



Seattle City Council

January 28, 2010

Governor Chris Gregoire
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Senator Mary Margaret Haugen
305 John A. Cherberg Building
PO Box 40410
Olympia, WA 98504-0410

Representative Judy Clibborn
435 John L. O'Brien Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Re: SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project

Dear Governor Gregoire, Senator Haugen and Representative Clibborn,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the recommendations made by the SR 520 Legislative Workgroup and comment on the ongoing work of the Governor's office, the State Legislature and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) on this critical transportation corridor. We very much appreciate your willingness to take into consideration the City of Seattle's perspective while moving forward with this project.

We cannot endorse a particular design alternative for the Westside at this time. Our hope is to share with you some thoughts regarding the design and engineering of the SR 520 corridor and to propose a way to continue to examine the Westside alternatives without compromising the project schedule and without risking the goal of opening the replacement bridge by 2014.

As the broader Program advances into more detailed design and engineering, we request that the following objectives be met:

- Ensuring that the Eastside connections and crosslake bridge are designed and built to maximize the opportunity for dedicated transit lanes as part of a design that will be limited to six lanes, as provided for in RCW 47.01.405.
- Reducing the height of the crosslake bridge structure from the thirty feet in the current plans.

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- Continuing to narrow where possible the lane widths and general overall footprint of the corridor without compromising public safety and emergency access.
- Identifying ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate project impacts during and after construction.
- Using innovative noise mitigation technologies and recognizing these investments as an integral and inseparable part of project design.
- Optimizing transit connectivity and functionality across the entire SR 520 corridor, along Montlake Boulevard, and in the vicinity of the future Multimodal Center on the University of Washington campus.

It is our understanding that these objectives are consistent with the current WSDOT planning and environmental review processes.

Furthermore, we recognize the State has established a \$4.65 billion budget for the SR 520 Program. As you continue your work on developing a full financing plan, we urge your support of the following:

- Committing that the currently envisioned share of the budget for the Westside, including lids and other project features that are designed to reduce negative impacts on neighborhoods and open space, will not be compromised by advancing the work on the Eastside and the crosslake bridge of the corridor.
- Assuring that there will be funding for increased transit across the corridor.

While we acknowledge the need to continue working on design and financing issues, we do support expanding and clarifying the use of tolling revenue along the corridor in order to move Eastside and crosslake elements of the SR 520 Program forward to construction.

As for the Westside design, first we want to thank you for your attentiveness to the issues that face the City of Seattle and its residents. We recognize that WSDOT's current schedule is to designate a preferred alternative in April 2010. At this time, we believe that there are still outstanding questions that remain with regard to the design options under review. As currently configured, neither Alternative A+ nor M adequately meets the needs and priorities of the City of Seattle and our residents. We commit to working to resolve the design options over the next several months.

We ask that the State engage with the City of Seattle in a final stage of concept and design work on the Westside configuration. We request that WSDOT work with the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) on a technical review of alternatives to identify potentially acceptable design elements and modifications based on guidance and direction from the Mayor and City Council. A wide range of alternatives and design elements have been studied through the EIS process. We request approximately 120 days to complete this work.

We recognize the urgency to continue advancing the SR 520 Program. This is why we are proposing a path forward that respects the current environmental review process. We ask that any action by the Legislature or WSDOT in the near term not preclude the opportunity for continuing work on the Westside configuration over the course of the next several months.

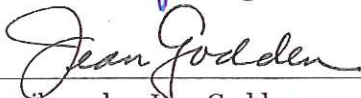
While we are seeking additional technical analysis, we are not seeking to create another state-led community process. The community processes have provided valuable, significant and comprehensive information about the public's preferences and interests. Our goal for this effort is for the Mayor and City Council to have a direct opportunity to work in partnership with you to ensure the Westside configuration best meets all of our needs. The City then expects to make final recommendations on a design configuration for the Westside.

Thank you for considering our requests. We look forward to continue our work together to replace and improve the SR 520 corridor.

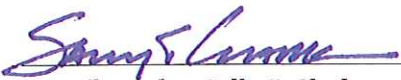
Sincerely,


Council President Richard Conlin

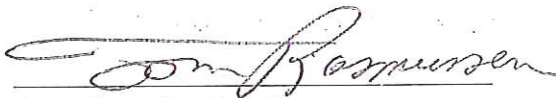

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