

I-382-001

Re: Draft EIS for the Options Involving Viaduct

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

There is so much good material in the draft EIS on the various possible ways to deal with the certainty that the viaduct must be replaced. I will eschew rehashing the detail of the report and stick to the big picture.

The most important thing to recognize, I feel, is that the way the viaduct is dealt with can and should be the defining moment for the "boomer" generation that is at its crest and soon to be on the way gradually to retirement. (While all generations will be involved with this decision, I say this because we currently represent the largest age cohort). We've enjoyed the benefits of those who came before us and created Arboretums and lovely University of Washington campus vistas, cleaned up Lake Washington waters, created the Seattle Center, and many other items in our built infrastructure too numerous to mention. Our generation has built a lot of office towers and shopping centers, condos and sports stadiums, but nothing that by itself seems to count as a true legacy to future generations. We are running out of time to do so.

It is not overstating it to say, I believe, that at least one of the viaduct "fixes" can transform the very way Seattle sees itself and is perceived by others. That relates to the fact that even though we are a seaport and our Emerald City fronts the shores of Puget Sound, our waterfront is largely an embarrassment, someplace we hide our visitors from instead of making sure they see it. If we can find a way to go with the "Cut and cover tunnel" alternative, we have the opportunity to create a true heart to the city, a place where people live, shop, recreate and where there is enough space to call it a civic space. This new place will connect the heart of the urban downtown with the soft edge of the water. All great seaports find a way to do this.

I hope the 'cut and cover' alternative can be modified a bit to cut down the number of lanes of traffic that will still seem to dominate Alaskan Way. Can't a portion of the flow be diverted to other streets in the north south grid? And we should make sure the tunnel is long enough that we create a truly worthwhile space, not some Westlake "Park" postage stamp chump space.

The key things here are to not let our suffocating "process" bog us down till the damn viaduct falls down, and the other is to decide at the beginning that while for many items we need to be very cost sensitive, in this case we have to realize that there is a difficult to quantify (but very real) upside that will accrue to creating a truly vibrant, beautiful heart to our city that will pay dividends 100's of times over the course of time. Yes, it will be difficult to find the money, but all involved must be passionately steadfast in adhering to the vision that this is something we HAVE to figure out and make happen. Naysayers turned down 90% Federal financing for an underground Metro for the region, and crushed the opportunity for us to have a beautiful city sized park at The Commons, why not this time see the yeasayers have their day??

Cut and Cover Tunnel is the way to go. The new space created will have the potential to make Seattle a much more special place to live. The new library is an inspiration, if we can create this space the way it should, it can have 50 times the impact the dazzling new library will have on our lives and for the lives of those who will follow us.

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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.

6/26/2004