

I-137-001

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From: Christopher Cunningham [mailto:CRCCunnin@maxwell.syr.edu]

Sent: Monday, April 26, 2004 4:17 PM

To: viaduct@wsdot.wa.gov

Subject: Consider not replacing Viaduct capacity

Dear WSDOT project managers,

Commuters, homeowners and businesses constantly optimize where they work, where they live, how they commute and where they operate. That is why new infrastructure rarely provides the claimed benefits or reduced travel times. People respond to the added infrastructure by taking more trips, driving alone and perhaps living farther away and thus eroding the claimed travel time savings. Similarly, reductions in capacity should have fewer costs than predicted from a static model.

Please include a tear down without replacement option in your cost-benefit analysis. It is a choice that should be seriously considered before spending 4 billion dollars (presumably 8 billion with overruns and delays.)

Sincerely,

Chris Cunningham

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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.