

September 18, 2006

WSDOT  
Attn: Kate Stenberg, AWV Environmental Manager  
AWV Project Office (Wells Fargo Building)  
999 Third Avenue, Suite 2424  
Seattle, WA 98104-4019

Dear Ms. Stenberg:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the recently issued Supplemental Draft EIS (SDEIS) for the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project (AWV). The Belltown Business Association, representing many businesses in the immediate area of the Viaduct, has reviewed the SDEIS and offers the following comments.

**C-058-001** First of all, it is very gratifying to us that the project partners have elected to include the "Under Elliott and Western" option as the primary alternative for the transition segment between the Battery Street Tunnel (BST) and the new tunnel. This option makes sense in many ways, not the least of which is the dramatic decrease in environmental impacts to our community when compared with the other alternative. Let us reemphasize that the other alternative, the "Over Elliott and Western" option, is totally unacceptable to the Belltown business and residential community because this outcome will leave us in a worse position in terms of noise, dust, and visual impacts than with the structure as it is today. Contrary to what is stated in the SDEIS, the Over Elliott option would not be "similar to the way that it is today." It would be a larger and higher highway that would increase noise, dust, and visual impact to the Belltown community. Belltown will be suffering tremendous negative impact during the lengthy construction period, and it is unconscionable that the conclusion of the "construction decade" could leave us worse off than we are now.

**C-058-002** Although we are pleased with the representation of the Under Elliott option as the primary alternative, we are disappointed that one of our key requests, i.e., the lidding of the entire stretch of highway between the new tunnel and the BST, is not included in the project plans. In addition to completely negating the adverse effects of the highway on our community, this lid would be a tremendous public asset providing substantial developable open space, a significant connection between Belltown and the Waterfront, and improved pedestrian and bicycle connections in this area. We continue to hope that the project designers will forthrightly make provisions in the design for the AWV so that the full lidding of the transition could be readily accomplished should funding become available. We support the partial lid that is proposed as an alternative (the Steinbrueck Lid) so long as it does not preclude the future lidding of the entire transition segment.

**C-058-003** Finally, although we are being presented with an EIS for review, many of the most significant environmental issues are related to the decade long construction period and its

### **C-058-001**

FHWA, WSDOT, and the City of Seattle appreciate receiving your comments supporting configuring SR 99 under Western and Elliott Avenues. We also note your concerns related to the "over Western and Elliott" configuration. With the Cut-and-Cover Tunnel Alternative, SR 99 would be constructed under Elliott and Western Avenues. The Elevated Structure Alternative no longer proposes replacing the current Western and Elliott overpass with a new elevated structure. Instead the existing structure in this area would be retrofitted. This proposal would lower costs, and would not noticeably alter existing conditions in regards to noise, dust, and views.

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 that it has received from diverse interests. With this alternative, the Elliott/Western Connector is a separate project. Please refer to the Final EIS for current information.

### **C-058-002**

A lid was incorporated into the design of the 2006 Cut-and-Cover Tunnel Alternative and evaluated in the 2006 Supplemental Draft EIS. It was included in the project, due in part to numerous 2004 Draft EIS public comments requesting the lead agencies to consider a lid in the Pike Place/Belltown area. The proposed lid would extend north from where SR 99 emerges from the tunnel's north portal near Pine Street to Victor Steinbrueck Park near Virginia Street. The design for this lid structure with the current Cut-and-Cover Alternative is described in this Final EIS and in Appendix B, Alternatives Description and Construction Methods Discipline Report.

### **C-058-003**

As part of the project's planning and design process the lead agencies have met with residents, business owners, property owners, and other

C-058-003

draconian, long-term effects on the Belltown community. The SDEIS covers these impacts in a very general manner and indicates that there will be further study, public meetings, and committee work to address the impacts of the construction decade including traffic (transportation management), noise, and mitigation. To many of us who are Belltown residents or business people, these construction period effects will be interwoven into major portions of our lives, and we are very deeply apprehensive about them. So, we need to see a more specific plan and timeline as to how noise, dust, and traffic impacts are going to be addressed and how the community will be included in the process from the beginning. Some information of this nature was provided to us at the recent public hearing, and we are looking forward to additional communications and involvement in this process.

We continue to be appreciative of the continued opportunities for communication with the project leadership and with the efforts of the team to tackle what is surely the most formidable public works project ever undertaken in Seattle. We look forward to working with the project team to help bring this project to a successful conclusion. Please feel free to contact me or our Transportation Chair, Greg Schuler (contact information below) should you have questions regarding the BBA positions.

Sincerely yours,

Chuck Stempler  
President  
Belltown Business Association

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stakeholders in the Belltown neighborhood to provide information about the project - including potential effects - and to solicit ideas about how to minimize and mitigate these effects. We appreciate the cooperation of Belltown stakeholders and will continue to meet with them throughout the project to ensure that the project's planning and design addresses the Belltown neighborhood concerns.

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. Specifically, compared to the Cut-and-Cover Tunnel and Elevated Structure Alternatives, it avoids substantial closure of SR 99 during construction and it can be built in a shorter period of time than the other two alternatives. Extended closure of SR 99 would be more disruptive to Seattle and the Puget Sound region. Chapters 5 (Permanent Effects) and 6 (Construction Effects) in the Final EIS provide a more in-depth comparison of trade-offs for the three alternatives.