

I-046-001

FHWA, WSDOT, and the City of Seattle appreciate receiving your comments on the Elevated Structure Alternative.

From: fnharvey [fnharvey@zipcon.net]
Sent: Monday, December 06, 2010 6:16 PM
To: AWW SDEIS Comments
Subject: my comments

I would like engineering responses to my comments please not the P. R. parrot style of which I give an example in Item H4 below. Thanks you.

A lot of what I have written is in the "Public Comments" section of the VIADUCT project library. Please excuse the length of this 6-item email message but I think it ties together well and some people are put off by attachments. I used URL's when I could.

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H1.
This article I wrote generated more opposition to a tunnel and support for elevated AWW.

http://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/150363_firstpersondec1.html

H2.
Here is report of Governor Gregoire favoring an upgrade of the AWW section of SR99. Despite the crowing in <http://ec2-72-44-60-181.compute-1.amazonaws.com/2009/12/27/seattle-city-hall/18780/Best-of-2009:-How-Jan-Drago-dragooned-a-Viaduct-solution/> , h

http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/localnews/2003510439_viaduct05m0.html

H3.
Despite the crowing in <http://ec2-72-44-60-181.compute-1.amazonaws.com/2009/12/27/seattle-city-hall/18780/Best-of-2009:-How-Jan-Drago-dragooned-a-Viaduct-solution/> , here is how SDOT and clever consultants came up with scary video to change governor's mind after wasteful vote of March 2007. This is courtesy of Elizabeth Campbell's using the Public Disclosure Act to eventually get the pdf file in 2009.

go to <http://www.scatnow.com/Documents>
and grab
04262007-Clark-Rigsby-attach1SpecforVideo.pdf

H4.
Here is an exchange of what I wrote on the S Holgate to S King SDEIS in which the replier ignores what I wrote because there was nothing in the script that covered it. It might be a bit difficult to follow.

I-046-002

I think that WSDOT and its consultants interpret the federal rules for Environmental Impact Statement differently than I do.
In the FONSI, entry I-010-001 comments

Having read the environmental impact statement on the southern part of the AWV, I must comment about an inaccuracy that I noticed. While it is true that the visual impact or views while driving south on it won't be substantially different, going north is a whole other story. Under the EIS, side-by-side traffic means that southbound traveling trucks and buses would obstruct the views of those traveling northbound.

Currently traveling north gives magnificent views (serendipitously provided by the original AWV designers) that are so spectacular that they merit "United Nations Heritage Drive" designation. Starting at Holgate, we see the Coast Guard pier and the Pier 46 cargo containers and cranes to the west and soon the baseball field and football stadium to the east. As we get higher, we see the Olympic Mountains and Puget Sound with its tankers, ferries and pleasure craft to the west and to the east the varied architecture of the city. But the view doesn't stop here at S. King St. even tho the project does; to the west is even more of the Sound, mountains, and water traffic, and to the east more city, up close and personal. When passing the Ferry Terminal, we get a glimpse to the north of how ugly the city could become when development is allowed right to the water. True, after Pine Street, the views aren't so special, but the EIS was about the South End of the AWV, not the entire thing.

Clearly, the view is many times better when traveling on the viaduct, compared to surface, tunnel, or side-by-side, particularly heading north. Though not as extensive as the views discussed in the April 6, 2008 edition of the "Seattle Times Pacific Northwest Sunday Magazine" for rich condo buyers and businesses, the views that riding on the viaduct provides are DYNAMIC, offering a splendid slice of Seattle. Furthermore, this is public, not just for car/SUV users but open to anyone who can afford bus fare. Unlike land acquisition problems with monorail, this right-of-way is already in use; improving the elevated viaduct wouldn't require buying up lots of land. Visitors immediately recognize our quality-of-life from traveling north on the viaduct. Even if transportation no longer depended on fossil fuels, (for examples, either a return to animal use, or some type of ground-effects hovercraft), the northbound view would still be spectacular and should not be given up to benefit greedy downtown interests.

Now that I've presented a case to maintain the views, let me discuss ways to do so.

- 1) depending on a positive outcome of the Miyamoto report, retrofit the existing viaduct all the way from the BatterySt. tunnel to S. Holgate St.
- 2) modifying Scenario D slightly, have the elevated structures at different heights with the northbound lanes higher than the southbound lanes and extend this the entire length of the existing viaduct. It would appear that this would satisfy all the federal highway safety standards and satisfy the majority of viaduct users including Seattle-dwellers, all 500000+ not just those living downtown.

I still think that demanding that the "South End" solution be applicable to any of tunnel, surface, or elevated side-by-side for the central waterfront and then

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The S. Holgate Street to S. King Street Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project is a separate project that is already under construction.

The views of Elliott Bay, Puget Sound, and the Olympic Mountains are prized by many. Views are currently enjoyed by motorists and passengers traveling on the upper deck of the existing viaduct. However, the views for motorists and pedestrians using downtown streets in the vicinity of the waterfront are interrupted by the existing viaduct structure. This structure is considered by some to be a substantial visual intrusion as well as a source of noise and shadow for the Pioneer Square Historic District and the Central Waterfront. Impacts to views are discussed in the Final EIS and considered in detail in Appendix D, Visual Quality Discipline Report.

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claiming that the only solution that meets that criterion is what is described in the EIS, is removing the elevated double-deck viaduct by "stealth engineering".

that I made on the EA for the H2K section of the SR99 AWV, the response

In Chapter 3 of the EA (p. 59), under the question "How would the project affect views?", the text states that "views from the new SR 99 roadway would not be substantially different from the existing viaduct. Motorists traveling northbound would still experience panoramic views of the downtown skyline." It goes on to state that for southbound SR 99 travelers, "the views of the stadiums and SODO area would improve somewhat with the new roadway configuration, because these views would no longer be blocked by the upper roadway".

to my comments implies that the only views worth seeing are those of the built environment. Any big city has a downtown skyline. The setting of Seattle on Puget Sound with the Olympic Mountains is what makes it so desirable. Did WSDOT use an AIA architect with no appreciation for the Sound and mountains to write the response to my comments?

Another attempt to explain is to consider the prohibition on building on migrating waterfowl resting wetlands. These areas are not necessarily in constant use year-round but are definitely to be maintained. Now the WSDOT reply to my complaint that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement didn't address my concern that valuable views would be stolen from northbound users of the H2K section of the AWV. It is as if the WSDOT responders only considered the worms in the wetland and not the waterfowl that appear periodically. People are not waterfowl and can adapt when necessary but it seems to me that the users of the AWV, not just the landowners near it, should have a vote on whether to rebuild a safer, quieter AWV.

Let me give another example of why I think that there is a significant environmental impact. Suppose someone decided that the Space Needle must come down for an extension of the EMP and they argued that there was no significant environmental impact because people could still get around that area. I would claim that the views of those who wanted to get up to the restaurant or the observation deck would be stolen because they couldn't do that anymore. Would the WSDOT responders still claim no significant environmental impact? Concerning H2K, those adapters affected are the everyday commuters into downtown Seattle, the everyday commuters through downtown Seattle (who might not have a problem (unless claustrophobic) if they are traveling southbound), the everyday commuters out of downtown Seattle, the tradespeople (plumbers, electricians, roofers, HVAC folk, communications setup and repair workers, etc.) who use the AWV several times a day to go in, out, through Seattle, those living in the Puget Sound region who bring visiting guests from Sea-Tac airport north on the AWV so that those visitors can appreciate the diversity of Seattle. All should have a vote on whether to have to permanently adapt or not.

The vote should be based on complete information, not just upon what the powers-that-be think will convince the voting public to vote for or against what the p-t-b want as, for example the March 2007 vote limited to Seattle residents only in which only 2 of the 6 outcomes had meaning. None of the WSDOT engineers had the courage to correct the information released to the media about the rebuild. There were 2

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ways to do the rebuild, quickly with a total shutdown for 3 years, or, with ongoing construction, demolition, and limited usage that could take 10 years. What the media reported was that the rebuild would involve total closure for 10 years - a gross canard.

Democracy only works when the electorate is informed. Slanting information to deceive the voters is unethical. But, it is obvious why it was done. If folks knew that they could have a safer, quieter, elevated AWV for even the same amount of money that a deep-bored tunnel would cost, the vote would probably be 3-1 in favor of rebuild. Downtown developers using Jan Drago, Tayloe Washburn, and Tim Ceis as front voices, wanted to get rid of the elevated SR99 AWV so that they could make more profits. Their attitude was that if the smooth talking front people couldn't convince the public, then too bad for the public. This scheme was not new but had been going on for years. Even before the Nisqually earthquake of 2001, the parameters for the waterfront design charrette were that AWV wouldn't be there. Despite that, two entrants did include AWV; they definitely didn't receive honorable mention. As early as 2004, I suggested using quieter pavement as what one hears when going from King to Snohomish county on I-5, and even acoustic tiles on the bottom of the upper deck. Because this might reduce noise so that only those with very sensitive hearing would complain, it wasn't even tried especially because the intent was to knock down the AWV anyway.

To come back to the FONSI, I think that replacing elevated SR99 AWV with a surface side-by-side highway has a significant environmental impact and that it would take an informed (all options, costs, timelines, honestly presented) vote of the entire region to allow you to claim no significant environmental impact. Even if this vote shows that the majority don't care, it would still be a significant impact to me, but I would cease writing to you about it.

I-046-003

H5. Some reasons for not buying a deep-bored tunnel to replace AWV

A "done deal", spending public money for a less functional deep-bored tunnel to replace the elevated Alaskan Way Viaduct section of State Route 99, based on alleged fraud and deception should be re-examined and, if necessary, "undone".

There are several parts to the fraud and deception allegation.

1. That the majority supports the deep-bored tunnel is false. The majority in Puget Sound prefer an elevated SR99.

http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/saturdayspin/181511_bqweb10.html

The viaduct project website has exact breakdown of AWV usage. They measured with cameras at all entrances and exits and compared license plates. They also found that more than half of vehicles using AWV were licensed outside of Seattle city-limits.

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/Viaduct/library-meetingmaterials.htm>

I-046-003

FHWA, WSDOT, and the City of Seattle appreciate receiving your comments on the Bored Tunnel Alternative.

I-046-003 Presentation was at August 28, 2008 meeting. Look at "Origin and Destination Information" presentation and at "Meeting Notes" for that meeting. "Public Comments" was also interesting.

The majority of AWV users, the true "stakeholders", want, preferably, a retrofit, and if not, then a rebuild that retains the Seneca and Columbia ramps.

<http://www.westseattleherald.com/articles/2007/08/21/interact/opinion/opinion.txt>

I-046-004 2. The Seattle Stakeholder Advisory Committee did not represent the stakeholders of SR99 but mainly greedy Seattle interests.

Following the disastrous (for tunnel advocates and mayor) vote, the "consulting group", Moore Iacafano Goltsman, Inc. (MIG) produced the "AWV stakeholder interview report" presented at the 13 December 2007 meeting in Seattle Town Hall. This report was glibly presented but EXTREMELY BIASED.

Point 1) They accepted the mayor's spin on the results of the March 2007 vote without comment.

Point 2) Their survey/poll of 69 "stakeholders" allowed all five original plans that WSDOT studied (chart on page 20 of the report), not the restricted vote that the mayor forced on Seattle voters.

Point 3) They did not get a fair representation of voters. Most of the 69 stakeholders polled were already on record that any elevated solution would be a "deal breaker" by 5 to 1.

Why was not also considered the P.I.'s Saturday Spin question where results are at "http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/saturdayspin/181511_bqweb10.html"?

This was open to anyone who read about it in the P.I. over several days, not restricted to a select few. Over 120 were passionate enough to vote; by a 30 to 1 margin, we saw either "fix it" (meaning retrofit) or "don't tear down the viaduct without rebuilding a better one". This is an exact opposite deal breaker than for the downtown interests but for twice as many people.

Point 4) If this was truly an unbiased study, they would have mentioned what most wanted before the mayor's vote -- a state-wide vote ranking all five choices. After all, we are discussing SR99, a solution to regional transportation in and through Seattle.

Despite this clear bias, the "Stakeholder Advisory Committee" was then picked as a proportionally-voting subset of those interviewed for the MIG report.

I-046-005 3. That the EXISTING AWV would be unsafe in a big earthquake does not mean that no elevated AWV could be built that would be safe. (see 5.)

I-046-006 4. That the AWV must be totally demolished before it can be rebuilt is false. WSDOT engineers have studied at least two different ways of having ongoing construction and demolition while the AWV is still being used.

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/8A69CCB4-348F-487C-8E42-8032FE97452A/0/SDEISAppendixBAlternativesandConstructionMethods.pdf>

I-046-004

Following the 2007 advisory vote rejecting both a cut-and-cover tunnel and elevated structure replacement, in 2008 WSDOT, King County and the City of Seattle assembled a Stakeholder Advisory Committee of almost 30 people, representing neighborhoods, business and freight interests, labor groups, and environmental and other cause-driven organizations. This group was charged with reviewing options for the Alaskan Way Viaduct's central waterfront section. As part of this process, the state, county and city determined that any solution would be grounded in the recognition of, commitment to, and integration across a set of six guiding principles:

- Improve public safety.
- Provide efficient movement of people and goods.
- Maintain or improve downtown Seattle, regional, the port and state economies.
- Enhance Seattle's waterfront, downtown and adjacent neighborhoods as a place for people.
- Create solutions that are fiscally responsible.
- Improve the health of the environment.

As we initially evaluated surface and elevated options, many of the stakeholders expressed concerns about how such options would affect the waterfront as a place for people and maintain mobility in and through downtown both during and after construction. The proposed bored tunnel was seen by many as the solution that would best balance all of these goals. In January 2009 the Governor, King County Executive, Seattle Mayor and Port of Seattle CEO announced their recommendation for replacing the viaduct between S. King Street and the Battery Street Tunnel – a bored tunnel alternative. The Washington State Legislature passed legislation that endorsed the bored tunnel and provided the budget authority necessary for its construction, and Governor Gregoire signed the bill into law. The Seattle City Council voted unanimously to

I-046-006 | <http://www.wsdot.gov/Projects/Viaduct/library-environmental.htm>

I-046-007 | 5. The WSDOT directed TV and youtube video showing the existing AWV collapsing appears not to be tied to a computer simulation with adjustable parameters but rather was just a SCARY propaganda movie illustrating how unsafe the combined AWV/seawall is.

It appears to be based on a vulnerability analysis (The 2007 Seismic Vulnerability Analysis Report is available on the WSDOT website at www.wsdot.gov/Projects/Viaduct/Library.htm and appears to imply that the AWV would not necessarily fail without the decrepit seawall failing first.) that apparently didn't use data from the 6.8 magnitude 2001 Nisqually earthquake directly.

What wasn't reported was that the design for a rebuilt SR99 elevated AWV would survive the magnitude 7.0 earthquake presumed in that video and even more intense temblors.

It appears fair to conclude that this video was political especially in light of

[04262007-Clark-Rigsbyattach1SpecforVideo.pdf](#)

a copy of which is on <http://www.scatnow.com/Documents/>

Rather the simulation video served to scare the governor, her advisors, and other key policy makers into feeling that any AWV elevated solution for SR99 would be too dangerous to consider.

This "done deal" must be undone.

H6. Here is my response to an early September 2010 Neal Pierce attack on AWV. Mine was most recent comment.

http://community.seattletimes.nwsources.com/reader_feedback/public/display.php?source_name=mbase&source_id=2012804409

authorize the Mayor to sign a memorandum of agreement that outlined the State and City's responsibilities for the viaduct replacement program, including the proposed bored tunnel.

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Replacing the existing viaduct with an elevated structure along the waterfront is presented as a viable alternative in the Final EIS.

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WSDOT has evaluated many construction approaches. In the Final EIS, the construction plan for the Elevated Structure Alternative does not demolish the entire viaduct before starting to rebuild the new structure. However, this alternative would have the longest construction duration, approximately 10 years. Chapter 3, Alternatives Description, of the Final EIS describes the construction activities for each of the alternatives.

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The video showing the existing viaduct sustaining damage during an earthquake was meant to illustrate what could happen if the existing viaduct is not replaced. Its purpose was not to discredit elevated structures in general. The lead agencies know that an elevated structure constructed to current design and seismic standards would be able to withstand earthquakes that the existing viaduct would not be able to withstand. It is for this reason that the lead agencies have continued to analyze an Elevated Structure Alternative in the EISs for this project, including the Final EIS.

The Bored Tunnel Alternative has been identified as the preferred alternative, but the build alternative for this project will not be selected until the Record of Decision.