



City of Seattle

Department of Neighborhoods

Bernie Matsuno, Acting Director

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

City of Seattle- University of Washington Community Advisory Committee (CUCAC)

Members

Matthew Fox (Co Chair)
Daniel Kraus (Co Chair)
Caroline Colon
Betty Swift
Kit O'Neill
Brett Frosaker
Eric Larson
Dave Eckert
Pat Cowen
Chris MacKenzie
Neal Lessenger
Matthew Stubbs
Heather Newman
Ashley Emery

Alternates

Chris Leman
Neal Wechsler
Tom Roth
Larry Sinnott
Brian Ramey
Ruedi Risler
Mark Holden

Ex-Officio Members

Cliff Louie - DON
Theresa Doherty - UW

CITY OF SEATTLE - UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting #81

October 10, 2006

(approved November 14, 2006)

Members Present

Daniel Kraus, UW Representative
Matthew Stubbs, Eastlake.
Eric Larson, Roosevelt NA
Matt Fox, University District CC
Neal Lessenger, UW-at-Large
Ashley Emery, UW Faculty

Kit O'Neill, Ravenna Springs
Greg Hill, Wallingford
Ruedi Risler, University Park CC
Brett Frosaker, Ravenna Bryant
Betty Swift, Portage Bay/Roanoke
Heather Newman, Laurelhurst CC

Staff Present

Cliff Louie, Department of Neighborhoods
Aaron Hoard, UW Regional Affairs

Others Present

Jan Arntz, UW Capital Projects
Russ Amick, Laurelhurst
Jennifer Young, WSDOT, SR 520 Jean

Ara Swanson, EnviroIssues
Michael Horntvedt, WSDOT, SR520
Jean Amick, Laurelhurst

I. Welcome, Introductions

Daniel Kraus, co-chair, convened the meeting at 7 PM. Committee members and the audience introduced themselves.

II. Review and Approval of September 12, 2006 Meeting Notes

On page 4, Matt Fox thought "revised," rather than "revisited" was the intent concerning the draft letter to be sent to WSDOT regarding the Pacific Street Interchange option for SR 520. It was noted that there were 2 abstentions on the voting measure to oppose the Pacific Street Interchange. Kit O'Neil thought Cliff Louie gave an incorrect attribution. She would provide that information to Cliff Louie. Neal Lessenger seconded the motion with the noted changes. Meeting notes were approved unanimously.

III. SR 520 – Draft Environmental Impact Statement

WSDOT brought copies of the Executive Summary of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement with two CDs, and the full DEIS for \$40. Handouts distributed were the Summer 2006 SR 520 brochure and fact sheet, and the revised cost estimates for the 3 options for the SR 520 replacement.

Michael Horntvedt of WSDOT used a PowerPoint presentation to help summarize the proposed options for replacing the aging SR 520 bridge. He asked people to allow him to finish the presentation, then he would take questions. Jennifer Young will highlight the environmental issues in the DEIS.

- He highlighted the three objectives for replacing the existing 520 bridge – improve safety by adding shoulders; increase the mobility of people and goods (adding HOV lane with the 6 lane alternatives); and avoid, minimize and/or mitigate impacts to the environment and neighborhoods. He quickly outlined the three replacement alternatives one 4 lane option, and two 6 lane options (the Pacific Street Interchange and a second Montlake bridge). The need to replace the existing 520 bridge is for two reasons: earthquakes, and wind and waves. He enumerated the six elements – bicycle and pedestrian path, sound walls, stormwater treatment, electronic toll, etc. - that will be included in all options. He explained the 6 lane design options offered for the Seattle side and Eastside.

A slide was shown to illustrate the effects of the 4 and 6 lane alternatives connecting to I-5 and the impact in the Portage Bay area. With the same options, the next slide illustrated the impacts from Portage Bay to Lake Washington. Michael provided details for the 4 and 6 lane alternatives. The 6 lane alternatives had a lid, whereas the 4 lane option did not. For the 6 lane option with a second Montlake bridge he spoke about the various design options – HOV lane, the lid, storm water facilities, bicycle/pedestrian path, sound walls, etc. The Montlake transit stop is removed.

With the Pacific Street Interchange option (6 lane alternative), the whole Montlake interchange function is moved to the east. And it is larger than the existing Montlake interchange. With this design WSDOT said it will “handle the demand that is out there today.” He provided details for the slide showing this option. The lid provides connectivity only in the Pacific Street Interchange, whereas in the second Montlake bridge the lid is only green space. Michael Horntvedt said that MOHAI (Museum of History and Industry) would be eliminated in all the options. Slides were shown of the existing Montlake area compared with the proposed 4 lane alternative concept design and the 6 lane option design. Another conceptual drawing showed the Pacific Street Interchange looking towards the Arboretum. He talked about the bicycle paths on the northside connecting to existing trails, to the University of Washington and the Burke-Gilman Trail, besides to Montlake neighborhood and to the Arboretum.

Jennifer Young spoke about the environmental portion of the DEIS. The DEIS examined and analyzed in detail 17 elements – water resources, ecosystems, land use and economics and relocation, geology and soils, air quality, hazardous materials, visual quality and aesthetics, navigation, noise, parks and recreation, transportation, indirect and cumulative effects, social, environmental justice, cultural and historic resources, energy, public service and utilities. Each is treated in their individual report totaling 3,700 pages. She also noted because of demand for public comment that the period was extended to October 31, 2006, and encouraged people to comment either by writing a letter or online on WSDOT’s website. She would only highlight six elements in the DEIS – water resources, ecosystems, land use, noise, parks and recreation and transportation – in tonight’s presentation.

She explained that currently stormwater is not treated. The new SR 520 will treat stormwater throughout the corridor. Jennifer Young give more details about how stormwater runoff will be treated before being discharged. The next two slides showed the effects of the alternatives on wetlands in Seattle, and how they will be buffered

with additional wetlands acreage. She also talked about shading from SR 520 that can inhibit plants from growing. The majority of the impacts are in the Arboretum, and Marsh and Foster islands. For noise analysis, it assumed the worst case scenario affecting 274 households under existing conditions. With the different alternatives when the sound walls are installed the number of affected households decrease. The next slide showed the impact on land use showing the structures and property that would be either eliminated for either the 4 or 6 lane base alternatives. There would be a home displaced just south of the Portage Bay Bridge, the Queen City Yacht Club and MOHAI would be eliminated, and some buildings owned by NOAA would be affected. Additional land use impacts were explained for the Pacific Street Interchange and the second Montlake Bridge. The next slide showed all the parks and recreation areas, and open spaces in the project area. The following slide showed how much acreage would be acquired depending on the various alternatives.

Michael Horntvedt explained the last topic, transportation, in the PowerPoint presentation. The first slide showed the number of vehicle and congestion according to the no build, the 4 lane and 6 lane alternatives in the year 2030. The decrease in daily vehicle trips for both the 4 and 6 lane alternatives was attributed to having a toll, and people making alternative modes of travel, i.e., public transit. He pointed out with the no build alternative both the congestion and daily vehicle trips are higher. With the next slide, the number of person trips for the no build (200,080) and the 4 lane option (198,630) are close, but with the 6 lane option, the number of people increases (228,900) because more people are taking alternative modes of transportation, namely public transit that is indicated in the following slide. The next three slides showed where there was severe and heavy congestion for the no build, 6 lane base and the Pacific interchange at key intersections in the adjacent neighborhoods.

With the revised cost estimate by the Expert Review Panel for the SR 520 alternatives, the most likely scenario was assumed versus the low (original) or the high estimates for the different options. The high cost represents risks such as missing dates, cost of materials increases, etc. The last slides showed the different funding sources and the timeline beginning with the publication of the DEIS on August 18 and the projected date in 2009 to advertise for construction.

Heather Newman asked if the estimated construction date is 2009 when would it end. Michael Horntvedt said it would be completed in 2020 for the 6 lane option. Betty Swift asked would it be legal to start charging tolls now. And her second question - why is there not a lid on the 4 lane option? Michael Horntvedt could not respond to charging tolls now, but there is a regional tolling committee that will set the policy for the State. WSDOT does not intend to construct a lid for the 4 lane alternative, only for the 6 lane options. Concerning the latter, WSDOT views the lid as an "enhancement" and not mitigation. Neal Lessenger asked if the lids were to be passive open space and would the lid be used for parking. The lid is passive open space and will not include parking, answered Michael Horntvedt.

Ruedi Risler was concerned because public transit has not been seriously thought of and that light rail is not being considered for any of the options. Michael Horntvedt maintained that with the pontoon design it could accommodate a wider lane if Sound Transit opted for a HOV lane. He also noted that Sound Transit wouldn't be able to run a rail line on the Pacific Street Interchange because of the elevation as it comes down toward Husky Stadium and the sharp angle of the turning radius. Neal Lessenger asked about the tax and whether it would be a sales tax or property tax. Matt Fox thought the tax would only affect King, Pierce and Snohomish counties. It was unclear of the source of the tax.

Kit O'Neil said with all the environmental discussion there was no mention of salmon migration when a lot of money is currently being devoted to salmon habitat restoration Jennifer Young noted it was not a topic that was included. However, with the Chinook salmon migration into Lake Washington, she mentioned that there will be less support columns in the water, but they will be wider and more widely spaced from each other and that will be better for the salmon. Jennifer Young thought there would be approximately 175 columns and they would be

250' on center. Presently there are 450 columns and they are 100' on center. She also added that they looked at decreasing the amount of shade by examining the height of the structure that generates shade. All these factors are being considered, especially for juvenile fish migrating. Betty Swift asked what the current height of 520 is. The height would depend on where the structure is, but the approximately average height is 20'.

Kit O'Neil expressed that she had more concern about the construction impacts for the Union Bay area since it is a convergent zone for migrating fish. Jennifer Young said that WSDOT is considering two large columns at either side of Union Bay (for the Pacific Interchange) and looking at various construction methods to reduce impact during construction for migrating fish. She spoke briefly about the various construction methods, and WSDOT will choose the one with the least disruption.

Daniel Kraus asked about one of the slides showing a shift (an increase) in mass transit as a result of implementing a toll. Michael Horntvedt said that their assumption is that most people would switch to a different mode of transportation, rather than change to a different corridor. Matt Fox challenged this assumption and asked what is the basis for this conclusion. He asked how people who live on the Eastside will get on their bus traveling westbound without building massive park and ride facilities. Matt Fox asked how many people did WSDOT survey to arrive at this conclusion of a massive shift to mass transit. Michael Horntvedt said WSDOT used a model employed by Puget Sound Regional Council to estimate this transportation mode shift. He also said it is a coordination issue with transit agencies and how they can modify their plans to facilitate this shift and apply for necessary funds to make it happen. Brett Frosaker asked what assumptions were used and who created them for this forecasting model. And what is the reliability rate? Michael Horntvedt said that transportation professional experts from around the world developed the model. He could not attest to its reliability. Matt Fox disputed this assumption by providing an example using this PSRG model, when the City's Comprehensive Plan projected a shift (a decrease) from SOV from 1994 to 2004 to mass transit. He stated it really has not shifted as projected.

Kit O'Neil asked about WSDOT's assumption of designing a structure to meet its demand. She contested this assumption that creating more lanes (SOVs) increases the volume citing Los Angeles as an example. A discussion ensued about congestion, traffic volumes, SOV and HOV lanes. Ashley Emery asked about the freeway bus stop at Montlake and if it is an option. The Montlake connection from 405 to 520 for going to UW or downtown is an option. If the Montlake transit stop is removed, then the option is removed for people to transfer to another bus. Therefore some added service must be included over 520 from the Eastside. If the Evergreen transit stop is removed, it just means that function must be consolidated somewhere.

Ashley Emery asked where these people/vehicles will end once they get off SR 520 when Montlake has two more lanes. Will they end up at University Village? Laurelhurst will be overrun with these vehicles. Michael Horntvedt explained that WSDOT looked at intersections beyond the exiting ramps and concluded with the extra lanes that congestion decreased from severe and heavy to little congestion when another lane is added at that signaled intersection. Traffic volume has increased, but congestion has decreased. Making a reference he emphasized that reducing regional congestion is not one of the goals for replacing SR 520. More discussion followed about increased traffic volume vis a vis congestion. Examples were given by CUCAC members about the current spillover effects of existing congestion.

Kit O'Neil asked for a clarification about the no build option. Does the no build allow for improving the structure, e.g., is there a way to widen the shoulders using the pontoons? My understanding of the life span of SR 520 Bridge is coming to an end, stated Michael Horntvedt, and he was not sure if WSDOT have re-inspected the bridge for prolonging its lifespan. Jennifer Young said that the bridge sinking in our lifetime is significant.

IV. Revisiting the CUCAC Letter Drafted at the September 12, 2006 Meeting

Matt Fox explained why "revised" was more appropriate than "revisited" because the fundamental position of opposing the Pacific Street Interchange has not changed. He suggested adding detail to the letter. He suggested reducing the shoulder width on the 6 lane options that is designed for 10' which will in turn reduce the foot print of that option. He compared that with the 4 lane alternative that has a 4' wide inside shoulder and a 10' wide outside shoulder.

Admitting she did not attend the last meeting, Betty Swift stated her position of favoring the 4 lane option with shoulders, and face the fact there will be congestion. A straw vote was taken at last meeting, since many community organizations had not yet taken a position, and Matt Fox offered to have another straw vote taken.

After a discussion of whether representatives at CUCAC meetings presented their community or spoke independently, Daniel Kraus proposed that CUCAC, as a group, act independently, and therefore be more effective, and have each community council state their own position independently. Neal Lessenger disagreed with this proposal. Aaron Hoard provided his thoughts about "revisiting" the drafted statement.

Kit O'Neil asked if the findings of the transportation consultant, who was hired by UW, to review the DEIS, could be shared with the group. Aaron Hoard mentioned that the consultants are still reviewing it, and seeking comments throughout the University. He highlighted some of the current findings from the summary of 35 pages, such as the economic impacts; the absence of any discussion of compensatory mitigation and their cost; neighborhood "cohesion," impacts to such communities as Montlake; and environmental concerns about the existing wetlands. Concerning the latter, it was thought that the old guidelines were being used regulating shoreline uses. There seemed a difference in text from the (executive) summary compared to the DEIS document that may lead to different conclusions. Another finding was the calculations of pollutants vary from agency to agency leading to difference in the level of pollutants. There was no mention of impacts to wildlife. Ruedi Risler asked if the University will be active in challenging the DEIS.

Bret Frosaker said the letter should be sent as it was drafted. At last month's meeting it was agreed that the majority were against the Pacific Street Interchange. Ruedi Risler said his community council (University Park) would approve of a 4 lane option or a 6 lane alternative if the 2 additional lanes were for transit only. Brett Frosaker said Ravenna Bryant does not have an official position. Greg Hill said the Wallingford Community Council would prefer 4 lanes that include transit lanes.

There was clarification whether a letter sent by CUCAC reflected the various community councils' sentiment or CUCAC itself. Daniel Kraus thought that if the letter was changed from opposing the Pacific Street Interchange to speaking about the 4 lane option, then a separate motion needs to be made. Brett Frosaker suggested doing another straw vote. Daniel Kraus stated his understanding of letters originating from here (CUCAC) represented this body, and not the individual community councils. Kit O'Neil clearly stated her position for supporting the 4 lane option with a lid. Daniel Kraus thought it would be difficult to craft a letter representing a consensus, since there are so many variations on different options, as already stated. Matt Fox stated that it seems authority given to community representatives, who sit on CUCAC, varies. Neal Lessenger suggested that if there was

agreement against the Pacific Interchange, then maybe the simple position would be to state a preference for the 4 lane option, thereby reducing the impact on the Montlake community. And there is not need to provide details. Then there was discussion of whether 4 lanes referred to its existing condition or new lanes.

Daniel Kraus asked for a straw vote to support a 4 lane option, oppose or abstain. With time running short, Matt Fox made a motion that CUCAC support a 4 lane approach. The motion was seconded by Neal Lessenger. A friendly amendment was also made by Matthew Stubbs to incorporate a lid as mitigation and that it should not be viewed as an enhancement. Daniel Kraus offered a clarification of the 4 lane approach. With the no build existing 4 lane option WSDOT is not going to build a lid, but with a new 4 lane option there could be a lid built as mitigation.

Matt Fox restated the motion with a friendly amendment that CUCAC opposes the Pacific Street Interchange, and supports a new 4 lane approach to replace the existing SR 520 with lids as mitigation not as enhancements. The motion was approved by nine (9) votes, with three (3) abstentions.

Matt Fox will draft the letter on behalf of CUCAC.

Meeting was adjourned at 9 PM.