

Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program  
Advisory Committee on Tolling and Traffic Management  
Meeting Summary – Nov. 14, 2012

### **Committee Members in Attendance**

- Claudia Balducci
- Kurt Beckett
- Rick Bender
- Marcus Charles
- Cynthia Chen
- Maud Daudon
- Tessa Greeger
- Rob Johnson
- Sharon Maeda
- Peg Staeheli
- Sung Yang
- Henry Yates

### **Committee Members Not in Attendance**

- Bob Davidson
- Phil Fujii

### **Agencies and Staff in Attendance**

- Linea Laird, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Kimberly Farley, WSDOT
- Amy Turner, Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program (AWV)
- Kevin Desmond, King County Metro
- 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. She recapped the previous ACTT meetings and introduced the day's topics.

Linea Laird Linea gave a brief update on WSDOT's needs for the upcoming legislative session. Because of Initiative 1185, toll authorization may need to be sought again. WSDOT plans to request bond authorization during the 2014 legislative session.

### **Agenda Item #2 – 2017 transportation system**

Matt Preedy explained the roadway improvements that are planned or under construction as part of the AWV program and how Seattle traffic patterns will change once these improvements are complete.

SDOT Project Manager Eric Tweit explained how the waterfront will change after the viaduct is removed. He also explained transit pathway improvements from the City of Seattle's transit master plan.

King County Metro General Manager Kevin Desmond explained his agency's plans for transit improvements and noted that transit is both a partner agency and a stakeholder in the AWW program. He gave background information on the regional transit system and the major service change that occurred in September 2012. He highlighted the increase in ridership that Metro has experienced in the last couple of years, and the installation of the four RapidRide lines. Kevin also noted that mitigation funding for Metro services as part of the South Holgate Street to South King Street project will expire in 2014 and Metro is interested in finding funding to replace this.

Due to a fire alarm, the presentations on bicycle, pedestrian and freight systems were postponed until the Dec. 12, 2012 ACTT meeting.

Question: How does RapidRide work, and how many people are using the C and D lines?

*Answer: RapidRide provides more frequent service that is faster and more reliable. Metro started the A line (Tukwila to Federal Way) 2 years ago and has since seen a 50 percent increase in ridership. The C (West Seattle to Downtown) and D (Ballard to Downtown) lines were implemented in September 2012. The C line has seen a dramatic increase in ridership and a lot of crowding is still occurring. The two lines are coupled to reduce costs, but this leads to reliability issues as buses encounter chokepoints downtown. Metro is committed to the brand of RapidRide and we want to increase it in the future.*

Question: Is RapidRide reliable?

*Answer: It will get more reliable, though we are still struggling to improve the service. We added some southbound p.m. peak trips originating in Belltown on the C line to help with this issue.*

Comment: Third Avenue is a dedicated transit street. This was a conscientious decision by the City of Seattle after the bus tunnel was closed to retrofit it for rail. This shows how certain strategies can be effective mitigation tools.

Question: Is Third Avenue transit-only during just peak hours?

*Answer: Yes. However, once Sound Transit's light rail is complete to Bellevue all buses will leave the bus tunnel and Third Avenue's transit priority may need to be reevaluated.*

Question: If we look at mitigation we need to look at its effects on businesses as well. My perception of Third Avenue is that it has lost its vibrancy and that it doesn't seem safe. Has there been an economic study of the impacts of the transit priority there?

*Answer: The Mayor and City Council started the Center City Initiative, with Third Avenue as a focus, to improve the urban landscape and security.*

Question: Are more people choosing to take transit because of enhanced service or because of congestion?

*Answer: Both are contributing factors. Frequency of trips and improved connections mean more people will use the system. West Seattleites are savvy commuters and will choose to not sit in a car in traffic.*

Question: How long did the process take for Metro to receive mitigation funding for the South Holgate Street to South King Street Viaduct Replacement Project?

*Answer: That funding is part of the overall AWV program budget. It's unusual in its size and that it's paying directly for transit. This money was allocated three or four years ago. A 1 percent Motor Vehicle Excise Tax (MVET) was part of original deal signed in 2009 to pay for the rest of transit construction mitigation and ongoing services costs. That funding tool has not been approved by the Legislature. Metro needs \$15million annually to fund the transit service that was agreed upon as part of this program.*

Question: What happens if the Legislature doesn't approve funding for Metro? Do you have a back-up plan?

*Answer: Without additional funding, in February 2014 Metro will eliminate 14 percent of its service. The bottom line is that we have a significant funding gap that will negatively affect commuters and the way traffic moves in downtown Seattle. Metro does not have a sustainable funding plan.*

Question: Why does Metro have problems with funding?

*Answer: The Legislature has been working on a broad transportation funding package for a long time which has yet to be finalized. The need to address transit statewide has been part of that conversation and this committee can play an important role in this process. It's important to remember that the MVET was included in the program funding package with the intent to view the corridor as a system. In the absence of the MVET, WSDOT worked with the county to fund construction mitigation service for one phase of the project.*

Question: How many routes access downtown from south of Seattle?

*Answer: There are 15 routes from West Seattle and Burien.*

Question: Why are we only considering one exit point for the southend transit pathway? Couldn't we utilize Main and Columbia streets?

*Answer: All of those routes work as a network and having a common corridor makes it easier for riders to transfer between buses. Splitting the routes on different streets requires more resources.*

Question: In the context of mitigation, wouldn't a number of buses coming into a single point change the dynamics of a street, like what we've seen happen on Third Avenue?

*Answer: Metro and SDOT are working to make sure whatever corridor is chosen for the southend transit pathway works well. We are still going to see an 8-12 minute time increase no matter which corridor is chosen, because there are so many competing needs for that area.*

Question: Will the model WSDOT is using for its analysis tell us the impact of added transit on the system? We'll need an analytical basis to form our recommendations.

*Answer: The Dynamic Traffic Assignment can't predict changes in mode. We can model a given number of buses and how they travel through the corridor but can't look at how many people are*

*changing from cars to transit. We've incorporated information about mode shift from the regional model and an understanding of future transit services into our model.*

### **Agenda Item #3 – Mitigating the effects of diversion**

Due to a fire alarm, the discussion on mitigating the effects of diversion was postponed until the Dec. 12, 2012 ACTT meeting.

### **Agenda Item #4 – Progress report**

Amy Turner explained a draft of the progress report will be sent to the committee in advance of the next meeting with feedback from committee members expected by Dec. 5. A final draft will be presented to the committee at the Dec. 12 meeting.

ACTT co-chair Maud Daudon discussed the content of the initial draft, including initial observations and policy issues that it will address.

Question: What is your process for disseminating the progress report?

*Answer: We will appear before the Transportation Commission and potentially the City Council. The key thing is to try to identify the key policy areas where we need to seek guidance from key policy makers. We don't need to do anything legislatively at this time unless asked.*

Comment: It will wreak havoc with a lot of people if there isn't any mitigation money for transit after February 2014 until tunnel completion. I understand that isn't our assignment as a committee, but it needs to be brought up.

Comment: The ACTT has three purposes and transit is part of all of those. Building the tunnel has had an impact on transit and its access to the downtown core. If we're talking about mitigating traffic diversion we need to be getting people to shift to transit.

Comment: There is a difference between mitigating for construction impacts to traffic, and mitigating for diversion from tolling after project completion. We can distinguish between those two things in the progress report.

Comment: Construction mitigation for transit and diversion mitigation for transit are interrelated. We have momentum built around the improvements to transit that have already been made and it is vital to keep this going to fulfill our charge to make the corridor function as a system.

Question: The word significant in the phrase "tolling generates significant revenue" makes it sound as if our modeling results have generated more funds than are necessary.

*Answer: The word significant was meant to highlight that all three scenarios so far have generated enough money to pay for at least the operations, and maintenance and collection costs. This is a significant revenue stream even if it doesn't accomplish all of our goals. We hope to move away from dictating what this revenue must be used for while still acknowledging that we have issues with it.*

Question: What work has been done on the questions surrounding social justice? Can WSDOT's model provide results for different types of populations? If so, that could help in the discussion about diversion impacts on minority populations. What are the costs and burdens of mitigation on other facilities, and do we risk spending more money on mitigation measures and the overall economic cost of the project than we can earn in tolls? WSDOT should also look beyond the cost of mitigation to its economic benefits.

*Answer: We can look more deeply at these two issues.*

Comment: In the progress report you should note that we are continuing to discuss social justice and the economic impact of diversion and mitigation.

Question: Should mitigation funding be noted as a separate issue in the progress report?

*Answer: It is noted under the policy issues.*

Question: In the progress report are we asking the Legislature to revisit their policy on toll allocation?

*Answer: The intent is to find out if the policy could be revisited.*

Question: Can you provide the committee with all of the comments made by ACTT members on the progress report, prior to the Dec. 12 meeting?

*Answer: We can provide a document that has a list of all of the comments.*

#### **Agenda Item #5 – Next Steps and Action Items**

Amy Turner thanked everyone for attending. The next committee meeting will be held on Dec. 12, 2012.

Action items:

- Staff will present on the bicycle, pedestrian and freight systems and on mitigating the effects of diversion at the next meeting.
- Staff will send a draft of the progress report for review, and send comments received, to committee members prior to the next meeting.
- Staff will look into the issues of social justice and the economic impact of diversion.