

Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program  
South Portal Working Group – May 2, 2012  
Meeting Summary

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**Working Group Attendees**

- Linda Anderson, Amalgamated Transit Union
- Jerome Cohen, West Seattle Chamber of Commerce
- Barbara Culp, Bicycle Alliance of Washington State
- Jan Drago, The Alliance for Pioneer Square
- Jason Handaly, Sound Produce
- Don Newby, Burien
- John Odland, MacMillan-Piper
- Vlad Oustimovitch, West Seattle
- Pete Spalding, Delridge
- Herald Ugles, International Longshore and Warehouse Union and Pacific Maritime Association

**Working Group Members Not in Attendance**

- Michael Beranbaum, Joint Council of Teamsters No. 28
- Kris Breton, Compass Housing Alliance
- Alan Cornell, Nitze-Stagen
- John Huey, American West Bank and Duwamish Transportation Management Association
- Adam Link, CenturyLink Field and Event Center
- Marty Oppenheimer, South Park
- Lisa Quinn, Feet First
- Susan Ranf, Seattle Mariners
- Ron Kieswether, Oak Harbor Freight Lines
- Ed Shilley, Nucor Steel

**Agencies and Staff in Attendance**

- Linea Laird, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Matt Preedy, WSDOT
- Bob Chandler, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
- Stuart Goldsmith, SDOT
- Ron Posthuma, King County Department of Transportation (KCDOT)
- Geri Poor, Port of Seattle

**Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and Introductions**

Bob Chandler, SDOT Assistant Director, Strategic Projects, welcomed the working group members and the public to the meeting.

**Agenda Item #2 – South End Construction**

Matt Preedy, WSDOT Deputy Program Administrator, gave an update on current SR 99 tunnel construction, including the launch pit and truck haul routes. He also gave an update on the South Holgate Street to South King Street Project. Geri Poor, Port of Seattle Regional Transportation Manager,

presented an update on the East Marginal Way Grade Separation Project. Stuart Goldsmith gave an update on the South Spokane Street and Airport Way South projects.

The group discussed planned haul routes for trucks removing soil from the launch pit. WSDOT and Seattle Tunnel Partners agreed to meet with Sound Produce and other stakeholders who are located near the planned routes to discuss the topic in greater detail.

Barbara Culp: How will cyclists heading to West Seattle travel through the south end construction zone?  
*Answer: A new bike path is being built along the west side of the construction area, next to the Port of Seattle's Terminal 46. At times during construction this path will be detoured onto port property, but access will be maintained throughout construction. When finished, the path will run along either side of the South Atlantic Street overpass.*

Barbara Culp: How will northbound bike traffic on East Marginal Way South cross South Atlantic Street?

*Answer: Cyclists can ride on the sidewalk on the west side of East Marginal Way South and cross using the crosswalk at South Atlantic Street. There will also be a northbound bicycle lane in the northbound travel lane with striping and signage to allow cyclists to cross South Atlantic Street.*

Linda Anderson: Will bicycles be allowed on the South Atlantic Street overpass?

*Answer: Cyclists will be able to use the structure, but there will be no dedicated infrastructure for them. The overpass is the only way for all modes to bypass train blockages.*

Linda Anderson: There is a possibility for dangerous blind spots if bicycles are moving alongside trucks on the overpass.

*Response: The design team worked closely with freight and bicycle representatives to maximize visibility at this location. Additionally, the speed limit on the structure will be slow.*

Vlad Oustimovitch: Can bicycle and vehicular traffic go under the overpass if there is no train at the tracks? How will the signals work in this area?

*Answer: Our goal is to keep the railroad tracks clear. To achieve this we will modify the signal operations to force people onto the overpass. Bicyclists will have a designated signal.*

Vlad Oustimovitch: Will this configuration be easy to navigate by drivers and cyclists not familiar with the area?

*Answer: There will be a number of way-finding signs in the area and we will monitor their effectiveness after the structure opens. We can bring diagrams to the next meeting that show where the signs will be placed.*

Pete Spalding: When will the Fourth Avenue South exit from the Spokane Street Viaduct open? How long will the First Avenue South exit remain closed?

*Answer: The Fourth Avenue South exit will open on May 22. The First Avenue South exit will remain closed for another six to eight weeks.*

Pete Spalding: There are still signs and lane markings on the lower Spokane Street Bridge that direct people toward I-5 by heading eastbound from Harbor Island.

*Response: The contractor was directed today to cover those signs.*

Pete Spalding: Are fliers with routes and construction information being distributed to truck drivers who aren't familiar with the area near your construction zones?

*Answer: Yes, a map was created and disseminated to the truck dispatcher listserv. That is the best way to reach all of the drivers.*

Pete Spalding: How long until construction is finished at the intersection underneath the East Marginal Way bridge?

*Answer: It reopened to traffic yesterday and crews are finishing up a few details.*

### **Agenda Item #3 – Working Group Member Feedback**

Bob Chandler explained that the agenda for the meeting was changed based on suggestions from working group members that more time should be devoted to eliciting feedback from group members. He proposed dedicating 10 to 15 minutes of each meeting to this topic in the future.

Pete Spalding: Thank you for rearranging the agenda. While the other components of this project and related projects are important for us to be informed of, construction in the south portal area is the most important for us to discuss.

Herald Ugles: We all learn a lot when we have discussions. Getting reports from program staff is important, but giving more time for discussion at each meeting would be good.

Linda Anderson: I would appreciate getting updates as to how cooperation is happening between the partner agencies and the different projects. I am also curious to know how this group is interacting with the arena planning efforts.

Herald Ugles: The possibility of a new stadium brings a new dynamic to this process. It will have an adverse impact on this area and needs to be studied before any plans move forward.

John Odland: As the viaduct replacement project moves forward, are you monitoring the traffic situation at First Avenue South and South Atlantic Street? The intersection is working very poorly. Will there be enough mitigation for this problem as construction continues?

*Answer: There are a couple of reasons for the backups occurring at this intersection. The first is the nearby train blockages, which back up truck traffic. That's one of the reasons that the South Atlantic Street overpass project is being accelerated. The other issue is how the Port terminals are operating. The Port is working to reduce conflicts with trucks serving their terminals and other traffic in the area.*

Jason Handaly: Putting more traffic on South Atlantic Street, as with the proposed truck haul routes, will create more traffic problems.

*Response: Completion of the East Marginal Way Grade Separation Project and the South Atlantic Street overpass will help with this. All of the partner agencies are working together to alleviate congestion in SODO. Until construction to replace the viaduct is completed, neighbors of the project will continue to feel the effects of working near an active construction zone. We need to continue to have these conversations and to look for new opportunities to make things better.*

Jason Handaly: You should communicate with nearby businesses. South Royal Brougham Way is not functioning well right now.

*Response: We are in regular communication with businesses near our construction zones and you pointed out a good opportunity for improvement.*

Vlad Oustimovitch: We all want to maintain the transportation networks while this project is being completed. This is a lot to ask of the partner agencies and I appreciate the difficulties that arise. There seem to be two separate issues at hand. One is the logistics of planning for all of the construction projects. The other is the operations of signage and communications. That is where additional improvement is needed. Having police officers direct traffic in this area is really helpful. I do appreciate how well WSDOT and SDOT have worked at keeping traffic moving in this area.

Don Newby: The new electronic board on southbound SR 509 is working very well. In the long-term, it would be good to focus on the area south of this project. What impact will increased daily car trips have on SR 509? I expect back-ups as trucks attempt to cross three lanes of traffic down there.

*Answer: There's an active discussion between the City and the Port on how to address this issue with the North Argo Access concept.*

#### **Agenda Item #4 – Central Waterfront Construction**

Matt Preedy gave an update on the SR 99 Tunnel Project in the central waterfront area, including traffic changes along the waterfront and viaduct reinforcement work. He explained that crews were adding 60 new on-street parking spots near the Seattle Aquarium. Over 200 spots have been removed from under the viaduct as part of the project.

Herald Ugles: How many lanes will be on the new road under the viaduct?

*Answer: There will be one lane southbound. There will be two lanes northbound, with the left lane restricted to ferry traffic accessing Colman Dock north of Columbia Street.*

Herald Ugles: Before this detour ferry traffic would sometimes back up to the Coast Guard station. How many cars was that?

*Answer: The number of vehicles was around 200. Last summer we conducted studies of the area to determine how we can best maximize operations at the ferry dock. With this new configuration we can accommodate 200 vehicles on the dock and in the designated lanes on the street. We will continue to tweak the system and make adjustments as necessary.*

Herald Ugles: Will traffic split at Yesler Way?

*Answer: There is a left turn lane at Yesler Way for trucks and registered vehicles to enter the ferry dock. Vehicles will be able to exit the dock via Marion Street or Yesler Way. We are hoping this will relieve congestion at First Avenue South and Edgar Martinez Way.*

Vlad Oustimovitch: It may not be worth building the bike trail with its temporary diversion. It will create a lot of vehicular/bicycle conflicts. Most bikes will ignore the path's jog, and the ones who don't will have to navigate a circuitous route. It will make riding in the street the preferable route.

*Answer: We expect that faster cyclists will ride in the street, which will be wide enough to accommodate bicycles. The trail is a lower-speed facility that recreational and occasional riders will want to use. The foremost goal is to create a safe path for cyclists.*

Barbara Culp: What stops the cyclists at Madison Street from continuing on the west side of the road?

*Answer: There will be no crosswalk and there will be a barricade across the trail at this location.*

Jan Drago: Will the sidewalk on west side remain open?

*Answer: Yes, and it will be available for people to use but is technically not wide enough for a shared-use path. All of the crosswalks will stay open. There will be substantial construction in these areas between tunnel preparation and Western Building rehabilitation.*

Herald Ugles: What about access for the fire station?

*Answer: The fire station will remain accessible. The fire department can use the transit lane along Alaskan Way, which will provide a through movement if needed.*

Barbara Culp: Have you considered diverting the bicycle trail to Western Avenue, starting at Yesler Way? It seems like that would be a safer route.

*Answer: We think that some people will choose to take that route on their own. There isn't enough room on the street for an official path, and the Western Building construction would pose a conflict as well.*

Herald Ugles: How will traffic be regulated in the ferry holding lanes on Alaskan Way?

*Answer: This area will operate as an extension of the ferry dock. Ferry personnel will direct traffic on Alaskan Way as needed.*

Linda Anderson: What will the signage be like for traffic driving southbound along the waterfront?

*Answer: There will be signs north of Madison Street indicating how to reach the ferry or continue traveling on the newly improved road beneath the viaduct. Uniformed police officers will be directing traffic in the first days of the switch and will make sure people get assistance when needed.*

Don Newby: Will there be concrete dividers between the cars and bicyclists on the road as you come off of South King Street and onto the new roadway?

*Answer: There is not enough room at that point on the roadway for concrete dividers. Cones will separate the road from the path.*

Vlad Oustimovitch: How wide will the lanes under the viaduct be?

*Answer: Each lane will be about 11-12 feet wide, which is wider than normal city streets.*

### **Agenda Item #5 – Action Items and Adjourn**

Bob Chandler wrapped up the meeting. All presentations and materials will be available on the program website and the meeting summary will be emailed to the working group members.

Action items:

- Set up meeting with Sound Produce, Bemis building, Carpet Exchange, stadiums and other businesses near South Atlantic Street regarding proposed truck routes and schedules for excavation. Information should include relevant traffic studies, anticipated impacts and mitigation.

- Provide diagrams and more information on the signal plan for South Atlantic Street overcrossing. If working group members have additional questions, offer a meeting.