

# The Alaskan Way Viaduct & Seawall Replacement Project



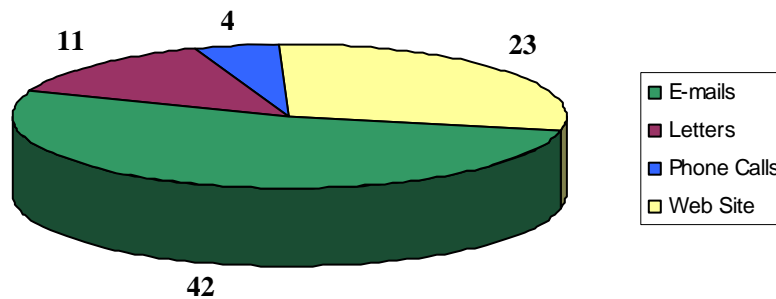
## JANUARY 2007 COMMENT SUMMARY

### Introduction

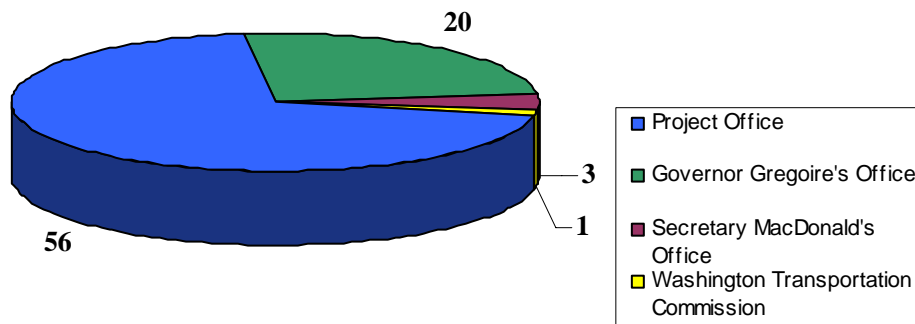
In January, 80 comments were submitted to the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project team.

### 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 January comments.

### **Transportation:**

This group includes categories such as traffic, connections/circulations, pedestrians, and bicycles. In January, there were 11 comments in this category. Below is a sampling of the comments.

- I drive the viaduct every day, either by car or bus. It is now six lanes and it never fails to slow to 20/25 miles per hour between 8 and 9 a.m. A tunnel that is only four lanes is unthinkable.
- We need more capacity. It's bad enough that I-5 goes to 2 lanes now, to take away more capacity and make it worse?!
- Since SR 99 is a State Highway, why don't you shut it down for 10 days and observe the vehicular traffic in the downtown corridor.
- I have never seen any dynamics of the traffic using the viaduct, but from the few times I have been on it in the morning, I would say relatively few cars use the Battery Tunnel and most of the traffic filters into Center City; hence I do not consider it a very important north-south arterial.
- I heard Mayor Nickels refer to the tunnel duration to be 75-100 years. I've heard previously in that same amount of time our population will double. Does not 110,000 vehicles then become 220,000 vehicles?

### **Design/Construction:**

This group includes categories such as construction, urban design, the seawall, and engineering. In January, there were 53 comments in this category. Below is a sampling of the comments.

- I urge WSDOT to reject Mayor Nickels's proposed tunnel project.
- No one is giving any attention to a boulevard on the waterfront.
- Please consider this design for a six-lane, one-level option. Two lanes plus a third merge/open lane in each direction. It can be attractive design with classic turn-of-the-century ironwork and concrete architecture like Pioneer Square area. Opens lots of city view as no city level. Lowest cost to build.
- Why can't the viaduct be rebuilt, but in a way that turns it into an incredible, beautiful landmark for the city? Why can't it be a bridge like the Golden Gate, or something even more stunning? I suggest we stop thinking of it as an elevated highway and start thinking of it as a beautiful bridge.
- Why not tear it down and then put half in tunnel and half in viaduct.
- The problem with the Elliott Bay Bridge option is mainly that it is ahead of its time. A few engineers have said the technology doesn't exist for a bridge there, but knowledgeable engineers see it does.
- Would it be possible to build the Alaskan Way tunnel on the surface?

- I suggest an engineering investigation of building the replacement viaduct over the existing Alaskan Way. In this manner the existing viaduct can be kept operational while the new viaduct is constructed. Retention of the right-of-way will allow for expansion when required.

### **Economic:**

This group includes categories such as cost, funding, property value/acquisition, and tolls. In January, there were 15 comments in this category. Below is a sampling of the comments.

- Why did the WSDOT not include tolls as part of the funding package for the six-lane cut-and-cover tunnel proposed by Mayor Nickels and the Seattle City Council? It appears the inclusion or exclusion of tolls in large WSDOT funding packages is a bit arbitrary.
- I feel the decision should be made by whichever is less costly to the state.
- I'm wondering how much cost estimates for both the elevated rebuild and the 4-lane cut-and-cover tunnel increase each month no action is taken on the project?
- Concerning the viaduct, why is it that we the people were already charged a 5 cent gas tax to pay for it then, and now we're being charged again?
- How are any cost overruns to be handled, under either project alternative – tunnel or elevated structure?

### **Transit:**

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

- We support prioritizing the movement of people and freight by dedicating traffic lanes to HOV and bus rapid transit, promoting the signal prioritization for bus rapid transit, and connecting city streets and mass transit options to improve the traffic flow throughout the city before AWW construction projects begin.
- In the cut and cover tunnel version, there is no mention of a “mass transit option.” What are the expectations for buses, and rail? Has this opportunity been considered?

### **Environmental/Public Safety:**

This group includes categories like noise, public safety, earthquakes, and visual quality. In January, there were six comments in this category. Below is a sampling of the comments.

- Compare the tunnel to a new viaduct in energy consumption and other environmental impacts during construction and during operation. Would a tunnel take a lot more energy to both build and operate than a new viaduct would?
- From the minimal information about these inspections posted on your web site, it does not appear that there is a serious problem with this structure, other than in the section across from Colman Dock.
- The solutions seemed obvious: fix the viaduct or people will suffer/life will be lost.
- There is an extremely dangerous drainage problem [on Highway 99 southbound] which WILL cause a serious accident if not fixed.

**Structures/Location:**

This group includes categories like historic structures and districts, portals, stadiums and South Lake Union. In January, there were two comments in this category. Below is a sampling of the comments.

- The site was very different than the site and situation the viaduct finds itself in today. In the 1950's Pioneer Square was not designated a Historical District, had no housing/condos and was a derelict neighborhood in which homeless shelters, taverns, and street prostitution reined. Seattle's waterfront did not have tourist shops or cruise ship terminals but instead had fishing and rail terminals that catered to the unsightly industrial sector.
- I notice that the Battery Street Tunnel is very narrow, and I question if when the viaduct is replaced with either plan, does the tunnel meet the requirements for lane size and turn radius?

**Community Briefings**

The project also attended five community briefings in January, and received approximately 53 comments and questions. These outreach events are summarized separately; summaries are available upon request.

- January 17: UW Infrastructure Construction Class
- January 18: Design Build Institute of America Northwest
- January 18: SODO/Duwamish Commute Trip Reduction Network Group
- January 23: North Seattle Industrial Association
- January 31: Municipal League of King County