

I-328-001

May 27, '04  
3415 Western Ave. #5B  
Seattle, Wa. 98121

The Director  
Wash. State Dept. of Transportation  
Dept. of Transportation Bldg.  
Olympia, Wa. 98504

Dear Director:

Please consider the enclosed excellent report as a reflection of our opinion with respect of the Seattle viaduct question. As long-time residents of the downtown area we have long pondered the terrible mistake of building this viaduct in the first place. It was absolutely criminal to separate the people from their waterfront as does this viaduct. It would be even more criminal to repeat this same mistake by now rebuilding the viaduct. The enclosed article provides the broad outline of an acceptable alternative at this time.

Sincerely yours  
Talmon R. and Marian Mager  
etc.

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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.

Post-Intelligencer May 27, 04

## Full tunnel will enhance waterfront

**BRIAN STEINBURG**  
Guest columnist

With every mega-project comes a "mega-document." Such is the case of the "Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement" (DEIS).

The DEIS presents multiple viaduct and seawall replacement alternatives for civic comment. Now is the time to provide the guidance that will shape our waterfront for future generations. It is time to ask, "What should the central waterfront be like when we replace the viaduct?"

To answer this, we must address two main questions: What option should be selected as the viaduct's replacement and how should the waterfront be designed once the project is complete?

If we are to spend \$3 billion to \$4 billion to replace the viaduct, the waterfront should be better off when construction is finished. Five replacement options are being studied: rebuild, new aerial, bypass tunnel, full tunnel and surface. The surface alternative will make the central waterfront another traffic-clogged Aurora; the aerial alternative is even worse, scaling in at 1.5 times larger than the current viaduct and further encroaching upon the piers with a wall of concrete, noise and shadow. Only the full cut-and-cover tunnel would allow the waterfront to become a great public, regional amenity.

Public design charrettes sponsored by Allied Arts and the city have highlighted some common themes for an improved waterfront:

► **Neighborhood connections:** Providing active workplaces, residences and recreational activities that bring the character of each neighborhood to the waterfront day and night.

► **A grand market terrace:** A lid over the viaduct as it emerges from the tunnel at Pine Street headed north will enable a direct pedestrian connection from the waterfront to the Pike Place Market. Landscaped terraces from the Market to the waterfront would make you forget a major freeway is below. This would allow Steinbrueck Park to expand, providing new downtown open space and stunning views. The high-speed 90-second whiplash view from the viaduct would pale in comparison to this leisurely pedestrian experience.

► **A place for parks:** Alaskan Way should be configured to create a wide swath of park space near Pike Street and south of Colman Dock. These parks could be linked with a wide promenade and series of plazas through the central waterfront.

► **Touch the water:** There is an innate human desire to access the water. In a city surrounded with water, it is vital to our identity to physically connect to and interact with this precious resource.

► **No net increase of roadway:** It doesn't make sense to fill up all the newly liberated land on the waterfront with traffic lanes.

Currently, all viaduct replacement options from the state and city show more than 70 percent of the Alaskan Way corridor is dominated by traffic; some lanes are dedicated to taxis and delivery trucks. We need to eliminate these special-purpose lanes and move the trolley to Western Avenue where it can become a part of Seattle's transportation system instead of a tourist ride. By doing this, we provide more open space and destinations for people, humanizing the waterfront.

When developers threatened Pioneer Square and the Market with parking lots and slab office towers, Seattle said no. Today, another Seattle treasure is threatened. We must raise our voices and proclaim we want and deserve more from our tax dollars than an ugly freeway and a blighted waterfront. With a little vision, a single investment could improve traffic and create a social and economic asset on our waterfront.

Now is the time to voice your desires for the waterfront and critiques of the DEIS. Contact the state Department of Transportation by Tuesday to record your comments. Access the comment form at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct/deis/chapter1\\_1.htm](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct/deis/chapter1_1.htm).

Brian Steinburg is a member of Action: Better City and producer/co-director of the film "Viaduct? What Viaduct?" which can be seen on the Seattle Channel Web site: [www.seattlechannel.org/issues/viaduct.htm](http://www.seattlechannel.org/issues/viaduct.htm).