

Point Defiance Bypass Project Technical Advisory Team – Meeting Notes

Date: October 21, 2010

Attendees: Jeff Gonzalez, City of Lakewood
Chris Larson, City of Tacoma
Peter Zahn, City of DuPont
Jodi Mitchell, Sound Transit
Jason Suzaka, Sound Transit
Larry Mickel, JBLM
Minh Vo, Camp Murray
Dean Moberg, FHWA
Michael Forsythe, Clover Park School District
Steve Kim, WSDOT Olympic Region
WSDOT Project Team: Ron Pate, Dave Smelser, Larry Mattson, Dan Lewis, Lisa Popoff, Melanie Coon, Kevin Jeffers, Dianna Lahmann

Welcome

Environmental Manager Larry Mattson opened the meeting by introducing people in the room and on the phone.

Operating plan signing

While the group members signed the Operating Plan, Mattson outlined WSDOT's view on public outreach as a three-legged stool involving: electeds, staff, and public.

Agenda Review

WSDOT's team conducted a Greenfield exercise. Mattson introduced the maps, and everyone gathered around the map that was displayed on an easel at the front of the room. Smelser oriented the group to the map. KJ elaborated on specific elements of the rail (grade, # of bridges, # of crossings)

The question of Sound Transit's intent to bring Sounder to DuPont was asked. Jodi Mitchell from Sound Transit said that it is not in the plans right now because the demand does not justify the cost

The general consensus of the group was that we not take more than a month studying these ideas (approximate cost, approximate impact). The impacts we're looking to avoid are impacts to Lakewood and DuPont, while not impacted to any greater degree JBLM or wetland areas or Tribal property. Mattson indicated that WSDOT will do its best to limit study on these alternatives to a month.

Jodi Mitchell overviewed some facts about the Sounder service. ST's maximum speed is between 40-60mph. WSDOT's Larry Mattson supplemented her info to say that Amtrak *Cascades* is proposing to add 14 trains per day to that route.

Shoreline Tech memo

Mattson introduced the purpose of the memo is to show our work. The memo demonstrates what is reasonable and feasible to a technical and economic standpoint. The “bypass” and the “no action” alternatives are in the reasonable category, but, we believe upgrading the shoreline route is in the unreasonable category.

WSDOT’s Dan Lewis highlighted sections of the memo pointing out areas that had tight curves, areas that would require miles of retaining walls, millions of cubic yards of excavation and clearing and grubbing and the number of bridges and structures that would have to be rebuilt or replaced (detail available in the memo).

David Smelser reviewed preliminary schedule and rough cost concepts. The team estimated that it would take about six years to design/construct (2 design/4 const.) We recognized this would be an environmentally sensitive project. We do not have construction/design funding, but we assumed it in the estimate. We estimate in current day dollars and at a very high level, the ballpark to be \$1.5b. We’ve used other tunnels, ST tunnels, as basis for estimates. Poor soils could increase costs, add height to walls.

Potential right-of-way impact to more than 60 residences. Mattson summarized environmental Impacts including highlighting that there are endangered species in the area, especially salmon. He explained that the average is about a year for ESA consultation but for this project it would take two years. Section 4f properties are wildlife refuges and parks. We do have impacts to the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge among many others.

Mattson explained some of the noise/vibration impacts by saying that the assumption is that we can build either over the water, on the beach or inland. If we move inland, we assume that people on this corridor will be no less concerned than anyone else about noise/vibration in their neighborhoods.

Jodi Mitchell said it would be helpful if in the beginning of the document if WSDOT explained how it came to these assumptions. She also suggested strengthening the conclusions and technical summaries to be more blunt and direct. She commented to the group that when having to acquire property from JBLM, federal trumps state. It takes lots of time and money to work with feds & acquire. She said it’s worth noting that the ST project in Mukilteo has taken 12 years to work with the federal govt.

Grade Separation Study Session

Smelser introduced the session saying that this is the first mitigation option that we heard from the public and we need to address it. We found two places where it was pretty clear where grade separation would be a viable option, so we prepared those two places. WSDOT’s Dan Lewis overviewed two locations: one at Bridgeport and one at Berkeley.

Dan Lewis and David Smelser went through the handouts (see handouts on the materials web page) for this exercise explaining the concepts with rough costs and schedule. See handouts

The group discussed ideas for different options for constructing grade separations and varying designs. WSDOT will produce a separate discipline report for grade separations, so those ideas will be reflected in the report.

The group voted not to meeting November and December and to pick up the meetings beginning in January 2011. WSDOT will continue to do outreach both with the public and with the jurisdictions.