



## Questions and Answers

Next Phase of SR 520 Construction in Seattle: Developed for the SR 520 website  
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### Introduction

On June 28, 2016, WSDOT hosted a public open house in Seattle to share information about the next phase of SR 520 construction between I-5 and Lake Washington – known as the Rest of the West. A total of 292 people attended the event, providing 110 written comments.

During an “Online Open House” from June 22 to July 8, a total of 2,838 individuals visited the website to learn more about the project, submitting 514 comments via an electronic comment form.

Below are some of the most frequently asked questions received during this outreach, and answers to each of them.

### List of questions (click on link to jump to individual answers below):

#### **Design Features for the Rest of the West**

1. [What will the Montlake area and the new Montlake lid look like?](#)
2. [What are the features of the new land bridge over SR 520?](#)
3. [Will WSDOT go through a similar design process for the Portage Bay Bridge phase of construction? What is the focus for the north Capitol Hill and Roanoke area?](#)

#### **Project Timeline**

1. [How long is construction of the project going to take?](#)
2. [What are the three construction phases for the Rest of the West?](#)

#### **Transit, Bicyclists and Pedestrians**

1. [How are buses going to operate in the Montlake area when the project is complete?](#)
2. [Why is the Montlake flyer stop being moved to the Montlake lid?](#)
3. [Will the bicycle/pedestrian path across 24th Avenue East be open to bicycles and pedestrians when the West Approach Bridge North \(WABN\) project is complete? What about during the next phase of construction?](#)

#### **Montlake Boulevard Market and 76 Station Property**

1. [Is WSDOT buying the property where the Montlake Boulevard Market and 76 gas station are located?](#)
2. [Why does WSDOT need to acquire the property?](#)
3. [Will the Montlake Boulevard Market be allowed to continue operations?](#)
4. [What is the timing for WSDOT to buy the property?](#)

#### **Traffic**

1. [When will the eastbound on-ramp to SR 520 in the Arboretum be removed?](#)
2. [Why are you removing the eastbound on-ramp?](#)
3. [How will you accommodate this traffic shifting to the busy Montlake interchange?](#)
4. [Will construction of the Montlake lid and West Approach Bridge South cause closures or disruptions of traffic?](#)
5. [What will be done to deter traffic from “cutting through” local neighborhood streets in the future?](#)

## Construction Staging

1. [We thought the old Museum of History and Industry \(MOHAI\) site would no longer be used for construction staging after the WABN project is done. Why do you need to continue to use that space for a staging area?](#)
2. [So when will the old MOHAI area become a landscaped stormwater treatment site and park space for neighbors?](#)
3. [Why will there be a staging area in the Arboretum for 10 years?](#)
4. [Will traffic be impacted by the project's construction staging areas?](#)

## Second Bascule Bridge

1. [What is the status of the second bascule bridge across the Montlake Cut?](#)
2. [Will the second bascule bridge include car and bus traffic, or just be for bicyclists and pedestrians?](#)

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### Design Features for the [Rest of the West](#)

1. **Question: What will the Montlake area and the new Montlake lid look like?**  
**Answer:** The [Montlake lid](#) will be a hub for local and regional transportation connectivity, and will include multifunctional open spaces, urban trails, undercrossings, a [regional shared-use path](#) and transit connections.
2. **Question: What are the features of the new land bridge over SR 520?**  
**Answer:** The land bridge will be a bicycle/pedestrian path over SR 520 that provides a north-south connection across the highway between the Arboretum and points north.
3. **Question: Will WSDOT go through a similar design process for the Portage Bay Bridge phase of construction? What is the focus for the north Capitol Hill and Roanoke area?**  
**Answer:** Yes. Our current outreach focuses on the next phase of construction: the West Approach Bridge South, Montlake lid and land bridge. WSDOT will provide similar design attention to the [remaining phases of construction](#), including the project elements in the Portage Bay and North Capitol Hill areas (such as a lidded overpass at 10th Avenue East and Delmar Drive East). We intend to continue our [coordination with the Seattle Design Commission](#) and other design professionals.

### Project Timeline

1. **Question: How long is construction of the project going to take?**  
**Answer:** The funding allocated by the Legislature via the 2015 Connecting Washington transportation package extends through the 2027-2029 biennium. The \$1.64 billion allocated to complete SR 520 in Seattle is spread out over that time frame, which constrains spending during each biennium. Because of this, WSDOT is building the “Rest of the West” project in three major phases.
2. **Question: What are the three construction phases for the Rest of the West?**  
**Answer:** The current construction schedule is as follows:
  - Phase 1**
    - Montlake lid, West Approach Bridge South, land bridge over SR 520
    - Construction to begin by 2018
    - Estimated duration: 4-5 years
  - Phase 2**
    - New Portage Bay Bridge with regional bike-pedestrian path, Roanoke lid, improved I-5 interchange, bike-pedestrian I-5 crossing
    - Estimated to begin as early as: 2020

- Estimated duration: 6 years

### Phase 3

- Second bascule (drawbridge) over Montlake Cut
- Estimated to begin as early as: 2024
- Estimated duration: 3 years

## Transit, Bicyclists and Pedestrians

1. **Question: How are buses going to operate in the Montlake area when the project is complete?**

**Answer:** The design of the Montlake lid allows the function of the current “flyer stops” alongside SR 520 to continue in the future on the lid. [Transit operations](#) on the lid and corridor will be determined by the regional transit agencies: Sound Transit and King County Metro.

2. **Question: Why is the Montlake flyer stop being moved to the Montlake lid?**

**Answer:** WSDOT went through an extensive public process and environmental review as the project design was developed. WSDOT heard concerns about the footprint and width of the highway. Keeping the flyer stop at highway level would have resulted in a wider footprint. The solution identified was to put the regional bus stops on the new Montlake lid. The flyer-stop function can be served on the new lid. King County Metro and Sound Transit will determine future transit operations.

3. **Question: Will the bicycle/pedestrian path across 24th Avenue East be open to bicycles and pedestrians when the West Approach Bridge North (WABN) project is complete? What about during the next phase of construction?**

**Answer:** Our current plan is to open the path on 24th Avenue East when the West Approach Bridge North project is complete in 2017. This bicycle access will be closed when the next construction phase starts in 2018, but bicycle detour routes will be available. Ongoing communications about construction will be utilized so that travelers will be able to plan around construction. WSDOT will require the contractor for the next phase to ensure that these safe detours are available, and to notify the public in advance.

## Montlake Boulevard Market and 76 Station Property

1. **Question: Is WSDOT buying the property where the Montlake Boulevard Market and 76 gas station are located?**

**Answer:** The construction of a landscaped lid in Montlake and improved interchange at Montlake Boulevard requires WSDOT to purchase the property on which the market and 76 station are located. We are in discussions with the property owner regarding a purchase of the site and with the business tenant(s) regarding the future operations of the two businesses. We’ll keep the community updated as this process unfolds.

2. **Question: Why does WSDOT need to acquire the property?**

**Answer:** 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. 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.

3. **Question: Will the Montlake Boulevard Market be allowed to continue operations?**

**Answer:** We don’t know yet. We are 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. We'll keep the community updated as this process unfolds.

4. **Question: What's the timing for WSDOT to buy the property?**

**Answer:** We are beginning discussions with the owner to acquire the property in preparation to start construction in 2018. We will keep the community apprised on this topic as the process moves forward.

## Traffic

1. **Question: When will the eastbound on-ramp to SR 520 in the Arboretum be removed?**

**Answer:** The eastbound on-ramp will be closed and removed during construction of the next project phase of the Rest of the West: the Montlake lid, land bridge, and West Approach Bridge South. We currently expect to begin construction of these elements in 2018.

2. **Question: Why are you removing the eastbound on-ramp?**

**Answer:** WSDOT conducted a comprehensive public involvement process during the planning and design phase of the [SR 520 Program](#). It involved a wide array of local and regional stakeholders in the decision-making process. This work and the public feedback it generated helped lead to a community-driven "Preferred Alternative" design for a reconstructed SR 520 corridor. This design – announced in April 2010, approved by the federal government in 2011, and fully funded by the Legislature in 2015 – removes all ramps in the Arboretum, including the eastbound on-ramp, which will help restore the Arboretum to a more natural state.

3. **Question: How will you accommodate traffic shifting from the current eastbound on-ramp to the Montlake interchange?**

**Answer:** In order to accommodate the traffic that currently uses the eastbound on-ramp in the Arboretum, WSDOT will implement several traffic improvements in the Montlake interchange area:

- Add a general-purpose lane to the existing eastbound "loop" on-ramp to SR 520 at Montlake Boulevard.
- Implement a second left-turn lane from northbound Montlake Boulevard onto the eastbound loop on-ramp to SR 520.
- Add capacity to the westbound lane of East Lake Washington Boulevard near the Montlake interchange, which will directly feed into the improved eastbound loop on-ramp at Montlake Boulevard.

4. **Question: Will construction of the Montlake lid and West Approach Bridge South cause closures or disruptions of traffic?**

**Answer:** During construction, there will be periodic short-term closures of the highway and local streets, and temporary traffic detours. However, WSDOT will work with the contractor and the city of Seattle to minimize these closures and keep traffic moving. We also plan to complete a Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan for the next phase, similar to [the plan developed for the West Approach Bridge North project](#).

5. **Question: What will be done to deter traffic from "cutting through" local neighborhood streets in the future?**

**Answer:** WSDOT and the city of Seattle will develop a Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan (NTMP) to address a variety of concerns related to traffic on local streets. One of these concerns is local "cut-through" traffic. The plan will identify potential measures and solutions for this and other concerns. We'll provide a way for the public to comment and provide input on the plan once it is drafted. Stay tuned for more information via our [program website](#) and regular [email updates](#).

## Construction Staging

- 1. Question: We thought the old Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) site would no longer be used for construction staging after the WABN project is done. Why do you need to continue using that space for a staging area?**

**Answer:** A new stormwater basin on the MOHAI site was originally scheduled to be built by 2017 as part of the WABN project. That's because, when we started WABN construction, funding was not yet approved for the Rest of the West. There was no funding available at that time for the highway's remaining improvements in Seattle, and thus the future construction schedule was unknown.

After receiving full funding last year for the Rest of the West, WSDOT determined that the stormwater facility at MOHAI should be deferred and constructed all at once to accommodate runoff from both of the west approach bridges (westbound and eastbound). For that reason, we determined it would be prudent to delay the stormwater site's construction until after the West Approach Bridge South was designed and built.

- 2. Question: So when will the old MOHAI area become a landscaped stormwater site?**

**Answer:** We'll complete the larger stormwater site by the time we complete the West Approach Bridge South – approximately 2022 or 2023. Until then, the MOHAI site will be needed for staging and construction of that bridge and the Montlake lid.

- 3. Question: Why will there be a staging area in the Arboretum for years?**

**Answer:** Construction of SR 520 improvements in Seattle is taking place in a very compact urban environment. To build the remaining project elements, WSDOT needs the peninsula space, as well as other locations, for staging materials, equipment, vehicles and personnel, and accessing the construction sites. The WSDOT-owned peninsula is planned to be restored and incorporated into the Arboretum once all SR 520 construction is completed.

- 4. Question: Will traffic be impacted by the project's construction staging areas?**

**Answer:** Moving construction vehicles and equipment in and out of project staging areas can affect nearby traffic. We will follow best management practices to limit the effects of our work on car, bus, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic during construction. We will provide advance notice of planned road closures or major detours.

## Second Bascule Bridge

- 1. Question: What is the status of the second bascule bridge across the Montlake Cut?**

**Answer:** The project's Preferred Alternative design includes a second bascule bridge across the Montlake Cut to the east of the existing bascule bridge. This bridge is funded and planned to be built as the final phase of SR 520 construction.

- 2. Question: Will the second bascule bridge include car and bus traffic, or just be for bicyclists and pedestrians?**

**Answer:** WSDOT and the city of Seattle continue their discussions about the bridge type. The bridge currently included in the project design would carry cars, transit, bikes and pedestrians. The city has expressed interest in considering a bridge that carries only bicyclists and pedestrians.