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To Director Kubly and Ms. Yim:

The Eastlake Community Council believes that SDOT, despite the independent expert advice it received, has chosen an alternative for rebuilding the Fairview Avenue North bridges that is financially wasteful and unnecessarily harmful to local businesses and to travel by transit, cars, trucks, bicyclists, and pedestrians. We urge SDOT to publicly reexamine the option of rebuilding only the west bridge while rehabilitating the existing east bridge as opposed to completely replacing both bridges.

From our review of the documents from this project, it appears that the [Time, Size, and Location \(TS&L\) report](#) (published in 2013) and the [Alternatives Analysis Discipline Report](#) (published in August 2014), which drew heavily on the TS&L analysis, determined that there were three potential issues with the “rehabilitation” option:

- 1.) The east bridge is not seismically sound
- 2.) The east bridge would have to be replaced eventually
- 3.) The east bridge cannot support a streetcar

However, SDOT engaged outside experts who found differently. Their [Value Engineering study](#), published in October 2014 – after the TS&L and Alternatives Analysis Discipline Report – contested issues #1 and #2 as presented in the TS&L report in stating that the east bridge’s “condition may not warrant replacement.” The Value Engineering study team went further in stating that a number of straightforward structural reinforcements would be sufficient to extend the life of the east bridge and to prevent collapse during a seismic event. The Value Engineering study also contested the point that such an approach would not be cost-effective, and it identified this option as saving over \$8 million in costs. Furthermore, SDOT’s own Roosevelt to Downtown High Capacity Transit Study has ruled out a streetcar in this area, rendering issue #3 in the TS&L analysis moot.

After filing a public records request, ECC received and reviewed every document about SDOT consideration of the bridge alternatives in recent years. We were unable to find any indication that SDOT did additional consideration or analysis of the east bridge rehabilitation option after completion of the Value Engineering study. Even more concerning, we can find no indication that SDOT shared the study's findings about the rehabilitation option with key stakeholders including the public, affected businesses, the Mayor's office, the City Council, or King County Metro. Not only was the Value Engineering study not made available to the public, but ECC's requests for it from SDOT were rebuffed. ECC was able to obtain it only after our public records request used state law to compel SDOT to provide it to us. To date, the study is still only available to the public through the ECC's [website section about the Fairview Avenue Bridge project](#).

**It is essential that SDOT pause in proceeding with a full bridge rebuild and that it conduct and release to the public a full engineering analysis for the east bridge rehabilitation alternative.** Based on the initial findings of the Value Engineering study, there is strong reason to believe that the replacement of only the west bridge would offer huge cost savings to the City while reducing the burdens of this project on the public.

We also must ask whether, after the completion of the Value Engineering study, did SDOT:

- a.) conduct any further constructability, seismic, or cost analysis about rehabilitating the east bridge?
- b.) conduct any studies about a required timeline for rehabilitating the east bridge?
- c.) conduct any studies of the impact on the public (in terms of local access, detours for all modes, traffic delays, and business disruptions) for rehabilitating the east bridge?
- d.) discuss this option with any agencies or offices outside of SDOT such as the Mayor, the City Council, or King County Metro?

**We insist that SDOT immediately answer these questions and provide any and all available documentation to substantiate the given answers.** If any documents are available about the above, please send them to us and explain why they were not in the documents supplied in response to our public records request.

For SDOT to be an effective and credible agency, it must be trusted to be a responsible steward of public funds. SDOT must also carry out infrastructure projects in ways that reduce unnecessary burdens on the public. Without further detailed consideration of a rehabilitation option for the east bridge, SDOT will have failed on both of these counts.

Sincerely,



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