

This testimony is on behalf of 18 Alaskan Way Viaduct Stakeholder Advisory Committee members who recently sent a letter to Mayor McGinn asking him to stop interfering with a project that came out of a lengthy public process.

In wake of the inconclusive viaduct vote in 2007, a number of civic leaders wrote to the Governor, County Executive, Mayor and City Council requesting a stakeholder process that will “result in a specific, actionable strategy for viaduct replacement”. That letter was signed by both Mayor McGinn and Councilmember O’Brien. Both now want to override the process they advocated because a majority of stakeholders did not agree with their adamant desire for an unworkable surface option.

Mayor McGinn continues to advance whatever stalling tactic presents itself. If the Mayor’s veto is left to stand, Seattle will not be protected as this project moves forward. In opposing the tunnel project, the Mayor supports a surface street plan that would effectively erase State Route 99 off the map, doubling travel time for the citizens and businesses on the west half of the city. It would devastate our fragile economy.

Our stakeholder committee studied three different surface street proposals in great detail and dismissed each one as fatally flawed. While we’ve all heard plenty from the Mayor regarding his opposition to the Bored Tunnel and Transit project, we haven’t heard how his surface plan could possibly work. Or how to pay for such a plan.

The state is moving ahead. The question for Seattle is how to protect the City’s interests. In our view, a constructive partnership based on carefully developed contracts is more likely to produce the best outcome for Seattle.

It’s been ten years since the Nisqually earthquake shook the Viaduct. We’ve seen plenty of examples since then of cities devastated by aging infrastructure: New Orleans, Minneapolis, Port-Au-Prince, Santiago, and now Christchurch.

We urge you to override Mayor McGinn’s veto and protect Seattle’s interest.