
From: LWV President [President@seattlelwv.org]
Sent: Monday, December 13, 2010 3:55 PM
To: AWW SDEIS Comments
Subject: Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement DEIS

C-019-001

The League of Women Voters of Seattle urges the Washington State Department of Transportation to respond fully to concerns raised in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement concerning the Deep Bore Tunnel before any construction contracts are signed and before any further funds are committed to the project.

Concerns raised in the DEIS are numerous and deal with a variety of problems, among them greatly reduced access to downtown Seattle from a tunnel designed to bypass downtown; harm to the citizens of Seattle resulting from the increase in traffic due to the significant number of the current viaduct users who will not use the (reduced access) tunnel; harm to historic buildings from the construction itself; and harm to Pioneer Square resulting from its use as the only downtown access to or from the tunnel.

The DEIS does not consider any alternative to the deep bore tunnel, including the two alternatives recommended by the 2008 Partnership Process, it only compares the tunnel to the existing structure. Nor does it indicate how the additional costs associated with the tunnel—including but not limited to costs resulting from the problems enumerated above—will be funded if current funding plans prove to be inadequate. Given the state's current budget crisis, such a contingency is not at all unlikely. The governor has committed most of the money allocated for "contingencies" to the bidders. Even without contingencies, there is no money budgeted for public transit to help ease the impact. Finally, the failure to include the effects of tolling on usage, and its concomitant effect on funding raises serious questions that need to be considered.

The League of Women Voters promotes an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive. We support a balanced state transportation policy and increases in funding to provide adequate revenue and flexibility for a multi-modal system of transportation. The League of Women Voters of Seattle urges the Washington State Department of Transportation to adhere to the guiding principles developed by the Governor's own Partnership Process in responding fully to the DEIS. WSDOT's plan should

1. improve public safety
2. provide efficient movement of people and goods now and into the future
3. maintain and improve downtown, regional, port, and state economies
4. enhance Seattle's waterfront, downtown, and adjacent neighborhoods as a place for people
5. create solutions that are fiscally responsible
6. improve the health of the environment (ESDEIS, p 3)

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The Bored Tunnel Alternative does provide access both through and to and from downtown. Access to downtown from SR 99 and from downtown to SR 99 are provided near S. King Street in the south and near Harrison Street in the north. Details about traffic effects associated with the Bored Tunnel Alternative are provided in the Final EIS and Appendix C, Transportation Discipline Report. Other environmental effects of the Bored Tunnel Alternative, including effects to historic buildings and Pioneer Square are also provided in the Final EIS.

The 2010 Supplemental Draft EIS and the Final EIS do consider and evaluate alternatives to the Bored Tunnel Alternative. The build alternatives evaluated and compared in both documents are the Bored Tunnel, Cut-and-Cover Tunnel, and Elevated Structure Alternatives. The effects of these build alternatives are compared in both the 2010 Supplemental Draft EIS and the Final EIS.

As part of the alternatives development process for the project, the Elevated Structure and Transit Hybrid and the I-5, Surface and Transit Hybrid were considered in the 2010 Supplemental Draft EIS. For reasons discussed on pages 53 through 58 of the 2010 Supplemental Draft EIS, these concepts were screened out for further evaluation in the EIS as potential build alternatives. WSDOT conducted further analysis as documented in the Surface and Transit Scenario Year 2030 Analysis Results, which is included in the Final EIS Appendix W, Screening Reports.

Effects of tolling the build alternatives was provided in Chapter 9 of the 2010 Supplemental Draft EIS. This information was updated and is provided in Chapter 5 of the Final EIS. Costs and funding are not issues that need to be discussed in an EIS per requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act; however, a discussion of project costs and assumptions is provided in the Final EIS.

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We urge complete transparency in this process and a commitment to addressing all the issues raised in the DEIS—as required by federal law—before proceeding any further with the Bored Tunnel Alternative.

Allison Feher
President
League of Women Voters of Seattle
206-329-4848

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