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**From:** michaelwilkins@comcast.net  
**Sent:** Monday, November 15, 2010 12:44 PM  
**To:** AWV SDEIS Comments  
**Cc:** mike.mcgin@seattle.gov; Godden, Jean; Clark, Sally; Burgess, Tim; Rasmussen, Tom; Obrien, Mike; Licata, Nick; Harrell, Bruce; Conlin, Richard; Bagshaw, Sally  
**Subject:** SR 99 Viaduct Replacement Project/Deep Bore Tunnel - Comments on Supplemental Draft EIS

**I-154-001** | Although the supplemental draft EIS document (SDEIS) identifies a large number of potential adverse environmental impacts of the project to Seattle and its residents, I focus my comments on what I see as two broad problems which I think present the great threat to Seattle's transportation network and the city's livability.

First, according to recent news reports, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) acknowledges that it has already obligated over 3/4 of its \$415 million contingency budget to entice the two remaining bidders to stay in the competition after the other bidders dropped out because they believed the project was too risky. The commitment of most of the contingency before the tunneling phase of the project begins compounds the risk that if and when it encounters unforeseen problems during tunnel excavation and construction, including soil stability problems and cultural resources issues referred to in the SDEIS, the State will have no choice but to shift money from other parts of the planned project scope to complete the tunnel work. Unfortunately for Seattle, the other parts of the project -- the surface street connectors to each of the tunnel portals and the demolition and replacement of the viaduct with a high capacity surface highway are critical to the functioning of the surface transportation network which serves downtown, Pioneer Square and the Seattle Center area of the city. Moreover, these at risk elements are critical mitigation to the Project's numerous negative environmental impacts.

**I-154-002** | Second and in addition to the potential adverse impacts noted above, the State's traffic studies show that over half of the daily trips on the existing viaduct will divert to surface streets as a result of two factors: the absence of entrances to and exits from the tunnel in the downtown area and the planned use of tolling to cover part of the State's cost of the \$3.1 billion viaduct replacement capital project. It appears that most of that diversion will be through Seattle's historic Pioneer Square, the neighborhood where I worked and spent much of my leisure time for nearly forty years. I can't imagine how that fragile neighborhood will survive such a forced concentration of through traffic. And according to recent press reports, the WSDOT project manager openly acknowledges that the State has no money in its project budget to mitigate those expected adverse impacts, and he further asserts that any mitigation of those impacts will be a responsibility of the City of Seattle.

**I-154-003** | So, at a cost of over \$3 billion Seattle will get: *diminished access to downtown from the north and from the south; and significantly more traffic congestion on city streets, especially in Pioneer Square and probably in the Seattle Center area.* This alone calls

### **I-154-001**

The committed funds and financial plan for the project remain sound and on budget. The lead agencies will manage the project to ensure it is completed on time and on budget by consulting with a panel of international tunnel experts, utilizing an innovative dispute resolution process and implementing a risk management plan. Also, the bored tunnel design-build contract requires the design-build team to take a greater share of the risk than a traditional construction contract. More than 90 percent of the work will be performed for a fixed price.

Traffic on surface streets in the project area and transportation mitigation measures are discussed in the Final EIS and Appendix C, Transportation Discipline Report, of the Final EIS for each alternative.

### **I-154-002**

With the Bored Tunnel, access to downtown would be provided via ramps located at Alaskan Way and Dearborn Street in the Stadium area. Traffic using the Stadium area ramps would disperse over several city arterials, including the improved Alaskan Way, First, Second, and Fourth Avenues to access downtown. Traffic analysis indicates that this arrangement would result in comparable or better overall traffic distribution and flow than is experienced with the current Columbia and Seneca Street ramps. This is because the current ramps concentrate traffic to a single, congested location in the central downtown. The relocated ramps would instead allow drivers to diffuse through the street grid using many different paths.

Updated analysis has been included in the Final EIS. Please refer to Chapter 7 of Appendix C, Transportation Discipline Report, for additional detailed tolling analysis.

### **I-154-003**

The Bored Tunnel Alternative meets the projects purpose and need

I-154-003

into question whether the preferred deep-bored tunnel alternative even meets to purpose and need statement that provides the basis for the SDEIS. Moreover, if the State encounters major problems in its tunneling phase, as most tunnel projects have experienced, it will have to shift money from its committed scope of work for waterfront reclamation, thus leaving *Seattle's downtown waterfront unimproved*.

If Seattle property owners and taxpayers are then told they will have to pay higher property taxes, property assessments or any other kind of tax or fee to complete work promised by the State or to mitigate damages to the surface transportation network caused by the tunnel, I think voters will feel deceived and will find it difficult to forgive elected officials responsible for allowing the project to precede without a sound and transparent plan for how to complete it and pay for it.

better than other alternatives, as described in this Final EIS. There is no proposal for property taxes to pay for replacement of the viaduct. 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.