Comments on the Viaduct replacement EIS: 13 Sept 2006

To: WSDOT
From :
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I-671-001 1. The EIS does not adequately cover long-term costs or impacts of the Tunnel option with regard to replacement costs when the tunnel must be replaced. The EIS should be revised to show what the cost will be for replacing a tunnel with a tunnel, and how this compares with replacing a new viaduct with a new viaduct.

I-671-002 2. I object to the EIS for the viaduct replacement, an alleged public safety issue, being used as a means to carry forward stealthily, the beautification modifications to lower Aurora AVE north of the battery street tunnel. Why has WSDOT in a time of difficult financing, included these elective, lobbyist driven, expensive, and disruptive changes in an EIS that deals with a public safety issue. The modifications north of the battery street tunnel should be removed from this EIS concerning a public safety issue.

I-671-003 3. It is a 'big lie' to tell the public that lowering Aurora ave north of battery street is 'planned for later'. It is much more probable that WSDOT, acting as an agent for Vulcan, will soon propose concurrent projects, and the need for more money to complete both at the same time.

I-671-004 4. The EIS in not adequate with regard to Puget sound air quality, and the effect of the tunnel and replacement projects on air quality. It is OBVOIUS that air quality, an environmental impact of duration 3-5 years, will be significantly degraded by the inevitable traffic slow downs, and idling cars that produce 5 times as much CO_2 as an engine under load. The EIS should be revised to show the effect on air quality.

I-671-005 5. The EIS does not adequately cover long term street level noise impacts from ventilation from a tunnel option. Fan noise is reported by organization Amnesty International as being effective as a means of torture. WSDOT needs to calculate the noise levels that would be created at street level by tunnel ventilation fans.

I-671-006 6. The EIS does not cover cost impacts to individuals who will have to spend more money on fuel due to either project.

I-671-007 7. The EIS does not adequately predict the number of fatalities that will occur due to increased traffic densities on side streets and arterials and in I5, both due to direct accidents, and due to the in-ability of aid cars to respond to an accident due to increased gridlock of the traffic.

Joe Wall

I-671-001

Overall project costs are included with the project description and are used for the analysis of economic impacts. Cost estimates for mitigation are included in the overall project costs. These estimates, along with other cost estimates, are refined as the planning and design process proceeds and details are developed. All cost estimates allow for escalation and inflation and include contingencies for unforeseen events. The project is included in the financially-constrained long range plan adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council (the area's Metropolitan Planning Organization, or MPO). Cost estimates for the alternatives evaluated in the Final EIS are:

- Bored Tunnel – $1.96 billion
- Cut-and-Cover Tunnel – $3.0 to $3.6 billion
- Elevated Structure – $1.9 to $2.4 billion

These cost estimates do include different elements. The Bored Tunnel Alternative cost does not include replacing the seawall, improving the Alaskan Way surface street, or building a streetcar. Costs for the Cut-and Cover Tunnel and Elevated Structure Alternatives do not include replacing the seawall between Union and Broad Streets.

I-671-002

Improvements north of Battery Street Tunnel do improve safety and the transportation functions in the area by improving access to and from SR 99. Safety, mobility, and access are some of the basic needs the project is meant to address.

I-671-003

Improvements north of Battery Street Tunnel are part of the overall project, as described in Chapter 4 of the Final EIS.

I-671-004

The potential air quality impacts from the proposed alternatives are fully disclosed in the Draft and Supplemental Draft EISs, and these analyses have been revised, as applicable, for the Final EIS.

Traffic disruptions during the construction phases will be minimized according to the mitigation measures described in Chapter 8 of the Final EIS, and an analysis has been included in the Final EIS to estimate the potential air quality impacts of these disruptions. Also, see Final EIS Appendix M, Air Discipline Report, for all the detail on the air quality analysis performed for the the project.

I-671-005

The ventilation fans would be designed not to exceed either 60 dBA at the nearest commercial uses or 57 dBA at the property line of the nearest residential use during normal operations. Please see Chapter 5 of the Final EIS for more information about potential project noise during operation of the facility.

I-671-006

The cost of congestion has as one of its components the increased expenditure on fuel due to prolonged idling, as well as spending more time in your car. The cost of congestion is discussed in the Economics Discipline Report, Appendix L, of the Final EIS.

I-671-007

Potential changes in the number of fatalities related to operation of proposed facilities will not be studied as part of the project. However, the Transportation Discipline Report, Appendix C of the Final EIS, does discuss traffic safety for each build alternative.