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March 17, 2005

**Sent via Email and U.S. Mail**

Better Bridges  
1837 E. Shelby Street  
Seattle, WA 98112

RE: Alternate Proposal for Portion of SR 520 Spanning Portage Bay, Montlake and the Arboretum

Dear Rob, Jonathan, Ken, and Peter:

Thank you for your letter of March 1, 2005 clarifying your organization's objectives for design of SR 520 through your community. This letter is intended to continue an open dialogue, and to explain the process we expect to follow to involve you in development of the option(s) for SR 520 in Seattle. We also want to let you know that WSDOT has retained David Goodyear of T.Y. Lin International to help us study your proposal. He is a national and international expert in cable-supported and long-span bridges. His resume is attached.

First, we want to assure you that WSDOT has no intention of trying to accommodate either HCT or the bicycle/pedestrian path across the Portage Bay Bridge, which would create an unnecessarily wide structure. In fact, before we received your proposal for a high-level bridge, we had already begun working on options that would reduce the width of the Portage Bay Bridge and the roadway through Montlake. Your estimate of 112 feet width for a 6-lane Portage Bay Bridge is close. The width of the barriers (1.5 feet on north and south and 2 feet in center) adds an additional 5 feet, for a total of 117 feet.

We have read your letter carefully in order to boil down the long list of objectives by focusing on the underlying goals. We understand them to be:

- Reduce size and effect of 6-Lane Alternative footprint
- Connect transit to North Link station
- Reduce traffic congestion on Montlake Boulevard from SR 520
- Create graceful landmark structures
- Provide continuous green space from Montlake Playfield to Arboretum

These goals would be translated into the following screening criteria:

1. How much does it reduce the size and effect of the footprint in Montlake?
2. Does it connect transit directly to the North Link station?
3. Is traffic congestion on Montlake Boulevard reduced from No Build?
4. Does it create a graceful landmark structure?
5. Does it provide continuous green space from Montlake Playfield to Arboretum?

During the screening process for the high-level bridge options, as well as for other options we are considering, we will also need to consider other screening criteria – ones we have used in the past to screen all the alternatives that have been considered over the years. These are:

How effectively will the alternative improve mobility for people and goods?

Operate reliably and safely?

Be compatible with the regional transportation systems?

What are the environmental effects on the following resources?

Wetlands

Habitat for species listed under ESA

Parks and cultural resources (4(f))

Residential and commercial displacements

Neighborhoods – (noise, visual, cohesion)

How much will it cost?

Our rating scale is a 1-5 scale, with 1 being the least effective/most effects to the environment and 5 being the most effective/improved environment.

We are planning on holding three more meetings with you and affected jurisdictions and agencies over the next 8 weeks as we work on development of the high-level bridge and Pacific Interchange option(s). The dates and general purpose of each meeting are listed below.

March 24 – 4:00-6:00 PM (you've already received an invitation to this meeting)

In progress briefing on potential Pacific Interchange configurations and high-level bridge layouts, including initial pros and cons of each; discuss other options/modifications that may work better

Week of April 25

Present Pacific Interchange geometrics and traffic analysis; review operational effectiveness, environmental effects, and cost data for high-level bridge options and interchange options; agree on changes to options, if any.

Week of May 9

Discuss outcome of screening workshop for all Seattle design options that may be carried into the Draft EIS.

As you know, we are delaying issuance of the Draft EIS in order to develop options to the 6-Lane Alternative that the communities on both sides of Lake Washington can support. However, given the years this project has been in process, we have an aggressive yet thorough schedule to review these new options and conduct environmental review. We appreciate your willingness to spend the time with us in the next two months to achieve that goal.

Sincerely,



Maureen J. Sullivan  
Project Director

MJS:lp

Enclosure

cc: Richard Conlin, Transportation Committee Chair, Seattle City Council  
Tim Ceis, Deputy Mayor, City of Seattle  
Anne Fiske Zuniga, Deputy Director, Seattle Dept. of Transportation  
David Allen, Project Manager, Seattle Dept. of Transportation  
Andrea Tull, Sound Transit  
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