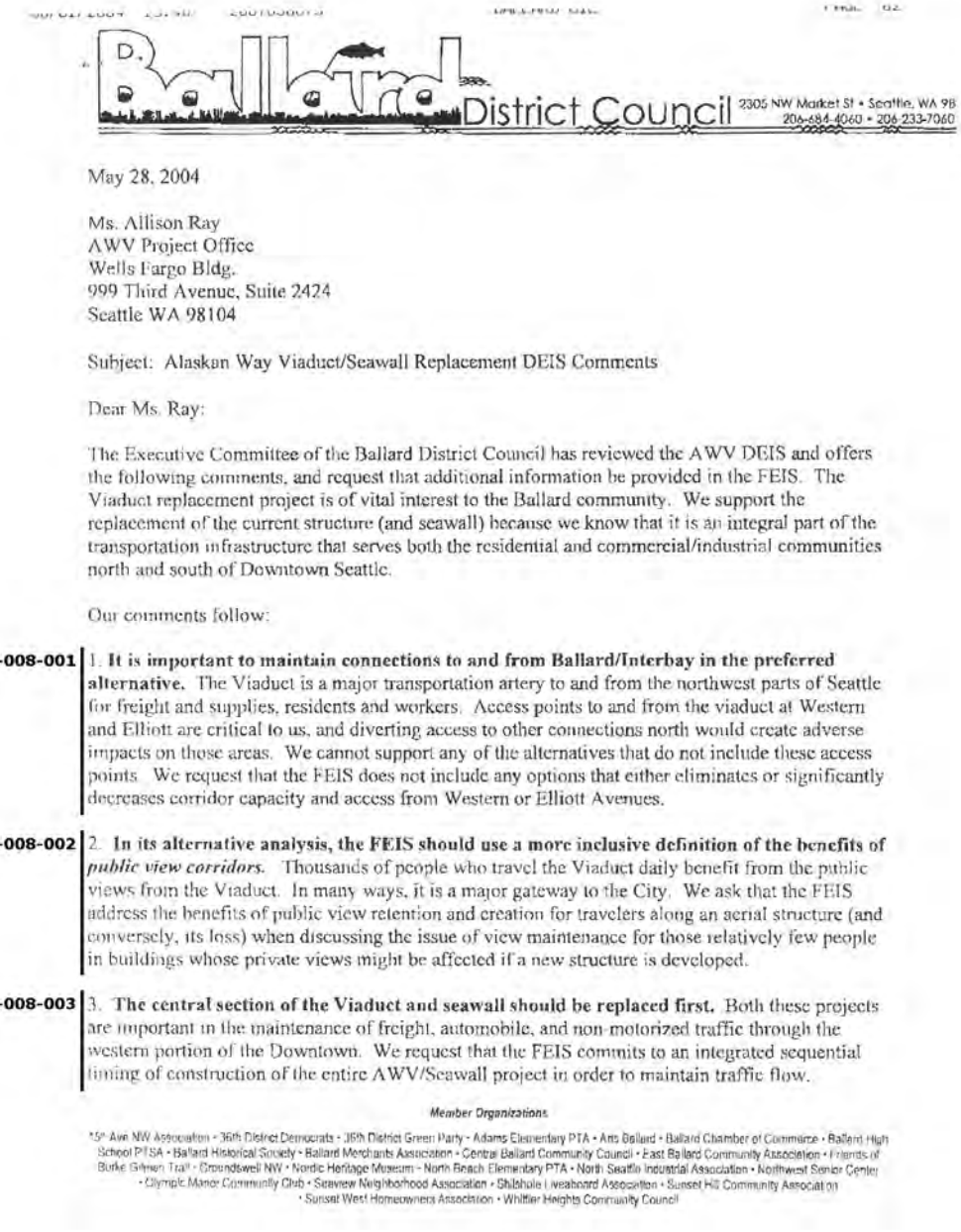

D. Ballard District Council

2305 NW Market St • Seattle, WA 98
206-684-4060 • 206-233-7060

May 28, 2004

Ms. Allison Ray
AWV Project Office
Wells Fargo Bldg.
999 Third Avenue, Suite 2424
Seattle WA 98104

Subject: Alaskan Way Viaduct/Seawall Replacement DEIS Comments

Dear Ms. Ray:

The Executive Committee of the Ballard District Council has reviewed the AWV DEIS and offers the following comments, and request that additional information be provided in the FEIS. The Viaduct replacement project is of vital interest to the Ballard community. We support the replacement of the current structure (and seawall) because we know that it is an integral part of the transportation infrastructure that serves both the residential and commercial/industrial communities north and south of Downtown Seattle.

Our comments follow:

C-008-001 1. **It is important to maintain connections to and from Ballard/Interbay in the preferred alternative.** The Viaduct is a major transportation artery to and from the northwest parts of Seattle for freight and supplies, residents and workers. Access points to and from the viaduct at Western and Elliott are critical to us, and diverting access to other connections north would create adverse impacts on those areas. We cannot support any of the alternatives that do not include these access points. We request that the FEIS does not include any options that either eliminates or significantly decreases corridor capacity and access from Western or Elliott Avenues.

C-008-002 2. **In its alternative analysis, the FEIS should use a more inclusive definition of the benefits of *public view corridors.*** Thousands of people who travel the Viaduct daily benefit from the public views from the Viaduct. In many ways, it is a major gateway to the City. We ask that the FEIS address the benefits of public view retention and creation for travelers along an aerial structure (and conversely, its loss) when discussing the issue of view maintenance for those relatively few people in buildings whose private views might be affected if a new structure is developed.

C-008-003 3. **The central section of the Viaduct and seawall should be replaced first.** Both these projects are important in the maintenance of freight, automobile, and non-motorized traffic through the western portion of the Downtown. We request that the FEIS commits to an integrated sequential timing of construction of the entire AWV/Seawall project in order to maintain traffic flow.

Member Organizations

15th Ave NW Association • 36th District Democrats • 36th District Green Party • Adams Elementary PTA • Arts Ballard • Ballard Chamber of Commerce • Ballard High School PTSA • Ballard Historical Society • Ballard Merchants Association • Central Ballard Community Council • East Ballard Community Association • Friends of Burke Gilman Trail • Groundswell NW • Nordic Heritage Museum • North Beach Elementary PTA • North Seattle Industrial Association • Northwest Senior Center • Olympic Manor Community Club • Seaview Neighborhood Association • Shilshole Liveaboard Association • Sunset Hill Community Association • Sunset West Homeowners Association • Whittier Heights Community Council

C-008-001

Since 2004, the project has evolved (please refer to the Final EIS for updated information). The preferred Bored Tunnel Alternative would remove the Elliott and Western ramps. The connection between Alaskan Way and Elliott and Western Avenues would be constructed as a separate project. The Cut-and-Cover Tunnel and Elevated Structure Alternatives would include ramps between SR 99 and Elliott and Western Avenues.

C-008-002

Many people have expressed that they enjoy the views when traveling on the viaduct. The visual character and quality of the views, as well as the likely viewer response of drivers and passengers, were discussed for each alternative in the 2004 Draft EIS, 2006 and 2010 Supplemental Draft EISs, and Final EIS.

The Final EIS analysis considers views in the SR 99 corridor, which is designated as a City of Seattle Scenic Route, and identifies and assesses designated view corridors largely along east-west streets. Views from the roadway and of the viaduct structure are both assessed. The lead agencies considered the visual quality analysis in Appendix D, Visual Quality Discipline Report, in the 2004 Draft EIS, and 2006 and 2010 Supplemental Draft EISs during the decisionmaking process.

C-008-003

The lead agencies agree that the seismically vulnerable sections need to be replaced as soon as possible. Chapter 3 of the Final EIS describes the construction sequencing, staging, and durations for the preferred alternative and other alternatives. Please refer to Chapters 6 and 8 in the Final EIS and Appendix C, Transportation Discipline Report for details about the temporary construction effects and mitigation for traffic.

C-008-004

4. **The Ballard District Council believes the Aerial Alternative has comparative advantages over the other alternatives in terms of traffic capacity, safety and cost issues (See attached Statement of Principles adopted in March 2003).** The Surface Alternative would severely reduce capacity for all modes of transportation. It mixes various automobile and freight traffic with bicyclists and pedestrians (tourists) along the waterfront and has potential for creating significant conflict among the different transportation modes. The Bypass Tunnel alternative also reduces capacity for all modes of transportation and has similar potential safety conflicts. The Tunnel Alternative has two additional problems: it would not permit the transport of hazardous materials, and would require a significantly higher level of funding - a funding level that would be difficult to achieve. The Rebuild Alternative would result in a structure with narrow lanes, potentially causing a safety hazard and reduction in useful capacity.

Therefore, the Ballard District Council supports the Aerial Alternative. Our support of this alternative assumes that there will be concurrent improvements at grade level as well, in order to facilitate the movement of pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the DEIS and hope that our observations and questions are addressed in the FEIS

Sincerely,

Warren Aakervik, Jr.
President

Attachment

C-008-004

FHWA, WSDOT, and the City of Seattle appreciate receiving your comments on the Aerial Alternative. Elements of the Rebuild and Aerial Alternatives were incorporated into the Elevated Structure Alternative to meet today's safety standards while minimizing the effects of a wider structure. This alternative was analyzed in the 2006 Supplemental Draft EIS, and the design was refined in the Final EIS. Because the project has evolved since comments were submitted in 2004, please refer to the Final EIS for current information.

Principles to Guide Reconstruction/Replacement of the SR99/Alaskan Way Viaduct *and Seawall*
Adopted by BINMIC Action Committee
January 8, 2003
Ballard District Council March 2003

1. Recognize that BINMIC and Duwamish industrial areas are interdependent and require predictable and efficient connecting routes at all times. Efficient, effective arterial and rail connections along the entire SR99/Viaduct route are essential to the economic viability of both areas and the entire city.

2. Design Viaduct and Seawall projects so that automobile and truck access to and from Ballard/15th Avenue West to SR99/AlaskanWay Viaduct is grade-separated from railroad crossings and where possible, or due to significant access demands, from other modes of transportation as well. Access to SR99/viaduct will continue to be on the east side of the Burlington Northern main line tracks, or if access must be moved across the railroad tracks, this access must be grade separated. We recommend full consideration of either elevated (ramps) or tunneled options to ensure efficient corridor access, especially at the northwest portal (Western approaches from Elliott to Broad and Virginia).

3. Maintain or improve road and rail capacity for freight movement from the Ballard Interbay Northend Manufacturing Industrial Center to Alaskan Way after completion of the project. Other projects such as the Art Museum's sculpture garden and redevelopment of the waterfront urban corridor must not be allowed to reduce this capacity.

4. Maintain or improve freight access to the waterfront and Alaskan Way. Freight must be allowed to use any new or rehabilitated structures, and have continued access to the waterfront.

5. Maintain predictable access to and from the Ballard Interbay industrial area to SR99/viaduct and related freeways and arterials during construction, and use all possible means (email, web listings, real time signage) to alert corridor users of changes in access routes.

6. Maintain access and unrestricted movement by vehicles carrying hazardous material cargo through this corridor including any interim period during construction.

7. Design all roadway grades to accommodate the unique needs of freight vehicles.

8. Provide for direct freight access to downtown Seattle destinations, including particularly deliveries within the waterfront area and immediate uplands areas from Elliott to Spokane Street.

9. Coordinate the schedule and design for Viaduct and Seawall projects with other nearby transportation, utility, and private or public development projects, and avoid multiple, sequential, and redundant rights of way closures or restrictions.