

# Alaskan Way Viaduct **REPLACEMENT** PROGRAM



Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program  
Stakeholder Meeting - North Surface Street Connections  
Oct. 15, 2014

## **Stakeholders in attendance**

- Warren Aakervik, Ballard Oil/Seattle Freight Advisory Board
- John Coney, Uptown Alliance
- Layne Cubell, Seattle Center
- Matt Curry, South Lake Union Chamber of Commerce
- Kyle Ducey, South Lake Union Community Council
- Marni Heffron, Mercer Corridor Stakeholder Committee
- Mike McQuaid, South Lake Union Community Council
- Lance Miller, Seattle Center
- Bree Moore, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

## **Agency staff in attendance**

- Ali Amiri, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Eric O'Brien, Seattle Department of Transportation
- Eric Tweit, Seattle Department of Transportation
- Christine Wolf, Port of Seattle

Ali Amiri discussed the conceptual design of the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program's North Surface Street Connections project. This work will begin after the SR 99 tunnel opens and includes:

- Re-building John and Thomas streets across SR 99 and re-building a small section of Denny Way and Wall Street. Additional work is limited to reconstructing the intersections and roadways adjacent to the tunnel operations building.
- Improvements to Aurora Avenue North between Denny Way and Harrison Street.

The group discussed concepts included in other plans for this area, including the South Lake Union Mobility Plan, Denny Way Streetscape Concept Plan, Thomas Green Street Concept Plan and current efforts to update the Uptown Urban Design Framework.

After design work reaches approximately 30 percent for North Surface Street Connections, WSDOT and SDOT will consider options for construction sequencing. Construction would occur after the new SR 99 tunnel is open to drivers and would require closures of Aurora Avenue North between Denny Way and Harrison Street. The construction start date and sequencing will be coordinated with WSDOT's Battery Street Tunnel decommissioning work. Construction could take place with a full street closure or could be phased while maintaining one traffic lane in each direction. The agencies asked the stakeholders for initial feedback on these two options.

- A full closure of Aurora Avenue North does not sound feasible. Metro RapidRide E line would be negatively affected.
- A full closure would have impacts for freight and business access. Maintaining access to local businesses is critical. Alternate routes would need to be carefully planned, especially with a long-term closure of Aurora Avenue North.
- When the SR 99 tunnel opens, the new Sixth Avenue North would be open and connect Mercer Street and Denny Way. This could provide an additional north-south route that may offset the impacts of a full closure of Aurora Avenue North during construction.
- Having this portion of Aurora Avenue North closed for several months could impact travelers to the area and visitors to Seattle Center.
- If Aurora Avenue North was fully closed for several months but provided a cost savings for the project, would that money be able to be passed along to the businesses? (Probably not. WSDOT would not completely block access to local businesses during construction.)
- The agencies should consider alternatives during construction such as opening Thomas Street across Aurora Avenue North to pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

WSDOT anticipates that this project will be at 30 percent design in early 2015 and will plan additional meetings to share progress with this group and other neighborhood stakeholders at that time. WSDOT and SDOT will continue construction phasing discussions with this group and other agencies, including King County Metro.

### **Questions and comments:**

- Will flammable or combustible cargo be allowed in the new SR 99 tunnel? Will the city or state oversee operations of the SR 99 tunnel? (WSDOT will own, operate and maintain the new limited access SR 99 tunnel. All loads that require a USDOT placard will be prohibited from using the tunnel.)
- How is design and construction coordinated between the City and State for North Surface Street Connections? (All WSDOT projects that are located on city streets must meet City of Seattle design standards. WSDOT and SDOT meet frequently to discuss design. The

Port of Seattle and King County Metro are also included in regular coordination meetings.)

- What is the current plan for bicycle infrastructure on Thomas Street? (WSDOT will make improvements to the intersection of Thomas Street and Aurora Avenue North. WSDOT will also improve the north sidewalk and curb adjacent to the tunnel operations building. Other plans for bicycle infrastructure are unfunded on Thomas Street but the City will look into options for upgrades.)
- There has been interest in creating a transit hub on Aurora Avenue North at Harrison Street. There should be wide sidewalks in this area to accommodate future transit infrastructure. (This area will have wide sidewalks and we are coordinating the design with King County Metro.)
- Will the left turn radius from southbound SR 99 to Harrison Street accommodate trucks? (It is designed for WB-50 trucks and would accommodate larger WB-67 trucks.)
- Will intelligent transportation systems be used on Denny Way? (Any improvements by WSDOT to signals on Denny Way will be reviewed by SDOT's signals group. SDOT is in the process of building its "Next Generation Intelligent Transportation Systems" in the Central Business District and expects to have this completed by the end of 2016. Concepts have also been developed for this to be implemented on Denny Way, but are waiting for funding before they can be built.)
- Will improvements near Denny Way and Aurora Avenue North match the Denny Way Streetscape Concept Plan? (Yes, we will reference this plan during design. We will also keep track of new building developments and other changes that will affect the streetscape in this area.)
- Will Sixth Avenue south of Denny Way be converted to two-way operation? (No, this was an early concept that is not being considered anymore.)
- Does the Seattle Bicycle Master Plan show one-way bike lanes on both Thomas and Harrison streets? (This concept is not getting much support. We are planning to locate the bike lanes on Thomas Street.)
- East-west bus service needs to be improved in this area. (SDOT and WSDOT are meeting with King County Metro to ensure that streetscape plans in this area incorporate opportunities for future Metro improvements.)

- When will WSDOT complete design for North Surface Street Connections? (WSDOT anticipates being at 90 percent design by the end of 2015 and going to bid in the spring of 2016.)
- When will WSDOT share more information on construction phasing for North Surface Street Connections? (We will complete the design before looking at options for construction phasing. We will keep stakeholders involved in this process.)
- Is there enough right of way on Aurora Avenue North between Thomas and Harrison streets to build the planned improvements? (Yes, there is enough room to accommodate planned travel lanes, transit lanes, sidewalks and landscaping features in the existing right of way.)