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From: Brian McNeill [mailto:bpmcneill@hotmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, May 27, 2004 11:32 AM

To: viaduct@wsdot.wa.gov

Subject: Viaduct Options

I-350-001

As a resident of Belltown, I have been carefully reviewing the proposed solutions for the viaduct. After completing my analysis, I would like to strongly encourage the state to look into the no highway solution. When I first heard this idea I scoffed at it as I felt the hindrance to area traffic would be too great, but after additional consideration I believe our money can be better spend in simply tearing down the viaduct for the following reasons:

- 1) A much greater portion of our traffic flows through I-5 and funds would be better spend improving flow around Mercer St and other causes of slowdown, including if needed, an elevated link between 99 on both the North and South sides of the city
- 2) The monorail will provide a much improved transportation option for those traveling from the North and South who currently take 99
- 3) Technological improvements over the next 10-20 years have the potential to greatly reduce existing need for single occupancy vehicle traffic in and out of the city (namely Personal Rapid Transit: <http://www.skywebexpress.com>)
- 4) The best solution presently proposed, replacing the viaduct with a tunnel (which would be my vote if I had to choose from the existing plans), keeps an elevated artery in two key growing residential districts, Belltown and Pioneer Square according to <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct/plans.cfm>. This misses a great opportunity to improve the regions of these neighborhoods that are hindered by crime and reduced property values resulting from the massive shadow and noise cast by an elevated roadway.
- 5) By eliminating HWY 99 through downtown Seattle, it provides a great opportunity to remake Highway-99 North of the city from its current status as a heavily trafficked, crime ridden eye soar. Because traffic volumes will be reduced, the center lane could be eliminated, and the area from downtown on northward converted to a tree lined boulevard that serves as an enjoyable residential neighborhood, and a pleasurable connection into the downtown area.

A greatly applaud the hard work your team is putting into making our city and region a more enjoyable place to live, and would like to ask that you carefully consider this one additional alternative.

Thank you,
Brian McNeill
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I-350-001

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.

Since the publication of the Draft EIS in 2004, the Seattle Monorail Project has been cancelled.