

1425 Western Avenue, APT 201
Seattle, WA 98101
27 May, 2004

RECEIVED
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AWVSP Team Office

Ms. Allison Ray
Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project Office
999 Third Avenue, Suite 2424
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement Public Comments

Dear Ms. Ray:

I-255-001

As a user of the Alaskan Way Viaduct, I am concerned about its integrity and am writing to address this issue as identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). As a resident of Hillclimb Court at 1425 Western Avenue, my home is adjacent to the existing Alaskan Way Viaduct and the proposed project area. I am concerned about the construction impacts detailed in the DEIS. I am writing to provide input on these aspects of the project as part of the DEIS public input process.

Design Alternatives

I-255-002

I am deeply concerned about the structural integrity of the existing Alaskan Way Viaduct structure and the seawall, and I implore you to take immediate action to adopt an alternative and move forward with it.

Preferred Alternative

I feel that the tunnel alternative is the best alternative of those cited in the EIS. I think it is important that WSDOT preserve an alternate north-south highway corridor between Elliott Bay and Lake Washington and the tunnel allows for that most effectively. The surface alternative does not allow for that at all and the bypass tunnel compromises that capability. From the data cited in Exhibit 2-10 the tunnel appears to have the highest capacity which will allow for the greatest flexibility to accommodate the future demand.

The tunnel alternative will also provide the best quality of waterfront experience for residents and tourists alike. The character and views in the permanent condition will be of great benefit and an incredible improvement over the existing condition. I wanted to cry when I saw the renderings in the EIS that simulate the aesthetic of the area without the aerial structure in-place. It will be such a visual relief to have no aerial structure along the waterfront. Seattle depends on its quality of views and the outdoor experience

I-255-001

Thank you for your comments and your careful consideration of the Draft EIS. As a neighbor, the lead agencies recognize your concerns. The 2004 Draft EIS evaluated one construction plan that considered brief closures of SR 99 during construction, but otherwise assumed that at least two lanes would be provided in each direction on SR 99 or an alternate detour route. In comments received on the 2004 Draft EIS, many people asked the lead agencies to consider more than one construction plan. Specifically, many people wanted to know if closing the corridor would reduce the amount of time it takes to build the project. To respond to this question, three different construction plans were developed (a shorter construction plan, an intermediate construction plan, and a longer construction plan) and evaluated in the 2006 Supplemental Draft EIS. Since 2006, the Cut-and-Cover Tunnel and Elevated Structure Alternatives and the construction approach for each of the alternatives have been refined. One construction plan is analyzed for each of the alternatives (Bored Tunnel, Cut-and-Cover Tunnel, and Elevated Structure) in the Final EIS. Chapter 3 describes each alternative and its construction plan, and Chapter 6 describes construction effects.

I-255-002

FHWA, WSDOT, and the City of Seattle appreciate receiving your comments on the 2004 Cut-and-Cover Tunnel Alternative. The alignment for the Cut-and-Cover Tunnel Alternative has been refined in the Final EIS. The lead agencies have identified the Bored Tunnel Alternative as the preferred alternative due to its ability to best meet the project's identified purposes and needs and the support it has received from diverse interests. Because the project has evolved since comments were submitted in 2004, please refer to the Final EIS for current information.

I-255-002

to attract visitors to the area and this is our opportunity to improve that experience in a monumental way. If as a community we are going to spend the money, we might as well "do it right".

I-255-003

Design Alternative Impacts

In the EIS Appendix Q, "Air Quality Discipline Report", Exhibit 6-9, the Pike Street Vent Building is shown located adjacent to and just south of the Hillclimb Court property at 1425 Western Avenue. In Appendix F, "Noise and Vibration Discipline Report" this property is identified in Exhibit 4-6 as noise monitoring location S18. I am concerned about the proposed location of the vent building.

If either of the tunnel alternatives is selected, the Pike Street Ventilation Building and its stacks must be located someplace other than near the Pike Place Market Hillclimb residential area. The release of concentrated pollutants from vehicle exhaust via the ventilation stacks into the neighborhood is not an option. There are children who play in the Hillclimb Court courtyard and other children who spend much of their day outdoors at the Pike Place Market Daycare who should not be exposed to a concentrated stream of pollutants; also there are elderly folks in Ross Manor who would be at greater health risk because of concentrated airborne pollutant levels. The character of the ambient noise will change in a way that is not compatible with a residential neighborhood. Fan noise is typically at a different frequency than any of the atmospheric urban noises currently experienced and is intolerable in a residential setting. Also, the document offers that the ventilation fans would be designed for normal operational noise levels not to exceed the City of Seattle Maximum Permissible Sound levels (Appendix F, Table 2-7, pg 13 and Section 5.5.4 Ventilation System Noise, Paragraph 2, page 58), and the "maximum" should not be the target design level – the target should be well below the maximum permissible sound level. Both of these issues, the noise and pollutant levels, must be addressed in the Final EIS and should affect a different location for the Pike Street Ventilation Building. There are several properties immediately to the south of the location shown (south of the foot of Union Street) that are vacant and industrial in nature and would be better suited than locating it directly adjacent to homes.

I-255-004

Construction Impacts

Noise

Appendix F states that exceedances of the City of Seattle noise regulations are expected to occur during the daytime and the nighttime. It is unacceptable that these noise regulations be exceeded during nighttime in the adjacent residential areas such as Hillclimb Court. Work can proceed at nighttime in non-residential areas of the project site.

I-255-003

An exhaust stack near Pike Place Market is no longer included in any of the alternatives. The preferred Bored Tunnel Alternative would have two tunnel operations buildings that include exhaust stacks. One building would be located in the south portal area near Alaskan Way S. and Railroad Way S., and a second building would be located in the north portal area near 6th Avenue and Harrison Street.

I-255-004

Several individuals and organizations have made the suggestion that construction noise associated with the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project that exceeds the City of Seattle residential nighttime noise regulations should be limited to non-residential areas. The construction plans evaluated for noise and vibration are described in Appendix B, Alternatives Description and Construction Methods Discipline Report, of the Final EIS. While actual construction plans and activity sequencing could differ from this evaluation, the locations and types of activities would be similar under the final sequence. This means that there is some flexibility in the proposed construction plans.

Construction of the project may require nighttime construction activities, and the City may require a Major Public Project Construction Noise Variance. Construction noise mitigation requirements would be developed and specified in the noise variance.

I-255-005

Traffic

I am concerned about the project adding traffic to Western Avenue. Any detours to SR 99 southbound ramp should be made at Broad Street or at Denny Way to divert southbound trips before they reach the Pike Place Market area, thereby preventing congestion in the vicinity of the Pike Place Market. Reducing congestion will reduce the impact on air quality and prevent the addition of vehicle/pedestrian conflicts in this area.

Paved access to the Hillclimb Court parking garage must be provided during construction. Construction of viaduct demolition must be phased to allow for this access with out risk of damage to passing cars. Any construction debris should be swept regularly to avoid damage to vehicles. Please employ adequate dust control measures.

Community Impacts

I-255-006

A mix of residential, commercial, and retail provides for a viable, vibrant community. It is critical that all of these are maintained during construction in order to preserve the safety and integrity of neighborhoods adjacent to the project area. The area has seen in recent years some new businesses develop and residences added along Western Avenue, at Harbor Steps, on the Pike Place Market Hillclimb, in the Pike Place Market, and along First and Second Avenues that have added eyes on the street, improving safety and other aspects of quality of life for residents & shopkeepers and attracting tourists. It is important that support is provided by the project to maintain the area as desirable for residents, tourists, and businesses alike, allowing the area to sustain its recent achievements but also for grow over the project period.

Consider mitigating impacts to neighborhood businesses by including a public information campaign in the highly trafficked tourist areas that has individuals posted to answer questions about directions and access. Such a program was successful at Portland International Airport during major expansion projects. As a resident of the Market, directions are asked of me on a regular basis. During the period of construction, way finding by landmarks will be more difficult because existing routes and facilities will be off-limits or obscured. Having uniformed, easily identifiable staff in public areas adjacent to the construction site would make the area more accessible to tourists & locals and keep businesses alive. Please add this method of public information to business mitigation possibilities in the Final EIS. In addition, the project must implement all of the other mitigation measures for affected businesses cited in Chapter 10 of the DEIS.

I-255-007

Conclusion

I am hoping that project will consider my comments contained within and provide a process in future stages of the project by which adjacent property owners can be involved in the design process in order to contribute local knowledge that will improve the design and mitigate the construction concerns.

I-255-005

The lead agencies recognize that the Pike Place Market area is especially sensitive to traffic impacts during construction. Updated construction transportation planning can be found in Chapter 6 of the Final EIS. Detoured traffic is not expected to pass through the immediate market area. However, nearby streets, such as First Avenue South, are likely to see impacts to traffic as a result of detours.

I-255-006

Thank you for your suggested mitigation measures to minimize impacts to businesses along the waterfront and along streets adjacent to the construction zone. These suggestions have been considered in preparation of the mitigation measures included in the Final EIS.

I-255-007

The project team uses several communication and public involvement tools (outlined in Appendix A, Public Involvement Discipline Report) to gather input and help shape the project throughout design and construction. There are opportunities to attend public meetings and community events to learn more about the project and multiple ways to contact the project team with any questions or concerns including hotline (1-888-AWV-LINE) or e-mail (viaduct@wsdot.wa.gov).

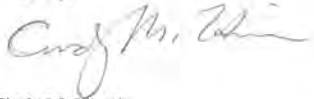
In addition, many forums are in place to provide feedback to the project team:

- North and south portal working groups exist today. They have been meeting since May 2009 and they do not have a firm end date.
- Maintenance of traffic meeting in the south end discusses upcoming construction and potential traffic impacts. This includes stakeholders as well as the contractor and staff from the project office.
- Construction outreach tools such as distributing (often in person) notices to adjacent businesses and residents about upcoming work,

Hirsch
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Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Cindy M. Hirsch".

Cindy M. Hirsch

- regular construction reports on the website and e-mail updates.
- Other resources: 24-hour hotline, the website, viaduct e-mail for comments or questions, community briefings, information booths and community events. Many of these tools are used as opportunities to have dialogue or discuss any issues with stakeholders or neighbors.