From: Greg Blaine
To:AWV SDEIS Comments;
CC:
Subject:
Fw: Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall ReplacementProjectConstruction Plan Brochure
Date:
Monday, September 11, 2006 8:44:07 AM
Attachments:

The email below contains the comments that I recently sent to Ron Borowski at SDOT. He recommended that I also send them as comments and feed back to the Supplemental Draft EIS.

B-021-001

I must stress the importance of dedicated truck corridors out of West Seattle. We are a second generation moving and storage business, and we have been operating out of our West Seattle location for over 40 years. It is already, under current traffic conditions, very time consuming to for our trucks to access I-5, and/or get into down town during morning commuter traffic. Our customers won't pay us extra for our delays, and will only accept minor schedule changes in order to accommodate traffic delays. The loss of the Viaduct for an extended period of time will have an extreme adverse impact on our business.

We have maintained the location of our business in West Seattle because it is close to down town. Most of our competition has moved to the Kent Valley to take advantage of lower taxes and lower rents. Extensive delays during viaduct construction will in essence place us in double jeopardy. We will have higher taxes, higher rents, and the advantages of our location in close proximity to our customers will be lost. In a highly competitive service industry like ours, where profits are consistently single digit, we could be forced out of business in Seattle.

Greg Blaine

President

Continental Van Lines inc.

>>> "Greg Blaine" <gregblaine@continentalvan.com> 9/5/2006 9:20 AM >>>

B-021-002

Ron, as a west Seattle resident and owner of a trucking company operating in West Seattle, I can speak from experience when it comes to traffic between West Seattle, down town, and the I-5 corridor It's horrific during the peak hours to access and get through down town utilizing the viaduct, and it can be equally as bad to access I-5 at almost any given time between 6:00am and 7:00pm. Without dedicated truck corridors to get us into and/or through down town from West Seattle, I fear our Seattle terminal location will completely loose it's viability. We can modify our schedules, and work smart to the best of our ability, but at some point there has to be enhanced capacity for truck traffic in this corridor or our company, as well as the rest of the freight community operating in this area, will experience traffic conditions that will kill our ability to compete

These are my comments and ideas regarding the plan:

B-021-003

1. The bus only traffic lane over the West Seattle high rise is very underutilized, and will remain underutilized even if bus volume doubles. Consider making that lane open to buses as well as trucks. Trucks and buses have the same maneuverability characteristics, slower speed characteristics on steep grades, and are driven by

professional drivers. They would mix well together, and the remaining lanes over the high rise would be less encumbered by slow moving trucks.

B-021-001

The Final EIS addresses the economic cost of congestion for the construction phase of the project within the limits of the data provided by transportation modeling. The updated discussion of economic impacts associated with freight mobility were described in the Appendix L, Economics Discipline Report, of the Final EIS. The Final EIS also includes an evaluation of impacts to freight mobility. Mitigation measures, which include a traffic management plan, are presented in Chapter 8 of the Final EIS and in Appendix C, Transportation Discipline Report. These measures cannot alleviate all of the construction impacts, but will provide some relief. The importance of the corridor for freight, and for the local and regional economy, is understood and efforts to minimize the impacts during construction will continue.

B-021-002

A dedicated truck corridor is not proposed on SR 99 due to limitations on the total number of lanes that can be provided on the corridor, the relatively small share of truck traffic compared to total users, and general-purpose capacity requirement associated with peak period auto demand. Off-peak traffic conditions are generally not congested on SR 99. The issue of overall freight mobility is an important one; please see the Final EIS for proposed mitigation measures to reduce effects to freight mobility.

B-021-003

This project is not considering changes to the West Seattle Bridge. Use of the dedicated bus lanes for moving freight is not recommended due to the potential merging impacts that could be experienced at the end of the lane under higher vehicle loads. Additionally, allowing trucks in transit lane would likely impede operations for transit vehicles as grades on the West Seattle Bridge would induce slower climbing speeds for trucks, thereby backing up transit buses and causing further delay.

B-021-004 2. Consider the same as above for the 1st Ave. south corridor peak restrictions. This could be taken one step further, no parking along first Ave south, give the busses exclusivity to the right lanes, the center lanes for buses and trucks together, and trucks get the left lane. Educate our local trucking companies, as well as the bus drivers that they must cooperate and yield to each other when lane changes are required.

B-021-005 3. Restrict lower bridge traffic to trucks, busses, and local access only. This keeps the upper bridge free of slow moving vehicles while still giving trucks and busses a dedicated route into the city. No bridge openings during peak traffic hours, or better yet scheduled bridge openings only.

B-021-006 4. Dedicate a truck traffic corridor between West Seattle and I-5 NB utilizing the 1st south bridge and Michigan street.

B-021-007 5. West Seattle Ferry improvements: Significantly expand on site parking on West Seattle side or have a close by off site lot with shuttle service to the dock. The Ferry needs to run late so that dinner goers, theater goers, late shoppers, base ball fans, etc.. have a round trip ferry alternative that doesn't require a lengthily bus trip on the West Seattle side.

Thanks for the update Ron. I will look forward to additional information as it becomes available.

Greg Blaine

B-021-004

The City of Seattle designates all principal arterials as truck streets and has also classified certain streets as Major Truck Streets. By policy, the City will “monitor these streets and make operating, design, access and/or service changes, as well as capital investments, to accommodate trucks and to preserve and improve commercial transportation mobility and access on these major truck streets.” First Avenue S. is currently designated as a Major Truck Street by the City of Seattle.

While First Avenue S. is a Major Truck Street, it is also an important transit corridor serving West Seattle and communities to the south. Adding exclusive use lanes on First Avenue S. for buses and freight would reduce vehicle carrying capacity in the corridor and likely cause more congestion, particularly during peak travel periods. The City will likely continue to monitor this facility and work with Metro and the freight community to determine if joint use by transit and freight is feasible.

B-021-005

The Southwest Spokane Street Swing Bridge opens on demand, even during rush hour traffic, due in part to tidal fluctuations and the resulting limited window for allowing certain types of marine vehicles to pass under the bridge. While the lower bridge could be prioritized for use by freight, restriction of use is not proposed since the route does serve some general-purpose users as well. Restricting buses and freight traffic to the Spokane Street Bridge would likely divert more traffic to the already congested upper West Seattle Bridge, further impeding general purpose, freight, and transit operations on that bridge. Of particular concern are those West Seattle express buses that access downtown via SR 99, which would likely encounter longer travel times during the peak commute hours if traffic was diverted from the lower bridge.

B-021-006

This proposal is beyond the project area, though such a change could be considered for implementation during the construction period.

B-021-007

For more information on the proposed mitigation measures, please refer to the Chapter 8 of this Final EIS.