

Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program
North Portal Working Group – Nov. 8, 2012
Meeting Summary

Working Group Attendees

- Warren Aakervik, Ballard Oil
- Glenn Avery, Queen Anne Community Council
- Rachel Ben-Shmuel, Vulcan
- John Coney, Uptown Alliance
- Layne Cubell, Seattle Center (on behalf of Robert Nellams)
- Matt Curry, South Lake Union Chamber of Commerce
- Stephen DeForest, Magnolia Community Club
- Tim Hillis, Charlie's Produce
- Vince O'Halloran, Puget Sound Ports Council and Sailors Union of the Pacific

Working Group Members Not in Attendance

- Howard Cohen, Seattle Hotel Association
- Tom Graff, Belltown Business Association
- Tessa Greigor, Cascade Bicycle Club
- Lorie Groth, South Lake Union Community Council
- Ron Hildebrandt, Trident Seafoods at Interbay
- Jim Miller, Millionair Club
- Bree Moore, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Lee Newgent, Seattle/King County Building and Construction Trades Council
- Eugene Wasserman, North Seattle Industrial Association
- Elaine Wine, Ballard
- Bruce Wynn, Interbay Neighborhood Association

Agencies and Staff in Attendance

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

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and Introductions

Bob Chandler, SDOT Assistant Director Strategic Projects, welcomed the working group members and the public to the meeting. Bob Chandler reviewed the action items from the August meeting. Matt Preedy, Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program Deputy Program Administrator, provided an update on the new program website and tunnel boring machine naming contest.

Bob Chandler also updated the group on the Elliott Bay Seawall Project schedule. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be released later in November. Construction is scheduled to begin fall 2013.

Warren Aakervik: Will there be two lanes of traffic open in each direction on Alaskan Way through Elliott Bay Seawall Project and Waterfront Seattle construction?

Answer: Yes, for the seawall replacement work, the waterfront will be similar to today. SDOT is still determining how the Waterfront Seattle construction staging will affect Alaskan Way.

Warren Aakervik: Will Alaskan Way be fully closed at any time during construction?

Answer: We don't know.

Warren Aakervik: If Alaskan Way needs to be closed for construction in the future, I would suggest that Second and Fourth avenues be opened to freight traffic.

Answer: We will note that.

Layne Cubell: When will you decide which special events can continue to use the viaduct?

Answer: Another few weeks to months.

Agenda Item #2 – North End Construction

Matt Preedy provided an update on north-end SR 99 Tunnel Project construction, including utility relocation work, micropile installation and tunnel boring machine receiving pit preparation. Utility relocation work continues in the north end with intermittent lane closures. In January, micropile and receiving pit work will begin. Initial work on the pit will include drilling soldier piles and pit excavation.

Matt Preedy also reviewed proposed north portal haul routes for receiving pit excavation. When excavation is fully underway, expect approximately 20 trucks per day. Matt Preedy requested that working group members submit any feedback on the proposed haul routes.

Agenda Item #3 – South End Construction

Matt Preedy provided updates on south-end SR 99 Tunnel Project construction and the South Holgate to South King Street Project. Tunnel boring machine launch pit excavation will continue through 2013, with crews excavating up to 86,000 cubic yards of soil. Crews continue to drill secant piles along Alaskan Way that will form tunnel support walls between the launch pit and South Washington Street.

In September, crews completed the side-by-side SR 99 bridges one year ahead of schedule, replacing the viaduct in SODO. Guy F. Atkinson Construction began construction on the South Atlantic Street overpass last summer, which will alleviate freight congestion by providing a bypass over the railroad tracks. The overpass will open to traffic at the end of 2013.

Agenda Item #4 – Other SR 99 Tunnel Construction

Matt Preedy reviewed the SR 99 tunnel monitoring program and provided an update on tunnel boring machine fabrication.

To protect buildings and structures during tunneling, nearly 200 buildings along the tunnel route will be monitored. About 1,200 monitoring instruments will be installed under streets and sidewalks and inside and outside of buildings. Survey equipment will continuously measure for any movement of buildings and crews will track measurements of excavated material as the tunnel boring machine progresses.

The tunnel boring machine fabrication is nearing completion in Japan, and will be accepted by Seattle Tunnel Partners in December. The machine will be delivered to Seattle next spring in 41 different pieces.

John Coney: Where are the news broadcasting facilities located in relation to the construction monitoring map?

Answer: KING 5 is located near the north portal on the east side of SR 99/Aurora Avenue North, KOMO 4 is located at Fischer Plaza on Denny Way and KIRO 7 is located away from the alignment near Belltown.

Layne Cubell: The City of Seattle owns the monorail columns. Will you be monitoring the Monorail during tunneling?

Answer: Yes.

Matt Curry: Will we see the tunnel liner segments as we drive through the tunnel?

Answer: No, but possibly right as you enter the tunnel portal.

Agenda Item #5 – Working Group Member Feedback

Bob Chandler asked the group to provide feedback on the topics discussed.

Layne Cubell: The proposed receiving pit haul routes are an active discussion with Seattle Center and we will submit our concerns to you. We have concerns about the alternate haul routes; for example, Fifth Avenue North and Harrison Street is a busy intersection. We are expecting that intersection to accommodate too much during two construction projects and Seattle Center operations.

Warren Aakervik: Will the receiving pit haul routes be in effect 24-hours a day?

Answer: No, off-peak, during daytime hours.

Agenda Item #6 – Mercer Corridor Update

Jeff Bertram, SDOT Project Manager, provided an update on the Mercer East Project and Eric Tweit, SDOT Project Manager, provided an update on the Mercer West Project and walked through the Mercer West construction sequencing.

Crews opened Mercer Street to two-way traffic in August. The project team is continuing to monitor traffic flow and make adjustments to signal timing as necessary. Construction on Fairview Avenue North between Harrison and Valley streets will continue until February 2013, when the road opens to traffic. Mercer East construction will continue until summer 2013.

The Seattle City Council approved the budget and funding for the Mercer West Project in September. SDOT advertised for construction bids in October and will award the contract by the end of 2012. Construction begins in February 2013.

Matt Curry: Mercer East construction is impacting Seattle Pilates International located at Fairview Avenue North and Republican Street. They've lost a lot of business. Any additional customer parking can remedy the issue.

Answer: SDOT met with them on Nov. 7 and are able to move the contractor construction zone closer to Fairview Avenue North. We've added eight more parking locations, including two ADA parking spaces on Fairview Avenue North.

Rachel Ben-Shmuel: When will the portion of Mercer Street that extends east towards Capitol Hill open?

Answer: It is open now.

Matt Curry: How will the intersection of Broad and Mercer streets function when Broad Street opens to two-way traffic?

Answer: We plan to keep Broad Street closed until Mercer West work begins. At that time, eastbound Broad Street will open and a signal will be added at that intersection.

Matt Curry: Would opening Broad Street coincide with Valley Street opening? This relates to the receiving pit haul routes using Broad Street to I-5.

Answer: No, Valley Street will still be under construction.

Warren Aakervik: When SR 99/Aurora Avenue North is reduced to two lanes, will transit stop in the through lane, causing only one lane to pass?

Answer: There will not be a stop for transit where the lanes are reduced.

Vince O'Halloran: In late 2013 through 2014, if you are traveling east on Mercer Street, will you be able to turn left on to Dexter Avenue North to access northbound SR 99?

Answer: Yes.

Matt Curry: Will Metro consider rerouting routes 358 and 5 onto Dexter Avenue North for the period while SR 99/Aurora Avenue North is reduced for overpass work?

Answer: SDOT continues to have discussions with Metro on this.

Warren Aakervik: What will be the turning radius off northbound SR 99/Aurora Avenue North onto Republican Street during construction?

Answer: It will be similar to what it is today. Today, trucks sometimes use the second lane over to turn.

Warran Aakervik: Is it possible to make Republican Street one-way eastbound during construction?

Answer: SDOT will look at this idea.

John Coney: What will be the scope of the bike path on Fifth Avenue North?

Answer: A block of the path will be on Fifth Avenue North between Republican and Mercer streets. The block between Republican and Harrison streets will likely be built when the parking lot on the west side of Fifth Avenue North is redeveloped under the Seattle Center Master Plan. SDOT's Bike Master Plan will develop plans to extend the bicycle path to Denny Way via Fifth Avenue North or Taylor Avenue North.

Matt Curry: Can SDOT review the South Lake Union/Uptown Triangle Mobility Plan and describe to our committee in what ways the final development of the Mercer Corridor Project will meet the recommendations of the plan. The South Lake Union Chamber of Commerce is interested in this.

Answer: Yes. Whether it's provided to this working group, or Mercer Stakeholders Group, we will leave that up to you.

Matt Curry: In stage six of the construction simulation, Broad Street has a yellow triangle at Mercer Street, and then the block is reconstructed. When will that occur?

Answer: When we close Broad Street. WSDOT will use it as part of construction staging until the tunnel opens. After that, the space will be available.

Layne Cubell: What is the Gates Foundation construction schedule for the third campus building?

Answer: The Gates Foundation construction timeline has not yet been finalized. Our current understanding is that they may start construction of the third building in 2014. SDOT and WSDOT are working closely with them on the Sixth Avenue North access and how to share the space.

Matt Curry: Based on the current designs, what will be the grade of Sixth Avenue North?

Answer: Going from north to south it will be roughly a six percent grade uphill.

John Coney: When will you re-channelize Mercer Street west of Aurora Avenue North?

Answer: At some point before Broad Street closes in 2014.

Stephen DeForest: During the SR 99/Aurora Avenue North overpass construction, will the underpass be two lanes for the entire duration of the work?

Answer: Mercer Street will be two lanes eastbound through the middle of 2014 and two lanes in each direction between mid-2014 and 2015. SR 99 will be two lanes in each direction as well.

Stephen DeForest: The reduced capacity on Mercer Street is a concern for those trying to access I-5 from northwest Seattle.

John Coney: The Mercer West Project involves bicycle corridors. A missing element is bicycle parking near RapidRide stops.

Answer: We can revisit that and talk with Metro.

Warren Aakervik: For drivers trying to exit southbound SR 99/Aurora Avenue North prior to the tunnel, will they be able to exit at Valley and Roy streets?

Answer: Yes, it will be similar to now.

Matt Curry: How much pocketing will there be at the SR 99 northbound off-ramp? Will there be back-ups into the tunnel's main line?

Answer: Northbound SR 99 includes an exit lane as it emerges from the tunnel portal to the Republican Street off-ramp. We reviewed traffic modeling at this off-ramp for the EIS.

Warren Aakervik: What is the latest on tolling?

Answer: The Advisory Committee on Tolling and Traffic Management (ACTT) continues to meet and meets again on Nov. 14. The committee has looked at three tolling scenarios to date and have selected an additional three scenarios to study. We expect a progress report from ACTT in December. ACTT will continue to meet until after the tunnel opens.

John Coney: What does mitigation mean for tolling?

Answer: It means finding ways to minimize diversion on city streets. For example, lower toll rates may reduce diversion, or there may be strategies to encourage drivers to use the tunnel.

John Coney: Are the mitigation strategies about making it more difficult for people to navigate the city streets?

Answer: No. There are limited routes to take. We will provide you with an update on the ACTT at the next meeting.

John Coney: The tolling diversion has a threatening quality to Belltown, Uptown and South Lake Union. This seems like it could be a concern.

Warren Aakervik: Will trucks coming out of the SR 99 tunnel be able to exit to reach Mercer Street from Dexter Avenue North, heading toward South Lake Union and Fairview Avenue North? There needs to be some truck route for freight exiting the tunnel.

Answer: Yes. Trucks can also use Republican Street to get to Fairview Avenue North.

Matt Curry: Amazon and UW Medicine have office buildings with garages on Republican Street, and are both about to build two new buildings on Republican Street. There is some interest from the community for only local access on Republican Street.

Tim Hillis: Our company pays a lot of tolls around the region. Are you looking at incorporating tolling into one packaged toll system in the state?

Answer: Any future tolled facilities would use the Good to Go! system that's already in place on the SR 520 bridge and all tolled facilities throughout the Puget Sound region.

Mike Merritt: The Port of Seattle is concerned about toll diversion in the south end. We urge you to pay attention to freight diversion.

Agenda Item #7 – Construction in 2013

Russ East, WSDOT Northwest Region Assistant Regional Administrator, provided updates on the SR 99 Spokane Street Overcrossing Replacement Project and the I-5 Special Bridge Repair. Replacement of the 50-year-old Spokane Street overcrossing will begin in January 2013. The work will maintain two lanes of northbound and one lane of southbound SR 99 traffic south of

South Spokane Street. WSDOT is also replacing 26 expansion joints located on ramps that connect the West Seattle Bridge, I-5 and Columbian Way. The work will begin in January 2013 and will result in 11 weekend ramps closures.

Warren Aakervik: Will the weekend closures for expansion join work overlap with the South Spokane Street overcrossing roadway closures?

Answer: WSDOT will coordinate that.

Warren Aakervik: Will the port have access to the rail yard during the South Spokane Street overcrossing replacement?

Answer: Yes.

Matt Curry: Has the South Park Bridge Replacement Project been delayed?

Answer: We believe it is scheduled to be complete in early 2014.

Bob Chandler asked the group if they have been using westbound Spokane Street on- and off-ramps to First Avenue South.

Tim Hillis: Charlie's Produce uses this route a lot. The First Avenue South exit has tight turns.

Agenda Item #8—New Alaskan Way

Discussion of the new Alaskan Way will be postponed to the next meeting and will be placed early on the agenda.

Layne Cubell: In your images, what are the grey blocks indicated on the WOSCA site? That area is very important to the future of the waterfront.

Answer: That's currently the WSDOT staging area. When WSDOT is finished, it will be sold by WSDOT as surplus land.

Agenda Item #9—Fall Metro Transit Service Update

David Hull, King County Metro Supervisor of Service Planning, updated the group on the fall Metro service change, which was the largest service change ever undertaken by Metro and the first service change under new guidelines. The service change affected 48 routes and the area of service affected carries nearly 40 million rides annually. The largest challenges of the service change are in West Seattle and Metro has added more trips to the C line. The downtown ride free zone was also eliminated.

WSDOT invested mitigation dollars to keep traffic moving during construction to replace the viaduct. The investments added transit trips and traffic demand measures to encourage drivers to use alternate modes of transportation.

Layne Cubell: The Seattle Center is served by RapidRide line D. We gave up an adjacent travel lane in front of the Key Arena for line D and have not seen an increase in passengers from Ballard. We offered to discuss the service changes with Metro in advance, but the agency declined. We encourage Metro to use Seattle Center as a forum for these discussions. Gary Merlino Construction team did a great job working with the Seattle Center schedule.

Warren Aakervik: How much impact does the Ballard Bridge have on RapidRide line D during peak hours? My belief is that the bridge opens when it doesn't always need to.

Answer: Metro is working with the bridge crew to observe if a bus is coming and to make judgment calls then.

Agenda Item #10 – Action Items and Adjourn

Bob Chandler thanked everyone for attending and reviewed the meeting's action items.

Action items:

- Provide update on the new Alaskan Way at the next meeting and include conversation about the Lake to Bay trail planning. Place it early on the agenda.
- Provide a brief update on SR 99 Tunnel tolling and the ACTT at next meeting.
- Review if there are plans to install bike racks near RapidRide stops in Uptown.
- Review South Lake Union/Uptown Triangle Mobility Plan with stakeholders to see which portions of the plan will be implemented through AWW and Mercer projects.
- Consider making Republican Street one-way eastbound during construction, to help accommodate trucks turning from northbound SR 99.
- Continue conversation with Seattle Center regarding proposed north portal haul routes.
- Relax some of the freight prohibition on city streets during Elliott Bay Seawall Replacement and Waterfront Seattle construction if there are full closures of Alaskan Way.