

Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program
Stakeholder Group – Sept. 17, 2013
Meeting Summary

Stakeholder Group Attendees

- Linda Anderson, Amalgamated Transit Union
- Glenn Avery, Queen Anne Community Council
- Rachel Ben-Shmuel, Vulcan
- Alan Cornell, Nitze-Stagen
- Matt Curry, South Lake Union Chamber of Commerce
- Carol Burton (*for Stephen DeForest*), Magnolia Community Club
- Jan Drago, The Alliance for Pioneer Square
- Tom Graff, Belltown Business Association
- Ron Hildebrandt, Trident Seafoods at Interbay
- Robert Nellams, Seattle Center
- Don Newby, Burien
- John Odland, MacMillan-Piper
- Marty Oppenheimer, South Park
- Vlad Oustimovitch, West Seattle
- Susan Ranf, Seattle Mariners
- Herald Ugles, International Longshore and Warehouse Union/Pacific Maritime Association

Stakeholder Group Members Not in Attendance

- Warren Aakervik, Ballard Oil
- 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
- Howard Cohen, Seattle Hotel Association
- John Coney, Uptown Alliance
- Jason Handaly, Sound Produce
- Tim Hillis, Charlie's Produce
- John Huey, American West Bank and Duwamish Transportation Management Association
- Ron Kieswether, Oak Harbor Freight Lines
- Adam Link, CenturyLink Field and Event Center
- Jeff Aken, Cascade Bicycle Club
- Bree Moore, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Lee Newgent, Seattle/KC Building & Construction Trades Council
- 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
- Pete Spalding, Delridge
- Eugene Wasserman, North Seattle Industrial Association
- Elaine Wine, Ballard

Agencies and Staff in Attendance

- Todd Trepanier, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Matt Preedy, WSDOT
- Mike Merritt, Port of Seattle
- Bob Chandler, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
- Eric Tweit, SDOT
- Jessica Murphy, SDOT
- Eric O'Brien, SDOT

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and General Updates

Todd Trepanier, Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program Administrator, welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced himself and explained his new role on the viaduct project. He gave updates on the Port of Seattle and WSDOT funding agreement, the new parking web application and the status of the tunnel labor issue.

Bob Chandler, SDOT Assistant Director of Strategic Projects, briefly updated the group on the Puget Sound Energy Pipeline Installation Project in Pioneer Square.

Todd Trepanier gave an update on the work of the SR 99 Advisory Committee on Tolling and Traffic Management (ACTT). He reviewed traffic and revenue results from the committee's seventh toll scenario and shared the group's next steps.

Herald Ugles: When did you fix the problem of fiberglass getting stuck in the tunneling machine's cutter head?

Answer: The fiberglass that was causing problems has been cleaned out of the machine and the tunnel drive has moved past the headwall, which contained the fiberglass, so the issue has been resolved.

Ron Hildebrandt: Like other WSDOT tolled facilities, will the SR 99 tunnel tolling be electronic?

Answer: Yes.

Matt Curry: Can you explain the idea of the tolls escalating?

Answer: Scenario 7 modeled a gradual increase of tolls over time. This escalation rate is very modest and the committee will discuss it further in their recommendations report.

Don Newby: The ACTT has not examined tolling across the region. Of particular concern is the plan to toll SR 509 and the potential effects that may result from drivers being required to pay a toll on that route and on SR 99.

Answer: The ACTT proposed examining regional tolling in its progress report, which could include a consideration of SR 509, and this preliminary recommendation is still under consideration. There is currently no funding for such a study.

John Odland: What will the impacts to Alaskan Way be when the tunnel is tolled?

Answer: In peak periods, Scenario 7 has a 19-20 percent rate of diversion spread over all arterials west and east of I-5. We have begun to discuss potential system improvements for this diversion with the ACTT.

John Odland: What are your plans for improving signal timing efficiency on the waterfront?

Answer: Adaptive signals will be installed on Alaskan Way. These signals should make the street work more efficiently for all modes of transportation. The new Alaskan Way is designed to absorb some of the SR 99 traffic that uses the mid-town viaduct ramps today. The Waterfront Seattle Environmental Impact Statement public process is underway and viaduct Stakeholder Group members are encouraged to voice their opinions about proposed configurations of the new Alaskan Way.

Agenda Item #2 – Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program

Matt Preedy, Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program Deputy Program Administrator, gave an update on the launch and progress of Bertha, the SR 99 tunneling machine. He noted that although tunneling had temporarily stopped due to a labor issue, it would resume again shortly. He explained why WSDOT is planning to close the viaduct when the tunneling machine passes beneath it and specified that this closure is anticipated to take place at the end of 2013 or the beginning of 2014.

Matt Preedy presented an update on work at the south end of the project, including construction of the south portal tunnel operations building, the cut-and-cover portion of the tunnel and the South Atlantic Street Overpass. He also gave an update on work at the tunneling machine receiving pit and the North Access Project, which will go to advertisement in mid-October.

Eric O'Brien, SDOT Project Manager, explained the plan for improvements to the intersection of South Royal Brougham Way and First Avenue South. He noted that a two-way cycle track will be added on the northwest side of the intersection and a two-way bike lane will be added on the northeast side. With the aid of detectors in the pavement, the signal will recognize the presence of bicycles at the intersection and will give them priority treatment.

Ron Hildebrandt: For how many days will the viaduct be closed?

Answer: Anywhere between one and two weeks. Once tunneling resumes, we can verify our assumptions about tunneling rates and get a more firm timeframe for the closure.

Herald Ugles: Will this be a complete closure of the viaduct?

Answer: Yes, the viaduct will be closed from South Spokane Street through the north end of the Battery Street Tunnel, which are the same limits used during the October 2011 closure.

Matt Curry: What is the excavation work taking place immediately to the east of the northbound SR 99 lanes and just south of the construction bypass?

Answer: That excavation is being done as part of the future northbound on-ramp into the tunnel.

Herald Ugles: Can you look into improving the traffic signal timing on South Royal Brougham Way between the intersections of Occidental Avenue South and First Avenue South?

Answer: We can discuss that issue with SDOT traffic engineers.

Susan Ranf: As part of the improvements to the intersection of South Royal Brougham Way and First Avenue South, will you be creating a left turn signal for westbound vehicles turning south onto First Avenue South?

Answer: A left turn signal is not part of the current plan.

Rachel Ben-Shmuel: Will there be bicycle signals on First Avenue South at South Royal Brougham Way?

Answer: No.

John Odland: What are the bicycle volumes at First Avenue South and South Royal Brougham Way?

Answer: There are very few bicycle crossings at that intersection, but these improvements will help to keep freight and bicycles separated from one another.

Rachel Ben-Shmuel: How will you separate opposing bicycle lanes?

Answer: They will be separated by a striped yellow line.

Jan Drago: Thank you for creating a solution to the problem at the intersection of First Avenue South and South Royal Brougham Way. The biggest benefit will be that there will be two lanes going westbound.

Alan Cornell: Where are the spoils from the receiving pit going?

Answer: There are three different locations that the tunnel contractor has chosen for disposal.

Agenda Item #3 – Elliott Bay Seawall Project

Jessica Murphy, SDOT Project Manager, presented information about the Elliott Bay Seawall Project's upcoming construction schedule. She noted that the project is in its first of three years of construction. Upcoming work will include utility relocations, temporary roadway construction under the viaduct and the first stage of constructing the new seawall.

Herald Ugles: What will happen to Alaskan Way during the summer construction moratorium?

Answer: Alaskan Way will be paved and used for parking.

Ron Hildebrandt: What will happen to the cruise ship loading facilities?

Answer: The City of Seattle and Port of Seattle are working closely to balance construction and cruise ship needs. The end of the temporary roadway reconfiguration will be at Virginia Street, so there will be two full blocks south of Pier 66 before the lane reduction begins.

Rachel Ben-Shmuel: Will people be able to walk on the piers during seawall construction?

Answer: Yes. There will be railings to keep people safe.

Rachel Ben-Shmuel: Can you explain the grouting process?

Answer: Jet grouting involves a drill rig being shoved into the bottom elevation of soil and then spraying out a mixture of water and cement. The drill rig rotates as it is extracted from the soil, creating a solid column in the ground. Crews will do this 5,000 times, creating a solid mass under the current roadway. Some grouting will occur from street level, and some will happen from an excavated position, depending on the area.

Vlad Oustimovitch: Will the jet grouting process contain rebar?

Answer: No, these columns will be different from drilled shafts. Jet grouting utilizes the existing soils to solidify the ground and help the area withstand potential liquefaction.

Herald Ugles: How will the ferry queuing lanes be affected by this work?

Answer: We can't have the ferry queue blocking the roadway, so there will be a passenger drop-off and a designated queuing area roughly between Spring Street and just south of Columbia Street on Alaskan Way.

John Odland: Is this project currently on schedule?

Answer: We are currently working on securing the final permits. We are getting a little later start than we intended, but don't think this will impact our completion date.

John Odland: Is this project being expedited to accommodate waterfront businesses?

Answer: SDOT's standard practice is to maintain access to all businesses at all times. We made agreements with businesses on some piers to close those piers on a few occasions to gain access for construction.

Matt Curry: Is your schedule dependent on the SR 99 Tunnel Project timeline?

Answer: The two projects only interface at the south end, which is a small component of the seawall project. Both projects have some float time built in to their schedules, and these schedules are not dependent on one another.

Agenda Item #4 – Mercer Corridor Program

Eric Tweit, SDOT Project Manager, presented an update on current and upcoming construction work for the Mercer Corridor Program. He noted that the Mercer East phase is wrapping up, with substantial completion scheduled for mid-October. Mercer West construction is ongoing, including construction of the new SR 99 bridge over Mercer Street.

Agenda Item #5 – Other Project Updates

Matt Preedy gave an update on the SR 99 Spokane Street Overcrossing Project and the I-5 Special Bridge Repair Project. He noted that the viaduct will be closed during the weekend of Oct. 5 and 6 for WSDOT's semiannual inspection.

Agenda Item #6 – Stakeholder Group Member Feedback

Bob Chandler opened the meeting to stakeholder feedback.

Tom Graff: Are there any updates you can provide on the plans for the Battery Street Tunnel once the SR 99 tunnel opens to traffic?

Answer: The current plan is to decommission the Battery Street Tunnel after the SR 99 tunnel opens to traffic. The primary reason behind this planned closure is that the Battery Street Tunnel isn't an essential travel corridor and is in the same condition as the viaduct.

Tom Graff: Can you implement some surface street improvements on Battery Street as part of this project?

Answer: No decisions have been made yet regarding surface street improvements.

Glenn Avery: The Mercer Corridor Project should coordinate with the new project being planned at Queen Anne Avenue North and Mercer Street.

Matt Curry: Related to the request about Battery Street, I am hopeful that there will be opportunities to improve the intersection at Denny Way and Battery Street.

Answer: One of the final projects of the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program, called the North Surface Street Connections, will look at potential improvements at the Aurora Avenue North and Denny Way intersection.

Robert Nellams: Up to this point, the Seattle Center has just barely survived all of the construction related to these projects. We appreciate all of the work that you are doing, but the Broad Street closure will be tough on the Seattle Center.

Marty Oppenheimer: Will signs be installed on South Holden Street at SR 99?

Answer: There is currently no money or established program for additional sign improvements in that area. We could incorporate corridor-wide wayfinding signage as a later component of the program. WSDOT is aware of this concern and will look for appropriate opportunities to address it.

Marty Oppenheimer: When the bridge is up for water traffic in the South Park industrial area, northbound SR 99 is a disaster. Can you remove the east shoulder of northbound West Marginal Way/SR 99 in that area and turn it into a right turn only lane?

Answer: We can look into that issue.

Ron Hildebrandt: Can you give us an update on the First Hill Streetcar Project and whether it will impact SR 99 tunneling work?

Answer: The two projects will not interact.

Herald Ugles: Having served on this committee for many years, I think you have done a great job of taking our comments and feedback. In light of what has happened with the recent labor dispute, which could have been prevented, I am disappointed. I hope that you will remain open-minded and take our comments into account going forward.

Linda Anderson: Do you have a timeline for making the final decision about bus-only lanes to connect SR 99 and Third Avenue?

Answer: This plan is currently going through the environmental review process. The current proposal calls for a transit-only lane from South Dearborn to Columbia streets, and Columbia Street to Third Avenue in the northbound direction, as well as the reverse configuration in the southbound direction. This would be the configuration 24 hours a day in both directions.

John Odland: My biggest concern about your toll rate modeling is that you haven't conducted a comprehensive study to examine areas well beyond the tunnel where the diversion is likely to go. The SODO area is becoming more congested and this congestion diminishes the ability of businesses to be successful in that area.

Answer: The ACTT's model study area stretches from approximately North 45th Street to South Spokane Street.

Don Newby: This will be my last meeting with the group. I congratulate WSDOT and SDOT on their implementation of this program. You have done an extraordinary job and I have met some great people

through my involvement on this committee. It has been a pleasure to serve here and I hope this program comes to a successful conclusion so that the agencies have the credibility to do future projects. I thank the staff for your service.

Vlad Oustimovitch: When you close the viaduct for tunneling, please provide fair warning to all drivers.

Agenda Item #7 – Action Items and Adjourn

Bob Chandler 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:

- Follow up on horse-drawn carriages using the temporary road beneath the viaduct.
- Bring information back on plans for the North Surface Street Connections Project (Aurora Avenue North and Denny Way intersection specifically).
- Provide a First Hill Streetcar Project update at an upcoming meeting.
- Look into improving the traffic signal timing on South Royal Brougham Way between the intersections of Occidental Avenue South and First Avenue South.
- Provide information on planned surface improvements to Battery Street after the tunnel's decommissioning.
- Look into converting the right, northbound shoulder on SR 99/West Marginal Way South into a right turn lane onto South Holden Street.