

June 18, 2019

LTR PR0697

Mr. Nathan Torgelson, Director
Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections
700 5th Avenue, Suite 2000
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Dear Mr. Torgelson,

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is submitting the attached application for a Major Public Project Construction Noise Variance (MPPCNV) for the SR 520/I-5 Express Lanes Connection Project (SR 520/I-5 Project). WSDOT has been working with Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections (SDCI) staff while preparing this application to include the necessary information.

SR 520/I-5 Express Lanes Connection Project Overview

WSDOT anticipates that construction on the SR 520/I-5 Project will begin in 2020 and last approximately three years. As described in the attached MPPCNV application, key project elements of the SR 520/I-5 Project include:

- A new, reversible transit/HOV connection between SR 520 and the I-5 express lanes;
- Restriped I-5 express lanes that retain the four existing lanes while adding a reversible transit/HOV lane between the I-5/SR 520 interchange and Mercer Street; and
- A modified, reversible transit/HOV ramp between the I-5 express lanes and Mercer Street.

The new SR 520/I-5 reversible transit/HOV connection will carry transit/HOV vehicles from westbound SR 520 to the southbound I-5 express lanes during the a.m. peak hours, and transit/HOV vehicles from the northbound I-5 express lanes to eastbound SR 520 during the p.m. peak hours.

Need for Nighttime Construction

WSDOT is requesting a three-year nighttime construction noise variance for the SR 520/I-5 Project. Nighttime construction work is required for three key reasons:

1. Provide a safe work environment for the contractor and traveling public during construction;
2. Avoid further exacerbating existing congestion on SR 520, I-5 and the Mercer Street corridor;
and
3. Minimize the economic cost to taxpayers and the region caused by extended project duration and significant daytime traffic impacts.

WSDOT is requesting an MPPCNV that would set an hourly average nighttime noise limit of six decibels higher than existing conditions. These limits would vary throughout the project area, based on current hourly average nighttime noise levels. The limits requested by WSDOT are consistent with variances that have previously been issued by SDCI.

Noise Monitoring and Compliance

As part of the MPPCNV, WSDOT has prepared a Noise Management and Mitigation Plan (NMMP), included in the application. WSDOT's plan indicates the means and methods the contractor will use to meet the noise limits requested in WSDOT's application.

During construction, WSDOT will provide an on-site independent noise monitor (noise inspector) who will report any noise complaints or non-compliance events directly to SDCI. WSDOT will also continue to deploy our comprehensive and ongoing public involvement program, including providing a 24-hour staffed construction hotline.

Working with the Community

WSDOT understands that construction, particularly nighttime construction, is difficult for nearby neighbors. To make sure that neighbors are aware of this process and the opportunities to participate, WSDOT hosted a public meeting on May 29, 2019, to share information about the SR 520/I-5 Project, anticipated nighttime construction activities and requested noise limits.

In addition, WSDOT will continue to share information with the public through our ongoing public engagement effort. This includes launching a process later this year to gather feedback on the SR 520/I-5 Project Community Construction Management Plan (CCMP). This document will identify the best practices for avoiding, minimizing, and/or mitigating the effects of construction on local communities and historic properties, and covers topics such as noise, vibrations, construction haul routes, and dust. We will continue to utilize the SR 520 Program website and the Rest of the West news email updates to keep the community informed of the MPPCNV application process. Additionally, the SR 520 Program Ombudsman continues to serve as a liaison between our project leadership and the community to address citizens' concerns.

Next Steps for the MPPCNV

WSDOT looks forward to participating in SDCI's public meeting and to staying coordinated with SDCI during the minimum 14-day public comment period, which will launch once WSDOT's application is published on SDCI's website this month.

WSDOT appreciates SDCI's ongoing coordination throughout the SR 520 Program, including this noise variance application process. We look forward to continuing our work together as WSDOT moves into the next phase of delivery of this regional safety and mobility project.

Sincerely,

Denise Cieri, PE
SR 520 Program Administrator
Washington State Department of Transportation

Attachments:

1. June 18, 2019 SR 520 / I-5 Express Lanes Connection Project MPPCNV application

Nathan Torgelson, Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

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Cc:

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James Dasher, Lead - Noise Control Specialist, SDCI

Jonathan Layzer, Interagency Programs Division Director, SDOT

Julie Meredith, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Megaprograms, WSDOT

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