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Subject: Protect Pioneer Square: SDEIS comments

Dear elected officials,

**I-036-001** | Please protect Pioneer Square.

· WSDOT has identified 13 buildings with historic significance that may be damaged during tunnel construction, including several that have direct ties to the Seattle arts community (see list below).

**I-036-002** | · Many Seattleites are dreaming of an open waterfront, but the same 4-lane road is being planned along the waterfront with –or- without the tunnel. In fact, the tunnel generates more traffic on the waterfront than the surface street/ transit/I-5 option.

· The tunnel will more than double traffic in Pioneer Square. For over a year, WSDOT has been aware that the volume of traffic in Pioneer Square “would not be acceptable” but offers no alternatives. The amount of traffic - combined with the scale of the interchange itself - would permanently alter the character of this historic district. In addition to the giant portal, likely changes include constant streams of traffic on previously quiet streets, no street parking, elimination and damage to trees, damage to buildings from traffic vibration, etc.

**I-036-003** | · My favorite oxymoron is "value engineering." This is what happens when the State runs out of money and all of the promises they make regarding aesthetics and other culturally important values get cut. All that's left is the mega-engineering. How are you planning to protect Seattle if this project is "value engineered?"

**I-036-004** | As you are reviewing the plans for the tunnels, please address the impacts on Pioneer Square. Tomorrow, I'll be chaperoning my daughter's class on a field trip to Pioneer Square via light rail to "look at the buildings and take the underground tour." Please be vigilant about the tunnel's impacts on Pioneer Square so that tomorrow's experience doesn't become a bittersweet memory for us all.

Thank you,

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## **I-036-001**

Buildings and structures (both historic and non-historic) along the alignment have been inspected and evaluated by structural engineers. 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. The construction process includes monitoring of selected buildings and structures 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. This protocol would apply to the list of buildings provided at the end of this comment letter.

The Western Building's existing poor structural condition means that it cannot withstand settlement as well as other nearby historic buildings. After studying various options for retrofitting or demolishing the building, and receiving public input, WSDOT determined that a protection plan for the Western Building could be implemented with the Bored Tunnel Alternative. The settlement impacts would be mitigated by:

1. Strengthening the foundation with micro piles and grade beams, or constructing a reinforced concrete wall system, or using a combination of both approaches.
2. Installing epoxy grout and wrap on cracked concrete columns and beams.
3. Constructing a temporary exterior steel frame and interior shoring and bracing.
4. Injecting compensation grout to manage building settlement to less than 0.5 inches.

The steel framing and the interior shoring and bracing would be removed when the risk of settlement diminishes, leaving the exterior appearance

**Buildings at Risk:**

At least twelve buildings that are located within the Pioneer Square Historic District or listed on the National Register for Historic Places may be damaged during tunnel construction:

1 Yesler Building -- 1 Yesler Way  
Maritime Building -- 911 Western Ave  
Federal Building -- 900 First Ave  
National Building -- 1000 Western Ave  
Alexis Hotel/ Globe Building -- 1001 First Ave  
Arlington South/ Beebe Building -- 1015 First Ave  
Arlington North/ Hotel Cecil -- 1015 First Ave  
Grand Pacific Hotel -- 1115 First Ave  
Colonial Hotel -- 1123 First Ave  
Two Bells Tavern -- 2313 Fourth Ave  
Fire Station #2 -- 2334 Fourth Ave  
Seattle Housing Authority -- 120 Sixth Ave N.

**One additional building that is a Seattle landmark but not listed in the NRHP:**  
Watermark / Colman Building -- 1107 First Ave.

**The 2 buildings most likely to experience damage (and be torn down):**

Polson Building at 61 Columbia  
Western Building at 619 Western

Here's what the Western Building website has to say: "**The Art Building of Seattle - Celebrating 100 years! More than one hundred artists work from studios in this six story building. 619 Western is one of the largest artist studio enclaves on the west coast if not the world. It has been a workspace for artists since 1979.**"

And what does the S-DEIS have to say about the Western Building? "**Mitigation measures to protect the building may not prevent the need for demolition to avoid the possibility of collapse.**"

of the building approximately the same as it is currently. The work would be reviewed by the Pioneer Square Preservation Board and would be done in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings (36 CFR 67.6). This work would require tenants to be relocated. The building would be unavailable for 12 to 20 months while it is being reinforced.

The Polson Building is not at risk of collapse or demolition, even though it shares an adjoining wall with the Western Building. The surrounding soil would be stabilized with compaction grouting and, if needed, the basement would be reinforced on the interior.

**I-036-002**

If the Bored Tunnel Alternative is selected, the final configuration of Alaskan Way would be determined by the City of Seattle's Central Waterfront Project.

Also, with the Bored Tunnel Alternative, traffic using the Stadium area ramps to access downtown would disperse over several city arterials, including the improved Alaskan Way, First, Second, and Fourth Avenues. 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 Appendix C, Transportation Discipline Report, for additional detailed analysis.

Through the Section 106 process for the Bored Tunnel Alternative, FHWA has concluded that the Western Building is the only property within the Pioneer Square Historic District with effects that rise to a level

that constitute a Section 4(f) use. The Western Building is a contributing building within the Pioneer Square Historic District. The Final Section 4(f) Evaluation contains additional discussion and is included in the Final EIS.

Because traffic in Pioneer Square is controlled by signals, it is not anticipated that the increased volume will affect the pedestrian character of the area nor will it make it more difficult to walk to shops or restaurants. Pioneer Square was historically an active place with considerable traffic and this will not affect its historic character or its integrity as an NRHP historic district. See the Final EIS Appendix I, Historic, Cultural, and Archaeological Resources Discipline Report, for a full discussion of project effects on Pioneer Square.

**I-036-003**

Your comment is noted. 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. Also, the bored tunnel design-build contract requires the design-builder 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.

**I-036-004**

The Final EIS addresses effects to Pioneer Square in Chapters 5 and 6. A more detailed discussion of effects to historic resources and districts is in Appendix I, Historic, Cultural, and Archaeological Resources Discipline Report, of the Final EIS.