

Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program
North Portal Working Group – Feb. 7, 2013
Meeting Summary

Working Group Attendees

- Glenn Avery, Queen Anne Community Council
- John Coney, Uptown Alliance
- Layne Cubell, Seattle Center (on behalf of Robert Nellams)
- Carol Burton, Magnolia Community Club (on behalf of Stephen DeForest)
- Tessa Greeger, Cascade Bicycle Club
- Ron Hildebrandt, Trident Seafoods at Interbay
- Tim Hillis, Charlie's Produce
- Bree Moore and Lynn Perkins, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Eugene Wasserman, North Seattle Industrial Association

Working Group Members Not in Attendance

- Warren Aakervik, Ballard Oil
- Rachel Ben-Shmuel, Vulcan
- Howard Cohen, Seattle Hotel Association
- Matt Curry, South Lake Union Chamber of Commerce
- Tom Graff, Belltown Business Association
- Lorie Groth, South Lake Union Community Council
- Lee Newgent, Seattle/King County Building and Construction Trades Council
- Vince O'Halloran, Puget Sound Ports Council and Sailors Union of the Pacific
- Elaine Wine, Ballard

Agencies and Staff in Attendance

- Linea Laird, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Matt Preedy, WSDOT
- Amir Rasaie, WSDOT
- Bob Chandler, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
- Mike Johnson, SDOT
- Jeff Bertram, SDOT
- Mike Merritt, Port of Seattle
- David Hull, King County Department of Transportation (KCDOT)

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and Program Updates

Linea Laird, Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program Administrator, welcomed the working group members to the meeting. Linea provided an update on the Advisory Committee on Tolling and Traffic Management (ACTT). The ACTT began meeting in late 2011 and initial advisory recommendations will be due in 2013. The committee is at their mid-point in traffic and revenue analysis and has analyzed three toll scenarios thus far. In December, ACTT released a progress report that is available on the [program website](#).

Eugene Wasserman: Do I understand that you cannot make tolling work with the current tolling plan and so you are trying tolling approaches that you've never done before?

Answer: The ACTT's charge allows them to examine various policy choices.

Eugene Wasserman: Other than examining freight toll rates, what else is ACTT talking about?

Answer: For financial planning purposes, WSDOT is following guidance of the Office of State Treasurer to not escalate toll rates. But ACTT is looking at some scenarios that include toll rate escalation over time.

Eugene Wasserman: What about SR 520? You raised the rates there?

Answer: The rate increase is part of a planned, small annual increase outlined in the program's financial plan.

Ron Hildebrandt: Based on tolling on the SR 520 and the Tacoma Narrows bridges, what is the transaction cost for collecting tolls?

Answer: Close to \$0.76 a transaction.

John Coney: Is it within ACTT's scope to recommend mitigation payments to the City of Seattle?

Answer: They could. ACTT highlighted a need for more sustainable transit funding in the progress report.

Eugene Wasserman: Given all construction near the north end, can we move working group meeting times to the middle of day? I think it should be held before 4 p.m.

Answer: We will address this during working group member feedback.

Agenda Item #2 – King County Metro Update

David Hull, King County Metro Supervisor of Service Planning, provided an update on the Metro service change, including main issues and corrective actions taken following the change. The main issues resulting from the service change were RapidRide C and D Lines crowding and reliability, bus “bunching” and increased travel times on some downtown routes. In general, Metro is seeing increased transit use since spring 2011, especially on routes from West Seattle to downtown. Metro is reviewing options for putting service back on First Avenue South through SODO when construction is complete. In the north end, Fairview Avenue North will open at the end of February, resuming service on that street.

John Coney: I have heard from a Ballard community member that people are buying cars because of poor service on the RapidRide D Line. Does that have credibility?

Answer: We are seeing ridership above what the network produced before. D Line carries about 8,000 people a day. The main complaints from Ballard are that the D Line shouldn't go to the Uptown area.

John Coney: The RapidRide D Line has no central stop for northbound travelers on Third Avenue. South of Seneca Street, riders have to take another bus up Pike Street. Will you be fixing that?

Answer: We don't have a definite answer right now, but have heard the ability to get farther south on the D Line is wanted. The final pathway will have a stop near the South King Street area.

Ron Hildebrandt: In Ballard, routes 15, 17 and 18 were replaced by the D Line. Were the routes replaced by the D line included in the increased ridership counts?

Answer: The numbers shown were transit into downtown. Peak services on routes 17 and 18 express, and 40 were counted. You may email David Hull with additional questions at David.Hull@kingcounty.gov.

Agenda Item #3 – New Alaskan Way

SDOT Project Manager, Mike Johnson, reviewed plans for the new Alaskan Way, which will be part of the [Waterfront Seattle Project](#). The project has finished conceptual design and is in preliminary engineering and environmental processes. The street design includes vehicle, parking/loading, flex and bikeway lanes, medians and clearly marked pedestrian-friendly intersections. The south segment, between South King Street and Yesler Way near the ferry terminal will see the highest traffic volumes, and flex lanes will be an important element. In the north end, an overlook walk will provide connections to Pike Place Market and will maintain legal freight movements. Mike Johnson also reviewed the [Lake to Bay Loop](#) project.

Eugene Wasserman: Can you tell me who from the city works on the Waterfront Seattle Project?

Answer: The program manager is SDOT's Angela Brady. Angela works for John Layzer. Also working on the project is Goran Sparrman, Bob Chandler and Department of Planning and Development's Marshall Foster. Mike Johnson is in charge of the new roadway project and Steve Pearce is leading the design elements.

Eugene Wasserman: Is the Waterfront Seattle project schedule online? If it is an SDOT project it should be linked on the SDOT website.

Answer: We will review this.

Eugene Wasserman: How many of the anticipated 35,000 south-end trips on Alaskan Way will be through trips?

Answer: We don't have this information today.

John Coney: Where is the Pike Place Market expansion zone relative to the overlook walk?

Answer: It is located to the east of the BNSF tunnel portal.

Eugene Wasserman: Will there be a walkway on both sides of Alaskan Way?

Answer: Yes.

Eugene Wasserman: Will there be a bike lane on the bridge structure? The sidewalks can be smaller to accommodate bicyclists.

Answer: Currently, the proposal is for a bike lane for northbound and sharrows for southbound traffic. The current master plan doesn't place bike lanes on arterials with this high of volume, but it is part of our design effort that we are addressing.

John Coney: I recently heard of a big push for the George Benson Waterfront Streetcar revival. Any plan to allow space for it along the waterfront?

Answer: Yes, current street design does allow for a streetcar. The City is studying options for local waterfront transit. The assumption is that any transit, including streetcars, would run in the street.

Layne Cubell: If there is a streetcar, what is its path toward the north end of Alaskan way?

Answer: In the north end it would likely go around the overlook walk and down the north waterfront. As our studies go forward, we will learn more.

John Coney: I hope SDOT will consider rubber-tired trains and consider hiring a consultant for the streetcar.

Tim Hillis: Have you done a study on travel time from one end of the new Alaskan Way to the other?

Answer: Models show 6 to 7 minutes (this was a non-tolled model). SDOT is working with the state to look at mitigation of toll diversion.

Ron Hildebrandt: Is there an element of the entire Waterfront Seattle Project that holds most priority, if for example, funding runs out?

Answer: The state is funding the new Alaskan Way, viaduct demolition and decommissioning of the Battery Street Tunnel. Funding for the remainder of the Waterfront Seattle Project is about 60 percent funded and we anticipate remaining funding to come from a local improvement district or possibly philanthropy.

Mike Merritt: The Port has concerns about an in-street streetcar and the mixing of traffic and freight. We continue to work with the city and stakeholders on the issue.

Agenda Item #4 – Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program

Matt Preedy, Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program Deputy Program

Administrator, provided updates on recent construction along the SR 99 corridor. In the north end, crews are installing micropile walls to protect several buildings near the SR 99 tunnel's future north portal. They will soon begin drilling soldier piles for the walls of the pit where the tunnel boring machine will emerge from the ground.

In the south end, crews continue to make progress on the tunnel boring machine launch pit, which will be completed and ready for the arrival of the tunnel boring machine this spring. Work has begun on ancillary equipment, such as the tunnel spoils conveyor belt. In Alaskan Way, crews continue to install piles that will form underground support walls and injecting grout to strengthen the soil. Upcoming work on the South Atlantic Street Overpass includes building the bridge deck. We anticipate opening the overpass to traffic at the end of 2013.

In December, the tunnel boring machine was named Bertha, after former Seattle Mayor [Bertha Knight Landes](#), and project leaders toured the machine in Japan. After successful testing of the machine, it will be shipped to Seattle. Tunneling will begin summer 2013.

Agenda Item #5 – Other Project Updates

Amir Rasaie, WSDOT Assistant Regional Administrator, updated the group on two nearby WSDOT projects. The [SR 99 Spokane Street Overcrossing Project](#) is underway and will require a closure the weekend of Feb. 22 through 25. When it re-opens on Feb. 25, SR 99 will have two northbound and one southbound lane between South Nevada Street and the West Seattle Bridge. This will be the configuration through mid- 2014.

The [I-5 University District Pavement Repair](#) work begins Feb. 8 and will require eight consecutive Friday night closures from 10 p.m. to 10 a.m. between NE 50th Street and an area just south of East Roanoke Street. The express lanes will remain open. The work is scheduled to be complete by April 1.

Layne Cubell: The Seattle Center is very concerned about these closures because it impacts center events. We haven't seen the closure schedule until now and we sit in the monthly north-end construction coordination meeting. Three of the four southbound lanes will be closed?
Answer: The express lanes will be open for southbound traffic and these closures do not include Saturday nights. Please coordinate with WSDOT's Travis Phelps and we will make sure that there is better coordination with the north-end construction coordination group.

Agenda Item #6 – Mercer Corridor Program

Jeff Bertram, SDOT Project Manager, provided an update on the [Mercer Corridor Program](#). The Mercer East Project will be wrapping up construction this summer. Construction and lane reductions on Fairview Avenue North are scheduled to be completed in February, followed by a closure on Valley Street for 6 to 8 weeks.

The Mercer West Project contract has been awarded and construction is expected to begin this March. This spring, Mercer Street will be reduced to two eastbound lanes and Broad Street will open to alleviate congestion. SR 99/Aurora Avenue North will be reduced to two lanes in this area until the SR 99 tunnel opens to traffic.

Bree Moore: During marathons in the north end, the Gates Foundation gets locked in between road closures and it has impacts to our offices. When Mercer Street is reduced to two lanes, what are the re-routes for marathons?

Answer: We don't know that right now. Mike Shea with SDOT has been working on these issues.

Layne Cubell: The Seattle Center had a resident directors meeting recently and we highlighted building successful communications. We are very concerned that media may communicate that the Seattle Center is not open for business during construction and we don't want to cripple our resident organizations. If we could all share the message that Seattle Center is open for business during construction that would be great.

John Coney: Pedestrian safety along the Mercer corridor, particularly after the tunnel opens, is a concern. We have been pushing for pedestrian safety measures at key intersections in the heart of Uptown and we are applying for crosswalks. We worry that tolls may divert freight up West Mercer Place, which will be dangerous. I would love to see a presentation on safety-related design for the heart of Uptown with Mercer Corridor Project input.

Answer: We will pass that along.

Tessa Greigor: During the upcoming Valley Street closure, will pedestrians and bicyclists be accommodated?

Answer: The sidewalks will be open on Valley Street, but we have not seen the contractor's plans for the later Westlake Avenue North and Valley Street work. I am confident we will have path for bikes and pedestrians.

Agenda Item #7 – Working Group Member Feedback

Linea Laird asked the group if there was interest to combine the north and south portal working groups into one group. She asked if there was a general preferred meeting time and for venue recommendations. The general consensus was that they would like to combine the working groups. Eugene Wasserman requested that meetings be held before 4 p.m. Ron Hildebrandt suggested holding meetings in either the earlier or later halves of the day.

Ron Hildebrandt: I think it is critical that King County Metro be present at all meetings. Traffic mitigation and bus routing through the construction zone is critical, especially in the north end.

Answer: We will note that, and our team will also do a better job at including information and providing outreach on related construction projects.

Layne Cubell: The cumulative nature of all the projects in the area is daunting. Can we have updates on all projects using a timeline, similar to materials by the SR 520 Project? Also, once detour routes are mapped in the future, can you please share informational materials so we can provide feedback?

Answer: Yes.

Agenda Item #8—Elliott Bay Seawall Replacement Project

Bob Chandler, SDOT Assistant Director Strategic Projects, provided an update on the Elliott Bay Seawall Replacement Project, which is in the middle of the environmental review process. A contractor was selected using the General Contractor/Construction Manager method; a method that allows the project to bring a contractor on board while finalizing plans. The first phase of the seawall is fully funded and we anticipate construction to begin this fall. Alaskan Way will not be closed during seawall replacement construction; however there may be some spot closures or nighttime closures.

Agenda Item #9—Action Items and Adjourn

Bob Chandler provided a few updates on previous action items:

- There are now traffic cameras along the waterfront for the goal of improving flow.
- We will install a signal at Republican Street and Dexter Avenue North in the next few months, as it will serve as an off-ramp from northbound SR 99 when the Mercer Street exit is closed.

Linea Laird thanked everyone for attending and reviewed the meeting's action items.

Action items:

- Consider adding a link to the Waterfront Seattle Project from SDOT's website.
- Discuss I-5 nighttime construction at the north end construction coordination meetings.
- Consider discussing the pedestrian crossings in the Uptown neighborhood at a future working group meeting.
- Consider having King County Metro represented at all working group meetings.
- Consider providing SR 520 and other regional closure information at working group meetings.
- Provide updates at working group meetings on the messaging and detour plans for Mercer West and AWV construction in the north end.