

SR 520 'Rest of the West'

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Ross Tilghman, Vice Chair

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Commissioners Present

Shannon Loew, Chair
Ross Tilghman, Vice Chair
Lee Copeland
Ben de Rubertis
Laura Haddad
Theo Lim
John Savo

Commissioners Excused

Brodie Bain
Thaddeus Egging
Rachel Gleeson

Project Description

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is redeveloping the Seattle segment of the State Route (SR) 520 corridor between I-5 and Lake Washington. The redevelopment will include new bridges that meet current seismic standards, HOV capacity, updated roadways, new pedestrian and bicycle facilities, improved transit connections, open spaces, and enhanced non-motorized connections. Although the entire project is fully funded, funding for design and construction is spread across several biennia, and construction is anticipated to occur in three phases:

- Phase I – Includes the corridor spanning from Lake Washington to Montlake Blvd. This phase will include the design and construction of the Montlake lid, land bridge, and West Approach Bridge South (WABS).
- Phase II – Includes the planning, design, and construction of the Portage Bay Bridge, 10th and Delmar lid, and I-5 interchange.
- Phase III – Includes a second bascule bridge over the Montlake Cut.

The Seattle Design Commission (SDC) is providing advice to WSDOT on final design concepts related to Phase I of the corridor. This final design work will assist WSDOT in developing the Request for Proposals (RFP) for construction of Phase 1.

Meeting Summary

At this meeting, the SDC received an overview and update on the SR 520 Program, focusing on specific elements proposed in the phase I program. Following the presentation, comment, and deliberation, the SDC agreed to endorse elements of continuity and distinction proposed within the SR 520 'Rest of the West' program.

Recusals and Disclosures

Thaddeus Egging recused himself. He is an employee of KPFF, the engineering firm working on this project.

April 7, 2016

2:00 - 4:00 pm

Type

Major Project

Phase

Concept Design

Previous Reviews[02/04/16](#)**Project Team Present**

Lyle Bicknell, OPCD

Brianna Holan

LMN Architects

Kerry Pihlstrom, WSDOT

Osama Quotah

LMN Architects

Steven Van Dyck

LMN Architects

Attendees

Joe Basile

WSDOT Consultant

Kenan Block, Seattle Arch

Evan Chakroff

LMN Architects

Linnea Cook

LMN Architects

Bob Corwin, Seattle Arch

Allan Davis, Seattle Arch

Erin Doherty, DON

Candace Goodrich

WSDOT Consultant

David Graves, SPR

Todd Harrison, HDR

Adam Hunter

LMN Architects

David Jackson, COS

Rainer Metzger, Seattle Arch

John O'Neil, Seattle Prep

Norie Sato, WSDOT Consultant

Allan Seidenberg, Seattle Arch

Joan Stewart, Seattle Arch

Carl Sturood, PBRPCC

Kirk Wilcox, WSDOT

Connie Zimmerman, COS

April 7, 2016

Users and Destinations

Figure 1: Example of elements of continuity

Summary of Presentation

Kerry Pihlstrom, of WSDOT, and Osama Quotah and Steven Van Dyck, of LMN Architects, presented the project proposal. Kerry provided an overview of the presentation, which included a timeline, purpose, and description of the 'Rest of the West' project proposal. The project team continues to work with government agencies and community leaders throughout the planning and design processes.

Osama Quotah presented an overall vision for project, including elements of distinction and continuity, followed by conceptual development of pathways and lighting elements throughout located throughout phase I. The overall vision, "where nature meets the City", addresses integrating green spaces, planting, ecology, pathways, places and networks throughout the SR 520 corridor. The project includes elements of distinction such as urban trailheads, wayfinding design, outlooks, vehicular streets, and pathways. These elements are unique in their design in order to reflect the individual character of the surrounding neighborhoods. Elements of continuity are used to integrate, or knit together, connections throughout the entire corridor (see figure 1). These elements, which will vary from regional to neighborhood scale networks, will connect users with a variety of outlooks, trails, and recreational spaces.

Lighting will be integrated throughout the corridor at various scales to address vehicular needs along SR 520 and Montlake Boulevard, as well as pedestrian needs along neighborhood streets, shared pathways and pedestrian only pathways. Lighting elements includes a variety of vehicular and pedestrian poles, bollards, and lighted handrails (see figure 2). The corridor will also include highway signage along SR 520. Signage will provide regulatory, variable, and life safety messaging through a series of electronically controlled and static signs.

Walls will be used throughout the corridor to provide safety measures between vehicular and non-vehicular uses while enhancing the surrounding landscape. The project team has proposed a series of walls that will weather over time, serving as an area for small plants, grasses, and mosses to grow. Heavy landscaping will be used to screen concrete walls used as terraces between pedestrian and vehicular areas, while low-lying walls in pedestrian areas will be constructed out of natural materials such as wood and stone. See figure 3 for more detail.

The landbridge will include shared pathways, pedestrian scaled lighting, outlooks, and heavy landscaping. The design of the land bridge has continued to develop

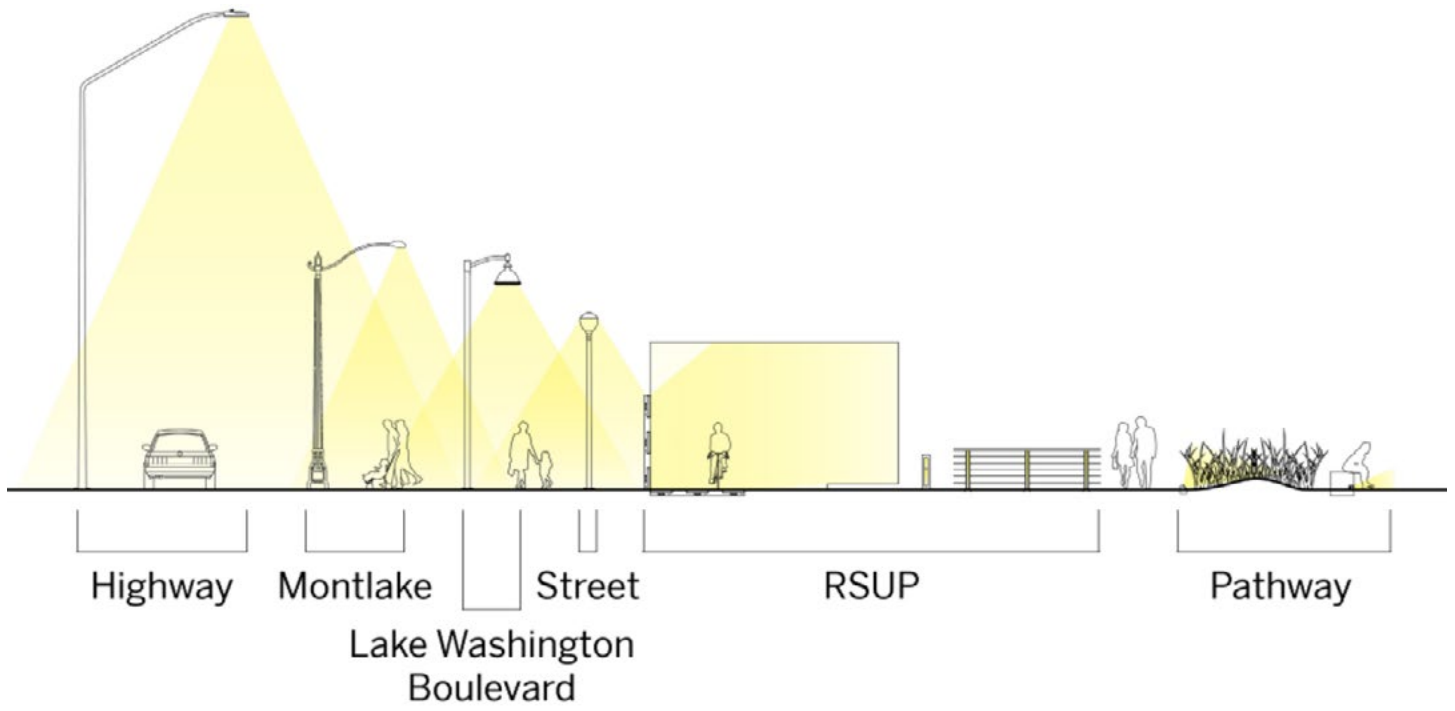


Figure 2: Proposed lighting elements

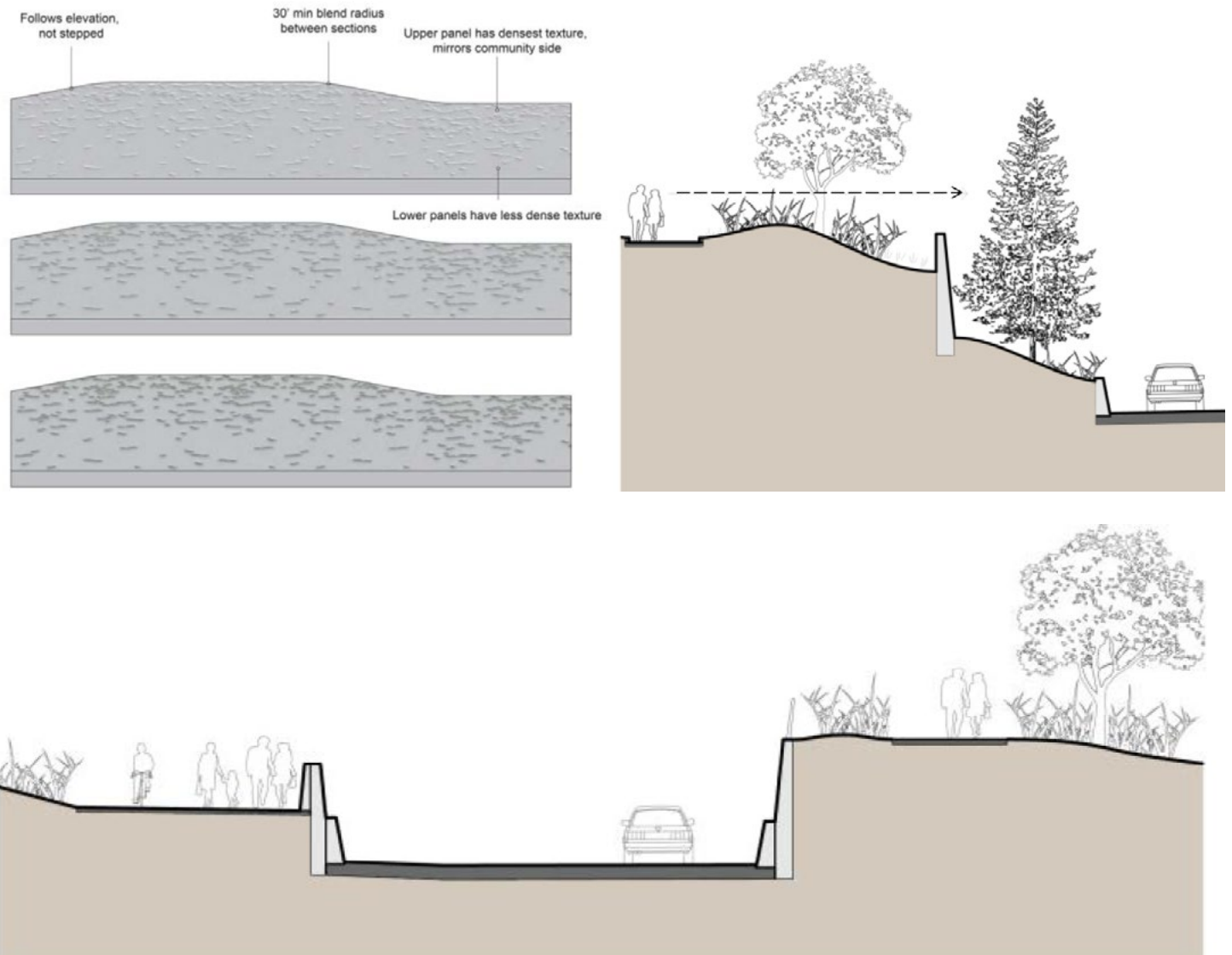


Figure 3: Examples of proposed wall design and placement

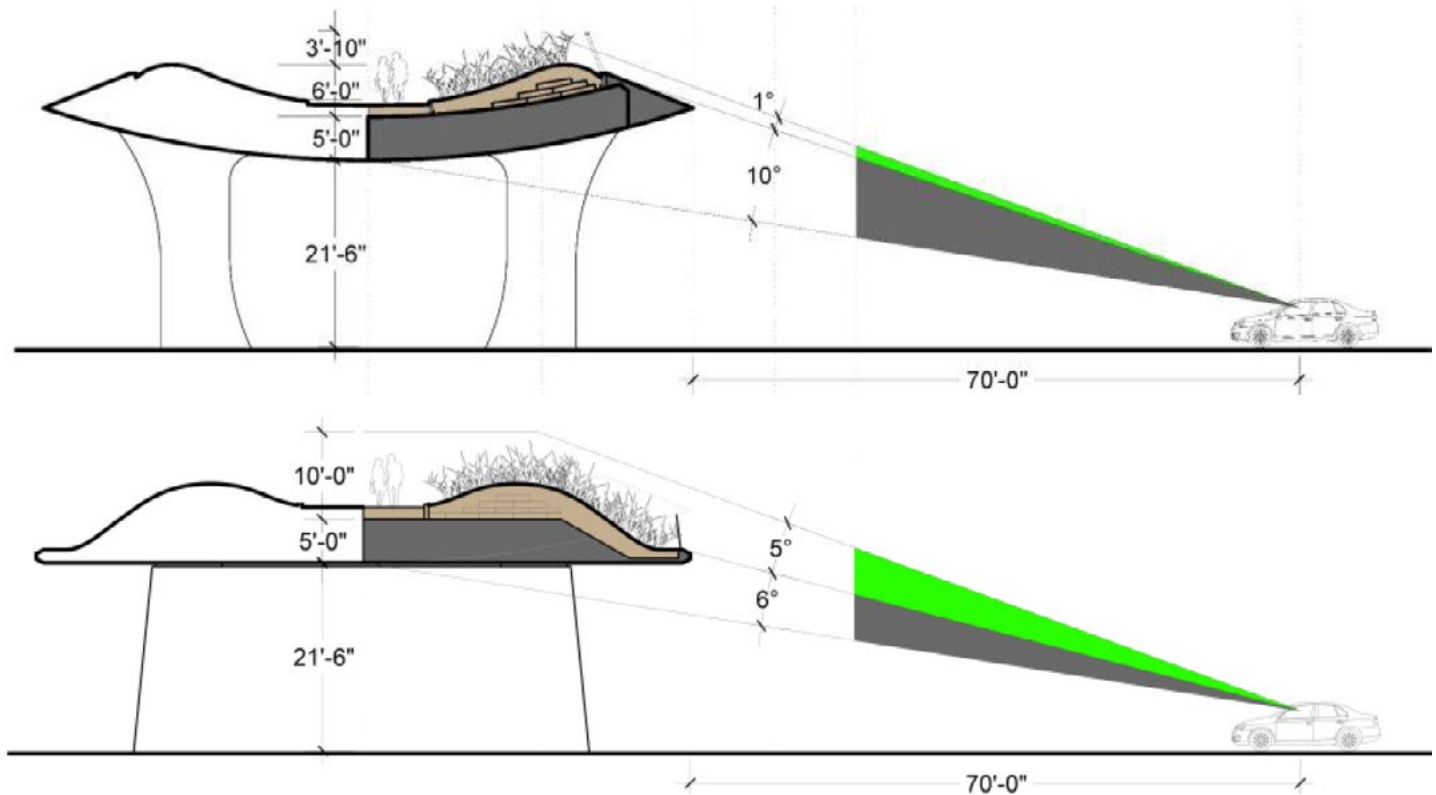


Figure 4: Previous landbridge design (top) and updated landbridge design (bottom)



Figure 5: View of landbridge from SR 520 - westbound

since the previous meeting. The original "saucer shaped" design provided limited views of the landscaping from the highway. The proposed design reversed the saucer design, allowing landscaping to blend into the edge of the landbridge while providing greater views from the highway. See figures 4 and 5 for more detail.

Agency Comments

None

Public Comments

Rainier Metzger, of Seattle Arch, stated that Seattle Arch presented a proposal for retaining a piece of the ramps to nowhere during a previous meeting. He then described a concept design for the proposal. Mr. Metzger mentioned that this ramp is literally the end of the road and is profound in the history of Seattle because it was a place where people came together in order to stand against the creation and expansion of a freeway system through several vulnerable neighborhoods. Mr. Metzger stated that the ramps are important history to leave behind, as a physical

remnant in order for this history remain present. Speaking for Seattle Arch, Mr. Metzger asked WSDOT and city staff to work with others in preserving this piece of history.

John O'Neil, of Seattle Prep, is concerned with pedestrian safety during the construction of phase of the project. He stated that although many issues regarding pedestrian safety are only temporary, they should not be brushed aside.

Summary of Discussion

Overall, the SDC supports WSDOT's concept of "nature meets city" for this segment of SR 520. The SDC supports this concept based, in part, on the variety of ways that WSDOT is implementing this concept through features like the landbridge (as a gateway and a regional connector), the lid, the transit hub and other key elements.

The SDC supports how the overall concept is being implemented into project details. The SDC appreciates and supports the design features and details, but also sees the need for additional design work to refine the "nature meets city" concept, including:

1. The integration of the landbridge with the surrounding corridor
2. The continuity of lighting types in the lid and pedestrian routes
3. How terraced landscaping is used to reduce vehicle noise
4. Continued ways to combine landscaping with concrete walls that soften those features and support plant growth

The SDC expressed agreement with design elements such as using terraced landscaping as a way to reduce vehicular acoustics, creating a garden experience along the land bridge, providing continuity in lighting types, and providing a tactile experience by combining the natural landscape with walls throughout the corridor.

The Commission encouraged the project team to begin thinking about creating bid documents. Specifically, commissioners want the team to clarify which elements will be explicitly defined within the documents. The SDC recommends the project team continue collaborating with the commission while drafting bid documents.

Action

The SDC endorses proposed elements of continuity and distinction presented during today's meeting. The Commission will continue to provide feedback to WSDOT throughout the planning and design of phase I.