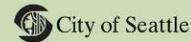
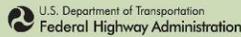


## Alaskan Way Viaduct & Seawall Replacement Program



### **Western Building Tenants Meeting Jan. 18, 2011, 6 – 8 p.m. Ruth Fisher Board Room, 401 S. Jackson St.**

Managers from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) met with tenants of the Western Building on Tuesday, Jan. 18 to collect tenant contact information, discuss WSDOT's recommendation to demolish the building, and allow additional time for questions and answers related to the relocation process.

After months of investigation and analysis, WSDOT determined that the 100-year-old Western Building would experience serious structural damage and significant settlement due to tunnel boring. It is likely that without extensive retrofitting, there could be further structural damage during construction, and even the possibility of collapse. The agency developed four options to address these and other issues – three structural rehabilitation options (estimated to cost between \$29-36 million) and a building demolition option (estimated to cost \$2.5 million). Because the cost to rehabilitate the building is substantial, WSDOT determined that this is not a prudent use of public funds.

The day before the meeting, Western Building tenants put together a list of questions for WSDOT. Unfortunately, there was not enough time to provide written responses to each of the questions prior to the meeting; however WSDOT is currently preparing answers to those questions and expects to have a final document by mid-February. Below are some of the questions asked at the Jan. 18, 2011 meeting.

#### **Summary of questions**

The following is a summary of questions asked by tenants and answers from the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Program team. These questions and answers have been summarized to provide context and clarity. You can find more information about relocation services on our website at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/RealEstate](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/RealEstate). More information about the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Program can be found at [www.alaskanwayviaduct.org](http://www.alaskanwayviaduct.org).

#### **What is the process by which tenants will be contacted by WSDOT to start the relocation process? Will you be contacting master tenants first?**

There is no defined process by which we will contact tenants. We will immediately contact those tenants for whom we have contact information. Please provide us with your complete contact information if you have not already done so. It is important that we receive every tenant's contact information, so please tell other people who did not attend this meeting that we need their information.

**I have 25 subtenants. Can I send you all of their information?**

Yes.

**Can we suggest meeting with each of the master tenants, first?**

Yes, but it is still important that we are in contact with every tenant as soon as possible. It is important that each tenant understands the relocation process and does not jeopardize their relocation eligibility by vacating early.

**What is the date for the purchase of the property?**

Once the Record of Decision is issued in summer 2011, WSDOT would initiate negotiations with the property owner. We anticipate the date of purchase to be in August of this year.

**I'm not a tenant. Can I still get reimbursed for relocation?**

It will depend. If you occupy space in the building you may be eligible for relocation entitlements.

**If I have a business practice that requires specific needs such as a freight elevator or loading dock, and I find an available space next month, wouldn't it be smart for me to move into that space immediately?**

Moving prior to the date that WSDOT makes an offer to the building owner would be a business decision and could preclude relocation entitlements. In order to qualify for relocation eligibility you must be in occupancy of the property at the time the offer is made and prior to the date the state acquires the building.

**If we have specific needs that are required for our business and we don't find a building that meets those needs, what is the window of time starting from August 2011 for us to find a new space?**

Once you have received your Notice of Eligibility, Entitlements & 90-Day Assurance letter, you have *at least* 90 days to move and likely more. Once you vacate the property, you will have 18 months to file any claims.

**If we have several people wanting to move as a group, would WSDOT relocation specialists help find a large space for us?**

If you choose to move as a group, you can utilize your relocation entitlements together to establish a large group move, based on reasonable and necessary as determined by the department. Ultimately it is the displaced businesses responsibility to find a replacement site; however, under advisory services your Relocation Specialist will assist you with this.

**When looking at a new space, what kind of repairs can we pursue and how much can be done to bring the new space up to code, if for example it has leaks or needs repairs?**

A qualified business may be reimbursed *up to* \$50,000 for expenses actually incurred in relocating and reestablishing the business. These are expenses that relate to the replacement site. All costs must be determined reasonable and necessary by WSDOT to reestablish the particular business being displaced. If you qualify as a business you will want to work closely with your Relocation Specialist and obtain pre-approvals on expenses. WSDOT can make relocation payments directly to a contractor on behalf of your business for approved relocation

expenses. Some examples of reestablishment items that may be considered reasonable could be replacement of soiled or worn surfaces such as flooring or paint; repairs or improvements to the replacement that are required by law or code would need to be justified by the code itself. All potential claims would be evaluated for each displaced business and their replacement site.

**I am a master lease holder. When the building is sold, what happens to my lease? Will I be paying a month-to-month lease?**

Each tenant and subtenant would enter into new individual lease agreements with WSDOT at the point of ownership transfer. Each tenant would be responsible for paying according to the terms of their individual lease agreements.

**What is the difference between relocation payments and in-lieu payments?**

A business, farm or nonprofit organization may be eligible to choose a fixed payment in lieu of any payment(s) for actual costs for moving and reestablishment. This payment is sometimes referred to as an "In Lieu" payment. The payment is based on net earnings rather than actual moving costs. The minimum payment is \$1,000 and the maximum payment cannot exceed \$20,000 depending on the net earnings of the displaced business, farm or nonprofit.

**If you move your business to your home and modify your home to suit your business, will those reestablishment repairs be considered?**

Yes, reestablishment claims may be reimbursable by the department if the department determines they are considered reasonable and necessary. Work with your relocation specialist for pre-approvals on potential claims prior to incurring any expenses.

**Are you working directly with the City of Seattle? Do we have resources with the City?**

We are working with the City's economic development staff to identify potential properties in Pioneer Square for relocation. We have also been in contact with the City's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs.

**Is retaining representation (an attorney) a reimbursable expense?**

No, relocation assistance does not reimburse legal fees.

**If I am out of state or out of the country for several months at a time, when will I know the last month I need to make rent payment to be considered for relocation assistance eligibility?**

As long as you are in occupancy of the property, you must continue paying your rent. At this point we do not know the exact date that WSDOT will make closing payments on the property.

**Next steps**

The program team will work to answer all of the questions submitted by the tenants in mid-February. Starting this evening, WSDOT will collect contact information for each individual tenant. A tenant relocation assistance specialist will contact each of you to schedule an occupancy survey. This survey will determine tenants' needs and preferences and provide advice on other sources of assistance. WSDOT expects to have the occupancy surveys complete by the end of February 2011.

The program team is working with local partners such as 4Culture, Artspace, city agencies and Pioneer Square property owners to identify available space that may be of interest to Western Building tenants. A list of available spaces will be circulated in late February. WSDOT will share the list with tenants and post it on the program website.

Following the release of the Record of Decision in summer 2011, WSDOT would initiate negotiations with the property owner and propose an offer. Once the offer is made each tenant will receive a Notice of Eligibility, Entitlements & 90-Day Assurance letter that states what relocation entitlements are available to them. The Western Building would need to be vacated by March 2012.