



STATE OF WASHINGTON

January 30, 2007

Doug MacDonald
Secretary
Department of Transportation
Post Office Box 47316
Olympia, WA 98504-7316

Jane Garvey
Chair
Expert Review Panel
700 12th Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. MacDonald and Ms. Garvey:

As you know, the Seattle City Council recently placed a hybrid tunnel proposal on the ballot for consideration by Seattle voters on March 13th. We understand that both the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and the Expert Review Panel have not had the opportunity to fully evaluate this proposal. We also recognize that there is not sufficient time to completely evaluate this proposal prior to March 13th. We do believe that voters should have the opportunity to, as much as possible, make an informed decision. As a result, we have identified some questions regarding the hybrid tunnel proposal that we want WSDOT staff, with the help of the appropriate consultants, to address. Please provide us with the answers to these questions by February 13, 2007, so we are able to provide the voters of Seattle this information as soon as possible.

As you address these questions, we ask that you do so with the following conditions in mind:

1. The Governor, the chairs, and the ranking minority members of the House and Senate Transportation Committees share a common understanding of the conditions associated with the state funding dedicated to the Alaskan Way Viaduct.
2. Safety and preservation work on the Battery Street Tunnel is included in the state funding and will not be deferred.
3. The state has agreed to pay for the replacement cost of the Viaduct. The City of Seattle is responsible for additional costs associated with the construction of a tunnel including project cost overruns. The City will also be responsible for the incremental cost difference for maintaining the tunnel, as well as meeting safety requirements.
4. Any design must be consistent with Federal Highway Administration safety standards. Any project alternative that deviates from federal safety standards must receive appropriate federal approvals and demonstrate comparable safety and reliability.
5. Finally, projected vehicle capacity for 2030 must be accommodated.

Questions Regarding the Hybrid Tunnel Proposal

Several critical questions remain unanswered and have to be addressed regarding the hybrid tunnel proposal. The following questions are for the WSDOT staff working on the Alaskan Way Viaduct project:

1. Federal Approval Requirements — What is the likelihood that the federal government will approve the necessary variances to allow the shoulders to be used as lanes during the peak period? How long will it take the federal government to make that decision? Has the state of Washington ever successfully requested a similar federal waiver on a transportation project? If so, what results have we experienced on those projects?
2. Operational Safety Issues — What are some examples of operational measures that would be necessary to offset the loss of shoulders during peak periods? How much would those kinds of measures cost? Do first responders have concerns regarding access issues and the use of shoulders as lanes during the peak periods?
3. Construction Timing and Impacts — What are the schedule assumptions for the hybrid tunnel proposal and the elevated alternative, and what are the cost implications related to those assumptions? Are schedules and impacts to waterfront businesses consistently evaluated across the various options? What is the assumed cost regarding construction mitigation for waterfront businesses?
4. Capacity — Based on your analysis, does the hybrid tunnel proposal maintain vehicle capacity needs in 2030? Is there any diversion to I-5? If so, are there ways to mitigate or avoid this diversion? If design changes are necessary, how much will those changes cost and will they affect the sequencing of construction? Does the capacity analysis assume new transit investments? If so, are those transit investments reflected in the current cost estimate? Does this proposal require a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement?
5. Utilities — Have the utility companies agreed to significantly deviate from their current spacing, depth and cover requirements that enable the side-by-side configuration? How are utilities relocation costs addressed in the other Alaskan Way Viaduct project alternatives and how does this approach compare to other transportation projects?
6. Movement of Freight — How does the hybrid tunnel proposal impact the safe and efficient movement of freight to and through the project corridor?

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7. Movement of Transit — How does the hybrid tunnel proposal impact the safe and efficient movement of transit to and through the project corridor? What are the assumptions for transit in the hybrid tunnel proposal and how do those assumptions compare to the use of transit in the elevated structure option? What are the funding assumptions regarding transit in the hybrid tunnel proposal and the elevated structure option?

Separate from the questions above, we would like the Expert Review Panel to review the cost estimates for the hybrid tunnel proposal based upon the answers to the above questions. What is the real cost difference between the hybrid tunnel and the elevated alternative? The City has identified some cost savings that could be also applied to the elevated option. Please make a cost comparison of the elevated option and the hybrid tunnel proposal using common scheduling and cost savings assumptions.

We recognize that performing this work in such a short period of time will be a challenge. We also recognize that some of your answers may not be definitive, but it is critical that Seattle voters receive reliable and objective information to make this decision.

Sincerely,



Christine O'Gregoire
Governor



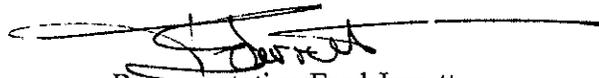
Senator Mary Margaret Haugen
Chair, Senate Transportation Committee



Representative Judy Clibborn
Chair, House Transportation Committee



Senator Dan Swecker
Ranking Minority Member
Senate Transportation Committee



Representative Fred Jarrett
Ranking Minority Member
House Transportation Committee