

AWV Draft EIS Comment Form Results:

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Would like to be added to the project mailing list?

Yes

Project Comments:

I-050-001

I-050-002

I believe that the Alaskan Way Viaduct should be the Washington State Department of Transportation's highest priority project. Thank you for undertaking this important work, and providing an opportunity for the region's citizens to shape the direction of this project, which will have a long-lasting impact on the quality of life of the City of Seattle. This is a rare opportunity to reclaim a critically important part of downtown Seattle, and to reconnect the city to the waterfront. Unfortunately, all of the alternatives seem to treat Seattle's Central Waterfront as simply a linear, north-south corridor through which to move as many vehicles as possible. While there is some discussion of improved views with the removal of the aerial structure, none of the alternatives adequately address the urban design aspects of the project, or treat the waterfront area itself as an important amenity for the city, the region, or indeed the entire state. This is seen in the answers to the questions "How would the alternative change access?" "How would the alternative change bicycle access?" and "How would the alternative change pedestrian access?" Answers to the first question only describe vehicle access to the facility (be it tunnel, aerial structure, or surface alignment) from the north or south. In answers to the other access questions, the location of the linear, north-south bicycle/pedestrian Waterfront Trail is discussed. The analysis neglects to consider that there are over 20 locations where east-west street-ends in downtown Seattle intersect with Alaskan Way. (These intersections are discussed as potential points of vehicle congestion - presumably a negative in this analysis - but are not considered as critical features for equally important pedestrian and bicycle access to the waterfront.) Quite naturally, pedestrians and cyclists will want to cross Alaskan Way at these locations to the waterfront, its amenities, and its businesses. Most will not care to use pedestrian overpasses such as the one that feeds into the ferry terminal, or the new ones mentioned that could "possibly" be developed at Madison and Thomas Streets. At any rate, pedestrian overpasses are a poor substitute for direct surface crossings. A similar lack of information about pedestrian and bicycle use of streets and roadways is evident in the discussion of "How will streets and intersections operate?" Potential congestion levels are discussed at intersections, and vehicle volumes along roadways, yet there is no mention of the equally important function of roads as pedestrian and cyclist facilities. A tremendous - and growing - number of people walk and bike along these roads. Possible impacts to pedestrians and cyclists are not mentioned. With any of the alternatives, how will pedestrians and cyclists safely cross Alaskan Way? How many signalized, marked intersections will there be for pedestrians? Will there be pedestrian refuge areas - particularly in the alternatives with trolley elements? Boulevard landscaping? Pedestrian amenities such as benches, human-scaled lighting?

I-050-001

FHWA, WSDOT, and the City of Seattle appreciate receiving your comments and agree that this project is important to the region.

I-050-002

The final design of the Alaskan Way surface street is being led by the City of Seattle's Central Waterfront Project. The City recognizes the value of improving pedestrian connections and providing improved public space along the waterfront that will allow people to walk, bicycle, play, view Elliott Bay and the mountains, learn, and reflect. The exact configuration and types of activities (e.g., pedestrian and bike lanes) on the waterfront are not part of the preferred Bored Tunnel Alternative.

I-050-002

Directional signage? A Waterfront Trail traveling parallel to the waterfront is meaningless if there are no safe, direct east-west connections across Alaskan Way to the waterfront itself. In addition to these pedestrian and bicycle access issues, the DEIS also lacks a discussion of the character of the corridor itself. Many groups and individual citizens have commented in the media and in public forums about the potential for developing a significant amount of new open space - be it in privately developed plazas as part of commercial or residential redevelopment of the half blocks to the east of the present viaduct, or in public park land - as part of the project. Where in the DEIS are these issues fully discussed? This is the first time in a generation that the city and region have an opportunity to significantly reshape part of the region's urban core, and provide additional amenities that are otherwise sorely lacking. I point to the City of Portland's redevelopment of its riverfront, San Francisco's redevelopment of the Embarcadero, and Boston's reclamation of its direct water access. These cities developed public park areas, commercial and residential! areas, promenades and urban amenities of which their citizens are rightly proud. Seattle should do no less. In other words, the DEIS seems to lack a discussion of how the waterfront of the City of Seattle will be improved with any of these alternatives. It discusses the potential to move a lot of vehicles THROUGH the city at high speeds, but does not talk about the ultimate effect on the shape and character of the city itself. They all lack a discussion of how people, be they tourists, residents or downtown workers, will safely access the waterfront and its attractions and amenities, and how this project will improve the Central Waterfront.

Comments apply to:

Overall Project

All of the Alternatives

Other Topic: The Waterfront as an urban amenity