



**Seattle
Design
Commission**

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

7 March 2002

Gregory J. Nickels,
Mayor

Donald Royse
Chair

Tom Bykonen

Ralph Cipriani

Jack Mackie

Cary Moon

Iain M. Robertson

David Spiker

Sharon E. Sutton

Tory Laughlin Taylor

John Rahaim,
Executive Director

Layne Cubell,
Commission Coordinator

Projects Reviewed

Commission Retreat Follow-Up
Terry Avenue Technology Court/
Schnitzer Development Northwest
Translake/ 520 Expansion

Convened: 8:30am

Adjourned: 2:30pm

Commissioners Present

Donald Royse, Chair
Jack Mackie, Vice Chair
Ralph Cipriani
Cary Moon
Iain M. Robertson
David Spiker
Tory Laughlin Taylor

Staff Present

John Rahaim
Layne Cubell
Brad Gassman
Sally MacGregor



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Construction & Land Use

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7 Mar 2002 Project: Commission Business/ Retreat Follow-up

Time: 1 hour

Staff distributed a letter from a Beacon Hill community member and noted the growing community interest in the Design Commission's review of Seattle Public Library's new and expanded branch libraries. Staff also reviewed notes and next steps from the Commission's annual retreat in early February and provided an update on the reorganization of City departments. Finally, staff reexamined and clarified the Commission purview in the review of street vacations and those large projects being developed within the City which are sponsored by outside agencies (i.e. Viaduct, 520/Trans Lake WA Expansion, and ETC/Monorail).

Staff will work closely with Seattle Public Libraries (SPL) to better understand larger neighborhood planning issues as they arise, but will also continue to reinforce the notion that the Commission is a centralized design review body. A representative from SPL could possibly come to the Commission for a briefing/ update on branch library issues.

During its annual retreat, the Commission expressed a desire to engage in more public oriented workshops. The Commission would also like to engage different City departments, early in the design process, more effectively. The Commission struggles with a workload of this magnitude, but the Commission's purview would be strengthened through the discussion of larger issues.

Staff clarified the City's vacation review process. The Commission typically examines the proposed public benefits, even though urban design concerns often suggest that the street or alley should remain. The Commission has seldom said no to a vacation outright, and has often gotten caught up in benefits negotiation. The Commission has two decisions to make, in advising City Council and the City. In some cases, the City Council prompts the proponents to return the Commission to work on the conditions of the vacation and hone the public benefits.

The Strategic Planning Office will be reorganized, and will be reduced to become an executive policy office. Some planners will move to Seattle Transportation, and others may move to Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU), but jobs will also be lost. The reorganization will provide an opportunity to have an integrated planning function within the city, but at DCLU.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know if the Commission could review vacations with two motions, approval of the vacation based on broader urban design considerations within the larger context, and approval of appropriate public benefits. Recognizes that vacation decisions are long-term decisions, but there is no custodian for the long-term range of the public benefits. Is concerned that the Commission and the City are offering vacations for sale, and they are up for negotiation at any cost.
 - Staff will work on clarifying a two-step process for Commission's review.
- Believes that if a street or alley vacation is approved, there is a middle-ground for negotiation.
 - CityDesign staff stated that the State government gives local governments the authority to vacate streets and alleys, and impose conditions.
- Is concerned that the City is using the long-term fabric of the city to fill some gaps in resources. Believes that there should be other methods to reinforce public improvements. Does not believe it is appropriate to use the urban fabric to make these trade-offs.

- Recognizes that the City as a whole would have to take this stand.
 - CityDesign staff stated that the Commission has the ability to not approve vacations, simply telling the proponents to move on with the process.
- Encourages everyone to reread the section of the Commission Handbook, describing the requirements for the vacation process.

7 Mar 2002 Project: Terry Avenue Technology Court/ Schnitzer Development

Phase: Alley Vacation

Previous Reviews: 7 February 2002 (Alley Vacation), 15 February 2001 (Alley Vacation), 7 September 2000 (Alley Vacation Briefing), 19 October 2000 (Briefing)

Presenters: Tom Berger, Berger Partnership
Suzi Morris, Schnitzer Northwest
Jim Mueller, Vulcan
David Yuan, NBBJAttendees: Beverly Barnett, Seattle Transportation
Sharon Coleman, Vulcan
John Eskelin, Department of Neighborhoods
Jeff Kiser, Schnitzer Northwest
Jack McCullough, Phillips, McCullough, Wilson, Hill, and Fisko
Mike Nelson, Schnitzer Northwest
Victoria Schoenburg, Department of Parks and Recreation
Marilyn Senour, Seattle Transportation
Jim Suter, Cascade Community Council
Kevin Teague, Foster, Pepper, and Shefelman
David Van Skike, Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use

Time: 1.75 hours (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00164)

Action: The Commission thanked the team for the presentation.

- **The Design Commission recommends approval of the proposed alley vacation, with a vote of five to two;**
- **accepts the proposed public benefit package presented by the proponents, which consists of street improvements along Terry Avenue and a central private plaza area that will be committed for perpetual public use subject to agreement between the City and the proponent of the proposed covenant;**
- **expresses many concerns regarding this vacation petition and the Commission's lengthy deliberation of this project given the City policy of not relinquishing public ownership of alleys;**
- **is concerned that the continued requests for street and alley vacations, if unchecked, will result in eradication of Seattle's historic street grid, and the deterioration of the urban environment in Seattle; and**
- **hopes that this vacation approval does not set a precedent for future vacations in the South Lake Union area or Seattle's center city.**

The proponents presented the current design proposal and proposed alley vacation for the Schnitzer Northwest Development, which has changed to respond to previous Commission concerns. The proponent clarified the public benefits that would be provided through this development. The requested vacation would be located within the block bounded by Republican Street to the north, Boren Avenue to the east, Harrison Street to the south, and Terry Avenue to the west.

A representative from Vulcan presented an overall background for the project. Vulcan has been working on the overall planning for multiple properties throughout the South Lake Union neighborhood. Vulcan has identified solutions for the neighborhood that would foster the community development and satisfy

the neighborhood's most pressing needs. Vulcan has been working with neighborhood planning groups to develop this vision and design guidelines for the streets in the area. The Terry Avenue Technology Court represents some of community's desires for development. The neighborhood has identified Terry Avenue as a special street, and believes that the character of this street is important.

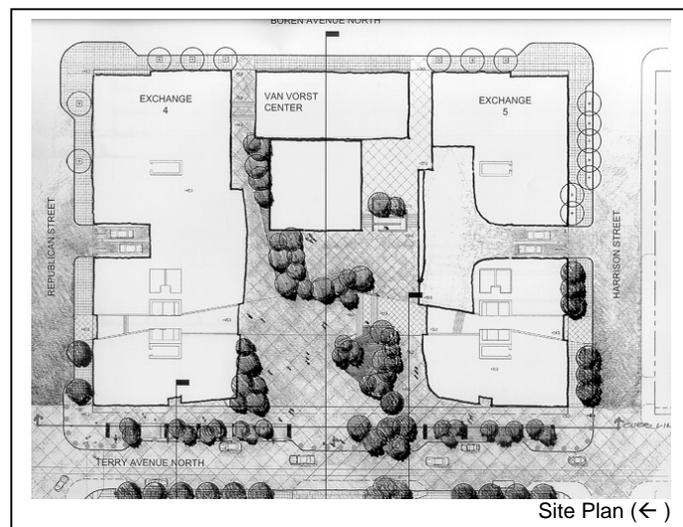
The design team presented a series of alternatives through which the alley would be retained. A four story building represents the maximum FAR of 3, with full coverage of the site. The block is 360 feet by 250 feet, with a sixteen foot alley. The allowable square footage of buildable area would be approximately 270,000 square feet including the alley, and the alley only represents 17,000 square feet of that total. If the alley remained, the western block of the site represents 126,000 square feet of buildable area at an FAR of 3. This building would be similar to the proposed building across the street, Exchange 3. This building would be consistently four stories on this half of the block, because Terry Avenue and Republican Street are relatively flat. The design team then explained the FAR possibilities for the east side of the block. The topography within this half of the block changes in elevation approximately twenty-five feet. This would require a three and a half story building, maximizing the FAR of 3. The design team would like to retain the Van Vorst building, which is 120 feet by 120 feet, at the center of the block. Two floors would be retained for use with this development. The building to the south of the Van Vorst building would be three stories, and the building to the north would be four stories. The Van Vorst building levels are fourteen feet, floor to floor. The desired height for an office building would be 12 feet -6 inches, and 15 feet for a bio-technology building. The design team would like to retain two floors in the Van Vorst building, but there would be discontinuity between the new buildings. The project would become three distinct buildings on the site; vertical circulation for this scenario would not be viable or efficient.

The team explained that there was a development study completed over the last eighteen months, looking at various solutions. The team has considered all of these alternatives. The developer hopes to attract businesses that will help to revitalize the neighborhood. These types of businesses would be full-floor tenants or multiple floor tenants. Full-floor tenants typically need 30,000 to 35,000 square foot floor plates. Multiple buildings and building cores would create an unfeasible project.

The developer explained that the eastern portion of the block could be developed as a single building with a single core, if the Van Vorst building were removed.

The preferred scheme is the only way in which the Van Vorst building could be preserved. The preferred alternative would include two five story buildings, working with the change in grade most efficiently. A full floor plate at grade would extend along the north edge of the site. Half of the ground floor would be a garage within the south building. The Van Vorst building would be retained and the public plaza would constitute most of the public benefit. The entrances to the garages would be re-aligned mid-block on Republican Street and Harrison Street, to allow for continuity of servicing within the building. Through these decisions, and the allowable FAR for the site, there would be a four and a half story building on the south portion of the block, and a five story building on the north side.

The landscape architect presented the



public benefit changes that would be implemented within the project limits. The open space, opening up onto Terry Avenue, would be included in these limits, and there would be three levels within the plaza, connected by stairs and ramps. From Boren Avenue, there would be views and access into the public open space. A water feature, adjacent to the ramp, would break this space into smaller areas. While the improvements in the plaza and along Terry Avenue would not become the standard as design guidelines for Terry Avenue, these improvements would be consistent to the other side of the street. Recognizing that there are no design guidelines for Terry Avenue, the developer plans to work with the appropriate City agencies to develop design guidelines for Terry Avenue. The design team participated in the design charrette for South Lake Union, and considers many of those ideas valid; the design of Terry Avenue should be a unique north south connection.

The open park space would be balanced with stone, incorporated in the water feature. The vegetation would be planted in rows and would be significant in size. There would be small gathering spaces in the plaza, as well as larger gathering spaces. The main paving would be a cast-in-place pattern, but the materials could be changed for special areas. The design team also explained the need for new light standards, instead of the existing cobra-head light standards, to create a pedestrian scale street. There could also be graphic displays and signs in the area to explain the Cascade neighborhood and Terry Avenue.

The team would like to preserve the public benefit of this plaza. The team presented a Covenant Term Sheet, explaining the developer's commitment to work with the Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks Department) to determine, plan, and program annual events and activities. Schnitzer Northwest would also work with the Parks Department to ensure that the activities at this site would not interfere with activities at South Lake Union Park. The Covenant Term Sheet also described the standards for the design of the park and Terry Avenue, including benches, tree selection, artist involvement, and other components. Schnitzer Northwest would also facilitate planning with the neighborhood and the City for future improvements along Terry Avenue. Schnitzer Northwest would participate in funding of its share of the agreed upon improvements. Schnitzer Northwest would also grant the City an easement for use of the public plaza by the general public.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know if the proponents explored a five story building for either half of the block, without the vacation. With an FAR of 3, there would be a significant open space on the site.
 - Proponents stated that a five story building in this orientation, retaining the Van Vorst building and the alley would not be economically feasible. Further stated that the increased FAR, achieved through the alley vacation, provides an economic benefit that compensates for the cost of the five story buildings. The value that is generated from the alley vacation enables the developer to construct these additional floors.
- Would like to know if the proponents considered a subterranean vacation.
 - Proponents stated that the subterranean vacation would make sense only if the Van Vorst building were demolished.
- Would like to know the purpose of the glass box building next to the Van Vorst building.
 - Proponents stated that this would be an addition to the Van Vorst building, and would provide for an ancillary use for the buildings on the site. Further stated that the design of this building would be governed by the Landmarks Board.
- Feels that the design of this building is significant, as it would be the focus of the open space.

- Proponents agreed that the design of this building is critical to the success of the plaza, and the team would work with the Landmarks Board to ensure that the position and mass are appropriate. Further stated that the interior would be a single volume, without multiple floors and would not extend above the height of the Van Vorst building.
- Shares the project team's frustration with this lengthy review process and recognizes constraints at every level. Feels that the Commission's role in this review is to assess the urban design impacts of this vacation. Is very concerned about the continued permanent loss of alleys in the City. Feels that City Council will ultimately make this decision, and feels that the Commission must assess the proposed public benefits package for this project. Is frustrated with the loss of the grid, but does not believe that the Van Vorst building should be removed.
- Would like the representative from Seattle Transportation to review the legal vacation procedures and purview of the Commission.
 - A representative from Seattle Transportation stated that the Commission advises the City Council. The Commission's recommendation is based on an urban design evaluation of the project, and an evaluation of the proposed public benefits. Stated that the Commission can recommend to approve or not to approve the alley vacation. Further stated that the City Council can approve the vacation, but this approval may be contingent on conditions outlined by the Commission.
- Believes that the proponents have made compelling economic arguments for the vacation, but believes that these are outside of the Commission's review of the project, which is related to design decisions. Feels that the grid should be preserved, whenever possible. Encourages everyone to recognize that there is a trade-off.
- Recognizes that the proponents stated they would propose to demolish the Van Vorst building if the alley vacation is not approved. Would like the team to clarify.
 - Proponents stated that the team would ask for full demolition of the building, because of economic constraints.
- Would like to know if low-income or affordable housing would be included in the South Lake Union area, to address the homeless concerns in the area.
 - A representative from the community stated that there are 1700 apartment units in Cascade, and 400 have been built as low-income housing.
 - Proponents stated that there is not a final physical plan for development within the neighborhood, but there is a strategic plan. Further stated that the team is exploring the diversity and demographics of the neighborhood. The proponents are working with non-profit developers to identify the needs for artist housing and affordable housing. The team is also working with other agencies to determine the types of policies needed to encourage different types of housing development.
- Would like to know if Vulcan is developing housing for people to walk to work at Interurban Exchange.
 - Proponents stated that 160 market-rate rental housing is part of Vulcan's strategic plan. Further stated that the team is trying to create a balance in the neighborhood. QFC has signed a lease for a 50,000 square foot store; other convenience services, such as a drugstore, would also be included in future development. The proponents, through

future development, hopes to bring diversity in income, as well as diverse employment opportunities.

- Would like the team to describe the design of the glass box, adjacent to the Van Vorst building. Would like to know how it would be used.
 - Proponents stated that, at this time, this is only a placeholder for a future building, and the Landmarks Board will review the design. Further stated that this would be a single volume, and could house a variety of uses, such as a community meeting area, fitness club, or an employee lounge. Agreed that there might be opportunities for a winter garden, but this would not be public, like the lobby of a building.
 - Proponents stated that, through this development, Vulcan is trying to improve the neighborhood, but is not trying to develop a campus. Does not feel that this should be an office park in the suburbs, but the development should add value to the community.
- Continues to support this vacation, but still has some concerns. Is worried about the long-term, cumulative effects of multiple vacations which change the fabric of the city. Feels that every project proponent presents merits, and appropriate public benefits, but they do cumulatively affect the urban fabric of the city. Feels that these vacations do not preserve the historic character of the neighborhood grid of South Lake Union, and this leads to the perception that alleys are for sale in the city. Recognizes that changes in Pioneer Square throughout the last thirty to forty years have prompted an evolution from an historical urban grid to a neighborhood of super blocks. Through these changes, each of the projects had their own merits, but over the long-term, they have changed the fabric of the city. Recognizes that, in other cities, there are no socioeconomic factors that are more important than preservation of the grid. Feels that, through each successive vacation, the city is starting to become more suburban.
- Will continue to vote no for the alley vacation. Believes that very long-term future development on this site could be twenty stories without an alley or open space. Does not believe that the benefit package has changed much since the beginning. Recognizes the proponents' explanation of water and power connections within the open space to provide for different uses, but feels that these would be included anyway. Does not believe that this is the right message to send for future development in the area.
- Believes that that the urban fabric pattern in South Lake Union is oriented north-south, and this positive orientation should be maintained. Believes that the public benefits should overcome the negative effects of the removal of the alley. Is not convinced that an east west orientation is appropriate for the neighborhood. Believes that the relationship between downtown Seattle and Lake Union should always be reinforced by the grid. Does not believe that this is a good precedent for the neighborhood.
- Is concerned by the lengthy deliberations of the Commission, especially as it does not seem that a resolution has been achieved. Believes that the proposed public benefit, the public plaza, is well designed and is appropriately oriented. However, feels that the project is, more accurately, a private plaza for public use in perpetuity.
- Would like the proponents to explain the language of the Covenant Term Sheet, which states "a public plaza would be constructed on the Project site in the location generally shown on the site plan." Would like to know if this plaza would change location in any way.
 - Proponents stated that the document is expressed this way, not to provide flexibility, but only because the proponents did not have the exact survey locations for the public plaza. Further stated that the boundary would be as it is shown on the plan, but would be more

clearly defined by survey information.

- Recognizes that the Covenant Term Sheet states as a component for public benefits, “Improvements to Terry Avenue Pedestrian/ Sidewalk Area.” Would like to know what improvements the proponents would be required to complete, regardless of the vacation.
 - A representative from the Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU) stated that they would be required to improve the street through the construction of the project, but are not required to improve the street to a yet to be determined level of improvements based on a neighborhood plan. To date, the proponents’ Master Use Permit (MUP) drawings have included two alternatives for street improvements. The first alternative would comply with standards, but the second alternative would be to a standard represented by the drawings in the presentation.
- Is concerned about this decision, recognizing that City Council would make an economic decision in this case, while the Commission is reviewing the urban design decisions and needs for the City. Does not believe that the grid should be interrupted here. Feels that the Commission should state this, and then express an opinion on the proposed public benefits. Feels that this has become a trade-off and an economic decision.
- Recognizes that this is a first step in Vulcan’s development in the South Lake Union Area. Hopes that this does not send a message that alley vacations are encouraged.
 - Proponents stated that the alley vacation process is not easy.
- Supports the proposed public benefits, if the legal easement for these benefits remains here permanently. Feels that future development on this block, changing the character of the plaza, should be required to return to the Commission.
- Feels that the Commission must make a recommendation on this vacation, does not believe that further meetings and deliberation would be appropriate.
- Cannot argue for the economic decisions related to this vacation. From a design standpoint, feels that this is an appropriate public amenity.

Key Visitor Comments and Concerns

- A representative of the Cascade Community Council stated that the neighborhood character is very important, and the community has identified Terry Avenue as the main corridor for the neighborhood to access South Lake Union Park. Further stated that the development team has been an important part of the visioning process. Believes that this large development will set the theme and the precedent for the neighborhood. Further stated that the community would like to retain other alleys throughout the neighborhood, but there has not been any opposition from the community. Recognized that this is a troublesome alley.

7 March 2002 Commission Business

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|-------------------------|----|---|
| ACTION ITEMS | A. | <u>TIMESHEETS</u> |
| | B. | <u>MINUTES FROM 21 FEBRUARY- APPROVED</u> |
| DISCUSSION ITEMS | C. | <u>OUTSIDE COMMITMENT UPDATES- CUBELL</u> |
| | D. | <u>LIGHT RAIL REVIEW PANEL- SIZOV</u> |
| | E. | <u>DESIGN REVIEW UPDATE- GASSMAN</u> |
| ANNOUNCEMENTS | F. | <u>VIADUCT/ SEAWALL SPECIAL REVIEW SESSIONS-
CUBELL</u> |
| | G. | <u>ETC/ MONORAIL WORK SESSIONS – CUBELL</u> |
| | H. | <u>QUARTERLY REPORT TO COUNCIL 3/19/02- RAHAIM</u> |

7 Mar 2002 Project: **Translake/ 520 Expansion**

Phase: Briefing

Presenters: Maureen Sullivan, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
Les Rubstello, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)Attendees: Lyle Bicknell, CityDesign
Eric Chipps, Strategic Planning Office
Pete Marshall, Department of Parks and Recreation

Time: 2 hours

(SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00262)

Discussion Summary: The Commission thanked the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) team for the briefing and appreciates the opportunity to assess the proposed improvements for the Trans Lake Washington/ 520 Corridor.

- **The Commission encourages the WSDOT team to continue to work with Sound Transit to develop a proposal for an integrated transit hub on the north side of Montlake Avenue at Northeast Pacific Street;**
- **commends the team for their progressive vision and the broad scope of proposals under consideration at this early stage of design;**
- **urges the team to incorporate innovative design solutions, such as lids and buffers at every opportunity, with special attention for the road's connections to the community;**
- **urges the team to incorporate Transportation Demand Management (TDM) at every opportunity;**
- **supports bold, civic design proposals, and urges WSDOT to remember that good design is not an enhancement of these improvements, but a necessary core component of the project;**
- **recommends early artist involvement on the design team to ensure integrated thinking about artistic problem solving, landscape and architectural design;**
- **recognizing that the project is striving for 50 to 100 year improvements, hopes that WSDOT will balance present-day local community concerns and the impacts of these changes with bold, long-term visions for the entire region, city, and communities; and**
- **hopes that WSDOT works with Seattle Transportation to determine the feasibility to close the ramps at the arboretum to improve the community and the region.**

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) updated the Commission on the project development of the Trans-Lake Washington Project.

“The goal of the Trans-Lake Washington project is to increase mobility across Lake Washington. Traffic across the lake, on both I-90 and SR 520, has increased dramatically in the last ten years. Even though improvements to the I-90 floating bridges in the 1990s helped increase mobility, the demand for moving people across the lake is still not being met. Increasing mobility requires more than concentrating on cars, buses and trucks. Increasing mobility means getting people to where they want to be as quickly as possible by using multiple modes of transportation— including cars, buses, bicycles, pedestrians, trucks

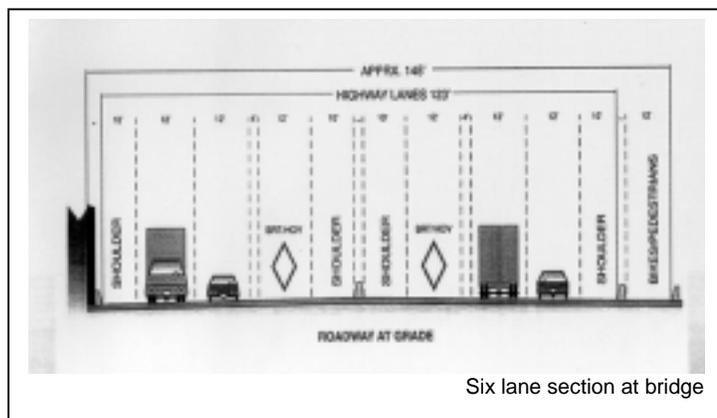
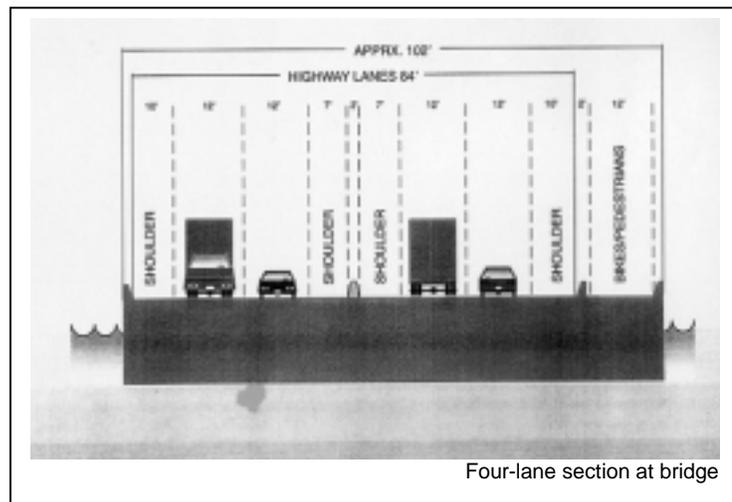
and trains—and various other tools and incentives, such as transportation demand management (free employee bus passes, telecommuting, and off-peak work hours, for example).

Even though the aging Evergreen Point Floating Bridge (SR 520 bridge) is a major focus of the Trans-Lake Washington project, other routes across and around the lake are being looked at as part of this project.”- <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/translake/>

The existing bridge, including lane widths, does not meet today’s design standards. WSDOT has conducted many studies, and have concluded that the floating bridge no longer “state of the art,” and is susceptible to windstorms or a large earthquake. The floating bridge has been forced to close in the past, due to sustained 50 mph winds in the north south direction. WSDOT team also explained that these changes are desperately needed, as the traffic will double in this corridor soon. There are three committees, an executive committee, composed of elected officials and agency heads, a technical steering committee, composed of agency and jurisdictional staff, and an advisory committee, composed of representatives of community, business and advocacy interests in the corridor. WSDOT is also working with Sound Transit, to collect and address the applicable issues, in order to identify the range of alternatives that will become part of the EIS. The Draft EIS for the project will be published in April, 2003, and in October, 2003, the final alternative will be selected. This project needs to be in the forefront, due to funding needs and concerns.

The WSDOT team presented three floating bridge alternatives, which all include improved reliability, safety and environmental protection throughout the corridor; reduced travel time across 520, including 10-minute savings for passengers in buses or HOV lane; improvements to the I-5 Mercer Weave; bicycle and pedestrian facilities; aggressive Transportation Demand Management (TDM), including opportunity for congestion pricing; added shoulders for safety and vehicle breakdown refuge; strengthened or replaced seismically-deficient approaches; and noise mitigation.

The first floating bridge alternative is four lanes. In addition to lane widths meeting current standards, the bridge would include shoulders and a bike and pedestrian lane. The six lane option would include elements like those of the four lane option. However, there would be an additional lane in each direction for HOV/ BRT (High Occupancy Vehicles and Bus/ Rapid Transit). Increased transit options are needed to cross Lake Washington. The eight lane option is similar to the six lane option, but would



provide an additional general purpose lane in both directions. The WSDOT team has eliminated ideas to add an additional bridge or tunnel under the lake, due to a range of technical implications.

WSDOT has partnered with Sound Transit, to examine the need for

high capacity transit across this corridor. However, the executive committee has concurred with WSDOT, Sound Transit and other team members, that high capacity transit for the long-term should continue to be planned for the I-90 corridor in the near future. With all of the alternatives for the 520 corridor, the team hopes to provide accommodations for high capacity transit in the thirty to fifty years from now.

The WSDOT team identified potential community enhancement alternatives, including widened bridges at overpasses, medium intensity lids without ventilation at connectivity locations, and investigation of greater noise reduction options. These lids must be less than five hundred feet; otherwise, they must be ventilated. Lids do not reduce noise, but they do prevent discontinuity in neighborhoods.

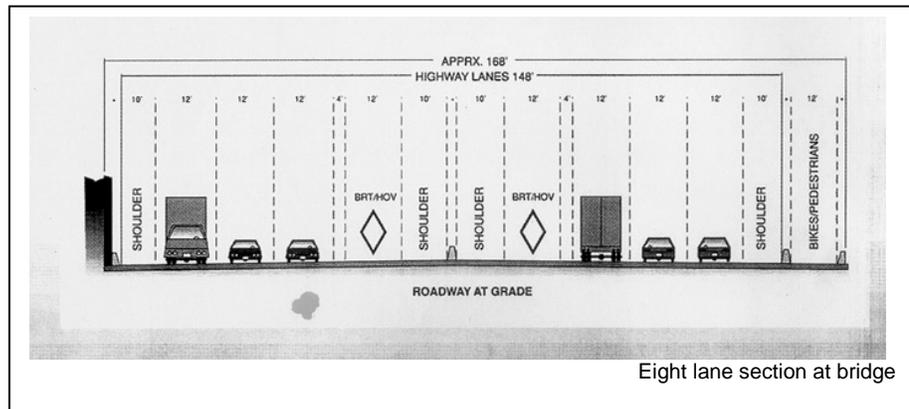
WSDOT is also considering major TDM strategies for this corridor, including van-pooling, public information and education, employer-based TDM programs, land use as TDM, core programs (interlocal agreements to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips, expand existing core programs, monitoring and evaluation), and miscellaneous strategies (innovative HOV fare media, custom bus services, etc.). Congestion pricing would include different prices for different times of day, based on occupancy. If TDM strategies are used in this corridor, the WSDOT team needs to know how this will link with other systems.

The WSDOT team has been working to complete the EIS, but the budget has not allowed for a landscape architecture plan, explaining the corridor. The project consultant, through the development of a project book, would include chapters on art, landscape design, and bridge architecture, to begin to identify design ideas for noise walls or other site changes. This will become the primary dialogue tool to work with the community as the WSDOT team begins to identify alternatives.

The WSDOT team presented plans of 520 corridor connections to I-5 and Seattle. The interchanges would accommodate the eight lane floating bridge alternatives. Through these ramp improvements, only one house would have to be removed. The existing tunnel to 520 would be retained.

The WSDOT team presented three options for lids that may be proposed in this area. The first option would widen bridge, with thirty to fifty feet of landscape on each side to soften the experience of crossing pedestrian and traffic. The second option would provide a continuous lid that would connect 10th Avenue with the Seward School area. The third option would extend the I-5 lid. The ventilation requirements depend on the specific lid.

The Montlake interchange is a challenge, because the capacity on the corridor has already been exceeded. Montlake Bridge is historic, and WSDOT does not want to widen this. The WSDOT team presented a new crossing at the ship canal. The team explained two options for crossing the ship canal. A tunnel



would be underground before entering the Shelby-Hamlin neighborhood. The tunnel would remain underground underneath the South Lot at University of Washington, before exiting as a two level stacked interchange at Montlake Boulevard and Northeast Pacific Street. The northbound tunnel would continue as a six lane tunnel to 45th Avenue Northeast, while the westbound traffic would connect with Northeast Pacific Street. Commuters traveling to the Eastside could access the freeway without traveling through the Montlake neighborhood. A second scheme would include a bridge that ramps from 520 at Marsh Island; the navigational clearance for this bridge would also be seventy feet high. This would also tunnel underground at the South Lot, continue to a similar grade-separated intersection. The WSDOT team will schedule a meeting with the University of Washington.

The WSDOT team also presented a Montlake lid scheme. The lidding options extend from Montlake Boulevard to 24th Avenue East. The interchanges must be determined first, to identify the ramp locations. The size of the lid may be limited by the engineering requirements. The pedestrian connections would have to be resolved as well.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know why lids do not reduce noise levels.
 - Proponents stated that there is often a trumpeting effect at the end of the lid, in which the noise level is magnified.
- Would like to know if WSDOT considered other bridge designs, rather than a floating bridge.
 - Proponents stated that the lake is 250 feet deep, with 100 feet of soft settlement. Supporting columns for a typical bridge would have to be 400 feet. Further stated that a suspension bridge tower would have to be the height of Columbia Tower to support the needed span.
- Would like to know what type of changes would be made to improve upon the existing floating bridge design.
 - Proponents stated the anchors would be bigger, and the mass of the concrete cells, pontoons would be thicker, to resist bending. The draw span would also be removed, because, in a storm, this segment is the weak link. Proponents stated that the navigational clearance would match the east channel bridge of I-90, which is seventy feet high, increasing the existing height approximately fifteen feet.
- Would like to know if the lid improvements at the 520 and I-5 lid would definitely be included.
 - Proponents stated that the lids would be included as an obligation of the six or eight lane 520 alternative.
- Feels that the Roanoke neighborhood should be reconnected.
- Would like to know why the community doesn't like the tunnel.
 - Proponents stated that the community doesn't believe it will be as unobtrusive as WSDOT claims it will be. Further stated that the Montlake Community Council has passed a resolution stating that they are opposed to a second crossing over the ship canal. Further stated that the team is working with Sound Transit and potential alignments to identify a stacked transfer station that would accommodate the light rail and bus transit.
- Would like to know how the bridge or other proposals would affect the Olmstead Plan for this area.
 - Proponents stated that the projects impacts and expansion are to the north. WSDOT

prefers the alternative that would allow the traffic to continue on Lake Washington Boulevard until it bends to the west. There would be sound walls to protect the nearby neighborhoods.

- Feels that the on-ramp would significantly impact the arboretum.
- Would like to know if a cut and cover option would be possible through the arboretum.
 - Proponents stated that, at the urging by the City of Seattle, WSDOT would consider closing these ramps. Further stated that, fewer on and off ramps allows a freeway to function more efficiently.
- Feels that these changes would significantly affect Foster Island, if the bridge is wider.
 - Proponents agreed and stated that the bridge could be raised at this location.
- Would like the team to explain the advantage of a lid on the west side of Montlake Boulevard. Recognizes that this would be a valuable amenity to those to the east of the lid with houses, but this is not the case on the west.
 - Proponents agreed and stated that, if there were ramps on either side of the lid, it would become an island. Proponents stated that there are still many questions that need to be addressed, and the WSDOT team plans to work with the community on these concerns.
- Appreciates the opportunity to review this project. Would like to know if there are many areas where this project will impact City property.
 - Proponents stated that there would be architects and landscape architects on the team. Further stated that WSDOT would like to make improvements and features of the same character as those at I-90, and the I-90 landscape design guide is still used as an example. Recognized that there was more federal money at the time I-90 was built. However, these changes represent 100-year decisions.
- Encourages the WSDOT team to balance present-day local community concerns and the impacts of these changes with bold, long-term visions for the entire city, and continue to do this throughout the decision process, as a principle.
 - Proponents agreed and stated that WSDOT would like to get the Commission's perspectives for specific locations.
- Commends the WSDOT team for the corridor studies. Feels that the 520 corridor study has been most efficient, dealing with so many complex issues. Recognizes that financial capacity is the primary issue for the Washington State government, in consideration of this project, and the current financial capacity would probably not be sufficient for this package. Would like the WSDOT to consider use-based fees, as these fees would probably gain legitimacy in the future. Encourages the team to consider these in the framework of the requirements of the EIS. Hopes that the financial capacity evolves over time. Hopes that other "soft-side" programs, such as Transportation Demand Management (TDM), are investigated in cooperation with local City and County governments, to determine who is responsible for the implementation of different types of programs. As the financial capacity develops, hopes that WSDOT is able to implement the best project for the communities and the environment, rather than completing the bare minimum requirements. Will be sending an invitation to the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) (co-sponsored with the Federal Highway Administration, the Humphrey Institute, local governments, and the private sector) value-pricing conference to major project managers at WSDOT. Hopes that 520 can be used as an example, to

develop a virtual reality tour of this potential corridor, in order to experience different scenarios. Believes that these improvements are not solely needed to reduce commuting times. Believes that this project could be a catalyst for community improvement.

- Proponents agreed and stated that a vision for the future of each of the corridors is needed. Further stated that this vision must also include strategic phasing, not only to reduce the impacts on these transportation corridors, but to ensure funding for the development of these projects.
- Encourages the WSDOT team to make the corridor as narrow as possible. Feels that the corridor should not be envisioned from the inside out, but from the outside in at every opportunity. Is encouraged to hear a voice of vision throughout the presentation, and hopes that this vision is characteristic of others in the department.
- Encourages the WSDOT team to include an artist on the design team, with the engineer, architect, and landscape architect. Feels that quality design services now are cost-effective in the future. Many artists work at the scope and scale of the 520 corridor. Urges the team to speak with Sound Transit, Seattle Arts Commission, and King County Arts Commission, as these agencies have already worked with artist on projects of a large scope.
- Agrees that this corridor should be narrow. Believes that the on and off ramps are always the most difficult components to visualize. Encourages the team to illustrate how these would affect the fabric of the city.
- Would like to know if the WSDOT team considered a double-deck structure. Feels that the bridge, in section, ranging in size from 100 feet to 168 feet is very wide.
 - Proponents stated that they have considered it, but there are many constraints such as Montlake Boulevard. One of the levels below would need to be under water to make some of these connections. Shallow water is protected from this type of intrusion.
- Would like to know if residents on the east side would like the eight lane option.
 - Proponents stated that the majority, not all, commuters from the east side prefer the eight-lane option. Further stated that those people recognize that these additional lanes cannot only be general purpose lanes, but must include provision for light rail or other transit options. Proponents recognize that some of the congestion within Bellevue includes people who commute on I-90 instead of 520.
- Believes that the rejection of the signature bridge at this early stage is a missed opportunity. Recognizes that these types of bridges have been built in Europe and Japan in the last fifteen years. Recognizes that the Golden Gate Bridge was not well-received at first. Feels that sometimes, the community does not have the vision for these types of projects. Feels that it would be a shame to reject these ideas if the community is short-sighted. Recognizes that if this idea is not economically viable, it doesn't make sense. Furthermore, the Seattle Space Needle was an object of discussion at first, but now, views of this icon is protected.
 - Proponents stated that the bridge design and rejection of a cable-stay bridge was not solely an issue of cost.