

Coalition for a Sustainable SR 520

Madison Park.. North Capitol Hill..Montlake.. Laurelhurst. .Roanoke Park/Portage Bay. .Boating community

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12/8/09

COALITION OPPOSES LEGISLATIVE WORKGROUP'S SR-520 RECOMMENDATIONS

A coalition of all the westside communities that abut SR 520 said today it will oppose recommendations just released by the state's legislative workgroup for SR 520. The recommendations will "harm the city of Seattle and all state taxpayers," said Fran Conley, coordinator of the Coalition for a Sustainable SR 520.

"There is no financing plan," Conley said. "The majority report simply hopes that some funding from the state or the federal government will show up. Even with high tolls on both SR 520 and I-90, we expect at least a billion dollar shortfall. That's a lot of taxes to raise."

Representing Madison Park on the coalition, Maurice Cooper, veteran civil engineer, described the legislative workgroup's selection of Option A for the west side as "a choice that simply follows the preferences of the state department of transportation. Option A is very similar to the base-6 option which the community defeated several years ago. It is old thinking: just put concrete straight through the heart of a major residential and recreational area."

"This process has been a charade" said Ted Lane, representative of the Roanoke Park/Portage Bay community and consulting economist. "The state department of transportation has controlled the release of information, presenting only information favorable to its chosen option. For example: a comprehensive funding plan where all specific components are presented and add up to the total has not been made available. And the breakdown of costs into major areas often makes no sense – such as counting the cost of the Lake Washington high rise connecting the floating bridge to Medina as part of west side, Seattle costs."

Pointing out further examples of bias, North Capitol Hill representative Nancy Brainard noted that the majority report claims that Option A "has broad-based support from local communities" but fails to mention that every community that abuts SR 520 strongly opposes Option A and prefers putting a tunnel under the cut. In addition, the legislative workgroup's recommendation puts 7 lanes across Portage Bay, ignoring state law and Seattle city policy that call for no more than 6 lanes."

Representing Laurelhurst, business owner Colleen McAleer said, “Our coalition has worked for years to negotiate a 6-lane solution which does not harm the city. “We laid out simple elements which should have been in any plan. These elements have been ignored. For example: noise is a primary concern, and WSDOT convened an expert panel on noise, but there is no provision in the recommended design for any noise-abatement systems.”

Jonathan Dubman, representing the Montlake community, said, “Option A adds a second drawbridge across the Montlake cut that forever ruins the context of the beautiful landmark bridge already there. This second drawbridge removes homes, causes avoidable environmental impacts and fails to improve transit speed or reliability. It fails to improve mobility across the cut and overloads the intersections on either side. WSDOT’s own analysis predicts the volume of traffic able to cross the cut will not increase beyond what can cross it even if we do nothing at all.”

Representative of the boating community, business man Gary Stone adds, “Because Option A is so damaging to local residential areas and businesses, it in effect transfers public cost into private hands. “There is no benefit to the people of Seattle. Their streets will be so congested that total travel times will be slower, even if the actual time on 520 itself might be less. We must do better than this!”

Said Conley “It is now clear that the intention is to build a highway looking back into the 20th century instead of a transportation system for the 21st century, after years of working cooperatively with the state, all of our communities are now unalterably opposed to the current proposals. “