

CITY OF SEATTLE
RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION relating to the State Route 520, Interstate 5 to Medina Bridge Replacement and High Occupancy Vehicle Project; recognizing the completion of a technical report on the conditions under which the Washington State Department of Transportation should consider building a second bascule bridge over the Montlake Cut, and making recommendations on actions to be taken by the State and the City based on the findings of the report.

WHEREAS, in an April 2010 letter to the Governor of Washington and the Secretary of the State Department of Transportation, the City Council stated its reservations about the potential construction of a second Montlake bascule bridge; asked the State to phase the decision on construction of this bridge and test measures to eliminate the need for the bridge; stated that the Council would consider supporting the construction of this bridge only if the bridge would be used to provide dedicated capacity for high occupancy vehicles, transit, bicyclists and pedestrians; and stated that the Council did not support the creation of additional roadway capacity along Montlake Boulevard for single occupant vehicles and other general purpose traffic; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 123733, passed in October 2011, authorized execution of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the State of Washington and the City of Seattle related to the State Route (SR) 520, Interstate 5 to Medina Bridge Replacement and High Occupancy Vehicle Project, and that MOU was executed; and

WHEREAS, the MOU stated the intent of the State and the City to collaborate in deciding whether and when to build a second Montlake bascule bridge, taking into consideration transit travel time, reliability and passenger delay, levels of service for pedestrians and bicycles, SR 520 mainline operations and other appropriate factors; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to that provision of the MOU the State and the City convened a technical workgroup, also involving King County Metro Transit, to conduct a detailed inquiry into the present and expected future performance of the transportation system in the vicinity of the existing Montlake Bridge related to those considerations and to identify triggers for levels of performance that could be used to analyze the need to build a second bridge; and

WHEREAS, those discussions have yielded a technical report titled Establishment of Triggers, Second Montlake Bridge Workgroup that set thresholds for levels of performance in pedestrian and bicycle mobility, transit speed and reliability and SR 520 mainline operations that would trigger consideration of the construction of a second bridge; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Highway Administration, the Washington State Department of Transportation, King County Metro, Sound Transit, and the University of Washington have reviewed the technical report and concur with the findings;

NOW, THEREFORE,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE
MAYOR CONCURRING, THAT:**

Section 1. The main findings of the technical report titled Establishment of Triggers, Second Montlake Bridge Workgroup are these:

A. Current levels of service for bicyclists and pedestrians over the existing Montlake Bridge approach, and at times exceed, thresholds defined as adequate by current City policy and triggers for action identified in the technical report. In the future, the poor conditions are likely to increase. This indicates that action within the next five years is appropriate to address the capacity limitation for pedestrian and bicycles on the current bridge.

B. Current transit operating conditions in the 2.5 mile corridor containing the Montlake Bridge either approach or fail to meet the City's standards for transit travel time and reliability adopted in the Seattle Transit Master Plan. However, the bridge is only one potential source of delay in the corridor and is not the primary factor in creating transit delay or increasing transit time. ~~It appears that a second Montlake Bridge would have little impact in addressing current adverse transit operating conditions in the corridor, but that other potential transit projects in the corridor (such as queue jumps and dedicated bus lanes) may improve conditions.~~ The report also indicates that future conditions, such as the implementation of light rail transit in the SR 520 corridor, could affect how people travel, indicating the need for continued monitoring of travel conditions into the future.

C. Mainline operations on SR 520 are affected by the Montlake Bridge only when the bridge opens for marine traffic and queues form on SR 520 off-ramps. Since the bridge does not open during peak hours, it does not affect mainline operations during those times. Because a

second bridge would open for marine traffic simultaneously, it would improve these conditions only marginally.

Section 2. Based on a review of the technical report the City requests and recommends the following actions:

A. Notwithstanding the importance of generally improving levels of transportation performance for bicyclists and pedestrians in the city, the improvements in these made by a second Montlake bridge are unlikely to yield benefits that justify the cost and environmental impact of a bridge that would be used primarily by autos and other vehicles. The development of the City's Bicycle Master Plan, currently in process, is the appropriate forum for developing more cost-effective options to improve service for bicyclists and pedestrians over the Montlake Cut. The City requests that the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) working with the Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board develop options for consideration in the Bicycle Master Plan and develop and implement improved methods of monitoring transportation performance for bicyclists and pedestrians in the vicinity of the Montlake Bridge so that the Bicycle Master Plan will be well informed.

B. Consistent with the City's Transit Master Plan, improving transit reliability and travel time in the 2.5 mile corridor including the Montlake Bridge is a high priority. It appears that a second Montlake Bridge would have little impact in addressing current adverse transit operating conditions in the corridor, but that other potential transit projects in the corridor (such as queue jumps and dedicated bus lanes) may improve conditions and be more cost effective than constructing a second Montlake Bridge. ~~The technical report, however, does not suggest that a second Montlake bridge would significantly improve conditions for transit or be a cost effective means of making such improvements.~~ The City requests that SDOT work with King County Metro and WSDOT to identify and implement other improvements in the corridor and monitor

1 the effects of these improvements. The City recommends that the State consider funding these
2 transit improvements in the corridor as soon as is practical.

3 C. It is likely that the benefits of any improvements in mainline SR 520 operations from a
4 second Montlake bridge would be small in comparison to the cost and impact of a second bridge.
5 In addition, many other changes related to SR 520, including roadway infrastructure
6 improvements, reconstruction of the Montlake interchange, tolling on SR 520, the
7 implementation of Sound Transit Link projects and improved cross-lake transit service, are likely
8 to impact traffic volume and flow in the Montlake area, making the benefits of a second bridge to
9 mainline SR 520 operations uncertain. The City requests that SDOT cooperate with the State in
10 monitoring the effect of bridge openings on mainline SR 520 operations and determining
11 whether these bridge openings meet the trigger defined in the technical report once these other
12 changes have been made.

13 D. Taking current bicycle, pedestrian, and transit performance and mainline SR520
14 operations into account, it is likely that a second Montlake bascule bridge would not deliver
15 benefits (particularly to pedestrian, bicycle, and bus transit mobility) that justify its cost and
16 impact. It is also likely that equal or greater improvements in performance for bicyclists,
17 pedestrians and transit customers could be otherwise delivered at lower cost. Accordingly, the
18 City's recommendation to WSDOT and the State Legislature is that a second Montlake bascule
19 bridge not be constructed within the foreseeable future. WSDOT and SDOT should continue to
20 monitor the triggers identified and recommended in the technical report titled Establishment of
21 Triggers, Second Montlake Bridge workgroup, to ascertain if a second bridge would be
22 warranted at some future date based on changes in conditions including, but not limited to,
23 consideration of light rail transit in the SR 520 corridor. If changed conditions suggest that
24 constructing a second Montlake Bridge should be considered, then a joint-decision making
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process between the City and the State should be established that includes opportunities for
community and neighborhood outreach and input.

Adopted by the City Council the ____ day of _____, 2012, and
signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day
of _____, 2012.

President _____ of the City Council

THE MAYOR CONCURRING:

Michael McGinn, Mayor

Filed by me this ____ day of _____, 2012.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)