

Divided Highways Writing Assignment

Often when the path for new road infrastructure is chosen the main goal of the designers and engineers is to find the most efficient and safe route. However in doing this, the negative effects that the roadway may induce on the current community are often ignored. Negative effects such as divided neighborhoods and less integration of different cultures of people should be evaluated in order to decide the smartest type of infrastructure to construct. Positive effects, such as new community development, new jobs, and promotion of sustainability should be considered as well. After taking these factors into account, the best choice for the Alaskan Way viaduct replacement would be to construct a tunnel. This method of replacement will cause the least amount of disruption of the current community and will have a smaller negative impact on the existing city than would an elevated roadway or surface level infrastructure.

Although it is unavoidable to cause some negative effect when installing a new roadway, the extent of the damage can be controlled depending on the type of roadway chosen. One of the major impacts of new roadways on existing communities is that they can divide neighborhoods, farms, and destroy the vibrant atmosphere. Often the new roadway is designed to be constructed as cheaply as possible by going through the cheapest land. This process often stifles racial integration in the community since by this method the roads often cut through the land of minorities, forces them to scatter, and may act as a divider between minorities and the rest of the community. New roads cutting through land may also cut off a city from its natural resources.

Construction of new roads not only causes negative effects on the community, but also leads to positive effects. The construction of a new roadway will create jobs. Also, creating roadways allow people to travel to their job locations more easily and promotes sustainability of a community. The creation of a new road will cause more people to drive, which may lead to increased community population, but will also cause increased congestion. New roadways may also cause new cities to emerge along the roadside and therefore promote community development.

The type of roadway that causes the most community division and destruction is surface level roads, because they are constructed directly on the land. Sometimes the negative effects of new roadway can be reduced by constructing elevated or tunnel roadways. These types of roads

are not constructed directly on the surface of the land, and therefore may allow for existing structures to remain in place. The construction of tunnel and elevated roadways will not completely evade negative effects on the community however. Although an elevated roadway will promote people to drive on it since it can provide an appealing view of the city, it will also cast a dark shadow on the city due to the large dark region underneath it. Due to the negative effects of elevated roadways and surface level roadways, tunneling seems to be the best option in order to avoid community disruption.

Both positive and negative effects on the community must be considered in the decision of what type of roadway to construct for the Alaskan Way Viaduct. Since this new roadway will be constructed in the same general location of the existing roadway it should not cause much destruction and division of the current city. However, the construction of a tunnel road would limit the community disruption most effectively. Also, a tunnel road will allow for the land which the existing roadway is built on to be revived and redeveloped for the use of the community. A surface level and elevated roadway will allow the congestion of the roadway to be very visible and visually unappealing, whereas a tunnel will not. Constructing the new viaduct as an elevated roadway may allow the preservation of community integration underneath the roadway, but will cause the city to seem very dark and dreary.

After considering the positive and negative effects of each type of roadway on the community, the tunnel roadway would be the best type of replacement for the Alaskan Way Viaduct. This type of roadway will not darken the city as an elevated roadway might. Out of the three options, a tunnel road will allow for the maximum community integration and land use above ground in the region where the road will exist. Also the tunnel road will cause the least amount of community disruption and destruction.