Alaskan Way Viaduct
Central Waterfront Working Group – May 19, 2009
Meeting Summary

Working Group attendees

- Warren Aakervik, Ballard Oil
- Zander Batchelder, Belltown Community Council
- Carol Binder, Pike Place Market
- Patrick Binion, Columbia Distributors
- Carol Burton, Magnolia / Queen Anne District Council
- Craig Curtis, American Institute of Architects (AIA)
- Karen Daubert, Seattle Parks Foundation
- Bob Davidson, Seattle Aquarium
- Bob Donegan, Seattle Historic Waterfront Coalition
- Dave Freiboth, King County Labor Council (KCLC)
- Adam Hanson, Pioneer Square
- Cary Moon, People's Waterfront Coalition
- Ralph Pease, Argosy
- Rob Sexton, Downtown Seattle Association
- Brian Steinburg, Allied Arts
- Mark Wainwright, Admiral Neighborhood Association
- Tayloe Washburn, Seattle Chamber
- Peter Whitehead, Nelson Trucking

Working Group members not in attendance

- Ron Sevart, Space Needle
- Heather Trim, People for Puget Sound
- Leila Wilke, Seattle Art Museum

Agencies and staff in attendance

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

Agenda Item #1 - Welcome and Introductions

WSDOT Urban Corridors Office Deputy Director Ron Paananen welcomed the working group members and the public to the event.

Next, Ron Paananen provided a brief history of the viaduct program. This brought working group members up to speed on the bored tunnel selection. The presentation for this portion of the meeting is available on the Web site.

Agenda Item #2 - Purpose and Operating Guidelines

Bob Powers, SDOT Deputy Director reviewed the purpose, responsibilities, and ground rules for the working groups. This presentation is available on the program Web site.

Agenda Item #3 – 2009 Milestones and Environmental Process

Ron Paanenen and Bob Powers reviewed the 2009 milestones for the project and the timeline for the environmental process. This information is available in the presentation on the program Web site.

Agenda Item #4 –Central Waterfront Working Group Goals and Objectives

Steve Pearce, SDOT Urban Mobility Plan Manager, and John White, Alaskan Way Viaduct (AWV) Program Director, reviewed the goals and objectives for the central waterfront surface street configuration. Their presentation can be found on the Web site here.

Agenda Item #5 – Potential Alaskan Way Surface Street Configuration

Steve Pearce reviewed potential elements for the configuration of Alaskan Way with the bored tunnel. His presentation is online at the program Web site.

Agenda Item #6 – Feedback from the Working Group Members

Bob Powers asked each of the members to comment on the goals, environmental process and other material presented at the meeting. A short summary of their comments are as follows:

Craig Curtis, AIA – Stated he appreciated the graphics used in the presentation and that they made it easier to understand. Mr. Curtis noted that items such as turn lane and edges are all part of the bigger idea and that we need as much flexibility in the future so good urban design can be made. AIA is looking for big ideas for the urban space. He expressed his concern about the statements regarding rebuilding the seawall in the current location and hopes the program team is open to discussion and ideas.

Peter Whitehead, Nelson Trucking – Much of what Mr. Whitehead's company hauls is oversize and when there's design happening the program team should consider those extra ordinary sizes that are being transported. Alaskan Way is needed for connections to Ballard and Interbay. He expressed concern about too many things trying to fit into too small of a spot along the waterfront.

Carol Binder, Pike Place Market – Ms. Binder appreciated the work that has gone into the images to show the design concepts.

Mark Wainwright, Admiral Neighborhood Association – Mr. Wainwright expressed his belief that the central waterfront working group role, within the presented scope, is specific to mobility to downtown but also making it a great place and a destination for West Seattlites. He stated that he would try and represent those mobility issues.

Brian Steinburg, Allied Arts – Supported comments made by Mr. Curtis and reiterated that every action taken for the surface Alaskan Way will affect the possibilities for urban design. His organization does not want to do any harm to the urban design possibilities with the street design but rather they want to repair the urban design fabric. He stated that the team has a wide area,

including Belltown, as well as the pedestrian connections from that area to the waterfront. Mr. Steinburg stated that maximizing public use is a noble goal but we should create a series of spaces rather than one single space. He urged that in September the working group look at the best use for the replacement parking and suggested underground options so that there isn't an open space impact.

Rob Sexton, DSA – Mr. Sexton appreciated the goal of identifying the transportation issues quickly so that the program team can move forward with the environmental process. He stated that the team needs to consider the elements for urban design and the seawall replacement to allow for flexibility so we don't impact future decisions. He also inquired as to whether the PowerPoint presentations will be distributed in advance.

Ralph Pease, Argosy – Seattle has an active waterfront that is the envy of a number of cities. Mr. Pease stated that parking is important to a business like Argosy. He urged the program team to think about buses dropping people off, where they will park and how they will turn around. The buses and those on the buses need to be safe. He also noted that if the team is moving the road to the east there would need to be vendor access to the piers 24-hours a day.

Cary Moon, People's Waterfront Coalition – Previous consultants, such as Nelson Nygaard and Smart Mobility have provided good background information. Ms. Moon stated that the program is making a mistake not including transit as part of the solution because we need to move people and transit is needed to do that. She noted that the seawall, space at Piers 62/63, and the Pike Street connection to the waterfront should be designed first, and design Alaskan Way to fit with those elements. She stated that the program team needed to be careful not to design a street that doesn't fit with the urban design.

Adam Hanson, Pioneer Square – Mr. Hanson inquired as to the boundary of the central waterfront. Steve Pearce, SDOT, clarified that it starts at approximately King Street in the south and goes up to Battery Street. Mr. Hanson stated that he didn't yet have enough information to make a detailed comment and that it was difficult to provide feedback since there wasn't much presented. He noted that Pioneer Square is an important and historic part of the city and that the team needs to make sure the connections fit with the community. He expressed that mitigation, First Avenue impacts, small businesses, vibrations, noise and settlement are all important issues. He expressed his concern about Washington Street Boat landing, a highly historical and ignored area, and the need to control costs.

Dave Freiboth, KCLC – Mr. Freiboth asked about the average wait time for pedestrians to cross Alaskan Way. Steve Pearce answered that typical downtown streets are 80 seconds and that the new Alaskan Way would likely be similar. Mr. Freiboth also asked whether there was a there a connection to Broad Street from Elliott/Western avenues and Steve Pearce confirmed that there would be.

KCLC is concerned about maintaining economic vitality. Mr. Freiboth stated that it is exciting to think that if we do this right, we might get it all. We might actually clean up the connection of NW Seattle and Duwamish and that there's a potential to facilitate better movement. He stated his hope to reach that goal and maintain the vision of the other needs, such as those for bikes and pedestrians. He expressed that he hopes the program team won't make the Westlake mistake by

trying to put bikes in a pedestrian facility. He then stated that he views the public space design similarly to building a hot on a lot of land. Right now, we are figuring out how to lay the lot out (where the drive way is, where the house will go) but that we're going to design the house later.

Bob Donegan, Seattle Historic Waterfront Coalition – Mr. Donegan stated he had six items to address.

1. If you can replace the seawall, do it in the winter.
2. When we have the final traffic capacity analysis? It's a mistake to only look at traffic on Alaskan Way, we should look at the system.
3. Is the animation of Elliott and Western completed? (John White answered that the team was working on them).
4. Three different organizations have done parking counts by asking all the visitors how they got to the waterfront, 65-79 percent come by cars or large buses. Parking is important to the waterfront for cars and buses.
5. First Avenue businesses and residents don't like the streetcar.
6. Having the streetcar go up the hill is a great idea.

Bob Davidson, Seattle Aquarium – It is obvious that much has been learned. Access is the vital word we look at to for a lot of these questions. Parking for large groups is also important. Public transportation needs to connect east/west and there may be some opportunities to add a car that would go through the air from the market to the waterfront. Mr. Davidson also stated that he would be interested in knowing what the assumptions are for the level of rise in sea level for the seawall.

Karen Daubert, Seattle Parks Foundation – Stated she was impressed by the progress being made. There are all sorts of models throughout the nation that look at our road needs and open space and Seattle has an opportunity to lead as a model. The program team should look for any opportunity to maximize the space – an 85 foot promenade with a 15 foot sidewalk is better than 80/20. The circle in front of the aquarium will need some creativity so the traffic doesn't land right in there and we need east/west connections and encouraged the team to look at the Lake to Bay Trail. She expressed her support for the six to four lane transition to happen as far south as possible. She noted that Pier 62/63 is an opportunity for creativity with the seawall as well as the Washington Street Boat Landing.

Carol Burton, Magnolia / Queen Anne District Council – Our main concern is access to downtown and north/south. We need to move people and freight. Transit is also very important. The bike and pedestrian separation is needed and works well. She also noted that there is a lot more known about building seawalls and we don't need to do concrete walls and need to look at the habitat.

Patrick Binion, Columbia Distributors – Stated that we need to focus on the fact that Alaskan Way is one of two north/south freight corridors that Seattle has. The freight corridor is critical to the wellbeing of the region and city. He also noted that loading zones should not be put far away from the destination, especially considering the waterfront businesses. Mr. Binion also stated that we should not increase the costs.

Tayloe Washburn, Seattle Chamber – Mr. Washburn commented that all the aspects being discussed are going to require a health economy. Economic vitality is key right now. He supported the focus of the group and shared his concern about the streetcar on First Avenue. There is work to do on the transportation components and he hoped the Elliott/Western connection would be completed correctly. He noted that the big news is what we're going to do with the new open space and that we need to reinvent the city along the waterfront. He stated he was ok to wait and figure out the design, that there is time to work out the details, and that we need to invest and make sure it's the highest quality space. We have to generate money for the ideas we're contemplating, we need to think of how we'll pay for it.

Zander Batchelder, Belltown Community Council – Mr. Barchelder stated that he appreciated learning more about open space opportunities at Elliott and Western avenues. Mr. Batchelder was interested in transitioning pedestrians and bikes to the waterfront. He stated the project team needed to minimize impacts for neighborhoods and that there needs to be ongoing communication of planned construction activities. He supported the Battery Street Tunnel being put to good use and not just shut down. He also noted that part of the Belltown neighborhood is opposed to the streetcar and they could benefit from more education and outreach.

Warren Aakervik, Ballard Oil – The traffic modeling needs to show and address the right turns the freight makes and the potential conflicts with pedestrians and bikes. It currently seems as though there will be one lane to go through. The speed for freight to go north on the waterfront is slower than if we use a through route. Mr. Aakervik also expressed concern that the presentation made no mention of freight during the presentation, only pedestrians and bikes. If we want to keep the maritime industry here, we need to keep it a north/south freight corridor.

Agenda Item #6 - Action Items and adjournment

Bob Powers reviewed the action items form the meeting as:

- E-mail design concepts presentations from the north and south portal working group meetings.
- Try to get meeting materials out in advance.
- Have parking, seawall and traffic information at the next meeting.

He thanked everyone for coming to the first meeting for the central waterfront working group and adjourned the meeting shortly after 6 p.m.

Next Meeting: June 2, 2009
4 to 6 p.m.
King County Labor Temple, Hall 1