



Legislation Text

File #: 2009-0610, **Version:** 2

Clerk 11/23/2009

A MOTION expressing King County's support for a preferred design of the State Route 520 bridge replacement and high-occupancy vehicle program.

WHEREAS, the State Route 520 bridge is a vital transportation corridor between job centers and growing communities around Lake Washington, carrying about one hundred fifty-five thousand people per day, and

WHEREAS, the State Route 520 bridge is heavily congested during morning and afternoon commute times, carrying twice as many vehicles as it was originally planned to, and

WHEREAS, the State Route 520 bridge was built in the early 1960s, without the benefit of modern design and safety standards, and the structure's age and condition make it vulnerable to seismic events or windstorms, and

WHEREAS, the state and the region have been studying the potential replacement of the State Route 520 bridge for several years and have identified State Route 520 bridge replacement and high-occupancy vehicle ("HOV") program options to replace the existing floating bridge, enhance safety and provide transit and roadway improvements throughout the corridor, with a total cost capped at four billion six hundred fifty million dollars, and

WHEREAS, the eastside transit and HOV project design components of the State Route 520 bridge replacement and HOV program have been agreed upon and are ready to move forward, and

WHEREAS, in 2009 the state Legislature created the State Route 520 Legislative Workgroup to recommend a preferred westside design option to the Legislature by December 2009, and

WHEREAS, five westside design options are currently under consideration by the legislative workgroup, and

WHEREAS, the impact on transit operations of the westside design options should be highlighted for the legislative workgroup's consideration, and

WHEREAS, King County Metro transit service will play a key role in accommodating future growth and demand in the State Route 520 corridor, and this service is crucial to making the new bridge and HOV program work for the communities on both sides of the lake both now and in the future, and

WHEREAS, the state Legislature recently provided King County with the authority to levy a property tax that would support expanded transit service in the State Route 520 corridor as envisioned in the federal urban partnership, which will help meet growing demand for transit service in the corridor. The metropolitan King County council, as part of its 2010-2011 biennial transit budget deliberations, has levied this property tax in a tax-neutral manner, and

WHEREAS, all of the westside design options include the removal of the Montlake freeway bus station, which will adversely affect capacity through the corridor unless an estimated three to five million dollars annually is provided to offset this loss, and

WHEREAS, the King County department of transportation stated its preference, at an October 8, 2009, State Route 520 Legislative workgroup meeting, for option A with specific suboptions as the best means of meeting the transit design needs, and

WHEREAS, the cost estimate for westside design option A with suboptions most closely aligns with the total program cost identified by the state in comparison to all the other design options, and

WHEREAS, it is in the county's best interests if the legislative workgroup recommends an option that meets the needs of transit now so that the project can move forward on schedule without further delay and allow for a final decision on westside design options by the state Legislature in 2010, and

WHEREAS, the SR 520 Legislative Workgroup on November 17 recommended that the A+ Hybrid

Option be advanced for review in the supplemental draft environmental impact statement, and

WHEREAS, the Eastside Transportation Partnership has expressed support for this proposed motion and the A+ Hybrid Option;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. King County supports a State Route 520 bridge replacement and HOV program design that is most affordable and includes the following transit design components for the westside:

1. An eastbound and westbound HOV direct access ramp such as included in the option currently defined as the A+ hybrid;
2. Bus layover space, passenger facilities and transit priority in the Montlake triangle and bridge area in the vicinity of Husky Stadium;
3. Lake Washington Boulevard ramps to the eastbound State Route 520 and from westbound State Route 520;
4. An eastside bus station designed to accommodate buses passing each other; and
5. Compensation to King County Metro in the form of an ongoing operating subsidy for the loss of direct service to the University District with the removal of the Montlake Freeway bus station.

B. King County supports the A+ Hybrid option because of its compliance with cost and transit connectivity requirements, and ability to improve overall mobility in the region.