
From: Uncle Vinny [unclevinny@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, December 06, 2010 1:17 PM
To: AWW SDEIS Comments
Subject: Do not dig a tunnel under downtown Seattle

- I-072-001** | * Cost -- the city has no money, the county has no money, the state has no money and the Federal government is deeply in debt. Let's not plan to build something if we can't pay for it!
- I-072-002** | * Function -- According to the SDEIS, 1/3 of the current viaduct traffic would not use the tunnel because it doesn't have the downtown exits they need. Another 1/3 would drop out if there were tolls, and given the budget constraints it's likely tolls will be necessary. So, is a \$4 billion tunnel that handles 1/3 of the viaduct's traffic a good plan?
- I-072-003** | * Risk -- The tunnel would pass beneath Pioneer Square and its fragile buildings, but the state
I-072-004 | has been unable to find an underwriter to insure them in case of building damage. The history of large public projects shows that it is a virtual certainty that there will be significant cost overruns. The ground hasn't even been broken and already the cost buffer is being eaten up.
- * Politics -- The Gregoire/Sims/Nickels creation of the bored tunnel alternative was a faith-based leap, and we have now had a chance to analyze the plan they hoped would work out. It won't.
- I-072-005** | * Climate Change -- We should be spending our resources on transportation projects that make it easier for people to use mass transit. The bored tunnel makes no accommodation for mass transit whatsoever, pushing us in an automobile direction when we should be going exactly the other direction.
- What to do instead? Find ways to overcome any problems with the surface/transit option. It's far cheaper, and the risks far more manageable. Please, it's not too late to kill this budding catastrophe.

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I-072-001

The state legislature authorized funding to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct in RCW 47.01.402. According to this law;

"The legislature finds that the replacement of the vulnerable state route number 99 Alaskan Way viaduct is a matter of urgency for the safety of Washington's traveling public and the needs of the transportation system in central Puget Sound."

This legislation also authorizes WSDOT to obligate two billion eight hundred million dollars. In order to fund this obligation the legislation further identifies sources of funding: \$2,400,000,000 of state funding; \$400,000,000 of toll funding.

In the absence of toll funding WSDOT would still have the authorization to issue contracts up to \$2,800,000,000 but the mix of funding sources would change. It is assumed that the toll funding would be replaced by new or reprioritized federal, state, or local funding sources.

The legislation authorizing WSDOT to proceed with the project also has a provision that those in Seattle who benefit from the project should be responsible for cost overruns. WSDOT interprets this as a statement of legislative intent that would need clarification to become operative.

I-072-002

If the Bored Tunnel Alternative is selected, traffic patterns would be altered. For instance, traffic would use the Stadium area ramps to access downtown Seattle and disperse from there along several city arterials, including the improved Alaskan Way, First, Second, and Fourth Avenues.

Additionally, if the new facility is tolled, there would be traffic diversion. The lead agencies acknowledge that a long-term solution should be

sought to minimize the amount of diverted traffic in order to optimize operation of the transportation network. Strategies for optimization will be developed by the Tolling Advisory Committee (TAC). See Chapter 8, Mitigation, of the Final EIS for a discussion of the work of the TAC.

I-072-003

The potentially affected buildings and the monitoring plan are discussed in Chapter 6 of Appendix I, Historic, Cultural and Archaeological Discipline Report, of the Final EIS. Buildings and structures (both historic and non-historic) along the alignment have been inspected and evaluated by structural engineers. The construction process includes extensive monitoring of each building and structure before, during and after tunneling. This will enable any settlement impacts to be detected immediately so that they can be prevented or minimized. If damage does occur to historic buildings, it will be repaired according to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties*.

The Bored Tunnel alignment is some distance from Pioneer Square's areaways and no impacts on them are anticipated. The areaways are included in the monitoring program; instrumentation has already been installed in First Avenue areaways. The areaways are discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 6 of Appendix I of the Final EIS.

I-072-004

The bored tunnel cost estimate is based on WSDOT's Cost Estimate Validation Process for large projects, which was developed in 2002. This process uses outside experts to help establish a more comprehensive budget at the early stages of a project and identify risks that need to be actively managed. It takes into account project changes, mitigation, inflation and risk - something projects that experience cost overruns generally fail to do.

Independent experts and cost estimators experienced in tunnels,

underground construction, and megaproject delivery have reviewed the bored tunnel cost estimate. The viaduct replacement project also has a technical advisory team with more than 295 years of collective experience delivering projects around the world that provides guidance on risk management, construction methods, and oversight.

To better understand the conditions we would encounter during construction, crews have conducted more than 100 borings for soil samples, some up to 300 feet deep, and more than 300 surveys of buildings and other structures along the tunnel route. This information, along with the other analysis completed, also helps to identify and manage risk.

The legislation authorizing WSDOT to proceed with the project obligates two billion eight hundred million dollars. Although the legislation also has a provision that those in Seattle who benefit from the project should be responsible for cost overruns. WSDOT interprets this as a statement of legislative intent that would need clarification to become operative.

I-072-005

The scope of the project did not include transit development in the project corridor. High capacity transit development for the region is identified by Sound Transit in its Long-Range Plan and includes expanded light rail service operating in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel. King County Metro is gradually implementing enhanced RapidRide bus service in the project corridor but the routes would use existing major transit corridors in downtown Seattle.