

## SR 520 Health Impact Assessment recommendations:

### Construction Period Management

The SR 520 replacement is expected to require seven or more years to build. The construction period can produce detrimental health effects due to exhaust emissions, congestion, and longer travel times.

- 1) Reduce construction-related pollution
- 2) Increase traffic management
- 3) Provide for construction noise control

### Transit, Bicycling and Walking

More and better transit service, combined with bicycling and walking facilities, will provide multiple health benefits by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants and providing opportunities for more physical activity.

- 1) Increase and improve transit service to meet increased demand, attract more riders and reduce air pollution
- 2) Install connected walking and bicycling facilities throughout the corridor
- 3) Create a common wayfinding system in the corridor
- 4) Provide safe mobility on pedestrian and bicycling paths, and at transit stops and transfer points

### Landscaped Lids and Green Spaces

Proposed landscaped freeway lids and green spaces will reconnect neighborhoods, reduce noise, and support vegetation that contributes to better air quality.

- 1) Include six landscaped freeway lids that connect SR 520 communities
- 2) Use landscaping materials throughout the SR 520 corridor, along adjacent rails and roadways and at transit stops
- 3) Improve and preserve the integrity of the Washington Park Arboretum, and the ability of visitors to enjoy it and other green spaces and natural areas
- 4) Preserve access to the waterfront for water-related activities

### Design Features

A primary public annoyance with roadways is noise, which can be alleviated with available materials and good design. Art incorporated into transportation corridors can help enhance adjacent neighborhoods' visual character. Storm water management practices are an important strategy to reduce water pollution.

- 1) Reduce noise throughout the corridor
- 2) Add to the adjacent communities' visual character with art and design
- 3) Utilize innovative storm water management practices along the SR 520 corridor to reduce vehicular pollution from entering Lake Washington

### Project Guiding Principles:

- » Ensure health elements are integral to the project plan.
- » Support all recommendations in difficult budget times for optimal health benefits.



Kern Ewing

Inside spread photo credits:

(Top Center) Washington State Department of Transportation

(Far left) Unknown

(Center left) Complete the Streets

(Center right) Preliminary concept design for Metro's RapidRide Service to be implemented beginning in 2010

(Far right) © Stacy Levy, Watermap, 2004; Fannie Cox Center for Science, Math and Technology; Friends' Central School, Wynwood, PA

(Bottom left) Flickr: Alan Murray

(Bottom center) The Washington Park Arboretum: photoskye.com

(Bottom right) Alex Young, Return of the Salmon, 2008, Eastgate HOV Access at I-90, Washington State Department of Transportation

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# SR 520 Health Impact Assessment



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<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/ehs/hia.aspx>

  
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Public Health  
Seattle & King County

## A bridge to a healthier community

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## The Puget Sound region has a unique opportunity to build a transportation project that moves people efficiently throughout the region while helping to create healthy places to live, work and play.

### AN OPPORTUNITY OF A GENERATION

State Route (SR) 520 was constructed in 1963 with little attention to the health problems associated with car emissions, neighborhood disruption, and degradation of the natural environment. Less was known at the time about some of these problems, and transportation projects were defined in terms of their ability to move vehicles. Four decades of research has changed that. There is indisputable evidence that transportation projects have major

effects on the people who live near them and on their communities. That knowledge offers a chance to approach the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project (SR 520 Project) in a way that embraces the region's commitment to provide a healthy community for all people.

A well-designed transportation project can go beyond its primary purpose of moving motor vehicles by positively influencing the futures of communities and the health of their residents. It is critically important that transportation planners make decisions that ensure their projects enhance adjacent communities and support individuals in making healthy choices.

### TRANSPORTATION HAS CHANGED

The four-county Puget Sound region will gain two million people in the next 50 years. Roads alone cannot accommodate all these people. Besides, people are changing how they travel. Reports indicate they are buying more vehicles that use less fuel, are driving them shorter distances, and are relying more on alternatives such as transit, bicycling and walking. A successful transportation system takes into account these changes and does not focus solely on moving cars.

### DEFINING HEALTH HAS CHANGED

Just as transportation needs are much different today than they were in 1963, health concerns also have changed. Today, being in good health is viewed as a state of physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Research has shown that numerous factors influence individual health,



including the character of the communities in which people live. Seen in this broader context, the SR 520 Project can be designed to support alternatives to the automobile, to reduce emissions

that cause pollution, to create community connections, to provide amenities that improve mental well-being, and to contribute to a visually stimulating environment. All these actions help enhance individual health and contribute to healthy communities.



### HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUESTED BY GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE

In 2007, Governor Gregoire signed Senate Bill 6099, a legislative directive to resolve through mediation the impasse over choosing a safer, reliable replacement for the existing SR 520 Bridge. The directive also asked Public Health – Seattle & King County and the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency to conduct a health impact assessment of the SR 520 Project, focusing on air quality, green house gas emissions and other public health issues, with final recommendations to be incorporated into a Mediation Group's Final Project Impact Plan.

### WHAT IS A HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

A health impact assessment is a tool to help decision-makers recognize the health consequences of the decisions they make and provide a healthier living environment. It is much like an environmental impact statement, but it focuses on the



potential effects of a decision on the health of the population and the distribution of those effects within the population.

The SR 520 Health Impact Assessment report is the latest in a series of coordination, collaboration, and partnership efforts to successfully complete the SR 520 Project. The measures it recommends will require continued coordination, collaboration and partnerships among Washington Department of Transportation, Sound Transit, the King County Department of Transportation, the University of Washington and the City of Seattle.

### A TOOLBOX OF STRATEGIES

The SR 520 Health Impact Assessment report recommends elements for creating healthy communities in the SR 520 corridor, including landscaped lids and green spaces, transit improvements, pedestrian and bicycling amenities, design improvements and noise reduction strategies. Many of these recommendations also appear in the SR 520 Draft Environmental Impact Statement published in August 2006.

The Health Impact Assessment report addresses the three alternatives being considered for the SR 520 Project, all of which incorporate the four single occupancy vehicle lanes and two high occupancy vehicle lanes configuration mandated by the Legislature. The report does not choose among the three alternatives. However, to protect and enhance community health, decision-makers should select the alternative that can most effectively and efficiently incorporate all recommended project features into its design.

