

## September 2020 Environmental Public Meeting and Online Open House Public Comment Summary (11/16/20)

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### Background

In September 2020, WSDOT hosted a virtual public meeting and two-week online open house focused on providing SR 520 Program updates and gathering public feedback on three upcoming Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid environmental and permitting processes:

- **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reevaluation:** The NEPA reevaluation analyzes how refinements in the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid project may alter the project's environmental effects that were analyzed in the 2011 Final Environmental Impact Statement. WSDOT's live meeting and online open house summarized the key points of our upcoming NEPA reevaluation and solicited public feedback. WSDOT will submit the draft reevaluation along with a copy of the public comments to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) later this year. This section also provided updated information about implementation of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement, which addresses historic and cultural resources.
- **Section 4(f) evaluation:** The Section 4(f) evaluation and technical report relates to project effects on recreational and historical resources and parks. The online open house was part of a Section 4(f) 45-day public comment period. WSDOT will submit Section 4(f) public comments to FHWA and Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR).
- **Recreational mitigation actions related to the shoreline permit application:** WSDOT focused on soliciting feedback on possible recreational mitigation actions to include in its application for a city of Seattle shoreline permit. The city will offer another public comment period after WSDOT submits the application to the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections, likely early in 2021.

Below is an overview of what we heard during the online open house from Monday, Sept. 14 to Monday, Sept. 28 and virtual meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 15.

To read WSDOT's responses to commonly asked questions, please see Appendix A. To see the complete list of verbatim public comments, see Appendix B.

### Comment overview

WSDOT received 61 comments during the online open house:

- 10 related to the NEPA reevaluation
- 11 related to the Section 4(f) evaluation
- 26 referred to the shoreline permit application
- 14 related to other topics (for example comments related to SR 520 operations or project design)

### **NEPA reevaluation**

WSDOT provided a summary of the information that will be included in the draft NEPA reevaluation to be submitted to FHWA and requested community comments on areas of concern or topics we may have missed. Some of the key themes of public comments were:

- The NEPA analysis should consider changes in the condition of the surrounding environment, for example shoreline enhancements made by the community, in addition to changes in project design.
- Avoid relocation of the beaver lodge in south Portage Bay if possible.
- Consider construction means and methods that reduce noise and vibration as much as possible.
- The reevaluation should consider the effects of SR 520 stormwater runoff on Portage Bay water quality.

### Section 4(f) evaluation

The Section 4(f) page provided an overview of which parks and resources were considered in the updated evaluation and a summary of changes in effects compared to the 2011 Section 4(f) report. Common themes from the public feedback were:

- The evaluation should address potential impacts on water access, birding, and other recreational uses at the Montlake Playfield.
- There should be additional mitigation for closing the Bill Dawson Trail during project construction.

### Shoreline permit survey

The shoreline permit section included a short survey to understand community interests and priorities for recreational improvements in the Portage Bay area that may be provided as mitigation for expected effects on parks and recreational areas. Below is a summary of responses to the survey questions.

**Question 1:** What recreational opportunities are most important to you in this area? (Participants were able to select all that apply. 21 people answered this question)

- 19 of 21 selected **walking/running**
- 16 of 21 selected **aquatic activities**, such as kayaking or paddling
- 16 of 21 selected **nature enjoyment**, such as birdwatching
- 15 of 21 selected **cycling**
- 2 of 21 selected **sports/organized activities at Montlake Playfield**

**Question 2:** What new recreational feature(s) are you most looking forward to? (Participants were asked to select their top three choices. 21 people answered this question)

- 13 of 21 selected **SR 520 Trail**
- 13 of 21 selected **trail enhancements in Montlake Playfield and Bill Dawson Trail**
- 10 of 21 selected **Roanoke lid open space**
- 10 of 21 selected **water access improvements**
- 10 of 21 selected **South Portage Bay shoreline improvements**

**Question 3.** Is there a different project of comparable scale that you would like to see replace one of the currently proposed mitigation projects listed above?

Fewer participants filled out this open-ended question than the previous two questions. We've listed some of the common suggestions here. A full list of comments is included in Appendix B.

- Projects that improve the surrounding environment, particularly water quality and wetland habitat.
- A trail connection from Montlake Playfield area to West Montlake Park.
- Add pickleball or tennis courts in the project area, for example in the under-bridge areas along Boyer Avenue East or on the Roanoke lid, or upgrade the tennis courts at Montlake Playfield.
- Improve on the I-5 crossing or construct a lid over I-5.

**Question 4:** Additional feedback.

We also invited open-ended feedback on the shoreline permit recreational mitigation. Some of the key comment themes were:

- Support for the addition of the SR 520 Trail over Portage Bay as planned as part of the project.
- Requests for more mitigation projects and actions to be located in the south Portage Bay area.
- Request for WSDOT to dredge the Portage Bay lakebed.
- Concern for potential impacts on native wildlife in the south Portage Bay from WSDOT construction activities.

## **Sept. 15 Virtual public meeting**

WSDOT hosted a live public meeting over Zoom on Sept. 15 from noon to 1 p.m. The meeting was an opportunity for members of the public to learn more about the environmental processes and to ask questions of WSDOT staff.

- 53 people registered to attend the meeting
- Over 35 members of the public attended the meeting.

WSDOT provided a short presentation of about 20 minutes and then reserved the remaining time for a public questions and answer session. You can view the presentation from the meeting [here](#).

During the question and answer portion of the meeting, participants asked questions on the following topics. See the common questions document in Appendix A for WSDOT's responses to the questions.

## **Next steps**

WSDOT will use your feedback to inform these three environmental and permitting processes.

- WSDOT is developing a NEPA reevaluation, informed by public comments. The draft reevaluation, along with public comments received during the open house, will be submitted to FHWA for review in late October/early November 2020. Once reviewed and approved by FHWA, WSDOT will share the NEPA reevaluation on our website.
- The comments received related to the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation will be included in WSDOT's final Section 4(f) Evaluation, for approval by FHWA, and shared with SPR in October 2020. The final Section 4(f) report will be posted on the SR 520 Program website.
- WSDOT will use public comments to help prioritize recreational mitigation actions to propose in the shoreline permit application if it is determined that mitigation actions are needed beyond the design updates incorporated since 2012. WSDOT will also share the comments received with SPR, as the agency that will be responsible for implementing the determined mitigation actions. WSDOT plans to submit the permit application in late 2020. There will be additional opportunities for review and comment of WSDOT's application during the city's review period, likely in early 2021.

WSDOT is also developing contract documents for the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project. The team's project timeline includes the following steps.

- **Winter 2021/2022:** Issue request for proposals (RFP)
- **2022:** Award contract
- **2023:** Begin construction, with estimated construction duration of six years

## **Next steps for public engagement**

As we work through the contracting process, there will be additional opportunities for public engagement on the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid project. In the coming months, WSDOT will be applying for a Major Public Project Construction Noise Variance from the city of Seattle, which will include a city-led public hearing and comment period. We will also develop a Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan and

draft Community Construction Management Plan. Both plans will be informed by community feedback. Once the design-builder is selected, the contractor will provide additional preconstruction public engagement opportunities.

## Appendix A - Responses to common questions

### Shoreline permit

#### **Q: Why are you reapplying for a Shoreline Permit after receiving one in 2012?**

A: WSDOT received a Seattle shoreline permit in 2012 for the entire SR 520 corridor in Seattle. Due to the amount of time that elapsed, the number of design refinements since the original shoreline permit was issued, and significant changes in the city code, the city has requested that WSDOT apply for a new permit.

#### **Q: What recreational mitigation projects are you planning to include in the shoreline permit application? How did you identify these projects?**

A: In addition to extending the SR 520 Trail across Portage Bay and a creating new non-motorized connections to local trails, we are considering recreational mitigation actions in south Portage Bay that may be included in our shoreline permit application to the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI), including:

- Improving water access at the Everett Avenue East street end.
- Refurbishing and enhancing existing Montlake Playfield trails.
- Native planting improvements along south Portage Bay and the Montlake Playfield.

We identified these mitigation actions based on public input received during previous engagement in 2019. We also worked with the city of Seattle to determine which measures would be feasible to construct and maintain.

We are using your public feedback, gathered during the September 2020 meeting and online open house to help prioritize what types of recreational activities are important to the community and see if there are other potential projects that the community may be interested in. This public feedback will inform what recreational mitigation is included in WSDOT's permit application. SDCI will make the final determination on what is included in the permit.

#### **Q: Will conditions from the previous permit be included in the new shoreline permit, including the Recreational and Environmental Improvements Plan?**

A: WSDOT will apply for a new shoreline permit to SDCI; therefore, conditions from the previous permit will not carry over to the new one. This doesn't mean that we will disregard the comments we've received about recreational and environmental improvements during the 2011/2012 shoreline permit process. WSDOT has heard a lot of public feedback about recreation in the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid project area.

As part of the new shoreline permit application process, WSDOT is coordinating with SPR to identify mitigation actions for project impacts to recreational opportunities and experiences in south Portage Bay. These previous shoreline permit public comments, along with comments heard during our 2019 design refinements, have informed the recreational mitigation actions that will be included in the new shoreline permit, such as trail enhancements in Montlake Playfield and shoreline plantings. WSDOT also incorporated a viewpoint along Boyer Ave E, which was supported by community members in previous engagement processes, into the project design.

#### **Q: WSDOT's 2012 recreational plan committed to a nature trail / boardwalk along the shoreline of south Portage Bay? Are you going to build this boardwalk trail?**

Since the 2012 shoreline permit was issued, WSDOT and SPR have identified challenges to constructing the proposed boardwalk trail, including significant environmental impacts associated with building over a wetland area. Therefore, a trail or boardwalk through regulated wetland areas will not be proposed in the

shoreline permit application. A non-motorized connection is alternatively provided by the extension of the SR 520 Trail across the Portage Bay Bridge to serve as a local and regional connection. In addition, we are considering trail enhancements within the Montlake Playfield as proposed recreational mitigation as part of the permit application.

**Q: Will there be other shoreline enhancements beyond the recreational mitigation actions included in the shoreline permit?**

A: Yes, the shoreline permit will require WSDOT to restore the condition of the shoreline after the completion of construction activities. This will include restoring any habitat or native vegetation within the shoreline area that is disturbed during project construction.

**Q: Some community members supported creating a trail connection between West Montlake Park and the Bill Dawson Trail. Will WSDOT include this as one of the recreational mitigation actions in the Shoreline Permit application?**

A: WSDOT has not included this trail connection in the proposed shoreline permit recreational mitigation actions. Completing the trail connection would require coordination between WSDOT and the city of Seattle, as well as private property owners, and other state and federal agencies, due to the complex property ownership in this area. WSDOT's project design will not preclude the trail connection from being built in the future by the city or another entity if coordination with relevant property owners occurs.

**Section 4(f)**

**Q: Why were local trail impacts not included in the 4(f) evaluation of parks property?**

A: Section 4(f) is a very specific requirement for public parks and certain historic properties. Local recreation trails, such as the Bill Dawson Trail, that would be directly affected by the project are included in the evaluation. The project refinements do not change the findings of the Section 4(f) evaluation of the Bill Dawson Trail that was included in the Final EIS.

During the construction period, WSDOT will provide detour information for any trail closures, including the Bill Dawson Trail. The Final EIS notes that the main north-south detour route for Bill Dawson Trail users will be Montlake Boulevard. After the completion of the Montlake Project this stretch will have widened sidewalks and people biking and walking will have the option to use the new bicycle and pedestrian land bridge to the east of the interchange. As we begin construction of the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid project, estimated to begin in 2023, WSDOT's contractor will provide advance notice of the timing of the trail closures and more detailed information on detour routes.

In the long-term, the project will improve on existing trails like the Bill Dawson Trail and provide new regional and local trail connections. New connections include the extension of the SR 520 Trail over Portage Bay as well as new additions and connections to the local city nonmotorized network. As part of the shoreline permit, WSDOT will include Montlake Playfield trail enhancements in the list of potential recreational mitigation actions to propose in the shoreline permit application.

**Q: Montlake Playfield is an important park for the nearby community, and neighbors have contributed significantly to improve the environment in the park. Does WSDOT's section 4(f) report only consider the construction effects in this park as a *de minimis* impact?**

A: Neither the draft nor upcoming final Section 4(f) evaluation found the impact to Montlake Playfield to be *de minimis*. The 2011 Final EIS and Section 4(f) report documented project use of Montlake Playfield. The current update to the Section 4(f) evaluation is consistent with the 2011 finding. FHWA found at the

that there was no design alternative that avoided Montlake Playfield and that the Final EIS Preferred Alternative would have the least overall harm to the park.

The preliminary finding in the 2020 draft Section 4(f) evaluation was that the design changes under review would not increase harm to Montlake Playfield compared to the Final EIS Preferred Alternative. The final Section 4(f) evaluation will include updated information about the changed features and activities at Montlake Playfield since the Final EIS was approved in 2011.

**Q: Does the Section 4(f) analysis consider prior comments and decisions from the shoreline permit process, requested mitigation from the neighborhood, and improvements made to parks?**

**A:** Section 4(f) is a federal US Department of Transportation regulation that is specific to evaluating the use of parks and historic properties. It does not evaluate areas that are not directly subject to use by or harm from SR 520 project construction and it only evaluates mitigation to the extent that it reduces the harm associated with the project's use of the property. The final Section 4(f) evaluation will expand on shoreline uses and water access at Montlake Playfield in response to public and SPR comments on the draft Section 4(f) evaluation.

Consideration of recreational uses within the city's shoreline permit process is much more general and holistic. WSDOT will include proposed recreational mitigation in its shoreline permit application, in part to address project impacts on recreational uses.

**NEPA reevaluation**

**Q: Why is WSDOT conducting a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reevaluation?**

**A:** Environmental review of the SR 520 project that was completed in 2011 included the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid phase of construction. This review is still applicable to the project. Because design refinements for the project have occurred since our 2011 Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), we need to reevaluate if those changes would have significant impacts that were not included in the 2011 Final EIS. The NEPA reevaluation will show either that the 2011 environmental findings are still valid or that the more recent design changes require additional analysis to assess how those changes may affect the environment.

**Q: When are you going to complete the NEPA reevaluation?**

**A:** We expect to submit a draft of the reevaluation to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) this fall. This online open house, which closed Sept. 28, provided a summary of what the reevaluation will cover. Public comments from the open house are being reviewed to determine if additional topics need to be included in the draft NEPA reevaluation that we submit to FHWA. We'll also include a copy of all comments in the submittal to FHWA. We will also post the final approved reevaluation on the SR 520 Program website.

**Q. What will happen to the beaver lodge in Portage Bay?**

**A:** Construction will affect the beaver lodge in Portage Bay because it is located within the work area needed to construct the new bridges. WSDOT is working with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to ensure a safe removal of the current lodge at an appropriate time of year to minimize the impact to the resident beavers. WSDOT understands the importance of the lodge to the local community and is committed to ensuring the beaver lodge is removed in a safe and appropriate manner.

**Q: How will impacts to non-endangered wetland and riparian species be addressed through the NEPA reevaluation process?**

**A:** WSDOT's is required to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to wetland areas as part of our permit with the Army Corps of Engineers and the city of Seattle shoreline permit. This includes potential effects

on wildlife in those wetland areas. WSDOT has already incorporated measures to reduce project impacts and has completed mitigation projects to address the project's impacts on wetland species. In addition, wetland areas that are temporarily impacted during construction will be restored and enhanced after the new bridge is complete.

**Q: Decades of runoff from the SR 520 and the Portage Bay Bridge have created significant silt and sediment in Portage Bay. Is WSDOT going to dredge and remove that sediment to enhance the bay's water quality and habitat?**

A: Sediment in the bay comes from many sources around the shoreline, not just SR 520 runoff. Seattle Public Utilities maps show approximately 20 stormwater and combined-sewer outfalls that discharge into Portage Bay. Stormwater runoff from the Portage Bay Bridge represents a relatively small percentage of the basin's overall stormwater and sediment discharge. Runoff from city streets, public parkland, and commercial and residential properties surrounding the bay are significant contributors to sediment in the bay.

The good news is that the new Portage Bay Bridge, like the rest of the reconstructed SR 520, will capture and treat the highway's runoff rather than let it flow directly into local waterways.

Additionally, dredging of Portage Bay is outside of the scope of the SR 520 Program, is not included in program environmental approvals or permits, and would not be allowed under our current permit with the Army Corps of Engineers.

**Q: Will WSDOT remove the contaminated soils that are disturbed during project construction.**

A: Geotechnical and sediment testing was done in Portage Bay to help determine the foundation design for the new bridge. At that time, a portion of soil samples taken for that purpose were analyzed for contaminants to determine proper land-based disposal of that material. During construction, the contractor will be required to dispose of contaminated soils in accordance with regulatory requirements. They will also be required to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as those identified in their Water Quality Management and Monitoring Plan (WQMMP) to minimize disturbance and turbidity associated with sediment disturbance.

In advance of building the new Portage Bay Bridge, our environmental documents, including the Final EIS identified a number of in-water activities that could potentially cause sediment disturbance ([Portage Bay Bridge section begins on page 3-25](#)). These activities include construction work such as installing or removing piles or columns from the old bridge, the new bridge, and/or a temporary work bridge. As these activities were already evaluated in the Final EIS, the reevaluation will only address any changes relative to that evaluation. As noted above, the contractor will be required to implement BMPs and dispose of contaminated soils in accordance with regulatory requirements.

**Q: Will WSDOT be permitted to dump concrete debris from bridge columns in Portage Bay?**

A: No, WSDOT is not permitted to dump concrete or other debris into Portage Bay during demolition.

- In July 2016, WSDOT submitted a permit modification to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to further quantify the effects of removing and replacing soil when using the saw-cutting method to remove bridge columns during demolition. Saw cutting the columns/pilings instead of vibrating them out requires removal of soil around each column.
- In compliance with the updated permit, the contractor may:
  - Remove soil around each column or pier.
  - Sidecast the excavated soil.
  - Saw cut the bridge columns/piles.
  - Remove the columns/piles and any deposited concrete debris.
  - Backfill with either native or clean imported soil or material.



- The proposed soil disturbance is a short-term, temporary effect, and the lakebed will be backfilled upon removal of each column. The Corps permit does not allow for explosive demolition of the bridge into the lake.
- This permit does not allow WSDOT to leave construction debris on the lakebed.

**Q: Won't pile driving for the new bridge create a lot of noise and vibration for nearby residents? What is WSDOT going to do to mitigate for that?**

A: To construct this project, we can't avoid pile driving and the noise and vibration it creates. However, WSDOT will apply for a Major Public Project Construction Noise Variance from the city of Seattle. This variance will outline noise requirements under which WSDOT's contractor will work, including work hours when pile driving can occur. The MPPCNV will have a public process and comment opportunity. WSDOT plans to begin the variance application process late this year or in early 2021.

In addition, we will require our contractors to follow a comprehensive menu of construction practices for reducing noise as much as possible. We'll also develop a draft Community Construction Management Plan (CCMP) with community input. The contractor will finalize and update the CCMP with more project-specific information.

WSDOT will also monitor vibration levels near project construction sites before beginning construction and will conduct preconstruction inspection to set a baseline during the construction period. During construction, vibration monitors will be used to ensure that the contractor stays within the limits outlined by regulatory and contractual requirements.

**Q: Will you remove the lily pads in South Portage Bay?**

A: Although they are non-native, the white pond lily communities are part of the wetland habitat protected under federal (Section 404 of the Clean Water Act), state (Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, and the State Water Pollution Control Act), and local (Seattle Environmentally Critical Areas) regulations. The SR 520 Program is required by these regulations and permit conditions to avoid and/or minimize impacts to wetland habitat to the greatest extent practicable. For project-related impacts to any wetland, WSDOT is required to provide compensatory mitigation for the wetland habitat loss by the following resource agencies: the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Ecology, and the City of Seattle. WSDOT may incidentally remove white pond lilies where they occur within the work-area cleared in our project permits and are in conflict with construction activities but cannot remove lilies outside of the cleared work area.

The terms of the permits we've been issued focus on the function of the wetlands, not which plants make up the wetlands. As the white pond lilies contribute to the function of the wetland, removing them would degrade the wetland's function. Due to this, all temporary and permanent impacts to the white pond lily community (i.e., impacts to aquatic bed wetland class) require WSDOT to complete additional mitigation at significant cost.

In general, WSDOT only treats weeds that are regulated for control, which does not include white pond lilies. Therefore, control or eradication of the white pond lilies is not within the scope of the SR 520 Program.

**Q: Have the design refinements increased the projects impacts on endangered species?**

A: WSDOT has also consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service to evaluate potential changes in effects on endangered species in the project area as a result of the design refinements. That consultation resulted in a determination that the project design refinements would result in no additional harm to endangered species compared to the 2011 Final EIS design.

**Q: Has WSDOT refined or otherwise altered the design of the stormwater drainage on the Portage Bay Bridge to move the overflow scuppers on the bridge deck, increasingly the likelihood of polluted water overflowing into Portage Bay?**

A: Upon completion of construction, the Portage Bay Bridge stormwater roadway runoff will be routed to a land-based enhanced runoff treatment best management practice (BMP) facility prior to discharge to Portage Bay/Lake Washington.

While certain aspects of the roadway's stormwater design have been refined, the location of the scuppers has not changed on the Portage Bay Bridge since the Final EIS.

**Q: Local community members and Seattle Parks and Recreation efforts have helped to improve the quality of shoreline habitat in south Portage Bay. Does the NEPA reevaluation take these improvements into consideration when evaluating shoreline habitat?**

WSDOT reviews the changed conditions to shoreline wetlands as part of the NEPA reevaluation and wetland permit update process. In 2016, WSDOT reassessed the contemporary conditions of the shoreline wetlands in Portage Bay pursuant to the latest rating system developed by the Department of Ecology. In 2020, WSDOT completed a field review and confirmed current conditions in the areas of impact are substantially the same as during the 2016 wetland ratings. Some of these areas will be permanently impacted and have been mitigated offsite in advance. As noted earlier, any shoreline areas affected by project construction will be restored and enhanced prior to completion of the project. Also, the design-build contractor will be required to control noxious weed species within the construction limits of the Portage Bay Bridge replacement.

WSDOT also complies with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which protects certain native bird species. The department includes this compliance requirement in all construction contract specifications for the project.

**Q: Has WSDOT considered installing noise walls as part of the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project?**

A: WSDOT evaluated potential noise walls for each neighborhood along the SR 520 corridor as part of the 2011 Final EIS. The analysis indicated that noise walls in the study area would not meet required feasibility and reasonableness criteria outlined in FHWA noise abatement policy. The results of this evaluation and specific information regarding the analysis methodology can be found in the Final EIS [Noise Discipline Report Addendum and Errata](#). The Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid phase will include noise reduction measures that were included in the FEIS, including quieter pavement, a 45-mph speed limit, and sound absorptive material at the lid portals.

Preliminary analysis for this NEPA reevaluation has indicated a few isolated changes of less than 3 dBA and that the design refinements would not substantially change project-wide noise levels. No additional locations have been identified that would approach or exceed the noise abatement criteria. WSDOT will finalize this analysis in the coming weeks and review mitigation as needed.

### **Other**

**Q: Is WSDOT recommending to the Governor and the Legislature to defer capital investments for the SR 520 Portage Bay Roanoke Lid phase? If so how will the deferral impact SR 520 project timelines and scopes?**

A: WSDOT is not recommending to the Governor or Legislature to defer capital investments for the SR 520 Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project. WSDOT is working on an ongoing basis with the Governor and Legislature to evaluate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and I-976 across the agency, and we will share updates as they become available.

**Q: How will WSDOT ensure that the Portage Bay Bridge lighting fixtures are aesthetically pleasing and unique?**

A: WSDOT worked with the Seattle Design Commission (SDC) to refine the column shape and other architectural features of the bridge and to align these features with the lighting fixtures on the bridge to ensure a consistent and well-organized aesthetic quality. This work was included in the SDC endorsement letter, which will be attached to the project RFP.

We also heard from earlier processes that the bridge should blend into the surrounding environment and that the desire is to reduce outward-facing lighting. Therefore, WSDOT's work with the SDC focused on reducing the amount of lighting spilling from the bridge, while maintaining WSDOT standards for safety for all users. To ensure long-term maintenance, necessary repairs, and replacement of lighting on the bridge, WSDOT has determined that lighting fixtures should be consistent with WSDOT highway lighting standards.

**Q: What is the proposed plan for the area under the SR 520 Bridge to improve safety and incorporate crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED)?'**

A: Safety and CPTED guidelines were a major consideration when we worked with the city, the community and the SDC to refine the project design in 2019. WSDOT has incorporated features into the design of the lighting, ground plane, and sightlines in the under-bridge areas as well as the lid and nonmotorized pathways. Some of the design recommendations included in the [2015 community report](#), particularly the inclusion of active programming elements, such as ball courts, in the under-bridge areas, were not incorporated into the project design. These elements were not considered feasible due to the landslide risk in this area.

For safety reasons, WSDOT will fence off some of the under-bridge area west of Boyer Avenue East. These concepts can be found in the [report](#) summarizing the 2019 stakeholder engagement process.

**Q: What are you doing to preserve as many trees as possible in the project area?**

While some trees will need to be removed during construction, WSDOT has made commitments to preserve and protect trees where possible, in the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid project area. WSDOT committed to the following tree preservation goals in the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement :

- To develop a conceptual design for the lid with the goal of preserving trees and the existing hill contours to the greatest extent possible.
- To preserve in place trees on the north and south side of SR 520 between I-5 and the Portage Bay Bridge to the maximum extent practicable.
- To avoid placement of temporary work bridges and other short-term construction features where they would require permanent removal or damage to mature trees, to the maximum extent practicable.
- To protect trees and screening vegetation adjacent to construction work areas from construction impacts to the maximum extent practicable.

Additionally, WSDOT's contractor is required to develop a Tree and Vegetation Management and Protection Plan (TVMPP). The purpose of the TVMPP is to describe the standards and project-specific best management practices that will be used as guidance to preserve and protect trees and vegetation within the limits of project construction.

**Q: Will the project include bathrooms as part of the Roanoke lid open space or other project improvements?**

WSDOT coordinated with Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) to evaluate the feasibility of incorporating a restroom into the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid project design as part of the 2019 conceptual design refinements. WSDOT and SPR confirmed that including a restroom was infeasible due to long-

term maintenance concerns and the availability of a public restroom at the Rogers Playground approximately two blocks from the new lid.

**Q: Has WSDOT considered using barges as an alternative, less impactful, way of constructing the Portage Bay Bridge?**

A: The selected design-build contractor will determine the specific means and methods of constructing the Portage Bay Bridge, including the use of barges or temporary work bridges. However, due to the shallow water depths and other potential limitations of barges, it is likely not a feasible option for building the new bridge.

**Q: Are you going to retain the stairs between Boyer Avenue and Delmar Drive?**

A: Due to the new bridge's footprint, WSDOT will need to remove these stairs during project construction. We recognize that the stairs are an important community connection, and we're working with the city of Seattle to develop a replacement stair connection and on-street improvements for an accessible alternate route between Boyer and Delmar.

**Q: Will boating access be impacted during construction of Portage Bay Bridge?**

A: WSDOT will provide a navigation channel with a minimum of 10 feet of vertical clearance to cross under the Portage Bay Bridge and temporary work trestles, which will allow small boat access to and from Montlake Playfield. While this temporary channel will be open for most of the construction duration, there may be intermittent short-term closures for safety reasons. WSDOT will provide notification in advance of any short-term closures.

## Appendix B - Verbatim comments

This appendix includes all comments shared with WSDOT through the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid environmental update online open house (Sept. 14-28), virtual meeting (Sept. 15), and via email during the online open house comment period. Comments are shared verbatim with identifying information removed.

### Online open house comments

Project background
<p>I am incredibly excited for this project. Although I may no longer live in the neighborhood once it is completed, I believe that the Roanoke Park Lid will be a great addition to our parks, and I am excited for future Seattleites and visitors to enjoy it. It will transform an area that is obviously a relic of car-centric 1950s urban planning into a multi-use space. My only wish is that there was some way to squeeze an express bus stop in to serve Eastlake, Portage Bay, and North Capitol Hill.</p>
<p>Hello, looks good except for the absence of bathroom facilities on Roanoke lid as well as Montlake cover space.</p>
<p>What type of fencing is being considered for the south boundary of the Delmar lid between 10th - Federal - 11th? Currently there is chain link fencing, are there plans to change the existing fence?</p>
<p>Is there any possibility of having a dedicated right turn lane from 10th to Delmar Ave E? 11th Ave E is set up as a one way in front of Seattle Prep and people (neighborhood as well as transient cars) go thru the one way all of the time. One reason is the amount of time it takes to follow the traffic laws and this time can be shortened and I believe people would be more apt to do the right thing if it were an actual route to turn right onto Delmar. Any current traffic study of right turns at the 10 th and Delmar would be understated by the many cars that go down 11th. Please consider / study this if possible.</p>
<p>Overall -- great improvements for the Seattle neighborhoods affected as well as huge volume of traffic to/from Eastside. However, reducing the speed through this area to 45 MPH seems INSANE. Please, please, please, PLEASE don't do this.</p>
<p>Is WSDOT recommending to the Governor and the Legislature to defer capital investments for the SR 520 Portage Bay Roanoke Lid phase? If so how will the deferral impact SR 520 project timelines and scopes?</p>
<p>My only complaint is it doesn't go far enough in lidding the area. In fact, we'd be better off without the 520 bridge.</p>
<p>How are people expected to connect from the Lake Wash. side of the 520 trail to the Portage Bay side of the 520 trail? The connection crosses under Montlake Blvd and under the 520 on the Bill Dawson trail? I hope that connection including the Bill</p>
<p>Many of these described improvements are excellent: improved water quality with runoff treatment, noise reduction measures and the Roanoke Lid improvements up the hill. However, the neighborhood at the bottom of the hill is being damaged and not improved at all. You state that "We recognize that the stairs are an important community connection, and we're working with the city of Seattle to develop a replacement stair connection" but that seems empty. "Recognition" of a serious problem and "working with the city" are vague assurances. A few years ago, after several months of community outreach, we were shown beautiful drawings of the area under the West connection with a well-groomed pedestrian</p>

winding pathway connecting Boyer to Delmar. This was an excellent design in compliance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), a multi-disciplinary approach of crime prevention that uses urban and architectural design. It also functioned to replace the current connection, a stairway that has connected Boyer and Delmar for the over 20 years I have lived here and was already quite aged when I got here in 1996. When the city removed our Boyer bus route out, that stairway was our means of getting to the next closest bus stop close to the fire station. When that is removed there will be NO connection up the hill. WSDOT is taking that away, NOT replacing it with their beautiful "plans", and now apparently turning the area under the bridge into "indigenous species". That sounds like a vacant lot gone to the weeds. They want to take AWAY our decades-old stairway, replace it with NOTHING, and turn the under-bridge area into an invitation to homeless encampments and garbage dumps, excusing these travesties by blaming it on geotechnical seismic concerns. The hill is "too steep" for a winding pathway, but apparently not too steep to support houses built all along it, up and down the grade, and (by the way) a highway. That is a weak and obvious excuse to encumber the Boyer Ave residents with loss of accessibility and a neighborhood blight. This hill is clearly not too steep for a winding pathway.

All the wonderful improvements of adding the RSUPs are done at the top of the hill on Delmar and the lid, mostly to appease the powerful bicycle lobby. Boyer Avenue has been tossed to the wolves.

I have pictures (unable to share them in this format) of what WSDOT has given us now after taking a home from the Frolund property next to the bridge: garbage, weeds, vacant area (like so many other highway under-bridge areas that then need to be cleaned up), homeless people hanging out that invade our backyards and steal from our homes; not a good use of state-owned waterfront property.

Also have pics (can't share) of what we were shown we might expect in several documents (2012\_1220\_SR520\_SCDP\_FinalReport\_11x17\_Ch5\_GeoSubareas\_pg10&11.pdf) that starts with these statements: "An existing substandard stairway on the north side of SR 520 is used by neighbors to connect to transit on Boyer Avenue East as well as to Montlake Playfield to the east and The Option Program at Seward (TOPS) School, Seattle Preparatory High School and Lake Union to the west. The existing underbridge area is overgrown and has been occupied by transients in the past leading to both the perception and reality of lack of safety."

Now all that is gone with a shrug. I guess it would have been bad PR to show an overgrown area given over to indigenous plants with a homeless encampment overflowing with garbage. Not my idea of community outreach and follow-through.

Further to this specific example, although our planned-demolition stairway does not qualify for 4(f) protection as a protected property or a trail, it certainly qualifies as a historic resource that is being destroyed and removed.

It is not fair or sensible to provide comments separately on this and the other subject areas as they overlap.

My husband and I live in the Portage Bayshore Condominiums. All of us owners are looking forward to a new and improved bridge. However, I we are concerned with being so near to the construction. I am afraid of windows possibly breaking from the noise. The vibration doing damage to our home, building and elevator and dock. We have families living in the building with young children. I am concerned that a crane could crash into our windows. We are so close we could sell coffee off the deck to the workers. I know that our board has been in contact with WSDOT since the entire project began (because I have been to those meetings). We have been ignored by WSDOT continually. And lied to. WSDOT took the mitigation money appointed for the our Portage Bay area and used it to build a swimming/park area over at the UW by Agua Verde Restaurant. This area is not a swimming area as it is a boat traffic channel between Lake Washington and Lake Union. In the area by our Condo it is more of a

recreational area and away from boat traffic. And where this money was meant to be spent. My main concern is for the safety of all of us who live at the Portage Bayshore Condominiums. We love this area, it is one of a kind. We love our Condo and being able to take the elevator down to the boat dock. We enjoy walking to Mountlake Park ,kayaking, or paddle boarding. We enjoy all of the bird activities of which there are 180 species. Can you screw in the Pillers instead of pounding them in? Will you be putting in quiet joists in the pavement as promised to us? Can you guarantee our safety? Will you be making sure our windows will not break during your construction and that I will not loose my hearing? Will you keep my building safe? Will you keep me safe?

Since the ROD and FEIS in 2011 the area known as the Montlake Playfield has evolved into an important place for recreation, including water sports, and urban wildlife habitat. Our community secured a neighborhoods grant to expand the useable area of the park between 2008 and 2010 – this was not addressed in the FEIS. WSDOT is proposing to use significantly more area of this park for construction and operation activities than contemplated in 2011. Since then wildlife enhancement areas, nature trails, boat launch for kayaks, paddleboard and small boats and children’s play have been expanded. The City now recognizes the importance of the Montlake Park shoreline as the most significant and largest natural shoreline on the Ship Canal between the Montlake Cut and the Locks. Volunteers have been working for over a decade to remove invasive species and plant native species in the expanded useable areas of the park. These changes in the availability of scientific information, regulation, wildlife enhancement activities and change in recreation use emphasis should be documented in the NEPA Reevaluation.

The SR520 project will disrupt a densely populated part of Seattle until 2029. Noise Mitigation is a major concern and should be considered. Actual uses in the area now make the noise level standard in the FEIS may be higher. Reconsideration of noise standards applied to the park is requested to determine if a lower operational noise level may be appropriate.

The 4F findings are not a precise measurement of the area. It does not contain a complete description of Montlake Park and its various uses by Montlake and area residents. The park is not only a play field, but a natural area used by residents for passive recreation such as walking, viewing the shoreline, bird watching and for relaxing in a natural green space. It’s a habitat for a variety of birds and other species. It also includes water access for boating (kayak launch) environment. 18 of the 27 acres described are natural and shoreline habitat that were painstakingly restored by hundreds of volunteers, many of whom were community members and are ecologically important. This natural area, shoreline and wetland should be accurately evaluated before it is deemed of no consequence (de minimis decision) within the 4F. No doubt an accurate 4F evaluation would require mitigation in the same area as the work. This is a long 6 year project which will cause significant negative impacts and

or preclude the use of the some of the area by the neighborhood and local schools; it is not a short term inconvenience. Additionally the bridge expansion was not part of the SR 520 Bridge NEPA EIS

The community came together with Seattle Parks and Recreation beginning 2005, received several grants including a Seattle Department of Neighborhoods and a Small and Simple grant to develop a Master Plan for restoration and improvements of the area and completed part of the plan. Many of us have a very personal interest as well as community interest in seeing that we are compensated with appropriate mitigation for the damage and the disruption of the natural area and habitat which we worked so hard to restore as well as the “playfield”. One example: we hosted 75 Microsoft employee volunteers who put in sweat equity to remove concrete which was dumped in the wetland area either during the first 520 construction and or various City projects. We called SPU to remove the pile of concrete we had removed which they very obligingly accomplished. It was weighed in at 18 tons at the

recycling center. This was only one of the many work parties where the community participated to improve and reclaim this natural area and wetland.

A variety of potential mitigation projects are within the Master Plan that was developed with Seattle Parks and the Montlake, Roanoke Park and Portage Bay communities.

- A new dock at the Everett street end, for recreation and viewing.
- A boardwalk connection between Everett and South Portage Bay
- Several seating areas at view points in South Portage Bay
- A bike path along the play field to connect to the current Bill Dawson Trail

In addition there is strong support for the reconnection between the current Bill Dawson Trail and West Montlake Park. This is an easily accomplished request would mitigate the wetland disturbance for Montlake. This reconnection makes a wonderful 5 Mile trail to West Montlake Park, the Ship Canal trail, the Arboretum Waterfront Trail and the Arboretum. This trail would also be used by all neighboring communities and visitors to the area.

This connection should be completed now when all of the agencies required for approval are already in this project. NOTE: There is a right of way established on the Seattle Yacht Club parking lot. This does not require an over water connection, just an easement and moving the fence a few feet on the NOAA property (or current owner).

Also, the community was awarded a grant to study the areas under 520 for crime prevention. The reasons put forth for not considering the wonderful plan developed are related to unstable soil and steepness of slope which are difficult to understand in view of the ability of the soil to support a bridge over the area and the residences nearby. What happens to our stairway connection to transportation which will be removed? Will this important connection be replaced?

So far, the only mitigation has been in other areas rather than the neighborhood where the work will have the greatest negative impact. I assume that a part of that decision was guided by Seattle Parks along with WSDOT, but it is a disservice to the neighborhood and areas of impact.

I'm sure that some aspects of the design will be improvements to the 520 slash through the neighborhood such as the Del Mar lid and as well as bicycle path connections. However, the Shoreline Permit should be issued only when there is a real commitment for some meaningful mitigation for the Montlake/Portage Bay wetland and shoreline in the same area during the 6 year long damage and disturbance.

The text says the Portage Bay Bridge speed limit will be posted at 45 mph to reduce noise. This is day-dreaming. People will drive as fast as conditions allow, which is usually about the design speed, which is probably around 60 mph. So to reduce noise you need to increase the height of the barriers on each side of the bridge.

Concurrent with the development of the FEIS in 2011 was the implementation of a \$100,000 grant to enlarge Montlake Park access to acreage along the shore of South Portage Bay for habitat restoration and passive wildlife observation. The result is a substantially different use of Montlake Park than was analyzed in the FEIS. This work has never been acknowledged or included in environmental documents prepared by WSDOT and results in a major discrepancy between WSDOT proposals and the reality and needs on the ground. For example WSDOT proposes native planting as a mitigation measure. Perhaps WSDOT staff is unaware that Green Seattle Partnership with Seattle Parks provides



Montlake Park Volunteers as forest stewards up to 250 native plants annually to support the passive use portion of the park. This partnership has worked successfully every year for the past decade. Participation by WSDOT in this ongoing effort is not requested, helpful or positive.

What is needed is help with planning for an enhanced future for South Portage Bay. WSDOT is proposing a massive increase in structure coverage of the bay, measures to begin to enhance the Bay's ecological problems are appropriate. A coordinated effort to address fundamental ecological problems of sedimentation and pollution from storm drains, low flushing, invasive aquatic plants, invasive wildlife, high noise and improved aesthetics of the structure is what is needed. This need is woven throughout comments on WSDOT online materials.

The commitment to noise reduction measures is greatly appreciated by those living near the bridge. These measures will likely produce benefits far higher than their cost in improved health, higher property values near the corridor and increased tax revenue to the state, county and city government.

The commitment to allow for future connection between Montlake Park/Playfield and West Montlake park is a highly appreciated, wise accommodation for future generations even if it is not constructed now.

The Conceptual illustration of the appearance of a new Portage Bay Bridge in the online materials does not show the lighting standards and sign bridges lined up with or relating to the structural column elements. This was a major recommendation of the Seattle Design Commission. This is an important view as there are a high number of viewers, engaged in recreational activities where views are important to the quality of their experience. The views of the bridge are from public viewpoints in public parklands and water. The Seattle Design Commission has developed simple thoughtful measures can be implemented to dramatically improve the appearance of the structure which should be implemented.

From SDC Endorsement Letter:

"The visible relationships between vertical and horizontal elements should be well integrated and designed for a seamless effect between structural members and their components"

"Vertical components above the bridge deck should be integrated into the bridge structure through their placement, orientation, spacing, color and other urban design strategies"

1 SDC ENDORSEMENT LETTER EXCERPTS AND CONCEPTUAL ILLUSTRATION

## NEPA reevaluation

Again, where are the bathrooms? Sanitary one at a time use.

With regards to the cultural preservation of this neighborhood, what we're really preserving are racist policies and practices by the state of Washington. Major freeway and highway projects were deliberately placed in Black, Asian, and other peoples of color neighborhoods. So what we are preserving here, are White institutions and a history of segregation, gentrification, and colonization. There is no doubt that the people of Seattle have heard of the neighborhood "north of the canal" and depending on which side of the canal (or the 520 bridge) you live on, has to do with racist policies. We should not implement landscape design that is "compatible with the historic character of Roanoke Park Historic District" nor should we try to preserve the name of a rock. Instead, we should be culture reaffirming of the people's land we build on, the Duwamish Tribe! We should landscape in their honor, with their consultation, with their art. According to the rock's plaque, Herman Bagley was the first

medical doctor in Washington. However, that is not factual. He was the first medical doctor of the western world in Washington state, which if we are preserving anything, he could be recognized as such. Additionally, this park should be a bridge between the racially, linguistically, and culturally diverse "South of the canal/520" people and the majority white people of "North of the canal/520" parts of Seattle. Instead, what I see are plans to preserve the White supremacist mindset, which is to preserve what white people stole from the Duwamish and then excluded from Black, Asian, Latino, even Jewish communities. You all need to go back to the drawing board regarding your Cultural Resources, because you're not even close to skimming the surface of what Seattle culture is and has been.

As a regular user of the existing 520 RSUP, I am very happy about the addition of the RSUP to this project and the other updates to the plans to improve connections with Seattle's non-motorized network. Thank you!

I cannot believe how WASDOT get to exploit the environment. I myself am a retired school teacher and have owned a property with a former gas station. I received zero help from any government agency I contacted to require Shell or previous gas stations that owned the property to clean it up. The property was purchased after 1985. I have spent thousands of dollars in legal fees. And yet WASDOT can purchase a gas station and build etc. I walk in the arboretum on a daily basis and I am disgusted by what I see from the construction. I have been attending public meetings for over 10years that WASDOT has invited the public to. This has been a total waste of time. You get to do whatever you want to do. I feel as if the state has failed.

A posted 45 mph speed limit on the Portage Bay bridge is meaningless. Posted limits through Montlake are currently 40 mph and most cars are going well over 60 mph despite barriers, curves and lack of shoulders because of construction. Active mitigation of speed should be built into the new plan, such as automated speed camera enforcement or adding physical chicanes to slow the traffic.

All these reported results of the 2019 Design Outreach sessions address improvements, mostly catering to the bicycle lobby. It conveniently "disappeared" all the discussions and plans for the CPTED designs and graphic drawings of the area under the bridge all the way to the shoreline (once a private property, now a state-owned garbage dump for transients). It all just went away. Instead, all the months of community meetings and design ideas changed from a beautiful functional under-bridge asset to an overgrown empty lot with no replacement for the well-used stairway connection between Boyer and Delmar.

#### NEPA Reevaluation

The introduction to this section is misleading as it implies that a change in design is the only justification for preparing a NEPA Reevaluation. Changed site conditions, additional environmental information, and changes in regulation are also reasons for preparing a NEPA reevaluation. In this case, there have been substantial changes since the Record of Decision (issued almost a decade ago) in the environment and recreational use at Montlake Park/Playfield, major changes in City scientific characterization and regulation (acting under federal law) of the shoreline, major new information developed by WSDOT on sediment contamination and water depth, substantial new development near the corridor. Of major note is that a structure system for the bridge has been refined so aesthetic analysis can be refined. These factors are all reasons to prepare a NEPA Reevaluation and should be included in the analysis presented in that document even if no or only minimal changes to design are proposed.

Requested Mitigation in South Portage Bay is Based on Impacts in South Portage Bay Consideration of mitigating measures, protection and enhancement of the habitat in South Portage Bay could and should be commensurate with the large impact that 520 construction and operation will have on SPB from shading, disturbance of contaminated sediment, and potential release of polluted storm water. SPB impacts from SR 520 include:

Water area shaded area by permanent structure will more than double from 21% of South Portage Bay water area to 46%.

Sediment disturbance proposed by WSDOT during construction has been increased since the Record of Decision from negligible area to over 4.5 acres.

Contaminated sediment will be "side cast" and replaced rather than removed.

Design of road deck drainage has been altered since the Record of Decision to place the overflow scuppers at the road deck rather than above it, dramatically increasing the possibility of continued polluted storm water overflow to SPB from negligible to a near certainty.

The noise impact to passive use of Montlake Park has increased since the Record of Decision because the level of passive use has increased due to the expansion of habitat restoration area that comprises a large part of the land and water area of the park since completion of work under the 2010 grant.

Subsequent grants and private donations have been used to remove invasive aquatic vegetation and shoreline vegetation and to control invasive wildlife. The entire Bay including WSDOT Right of Way is under management efforts which promote passive shoreline use, wildlife use, fishing, and use by small non motorized boats.

Measures to mitigate impacts requested in South Portage Bay water area are also intended to enhance the area in the long term for use by species of concern. Measures requested include:

- Take a leadership role in developing a plan to restore and enhance the ecology and recreational use of the bay. (A condition of 2012 shoreline permit approval)
- Participate in aquatic vegetation management before, during and after construction.
- Remove rather than replace any disturbed contaminated sediment.
- Participate with City of Seattle and METRO in sediment clean up at storm water outfalls.
- Implement a zero-discharge design for untreated storm water from the bridge deck.
- Consider a lower operational noise level for Montlake Park.
- Provide a pedestrian connection between Montlake Park/playfield and west Montlake Park
- Provide a pedestrian connection from Montlake Park/Playfield to the proposed Delmar Lid, 10th Ave business district and transit.

Changed Environment Should Be Documented. The implementation of a Department of Neighborhoods grant to expand the useable area of the park between 2008 and 2010 was not addressed in the FEIS. These and other efforts have the changed environment and use of Montlake Park/Playfield over the past decade. This is of particular importance since WSDOT is proposing to use significantly more area of this park for construction and operation activities than contemplated in 2011. The use of this park has shifted dramatically in the past decade towards wildlife enhancement areas, nature trails, small boating and children's play. Since the 2011 ROD, the City has documented and recognized the importance of the function of the Montlake Park shoreline as the most significant and largest natural shoreline on the Ship Canal between the Montlake Cut and the Locks. Volunteers have been working for over a decade to remove invasive species and plant native species in the expanded useable areas of the park. These changes in the availability of scientific information, regulation, wildlife enhancement activities and change in recreation use emphasis should be documented in the NEPA Reevaluation.

Noise Mitigation Should Be Reconsidered. An aspect of incomplete characterization of Montlake Park in the FEIS is that noise mitigation may have been based on an assumption of playfield use. The actual use of substantial (at least 50%) of the park's land and water area is for the quiet contemplation of nature. This area used for contemplation of nature includes the nature trails through the natural areas of the park (6.2 acres) and the water area south of the viaduct which is used for kayaking, fishing and paddle boarding (5 acres). An active birdwatching group is using these two areas plus WSDOT right of way to observe migratory waterfowl and birds. These actual use characteristics suggest that the acceptable noise level standard applied in the FEIS may be higher than would be the case if full use of the park natural and water area for bird watching and other passive activities was considered. Reconsideration of noise standards applied to the park is requested to determine if a lower operational noise level may be appropriate for Montlake Park than is currently considered. This is of importance to federal reconsideration as parkland affected by the project is protected under the 4(f) processes of federal code (49 U.S.C. 303).

Noise Variance on Public Health Should Be Evaluated. The NEPA Reevaluation should incorporate new information developed since 2011 on the impact of proposed noise variance (likely 6 Dba over existing for nighttime work) limits on the neighborhoods near the corridor. WSDOT now has several years' experience and records associated with the noise levels likely to occur during construction in the Portage Bay section that should be incorporated into a new analysis of construction impacts. Measures to protect public health should be described and evaluated.

Vibration Mitigation Should Be Reevaluated The NEPA Reevaluation should incorporate new soils information developed since 2011 on the impact of proposed vibration on the structures near the corridor. WSDOT now has several years' experience and records associated with the vibration produced by construction in the soft, peat soils in the Bay that should be incorporated into a new analysis of construction impacts.

The impact of pile driving for work bridges was not discussed in the 2011 DEIS so the public had limited opportunity to comment on the addition of this construction procedure in the FEIS. This construction activity on adjacent neighborhoods should be discussed in the NEPA Reevaluation.

Neighborhood Connectivity During and After Construction Should Be Evaluated. Pedestrian circulation in the neighborhood should be explicitly discussed in the NEPA reevaluation. Evaluation of the following points is needed:

The current project appears to sever long standing existing pedestrian connections from Boyer Avenue to Transit stops near Roanoke Park and the business district on 10th Ave.

The current project may restrict or foreclose the opportunity to reestablish an historical pedestrian connection between Montlake Park/Playfield and West Montlake Park.

New Scientific Field Study Information Should Be Incorporated into the Analysis. Substantial geotechnical, soils water depth and sediment contamination information has developed by WSDOT since 2011. Sediment contamination and sediment rates should be evaluated to consider the impact of the structure and its drainage system over the past 60 years on Bay ecology. Identification of potential multi agency mitigation measures to return the Bay to pre-Bridge conditions should be included.

A summary of sediment testing by WSDOT follows which shows pollution identified that was likely deposited by the bridge which arguably should be removed as part of the current project. This information was not included in the 2011 ROD and should be included in the NEPA Re Evaluation and considered now. State sediment quality standards should be used in the NEPA Re Evaluation rather than the MTCA standards used in the report.

The following table shows results of over (in) water test locations where contaminants were looked for. The information is from 2015 reports received from WSDOT.

#### PORTAGE BAY

Geotechnical Data Report I-5 to Montlake June 26, 2015

Key Blank=Not Tested ND=Not Detected DBM= Detected Below MTCA EM= Exceeds MTCA

Location Metals Hydrocarbons SVOC's PCB's

Map

Alternative Construction Procedures Should Be Evaluated in the Reevaluation.

An evaluation of the potential benefits of barge construction in terms of reduced construction cost, environmental benefits, reduced construction traffic on local streets and reduced need for pile driving should be included.

An evaluation of the potential benefits of dredging in terms of reduced construction cost, environmental benefits, reduced construction traffic on local streets and reduced need for pile driving should be included.

Linear construction projects may achieve substantial cost savings or use a narrower travel corridor (workbridge in this case) if construction traffic has a one way or through travel route. The potential benefits for construction traffic to travel through from Boyer Ave to Montlake Boulevard should be discussed.

Message:

Subject: 4f Comment Response Period Comment Letter. This letter is the Portage Bay-Roanoke Park and Montlake CC response to WSDOT's request for public comment on the SR 520 4f update:

The SWSTD 4f review states that SR 520 impacts on the Montlake Playfield are de minimis they do not meet a requirement for mitigation. This finding is used when the impacts are just temporary or do not affect a park's primary uses.

The document prepared by WSDOT does not contain a complete description of Montlake Park. It is not an adequate information basis on which to support a de minimis decision. The NEPA reevaluation including park related issues should be completed before a 4F decision is made.

About 2.5 acres of the SR 520 right of way bisect the 12-acre water area of Montlake park as it crosses South Portage Bay. The portrayal of the 27-acre Montlake Park as a "playfield" in the FEIS and 4F decision may dramatically understate its ecological importance and may even be misleading to agencies unfamiliar with the site. Over 18 acres of Montlake Park are natural water and shoreline habitat performing an important ecological function in supporting listed species that is unique on the Ship Canal between the Montlake Cut and Ballard Locks. Approximately, 6.2 acres of the park are wetland and shoreline vegetation (continually enhanced by Seattle Parks, Forterra and volunteers since 2004). While 11 acres of the 27-acre Montlake Park are in upland uses (including a kayak launch, open grass fields, a community center, children's play area and soccer field), only 6 acres of the 27-acre park (the soccer field, softball field and open grass area used for practice fields) could accurately be considered as a playfield

This 4f de minimis finding is not appropriate as the water and shoreline area of the park has not been considered. The shoreline is an integral part of this park's multiple uses. The shoreline area has an improved kayak launch site and shoreline area footpath/nature trail. The kayak launch site is the only primary access for recreational water activity on South Portage Bay. The nature trail allows access to many water and wildlife viewing areas. This work effort has been supported by Seattle Dept. of Neighborhoods, King County and neighborhood resident grant funding.

The western end of the park property plus the entire park shoreline has a restored native habitat. A Seattle Department of Neighborhoods grant funded waterfront area plan was completed in 2006.

{See Attachment 1}

The community was fortunate to have a dedicated group of individuals who began work spending countless hours clearing an abandoned site that is part of the Montlake Playfield property. WSDOT support for the plan's implementation is referenced in the original City of Seattle 2011 SR 520 Shoreline Permit Project: 3012585. (See Attachment 2 below) The volunteers removed invasive trees, bushes and other plants and literally tons of concrete waste and garbage.

The restoration work continues today. It has created a shoreline forest of evergreens as well as plants favored by waterfowl and song birds. In the bay invasive lily pads have been controlled. Also, invasive Nutria rodents have been removed. To date over 3,000 native plants have been established. Numerous viewpoints are linked by a shoreline footpath/nature trail.

As part of SR 520 project mitigation, neighborhood residents have proposed habitat improvements plus improvement of and extension of the waterfront area nature trail. A major part of which will be the restoration of a footpath from the Bill Dawson Trail to West Montlake Park. The Seattle Parks Department supports this connection. (See Attachment 3 below)

These relatively low-cost improvements will meet WSDOT's obligation to meet a non de minimis mitigation requirement. They were discussed by neighborhood residents in the previous NEPA EIS

process and last summer's WSDOT community stakeholder meetings. WSDOT has recognized these improvements as shown in the plan attached below. (See Attachment 4 below) However, they are not even mentioned in WSDOT's recently issued Summary of 2019 community and stakeholder engagement.

Expansion of the SR 520 bridge footprint for a bicycle/pedestrian trail will also further impact the South Portage Bay Seattle Class I wetland area. It will totally prevent usage of the Bill Dawson trail. This bridge expansion was not part of the SR 520 Bridge NEPA EIS review process. It will require a Bill Dawson Trail detour that cannot be accommodated within the park area.

Additionally, this construction will be immediately adjacent to the Montlake Playfield's reconstructed soccer/football field. The over 6 years of construction noise and work activity will prevent any normal use of this facility. As these impacts will last up to 6 years, this is a very long time period for just a temporary impact.

These impacts to the soccer/football field, shoreline habitat, the kayak launch site, water recreational activities and the nature trail do affect primary park uses. How can they be considered to be de minimis not meeting 4f mitigation requirements?

Attachment 1 Waterfront Area Plan

See PDF file attached separately

Attachment 2 Shoreline Permit Reference

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Recreational and Environmental Improvement Plan WSDOT, Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks), Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) and other relevant local or state agencies, as required depending on the project location, will collaborate to develop a Recreational and Environmental Improvement Plan (REIP).

The REIP shall coordinate with and not conflict with other commitments made by WSDOT for the avoidance, minimization and mitigation of 520 project impacts, such as the CCMP, Seattle Community Design Process and the Arboretum Mitigation Plan, which are separate but related efforts.

The purpose of the REIP will be to develop implementation plans and cost estimate for specific projects in the 520 project area as additional mitigation for construction-related effects to recreational access and local environmental conditions and habitat in the 520 project corridor, prioritizing unfunded projects already identified and partially designed in the Montlake Community Park Waterfront Master Plan Report (July 2006), hereafter referred to as the Montlake Plan.

WSDOT shall fund the planning, design, implementation, construction and maintenance costs for the establishment of landscaping and trail amenities. Local citizens shall have input in the design of the projects identified and developed through the REIP. It is the intent of the REIP that Seattle Parks will lead a public involvement process to verify and update, as needed, the project concepts in the Montlake Plan. This process will occur following completion of the REIP, depending on Seattle Parks' project priorities. Although estimated project costs may be identified prior to this public process, WSDOT will participate as necessary to facilitate trail construction within WSDOT right-of-way.

Top priority projects for the REIP identified in the Montlake Plan include: a. Design, permitting and construction of a boardwalk trail connecting the public shoreline along the Fuhrman Street Right of Way to the pathways at South Portage Bay. (See Phase 1 of Montlake Plan for more details) b.

Design, permitting and construction of a trail near the shoreline of Portage Bay from the existing beach launch, connecting to the Bill Dawson Trail (see Phase 5 of the Montlake Plan for more details). c. Removal of upland and wetland invasive species within trail corridors and planting of native vegetation associated with and in coordination with the design and construction of both of these new trails and associated habitat areas.

The following projects were not identified in the Montlake Plan but also shall be considered top priority projects for the REIP: d. Removal of upland and wetland invasive species, planting of native vegetation and other wetland and wetland buffer enhancements at the former Frolund property under the west side of the Portage Bay Bridge, currently owned by WSDOT. In addition to habitat enhancements in this area, an ADA-accessible trail from Boyer Ave to a series of shoreline viewpoints shall be designed and constructed at this property in cooperation with Seattle Parks. This trail shall include appropriate landscaping for the location. Application No. 3012585 Page 74 e. Removal of upland and wetland invasive species and native plant revegetation and establishment, as feasible and appropriate given site conditions and constraints, at the following public street ends or waterways in the project area: E. Hamlin, E. Edgar, E. Roanoke and Waterway One. Design and implementation shall be in cooperation with WSDOT and Seattle Parks and DNR, where needed. Repair and maintenance to the Waterfront Trail from the MOHAI parking lot to the western edge of Foster Island, including revegetation in the trail corridor, as designed by Seattle Parks, shall be funded by WSDOT prior to issuance of West Approach Shoreline Substantial Development Permit (see MUP # 3012587).

The REIP will produce implementation plans and cost estimates for these projects. The REIP will also identify the implementing party for the individual projects. While the REIP will contain a general project schedule, the implementing parties will be responsible for developing a final implementation schedule as well as permitting for the project. The implementing party will also be responsible for developing a contingency plan if a top priority project (cited above) is determined to be infeasible through the public process and collaboration with relevant permitting authorities. The contingency plan will identify alternative, unfunded projects in the 520 project corridor that have similar or equivalent value to the affected community as the top priority projects. Preliminary cost estimates for portions of the Montlake Plan are available in the Montlake Plan but will be revised through the REIP process. Project funding identified through this process shall be used for a replacement contingency project to ensure that equivalent value to the community is achieved.

The REIP shall be completed prior to the issuance of the Portage Bay Shoreline Substantial Development Permit. WSDOT shall be responsible for providing full funding for the following costs associated with each REIP-identified project: design, permitting, construction, and maintenance costs for the establishment of landscaping and trail amenities. WSDOT and the City of Seattle shall develop a Memorandum of Agreement to ensure that WSDOT covers the REIP project costs in a timely and reasonable manner given the objectives summarized above

Attachment 3 Seattle Parks Letter to Community Members from Parks Superintendent Jesús Aguirre

Dear Montlake Community Club Board and Portage Bay Roanoke Park Community Council Board members:

Thank you for your reaching out about a waterfront pedestrian pathway to connect Montlake Playfield to West Montlake Park, linking Montlake Playfield, West Montlake Park, and the Ship Canal pathway. We appreciate your community engagement with the SR520 expansion project.

We are working closely with the WSDOT team to ensure that impacts to parks and park users associated with the highway construction and subsequent operation are avoided, minimized, or adequately mitigated. We appreciate the importance of pedestrian connections to and through our

parks, and we support your efforts to identify improved pedestrian connections along and across the corridor as part of the SR520 community mitigation package.

The idea of a waterfront pedestrian pathway connecting Montlake Playfield to West Montlake Park is very attractive, to provide an uninterrupted pedestrian link between the Montlake Playfield, West Montlake Park, and the Ship Canal pathway, and beyond to the UW and the Arboretum. However, as you know, Seattle Parks and Recreation does not own the property between Montlake Playfield and West Montlake Park. Our understanding is that the intervening properties are owned by the State of Washington, the Seattle Yacht Club, and the federal government. There is no requirement related to this potential future connection in WSDOT's existing Shoreline Permit (or other environmental documents or permit requirements).

As well as the challenges of property ownership, another significant factor is that, once you move off dry land to consider a pathway structure over the water and over the associated wetlands along the Portage Bay shoreline, there are significant permit challenges. Any structure would be considered new overwater coverage, requiring approval from several state agencies and from the US Army Corps of Engineers with concurrence from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service/NOAA, and local Tribes, and the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections.

We can commit to working with the WSDOT SR 520 project design team to ensure that the design of the Portage Bay Bridge can accommodate a future link between Montlake Playfield and the community center and West Montlake Park. Given the federal, state, and private properties involved, this will likely be a long-term project. We can also commit to sharing any property information we have, and to working with your community to help develop a plan for a feasible pathway connection between park spaces.

David Graves is our liaison with WSDOT on this project and will be the one to work with you. Please contact him at david.graves@seattle.gov and 206-684-7048.

Again, thanks for reaching out to us, and apologies for the delay in getting back to you.

Sincerely,

Jesús Aguirre

Superintendent, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Attachment 4 WSDOT Park and Trail Figure See PDF file attached separately

Subject: 4f Comment Response Period Comment Letter

This letter is the Portage Bay-Roanoke Park and Montlake CC response to WSDOT's request for public comment on the SR 520 4f update:

The WSDOT 4f review states that SR 520 impacts on the Montlake Playfield are de minimis they do not meet a requirement for mitigation. This finding is used when the impacts are just temporary or do not affect a park's primary uses.

The document prepared by WSDOT does not contain a complete description of Montlake Park. It is not an adequate information basis on which to support a de minimis decision. The NEPA reevaluation including park related issues should be completed before a 4F decision is made.

About 2.5 acres of the SR 520 right of way bisect the 12-acre water area of Montlake park as it crosses South Portage Bay. The portrayal of the 27-acre Montlake Park as a "playfield" in the FEIS and 4F decision may dramatically understate its ecological importance and may even be misleading to agencies unfamiliar with the site. Over 18 acres of Montlake Park are natural water and shoreline



habitat performing an important ecological function in supporting listed species that is unique on the Ship Canal between the Montlake Cut and Ballard Locks. Approximately, 6.2 acres of the park are wetland and shoreline vegetation (continually enhanced by Seattle Parks, Forterra and volunteers since 2004). While 11 acres of the 27-acre Montlake Park are in upland uses (including a kayak launch, open grass fields, a community center, children's play area and soccer field), only 6 acres of the 27-acre park (the soccer field, softball field and open grass area used for practice fields) could accurately be considered as a playfield

This *de minimis* finding is not appropriate as the water and shoreline area of the park has not been considered. The shoreline is an integral part of this park's multiple uses. The shoreline area has an improved kayak launch site and shoreline area footpath/nature trail. The kayak launch site is the only primary access for recreational water activity on South Portage Bay. The nature trail allows access to many water and wildlife viewing areas. This work effort has been supported by Seattle Dept. of Neighborhoods, King County and neighborhood resident grant funding.

The western end of the park property plus the entire park shoreline has a restored native habitat. A Seattle Department of Neighborhoods grant funded waterfront area plan was completed in 2006.

{See Attachment 1}

The community was fortunate to have a dedicated group of individuals who began work spending countless hours clearing an abandoned site that is part of the Montlake Playfield property. WSDOT support for the plan's implementation is referenced in the original City of Seattle 2011 SR 520 Shoreline Permit Project: 3012585. (See Attachment 2 below) The volunteers removed invasive trees, bushes and other plants and literally tons of concrete waste and garbage.

The restoration work continues today. It has created a shoreline forest of evergreens as well as plants favored by waterfowl and song birds. In the bay invasive lily pads have been controlled. Also, invasive *Nutria* rodents have been removed. To date over 3,000 native plants have been established. Numerous viewpoints are linked by a shoreline footpath/nature trail.

As part of SR 520 project mitigation, neighborhood residents have proposed habitat improvements plus improvement of and extension of the waterfront area nature trail. A major part of which will be the restoration of a footpath from the Bill Dawson Trail to West Montlake Park. The Seattle Parks Department supports this connection. (See Attachment 3 below)

These relatively low-cost improvements will meet WSDOT's obligation to meet a *de minimis* mitigation requirement. They were discussed by neighborhood residents in the previous NEPA EIS process and last summer's WSDOT community stakeholder meetings. WSDOT has recognized these improvements as shown in the plan attached below. (See Attachment 4 below) However, they are not even mentioned in WSDOT's recently issued Summary of 2019 community and stakeholder engagement.

Expansion of the SR 520 bridge footprint for a bicycle/pedestrian trail will also further impact the South Portage Bay Seattle Class I wetland area. It will totally prevent usage of the Bill Dawson trail. This bridge expansion was not part of the SR 520 Bridge NEPA EIS review process. It will require a Bill Dawson Trail detour that cannot be accommodated within the park area.

Additionally, this construction will be immediately adjacent to the Montlake Playfield's reconstructed soccer/football field. The over 6 years of construction noise and work activity will prevent any normal use of this facility. As these impacts will last up to 6 years, this is a very long time period for just a temporary impact.

These impacts to the soccer/football field, shoreline habitat, the kayak launch site, water recreational activities and the nature trail do affect primary park uses. How can they be considered to be de minimis not meeting 4f mitigation requirements?

I work with the organization Beavers Northwest and have been in touch with community members around Montlake Park. The beaver lodge there has been around for decades. It is likely that beavers will move on their own when construction begins. However, ideally, the lodge could remain in place during construction so that beavers can return to the lodge once construction is complete. If destruction of the lodge can be avoided, that would be a great asset to both the community members in the area and the habitat quality of the Bay. This is one of the largest lodges that I have observed in our area!

#### **Section 4(f)**

Again, where do you expect to go when they have to go? In the bushes?

Please provide a skateboard park within the Roanoke Lid area. We live in the immediate area, and there is not one within 4 miles of our house... we must drive to them. A local skateboard park is needed, no matter how small. They are cheap, can be visually appealing, and provide a much needed activity base for kids, teens, and adults. Well-intentioned people WILL skateboard in this area, so let's make it a good situation for everyone, by building that into the plan. Much better to incorporate a skatepark rather than continually chase skateboarders away for skating in/on areas that were not set up for it. Thanks!

Costs are likely prohibitive, but a possible extension of the lid all the way to Seward Elementary would be extraordinarily beneficial -- and much safer for students and commuters using the expanded bike and pedestrian routes. One can only wish!

For the lids, what types of infrastructure for hosting events would be available? With the pandemic pushing our communities to embrace outdoor events, I think we should make hookups for electricity and water available to support potential for small events or to host small vendors. Perhaps something like a popup at the park, where a vendor can register to use the hookups to host a popup shop or space for a food truck.

The Montlake and Roanoke Park Historic Districts are covert white supremacist organizations, and they don't even realize it. They're trying to 'preserve' what it means to colonize a people and exclude people of color. Do not let them have an influence on this park! Their idea of 'preserving' their history has to do with preserving a history of redlining, housing segregation, religious exclusion, income exclusion, and reaffirming their white power. If the Seattle Parks want to get input from people of Seattle, they should contact the people whose history we try to erase anytime we consult with the Montlake and Roanoke Historic District. I'm talking about the Duwamish Tribe! And while you're at it, consult with Black and Brown people who were excluded from renting or owning property in this alleged "historic district."

The 4(f) Statement needs to acknowledge that Montlake Boulevard is part of the City's park system, including its center green swath and that the taking of the strip called the "Old Canal Right of Way" has impacts on the Washington Park Arboretum as dedicated and the surrounding neighborhood. The only appropriate mitigation would be the conveyance from the State to The City of Seattle for park purposes of the "WashDOT Peninsula" bounded by Foster Island Drive and Lake Washington Boulevard and the SR 520 right of way (including the upland). The construction drawings do not show ornamental decoration on the highway walls and pylons in the arboretum. This needs to be corrected. The white

pillars and sidewalls turn into a dirty grey very quickly and soon leave an impression of an industrial area. The view of the Roanoke Park shows only lawn and a pathway. There must be some facilities for active recreation, such as a basketball half court and play structures for children.

The RFP should require as much protection as possible for the trees now on public land at the edges of the Roanoke lid footprint, as well as for the privacy of adjacent homes.

As noted in question 3, while the stairway connection between Boyer and Delmar that WSDOT intends to demolish and remove does not qualify for 4(f) protection as a protected property or a trail, it certainly qualifies as a historic resource. Yet, it disappears.

The document prepared by WSDOT does not contain a complete description of Montlake Park. It is not an adequate information basis on which to support a de minimis decision. NEPA Re evaluation addressing park related issues identified in NEPA Reevaluation comments above should be completed before a 4F decision is made.

The 2011 EIS did not contain an adequate description of Montlake Park and conditions have changed dramatically since the ROD was issued. For example, 2.5 acres of the SR 520 right of way bisect the 12-acre water area of Montlake park as it crosses South Portage Bay. The portrayal of the 27-acre Montlake Park as a "playfield" in the FEIS and 4F decision may dramatically understate its ecological importance and may even be misleading to agencies unfamiliar with the site. Over 18 acres of Montlake Park are natural water and shoreline habitat performing an important ecological function in supporting listed species that is unique on the Ship Canal between the Montlake Cut and Ballard Locks. Approximately, 6.2 acres of the park are wetland and shoreline vegetation (continually enhanced by Seattle Parks, Forterra and volunteers since 2004). While 11 acres of the 27-acre Montlake Park are in upland uses (including a kayak launch, open grass fields, a community center, children's play area and soccer field) Only 6 acres of the 27-acre park (the soccer field, softball field and open grass area used for practice fields) could accurately be considered as "playfield".

The Re-evaluations should include an analysis of geotechnical, soils water depth and sediment contamination - as water runoff from the bridge has continued since the FEIS in 2011. Sediment contamination and sediment rates have resulted in sandy silt build up over the past 60 years directly into Portage Bay. Multi agency mitigation measures should be applied to return the Bay to pre-Bridge conditions. Mitigation in this densely populated area where recreation meets wetland habitat should be valued. The shameful use of SR520 mitigation funds for the UW waterfront park and UW arboretum and Magnuson Park should not prevent a multi-agency reclamation effort.

Sediment testing by WSDOT shows pollution identified that was likely deposited by the bridge which arguably should be removed as part of the current project. This information was not included in the 2011 ROD and should be included in the NEPA Re Evaluation and considered now. State sediment quality standards should be used in the NEPA Re Evaluation rather than the MTCA standards used in the report.

Alternative Construction Procedures Should Be Evaluated in the Reevaluation.

An evaluation of the potential benefits of barge construction in terms of reduced construction cost, environmental benefits, reduced construction traffic on local streets and reduced need for pile driving should be included.

An evaluation of the potential benefits of dredging in terms of reduced construction cost, environmental benefits, reduced construction traffic on local streets and reduced need for pile driving should be included.

Linear construction projects may achieve substantial cost savings through the use of a more direct access corridor to the project's work bridge. A possibility is work bridge construction access from the east using the Montlake market site for mobilization. The work bridge can then be accessed at

night using the new right turn lane on to Montlake Blvd. The potential benefits for construction traffic to thus avoid neighborhood arterials needs to be evaluation.

**Shoreline permit question 3: *Is there a different project of comparable scale that you would like to see replace one of the currently proposed mitigation projects listed above?***

Roanoke lid is a waste of taxdollar \$ since Roanoke Park is across the street. Would rather see that money improve pedestrian overpass over I-5. Or focus on transit access and improvements.

The is an unfair and confusing question as the proposed mitigation projects are not clearly identified

Why do you have to have a space in the middle; seems a waste? Your explanation makes not since. Why can't you do more on Barges instead of heavy trucks on our narrow street? And then clean out the bay of all the silt build up from the bridge over the years and recognize that this is a great recreational area.

Water quality, wetlands habitat improvements, shoreline trails and access

SR520 project construction means and methods should be re-evaluated in the NEPA process. Construction activity in a densely populated urban area until 2029 will be challenging for WSDOT and impacted people. Dredging the bay of sediment runoff would allow for beneficial barge construction in... for reduced construction cost, environmental benefits, reduced construction traffic on local streets and reduced need for pile driving. Construction means & methods are at the heart of the NEPA re-evaluation process.

The 4F findings are not a precise measurement of the area. It does not contain a complete description of Montlake Park and its various uses by Montlake and area residents. The park is not only a play field, but a natural area used by residents for passive recreation such as walking, viewing the shoreline, bird watching and for relaxing in a natural green space. It's a habitat for a variety of birds and other species. It also includes water access for boating (kayak launch) environment. 18 of the 27 acres described are natural and shoreline habitat that were painstakingly restored by hundreds of volunteers, many of whom were community members and are ecologically important. This natural area, shoreline and wetland should be accurately evaluated before it is deemed of no consequence (de minimis decision) within the 4F. No doubt an accurate 4F evaluation would require mitigation in the same area as the work. This is a long 6 year project which will cause significant negative impacts and or preclude the use of the some of the area by the neighborhood and local schools; it is not a short term inconvenience. Additionally the bridge expansion was not part of the SR 520 Bridge NEPA EIS

The community came together with Seattle Parks and Recreation beginning 2005, received several grants including a Seattle Department of Neighborhoods and a Small and Simple grant to develop a Master Plan for restoration and improvements of the area and completed part of the plan. Many of us have a very personal interest as well as community interest in seeing that we are compensated with appropriate mitigation for the damage and the disruption of the natural area and habitat which we worked so hard to restore as well as the "playfield". One example: we hosted 75 Microsoft employee volunteers who put in sweat equity to remove concrete which was dumped in the wetland area either during the first 520 construction and or various City projects. We called SPU to remove the pile of concrete we had removed which they very obligingly accomplished. It was weighed in at 18 tons at the recycling center. This was only one of the many work parties where the community participated to improve and reclaim this natural area and wetland.

A variety of potential mitigation projects are within the Master Plan that was developed with Seattle Parks and the Montlake, Roanoke Park and Portage Bay communities.

- o A new dock at the Everett street end, for recreation and viewing.
- o A boardwalk connection between Everett and South Portage Bay
- o Several seating areas at view points in South Portage Bay
- o A bike path along the play field to connect to the current Bill Dawson Trail

In addition there is strong support for the reconnection between the current Bill Dawson Trail and West Montlake Park. This is an easily accomplished request would mitigate the wetland disturbance for Montlake. This reconnection makes a wonderful 5 Mile trail to West Montlake Park, the Ship Canal trail, the Arboretum Waterfront Trail and the Arboretum. This trail would also be used by all neighboring communities and visitors to the area.

This connection should be completed now when all of the agencies required for approval are already in this project. NOTE: There is a right of way established on the Seattle Yacht Club parking lot. This does not require an over water connection, just an easement and moving the fence a few feet on the NOAA property (or current owner).

Also, the community was awarded a grant to study the areas under 520 for crime prevention. The reasons put forth for not considering the wonderful plan developed are related to unstable soil and steepness of slope which are difficult to understand in view of the ability of the soil to support a bridge over the area and the residences nearby. What happens to our stairway connection to transportation which will be removed? Will this important connection be replaced?

So far, the only mitigation has been in other areas rather than the neighborhood where the work will have the greatest negative impact. I assume that a part of that decision was guided by Seattle Parks along with WSDOT, but it is a disservice to the neighborhood and areas of impact.

I'm sure that some aspects of the design will be improvements to the 520 slash through the neighborhood such as the Del Mar lid and as well as bicycle path connections. However, the Shoreline Permit should be issued only when there is a real commitment for some meaningful mitigation for the Montlake/Portage Bay wetland and shoreline in the same area during the 6 year long damage and disturbance.

City of Seattle shoreline permit:

Preparation of a Recreation and Environmental Enhancement Plan (REIP) as requested by the City of Seattle in 2011 should be done to determine an appropriate balance, use zones and management practices for trails, boating, fish, wildlife and botanical resources based on scientific information and public input. Shoreline management goals suggest that water access should be provided wherever possible especially in enhanced form under the east and west ends of the viaduct as well as street ends on the Bay.

Potential recreational and wildlife habitat improvements in the project's shoreline area should be provided as determined in an REIP including additional access points and connection to West Montlake Park.

The questions provided in the Online form in this section are misleading. Volunteers have already provided native plantings along the shoreline, WSDOT additional measures would likely go backwards. Similarly, improvements have been or will have been made by volunteers at Everett Street end so this is a non proposal, simply stating what volunteers have already done. Without ecological study in the NEPA document it is impossible to comment on whether removal of the dock at Everett street is positive or negative. What is the objective that WSDOT and the City are trying to achieve? It may be viewed as an eyesore by some but may provide a huge wildlife benefit for herons, ducks, geese and bass. The REIP is the planning process that should be used to determine specific actions such as the removal of the dock at Everett Street.

Some things that could be considered in an REIP to provide benefit in South Portage Bay:

- Dredge to remove sediments contaminated by bridge runoff and to remove sediment buildup created by bridge runoff over the past 60 years. This dredging could also have positive effects on fish and wildlife and on increasing small non-motorized boating opportunity.
- Implement Seattle Design Commission recommendations for the appearance of the viaduct to minimize the negative aesthetic impact of the structure on park users in the water and land areas of the shoreline environment.
- Provide planting for aesthetic purposes such as to screen the viaduct or as a visual backdrop to the viaduct structure. This proposal should be reviewed by the Seattle Design Commission to assure it supports the architectural design of the bridge.
- Provide an information kiosk and Montlake Park. One element that was not implemented from the Master Plan referenced in the 2012 REIP condition due to funding concerns was a kiosk near the Montlake Park Parking lot. This could provide information on the important engineering history of the ship canal, construction of the viaduct in the 1960's a brief history of the area and space for information on native species that may be seen in the park.
- Fund participation in aquatic vegetation management within WSDOT right of way in accordance with WSDOT Design Manual policies to manage noxious weeds within the right of Way.
- Fund study and coordinate with Seattle and King County on measures to improve the quality of runoff flowing into the Bay
- Fund a water access/small boating trail linking street ends along the ship canal between the Montlake Cut and the locks
- Participate in funding removal of invasive wildlife should such activity be needed again.
- Plan for wildlife enhancement during construction. Beavers appear to have a positive effect on the ecology of the bay by encouraging insect habitat which encourages birds. Perhaps the Beavers can be relocated (if necessary) to a slightly different location in South Portage Bay outside construction limits but which still provides benefits to habitat that the Beavers provide. There are locations where abandoned lodges exist that may be appropriate.
- Provide public access to the shoreline at the east and west ends of the viaduct.

**Shoreline permit question 4: *Please share any specific feedback, including what is most important to you in the design, on the proposed mitigation projects listed above***

he is an unfair and confusing question as the proposed mitigation projects are not clearly identified

Please preclude the use of prestressed girders for the Portage Bay Bridge to ensure the structure is unique and not just cheapest possible.

I look forward to the continued development of the specified Portage Bay projects. As a regional user of the current 520 trail and recreational facilities, the Portage Bay projects should ensure the concerns of neighbors are addressed with respect to designated access points and incorporating their desires as well (i.e. plantings, park features, etc.).

Easy access to the proposed improvement areas is critical as is parking.

The street end improvements should not be reaffirming whiteness by paying any respect to any "original" founder of Seattle. It should be recognized as tribal land.

Building the area in South Portage Bay to be what people want it to be. Extend the Everett Dock at the street end. Clean out the bay of the toxic build up. Take measures to protect the Portage Bayshore Condominiums (Families and children live here) and its Moorage.

The trail across the floating bridge is great except for one thing: the proximity to traffic. I realize that it is the nature of the beast, but if the barrier for the trail Portage Bay could be wider or taller than the one on the floating bridge, that would be great.

Multiple impacts to the neighborhoods of Portage Bay and Montlake adjacent to the waters of South Portage Bay are intended and planned, yet to date all "mitigations" have been located miles away from the new bridge and construction. It is refreshing to see these planned mitigations being done to improve the impacted area!

All 3 listed mitigations are excellent (particularly Everett street end park). The Montlake Playfield shoreline has tremendous potential for regional improvements, yet is currently left to volunteers working on their own. But let's not forget water quality and protected wetlands.

While there have been no demonstrated impacts on protected species, that is due to failure to look hard enough. Serious impacts on indigenous species impact the health of the sensitive wetlands of South Portage Bay immediately under and extending southwest of the Portage Bay Bridge. Towards compliance with the NEPA, we were told that WSDOT is "working to decrease habitat impacts". The Construction Core Permit mandates minimizing damage to indigenous species. As just one example of planned impacts, when the temporary work bridge SW of the PBB is built WSDOT is already planning to "relocate" (meaning destroy) the large beaver lodge that has been present and occupied for well over 20 years. Elsewhere, plans state that all areas damaged or removed will be restored, but one doubts the abilities of the crews to rebuild a decades-old beaver den.

Beavers are integral in creating the regional habitat that supports countless species as well as migratory birds, and that acts as an important carbon sink under and adjacent to this corridor of pollution. Preserving that ecologically important structure (easily done by planning piling placements of the temporary bridge) would be a simple yet powerful PR opportunity for WSDOT.

South Portage Bay shoreline, extending from south of the Queen City Yacht Club and the condos next to SR520, continuing around the entire southern shoreline and then north again under SR520 to the Seattle Yacht club, is one of the very few pristine natural wetlands left in the entire area that includes the Montlake cut, all of Lake Union to the Ships Canal. There are currently several projects looking at the biodiversity and wetlands habitat of south Portage Bay, including amphibian monitoring (Woodland Park Zoo project using iNaturalist) and Beaver activity and their habitat enrichment (project with local residents and Beavers Northwest).

On a positive note, the 2-bridge design does help decrease habitat impact by opening a space in the middle for sunlight to reach the water. One hopes this design does not get changed for the weak argument of decreasing bridge width approaching the Roanoke bridge by less than 10 feet.

Addendum (since this questionnaire ends abruptly without addressing many feedback issues) "relocating" the beavers does NOTHING towards saving the historically important and locally loved beaver lodge. The crazy thing is that it would be SO EASY to preserve it by simply relocating the pilings of the temporary work bridge.

As an aside (because there is nowhere else to comment on this), regarding Community Outreach to Stakeholders:

On page 5 of the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation we again read how proud WSDOT is about their community input meetings. It is stated:

• Between June and November of 2019, WSDOT met with community members and stakeholders on a monthly basis to refine the Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid phase's conceptual design. The focus of this stakeholder process was to gather feedback and hear community preferences on:

o ...

o • User experience in areas under the Portage Bay Bridge around Boyer Avenue East

The fact is that the community is fatigued by multiple meetings asking our input, receiving confirmation that WSDOT is considering the input as we see detailed beautiful drawings of what we can expect to see, then having them thrown out! What is the point of dozens of meetings and suggestions if they are only followed by false hopes then abandonment?

Other than shifting planned bridge replacement construction means' & methods, completion of the shoreline trail from the Everett Street end and historical dock to West Montlake Park

There should be a dock rebuild and a connecting path to south portage bay natural area.

During the noon zoom call today a comment was made by WSDOT representative regarding lighting options for the new bridge. She stated the community input was we did not want added lighting. This is not factual. We stated we were concerned about excess lighting on the bridge deck shining into the homes near the bridge from the standard and bright lights used on freeways. We are positioning our community to ask the Seattle Design Commission to look at the structure as an opportunity to use creative low glow lights to outline the sides of the structure so it is a positive addition to our city verse just a freeway bridge with industrial lighting.

I would like to request consideration for the addition of a pickleball and sports court area like exists at Maple Lead Reservoir. This will increase usage of the park which increases safety of parks.

**Public meeting comments/questions (all questions answered verbally during the meeting)**

**NEPA Reevaluation**

Did you say the Beaver Lodge is already slated for removal?

Related to NEPA, it addresses endangered species. Who protects non-endangered natural indigenous species in repacious areas and sensitive wetlands?

How will changed site conditions such as the enhancements to the shoreline of the Montlake playfield park over the past decade will be incorporated into the NEPA review?

**Section 4(f)**

for the section 4f why isn't the south portage bay wetland and nature trail included? volunteers have invested more than 8000 hours to maintain this wetland and bird habitat where 280+ species have been documented

the south portage bay wetland is seattle parks property with nature trails extending from Montlake Park



<b>General comments</b>
Could you update us on the timing of the upcoming RFQ and RFP for this DB contract?
Will the RFP for the Portage Bay Bridge indicate a preference for base isolation as was indicated in the RFP for the WASB DB RFP?
How will the recommendation of the Seattle Design Commission to line up the light poles and sign bridges with column structural elements to improve views of the bridge be implemented?
The Portage Bay Bridge would be made more attractive if WSDOT would allow for creative lighting through hiring a Lighting Design Firm to make this structure beautiful through night lighting.
Will there be an aesthetic component to the RFP scoring criteria?
There is a public access to Lake Washington in East Montlake Park, just north of the westbound SR 520 approach (which will be the north entrance to the land bridge). After construction of the land bridge to the Washington Park Arboretum, will there be public access to Lake Washington just SOUTH of the eastbound SR 520 approach?
It has been stated that the Portage Bay Bridge will be a variable depth box girder bridge. Will the bridge span lengths be fixed in the RFP, or will the DB contractor be allowed to propose different span lengths other than by ATCs?
A neighborhood grant provided a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design under the SR520 Portage Bay bridge from Delmar Dr. across Boyer Ave. to the Portage Bay shoreline. Will WSDOT consider CPTED design under the west Portage Bay bridge?

## **Email comments/questions**

<b>Section 4(f) comments</b>
<p>Why have the substantial improvements made since the FEIS in the Montlake Playfield shoreline area not even considered in meeting 4f mitigation requirements? They include extensive native planting sand wetland estuary restoration. These have dramatically increased the public's use of these areas. They include an improved kayak launch, nature trail extension and creation of viewpoints.</p> <p>Why aren't the bridge expansion construction noise impacts at the NE corner of the Montlake Playfield park not considered for 4f mitigation? This includes 6 years of the noise impacts on the reconstructed soccer sports field and running track. It also includes an expanded use of a high-class wetland and the closure of the Bill Dawson Trail.</p>
<b>Shoreline permit comments</b>
<p>Why did the summary report delete/not include neighborhood mitigation improvements documented to WSDOT by the City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development in master use initial permits?</p> <p>"In response to concerns expressed during the shoreline permit application review process by the City of Seattle and local community, WSDOT is prepared to offer additional mitigation to address temporary, construction-related effects to recreational access in the Portage Bay area. To enhance</p>

recreational access and mitigate for project construction-related effects."

Explain how this critical decision was simply ignored in the 4F.

### General comments

What Montlake Playfield area mitigations for wetland, shoreline habitat and nature trail impacts are being considered? What will be the mitigation for the closure of the Bill Dawson trail? Has a replaced connection between the Bill Dawson trail and West Montlake Park been considered?"

Why did the summary report did not even consider neighborhood suggested mitigation improvements in the WSDOT Design Refinements report on the 2019 community stake holder meetings? These improvements were identified for consideration by WSDOT in previous communications?

Why hasn't mitigation for the Portage Bay Bridge run-off contamination of Portage Bay been considered?

How will construction noise and traffic impacts resulting from up to 200 truckloads be considered?

What Montlake Playfield area mitigations for wetland, shoreline habitat and nature trail impacts are being considered?

What will be the mitigation for the closure of the Bill Dawson trail?

Has a replaced connection between the Bill Dawson trail and West Montlake Park been considered?" I would also like to ask, why has WSDOT completely ignored all of our concerns for south Portage Bay?

What is WSDOT's plan about tearing up parts of Montlake Park and the mitigation from this action? What is WSDOT's plan about noise and contaminated runoff from the roadway and the proposed mitigation?

What is WSDOT's plan about getting rid of the Bill Dawson Trail and the wetlands along the shoreline and the proposed mitigation?

What is WSDOT's plan on mitigation improvements for our neighborhood such as the area under the SR520 bridge?

And how will WSDOT mitigate the noise, vibration, dirt, unhealthy air quality and congestion from the 200+ trucks driving on our residential streets?

What are you doing to not completely ruin our neighborhood from all of these environmental concerns?

We deserve to have appropriate mitigation in the same area as the damage or disruption to our natural area, and recreation area that is likely to occur with the building of the new bridge. Our neighborhood groups, Montlake Community Club, Portage Bay Community Club and Fuhrman and Boyer Neighborhood Improvement Assoc and Friends of South Portage Bay Reclamation have work since 2005 with the Seattle Parks and City of Seattle to restore the natural area adjacent and surrounding the Montlake Playfield. We were awarded substantial grants and donations to accomplish the improvements. With neighbors and volunteer groups we have planted thousands of trees and shrubs, cleared 18 tons of concrete from previous bridge construction, removed the invasive weeds, and provided nesting areas and nest boxes for many species of birdlife. We have greatly improved the Kayak launch and made the area a useable and popular recreation area for the community. We have a 2007 Recreation and Enhancement Masterplan which was developed and approved by the community and Seattle Parks. There are several improvements within the scope of the Masterplan which should be included in mitigation. Our Masterplan includes removing the old dock and rebuilding a new dock at the Everett street end, not just planting a few trees and calling it good. If WSDOT can put in concrete bridge pilings, certainly building a new dock could be an easy mitigation project allowing for enhanced recreation for fishing and viewing. Has rebuilding the dock been considered as part of our mitigation and if not why not?

Has there been any consideration for the reconnection of the Bill Dawson Trail to West Montlake Park and the Montlake cut trail? For years this community has asked for the connection to be made along the shoreline to West Montlake Park where water views are the best and most enjoyable. That connection also continues along the cut with eventual connection to the Arboretum Waterfront Trail and the Arboretum to complete a five mile trail, a perfect band of green and water connection. I have been at many planning meetings for WSDOT 520 and I have always made a point to discuss this possibility with the representatives, plenty of opportunity to determine ownership, leases, etc. We do not need to cross NOAA property to accomplish this connection.

How will the heavy truck traffic on Fuhrman and Boyer be handled (currently, just prior to COVID 19 we had bumper to bumper 3 mile an hour traffic creeping through the neighborhood at extended rush hour times.) What is the likely mitigation planned for the 6 years of heavy truck traffic adding to the current impossible traffic and disruption to our neighborhood? Why aren't barges being considered?

I understand that there is a water main that currently runs under Federal Ave. E. and then crosses north under SR 520. Will the changes required to keep this water main functional require construction on Federal Ave. E? What equipment will be involved? How long will it take?

What will be involved in the installation of subterranean tiebacks for the Roanoke Lid? How will the properties on the surface above these tiebacks be affected during and after installation? When will neighbors have the chance to provide further input on the design details of the Roanoke Lid: the viewpoints, bike paths, sidewalks, lighting, vegetation?

There are beautiful mature trees growing in the SR 520 right-of-way currently. What is being done design-wise to save as many of them as possible? When will we know what trees can be saved? Has there been any agreement on who will be responsible for ongoing maintenance of the completed Lid: landscaping, trash collection, etc.?

When will neighbors have the chance to weigh in on what fencing will separate the Roanoke Lid park from the private properties adjacent to it?