

Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program
Advisory Committee on Tolling and Traffic Management
Meeting Summary – March 13, 2013

Committee Members in Attendance

- Kurt Beckett
- Rick Bender
- Maud Daudon
- Bob Davidson
- Brendan Donckers
- Tessa Greigor
- Sharon Maeda
- Peg Staeheli
- Sung Yang

Committee Members Not in Attendance

- Claudia Balducci
- Marcus Charles
- Cynthia Chen
- Phil Fujii
- Rob Johnson
- Henry Yates

Agencies and Staff in Attendance

- Craig Stone, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Linea Laird, WSDOT
- Mark Bandy, WSDOT
- Amy Turner, Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program (AWV)
- Brent Baker, AWV
- Dan Eder, Seattle City Council Central Staff
- Bob Chandler, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
- Eric Tweit, SDOT

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and Introductions

Advisory Committee on Tolling and Traffic Management (ACTT) committee administrator Amy Turner welcomed everyone to the meeting. ACTT committee co-chair Maud Daudon gave an update on recent presentations about the ACTT progress report to various agencies and elected officials.

Agenda Item #2 – Round 2 Scenarios Review and Modeling Results

WSDOT Assistant Secretary of the Toll Division, Craig Stone, provided an overview of the different agencies responsible for toll projects and planning.

WSDOT Urban Corridors Traffic Engineer Mark Bandy, SDOT Project Manager Eric Tweit, and Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program Traffic and Revenue Consultant Brent Baker provided an overview of the traffic and revenue results from the second round of modeling.

Question: What are the implications of not selling toll-backed bonds?

Answer: If you didn't sell toll-backed bonds, you could make different assumptions about the amount of insurance or the types of reserves that would be required.

Question: Would not selling toll-backed bonds essentially shift risk from the bond holders to the state?

Answer: Bond markets impose a number of requirements that would be eliminated if toll-backed bonds weren't sold. WSDOT is working with the Office of the State Treasurer on project financing.

Question: Does Scenario 6 require additional infrastructure and is that reflected in the collection costs that you have shown?

Answer: Yes, there would be more trips in the tunnel, which means the collection cost amount would increase. There would also be additional hardware to maintain because there would be more gantries, which house the toll collection sensors, to capture shorter trips exiting at the portals and longer trips continuing on SR 99. WSDOT is concerned that our toll collection vendor would not be able to guarantee the same rate of capture that we have on other facilities because of the locations and angles of the extra gantries.

Question: What would the cost allocation for the tunnel project be if tolls were implemented on some of the state's other potential toll facilities?

Answer: The tolled facilities included in this model are SR 167, Tacoma Narrows Bridge and SR 520. The Columbia River Crossing and I-405 are legislatively authorized and would each have a large share of transactions, but were not included in this analysis.

Comment: The ACTT's progress report raised the question of cost allocation and whether it should be allocated differently for the SR 99 tunnel. This has been noted by the Transportation Commission.

Question: Would traffic congestion improve on I-5 as result of tolling the SR 99 tunnel?

Answer: I-5 congestion does not improve due to tolling the tunnel. The model demonstrates how trips redistribute themselves based on different toll rates. From the Seneca Street screenline, our model indicates that people are accessing I-5 in different places than they do with a no-toll scenario.

Question: If you tolled I-5 during the same periods of time as the SR 99 tunnel, would more people use the tunnel?

Answer: That would depend on what other facilities in the system are tolled or the extent of tolls on I-5. More analysis would need to be done to determine how that would affect traffic patterns.

Question: Have you assumed a constant level of traffic for all 30 years of your model?

Answer: No, the total traffic volumes are assumed to be the same across all scenarios for any given year. Total volumes are assumed to increase over time.

Question: What are the origin and destination parameters of the West Seattle routes that you have shown in your data?

Answer: We measured travel times from Southwest Avalon Way and Southwest Admiral Way at the high West Seattle Bridge. Most of the travel time delay occurs at the bridge, so trip origin in West Seattle is less of a factor.

Question: This data only shows two pathways. How do the toll rates impact the broader system? With 60 percent of the city's bus routes traveling through downtown, what are the broader impacts to transit?

Answer: We have provided other route information in your packets. A lot of the downtown transit routes have priority treatments on them already, so we don't see transit travel times varying much. It is important to note that the model assumes the same level of transit service that exists today; it does not take into account potential cuts to service.

Question: Is the data from the two pathways you've shown us in your presentation an accurate example of the kind of impacts to transit in the rest of the system?

Answer: Yes, these are typical travel times.

Question: Is the temporary bus funding for construction mitigation included in the model?

Answer: We assumed that King County Metro would maintain service at the level instituted as part of the South Holgate to South King Street Viaduct Replacement Project. King County Metro has indicated that maintaining this level of service requires additional funding.

Comment: It would be good to know how much the system would be impacted if those service levels decrease.

Comment: We should have someone from King County Metro at the table for our next ACTT meeting. I want someone to assure us that routes won't disappear again.

Comment: King County Metro should discuss how they would deploy their resources under the best case scenario.

Comment: We should remember that transit is critical to the system as we discuss mitigation.

Question: What was the threshold to create the diversion area circles on these maps?

Answer: Technical staff compared how dense the traffic was in a given area and looked at the demand on the street versus its capacity. We then looked at where this demand changed from the no-toll benchmark.

Agenda Item #3 – Small Group Discussion

The committee broke into small groups to discuss the second round of modeling results. Committee members were asked to discuss how these results were related to the ACTT's guiding principles.

Agenda Item #4 – Report Out and Questions

Amy Turner reconvened the group and led a report-out session.

Comment: One concern I have with Scenario 5a is that the net revenue is too low. Tweaks like adding weekend tolls could change that.

Comment: We want the City of Seattle to explain how much diversion, in vehicle volumes and by time period, is acceptable or tolerable. We should also increase the revenue as much as possible by pulling from different scenarios.

Question: Do none of these scenarios meet all of the funding requirements, including mitigation?

Answer: That is correct. The revenues from each of the scenarios studied in Round 2 (i.e., Scenarios 4, 5A, 5B, and 6) likely wouldn't be sufficient to pay for all of the project and ownership costs and mitigation that the ACTT may consider recommending.

Comment: It seems that we are dealing with a deficit in either project costs or mitigation funding.

Comment: This is true if you think about paying all of the funding components, but the committee has asked in its progress report what the funding stream priorities should be.

Question: We were originally supposed to meet a \$400 million target which is now \$200 million. What are the consequences if the committee doesn't get to that \$200 million in our recommendations?

Answer: The revenues would either need to be secured from tolling or from some other funding source to support all the planned costs for the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program's capital improvements and ongoing ownership costs. If the revenues cannot be secured, then the scope of the viaduct replacement program would need to be cut.

Comment: I don't think that we know all of the financing issues to be able to answer that question. We are trying to balance raising revenue with the need to protect the city. The conversations I've had with the Office of the State Treasurer and the Transportation Commission show that they understand what we are trying to do. The state has paid the viaduct's operations and maintenance costs for a long time so why do we now need to pay those costs with tolls? Regardless, it is important to get the revenue stream as high as possible.

Comment: Please quantify the cost of vehicle diversion. These costs include economic and opportunity costs, wear and tear, and mitigation costs. Maybe the best we can do is minimize diversion. Understanding this would give us a better baseline to understand diversion. Diversion doesn't always have to be negative.

Comment: I thought that we should look at vehicle hours of delay, and the value of that time multiplied by a given metric. We need a different metric to understand what these numbers mean.

Comment: We need to have some way to evaluate the options and be able to explain how we came up with our recommendations.

Comment: It would help us if we decide to recommend a tolling scenario that doesn't meet the funding target to be able to explain, based on a given metric, that reaching that target was a poor trade-off with the other effects it creates.

Comment: It may be that we need multiple metrics and this analysis can be tweaked over time. After a year of tolling we should look at mitigation actions.

Agenda Item #5 – Next Steps and Action Items

Amy Turner thanked everyone for attending. The next committee meeting will be held on April 24, 2013. At that meeting, the pathway to preliminary recommendations will be discussed.

Action items:

- Bring the range of cost allocations based on additional facilities being tolled.
- King County Metro should be present at the next ACTT meeting.
- Provide information on the cost of delay from each toll scenario.
- Provide information on the future uses of Alaskan Way.