
From: Robert Ortblad [r.ortblad@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, November 22, 2010 1:28 PM
To: AWW SDEIS Comments
Cc: Rubstello, Patty; Howard, Charlie; Bandy, Mark; Paananen, Ron; Everett, Randolph (FHWA); marquardt@soundtransit.org
Subject: 2010 SDEIS Comment-Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

COMMENTS

Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project
Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

I-120-001

Bored Tunnel Toll - a better alternative

By 2015 Seattle's hourglass geography will funnel about 400,000 cars north or south on either SR99 or I-5. A proposed \$2 toll on SR99 will divert up to 50% or 45,000 cars from SR99 to I-5 or worse to downtown surface streets. This would cause a traffic nightmare on I-5 and downtown.

A simple solution to avoid this traffic nightmare is to completely eliminate the diversion incentive by placing a balancing toll on I-5. A modest exit toll to downtown Seattle of \$.50 on both SR99 and I-5 would raise more revenue than a \$2 average toll on only SR99, be more equitable, and avoid major diversion problems.

An exit only toll is an equitable solution that allowed drivers to pass through the Seattle on SR99 and I-5 for free, and charges only drivers that exist to downtown. This would help the mobility intent of the interstate highway and provide the City of Seattle with the ability to manage downtown congestion.

Gateway/exit reads north of Mercer St. and south of Yesler St. on both SR99 and I-5 would be required. Four gateway readers would charge the toll, and four exit readers, and a little software would credit through traffic. Cars existing the city would not be charged.

A \$.50 toll to enter Seattle's downtown is less than the cost of eight minutes of parking. London currently charges \$15 to enter its city center, San Francisco is proposing \$6, and New York is proposing \$8.

Thanks for the chance to comment,

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At this time, WSDOT does not have the authority from the state legislature to impose tolls on SR 99 or I-5. If the legislature grants this authority, WSDOT, along with other agencies, will work to optimize the bored tunnel's toll configuration in order to minimize diversion to city streets while maintaining efficient traffic flow on SR 99 and generating revenue. It is possible that exit tolls are part of the strategy yet to be developed. The Final EIS assumes the implementation of a specific tolling strategy for the sake of effects analysis and to test the revenue-generating capacity of a tolled facility. A Tolling Advisory Committee (TAC) will develop strategies to optimize tolling and is expected to provide initial recommendations in 2012. See Chapter 8, Mitigation, in the Final EIS for more information about the work of the TAC.