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From: Ralph Pease [mailto:RalphP@ARGOSYCRUISES.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, May 12, 2004 2:47 PM
To: 'awvdeiscomments@wsdot.wa.gov'
Cc: John Blackman; Duran Larsen
Subject: Viaduct & Seawall EIS comments

Sirs,

My compliments on the Draft EIS report for the five alternative solutions for the Viaduct and Seawall project. I appreciate the open approach and the opportunity to comment on it along the way.

B-011-001

Of the five alternatives Argosy is strongly apposed to the the Surface alternative due to pedestrian safety, the increased surface street congestion and long term impact on our business. Argosy supports the Tunnel option with Side-By Side Aerial around SR and ramps to Elliott/Western. But equally important to us is the length of time that construction work will impact the central waterfront. Particularly during the summer season. We strongly recommend and request that the work be phased in such a way to cause minimal disruption during this critical time of the year for our business.

B-011-002

Other important things to consider:

In the event that one of the two tunnel alternatives are chosen and built, a major concern of ours is the subsequent zoning of the area between Columbia and Pike, Western and Alaskan Way. The prospect of this area being approved for residential of any type, (except maybe large hotels), would be extremely detrimental to our business. Argosy carries over a half million passengers a year, occasionally operating with round-the-clock departures. Motorcoaches pick up and drop off many of these passengers early and late in the day and our deliveries are occasionally made 24 hours a day. Severe after hours noise restrictions would add greatly to our cost of operation and could force us out of business. As anyone who works on the waterfront can attest, the cars on the viaduct as it exist today are the primary noise generators. We are hardly noticed. With the viaduct eliminated we fear that there will be a powerful interest in building high end condominiums similar to those across from Pier 62 & 63. These would not only change the look and feel of the waterfront but also the businesses that could survive here.

B-011-004

Both during the construction and after please don't forget the water side of the waterfront and how this can lend itself to short and long term solutions such as the West Seattle Water Taxi or other water taxi applications. These can be quick to start up, flexible in operation and inexpensive by comparison to light rail, monorail, temporary bus service or road building alternatives. Particularly when multi-year agreements can be worked out. Argosy is currently operating the West Seattle Water Taxi for King County and as a partner in Aqua Express we intend to start a foot-passenger commuter service to Kingston this coming fall. Please let me know if there is anything along these lines that Argosy can be of service with.

Thank you,

Ralph Pease
V. P. of Operations
Argosy Cruises

B-011-001

FHWA, WSDOT, and the City of Seattle appreciate receiving your comments on the 2004 Cut-and-Cover Tunnel Alternative. 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.

B-011-002

Construction activities, especially viaduct demolition, along the central waterfront would interfere with access to businesses and properties adjacent to the project on either side of the right-of-way. The project team has met numerous times with the businesses in the central waterfront to prepare them for the upcoming construction and discuss a variety of mitigation measures. These mitigation measures are discussed in Chapter 8 of the Final EIS.

B-011-003

The 2004 Draft EIS, 2006 and 2010 Supplemental Draft EISs, and Final EIS acknowledge that the proposed project may result in opportunities for redevelopment created by removing the viaduct. This may occur under both the Bored Tunnel and Cut-and-Cover Tunnel Alternatives. It is also acknowledged that substantial changes would occur in the relationship between the waterfront and upland properties leading to the downtown core. To the extent that the existing viaduct has been perceived as a barrier to waterfront uses, new development on vacant or under-used property or redevelopment may take place around the new Alaskan Way surface street. However, no development within the existing viaduct right-of-way is proposed as part of the proposed project.

It is anticipated that any potential new development would be consistent with zoning designations for this area. Presently, most of this area is

within the City's DH2 (Downtown Harborfront), PMM 85 (Pike Market Mixed) and DMC 160 (Downtown Mixed Commercial) zones. Residential use is a permitted use in both the PMM and DMC zones, and limited residential uses currently occur in this area. Other permitted uses within these zones include a variety of retail, office, restaurant, and entertainment uses.

The proposed project, however, would be only one of a number of influences that will likely determine the exact mix of development that may take place in this area. The City is currently studying the waterfront area as part of its Central Waterfront planning efforts, and the results of these studies will also guide future uses there. Other important factors would include market and economic conditions which may, or may not, favor new residential development. If new residential development occurs, it will be required to comply with City land use and zoning regulations.

B-011-004

Thank you for your comment regarding the Water Taxi. The alternatives analyzed in the 2004 Draft EIS did not include items other than those directly related to replacement of the existing viaduct. Since the Draft EIS was published in 2004, the Water Taxi operations have been expanded and are now operated by King County.