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Officials give viaduct replacement details to Ballard residents

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Ballard residents will have four routes to access the state Route 99 bored tunnel and travel times with the viaduct alternative, expected to open in late 2015, will increase by only a few minutes, a crowd of about 100 people was told Monday at Ballard High School.

"We're providing options," Seattle Department of Transportation Deputy Director Bob Powers explained as part of the seven-person panel that included regional transportation officials.

The tunnel hybrid alternative -- a project that's estimated to cost \$4.24 billion dollars -- would be funded by the city, county, state and Port of Seattle.

Access to the four-lane, two-mile tunnel would be from Aurora Avenue North, which would transition from a surface highway to the tunnel between Mercer Street and Denny Way.

Ballard residents traveling east to west could access Aurora by traveling on Northwest Market Street to North 46th Street, from Leary Way Northwest to North 39th Street, from Nickerson Street and by taking Elliott Avenue to Mercer Street.

Rerouting onto east-west streets to access Aurora would increase travel times by up to three minutes for people accessing the viaduct at Elliott and Western Avenue ramps, Powers said.

Major construction would begin in 2011 and continue until the tunnel opens in late 2015.

"Until that time, nearly 2016, the viaduct will remain in service," said Ron Paananen Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Program Director for the State Department of Transportation.

Ballard residents would use 15th Avenue Northwest and Elliott Avenue as main routes to downtown, with drivers getting also getting downtown access via Mercer Street.

Transit service would be improved, and Elliott Avenue traffic is expected to flow to the new Alaskan Way boulevard by a new connection over the railroad, Powers said.

State Department of Transportation consultant John Reilly explained fresh air would be pumped in to the tunnel and an exhaust system would be maintained throughout the space, dug with a 54-foot boring machine.

Extraction points would be made for car fires and other accidents.

"There is a whole mechanism for how this works," he said.

Additional details from the meeting are available in several handouts, available to download as a [PDF here](#).

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