

WSDOT begins SR 520 Pontoon Fieldwork at Port of Olympia

Local News

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) crews have started fieldwork to see if the Port of Olympia is a viable location for building pontoons and anchors for a new, safer State Route 520 floating bridge that will open to drivers in 2014. Crews recently completed two weeks of similar work at the Port of Tacoma. The work will take up to 20 days to complete in Olympia. Crews will drill seven borings measuring up to 120 feet deep, including three groundwater observation wells, and conduct other soil tests. WSDOT needs 77 total pontoons in various sizes for the new six-lane floating bridge. Crews are scheduled to begin construction of a [casting basin in Grays Harbor](#) in spring 2011 for the initial 33 pontoons. The fieldwork under way will help to determine if the ports of Olympia and Tacoma could be used to build some of the remaining 44 pontoons. WSDOT has also identified the Concrete Technology Corporation site in Tacoma, in addition to the Grays Harbor site, as potential pontoon construction locations.

“Having the port properties as optional sites gives contractors more flexibility for building all the pontoons we need to open the bridge in 2014,” said SR 520 Program Director Julie Meredith. Earlier this year, WSDOT awarded a \$367 million contract to Kiewit-General Joint Venture to build a casting facility and 33 pontoons in Grays Harbor. These 33 pontoons will either be used for emergency replacement of the current four-lane floating bridge or will be stored until needed for a new six-lane bridge. The Grays Harbor facility will not have enough capacity to build all 77 of the pontoons needed for the entire six-lane floating bridge. In August, WSDOT launched its search for qualified design-build teams to build the new six-lane floating bridge, including production of the remaining 44 pontoons. The floating bridge project is estimated to be valued at \$700 million to \$900 million and proposals are due next year. As part of the proposal process, WSDOT will make feasible pontoon construction sites available to the contractor teams, including the Grays Harbor, Concrete Technology Corporation and ports of Tacoma and Olympia sites. The state Legislature set the SR 520 program budget at \$4.65 billion for improvements from I-5 in Seattle to SR 202 in Redmond. Toll revenue and state and federal funds provide about \$2.37 billion for the SR 520 improvements. WSDOT will continue working with the state Legislature to identify additional funding to complete improvements in the corridor. More information about the SR 520 Program is available at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/sr520/pontoons>>
www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/sr520bridge.