AWV Draft EIS Comment Form Results:

Name: Sharon Florakis
Address: 720 W. Argand #2
City: Seattle
State: WA
Zip Code: 98119
Email: sljacobs2@yahoo.com
Affiliation (optional):

Would like to be added to the project mailing list?

Yes

Project Comments:

I-183-001

As a lifetime resident of Seattle, I have been able enjoy the drive through Seattle on the Viaduct, with its inspiring view of Puget Sound and its feeling of openness. It would be tragic to lose this great in-the-air thoroughfare, especially if it were replaced by a tunnel or by a surface roadway. I make the following comments based on my already strong support of the in-the-air Viaduct and on what I have managed to glean from the DEIS. As a busy, working person I could not read every page, but I did my best to cover the basic information. I would support the REBUILD ALTERNATIVE, and am also open to the AERIAL ALTERNATIVE). Perhaps the some aspects of the former could be modified by aspects of the latter; I would hope so. I believe the REBUILD would be more popular than the AERIAL, since the AERIAL is wider and thus would take up more space near the waterfront and cast more shadow, but that does not bother me personally. Also, the REBUILD would take considerably less time to build than would the AERIAL - a very important consideration indeed! (1) DRIVING ALONG AN IN-THE-AIR VIADUCT IS A COMFORTABLE AND INSPIRING EXPERIENCE FOR SEATTLE RESIDENTS AND VISITORS: With an in-the-air viaduct, everyone can enjoy the view of Puget Sound, instead of only wealthy downtown condo owners. And it enhances tourism, quickly affording tourists a spectacular view and a sense of what the whole downtown is like; solid walls of commercial buildings (which would replace the existing viaduct) would make this impossible. Many commuters are forced to drive long distances nowadays and I believe it is more important to consider THEIR needs than to be mainly concerned about how pleasant the downtown area could be for pedestrians, residents and nearby businesses. Furthermore, commuters will be more willing to pay a toll to travel along a viaduct than through a confining tunnel. I for one would never travel through a tunnel, if that is built, as I would find it claustrophobic especially when forced to sit in it during traffic jams -- and, as I explain below, vulnerable to dangers. (2) THE REBUILD AND AERIAL ARE SAFER THAN THE

I-183-002

I-183-001

FHWA, WSDOT, and the City of Seattle appreciate receiving your comments and recognize your preference for the Rebuild Alternative, followed by the Aerial Alternative. Elements of both the Rebuild and Aerial Alternatives have been combined to form the Elevated Structure Alternative, which was analyzed in the 2006 Supplemental Draft EIS and the Final EIS.

The views of Elliott Bay, Puget Sound, and the Olympic Mountains are prized by many. Views are currently enjoyed by motorists and passengers traveling on the upper deck of the existing viaduct. However, the views for motorists and pedestrians using downtown streets in the vicinity of the waterfront are interrupted by the existing viaduct structure. This structure is considered by some to be a substantial visual intrusion as well as a source of noise and shadow for the Pioneer Square Historic District and the Central Waterfront. Impacts to views are discussed in the Final EIS and considered in detail in Appendix D, Visual Quality Discipline Report.

I-183-002

The preferred Bored Tunnel Alternative is a safe alternative. Generally, structural engineers agree that tunnels are one of the safest places to be during an earthquake, because the tunnel moves with the earth. The bored tunnel would be built to current seismic standards, which are considerably more stringent than what was in place when the viaduct was built in the early 1950s. Emergency access, evacuation routes, ventilation, and fire suppression systems are incorporated into the tunnel design.

Since publication of the Draft EIS, the Surface and Bypass Tunnel Alternatives have been removed from further consideration. Please refer to Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for information about alternatives development.

I-183-002

TUNNEL ALTERNATIVES: A tunnel would be more vulnerable to terrorist attack than the open viaduct, and thus it would require costly security measures at all times. Moreover, built on shifting landfill, it would not be safe in an earthquake, or would cost too much to ensure such safety. As for the Battery Street tunnel, I like the improvements offered in the AERIAL ALTERNATIVE the emergency exits, fire suppression system, and improving the ventilation - and wonder why these could not be added to the REBUILD ALTERNATIVE. If cost is the only consideration, I think that would be worth the extra cost.

Increased traffic caused by the SURFACE and BYPASS TUNNEL ALTERNATIVES would increase the number of vehicle and pedestrian accidents and injuries. (3)

I-183-003

TRAFFIC FLOW IS BETTER WITH THE REBUILD AND AERIAL ALTERNATIVES THAN WITH THE SURFACE OR BYPASS TUNNEL ALTERNATIVES: With the SURFACE ALTERNATIVE, travel times would increase for trips to and from downtown, and especially to and from the Ballard/Interbay area: 26 minutes to get from Ballard to the SODO area, as compared to 13 minutes with an aerial alternative! And this alternative would increase congestion on downtown city streets and Alaskan Way, thus probably causing traffic noise levels to increase on other adjacent streets. The REBUILD ALTERNATIVE is better than all the other alternatives, which it does NOT - as do those others -- increase the number of congested intersections due to expanding Mercer Street. High traffic volumes of the SURFACE ALTERNATIVE and the BYPASS TUNNEL ALTERNATIVE could make recreational resources less desirable to visit or harder to get to. And the BYPASS TUNNEL would increase travel times between the Duwamish and Ballard/Interbay industrial areas, an important route for freight. (4)THE

I-183-004

REBUILD AND AERIAL ATERNATIVES WOULD CAUSE LESS DISRUPTION AND ANNOYANCE, IN MANY IMPORTANT WAYS, THAN WOULD THE OTHER ALTERNATIVES: First, let's avoid a Boston-Big-Dig type of nightmare, and build an aerial viaduct rather than a (more expensive) tunnel! ** The REBUILD would not affect parks, recreation and open space, which would remain about the same as they are now. It would benefit public service providers, as overall traffic would improve. ** THE AERIAL would benefit public service providers by improving overall traffic operations. It would affect some buildings and businesses, and in this respect is less desirable an alternative than the REBUILD. ** The REBUILD and AERIAL ALTERNATIVES might include sound-absorptive materials to reduce noise reflected off the bottom of the elevated structure and around the tunnel portals, and this would probably be worth any extra cost to those people most affected by the noise. ** The REBUILD would cause the loss of fewer parking spaces than would the other alternatives. ** THE AERIAL would take longer (possibly three years longer!) to build than the REBUILD, so this is another reason I prefer the REBUILD to the AERIAL. Thank you for your consideration of my interest and opinions.

I-183-003

The Rebuild, Aerial, Surface, and Bypass Tunnel Alternatives are no longer under consideration for this project. However, elements on the Rebuild and Aerial Alternatives have been incorporated into the Elevated Structure Alternative analyzed in the Final EIS. Because the project has evolved since publication of the 2004 Draft EIS, the project team has updated the traffic analysis for the current proposed alternatives. Please see the Final EIS for a summary of the updated traffic analysis and the Transportation Discipline Report, Appendix C, for all the details.

I-183-004

Again, we appreciate receiving your comments on the Rebuild and Aerial Alternatives.