

AWV Draft EIS Comment Form Results:

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Would like to be added to the project mailing list?

Yes

Project Comments:

I-049-001 I'm in favor of a limited-lane surface road alternative because it best meets the needs of the area in question: the waterfront. A rebuild or tunnel addresses the question of how to get through Seattle without dealing with the I-5 bottleneck, which has nothing to do with the waterfront, its relationship to the city, and how its integration with the city might become more fruitful for all concerned. Given that the disruption to the current traffic pattern is inevitable and long-term, we don't need to consider "replacing" the current traffic pattern with this proposal. It will obviously have to go somewhere during construction, and our efforts might be better spent managing where else traffic will go, and planning capacity extension along multiple avenues. You only have to visit the Embarcadero in San Francisco to see how successful a surface road alternative can be at satisfying the needs of various transportation constituencies without looking like a multi-lane freeway. Restricted-speed surface roads allow for into-city transport of freight, tourist traffic, and local circulation. They quite helpfully deter anyone looking for a speedy shortcut through the city, and create a calmer traffic pattern. They are easily integrated with our existing public transit system, and may even allow the expansion of the Waterfront Streetcar Line. Most importantly, they don't challenge current transportation behavior in inviting a waterfront experience rather than helping you bypass it entirely. The question of where existing traffic will go (and the larger question of how to get through or past Seattle) is really a separate issue, though a burning question in its own right. But let's try to solve that question by asking if it was ever a good idea to create a major secondary route through the heart of the city? There are a nexus of constituencies that were being served suboptimally by the existing structure. But it's not necessary to serve them all through a single replacement structure, and probably is not advisable. The city is planning at great expense to link parts of the city by light rail and (god forbid) Monorail; hopefully the city is considering the fact that public transit might serve a greater need than anticipated. Freight traffic to and from the waterfront belongs on freeways and again, rail options might prove a viable alternative. What it comes down to is making a choice about which question you want to solve: that of the region's transportation issues (which is not solvable with any single structure), or how to help residents live in their city?

Comments apply to:
Surface Alternative

I-049-001

Many people asked the lead agencies to consider an alternative that would remove the viaduct and replace it with a four-lane surface roadway along Alaskan Way and include transit improvements. Without a host of improvements and modifications, a four-lane Alaskan Way would create even more congestion on I-5 and downtown streets than the alternatives evaluated in the Draft and Supplemental Draft EISs. Transportation studies performed for this project indicate that replacing the viaduct with a four-lane surface street would substantially increase congestion for most of the day and part of the evening on I-5 through downtown Seattle, downtown streets, and Alaskan Way. On downtown streets, traffic would increase by 30 percent; though traffic increases to specific areas like Pioneer Square and the waterfront could exceed 30 percent. With a four-lane roadway, traffic on Alaskan Way would quadruple to 35,000 to 56,000 vehicles per day compared to about 10,000 vehicles today. This traffic increase would make Alaskan Way the busiest street downtown, carrying more traffic than Mercer Street does today. The increased traffic congestion would also make travel times worse for buses, making transit improvements along these streets largely ineffective. Finally, neighborhoods west of I-5 (Ballard, Queen Anne, Magnolia, and West Seattle) would be less accessible and would face longer commute times.