



## Seattle Community Design Process June 14, 2012 Public Session Public Comment Summary

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### **Overview:**

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) hosted the sixth public session of the Seattle Community Design Process (SCDP) on June 14, 2012 at Montlake Community Center. Approximately 155 people attended the event, and over 300 individual written comments were received. Similar to previous SCDP public sessions, there were many interactive conversations between members of the public and SR 520 staff, including many conversations among neighbors.

At the event, people were able to view a series of information boards with overviews and updates on the following topics:

- SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program
- SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project
- Seattle Community Design Process, including summaries of public feedback received at the April 12, 2012 and May 19, 2012 SCDP public sessions

### **Workshop focus**

The public session built on the work conducted from August 2011 to May 2012 during the SCDP and focused specifically on design refinement concepts for the I-5/10th Avenue East and Delmar Drive East lid area, and local and regional connections in and around the SR 520 corridor. As reference, the event also featured Portage Bay Bridge design concepts that were shared at the May 19 SCDP public session.

Members of the public were able to view conceptual design drawings of the baseline design approved by the Federal Highway Administration in the I-5 to Medina Project Record of Decision, and potential design opportunities in the I-5/10th Avenue East and Delmar Drive East lid area. The design materials included information on the function, design goals, benefits, and considerations of the various design concepts. Similar to previous SCDP public sessions, members of the public were able to view the design materials and share their feedback by having conversations with project staff and providing written comments.

### **Workshop accomplishments**

There is continued excitement for the SCDP and people are appreciative of the design concepts that are being developed. Members of the public are also appreciative to have other agency staff, such as the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), attend the event to answer questions.

Many people who have not been actively involved with the SR 520 Program attended the public session. Project staff clarified many elements of the baseline design. Also in attendance were many participants who have been active throughout the SCDP and are interested in design progress and additional design opportunities being explored. Overall, most people want to see design concepts move into construction and more information about decision making processes, decisions that have been made, and decisions yet to be made.

### **General themes of public comments**

Similar to previous public sessions, public comments are diverse. Feedback remains split on some topics, while clearer themes emerged on other topics. Generally, comments are constructive and will help inform designs for the 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 project staff, and is *not inclusive of all the individual comments received*. All verbatim comments have been recorded separately and are being used by WSDOT and the SR 520 design team to help inform design preferences as WSDOT continues to explore design refinement concepts through the Seattle Community Design Process.

### **General:**

The public shared general feedback that is not specific to the new design materials developed for the I-5/10th Avenue East and Delmar Drive East lid area. Main topics discussed are outlined below:

- **Portage Bay Bridge**
  - There is mixed feedback regarding the preferred Portage Bay Bridge type. For example, some people prefer the box girder concept because it has the least visual impact above the bridge. Other people prefer the cable stay option because it is iconic, has a thin deck and fewer in-water columns. Other people believe that the extradosed concept is a good compromise between the box girder and the cable stay.
  - There are requests to study variations of the proposed concepts, including thinner cables and fewer towers.
  - There is community support for a bicycle/pedestrian path across the Portage Bay Bridge.
  - Some people are concerned that the addition of a shared-use path would worsen potential effects of the bridge.
  - Noise from the bridge remains a primary concern for nearby residents.
  
- **Traffic**
  - People continue to voice concern for how traffic will operate in the Montlake, Roanoke Park, and Portage Bay area and the surrounding neighborhoods.
  - There are concerns about limited parking and increased activity that might result in the area due to new attractions, including the new lid, proposed path from

Delmar Drive East to Boyer Avenue East, and potential new open spaces at the shoreline and viewpoints.

**Local and regional connections:**

Key areas of opportunity include:

1. Partnering with other agencies, stakeholders, and projects to connect existing gaps between Seattle's neighborhoods, parks, and activity centers.
2. In the underbridge area west of the Portage Bay Bridge, provide a bicycle/pedestrian path and ramp from Delmar Drive East to Boyer Avenue East, an area for recreation, and an access road to bus parking proposed by Seattle Preparatory School.

**Main topics discussed:**

- **General**
  - There is support for a bicycle/pedestrian path on the south side of the 10th Avenue East and Delmar Drive East lid that continues under 10th Avenue East and connects to the west of Harvard Avenue East.
  - Most people want connections from the University of Washington to Capitol Hill to be maintained and enhanced.
  - There is general support for the Seattle Neighborhood Greenway's concept of designing Federal Avenue East as a greenway and connecting it to the 10th Avenue East and Delmar Drive East lid. There are also concerns about this connection including:
    - Width for vehicles and bicycles.
    - Parking maintenance.
    - Safety for bicyclists due to current pavement conditions.
  - There is support for completion of the shoreline trail/boardwalk included in the Montlake Playfield Master Plan and City of Seattle shoreline permit conditions for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina Project.
- **Underbridge areas**
  - There is strong support for a connection from Delmar Drive East to Boyer Avenue East. The connection should serve all users including bicycles, pedestrians, and be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible.
    - Most people want this connection to exist.
    - Seattle Preparatory School prefers that this connection is located under the bridge structure.
  - Safety is a concern in this area. There is a common understanding that a path could help activate this space. People also think that other programming, such as p-patches, could help. Other safety concerns include:
    - Potential conflicts between users on the shared-use path.
    - Attracting unintended uses.

- There is support for replacing the stairs on the north side of the bridge at Bagley Viewpoint.
  - People would like access to the shoreline in Portage Bay, but are concerned about tradeoffs with potential disturbance of natural areas and wetlands.
  - There are suggestions to develop a park in the shoreline property south of the Portage Bay Bridge.
- **Connections across Portage Bay Bridge**
    - There is continued strong support for a shared-use path across Portage Bay Bridge. There are suggestions to have the path on both sides, one side, or suspended beneath the bridge.
      - People believe a path across the Portage Bay Bridge provides an important direct and comfortable connection, while also promoting sustainability and equal opportunities for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
    - There are also suggestions that the existing and proposed bicycle/pedestrian connections to the south of Portage Bay may be sufficient and that a path on the structure may not be needed.

**I-5 crossing area:**

The following design opportunities are being explored:

1. Option A (baseline design) – A new 30-foot wide bridge structure with a landscaped planting on the south side of the existing bridge. This option includes a separated 14-foot wide shared-use path, planting areas, viewpoints and seating.
2. Option B – Includes separated on-street bicycle lanes on both sides of East Roanoke Street and a new dedicated pedestrian bridge.

**Main topics discussed:**

- **General**
  - There is support for improved pedestrian and bicycle connections at the I-5 interchange.
  - This area is heavily used by transit riders. The design should also make the area safe and efficient for transit users.
  - The area from Boyer Avenue East to Delmar Drive East across I-5 provides an important connection between the Eastlake neighborhood, South Lake Union, and the Montlake Playfield.
  - There is concern about the height of the transit/HOV flyover lanes that connect to I-5 and potential noise and visual effects to nearby residences.

- **Bicycle/pedestrian connections**
  - There is support for a direct, comfortable bicycle/pedestrian connection across Portage Bay Bridge to the I-5 crossing area.
  - There is concern for conflicts between vehicles and bicycles/pedestrians at various locations on East Roanoke Street, including intersections with Boylston Avenue East and Harvard Avenue East. People provided various suggestions to address this concern, including:
    - Do not include a westbound on-street bicycle path on East Roanoke Street.
    - Include crosswalks (and/or textured crosswalks), pedestrian signals, and additional warning signs at these intersections.
  - There are also concerns for potential conflicts between bicyclists and pedestrians with both of the design concepts being explored. People would like more separation between bicycles and pedestrians, while also maintaining separation from the roadway.
  - People would like the bicycle/pedestrian path to be as wide as possible.
  
- **Shared-use path and landscape bridge concept**
  - There is more support for this concept than the separated pedestrian bridge concept. People believe this option is a more efficient use of space, provides a wider shared-use path, and appears more “integrated.”
  - People asked about opportunities to create more space for bicyclists/pedestrians by moving the landscaped feature closer to the roadway and/or narrowing it.
  
- **Separated pedestrian bridge and bicycle lanes concept**
  - This option may provide better separation between bicyclists and pedestrians, although bicyclists may still use the pedestrian bridge.
  - People perceive this option to be more expensive, less safe, and “less integrated.”

### **10th Avenue East and Delmar Drive East lid area:**

The following design opportunities are being explored:

1. Passive use option (baseline design) – Lid expands east to west from 10th Avenue East to Delmar Drive East, and north to south from East Roanoke Street to the Federal Avenue East street end. The resulting lid area slopes down in a gently rolling grade from a high spot at the southwest corner at 10th Avenue East to the low spot at the intersection of Delmar Drive East and 11th Avenue East.
2. Active use option – Reconfigures the surface of the lid to allow for more level, open spaces.

Other areas of opportunity include:

1. Blending the south end of the lid into the hillside at north Capitol Hill to balance tree preservation and safe/useable area.
2. Lid portal design.
3. Potential to increase greenspace at Bagley Viewpoint versus providing additional parking locations.

### **Main topics discussed:**

- **Lid programming**
  - There is support for making the lid a passive space with the option of p-patches, orchards, water features, seating areas, and other limited activities such as basketball half-courts or small skate parks.
  - There is strong support to blend the lid into the hillside to the south. At the same time, people would like to retain as many trees as possible.
  - The lid should provide viewpoint locations.
- **Lid portals**
  - There is mixed feedback regarding various portal design concepts. Some people prefer a “gateway” design, while other people prefer a stepped lid face to help reduce visual impact of concrete.
- **Viewpoints**
  - There are suggestions to create a street end viewpoint from Federal Avenue East that would provide views of new park areas created on the lid.
  - There is support for removing off-street parking at the Bagley Viewpoint area and locating the minimum number of required parking stalls on Delmar Drive East.
  - There is concern regarding potential Portage Bay Bridge types and how it may influence or obstruct views from the Bagley Viewpoint area.
  - There is too much vegetation surrounding the Bagley Viewpoint area for it to effectively serve as a viewpoint.

- **Bicycle/pedestrian/transit connections**

- There is support for paths on the south side of the lid, which provide connections to Harvard Avenue East, the proposed Federal Avenue East greenway, Roanoke Park, and a potential new path from Delmar Drive East to Boyer Avenue East.
- There is concern that bus stops located at 10th Avenue East and East Roanoke Street will be difficult to reach due to the steep grade of 10th Avenue East.
- There is support for a crosswalk at Delmar Drive East and 11th Avenue East.