridor elements. These refinements focused on the design of a new Portage Bay Bridge, a new Montlake lid, and bicycle and pedestrian connections around the corridor in Seattle. These updated design recommendations will be presented to the 2015 Legislature. WSDOT is committed to continue to work with the Legislature and city of Seattle to obtain full funding for the remaining elements of the west side corridor.