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AWWSP Team Office

May 22, 2004
Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall
Replacement Project c/o WSDOT
999 Third Avenue, Ste 2424
Seattle WA 98104

Citizen Comment:

I-262-001

I think that the present Viaduct is the best thing we have in our transportation system in Seattle. It allows traffic from the North end (Greenwood – Holman Road – Ballard district, Hiway 99 (Aurora Avenue) to connect directly to the South end industrial area for truck traffic and a swift uninterrupted connection to West Seattle (Magnolia to California Avenue in 20 minutes) and on to the airport via Burien as the quickest route from the North end to the airport – all this freedom of movement without having to use the I-5 Freeway. This route should never be tampered with. It is a result of many years of traffic engineering study for this North – South traffic corridor.

I-262-002

Some older more experienced engineers have stated that the Viaduct has many more years of useful life. It is not the same design as the San Francisco double decker viaduct that collapsed in the 6.0 plus earthquake. The Seattle Viaduct is designed so that it will not pancake in an earthquake.

In these times of high taxes it would be prudent of the city to consult with structural engineers to determine what type of retrofitting could be done to add more strength to the existing structure. They need to lay out plans to repair any aging cracks, repair the roadbed and shore up areas that are settling and give it a good pressure washing to clean it and brighten it. This would be the most practical solution to extend its life and to save us taxpayers the huge burden of replacement. And it would be much less of an impact on the transportation corridors. It would be much less of an impact on our waterfront tourist businesses and businesses throughout the city.

All of the five options for replacing the Viaduct will cause many years of clogged traffic and misery on our city streets. I hope that the decisions that are made regarding the Viaduct will not be politically driven yielding to pressures from our powerful developers who want to profit from the pocketbooks of the unsuspecting and underrepresented taxpayer.

Yours truly,


S.J. Holmes

I-262-001

All the build alternatives analyzed in the Final EIS would accommodate traffic patterns similar to the current facility. The tunnel alternatives will not provide access in midtown, but new on-and-off ramps to and from the north are added in the Stadium area. Improvements to the existing facility will include wider lanes that meet current engineering standards. Travel times on SR 99 for trips traveling through central Seattle will be approximately the same as what is experienced today.

I-262-002

The lead agencies recognize that retrofitting highways, roadways, and bridges is often a viable option to counter earthquake threats. However, unlike other bridges and structures in the area, it isn't practical to retrofit the viaduct by only strengthening one or two structural elements. Fundamentally, such fixes transfer the forces from one weak point in the structure to another, and the viaduct is weak in too many places. The concrete frames, columns, foundations, and even the soil under the structure don't provide enough strength by today's standards. The lead agencies have studied various retrofitting concepts, and all of these concepts fail to provide a cost-effective, long-term solution that adequately addresses the risks to public safety and the weakened state of the viaduct. The lead agencies also determined that retrofitting 20 percent of the viaduct as discussed for the Rebuild Alternative is not reasonable.