



Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration



Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project

Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Scoping Comment Period and Public, Agency and Tribal Scoping Meetings

Summary

June 8 to July 10, 2009

Overview

The Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project team held an environmental scoping comment period from June 8 through July 10, 2009, for the second Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS). Questions and comments received during this period helped to inform the environmental analysis of the bored tunnel alternative for replacing the Alaskan Way Viaduct.

As part of this process, the project team hosted three public scoping meetings and one agency and tribal scoping meeting. The first meeting (and the agency and tribal meeting) was held downtown at Seattle City Hall, the second was held in West Seattle at Madison Middle School, and the third was held in Ballard at Leif Erickson Hall. The purpose of the meetings was to present information about the bored tunnel alternative, and to gather public, agency and tribal input about what should be considered in the second SDEIS.

Notification

Several methods were used to notify the public, agencies and tribes about the scoping period and public meetings:

- Legal notice placed in The Seattle Times
- Press release to media contacts
- Announcements sent to community calendars
- Notice on the program Web site (www.alaskanwayviaduct.org)
- Notice on the WSDOT Web calendar (www.wsdot.wa.gov/news/events/)
- Electronic postcards e-mailed to community organizations and key stakeholders
- Electronic postcards e-mailed to Alaskan Way Viaduct working group members
- Program e-mail update sent to approximately 6,000 e-mail addresses
- Invite sent to local social service organizations
- Invite sent to cooperating and interested agencies and tribes

Format of the public meetings

After signing in at the registration table, attendees were offered several handouts describing the project. Display boards were set up around the room and staffed by program team members.

The displays featured information on the environmental scoping process, program timeline, how the bored tunnel recommendation was chosen, what will be studied in the second SDEIS, graphics of the tunnel portals and what the next steps are for the program.

Throughout the meetings, attendees were encouraged to provide written comments on comment forms. A court reporter was also available to record verbal comments. For those unable to attend the hearings, we encouraged the public to submit comments via mail, e-mail or fax until the end of the scoping period on July 10.

Attendance at the public meetings

Scoping meeting	Attendance
Downtown, June 8	41
West Seattle, June 10	29
Ballard, June 11	44
Total	114

What we heard during the scoping period – comment summary

Comments for the scoping period could be submitted by e-mail (SDEIS2ScopingComments@wsdot.wa.gov) or mail. Attendees at the public meetings could also give comments by completing a printed comment form. The comment form consisted of the following questions:

- Do you have comments or questions about this project or the public process for it?
- We will study a number of factors during the environmental process such as transportation, land use, visual quality and air quality. Are there specific issues related to these topics we should consider?

During the scoping comment period, which included the public meetings, 76 comments were received from individuals, businesses, community groups and public agencies.

Comments submitted by...	Number of comments
Individuals	42
Businesses and community groups	27
Public agencies	7

Below is a summary of the main themes and findings. A listing of verbatim comments is available upon request.

The most common topics suggested for consideration in the project’s environmental document included:

Topic	Comments
Transportation	32
Air quality	15
Land use	8
Visual quality	3
Other	15

Note: Some comments mentioned more than one topic.

Several comments and questions focused on improving transportation in the project area. Community members and agencies were concerned about delays during rush hours, increased commute times, and the movement of freight. Comments included:

- How will ferry and stadium event traffic be addressed?
- How will you mitigate the increased traffic from the tunnel's north portal around the Seattle Center neighborhoods?
- How will the extra traffic on First Avenue be handled?
- What will the travel time from downtown to West Seattle be?
- What is the magnitude of parking lost and what impacts are associated with that, such as the impact to waterfront tourism and retail businesses?
- Examine the opportunity to link the proposed First Avenue streetcar to the First Hill streetcar that Sound Transit is funding.
- Remove parking on First Avenue in Pioneer Square to avoid gridlock.

Other comments and questions focused on bicycle and pedestrian mobility. Community members suggested the environmental process should consider effects on bicycle commuters and others who use bicycle-pedestrian paths. Comments included:

- Consider how you will effectively move bicycles throughout this important corridor.
- Set performance and safety goals for the movement of bicycles through the corridor that can help guide the final design.

Community members commented that air quality should be considered during the environmental process, as well. Frequent comments focused on decreased air quality caused by emission fumes. Comments and questions included:

- Address how the preferred alternative meets state greenhouse gas and vehicle miles traveled reduction requirements.
- Include air quality issues associated with the impact of exhaust fumes.
- How will maximizing public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian enhancements mitigate air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions?
- Identify sensitive receptive locations, particularly parks, schools, hospitals, day care centers, etc. where people are vulnerable to poor air quality.

Other comments and questions focused on land use. Community members were concerned about ventilation buildings and the Battery Street Tunnel. Comments included:

- Lands vacated by the viaduct should be used for neighborhood parks and walkways.
- What will happen to the Battery Street Tunnel once the new tunnel is in place?
- Will there be any above-ground structures servicing the needs of the deep tunnel in Belltown? If so, please consider the urban design planning efforts of our community.

There were several comments made by community members about the visual quality of the program. Comments and questions included:

- Study public view corridor impacts, not private view protection.
- Consider the vent buildings' visual impacts.
- How will you address the noise and visual impacts on Seattle Center's campus during construction?

Comments and questions that did not fit into any of the above categories were included in the “other” category. These comments ranged from noise concerns to economic questions.

Comments included:

- Include a discussion of the vibration, subsidence and other tunnel boring-related impacts, as they may occur to properties in the vicinity of the tunnel.
- How can noise from the below-grade and at-grade segments of SR 99 between Harrison and Roy streets be mitigated to the benefit of the Uptown urban center and the South Lake Union urban center?
- How will economic activity be degraded in the neighborhoods surrounding the project?

Next Steps

The Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project environmental team will take all of the comments into consideration as they begin to prepare the discipline reports. Formal responses will not be provided to comments received during this scoping period.

The public’s next opportunity to comment will be during the 45-day comment period following the March 2010 publication of the SDEIS. Formal responses will be developed to comments received during the first SDEIS and the second SDEIS. Those responses will be published in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.