

AWV Draft EIS Comment Form Results:

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Would like to be added to the project mailing list?

Yes

Project Comments:

I-163-001

The following are my substantive comments on the Draft EIS. I have included procedural comments in a separate response. Two obvious and substantial omissions in the EIS, and the overall Viaduct project documentation, are: (1) the absence of any concrete analysis of traffic impacts, and (2) the lack of discussion lower cost alternatives to the proposed construction impacts (specifically, the temporary elevated highway). As a resident of the waterfront community and city taxpayer, I find it inconceivable that the member organizations have proposed a massively costly "temporary" elevated by-pass highway in answer to completely unquantified traffic impacts. I describe them as unquantified, because until a detailed analysis of surface street impact throughout the city is completed, there really is not way to quantify them based on partial or complete closure of the existing viaduct alone. Because a thorough traffic impact analysis is lacking, there is no basis for a rational cost-benefit analysis of construction impact mitigation alternatives. The proposed "temporary" highway would definitely not be justified, for example, to mitigate an average 10 to 15 minute longer commute through the city. Nor would it be even faintly justified if it results in only slightly less disruption than using surface streets to absorb viaduct traffic, but stretched over a much longer time frame due to construction risks involving the structure itself. Secondly, and most glaringly, there is virtually no discussion of compensating for impacts on the large and growing waterfront community, which includes several condominium residential developments, several restaurants, a major hotel, the Port of Seattle Maritime Discovery center and its museums, to name only a few. How are these individuals and businesses to be compensated for lost property values, disruptions, and lost business, both during construction and during the life of the "temporary" over flight highway? Additionally, the document does not address two inevitable and glaring risks of the "temporary" overflight structure itself: safety of the structure in its proposed setting, and the nature of "temporary" given today's fiscal realities. Specifically: (1) How are the residents, tourists, and businesses of the waterfront to be protected, during construction of this "temporary" highway and afterwards, in the event the structure itself is damaged and rendered unsafe by another earthquake? You will be placing a massive structure in a position to damage or destroy residences and parks, putting the people who live and work in these areas at much higher risk than at present. (2) What provision will be made to ensure the timely completion of the "temporary" highway, to ensure that it is not fiscally undermined and left as an eyesore on the Seattle waterfront, to the detriment of the entire city? This is arguable the single most important development issue facing the City of Seattle of this generation. This is not simply another monorail extension or a highway access issue.

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Thank you for your comments. Appendix C, Transportation Discipline Report, of the Final EIS contains updated and more in-depth information on the transportation analyses conducted for the project than was summarized in the 2004 Draft EIS. The Final EIS also presents a discussion of traffic impacts on surface streets in the area as well as the transportation management plans that are under consideration. The 2006 Supplemental Draft EIS evaluated several additional construction approaches and provided more information on traffic impacts during construction. The temporary bypass elevated highway referred to in your comment has been eliminated in the current build alternatives.

Although costs are an important part of project planning and decision-making, they are purposely not a major part of the environmental review process. As provided in CFR 1502.23 "For purposes of complying with the Act, the weighing of the merits and drawbacks of the various alternatives need not be displayed in a monetary cost-benefit analysis and should not be when there are important qualitative considerations. Overall project costs are included with the project description and are used for the analysis of economic impacts.

Chapter 8 in the Final EIS presents mitigation measures to address project construction effects. Please see the Final EIS for current project information and analysis.

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Your decision concerning the Viaduct, and in particular, the "construction impact" of the "temporary" highway will profoundly and permanently affect the most valuable city asset, its waterfront. Accordingly, this project more than any other deserves and exhaustive examination, forward-thinking analysis, AND an equitable solution for those who will, under your current proposal, be asked to bear a disproportionate measure of the cost. If not in the "Environmental Impact Statement", then where, of all places, are these issues to be publicly discussed?

Comments apply to:  
Overall Project  
Construction Impacts and Mitigation  
All of the Alternatives

Project Comments:

I-163-002

The following relates to a very serious procedural issue regarding the EIS. I have provided my substantive comments on the document by a separate response. I am a resident of the Waterfront Landings Condominium development, a waterfront residential development whose members will suffer extreme and disproportionate impacts as a result of the proposed temporary fly-over highway. My procedural comment is this: fourteen months ago, before I purchased my condominium and as a portion of my due diligence efforts as a potential waterfront landowner and taxpayer, I read every document regarding the Viaduct replacement project available on the WSDOT Viaduct project website. In addition, I contacted, by telephone, WSDOT project contact staff. Throughout this effort I was attempting to answer one simple question: will any of the proposed Viaduct alternatives result in construction north of the current Seattle Aquarium (and therefore in the immediate vicinity of Waterfront Landings). I was assured both in the documentation and personally, by DOT staff, that there would be absolutely no construction north of the Aquarium or in the vicinity of Pier 62/63 or Waterfront Landings. A year later I learn that construction will not only continue north of the Aquarium, but pass mere feet from my residence, a "detail" that remained hidden from public scrutiny until April of this year when the Draft EIS was issued. The decision to announce the temporary fly-over highway, a massive construction project, costing in the vicinity of \$170-200 million and imposing 6-11 years of vastly negative impact on quality of life, community, businesses, tourism, and property values along the waterfront was, on its face, irresponsible and even corrupt. To treat this huge, costly and risky project as a mere impact mitigation is dishonest beyond comparison. It will have a substantial and possibly massive impact on the overall cost of Viaduct restoration, depending on which of the existing alternatives is chosen, and to treat it as a somehow separate, non-negotiable aspect is completely wrong and unacceptable, and will only result in a strenuous legal backlash from the waterfront community and other city residents. Consequently, by trying to "back door" this monstrous project, you have probably only ensured that, in the end, it will take much longer and cost much more than if you had simply included it as one of the original, public proposals.

## I-163-002

After the 2004 Draft EIS was issued, numerous comments were received relating to the visual impacts and other negative effects of the Battery Street Flyover Detour. As the design plans for the Cut-and-Cover Tunnel and the Elevated Structure Alternatives evolved, the Battery Street Flyover Detour was eliminated.