



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park - Seattle Unit
319 Second Avenue South
Seattle, Washington 98104

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L7619 (KLSE)

December 13, 2010

Angela Freudenstein
Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project
999 3rd Ave, Suite 2424
Seattle, WA 98104-4019

Dear Ms. Freudenstein:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project. The National Park Service supports any alternatives which will improve the safety of motor vehicle travel through downtown Seattle. However, I would like to share concerns regarding potential adverse effects outlined in the DEIS. This letter's purpose is to encourage solutions and mitigation strategies that would result in continued preservation of historic character for the Pioneer Square National Historic Landmark, the Pioneer Square National Historic District, and the operations of Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park.

F-001-001

The current DEIS notes that the Polson Building and the Western Building, both contributing buildings to the Pioneer Square National Historic District, may experience settling during the proposed project which could result in severe damage to the structures. The document mentions that even with mitigation, the Western Building may require demolition. As both these buildings contribute to the historic character of the District, I would highly encourage the planning team to continue to develop solutions that would prevent adverse effects resulting from a loss of these particular historic resources; as well as minimize damage to the additional 12 historic structures listed in the DEIS.

F-001-002

The DEIS also includes information regarding a significant increase in traffic through the Pioneer Square National Historic District. The District is currently a pedestrian friendly neighborhood, conducive to the provision of walking tours by National Park Rangers for visitors to Seattle. The National Park Service is working with the Alliance for Pioneer Square and more than 40 public stakeholders to develop the Trail to Treasure self guided walking tour through the District. I am concerned that increased traffic volume, as proposed in the DEIS, would significantly inhibit the safe and pleasant provision of visitor services that Klondike Gold Rush NHP provides along the streets and sidewalks of Pioneer Square and impact the Trail to Treasure. These types of visitor services draw tourists to Pioneer Square, significantly contributing to the economy of the area. I would encourage you to seek traffic solutions and mitigations that do not increase through traffic in Pioneer Square, but rather improve local traffic conditions, provide adequate parking for visitors, and markedly contribute to a safe, pleasant pedestrian atmosphere.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the DEIS for the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project.

Sincerely,

[Handwritten signature of Karen Bepler-Dorn]
Karen Bepler-Dorn
Superintendent

F-001-001

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 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.

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.

**F-001-002**

Modest increases in traffic volumes are expected between 2015 and 2030. In most cases, these traffic volume increases are related to expected population and employment growth in the study area and region. The new ramps near the stadiums would provide more direct access for people accessing the south downtown and Pioneer Square areas. Appendix C, Transportation Discipline Report, addresses traffic impacts on the Pioneer Square neighborhood. Included within the discipline report are a variety of metrics looking at roadway and intersection performance. These analyses were performed with analytical tools using data for a range of modes including pedestrians, trucks, transit, ferries, and automobiles. Analysis of traffic patterns for vehicles accessing ramps to and from SR 99 in the stadium area show that vehicles would disperse on to a variety of streets in the area such as S. Royal Brougham Way, Alaskan Way, First Avenue, Fourth Avenue, etc. As part of the preferred Bored Tunnel Alternative and related projects, WSDOT and partner agencies have or will implement several strategies that should reduce the effects of potential traffic congestion in Pioneer Square. For example, the south portal configuration includes bus priority lanes to provide reliable travel times for SR 99 transit service into and out of downtown. The streets that transition between SR 99 and the downtown street grid are designed in a manner that meets the city's Complete Street goals and include treatments for pedestrians, bicycles,

freight, and adjacent land uses. Please refer to Chapter 5, Permanent Effects, of the Final EIS for the discussion of transportation effects for the build alternatives.