

Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program
Stakeholder Group – May 8, 2013
Meeting Summary

Stakeholder Group Attendees

- John Coney, Uptown Alliance
- Alan Cornell, Nitze-Stagen
- Matt Curry, South Lake Union Chamber of Commerce
- Stephen DeForest, Magnolia Community Club
- Jan Drago, The Alliance for Pioneer Square
- Tim Hillis, Charlie's Produce
- David Luong, Seattle Hotel Association (*for Howard Cohen*)
- Evan Manvel, Cascade Bicycle Club
- Lynn Perkins and Bree Moore, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Robert Nellams, Seattle Center
- Don Newby, Burien
- Marty Oppenheimer, South Park
- Vlad Oustimovitch, West Seattle
- Susan Ranf, Seattle Mariners
- Pete Spalding, Delridge

Stakeholder Group Members Not in Attendance

- Warren Aakervik, Ballard Oil
- Linda Anderson, Amalgamated Transit Union
- Glenn Avery, Queen Anne Community Council
- Rachel Ben-Shmuel, Vulcan
- Michael Beranbaum, Joint Council of Teamsters No. 28
- Kris Breton, Compass Housing Alliance
- Barb Chamberlain, Bicycle Alliance of Washington
- Jerome Cohen, West Seattle Chamber of Commerce
- Tom Graff, Belltown Business Association
- Jason Handaly, Sound Produce
- Ron Hildebrandt, Trident Seafoods at Interbay
- John Huey, American West Bank and Duwamish Transportation Management Association
- Ron Kieswether, Oak Harbor Freight Lines
- Adam Link, CenturyLink Field and Event Center
- Lee Newgent, Seattle/KC Building & Construction Trades Council
- John Odland, MacMillan-Piper
- Vince O'Halloran, Puget Sound Ports Council & Sailors Union of the Pacific
- Robbie Phillips, South Lake Union Community Council
- Lisa Quinn, Feet First
- Ed Shilley, Nucor Steel
- Herald Ugles, International Longshore and Warehouse Union/Pacific Maritime Association
- Eugene Wasserman, North Seattle Industrial Association

- Elaine Wine, Ballard

Agencies and Staff in Attendance

- Linea Laird, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Matt Preedy, WSDOT
- Ron Posthuma, King County Department of Transportation (KCDOT)
- Mike Merritt, Port of Seattle
- Bob Chandler, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
- Eric Tweit, SDOT
- Jessica Murphy, SDOT
- David Namura, Puget Sound Energy (PSE)

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and Program Updates

Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program Administrator Linea Laird welcomed everyone to the meeting and led introductions. She informed the group about public tours that are now offered on a viewing platform above the SR 99 tunnel launch pit.

SDOT Assistant Director of Strategic Projects Bob Chandler briefly updated the group on the SODO arena plan progress, noting that the City is awaiting a decision by the NBA and the environmental impact statement process was moving forward in the meantime.

Bob Chandler gave an update on the work of the SR 99 tunnel Advisory Committee on Tolling and Traffic Management (ACTT). He reviewed traffic and revenue results of the two rounds of scenarios the committee has studied to-date.

PSE Manager of Local Government Affairs David Namura gave an update on the natural gas main relocation project. PSE will lay a new pipe along the downtown waterfront and then decommission the existing pipe. Construction will begin in early or mid-June 2013 and scheduled to end in September 2013. PSE is coordinating closely with Pioneer Square and waterfront stakeholders to mitigate their concerns.

Marty Oppenheimer: If you will need to put funds aside for maintenance of the SR 99 tunnel, regardless of whether or not you bond for financing purposes, why does the amount you put aside change?

Answer: The bond market makes certain requirements about how much money you put aside and when you do that. Money for tunnel maintenance could come from tolls and therefore would be considered when setting toll rates.

Marty Oppenheimer: What do diversion numbers of 20 percent mean for streets like Fifth Avenue?

Answer: There is substantial diversion at both ends of the corridor. We can provide more detail about traffic impacts in that area at a future meeting.

Vlad Oustimovitch: Of the total number of cars diverting from the tunnel, what percent instead travel on city streets and what percent travel on I-5?

Answer: Most diversion begins at the waterfront and works its way eastward. I-5 sees relatively little additional traffic because it is already operating at capacity.

Vlad Oustimovitch: That's counter-intuitive because today when SR 99 is blocked or congested, drivers traveling from West Seattle use I-5 as an alternate route.

Answer: The total number of vehicles on I-5 remains essentially the same, but drivers using the facility may change. Some drivers who were on I-5 will divert to city streets, while others who were on SR 99 will divert to I-5.

Don Newby: Can you go into more detail about tolling from SeaTac to Shoreline and what routes were included in the analysis?

Answer: No scenarios examine tolling from SeaTac to Shoreline; only the SR 99 tunnel and its ramps would be tolled.

Don Newby: Is there more information about the ACTT's work than what can be found on the program website?

Answer: All ACTT meeting materials are on the website. The ACTT meetings are open to the public. We will continue to provide you with updates on that committee's work, but ACTT meetings are the appropriate venue for discussing these issues at length.

Don Newby: Will you be using a boring technique to install the natural gas pipeline?

Answer: We will dig an open trench with a maximum depth of about ten feet.

Agenda Item #2 – Elliott Bay Seawall Project

SDOT Project Manager Jessica Murphy presented information about the Elliott Bay Seawall Project's upcoming construction and schedule. She explained the sequencing plan for the project including how it is designed to have less impact on businesses, how the waterfront road will be configured during construction and what near-term construction activities will be.

Susan Ranf: We recently received an update about parking impacts for the entire Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program. Did that update account for the interim spaces indicated in your presentation?

Answer: Yes, they are part of the early road widening before Memorial Day weekend. Whenever sections of Alaskan Way are not in use for construction they will be striped for temporary parking.

Susan Ranf: Are you saying that any one segment of businesses along the waterfront will be impacted for only one season?

Answer: Yes, and the bridges connecting pedestrians to those businesses should only be impacted for part of a season. The access bridges are for deconstruction and reconstruction of the seawall. We are trying to minimize impacts caused by this work.

Susan Ranf: What will the roadway configuration be once you've finished replacing the seawall?

Answer: After each phase of construction, we will restore the roadway to what it is like today. At the conclusion of the project it will return to a temporary roadway until the viaduct is demolished.

Stephen DeForest: Will the temporary roadway have the same number of traffic lights as the current Alaskan Way?

Answer: The temporary roadway will have approximately the same number of traffic lights and we can find out the exact number. These lights will also utilize adaptive signal technology.

Stephen DeForest: Does the temporary roadway underneath the viaduct have fewer lanes?

Answer: The temporary roadway will have one southbound and one northbound lane, plus a turn lane. Currently there is one lane in each direction at the far north and south ends of Alaskan Way. The four lanes that exist in the middle of the stretch don't currently see a lot of added traffic.

Don Newby: What are the highest risk factors for this project?

Answer: The project is on a tight schedule with very complicated work to be done. Some of the work will be impacted by tides, so it will be very important for our crews to take advantage of every available opportunity to work. That's why we're doing some construction work early.

Don Newby: You changed the composite materials that you're putting in the seawall. What is your anticipated life cycle of these materials and the seawall in general?

Answer: The structure is designed for a 75-year life cycle, which is typical of most structures. This doesn't mean that the seawall will fall down after that period is over; it may just need more significant repairs at that point.

Agenda Item #3 – Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program

Matt Preedy, Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program Deputy Program Administrator, updated the group on south-end construction, including assembling and testing the tunneling machine, installing facilities to support tunneling and building the South Atlantic Street overpass. He also gave an overview of construction at the north end, where work has begun on the tunneling machine's receiving pit support walls and excavation.

Lynn Perkins: What will happen to Bertha, the tunneling machine, once this project is complete?

Answer: Our tunnel contractor, Seattle Tunnel Partners, owns the tunneling machine and will decide what to do with it.

Don Newby: Other tunneling projects have buried their boring machines upon completion. Will they do that here?

Answer: While that sometimes happens, many machines are of a common size and can be reused for other projects. There is nowhere to bury this machine without impacting property owners.

Vlad Oustimovitch: How do you intend to move all of the tunneling machine's big parts from the north portal site?

Answer: The machine will be disassembled at the end of tunneling into much smaller pieces than the ones that went into the launch pit.

Agenda Item #4 – Mercer Corridor Program

SDOT Project Manager Eric Tweit presented an update on current and upcoming construction work for the Mercer Corridor Program. He noted that Fairview Avenue North reopened to traffic in March 2013 and Westlake Avenue North will remain closed for another couple of months. The east phase of the project will be complete this summer. The west phase of the project began in March 2013 and SR 99 between Roy and Republican streets will be narrowed to two lanes as part of the replacement of the SR 99 bridge over Mercer Street.

Pete Spalding: How long will the SR 99 detour last?

Answer: The shift will occur very soon and the new configuration will be in place until the end of 2015 when the new SR 99 tunnel opens. Bridge construction will finish at the end of 2014. At that point WSDOT will take over SR99/Aurora Avenue North and continue with tunnel construction.

Pete Spalding: Will there be sidewalks through the construction area? Will the lanes in the restricted area be regular size? Are there any bus stops in the restricted area of SR 99?

Answer: Once we are done with this project this part of SR 99 will have sidewalks, but there will be none in the tunnel construction zone further south. The lanes will be standard size. We had to close two bus stops on Mercer Street because sidewalks were removed.

Evan Manvel: How many pedestrians go through the Mercer West construction area and how will they be impacted?

Answer: We will look into this information.

Evan Manvel: Where would the pedestrians detour to?

Answer: The green lines on the maps in the presentation indicate alternate routes.

Matt Curry: I want to compliment you on the quality of your graphics. Please include these on your notification fliers.

Answer: We will include these types of materials in future fliers.

Lynn Perkins: Will bicyclists and pedestrians have to share the sidewalks on Mercer Street?

Answer: Yes, everyone will get half the amount of space they have today. There's very little space on Mercer Street to work with for construction.

Lynn Perkins: Is there a pedestrian crossing signal at the intersection of Harrison and Broad streets? How will pedestrians cross Broad Street at Taylor Avenue North?

Answer: Pedestrians will be able to cross Harrison on the west side of the street via a sidewalk. As it is today, pedestrians won't be allowed to cross Broad Street at Taylor Avenue North.

Matt Curry: Will a guided left turn at Ninth Avenue North keep pedestrians from attempting to cross at Eighth Avenue North?

Answer: Correct. Pedestrians will not be able to cross at Eighth Avenue North.

Robert Nellams: How will you make sure that people can get through the construction zone and visit the Seattle Center during this project? What mitigation steps are you taking, such as having traffic cops at intersections?

Answer: We will place advanced notice signs so that travelers are aware of the closure. We will be giving notice further west so fewer drivers try to turn south on Fifth Avenue North. We will have uniformed police officers at some locations during the full closure and on the first Monday morning. Our goal is that the signals and notifications are well-designed so there isn't a need for officers to direct traffic.

Robert Nellams: When the Mercer East Project first reopened the lanes on Mercer Street, people were confused and conditioned to use Valley Street. Even a well-designed road is not enough in the initial

stages to change driver behavior. I suggest we get out in front of that issue so we don't discourage people from coming into the area.

Lynn Perkins: During construction of the Mercer East Project it was often difficult to understand the lane configurations as they changed. Will the Mercer West Project be more difficult to navigate?

Answer: The biggest difference with the Mercer East Project is that we could usually keep three eastbound lanes open. We don't have room for that in this area and will only have two eastbound lanes for Mercer West. Another challenge is that SR 99 will be narrowed here as well.

Lynn Perkins: Right now we have four eastbound lanes and it can take twenty minutes to drive on Mercer Street from Dexter Avenue North to I-5. I think the problems are further down the line at Westlake Avenue North or the Amazon offices. If we can't solve some of bottle neck on the east part, the problems on the west part won't be solved.

Answer: We will monitor traffic patterns on east and west Mercer Street and make adjustments to signals as necessary.

Lynn Perkins: Truck traffic uses Fifth Avenue North to get to Mercer Street. What plans do you have for separating pedestrians from those big trucks? This is a place where officers might be helpful.

Answer: We will have the infrastructure that is currently in place.

Lynn Perkins: What's being done with the retiming of signals at Denny Way? What are the overall plans for this street?

Answer: We don't have funding identified or a definite start date. More analysis is needed. If any changes are made they would be for signal retiming and monitoring.

Stephen DeForest: When will the fourth phase at Yale Avenue North be complete? Will that take some pressure off of Mercer Street?

Answer: That project will finish in mid-summer 2013 and may help conditions on Mercer Street.

Robert Nellams: Will Battery Street continue to have one general purpose lane and one bus-only lane?

Answer: Yes, that is the current plan.

Stephen DeForest: What is the status of the proposal for an electronic reader board on 15th Avenue Northwest to inform travelers about construction on Mercer Street?

Answer: We will temporarily have a portable message sign stationed on Elliott Avenue north of West Mercer Place. We are examining a longer-term solution in light of future Elliott Bay Seawall and Waterfront Seattle construction.

Stephen DeForest: If someone lives in Ballard and travels southbound, when will they be informed about construction?

Answer: The only sign will be between the Magnolia Bridge and West Mercer Place.

Mike Merritt: What happens to traffic if a NBA basketball team returns to the Key Arena?

Answer: We are coordinating with Seattle Center staff, and if an NBA team returns to Key Arena we will need to direct people to other routes as best we can.

Agenda Item #5 – Other Project Updates

Matt Preedy gave an update on the SR 99 Spokane Street Overcrossing Project, also known as the Timber Bridge. He noted that traffic is moving reasonably well through the narrowed areas.

Pete Spalding: Slow-downs on the timber bridge are occurring during every evening commute.

Don Newby: There is not enough notice for people to merge to the right. There should be signs earlier indicating the southbound reduced lanes.

Pete Spalding: Some of the signs for drivers going to the West Seattle Bridge are not visible from the roadway. Aerial signs similar to those on the southbound Alaskan Way Viaduct exit to the stadiums would be helpful.

Marty Oppenheimer: A lot of drivers try to use the left lane to speed ahead of the queue. An earlier merge may help solve that problem.

Agenda Item #6 – Stakeholder Group Member Feedback

Linea Laird asked the group if they liked the new format of the joint meeting. Group members stated that they preferred this new format and location.

Jan Drago: The intersection at South Royal Brougham Way, Occidental Avenue South and First Avenue South isn't working during peak hours. Frequently, traffic doesn't move for one or two light cycles. There is a solution, but you're not willing to do it. It continues to be a problem and has gotten worse.
Answer: We will make that an action item and bring possible solutions to a future meeting.

Marty Oppenheimer: When the First Avenue South Bridge is raised it causes a tremendous backup on SR 99. Could we have a reader board at the intersection of SR 509 and South Holden Street to inform northbound drivers and give them an opportunity to find an alternate route?

Answer: We will make that an action item and bring possible solutions to a future meeting.

Agenda Item #7 – Action Items and Adjourn

Linea Laird wrapped up the meeting. The presentation will be available on the program website and the meeting summary will be emailed to the working group members.

Action items:

- Consider adding message signs farther north on 15th Avenue Northwest north of the Ballard Bridge to help Ballard residents make decisions whether to take Mercer Street during construction.
- Consider more advance notice and visible signage on southbound SR 99 so drivers will merge earlier before reaching the South Spokane Street Overcrossing lane reduction.
- Monitor congestion on Mercer Street near Ninth Avenue North and how it may increase during Mercer West construction.
- Revisit possible improvements for traffic flow near South Royal Brougham Way, First Avenue South and Occidental Avenue South (specifically westbound movements).

- Continue using graphics such as the maps provided for the Mercer Corridor Project update in construction notifications.
- Consider placing a message sign for northbound SR 509 traffic at South Holden Street that indicates when the First Avenue South Bridge is up.