



# Montlake Community Club

Working together to maintain and nurture the natural environment  
and history of Seattle's Montlake neighborhood

montlake-board@googlegroups.com

Washington State  
Department of Transportation

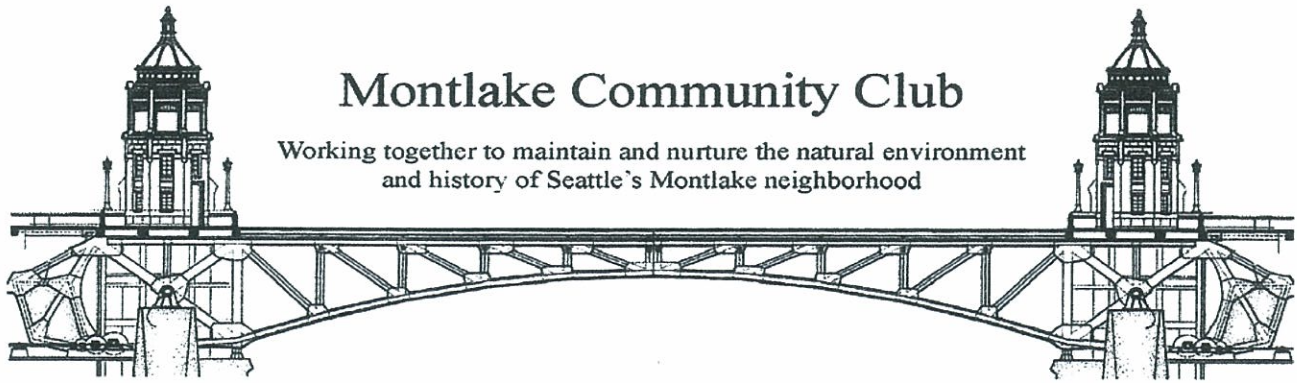
## SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project

Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement



Montlake Community Response

15 April 2010



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Washington State Department of Transportation  
Ms. Jenifer Young  
Environmental Manager  
SR 520 Office  
600 Stewart Street, Suite 520  
Seattle, Washington 98101

Subject: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
Re: Review Comments

Dear Ms. Young:

As requested by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), the Montlake Community Club has reviewed the January 2010 Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project. In general, the Montlake community is most heavily impacted by the project and we believe several fundamental aspects of the project are not addressed adequately in the SDEIS. Members of the community are concerned about both the design of the project and the process of construction.

The Montlake Community Club's highest priority concerns with the current plans are:

- Construction effects – restricted access, impact on businesses, gridlock, and noise.
- The taking of homes in the path of the proposed second bascule bridge over the Lake Washington Ship Canal, parallel to the historic Montlake Bridge.
- Re-routing of the existing Arboretum ramp traffic onto our neighborhood streets.
- The width of the corridor between Foster Island and the Portage bay Bridge.
- Increase in traffic on Montlake Blvd, 24<sup>th</sup> Ave and other residential streets.

The proposed construction, with a duration of up to 78 months, an average of 13 to 50 truckloads per day, with a peak 120 to 300 truckloads per day on East Shelby, East Hamlin streets and Montlake Boulevard will create a collapse of the neighborhood's access to their homes. For the Portage Bay Bridge with the duration of 72 months with an average of 11 to 12 truckloads per day with a peak of 50 truckloads per day traveling through the community business district on 24<sup>TH</sup> and turning on Boyer past the Children's Clinic and the St. Demetrious church, the impact would cause the businesses to fail financially, access to the medical center to be conflicted and

the religious activities at the church that is listed as eligible for national registration to be severely impacted, not to mention the fact that 70 foot truck/ trailer assemblies will not be able to turn onto Boyer Avenue from 24<sup>TH</sup> Avenue.

Following our review of the above conditions, we met with a representative from the WSDOT's program engineering office to confirm the above with the existing site and neighbor conditions. It was confirmed that the proposed plan was not feasible and required major revisions. The attached response substantiates the above findings and further describes the other impacts including noise, air contamination, pedestrian and bicycle routes, and affects on fisheries and wetlands. A basic recommendation to mitigate the above impacts is to pursue the use of barges and conveyor systems to deliver and return supplies equipment and debris. Refer to Jim Harper's statement, response No. 9.

Regarding the design options, the residents of Montlake are concerned about the rerouting of traffic that will be caused by the removal of the existing Arboretum ramps. Approximately 20,000 vehicles per day use the section of Lake Washington Blvd that runs through the Arboretum, and a large percentage of those vehicle use the existing Arboretum ramps to get to and from the east side. Under the current proposals for the westside interchange, some or all of that traffic would be rerouted onto our residential streets. This is unacceptable. The benefits of removing the existing ramps do not offset the obvious harm done by turning existing neighborhood streets into de facto freeway ramps and arterials. We are not proposing that the existing ramps remain, simply that better design options be developed. Whatever the final design is, it must adhere to the "do no harm" principle. It must not appreciably increase traffic volumes or congestion on existing streets, and it must discourage cut-through traffic either by its basic design or by using bollards and turn restrictions. This will require close coordination with the Seattle Department of Transportation throughout the design process since most the existing streets in Montlake belong to SDOT, not WSDOT.

Two other design components of the project, the excessive width of the corridor through Montlake and the construction of a second bascule over the ship canal parallel to the historic Montlake bridge, will have devastating impacts on the Historic Montlake District through the taking of historic homes and the degradation of the area around the remaining homes. The proposed width of the corridor and the addition of a second bascule bridge are strongly opposed by members of the community, and the permanent harm done to the environmental, historical, social and cultural fabric of our community has not been addressed completely or honestly in the SDEIS.

The Community offers the following comments and recommendations for your consideration. These comments have been organized as follows: General comments with respect to 520 Project SDEIS, followed by Discipline Report Comment Summaries as tabbed sections.

Response:

1. Topic: Construction Activities – Chapter 3  
Project Area's Environment – Chapter 4  
Effects During Construction – Chapter 6

Reviewer: Jon H. Decker, AIA

Summary Statement: The descriptions related to the impact to the Montlake Community requires more specificity in order for the Community to accurately assess the impact, for example the use of neighborhood streets for haul routes, the inclusion of the Montlake Football Field as part of the right-of-way and the construction of the bridge foundation within shallow water wetlands. Refer to Attachments 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D.

2. Topic: Construction Activities – Chapter 3  
Haul Routes

Reviewer: Richard D. Dunn

Summary Statement: The Montlake neighborhood streets E. Hamlin and E. Shelby will be the two most negatively impacted streets in any area of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project-under any of the three options described in the SDEIS. Between the staging areas in the UW open area next to the Montlake Cut, Mohai, the Lake Washington Blvd areas and the Montlake Blvd site there will be construction activity in close proximity to houses on these streets for the length of the project. The demolition of Mohai and its removal and the construction of the second bascule bridge on Montlake Blvd will bookend this small community with loud projects at both ends of the streets. Rebuilding the westbound Montlake exit will create tremendous noise for the people on E. Hamlin. To also use E. Hamlin and E. Shelby as haul routes for the Mohai debris removal, materials delivery and the other activities associated with the staging of the project will be overkill. Another route for this activity must be used. Attachment 4 describes the issues and provides the haul route alternative (one that is in the SDEIS) 3-4 in Chapter 3. Refer to Attachments 2A, 2B, 2C, and 2D.

3. Topic: Cultural Resources

Reviewer: Paula Opperman

Summary Statement: In the SDEIS the permanent adverse impacts of the construction of the A+ version of the 520 replacement to the historic neighborhood, building and sites are seriously understated. Discussion of mitigation is unclear, absent or inadequate when discussed. There are no identified benefits for many of the aspects of the project design for example, the addition of a 2<sup>nd</sup> bascule bridge and the doubling of the footprint of the bridge through the historic Montlake neighborhood.

4. Topic: Noise

Reviewer: Marie Hagman