

Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program  
North Portal Working Group – Feb. 2, 2012  
Meeting Summary

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### **Working Group Attendees**

- Warren Aakervik, Ballard Oil
- Glenn Avery, Queen Anne Community Council
- Rachel Ben-Shmuel, Vulcan
- John Coney, Uptown Alliance
- Stephen DeForest, Magnolia Community Club
- Tom Graff, Belltown Business Association
- Tessa Greeger, Cascade Bicycle Club
- Lorie Groth, South Lake Union Community Council
- Jim Miller, Millionair Club
- Bree Moore, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Robert Nellams, Seattle Center
- Dana Weber, Seattle Hotel Association (on behalf of Howard Cohen)
- Elaine Wine, Ballard
- Bruce Wynn, Interbay Neighborhood Association

### **Working Group Members Not in Attendance**

- Lee Harper, Phinney Neighborhood Association
- Ron Hildebrandt, Trident Seafoods at Interbay
- Jason McKinney, South Lake Union
- Lee Newgent, Seattle/King County Building and Construction Trades Council
- Vince O'Halloran, Puget Sound Ports Council and Sailors Union of the Pacific
- Bob Viggers, Charlie's Produce
- Eugene Wasserman, North Seattle Industrial Association

### **Agencies and Staff in Attendance**

- Linea Laird, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Matt Preedy, WSDOT
- Eric Tweit, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
- Mike Merritt, Port of Seattle

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

Linea Laird, WSDOT Program Administrator, welcomed the working group members and the public to the meeting and introduced new working group members. The meeting's focus was to provide a look at upcoming construction, including any associated traffic or other impacts. For this year, the north portal working group will meet on May 3, Aug. 2 and Nov. 8.

### **Agenda Item #2 – Meeting Objectives and Guidelines**

Linea Laird reviewed the working group objectives and guidelines. The meetings are an opportunity for members to provide feedback and help the program mitigate construction impacts. Working group members were asked to share information with the broader community.

### **Agenda Item #3 – Overview of Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program**

Linea Laird provided a program overview. WSDOT recently demolished the viaduct's south end and completed a new SR 99 bridge and construction bypass. When complete, the new roadway in SODO will include two side-by-side bridges and a South Atlantic Street overcrossing, allowing traffic to bypass railroad tracks.

Linea reviewed the north and south portal designs for the SR 99 tunnel. Preliminary tunnel construction began in fall 2011.

Rachel Ben-Shmuel: What will happen to the Battery Street Tunnel?

*Answer: Once we remove the viaduct along the waterfront in 2016, the Battery Street Tunnel will be decommissioned and filled.*

Tom Graff: Is a company designing the landscaping near the tunnel portals?

*Answer: We have a landscape architect on board. All of the landscape work will go before the Seattle Design Commission.*

### **Agenda Item #4 – Agency Coordination and Construction Overview**

Matt Preedy, WSDOT Deputy Program Administrator; Eric Tweit, SDOT Mercer West Project Manager; and Mike Merritt, Port of Seattle Manager of Local Government Relations, provided information on agency coordination and community outreach and updates on construction.

#### **Agency Coordination and Community Outreach**

To avoid major construction conflicts, agencies meet weekly to review the next three to five weeks of construction. Weekly construction updates are emailed to a listserv of subscribers.

Milepost 31, WSDOT's information center for the SR 99 Tunnel Project, is another resource for the public to learn about tunnel construction as well as the neighborhood's history.

SDOT and WSDOT project websites include detailed information on construction closures. The agencies work to ensure consistency between websites.

#### **North End Construction Activities**

In early 2012 the City's Mercer East Project shifted eastbound traffic onto new lanes built north of the existing lanes, while crews rebuild the existing lanes. This traffic shift restricts access to Mercer Street from the south.

For the SR 99 Tunnel Project crews are relocating utilities along John Street near Sixth Avenue North through the end of 2012. Additional utility relocation along southbound Aurora Avenue North, south of Broad Street, will begin in late February.

Demolition of the building at 330 Sixth Ave. N., the future site of the north tunnel operations building, will begin in late February or March. Crews will mobilize in the next several months to build the tunnel boring machine receiving pit near Broad Street.

For future activities, the north portal [construction simulation](#) shows construction through 2017.

Tom Graff: When does the tunnel boring machine arrive?

*Answer: It is being built now and takes about a year total to construct. The machine should arrive on-site in spring 2013.*

John Coney: The north portal Sixth Avenue North will curve around the edge of the Gates Foundation. Who is designing that extension, and who is building it? What will happen to Broad Street in that area?

*Answer: WSDOT will complete the design and build Sixth Avenue North. The city may consider surplussing sections of Broad Street near the north portal.*

Tom Graff: Eastbound Broad Street near the entrance of the Seattle Center looks disgusting. Will this area be cleaned up?

*Answer: We will pass this information on to the Mercer Corridor Project.*

Lorie Groth: What is the status of the Mercer West Project?

*Answer: The project is in design. Construction will begin later this year. We have a \$60 million funding gap to fill before going to construction. We are confident the project will be funded.*

### **Central Waterfront Construction Activities**

Seattle City Light is relocating electrical transmission lines from the viaduct into underground vaults between Yesler Way and Union Street through April. Additionally, through December 2012, Seattle Tunnel Partners is relocating utilities under the viaduct and along Alaskan Way South in preparation for digging the tunnel launch pit.

Crews will reinforce sections of the viaduct and install micropiles, a mitigation technique to limit ground movement during tunneling. In March crews will begin construction to widen Alaskan Way between Spring Street and Yesler Way, adding a lane on the east side of Alaskan Way.

Alaskan Way South is closed between South Atlantic and South Main streets to prepare for tunnel work. A detour is in place under the viaduct from South King to South Jackson streets. In May this detour will be extended north under the viaduct to Spring Street. WSDOT is working with SDOT and the Washington State Ferries on ferry traffic needs.

Crews have installed noise walls around the tunnel launch pit site and are bringing equipment to the work site. Piles will soon be installed for the tunnel launch pit support walls.

Lorie Groth: How far do ground vibrations from utility relocation reach?

*Answer: Soft fill usually transmits vibrations very well. During this work it is not uncommon to get noise feedback from neighbors a few blocks away. We do notifications and door-to-door outreach to nearby neighbors. Sometimes neighbors will provide feedback to us about large events conflicting with our construction work. If we are aware of these events in advance, we can try to adjust our work schedule to mitigate the impacts.*

Lorie Groth: How will the utility relocations affect residential South Lake Union and Uptown neighborhoods?

*Answer: This work should have minor vibrations that are not long lasting.*

Rachel Ben-Shmuel: Is the ferry U-turn for northbound Alaskan Way traffic in place now?

*Answer: In May we will extend the Alaskan Way detour farther north, and the U-turn will be operating by the middle of that month.*

Stephen DeForest: Can you turn north on Alaskan Way from the ferry terminal?

*Answer: You will be able to go north in May using the detour under the viaduct. Right now you can only turn south.*

### **South End Construction Activities**

The foundation work for the new northbound SR 99 bridge may be complete in April. The South Atlantic Street overcrossing contract will be advertised in March, with construction starting this summer.

Crews will relocate utilities near South Royal Brougham Way through December. This may include intermittent overnight lane closures on the nearby northbound on-ramp to SR 99. Crews are also rebuilding the sidewalk and the southbound traffic lanes on East Marginal Way South.

The Airport Way Bridge replacement will be completed by the end of the year. The South Spokane Street Viaduct Project will have traffic shifts in the coming months, with substantial completion expected this summer. The East Marginal Way Grade Separation's southbound operations are open to traffic, and the northbound direction is scheduled to open by the end of February.

For future activities, the south portal [construction simulation](#) shows construction through 2017.

Elaine Wine: Will the tunnel boring machine exit in the north?

*Answer: Yes, it will bore from the south end to the north portal. It will be assembled on-site in the south and will take more than a year to bore the tunnel.*

Bruce Wynn: Where will the soil from the tunnel be sent?

*Answer: Soil will be transported out of the tunnel's south end to Terminal 46, then barged to the Mats Mats Quarry in Port Ludlow, Wash. Excavated soil at the portals will be trucked out of the area. Seattle Tunnel Partners is determining a disposal site for this excavation.*

Lorie Groth: Do you have a name for the tunnel boring machine?

*Answer: We will have a naming process. The design-builder will most likely lead this process.*

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

Linea Laird thanked everyone for coming and reminded the group that the next north portal working group meeting will be held on May 3 at the Puget Sound Regional Council boardroom.

Warren Aakervik: When will Mercer Street east of Dexter Avenue North start functioning in both directions?

*Answer: By fall of this year.*

Warren Aakervik: I often use the city's traffic cameras but some appear to be out of commission (For example, a camera at South Lander Street and one at the Elliott Avenue on-ramp to SR 99). Also, some cameras could be better positioned to show traffic blockages.

*Answer: We will check on these suggestions.*

John Coney: For the Uptown Alliance the parking lot that will be attached to the operations building is not satisfactory. This parking lot is a key development site; there are other ways to use it. Other parking lots located around the Seattle Center could serve as a site for WSDOT service truck parking. The Uptown Alliance and South Lake Union Community Council are happy to work with you. In the mean time, the parking lot will need reasonable landscaping in the interim use.

*Answer: The area is currently being designed with a vegetative screen. We have an agreement with SDOT that if there are development opportunities in the future, we would accommodate them, but we do need parking for the operations building. This is the site from which we will respond to all tunnel maintenance and operations service calls. We can work with the developer if and when that site is ready to go.*

Action items:

- Program staff will determine how Broad Street can be cleaned up.
- Provide an email to working group members with links to program resources such as online simulations.
- Review Seattle-area traffic cameras to see where images may not be available and how they can be best re-positioned to show delayed or blocked traffic.