

# Expert Review Panel

## SR 520 Bridge Replacement & HOV and Alaskan Way Viaduct & Seawall Replacement Projects



January 16, 2007

Tim Ceis, Deputy Mayor  
City of Seattle  
PO Box 94769  
600 Fourth Avenue, 7th Floor  
Seattle, WA 98124-4749

Dear Deputy Mayor Ceis:

I want to thank you for the questions you have asked the Expert Review Panel recently. I have shared your questions with the rest of the Panel members. First, we would like to commend both the City and the State for the work that has been completed thus far in responding to the Panel's earlier recommendations. Your efforts to refine the AWW designs have considered many elements from both our initial September 1 Report and subsequent response to additional questions by the Governor. We believe that the resulting hybrid design shows promise in reducing costs and addressing impacts associated with the alternatives under consideration.

As noted in our October 31 supplemental report to the Governor, we recommended that WSDOT should use "affordable context sensitive design" to make design changes which "could result in significant cost reductions." We believe that the City and WSDOT are taking the right path by reviewing the tunnel design for cost-saving opportunities.

In particular, we believe the City and WSDOT can save money by adopting a hybrid design using a narrower tunnel and more transit and traffic improvements on the surface. Also, instead of stacking the roadways in a deep dig, you can save money and reduce risk by putting them side-by-side in a shallower tunnel. These design changes alone could save hundreds of millions of dollars. In addition, changes in and near the Battery Street Tunnel as well as at the south end of the project will reduce costs to all alternatives.

As we said in our previous report, it is preferable to take alternatives to a further level of design before settling on a cost for budget purposes. We urge the City and WSDOT to continue reviewing a new hybrid tunnel design, in order to develop an accurate cost estimate before elected officials or voters make their decision. We also urge the City and WSDOT to consider conducting an independent review of the cost estimate before it goes to the voters.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the latest design efforts. We are encouraged by the progress we have seen, and believe you are on a path to develop the more refined design we recommended last Fall.

Sincerely,



Jane Garvey, Chair *by BS*  
Expert Review Panel

cc: Governor Christine Gregoire