



**King County**



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KING COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE**  
GOVERNOR

**GREG NICKELS**  
MAYOR OF SEATTLE

March 14, 2007

To: Seattle Legislative Delegation, City Council, and County Council

Thanks for all your thoughts and concerns about the Alaskan Way Viaduct and its replacement. Major transportation projects in large cities are very challenging. And the path to success is not always smooth.

The past months have been particularly challenging for all of us as we have tried to forge a path forward on the viaduct replacement project. Clearly there are legitimate and heartfelt differences about the specific approach that path should take. Now that Seattle voters have expressed their opinions on two specific approaches to replacing the Alaskan Way Viaduct, we have the opportunity to renew our commitment to key principals and to find common ground.

In 2005, we secured the dollars necessary to replace the viaduct. In 2006, we started to develop options and estimate costs. Now in 2007, we have a much better understanding of the will of our citizens. We are making much needed progress and we appreciate all of your support in the effort.

We all agree that the viaduct is a significant safety risk and must come down within the project's existing timeframes. We all agree that delay is not an option. We further agree that any final selected alternative must adequately address the three fundamental criteria of safety, capacity, and financial responsibility. We all agree that the core elements of any solution must address issues such as vigorous public transit, freight mobility, business disruption, urban design, job creation, the preservation of our marine economy and the future of Seattle's central waterfront. With these principles and criteria in mind we are writing to invite you to join us in continuing our efforts to move forward.

Over the next several months we have a lot of work to do. We will begin by meeting to establish guidelines and a collaborative process that is timely and centers on determining a final alternative. The process needs to be inclusive and guided by the principles and criteria we hold in common. The process also needs to be open to creativity. We must rely on the best available engineering and design through the renewed efforts of the integrated project team from the State of Washington and the City of Seattle with representation from King County. Assuming you agree with this next step, we will be in touch with you in the near future as we get it started.

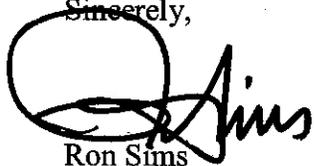
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Second, beginning this summer, we have agreed to initiate a series of projects that significantly advance the overall replacement project in time to avoid the \$10 million in project costs for every month of delay. These early safety and mobility projects are detailed in the enclosed graphic. None of these projects rely on the final design of the center one-mile portion of the overall project. However, by moving forward we will be on track to take down the existing viaduct in a timely manner.

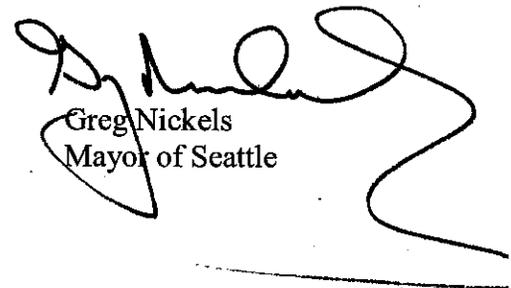
Lastly, we must remain vigilant about the safety of the existing structure for its continued use of approximately 110,000 vehicles per day. To this end, the Washington State Department of Transportation will increase the safety monitoring program and will undertake a series of temporary safety repairs on key portions of the structure described in the enclosure.

It has been six years since the Nisqually Earthquake. We must continue to move forward. We look forward to working with all of you on the next steps. We are confident that we are on the right track to break through the challenges of the past and develop a final design for replacing the Alaskan Way Viaduct in time for the next bi-annual budget.

Sincerely,

  
Ron Sims  
King County Executive

  
Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor

  
Greg Nickels  
Mayor of Seattle

Enclosure