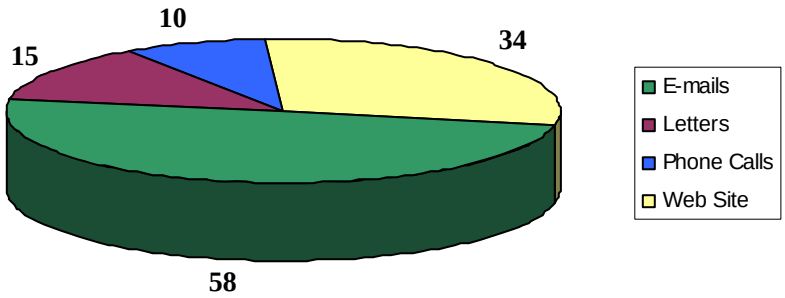
FEBRUARY 2007 COMMENT SUMMARY

Introduction

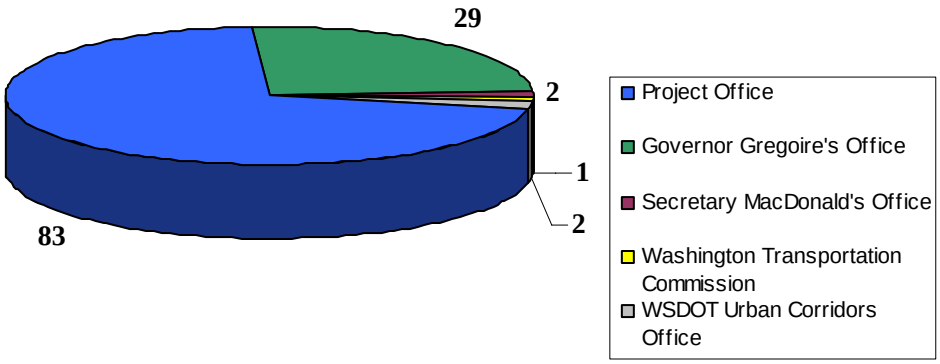
In February, 117 comments were submitted to the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project team.

Comment Format and Origin

Comment Format



Comment Origin



Note: Comments sent to other offices (i.e., Governor's office) were not the only comments received by that office; rather they are the ones sent to the project team for a response.

Comment Categories

There are six comment categories: transportation, design/construction, economic, transit, environmental/public safety and structures/locations. Each comment submitted is categorized by the content of the message. Please note that some comments fit into more than one category, while others do not fit into any of the categories. The bullet points below are quotes that were extracted from the February comments.

Transportation:

This group includes categories such as traffic, connections/circulations, pedestrians, and bicycles. In February, there were 18 comments in this category. Below is a sampling of the comments.

- Which design will handle higher traffic loads (during rush and non-rush times) and increase total throughput of vehicular traffic on the viaduct?
- The argument I hear goes something like, this traffic has to go somewhere. If we don't provide for it here it will have to use the downtown streets, and that would be intolerable. This argument is nonsense. Urban traffic increases or decreases based on the availability of routes.
- The gridlock on I-5 and 520 both ways is terrible already! We will always need Hwy 99 as a relief to those highways through Seattle.
- West Seattle will shut down without the viaduct, tunnel or bridge to connect us to the city. I-5 is so crowded, even with the viaduct, that you can't get onto it from West Seattle during the ever longer morning, midday, afternoon and evening rush hours.

Design/Construction:

This group includes categories such as construction, urban design, the seawall, and engineering. In February, there were 82 comments in this category. Below is a sampling of the comments.

- I call it an "elevated tunnel." A new viaduct would be encased by a building shell with enough soundproofing to keep most road noise inside.
- Why not give Seattle an elevated viaduct with a park?
- Why not the bridge over Puget Sound? It cannot cost as much as the tunnel or replacement.
- I would like to present an alternative tunnel option employing a similar construction process now used on the Sound Transit light rail project, which would entail boring two tunnels about a quarter miles east of the waterfront from the industrial end of 6th Avenue (east of Qwest Field) to the north entrance of the Battery Street Tunnel.
- Wouldn't you be able to pave new roadway on top of the new tunnel, aiding Alaskan Way traffic issues? You could possibly make the tunnel express lanes, meaning you do not have to worry about building exits leading form the tunnel; instead, the new roadway would be the source for all downtown exits, which would be cheaper to construct.
- Our idea uses the crushed concrete from the existing viaduct to expand the shoreline outward, into the Puget Sound. This will accommodate multiple lanes of traffic and provide a revenue opportunity for the state. Additionally, we would like to build part of the viaduct into a multi-story structure to provide further real estate potential.
- Instead of a covered tunnel, consider an "open channel," which would be sunken below ground level, like the tunnel, but open overhead. Occasional bridges connect main streets for cars and pedestrians. Ground-level barriers along both sides of the channel protect people and vehicles from falling in.

Economic:
This group includes categories such as cost, funding, property value/acquisition, and tolls. In February, there were 24 comments in this category. Below is a sampling of the comments.

- From what I've read the replacement of seawall is always mentioned as part of the tunnel budget, but it is never mentioned in communications I've read about the viaduct option/budget.
- I am wondering if the land above the tunnel, where the current viaduct is located would be used for commercial or residential use. If so, would the income from that land offset the costs of the tunnel?
- A primary problem with large public works projects is that the initial estimates do not adequately reflect the final cost. What assurances are in place that the price estimates which have been presented to the voters and discussed among city officials are actually reliable?
- What will be the total cost to us—through local and federal taxes, tolls, and indirect costs—over the life of the structure?

Transit:
This group includes categories related to transit, such as light rail and buses. In February, there were four comments in this category. Below is a sampling of the comments.

- The transit system only meets the needs of individual who travel to a single destination for work for the entire day and who do not have children and all of their issues…meaning the ability to return home whenever need be, quickly, due to a child's illness or injury or that the sitter/childcare has a crisis.
- My proposal is that while building the tunnel for Highway 99, why not build a tunnel for light rail, i.e. a subway, and heavy rail in the same trench. The light rail tunnel and passenger stations could be stacked underneath the automobile tunnel.

Environmental/Public Safety:
This group includes categories like noise, public safety, earthquakes, and visual quality. In February, there were 21 comments in this category. Below is a sampling of the comments.

- Your advisers have downplayed the folly of constructing another elevated structure that will certainly be destroyed by a quake.
- It would be helpful to know if combined sewer costs to prevent existing outfalls directly into Puget Sound are included in both schemes. It would seem that efforts to clean Puget Sound could begin with treatment of sewer water from westward sloping part of Seattle.
- My grandmother refused to ride on the lower deck of the viaduct until the day she died. She was terrified by the people who were crushed on a similar structure in the Bay Area.
- If an 8.0 quake is required to collapse it, then wouldn't we do better to retrofit office towers and condominiums where people live rather than a roadway?

Structures/Location:
This group includes categories like historic structures and districts, portals, stadiums and South Lake Union. In February, there were six comments in this category. Below is a sampling of the comments.

- Replacing the viaduct may not improve traffic flow due to the chokepoints in the Battery Street Tunnel.

Community Briefings

The project also attended two community briefings in February, and received approximately 20 comments and questions. These outreach events are summarized separately; summaries are available upon request.

- February 20: Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport
- February 23: ASCE Younger Members Council