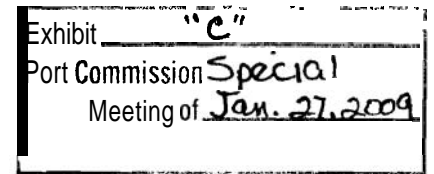




MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL



January 27, 2009

Hon. Bill Bryant, President
Seattle Port Commission
Seattle, WA.

Dear Mr. Bryant:

The Manufacturing Industrial Council supports further review of the deep bore tunnel option for replacing the Alaskan Way Viaduct and will support it as the preferred option provided that the tunnel and related surface road improvements can meet the freight, commercial and commuter transportation needs of Ballard and the rest of northwest Seattle.

Several members of our governing board participated in the stakeholder process and we feel the work of that body produced two key outcomes that are important to the road ahead.

First, the stakeholders helped the Governor and other key elected leaders to recognize the magnitude of economic disruption that will be caused by viaduct-related construction activity that impacts the through capacity of the State Route 99-Interstate 5 corridor. Highly negative impacts would be felt not only along the central waterfront, but in the Duwamish and Ballard industrial centers with ripple impacts extending to commercial aircraft production facilities at Boeing Field, Renton and Paine Field.

Based on state and city tax records, the industrial firms in those impact areas generated about \$65 billion in business revenues in 2006 and nearly every one of those companies rely on the SR 99-15 corridor daily to move goods and employees. To put that sum in perspective, \$65 billion represented half the state's entire manufacturing output during 2006.

If the deep bore tunnel option can minimize construction disruption, it will be well worth the required investment because it will help to keep the heart of the regional economy flowing while a viaduct replacement is being built. For this reason, we also feel the tunnel would be a far better investment than construction of a new elevated structure. The disruption factor is also what separates the deep bore tunnel from the previous proposal for a cut-and-cover tunnel. The cut-and-cover was among the most disruptive options for replacing the viaduct. It appears the deep bore tunnel might prove to be the least disruptive option.

Second, the stakeholder process helped document that the surface-transit option was fatally flawed because it would result in so much car, bus and truck traffic downtown that the traffic volumes would overwhelm any opportunities to seek the amenities that might be possible if the viaduct was removed.

These two factors – economic disruption and downtown traffic volumes – remain relevant to future viaduct discussions because of the need to find successful transportation solutions for northwest Seattle.

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The viaduct and SR 99 are presently used by about 35,000 cars each day that gain access to the route at the Elliott Way and Western ramps north of the Pike Place Market. It is estimated that most of these trips are generated by people living in Ballard or other parts of northwest Seattle. The present plan for the deep bore tunnel would eliminate these ramps, providing SR 99 access instead through a northern tunnel portal that would exist somewhere near Mercer Street east of the existing SR 99 route.

We believe many of these viaduct travelers are driving to jobs in the Duwamish and other points south of downtown. If even half of them opt to commute along the waterfront, it would add 17,000 cars to the 10,000 or so cars that presently use that route. That's similar to traffic volumes on Aurora Avenue near Green Lake. As with the previous surface-transit option, this volume of nearly cars would seriously undermine any aesthetic and environmental enhancements that might be possible along the central waterfront following removal of the viaduct.

If a significant number of the 35,000 cars wind up on I5, it will also create additional congestion on the freeway that will reduce the productivity of the industrial and retail firms that rely on existing SR99-I5 through capacity.

The failure to provide a successful solution for Ballard will also undermine the economic health of the "BINMIC" Manufacturing and Industrial Center, which continues to flourish as the home port for the North Pacific Fishing Fleet and one of the largest "family-wage" job centers in the Pacific Northwest.

Therefore, we believe it is essential to find more viable and productive alternatives for the 35,000 cars now using the Elliott and Western ramps.

Port staff played a key role in helping the stakeholders document the regional economic significance of the viaduct and its role in the SR 99-15 corridor. We hope the Port can continue to provide similar assistance as technical review moves forward.

Please let us know if we can provide any information or answer any questions regarding our position on these issues.

Sincerely,



Dave Gering, Executive Director
Manufacturing Industrial Council of Seattle

cc: Port Commission & Tay Yoshitani