

Alaskan Way Viaduct
North Portal Working Group – June 4, 2009
Meeting Summary

Working Group attendees

- Jill Arnow, Greater Queen Anne Chamber of Commerce
- Glenn Avery, Queen Anne Community Council
- Sharon Coleman, Vulcan
- John Coney, Uptown Alliance
- David Delfs, Magnolia/Queen Anne/South Lake Union Design Review Board
- Bob Grossman, South Lake Union Friends & Neighbors
- Ron Hildebrandt, Trident Seafoods
- David Hiller, Cascade Bicycle Club
- Bill LaBorde, Transportation Choices Coalition
- Mary McCumber, Futurewise
- Tom Tanner, Magnolia Community Club (substitute for Jose D. Montaña)
- Robert Nellams, Seattle Center
- Lee Newgent, Seattle/King County Building & Construction Trades Council
- Vince O'Halloran, Puget Sound Ports Council & Sailors Union of the Pacific
- Marko Tubic, Fremont Chamber of Commerce
- Lisa Verhovek, Gates Foundation
- Elaine Wine, Ballard Neighborhood

Working Group members not in attendance

- Linda Anderson, Amalgamated Transit Union
- David Brown, Pacific Northwest Ballet
- Tom Graff, Belltown Business Association
- Kevin Hughes, Pacific Science Center
- John Kane, Ballard Interbay Northend Manufacturing & Industrial Center (BINMIC)
- Kim Suelze, CityIce Cold Storage
- Bob Viggers, Charlie's Produce

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
- Ron Posthuma, King County Department of Transportation
- Bob Powers, SDOT
- Eric Tweit, SDOT
- John White, WSDOT

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and Introductions

WSDOT Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Program Administrator Ron Paananen welcomed the working group members and the public to the meeting.

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

Ron Paananen explained that the update on other working groups would be moved to the end of the meeting to ensure enough time to present the north portal materials. He also explained that the program team had prepared 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.

Bob Chandler, SDOT Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project Manager, explained the bored tunnel video.

Steve Pearce, SDOT Project Manager, explained the waterfront video and highlighted the Elliott Avenue and Western Avenue connections.

Ron Paananen concluded the video presentation by noting that the videos are still being finalized and will not be available on the Web site for approximately a month.

Agenda Item #3 – Feedback from Working Group Members

Ron Paananen began the feedback portion of the meeting by reminding participants of the environmental review process and the types of comments that program management is seeking. He explained that comments made by the working group will help shape the analysis of the project. He also reviewed the types of analysis that will be done as part of the second Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Then he opened the floor to comments on the draft concepts presented at the May 21, 2009, meeting.

Bill LaBorde: Will the environmental analysis include the study of air quality and carbon emissions?

Answer: Yes, absolutely.

Ron Hildebrandt: You have \$2.4 billion to complete the project, and, presently, you're \$400 million short. What gets cut from the project if you can't come up with the additional funding? It is important to remember that the surface street and seawall are vital to this project.

Answer: You're correct, we cannot cut the surface street or seawall, because they are vital. This summer the program team is taking a very detailed look at costs for the project. We'll take a hard look at the costs and benefits of all of the elements proposed.

Ron Hildebrandt: During the design phase will you determine which streets and routes are major truck streets? Which is the preferred way you want the trucks to go?

Answer: The tunnel will be a freight route. Additionally, we will engage the freight community once we have a more advanced portal design to determine which roads and routes are the most promising for freight.

Tom Tanner: We have been asked for feedback, but the Magnolia Community Club doesn't feel like there has been enough time to provide input. We also feel like our influence is small and we have many concerns regarding access to and from Magnolia. A letter has been passed out summarizing the thoughts of the Magnolia Community Club.

David Hiller – The Cascade Bicycle club wants to see a good multi-modal analysis of concept B. It will be especially important to calibrate the model and show that vehicle miles traveled is declining throughout the region. The program team needs to look at how travel patterns in the city have changed over the years

Robert Nellams: The Seattle Center represents more than 30 resident organizations. We have not had enough time for all of those resident organizations to come together and go over the options you have presented thus far. We hope to do that this month and get back to the program team with our comments sometime in July. Secondly, we enter into this process with a lot of hope. The program team has done a good job of listening to Seattle Center and to make sure that people retain access to the center. Enhancing connections to Seattle Center is very important to us. One issue we have is that the Seattle Center is not outlined in any of the goals for the north portal. We are a huge draw in the area, and access to our facilities is critical to the success of any design.

Bob Grossman: South Lake Union Friends and Neighbors has looked over the concepts and it's clear to us that concept B is the way to go. It is important to our neighborhood and it helps us address a lot of our community issues. It would be nice to see how transit on Aurora Avenue works in the future. Transit is always a problem for our particular neighborhood.

Elaine Wine: Ballard residents are putting together a letter with formal comments. Speaking personally, I also want to support concept B because it preserves the best connections to and from downtown. Like Tom Tanner mentioned for Magnolia, it's hard to imagine that passenger vehicles from Ballard would access the tunnel via Mercer Avenue. It makes the continuity of the Alaskan Way corridor that much more critical for Ballard and Magnolia. I am concerned that bicycle traffic would be mixed with two lanes of traffic on Alaskan Way.

Lee Newgent: The Seattle/King County Building and Construction Trades Councils' major concerns regard the issues of truck radii and ramps. The construction impact in this area is going to be a major consideration in planning.

Jill Arnow: We need to avoid doing anything that makes it harder to get to Seattle Center or South Lake Union. I am also concerned about parking and the coordination of the Mercer east and Mercer west projects.

Lisa Verhovek: There are some great things about concept B. The Gates Foundation has concerns about the reconnection of Sixth Avenue all the way through, but we look forward to continuing the Sixth Avenue conversation with the program team. Also, Mercer Street construction is set to begin in 2011, and this is also the timeline for moving into the new foundation buildings. We will want to talk more about that in the future.

John Coney: There is a lot of streetscape potential for the new surface level Aurora Avenue. We should be looking at all the options for how this can be developed to integrate into calmer city traffic.

David Delfs: It would be good to talk a little more about opportunities for urban planning and design. The road is currently a fast cut-through and it divides things in the South Lake Union

area. The street level connections across John, Thomas and Harrison streets will change the feel of the neighborhood dramatically. We'll see a lot more dense urban development. There's been a lot of planning for uptown design review guidelines that you should use as reference. I've also had some conversations with Queen Anne residents about connecting Sixth Avenue all the way through to Queen Anne hill. At the last meeting cost was one reason given for not continuing Sixth Avenue up into Queen Anne. We'd like to understand more about the costs and if it could be considered to improve access for Queen Anne residents.

Vince O'Halloran: I would like to compliment everyone on their work. The visuals are extraordinary. I am concerned about the flow of Pike Place Market pedestrians down to the waterfront. I hope you consider a pedestrian overpass.

Marko Tubic: We are concerned about where all the traffic is going to go during construction. As we experience gentrification in Fremont, freight movement has become more critical for businesses. Freight movement in any of these plans is very important for us.

State Representative Reuven Carlyle was also in attendance. He made the following remarks: I understand how much effort has been put into getting the bored tunnel to where it is today. I know that the issue of access in northwest Seattle is particularly sensitive. We need to make sure that the northern arterial streets are a viable option for northwest Seattle residents. This process sets the stage for an integrative approach for the city and state moving forward.

Agenda Item #4 – Further Review of Concept B

John White, WSDOT Program Director, Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Program, reviewed a presentation on early construction ideas and concepts for north portal concept B. He noted that the construction details are something that will be studied further as part of the environmental process. He also presented an updated concept B diagram and a diagram for a detour during concept B construction. The presentation and diagrams are available online at www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct/workinggroupmaterials.htm.

Agenda Item #5 – Action Items and Adjourn

Ron Paananen concluded the meeting by noting that the next north portal meeting will be held in the fall. The south portal working group and central waterfront working group will each meet one more time prior to breaking for the summer.

He apologized that there was no time for a detailed review of the other two working groups but directed attendees to the program Web site (www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct/workinggroupmaterials.htm) to view the presentations and summaries from the other groups.

He then reviewed the action items from the meeting as:

- Update the central waterfront video to reflect expected traffic levels of 25,000 cars per day along the new waterfront surface street.