

Online Comment by User: Travel Analysis

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Comment Category: General Comments

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Comment:

SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project
Draft Environmental Impact Statement Review
Comments by Ruth Decker and Christie Vintilo
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Transportation Data Office (TDO), Travel Analysis Branch

We reviewed the DEIS for the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project (dated August 18, 2006) and it's accompanying appendices.

The Transportation Discipline Report (Appendix R dated June 9, 2005), Travel Forecasting Analysis Results Technical Memorandum (Attachment 1 to Appendix R, dated May 17, 2004), and Addendum to Transportation Discipline Report (dated February 13, 2006) were reviewed in depth. We have the following comments.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

I-0940-001

Page 4-2, "How is traffic in the SR 520 corridor predicted to grow?," first paragraph "On a daily basis, 127,000 vehicles would cross the lake, compared to 113,300 now." This is an approximate straight line growth rate of 5% per year which seems excessive when applied to each of 26 years. Over-assumption of growth is likely to result in over-estimation of alternative traffic options, in under use of facilities built specifically to accommodate the alternative options, and in waste of funds by over-building for the alternative traffic options. Five percent annual growth is much higher than the historical growth of between 0.4% and 3.0% determined from TDO permanent counters in the general area of the project. While SR 520 traffic may have grown at 9% per year between 1976 and 1984, growth on SR 520 has been relatively static since then.

Transportation Discipline Report - Appendix R

I-0940-002

Exhibits 3-9 and 3-10. (Also, "Reading the Pie Charts" on page 3-22.) There are four colors (blue, violet, tan, and yellow) in the pie charts under "Mode choice," but the legend shows only three (blue, violet, and yellow). Should there be a legend for the tan, or should the yellow HOV be tan and labeled carpool?

Page 9-12, Exhibit 9-5 "Summary of Effects of Truck Traffic on Eastside."

I-0940-001

Comment Summary:

Methodology (Freeway)

Response:

See Section 5.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-0940-002

Comment Summary:

Format and Content

Response:

See Section 23.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-0940-003 | In the section under the Evergreen Point Bridge, under the "Notes" heading, it states, "... it is assumed that all materials would be manufactured offsite, floated in and assembled." While major components may come in that way, it seems unreasonable to assume that the absolute all materials will be floated in and none, whatsoever, will come in on a truck.

I-0940-004 | Page 10-8, second paragraph under "Cross-Lake Travel Demand Statement: "... capacity improvements, in combination with tolling on the Evergreen Point Bridge, would encourage cross-lake trips to remain on the Eastside." Need to clarify what is meant here. How can a cross-lake trip remain on one side?

Addendum to Transportation Discipline Report

I-0940-005 | Page 3-15. Second to last sentence before "P.M. Peak Period." The sentence says, "Traffic volume would change ... which is insubstantial relative to the total volume on the freeway." "Insubstantial" means imaginary, flimsy, or delicate, and is not the appropriate word here. Perhaps the word should be "insignificant" or "minimal."

Travel Forecasting Analysis Results Technical Memorandum

I-0940-006 | Page 18. Second paragraph below bullets. This section indicates "significant shifts from low-occupancy modes to 3+-person carpools and transit." Similar findings are found throughout the DEIS and appendices. We were unable to find anything in the DEIS or discipline report/addendum that explained how the percentage of mode shifts was determined. As this document explains the origins and methodologies used to come up with projections used throughout the DEIS, we expected to find an explanation somewhere in this technical memorandum. Why is it assumed, for instance, that the percentage of non-transit vehicles will decrease "from about 81 percent in 1998 to about 77 percent in 2030?" Surely someone didn't just make up those numbers. Was there a previous study (or several studies) of similar situations that gave a basis for those assumptions? Something should be cited to support the assumptions about how the mode-shift figures were determined throughout the EIS.

I-0940-007 | Page 26-29, Table 8. It is not clear what "commercial" refers to. Does it include taxis? buses? heavy trucks? all of these? It should be defined.

I-0940-008 | Page 30, last sentence before heading 4.2.4. The report states, "This probably indicates that the parallel facilities..." To state that the volumes shown "probably indicates" something is to imply that we are not sure why the model gave those results, but we will blindly believe the results we get are correct. We feel the wording, "This suggests that..." might better convey the intent than does the current wording.

I-0940-003

Comment Summary:

Schedule

Response:

See Section 4.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-0940-004

Comment Summary:

Methodology (Freeway)

Response:

See Section 5.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-0940-005

Comment Summary:

Format and Content

Response:

See Section 23.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-0940-006

Comment Summary:

Methodology (Freeway)

Response:

See Section 5.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-0940-007

Comment Summary:

Freeway Operations (I-5 Area)

Response:

See Section 5.2 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-0940-008

Comment Summary:

Format and Content

Response:

See Section 23.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.