
From: Van Ness, Kristy (Consultant)

Sent: Monday, January 26, 2009 2:56 PM

To: Mattern, Dave (Consultant); White, John; Preedy, Matt; Greco, Theresa; Visconty, Sasha (Consultant); Paananen, Ron

Cc: Grotefendt, Amy (Consultant); Lenz, KaDeena (Consultant)

Subject: AWW MEDIA: Env. questions re: bored tunnel, telephone interview requested.

Importance: High

I received a call from a reporter at the UW -- The Daily. She wants to know about the environmental positives/negatives associated with the bored tunnel hybrid. Ron/John/Sasha -- who's the best person for her to speak with this afternoon? I can pass along her cell number, as I know a number of you are traveling today.

Here's the questions that I received from her, and draft responses I have so far. Could you please review and send me comments ASAP?

What are the positive/negatives affects to the environment for the bored tunnel?

The bored tunnel hybrid alternative is a balanced approach: it maintains capacity for trips through downtown Seattle that the regional economy depends on, and relies on investments in surface streets and transit to carry local trips. The bored tunnel [is ideal for through trips](#) . Drivers will be encouraged to take transit with over one million new hours of transit service added to METRO's system. By moving people and goods more efficiently through and within the downtown area the project will minimize congestion and reduce the amount of pollution from vehicles stuck in traffic.

[The bored tunnel allows us the best opportunity out of other studied options to minimize disruptions during construction. Because its all underground there are no noise impacts from traffic. Tunnel ventilation buildings will be designed to meet noise and air quality requirements. Removing the existing Viaduct will greatly reduce noise levels and view blockage on the central waterfront.](#)

Is there a direct effect on Puget Sound? What is the different in stormwater drainage from today?

Yes, the tunnel will include modern stormwater conveyance systems, [improving](#) water quality in Elliott Bay [to areas that do not have treatment today](#).

Today [most of the stormwater runoff from the viaduct gets no treatment](#) prior to discharge.

To what extent with the bored tunnel meet earthquake standards?

The bored tunnel will meet today's earthquake standards. The American Association of State Highways and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) establishes the minimum

seismic standards for national implementation. Projects requiring major investment, such as the bored tunnel, will be built to a 1,000 year earthquake standard.

Earthquake waves are amplified as they reach the surface of the earth. Above-ground structures are affected by earthquakes because of a whiplash effect at the surface. Structural engineers agree that tunnels are one of the safest places to be during an earthquake, because a tunnel moves with the earth.

We will be producing an environmental document at the end of 2009/early 2010 for public review and comment. This will include further analysis of environmental impacts for the bored tunnel.

She also asked where the bored tunnel was underground in comparison with the other underground tunnels, utilities, etc. I sent her a link to the simulation, so I think she's set there.

Thank you for your help,
Kristy

Kristy Van Ness (Laing)
Communications Manager
Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Program
206.382.6361
cell: 206.300.4312
email: VanNesK@wsdot.wa.gov