



City of Seattle



**Washington State  
Department of Transportation**

## **SR 520 West Approach Bridge North Project Construction Update Meeting Summary**

Thursday, Jan. 30, 2013, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.  
Graham Visitors Center – Large Meeting Room  
2300 Arboretum Drive East, Seattle, WA 98112

---

### **Attendees**

#### **SR 520 staff:**

- Daniel Babuca, West Approach Bridge North Engineering Manager
- Brian Dobbins, West Approach Bridge North Construction Engineering Manager
- James VanSteenburg, West Approach Bridge North Deputy Construction Manager
- Suryata Halim, West Approach Bridge North Engineering Lead
- Matt Beaulieu, WSDOT Traffic Engineer
- Kristin Sandstrom, West Approach Bridge North Communications Manager
- Emily Namiki, West Approach Bridge North Communications

#### **City of Seattle staff:**

- Calvin Chow, Seattle Department of Transportation
- Lyle Bicknell, Seattle Department of Planning and Development
- Andy Sheffer, Seattle Parks and Recreation

#### **Agency representatives:**

- Colin Drake, King County Metro

#### **Community representatives:**

- Jeff Aken, Cascade Bicycle Club
- Colleen McAleer, Laurelhurst Community Club
- Gene Brandzel, Madison Park Community Council
- Lionel Job, Montlake Community Club
- Rainer Metzger, Montlake Community Club
- Ted Lane, Portage Bay / Roanoke Park Community Council
- Jorgen Bader, University District Community Council

#### **Other public attendees:**

- Jean Amick, Laurelhurst resident
- Bill Mundy, Madison Park resident
- Kip Cramer, Seattle Yacht Club
- Liz Brandzel, Madison Park resident
- Julie Newhart, Montlake resident
- Mike Schwindeller, Seattle Parks and Recreation intern

## **Meeting format**

Before the formal presentation, meeting attendees had the opportunity to view materials set up around the room and ask questions to technical staff. Project materials provided an overview of the SR 520 West Approach Bridge North Project (WABN), traffic volumes, construction sequencing, key construction elements, and construction notification resources.

## **Presentation Overview**

**Daniel Babuca provided a presentation that covered the following topics:**

- A brief introduction to the SR 520 Program and current funding status.
- An overview of the WABN project including key features and benefits.
- Highlights from the SR 520 Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan (NTMP) and the refinements made based on feedback received over the last year and a half.
- Key resources and tools that will help communities stay informed during construction.

**Key points of the presentation included the following:**

- WABN construction is scheduled to begin in summer 2014. The construction duration is approximately 2.5 to 3 years.
- When WABN is complete, traffic access in the Montlake area will not be significantly impacted and will operate similarly to how it operates today. The key difference for drivers is that the westbound Arboretum off-ramp will be removed, and its function replaced by a new off-ramp at 24th Avenue East.
- The NTMP represents the City of Seattle's and WSDOT's commitment to enhance the safety and livability in the Montlake Boulevard corridor while the I-5 to Medina project construction is underway.
- Specifically for the WABN project, the NTMP defines traffic management measures to proactively reduce SR 520 project construction effects and develop long-term traffic management strategies.
- The NTMP used public feedback to frame the solutions and has integrated this input into the project's design. WSDOT heard extensive feedback about the need to improve connections for pedestrians and bicyclists and traffic flow for drivers, and other topics of concern related to safety and traffic effects.
- Construction activities have been carefully planned to create the least amount of effects to the area.
- Additional public engagement opportunities include:
  - Local community council briefings as requested.
  - Pre-construction public open house to meet the contractor and learn about construction activities.
  - Monthly construction update meetings after the start of construction.
- Construction notification tools to keep the public informed on the latest activities include:
  - SR 520 Orange Page for up to date information about upcoming construction activities
  - 24-hour construction hotline
  - Program email updates
  - Email and text alerts

All meeting materials can be found online here:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/Library/meeting.htm>

## **Key comments and questions**

During the presentation, project staff answered questions from attendees. See below for a list of comments, questions and answers. The summary below is not verbatim, and instead represents a summary of the questions and comments received, as well as WSDOT's responses.

- **COMMENT:** There is no funding to build the West Approach Bridge South (WABS) and the rest of the west side corridor.
  - **RESPONSE:** You're correct that there is no funding available for the remaining elements of the corridor. The WABN project is designed to be forward compatible with future phases, and their timing depends on when future funding becomes available.
  
- **QUESTION:** Why don't the SR 520 improvements stretch down to Montlake School?
  - **ANSWER:** The limits of the project extend south to the Lake Washington Boulevard and Montlake Boulevard intersection. We don't expect any significant changes in traffic. We're prioritizing improvements based on the money we have.
  - The unfunded portion of SR 520, the interchange and the lid, are the biggest changes for traffic in the next phase. The WABN phase of work has much less traffic impacts and changes than the preferred alternative. There will be significant construction activities in the Montlake area during the next phases of construction.
  
- **QUESTION:** Who did you coordinate with at the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) and Seattle Parks to interface with other projects?
  - **ANSWER:**
    - The City of Seattle staff at the meeting provided an answer to explain the ongoing coordination between WSDOT and the city of Seattle, including SDOT and Seattle Parks.
    - SDOT, Major Projects Division – Calvin Chow
    - Seattle Parks – Andy Sheffer, Mike Shiosaki, David Graves
  
- **QUESTION:** The SR 520 Program identified the Portage Bay Bridge (PBB) as a vulnerable structure and public safety concern. There is currently no funding, schedule or commitment to build the PBB. Why are other "non-essential" project elements like mitigation projects being conducted before PBB? With all the cost overruns (pontoons cracking, condos cracking, and other unexpected issues for WABN) depleting the contingency fund, how can we expect PBB will be constructed and safety issues addressed? Isn't safety the number one priority?
  - **ANSWER:** We are working with the Legislature to seek additional funding sources to complete the SR 520 program.
  - We recognize that the PBB vulnerabilities and safety issues will still exist after WABN. The current reality is that we do not have funding to address all safety concerns at this time. We are committed to building the entire SR 520 corridor, and will continue to seek the funded needing to do so.
  - Mitigation is a commitment outlined in the Record of Decision and will be constructed concurrently with each funded phase of the project. Completing the mitigation for each phase is a requirement to meet various permits and commitments, and cannot be separated from other construction activities.
  
- **Action Item:** Follow up with Ted Lane on additional funding information, via the SR 520 business group (Completed Feb. 2014)

- **QUESTION:** Why wasn't an official Community Advisory Group convened? Why hasn't the community been involved in developing the SR 520 Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan? This is a commitment under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the city of Seattle.
  - **ANSWER:** WSDOT and the City believe that we've reached out to the community to seek input several times since the MOU was signed, and have met the intent of MOU. While an officially defined "community advisory group" was not chartered for the WABN phase of construction, neighboring communities, project stakeholders, and the public were invited to work with us on several occasions to discuss issues of concern.
  - **Action Item:** Provide Gene with information on the CAG (who was involved, how the communities have been involved, etc.) (Completed Feb. 2014)
  
- **QUESTION:** The signaled intersection along Montlake Boulevard is dangerous because bicyclists will not stop at the signal. I recommend keeping the 24th Avenue East bridge open to avoid extra bicycle traffic from using this intersection.
  - **ANSWER:** Bicyclists will have to follow the same traffic laws that drivers do. During construction, we'll need to close the 24th Avenue East bridge over SR 520 in order to construct the new off-ramp to Lake Washington Boulevard. We will complete all local surface and street improvements before closing the 24th Avenue East bridge to give bicycles clear detour routes during construction.
  - Once WABN is complete, there will be more options for all users.
  
- **QUESTION:** Will bikers going south have a designated route or lane?
  - **ANSWER:** Yes. Bikers will be routed onto the designated city of Seattle bike routes and detoured appropriately during construction.
  
- **QUESTION:** Will these plans do something to keep bikers off of Lake Washington Boulevard through the Arboretum?
  - **ANSWER:** There will be signage for the designated city of Seattle bicycle route. Bicyclists will be allowed on Lake Washington Boulevard through the Arboretum, like they are today.
  
- **QUESTION:** Why was a four-way stop used instead of a traffic signal at the 24th Avenue East and Lake Washington Boulevard intersection? What triggers will warrant the need for a traffic signal (e.g. backups)?
  - **ANSWER:** Our traffic analysis shows that only a four-way stop is warranted. We worked closely with the city of Seattle to identify traffic calming for this intersection and to limit cut-through traffic. Bicycles/pedestrians will greatly benefit from traffic calming at this intersection.
  - **Action Item:** Provide Kip Kramer with information about parameters to implement a stop sign versus a traffic signal at East Lake Washington Boulevard and 24th Avenue East. (Completed Feb. 2014)
  
- **COMMENT:** Many bicyclists go through the 24th Avenue East and Lake Washington Boulevard intersection. There may be safety issues without proper lighting in this intersection, but also light from cars shining into neighbor's homes may also be an issue. The team should consider this in their planning.
  
- **COMMENT:** I am concerned that the number of Montlake Bridge openings during construction, especially during spring/summer time, will cause traffic congestion in the neighborhoods. I hope

that the city of Seattle and WSDOT work with the Coast Guard to limit Montlake Bridge openings.

- **COMMENT:** The city of Seattle and WSDOT must coordinate with the Portage Bay/Roanoke Park and Fuhrman/Boyer neighborhoods during Montlake Boulevard lane closures. The neighborhoods will be greatly impacted by cut-through and diverted traffic during lane closures.
- **COMMENT:** I would like to request that the community be involved in where the WABN vibration monitoring equipment will be set up. I have concerns about structural damage to homes caused by construction effects and vibrations. How will the project minimize vibrations?
  - **ANSWER:** We are learning a lot from the West Connection Bridge project, which will help to inform the vibration monitoring process and public response protocol. We will begin pre-construction inspection of Montlake front-line homes nearest to the project limits this spring. Front-line property owners will be notified directly and invited to participate in a pre-construction inspection so that we have baseline data in the case of damage during construction.
- **QUESTION:** What project elements are temporary and must be demolished or reconstructed after this phase? What permanent noise mitigation features are included?
  - **ANSWER:** The WABN bridge structure and the stormwater facility will be permanent structures. Everything west of the abutment (Montlake shoreline) is temporary and will be rebuilt as part of WABS.
  - WSDOT is required to meet noise commitments in the final EIS. The WABN project is designed to include 4-foot barriers, quieter concrete, and quieter expansion joints to help reduce noise.
- **QUESTION:** The monitors [referring to the West Connection Bridge (WCB) project] provide no reason for any damage. The monitor by our condo is placed on a sand bag. How are your monitoring systems designed? Where are they placed? Can we take part in deciding where they are placed? Let the citizens be satisfied that the monitoring is true and accurate.
  - **ANSWER:** We are primarily targeting front line homes for the pre-construction surveys. We'll be sure to let the community know about our monitoring plans. At that point we can figure out how best to involve the community in where they are placed. I'll pass your request to participate in where they are placed along to our construction team.
- **QUESTION:** Has there been an inquiry made as what to do to minimize the pile driving?
  - **ANSWER:** I'm not intimately familiar with the West Connection Bridge project. The WABN team is encouraging the contractor to vibrate piles instead of conducting impact driving. There are differences between the WCB project and WABN because of the proximity to the existing highway structure and the depth required to drive the pile. We are working on ways to minimize noise and vibration as much as possible, but there will be significant construction on the lake, and we have to impact drive some piles.
  - We will keep community members informed during construction.
  - **Action Item:** Provide Gene with more information on vibration monitoring, plan, etc. (follow up in progress).

## **Appendix 1: Public notification and written comments on NTMP**

The SR 520 program team completed the following to solicit comments to invite neighborhood representatives to the meeting and solicit comments on the NTMP. This included:

- Dec. 11, 2013: An email invite with the link to the draft Neighborhood Traffic Management and Community Construction Management Plan prior to the meeting.
- January 15, 2014: An email reminder prior to the meeting on January 30, 2014.

Meeting participants were asked to submit their comments on the NTMP by Feb. 20, 2014. The attached comment forms were available at the meeting venue, or could be emailed to [SR520Bridge@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:SR520Bridge@wsdot.wa.gov).

The SR 520 program received one written comment from community members at the meeting, and one by email following the meeting. They are summarized below:

### **1. Jorgen Bader, University District Community Council**

- a. The graphic showing the intersection of Montlake Boulevard East and East Lake Washington Boulevard should have included drawings of the final/completed configuration, including pedestrian routes on Montlake Boulevard East and access to the Montlake flyer stop.
- b. Anti-graffiti treatment is needed on walls and pylons, as well as artistic treatments. The plan should allow for community comment.
- c. Community comment should be invited for design of artistic bus shelters.
- d. Surface walkways on the Montlake lid are integral to the design. Temporary pathways are also important, and WSDOT should consult the community.
- e. More information is needed about event accommodations, such as Husky football games.
- f. Bicyclists do not always follow stop and yield signs. WSDOT should seek input from Cascade Bicycle Club, to reduce accidents and injuries.

### **2. Pete DeLaunay, Portage Bay/Roanoke Park Community Council and surrounding neighborhoods**

- a. The WABN project will cause impacts to city streets.
- b. Montlake Boulevard lane closures will impact the area.
- c. Metro route 25 may be eliminated. Combined with increased traffic, there will be unhealthy congestion that will overwhelm the area.
- d. Our community council has worked with WSDOT and the city of Seattle for years to mitigate construction impacts.
- e. We would like to hear dates when you could attend a combined community meeting to hear our concerns about traffic impacts.
- f. We hope to reduce impacts during construction, east impacts to city surface streets, provide mitigation funding for a lid extending Roanoke Park, develop a retro-fit plan for the Portage Bay Bridge to save funding for other priorities, provide mitigation for reclamation of south Portage Bay, and review the health impacts from vehicle emissions in the neighborhoods.



# SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program



I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project

Please provide your comments on the SR 520 Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan for the West Approach Bridge North Project. You can submit your comment form to the designated comment boxes at the meeting, or by mail and email to the addresses below. All written comments must be postmarked or submitted by **Feb. 20, 2014**.

The SR 520 Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan is posted on the SR 520 Orange Page and can be viewed at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/520orange/page/](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/520orange/page/).

**By mail:**

SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program  
Attn: Daniel Babuca, P.E.  
999 Third Avenue, Suite 900  
Seattle, WA 98104

**By email:**

[SR520bridge@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:SR520bridge@wsdot.wa.gov)

**Please provide your contact information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**COMMENTS (Please print clearly):**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

