

Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program
South Portal Working Group – Aug. 1, 2012
Meeting Summary

Working Group Attendees

- Barb Chamberlain, Bicycle Alliance of Washington
- Alan Cornell, Nitze-Stagen
- Jan Drago, The Alliance for Pioneer Square
- Jason Handaly, Sound Produce
- Don Newby, Burien
- Susan Ranf, Seattle Mariners

Working Group Members Not in Attendance

- Linda Anderson, Amalgamated Transit Union
- Michael Beranbaum, Joint Council of Teamsters No. 28
- Kris Breton, Compass Housing Alliance
- Jerome Cohen, West Seattle Chamber of Commerce
- John Huey, American West Bank and Duwamish Transportation Management Association
- Ron Kieswether, Oak Harbor Freight Lines
- Adam Link, CenturyLink Field and Event Center
- John Odland, MacMillan-Piper
- Marty Oppenheimer, South Park
- Vlad Oustimovitch, West Seattle
- Lisa Quinn, Feet First
- Ed Shilley, Nucor Steel
- Pete Spalding, Delridge
- Herald Ugles, International Longshore and Warehouse Union and Pacific Maritime Association

Agencies and Staff in Attendance

- Matt Preedy, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Bob Chandler, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
- Stuart Goldsmith, SDOT
- Mike Johnson, SDOT
- Chris O’Claire, King County Department of Transportation (KCDOT)
- Mike Merritt, 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 SR 99 tunnel construction, including boring machine launch pit excavation and tunnel support walls construction. He also gave an update on the SR 99 South Holgate Street to South King Street Project, including northbound bridge completion and the South Atlantic Street overcrossing.

Stuart Goldsmith, SDOT Supervising Project Manager, gave an update on the Spokane Street Viaduct Widening Project. The project is almost finished. The last major activity is to complete paving of the First Avenue South and South Spokane Street intersection and the eastbound First Avenue South off-ramp.

Bob Chandler updated the group on the Airport Way South Viaduct rebuild project, which will open in early 2013.

Don Newby: Have you found many artifacts while digging in the south end for the SR 99 tunnel?

Answer: Most of the recovered artifacts were found during construction of the southbound SR 99 bridge foundations. Our archaeologists found hundreds of shoe soles, corks, bottle caps, etc. The city used this area to dump trash and deposits from the Denny Regrade at the beginning of the 20th century. Most of the things we found were not of archeological significance.

Barb Chamberlain: When you close the bicycle/pedestrian portside trail for South Atlantic Street overcrossing construction, where will you reroute people?

Answer: Most of these closures will occur during the nighttime. The contractor is required to provide a shuttle to bicyclists, but we are also looking into having a flagger in the area at those times. When we have a revised plan for these closures, we will approach the bike community for feedback.

Agenda Item #3 – Other SR 99 Tunnel Construction

Matt Preedy gave an update on work to reinforce the Alaskan Way Viaduct prior to tunneling. The new road under the viaduct between South Washington and Columbia streets will experience intermittent lane closures because of this work, and the southbound lanes of SR 99 will be closed Sunday through Thursday nights. These closures are weather dependent and will last through fall 2012.

Matt updated the group on the building monitoring plan. He explained that monitoring equipment installation on buildings and in the ground will begin August 2012 and continue through mid-2013.

Jan Drago: Where does the tunnel reach its lowest depth, and what is that depth?

Answer: The deepest distance below ground is at Virginia Street, where the tunnel will be about 200 feet below the surface.

Jan Drago: How much do you estimate the tunnel will settle after it is built?

Answer: Settlement would only occur during tunneling, not after completion. Settlement occurs above tunnels during construction, not to the tunnel itself.

Don Newby: What types of soils will the tunnel boring machine encounter, and what are the contingency plans for building settlement?

Answer: The machine will start in fill soil in the south end but will quickly move into more stable glacial till, which is made of clay, consolidated silt and sand. The contractor has taken many soil samples along the tunnel route and has planned for any soil varieties that will be encountered.

Most buildings along the tunnel route are sufficiently sound to withstand expected settlement, and retrofits will not be required prior to tunneling. In the isolated cases where advanced precautions are

needed, WSDOT will be responsible for building protection. While we do not anticipate significant levels of settlement, we are monitoring buildings as a precaution.

Agenda Item #4 – Working Group Member Feedback

Matt Preedy reported on action items from the May working group meeting and how they have been addressed.

Jan Drago: I still find it confusing to take the bike trail along Alaskan Way. It seems to cut back and forth a lot. I wonder if there's a better configuration or if better signage would improve it.

Don Newby: There has been a lot of feedback about the Colman Dock drop-off/pick-up area. When I'm down there, it seems like there is total confusion, and walk-on passengers are not being accommodated. Is there a specific place where you can direct people to be dropped off?

Answer: We acknowledge that this is one of the remaining issues with the Alaskan Way detour. There is a designated three-minute loading zone, but we need better signage. We are also working with Washington State Ferries on the best way to address passenger drop-off/pick-up.

Don Newby: What is the cross street of the three-minute loading zone? You need more enforcement down there because taxis have been using the wrong spaces.

Answer: Southbound under the viaduct between Marion and Columbia streets.

Don Newby: WSDOT and SDOT are doing a fantastic job with the complexities of this project. It would be good to begin a discussion about how the SR 99 tunnel will impact SR 509 and its future uses. I would like to see a presentation of WSDOT's plan for SR 509 and how the industries that use it will be affected in the future.

Susan Ranf: We are receiving an increasing number of complaints from people outside of Seattle who come to games at the stadium. They are expressing frustration at wayfinding and lack of parking. We advise our customers that travel will take much longer than usual and direct them to the WSDOT and SDOT websites for accurate information, but people still find that the information has changed by the time they arrive in the stadium district.

Response: This is a complex topic that we can continue to discuss. Please feel free to provide us with any definitive ideas that you think will be helpful to address your concerns.

Agenda Item #5 – New Alaskan Way

Mike Johnson, SDOT Project Manager, updated the group on the Waterfront Seattle project. He outlined the project schedule and noted that the design is at five percent. He also went into detail about how vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic will access the new waterfront and reviewed different street configurations that are under consideration.

Don Newby: How will freight and companies like Ballard Oil get from Ballard to the downtown waterfront in a timely fashion?

Answer: Alaskan Way is a major freight corridor. We anticipate that truck traffic will use Elliott Avenue to connect to Alaskan Way via the new railroad overcrossing. This new roadway feature, coupled with controlled pedestrian crossings, will make the street operation more efficient for truck drivers.

Don Newby: How will the work occurring between Interbay and I-5 on Mercer Street affect freight movements?

Answer: The Mercer East project is under construction now. The Mercer West project will be advertised this fall for a January start date. Once complete, these projects will relieve congestion along the Mercer corridor by providing people with more choices to move through and into downtown. We can go into more depth on the Mercer projects at another meeting if necessary.

Don Newby: I am concerned about the summer cruise ship business as people attempt to get from Sea-Tac Airport to the cruise terminals.

Response: We are working with the cruise ship companies to make sure their needs are met. We anticipate that the north waterfront, where the Pier 66 cruise terminal is located, will experience less traffic congestion because of the new railroad overcrossing.

Agenda Item #6 – Southend Transit Pathways

Chris O’Claire, KCDOT Supervisor of Strategic Planning and Analysis, presented information on post-viaduct transit pathway planning efforts for the south end of downtown. She explained how pathways were developed, including modeling and public survey efforts. Metro will move forward with its evaluation of the Columbia Street option, although the other pathways are not being formally removed from consideration. She noted that different pathways may be used in the interim construction periods.

Susan Ranf: One of the biggest problems we’ve experienced in the last couple of years has been with our senior and disabled riders. The distance between bus stops and our stadium is too far.

Response: Metro is aware that there are a lot of seniors who use our services and that population is growing. Our Access service is very expensive for us to run, so we are continuing to evaluate how we accommodate this population. Our First Avenue service will resume once construction is complete.

Susan Ranf: Did you examine car and pedestrian interactions with transit and ferry services in each of your pathway options?

Answer: Yes, and that is why Yesler Way and Marion Street are not being evaluated further at this time. We continue to meet with Washington State Ferries to understand their capacity and access needs as we evaluate options.

Barb Chamberlain: When you say that you will work with the bicycle community, with whom specifically are you working?

Answer: Each of the stakeholder groups have representatives from the bicycle community. In addition, each agency has staff members who serve as liaisons to the bicycle community. They connect with organizations like the Bicycle Alliance of Washington and the Cascade Bicycle Club.

Susan Ranf: When you use the term “riders” to describe how many people use a facility, do you mean the number of round-trips in a day?

Answer: That refers to individual boarders or vehicles, not round-trips. We use this definition across all modes of transport.

Agenda Item #7 – 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:

- Provide update to bicycle advocacy groups regarding plans for bicycle detour during South Atlantic Street overcrossing construction.
- Consider and report back on further improvements to passenger loading/unloading zones at Colman Dock.
- Consider additional signage to improve wayfinding and access to parking for regional tourists traveling to the stadiums, Pioneer Square and other destinations.