



November 21, 2009

Dear Neighbors,

Next week, the City Council will hold a hearing about 520 highway expansion.

Tuesday 11/24  
9:30 – 11:30 a.m.  
Seattle City Hall

We are asking you to attend that meeting, even though the date, two days before Thanksgiving, is difficult.

Here's why: a subgroup of the State Legislature has just recommended a 520 design that would do serious damage to our area. The recommendation will go to the City Council Tuesday. Most Council members are not up to speed on this issue, and might go along with the recommendation, unless they see significant citizen opposition.

If the Council sees strong citizen interest and unity, they can pressure the state to change its plans. The city can also withhold permits for construction.

#### **Why We Object to the State's Plans**

For some years, we have worked with a coalition of communities contiguous to the 520 highway. We have a strong working group, and all the members (Montlake, North Capitol Hill, Roanoke/Portage Bay, Madison Park, Laurelhurst and the boating community) oppose the State's recommendation.

We have tried to work with the state. We have developed criteria that would create the mandated 6-lane highway in a way that reduces damage to our area. We have embodied those criteria in a design with a tunnel under the cut, called Option K, later refined and called option M.

The State Legislative group, however, has completely ignored our concerns: noise, local traffic, visual pollution, excessive highway height, width and construction damage.

Instead they have stopped work on Option M and recommended a design called (ironically) Option A+, favored by the state Department of Transportation.

Option A+ fails to solve local or regional traffic and transit problems. Option A+ will add noise and impose visual blight. It creates a high, obtrusive highway from the east, a mammoth noisy interchange in Montlake, a second drawbridge over the Montlake cut, and 7 lanes (instead of 6) over Portage Bay. Rep. Frank Chopp and Rep Jamie Pedersen from the 43<sup>rd</sup> District have worked hard with us and opposed this choice, but the majority of the legislative group was from the east side and wanted a cheap road.

### **What We Favor**

We have no alternative now but to go into full opposition.

- We believe that A+ must not be built or begun.
- We also need to stop construction of the pontoon section of the floating bridge whose current design puts a 30' high concrete barrier across the lake.
- And as the State is far short of funding to actually build *any* plan, we recommend a safety fix to the current 4-lane highway, allowing time for us all to work together toward a true 520 solution.

### **Why and Where We Need Your Support**

Our strength is our unity, and we will have to demonstrate this to politicians in order to preserve our natural surroundings and livable neighborhoods.

The meeting at City Hall starts at 9:30 and should be done by 11:30. You do not need to speak, but if you would like a 2-minute speaking slot, come at 9:00 to sign up. The important thing is to show large visible citizen support. When our coalition's time to comment starts, we will ask all our supporters to rise so that the City Council can see and understand.

Here's a link to the meeting agenda:

[http://www.seattle.gov/council/agendasc/cow\\_520.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/council/agendasc/cow_520.pdf)

And here are directions to city hall:

<http://www.seattle.gov/html/citymap.htm>

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue!

Pegeen Shean, President

Nancy Brainard, Secretary and SR-520 Representative

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If you have more time on Tuesday, the State Legislative committee is also holding a public 520 hearing that evening.

Tuesday 11/24

6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Center for Urban Horticulture

3501 NE 41st Street Seattle, WA 98105

It would be good to be represented there, too, but the city council meeting is the most important.