

Alaskan Way Viaduct  
Central Waterfront Working Group – June 2, 2009  
Meeting Summary

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**Working Group attendees**

- Warren Aakervik, Ballard Oil
- Linda Anderson (substitute for David Freiboth), King County Labor Council
- Patrick Binion, Columbia Distributors
- Carol Burton, Magnolia/Queen Anne District Council
- Craig Curtis, American Institute of Architects
- Karen Daubert, Seattle Parks Foundation
- Bob Donegan, Seattle Historic Waterfront Coalition
- Adam Hanson, Pioneer Square
- Dave Janis, Bicycle Alliance of Washington
- Cary Moon, People's Waterfront Coalition
- Richard Nordstrom, Belltown Community Council
- Chas Redmond, Feet First
- Rob Sexton, Downtown Seattle Association
- Brian Steinberg, Allied Arts
- Heather Trim, People for Puget Sound
- Mark Wainwright, Admiral Neighborhood Association
- Tayloe Washburn, Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce
- Leila Wilke, Seattle Art Museum / Sculpture Park

**Working Group members not in attendance**

- Carol Binder, Pike Place Market
- Bob Davidson, Seattle Aquarium Society
- Ralph Pease, Argosy
- Ron Severt, Space Needle
- Peter Whitehead, Nelson Trucking

**Agencies and staff in attendance**

- Bob Chandler, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
- Mike Merritt, Port of Seattle
- Ron Paananen, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Steve Pearce, SDOT
- Bob Powers, SDOT
- John White, WSDOT

**Agenda Item #1 –Welcome and Introductions**

WSDOT Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Program Administrator Ron Paananen welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone around the room to introduce themselves.

He then shared information that was the result of action items from the last meeting:

- The estimated parking loss for last year's central waterfront scenario F (dual bored tunnel) was 357 spaces between Columbia and Broad streets and 170 spaces in the Pioneer Square neighborhood. This analysis will be updated during the next few months and reported in the second Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
- The project has \$30 million to mitigate the loss of parking along the central waterfront.

### **Agenda Item #2 – Overview of Other Working Groups and Program Updates**

Bob Chandler, SDOT Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Program Manager, gave an update on the north portal working group goals and potential design options. Presentation materials and design concepts are available on the program Web site at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct/workinggroupmaterials.htm](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct/workinggroupmaterials.htm).

Question: How is the truck access?

*Answer: There will be a new connection along the waterfront between Elliott and Western avenues and the new surface Alaskan Way. There will also be an option to get to the tunnel via Mercer Street.*

Question: Will there be signed truck routes?

*Answer: We are creating routes for freight that take into account issues such as turn radii and grades. How they will be signed has not been designed at this stage.*

Question: Where will hazardous materials be able to get off before the tunnel?

*Answer: There are multiple options for trucks carrying hazardous materials, including the south portal near Royal Brougham Way and the north portal at Republican Street.*

Question: How will the lights be synchronized along the waterfront? Will priority be given to north/south or east/west travel?

*Answer: The traffic lights along the waterfront will be synchronized to maximize through movement. It is likely they will be synchronized north/south rather than east/west, but those decisions will be made later.*

John White, WSDOT Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Program Director, gave an update on the south portal working group goals and potential design options. Presentation materials and design concepts are available on the program Web site at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct/workinggroupmaterials.htm](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct/workinggroupmaterials.htm).

Question: If you're coming on SR 99 from West Seattle, how will you get into downtown?

*Answer: Either with the new Alaskan Way or First Avenue. Those will be the two primary options, though there will be a lot of new connectivity with the street grid and other options as well.*

Question: What are the cross streets between First Avenue and Alaskan Way?

*Answer: They are three new cross streets being contemplated as part of the bored tunnel project. They do not currently exist.*

Question: How will transit use the south end?

*Answer: Transit on SR 99 northbound will take the off-ramp before the bored tunnel and use Washington Street or Main Street to access Third Avenue to get through downtown.*

**Question:** Where is the railroad tail track?

*Answer: The new segment of SR 99 near the stadiums will rise over the tail track so trucks and cars are not blocked by trains.*

**Question:** Will the tail track be moved?

*Answer: The program will ultimately relocate the tail track as part of the S. Holgate to S. King Street Viaduct Replacement Project. We are working with BNSF on that.*

**Question:** How will you use the lower Spokane Bridge to get to West Seattle?

*Answer: That is one of the things we're looking at. The existing connection from SR 99 to Harbor Island will remain.*

**Question:** How will you get from Colman Dock to I-90?

*Answer: To head north, Colman Dock traffic would use Alaskan Way then cross over to First Avenue S on one of the new streets south of King Street.*

**Question:** How will large trucks get to/from the waterfront? Can they make all the needed connections?

*Answer: Alaskan Way is the oversized route. We will design the new Alaskan Way to accommodate these vehicles.*

**Question:** How will you handle ferry queuing?

*Answer: The south end of the new Alaskan Way is being designed to address the additional movements in that area. There will be dedicated turning lanes and room for queuing.*

**Question:** Could you move some of the ferry queuing to the south portal area, so the new Alaskan Way can remain four lanes near Colman Dock?

*Answer: Ferries need less space for cars than they used to due to operational changes. We would need to do more analysis to determine the amount of queuing area that would be needed. Ferry demand varies by time of day, and we may be able to make more efficient use of lanes on Alaskan Way by using some for queues in the evening and for other traffic in the morning.*

**Comment:** Lending support for concern expressed from others at the south working group about the reduction in options.

**Question:** Will Metro's RapidRide use SR 99 and get off at Washington Street?

*Answer: It is likely.*

**Question:** How will the First Avenue streetcar line function? Will Metro move bus lines to accommodate it?

*Answer: Need to follow up.*

Bob Powers introduced two draft videos – one showing the design concept for the bored tunnel with the proposed north and south portals and one showing the design concept for the new waterfront surface street and its connections to Elliott Avenue and Western Avenue. The videos are still being finalized and will be available on the program Web site at a later date. Bob Chandler walked the working group members through the details of the bored tunnel video.

Question: Will cell phones work in the tunnel?

*Answer: We are looking into the details for cell phone usage in the tunnel.*

Question: Are the on- and off-ramps at the tunnel's south portal one lane each?

*Answer: The on-ramp narrows to one lane. The off-ramp begins as one lane and quickly expands to two lanes.*

Question: Is there enough room on the off-ramp to get around a stalled vehicle or accident?

*Answer: Yes.*

Question: Can the off-ramp be expanded to have a transit lane or HOV lane?

*Answer: It expands as it goes, so there's room later for queuing jumps.*

Question: What will be the speed limit in the tunnel?

*Answer: It is being designed for 50 mph.*

Steve Pearce walked the working group members through the details of the central waterfront video.

Question: What will be the speed limit on the new waterfront boulevard?

*Answer: City streets are 30 mph.*

Question: How wide will the sidewalks be on the Elliott/Western connector?

*Answer: They can go wide. The smallest is 12-14 feet on the east side.*

Question: Will north Alaskan Way start at Pike Street?

*Answer: Yes.*

Question: The pocket for the cruise ships at Pier 66 seems short. How will you handle that?

*Answer: Passengers and suppliers will be coming from the south. We will look at this in more detail.*

Question: Do you know how many vehicles (capacity) the new waterfront boulevard will handle?

*Answer: Approximately 25,000-27,000. We will do further traffic analysis for how traffic will move/flow.*

Question: Will bikes and pedestrians be grade separated?

*Answer: We are looking at the possibility for separating bikes along the promenade.*

Comment: Timing lights for cars is different than for bikes.

*Response: We are looking at the potential of separate bike facilities.*

Question: Is there an aerial view?

*Answer: As soon as we have it done, we will share it.*

Question: For trucks heading northbound along the waterfront and going up the hill to Western Avenue, what grade will the hill be and how far will it be from the hill to the first traffic signal?

*Answer: The hill will be a five percent grade. The exact profile for lights has not been determined.*

### **Agenda Item #3 – Overview Presentation: Seawall Replacement**

Bob Chandler gave a presentation on the seawall replacement goals and considerations. The project includes replacing the seawall between Washington and Pine streets. There is a mixture of different uses (public and private) in this area. The water at the seawall is fairly deep and it is expected to rise 6' to 3' during the next 75 years. Bob also explained the different types of seawall. The current seawall was designed for a small scale earthquake, and it is a major utility corridor for the city of Seattle. Construction is expected to be phased in sections working down the waterfront. Bob presented the options for replacing the seawall. Also, the new face of the seawall presents the opportunity to build habitats. This presentation can be found online on the program Web site at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct/workinggroupmaterials.htm](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct/workinggroupmaterials.htm).

Question: Have you thought about water turbidity impacts?

*Answer: We are conscious of that. It will be monitored.*

Question: Are you looking at locations where a shallow water habitat is more feasible?

*Answer: We are and will continue to as part of the waterfront concept.*

Comment: The Seattle Art Museum at the Sculpture Park has seen remarkable results.

### **Agenda Item #4 – Feedback from Working Group Members**

Comment: For the waterfront goals, the need to improve the environment should be included.

Comment: Last time we talked about maintaining flexibility, a few things came up during the presentation – the utility relocation may not fit with the design phase for the waterfront so please keep flexibility open for the waterfront. Transit on the waterfront is going to impact how you use Alaskan Way, so those issues need to be addressed. Delivery access needs to be maintained with a multi-use promenade. Need video vignettes that show smaller segments (example – to Alaskan Way from the south, from Aurora Avenue into the city). Pedestrian vignettes would be good too. Consider opportunities for re-use of materials that are being deconstructed.

Comment: Look at other options for the seawall, such as a beach. It's cheaper and friendlier to habitat and would create a strong, viable marine environment. Replacing the seawall in its current location does not demonstrate flexibility. It's an error to let the street design drive the design of the seawall.

*Cary Moon would like to edit her comments that were in the previous meeting summary.*

Comment: Would like to encourage that the transit component be integral to the initial planning, rather than detailed later. By taking away the ramps midtown, we are misplacing a number of buses. Those buses will be routed down Third Avenue. Put this planning up front. Plan the ferry dock with transit as well. Next time we meet, have Metro present.

Comment: The visuals are helpful for the non-engineering types. Apply the traffic modeling to them as you get further in design.

Comment: The traffic modeling needs to look at the conflicts we are building by having bike lanes on the east side of the waterfront street. This needs to be evaluated.

Comment: Would like to advocate for a separate bike path. There is an issue/conflict with pedestrians and bike crossings.

Comment: There are treatments they do in Europe that keep bikes and cars separated well. Look at the Alki concept.

Comment: Not sure why we're meeting. Looks like you're just talking to us. Think we need to meet more to discuss deeper issues regarding the seawall, the big picture, bikes, etc.

Comment: Have some concern looking at the video and the way that people are crossing the road in it. We should have seriously considered other ways to get people across the road so it does not conflict.

Comment: The videos were helpful.

Comment: Would like a better understanding of how to provide comments and feedback for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and how this working group fits into the EIS. The video was helpful. We need to look at transit and pedestrian issues.

Comment: Early on in the design process you can make huge design decisions that are important to the overall process. What input are we going to be able to provide regarding the access to the water? I would like to see more of a commitment and would like more information on when and how those decisions will be made.

Comment: Once you build a wall, it won't leave options for improving them. Where is transit? They should be here as part of this.

Comment: I think I understand the connection between Alaskan Way and pedestrians. If it's going to be a pedestrian route, then let's make it that. We need to improve those connections. It should be a focus in addition to the vehicle aspect.

Comment: Identify pedestrian pathways for getting down to the waterfront.

Comment: There seems to be multiple interests, and I think we'd address a lot of them if we shared our views. It still is a transportation corridor.

**Agenda Item 6 – Action Items**

- An e-mail will be sent with information on the next meeting date.
- Find out what the central waterfront vehicle volume will be.
- Bob Fernandez is going to confirm the extreme high at the type “B” seawall.