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Comment Category: Comment on all alternatives

Comment Location: Chapter-1, Page-1

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Comment:

I-0707-001

I have lived in my home in the Roanoke Park/Portage Bay neighborhood for 22 years. I used to live in Kirkland while attending the University of Washington, so I have first hand experience with the commute across 520 also. (Believe me, it was bad in the 1970s and early 1980s too).

I am very concerned about the adverse impact that the current proposals will have upon our neighborhood, Seattle, and the Eastside communities alongside the path of 520. I am concerned about the impact upon wetlands, fish, fowl, and wildlife populations. I am amazed that anyone would consider a 6 lane alternative as being at all reasonable and appropriate. Further, from what was presented at the meetings that I was able to attend, the 6 lane proposals are in reality 8 lane or larger proposals because of the current requirements for shoulders, "emergency" lanes, and bus acceleration/merge lanes. Even the 4 lane proposal is too big, given the current highway design standards.

Seattle fought the RH Thompson Expressway and we can only thank those residents who stood up to the pressures to build that highway. I cannot believe that we are again facing similar choices, with such limited options.

In many ways, the DEIS has shown itself to be woefully inadequate -- especially in its global failure to consider seriously aggressive peak-load or congestion pricing (tolls shouldn't be used simply to raise project funds), the environmental impacts, and the impacts upon surface streets and I-5 within Seattle. I also do not understand the shortshrift given tunnel options.

I-0707-002

It is also troubling that many of the public meetings were set on very short notice.

I-0707-003

I also don't understand the apparent interest in making a decision so soon.

Before considering the current proposals, I believe that the WSDOT should first consider instituting aggressive congestion pricing tolls and see how rush hour traffic is affected -- in terms of getting people out of single occupancy vehicles, changing trips patterns to different times of the day, and encouraging people to live near where they work. All of these are laudable goals and warrant careful review.

I-0707-004

[In passing, I note that the current DEIS suggests that income redistribution effects would be both significant and socially unacceptable such that they would swamp any proposed benefit (which might not be true). But what benefit is met by having people, of all income levels, sit and waste time in traffic jams? It should be obvious (but to many it isn't) that time is the one resource that cannot be recaptured or recycled. Further, if one is truly concerned that income redistribution effects could be very great, several public sector economists have suggested mechanisms to return supposed "excess receipts" back to low income groups

I-0707-001

Comment Summary:

Alternatives Development

Response:

See Section 1.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-0707-002

Comment Summary:

Coordination with Other Transportation Projects

Response:

See Section 1.0 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-0707-003

Comment Summary:

Early Tolling

Response:

See Section 3.3 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-0707-004

Comment Summary:

Environmental Justice

Response:

Please see Section 8.1 of the Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-0707-004

through a variety of alternative programs. Professor Halvorsen (now chair) of the Department of Economics at the University of Washington is an economist who has explored such issues with respect to other public services such as electrical utility pricing models.]

In summary, I can only hope that the WSDOT (and its consultants) for once will and resist the WSDOT's natural tendency to build and build and build again.

Respectfully,
MARK B. NERHEIM