

-----Original Message-----

From: Nathan Herring [mailto:nh.94@alum.dartmouth.org]

Sent: Thursday, May 27, 2004 4:31 PM

To: awvdeiscomments@wsdot.wa.gov

Subject: Limit additional traffic capacity and increase tunnel lid size.

I-252-001

One thing we should not be doing with any rebuild of the Viaduct is encouraging more people to use their personal vehicles. The more lanes we provide means the more traffic capacity and the less traffic backups, at the cost of having more people take to their vehicles or at least to have less incentive to switch to mass transit options.

The current viaduct is not the most attractive part of our skyline, both for visitors on the ferry or cruise ships, but also for the people living downtown and close to the waterfront. Both the rebuild and arial options will continue this cosmetic problem.

The surface option, while cost efficient, will make it even harder for people to walk from downtown to the waterfront and back – traffic snarls and the inevitable traffic casualties will be a part of our daily lives.

In any other than a tunnel option, noise and extra traffic will be an auditory and visual pollution.

I would really encourage the use of a limited capacity (two lane, or at most three lane) tunnel option that extends most of the way through downtown, to allow a large continuous section of park that would adjoin the waterfront and downtown businesses. While in the short term, local residents will have to deal with the construction efforts, overall, property values will increase, due to the beauty that we will recover from those areas.

I-252-002

The cheapest alternative, and while my favorite, but probably untenable as an option, is to just remove the viaduct entirely and make no replacement. The costs would be significantly less than any of the aforementioned options, and traffic would have to spill into the rest of the city streets.

Sincerely,

Nathan Herring

I-252-001

FHWA, WSDOT, and the City of Seattle appreciate receiving your comments on the 2004 Cut-and-Cover Tunnel Alternative. Your suggestion that the lead agencies should adopt a tunnel alternative with a maximum of two or three lanes would be infeasible, because the state legislature has stipulated that state funding is contingent upon accommodating at least as much traffic as the existing viaduct does today. The lead agencies have selected the Bored Tunnel Alternative as the preferred alternative. Please refer to the Final EIS for information on the alternatives evaluated.

I-252-002

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.