
From: Arthur Lewellan [lotilivo@peoplepc.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 01, 2010 12:53 PM
To: AWW SDEIS Comments
Cc: Arthur Lewellan
Subject: Supportive comment for the 'stacked' 6-lane Cut/cover Tunnel option...

I-098-001 | **The 'stacked' SIX-LANE cut/cover (as depicted in the SDEIS) is the only sensible tunnel option.**

All studies indicate the cut/cover tunnel displaces the least traffic onto surface streets -- principally Alaskan Way and Mercer Street & Place, plus cross-streets in South Lake Union, Denny Triangle, Queen Anne and Belltown. Redirecting Interbay-bound traffic (*35,000 vehicles daily*) from the Elliott/Western access to SR99 in Lower Belltown, to the DBT north portal and Mercer to Elliott, is "absolutely detrimental" to traffic management. The Lower Belltown access to SR99 is the shortest, straightest, most suitably commercial corridor with the least hillclimb and stoplights (7-9 stoplights vs 12-13 via Mercer and 15-16 via Denny Way). More important, the displaced traffic presents deplorable hazards to public health and safety alongside detrimental impacts to district economies.

Reconnecting the grid at Aurora and Harrison, Thomas and John Streets is desirable, but equally or even more ideal by retaining the Battery Street Tunnel (BST). Furthermore, retaining the BST access ramps in Lower Belltown reduces overall displaced traffic onto surface streets by several thousands.

Cut/cover tunnel advantages include:

- better, faster access in a tunnel emergency
- better ability to reroute/redirect traffic in emergency
- **avoids insane risk** posed by DBT construction and long-term maintenance
- creates more construction jobs
- rebuilds seawall at same time
- better utility access
- etc etc

The deep-bore tunnel (DBT) offers neither best engineering nor least environmental impact to the urban environment.

I-098-002 | Evidence suggests Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) intentionally rigged studies against the cut/cover tunnel to favor the elevated replacement option prior to the March 2007 voter referendum, and more recently to favor the DBT. The general public knows next to nothing about the cut/cover tunnel aside from its construction disruption to Alaskan Way which is essentially unavoidable with any replacement for that segment of SR99. I suspect it is possible to reduce cut/cover construction time by several years and construction impacts likewise dramatically reduced. The cut/cover construction technique WSDOT chose to study (a huge, 6-block trench between Spring and Main Streets, followed by two similarly huge trenches to the portals at Pike and King Streets) is highly questionable. Even if the cut/cover construction disruption cannot be avoided, the long-term benefit of managing traffic much more capably than the DBT makes the cut/cover the only sensible tunnel option.

I-098-001

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

I-098-002

Environmental documentation for the project has been prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)(42 U.S.C. 4322(2)(c)) and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)(Ch. 43.21 C RCW). The purpose and need statement is included in Question 5 of Chapter 1, Introduction, in the Final EIS. Chapter 2, Alternatives Development, of the Final EIS describes the history of the project, including how the Purpose and Need was updated and alternatives development.

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 alternatives.

Please refer to the Final EIS for current information. FHWA, WSDOT, and the City of Seattle appreciate receiving your comments on the Cut-and-Cover Tunnel Alternative.

It is no pleasure for me to question WSDOT competence on this project. The public dutifully demands full disclosure from its planning agencies and expects the same from its mainstream media. The DBT poses too much RISK. Period. Mayor Mike McGinn should be fully exonerated for his opposition to the deep bore tunnel fiasco worse than the Boston Big Dig.

Art Lewellan
Author "The Seattle Circulator Plan"
(blacklisted in Seattle)

PS: I believe the I-5 Columbia River Crossing project is likewise questionable engineering and support a fair reconsideration of Concept #1 released earlier this year but abruptly dismissed by that project stakeholders. The public should learn how a design for Hayden Island with NO RAMPS is ideally possible with 'off-island' access from North Portland.