

Alaskan Way Viaduct
South Portal Working Group – June 24, 2009
Meeting Summary

Working Group attendees

- Jerome Cohen, West Seattle Chamber of Commerce
- Jean-Paul Page (substitute for Barbara Cole), Frye Apartments
- John Huey, Viking Bank, Duwamish Transportation Management Association (TMA)
- Joyce Pisanont, International District
- Don Newby, Burien
- John Odland, MacMillan-Piper
- Marty Oppenheimer, South Park
- Vlad Oustimovitch, West Seattle
- Lisa Quinn, Feet First
- Susan Ranf, Seattle Mariners
- Paul Schieck, Qwest Field
- Ed Shilley, Nucor Steel
- Herald Ugles, International Longshore and Warehouse Union
- Nick Wells, Pioneer Square Community Association
- Cynthia Welti, Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust
- Pete Spalding, Delridge

Working Group members not in attendance

- Bill Bloxom, Bloxom Company
- Al Hobart, Joint Council of Teamsters No. 28
- Ron Kieswether, Oak Harbor Freight Lines
- Mike Peringer, SODO Business Association
- Brent Stavig, Starbucks
- Bill Weise, Silver Cloud Inn

Agencies and staff in attendance

- Mike Johnson, SDOT
- Mike Merritt, Port of Seattle
- Ron Paananen, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Christine Wolf, Port of Seattle
- Ron Posthuma, King County Department of Transportation (KCDOT)
- Bob Powers, SDOT
- Matt Preedy, WSDOT

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and Introductions

SDOT Deputy Director Bob Powers welcomed everyone to the meeting. Since the June 3 meeting, the program has continued to develop preliminary designs for a structure that would maintain a connection between Alaskan Way S. and East Marginal Way S. The AWV Program hosted three scoping meetings in early June; approximately 120 people attended, and 140 comments were received. We are still accepting comments and meeting with community groups, and will have more detail when the working groups reconvene in the fall.

Agenda Item #2 – Further review of S. Holgate Street to S. King Street Viaduct Replacement Project

WSDOT AWV Program Administrator Ron Paananen briefly explained that three options to maintain the Alaskan Way S./ East Marginal Way S. connection were presented at the June 3 meeting. WSDOT, King County, City of Seattle and the Port of Seattle prefer an option that would build a bridge adjacent to the new SR 99 south end roadway. The concept is still early in design, but looks promising. The proposed bridge would likely be built after the tunnel is in place. It would include one lane in each direction and would maintain access to the nearby Port of Seattle and United States Coast Guard facilities. Preliminary estimates show the structure would cost between \$50 million and \$70 million. The proposed design will accomplish the goals of maintaining redundancy in the transportation system.

Working Group Members' Questions / Comments

Marty Oppenheimer: Did I hear correctly that you plan to build the East Marginal Way connector after the tunnel is finished? Wouldn't it make more sense to build it alongside the S. Holgate Street to S. King Street Viaduct Replacement Project?

Answer: We are dealing with several constraints – including the existing viaduct and the tail track – that would make it difficult to build the structure earlier. We will continue to look for the most efficient way to build this project

Agenda Item 3 – Further Review of Concept A – Construction Considerations

SDOT Major Projects Manager Mike Johnson explained some of the goals being considered as the SR 99 tunnel project is designed, including maintaining First Avenue traffic and transit, pedestrian and bike pathways; minimizing noise and other impacts; transit reliability to and from downtown; connections to the waterfront; oversize and regular freight access; and railyard access.

Several projects will help mitigate the effects of construction on traffic in the area, including the SR 519 project, transit improvements, Spokane Street improvements, improved traffic signals Intelligent Transportation Systems and programs designed to encourage carpooling and transit use.

The tunnel design is evolving, and the contractor may introduce an alternative staging plan. We will entertain those ideas, to ensure we choose methods of construction that minimize construction effects and ensure the project is built in the most efficient way.

WSDOT AWV Program Construction Director Matt Preedy explained in detail the construction timeline, focusing on the major elements that will be built during each year between 2010 and 2017. The tunnel will take 18 to 20 months to design, build and assemble. The tunnel boring will take one year.

2010: Work will include utility relocation south of S. Atlantic Street. This work is necessary because the new facility will be wider than the existing viaduct. A new frontage road will be constructed, as will the west half of the u-tube. A temporary connection between the existing

viaduct and the new structure will be built beginning in late 2010. This structure will allow us to tear down the viaduct and build the tunnel while keeping SR 99 traffic moving. The SR 519 project will be completed in 2010. Construction related to viaduct replacement will not affect traffic on First Avenue in 2010.

Working Group Members' Questions / Comments

Marty Oppenheimer: I thought the existing viaduct would remain in service until the tunnel opens?

Answer: The existing viaduct will remain in service north of S. King Street. We're building a temporary structure to connect to the new south end SR 99 structure as part of the S. Holgate Street to S. King Street Viaduct Replacement Project.

2011: Work will include demolition of the Railroad Way ramps and construction of temporary ramps and the permanent southbound SR 99 replacement structure. Ground improvements on First Avenue S. will require the reduction of First between S. Dearborn Street and S. King Street to one lane in each direction.

Working Group Members' Questions / Comments

John Odland: Will transit be allowed on First Avenue in 2011?

Answer: Yes, local transit service will have options to continue to use First Avenue or a detour route during this period.

Jerome Cohen: At what stage of completion will the Spokane Street Project be in 2011?

Answer: The Spokane Street Project is scheduled to be completed by late 2010 or early 2011, with the widening to be completed by the end of 2012.

2012: Work will include construction of the east half of the u-tube and demolition of the existing viaduct. Two lanes of traffic will be maintained in each direction on SR 99. First Avenue S. will again have two lanes in each direction.

Herald Ugles: When will you relocate the tail track?

Answer: 2011.

2013: Work will include completion of the northbound SR 99 structure and the east half of the u-tube. By this time the tunnel boring machine will be tunneling under First Avenue. Truck traffic will increase in the area as we remove spoils. SR 99 will remain open with two lanes in each direction. The new Alaskan Way surface detour will be completed at this point, allowing for increased capacity. First Avenue S. will remain open with two lanes in each direction.

2014: This year will mark a big milestone in the program, with the completion of tunnel boring and the disassembly of the machine. At this time we will no longer be removing spoils to south, which will allow us to build a permanent connection in the south end. The u-tube will be open in 2014, as are the new northbound SR 99 lanes. All traffic traveling from Colorado Avenue S. to East Marginal Way S. will have to use the u-tube. Port traffic will be able to use truck lanes on Colorado Avenue S.

Working Group Members' Questions / Comments

Nick Wells: When can we expect boring beneath the historic district?

Answer: We will generally bore about 30 feet per day, but it will be slower than that at the start. We expect to be beneath Pioneer Square in the last half of 2013.

2015: The tunnel interior and systems and the south end connections, including new on- and off-ramps will be complete. There will be a short period where the northbound connection will need to be closed for one or two weeks. At the end of 2015 we plan to open the entire corridor.

2016: The temporary connection in the south end will be torn down, and we will begin making improvements to the central waterfront. This is when we could begin to build the proposed connection between Alaskan Way S. and East Marginal Way S.

Agenda Item 4 – Feedback from Working Group Members

Lisa Quinn: Can you expand on the temporary bike path relocation during 2010?

Answer: We are required to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian access throughout construction, but specific routes are still being identified.

Vlad Oustimovich: This plan is extremely complex. People will have to re-learn how to travel through the area. Based on what we've just seen it looks like the most restricted period will be in 2010. Is that accurate?

Answer: The location and extent of traffic changes will vary throughout the project. There will be a period of two years, between 2011 and 2013, when neither northbound nor southbound traffic on East Marginal Way S. will have a direct connection to Alaskan Way S.

Vlad Oustimovich – I believe that using rail to remove spoils would alleviate some of the burden of truck traffic in the area. Does your plan preclude the possibility of removing spoils via rail?

Answer: No, it does not preclude that possibility. We are now studying different possibilities for removing spoils, and will present a range of options – including rail and barge – to the contractor.

Herald Ugles: If you used a barge to remove spoils, where would the spoils be disposed of?

Answer: We are still studying different possibilities. One possibility is in Port Townsend, where the Brightwater tunnel project has been disposing of spoils.

Can you dispose of soils in Puget Sound?

Answer: Spoils are sometimes disposed of in water, but the spoils from this tunnel won't be.

John Odland: In 2010 will the intermodal route for trucks be on the frontage road?

Answer: Work on S. Atlantic Street will not be occurring at this point. Construction of the frontage road comes first. Railyard traffic could use S. Massachusetts Street/Utah Avenue S. to connect to the frontage road.

John Odland: How will you coordinate various road closures?

Answer: We have several tools to help with project coordination, including a maintenance of traffic group that will study the details of our traffic control plans. Representatives of the

different agencies meet regularly and work to distribute information to the public via email and other mediums. SDOT also has a construction management tool that allows people to track short- and long-term changes that are coming.

John Odland: The Duwamish Transportation Management Association has a good history with helping to manage traffic issues. The only thing missing from their efforts is mitigation money. I would encourage you to reconnect with that group as you look for ways to manage traffic.

Susan Ranf: I don't disagree with mapping tool, but we've seen a lack of information sharing and cases where contractors don't follow the rules. Reliance on a mapping system scares me. Speed, accuracy and inclusiveness are vital to making this project work. We have things changing overnight, and we don't have adequate tools in place to deal with this right now.

Nick Wells: I would suggest you consider an RSS feed, so that the various Web sites you manage can link to one another.

Vlad Oustimovich: You need to change signage and have real-time responses to changes that occur as a result of construction. It would be nice to have a staff of people whose mission is to keep traffic moving during all of this construction.

Harold Ugles: What happens with ferry traffic during construction?

Answer: The new frontage road will accommodate ferry queuing.

Don Newby: What is the cumulative impact of all of the traffic being re-routed during this area, particularly on routes like I-5?

Answer: We recognized several years ago that we would need mitigation, which is why Spokane and other projects will be in place prior to the disruptions caused by viaduct replacement. We'll also be adding transit and trying to give people other options, so that people can change modes of travel and their habits. Since we haven't found a way to maintain three lanes in each direction while we build this project, it will be important to implement strategies that will keep traffic moving.

Vlad Oustimovich: Will King County's budget shortfall affect the ferry district?

Answer: King County and the ferry district are two different entities. The budget shortfall likely won't affect the ferry district. We have gotten some federal grants and are in reasonably good shape in West Seattle and Vashon Island. Additional demo routes are more in question.

Marty Oppenheimer: What kinds of soils are you finding underground?

Answer: We've done several borings already, and we're primarily finding glacial till, as well as some wood, peat and other materials from the re-grade.

Marty Oppenheimer: Can you salvage material?

Answer: It's too early to tell about utility of the soil. There is quite a bit of silt and clay, which is poor material for construction, but we won't know for sure until we have more information. There are techniques the boring contractor could utilize to affect the reuse value of the material.

Nick Wells: I'd like to see mitigation funding for Pioneer Square and other areas impacted by construction. Pioneer Square is one of highest concentrations of small independently owned businesses in city. We don't want people to get the idea that Pioneer Square is closed. We need to see not just technological tools, but a funding package.

Marty Oppenheimer: Will there be future coordination between the different working groups?
Answer: All of the groups have expressed some interest in connecting with one another. We've also considered whether we should form an overarching group. We're mapping that out now.

Susan Ranf: Life in the city is more than just getting to and from work. The quality of life in Seattle will deteriorate as a result of this construction. You need to look at what's happening at all times of day. As an example look at the Rock 'N Roll Marathon. Will the city be able to support that kind of event during the project? That will be one of the measures of how well Seattle can survive this kind of extended construction.

Agenda Item 5 – RapidRide update

King County Department of Transportation Deputy Director Ron Posthuma updated members on planned RapidRide service. There was a miscommunication recently regarding service changes; the county is still planning improved West Seattle service that is part of the transit mitigation service during the Moving Forward and S. Holgate Street to S. King Street Viaduct Replacement construction projects, but it won't be branded as RapidRide until 2012.

Agenda Item 6 – Action items and next steps

No specific action items were identified during the meeting, but the state, county, city and port will continue to look for ways to improve communication and traffic management during construction. Additionally the agencies will continue to develop details and more solid timeframes. A request for qualifications will be issued in September that will attract attention from around the world. The working groups will reconvene in the fall.

Next meeting: Fall 2009