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Alaskan Way Viaduct construction contract marks progress, sustains local jobs

SEATTLE – WSDOT has issued a request for bids to further prepare for removal of the southern mile of the Alaskan Way Viaduct. This project is one of several contracting opportunities over the next several years to remove the seismically vulnerable viaduct.

Construction will begin this June and will sustain an estimated 150 jobs. The first contract is expected to cost approximately \$15 million. A second contract, estimated to cost more than \$300 million, will be advertised this fall.

“This contract gets us one step closer to removing the viaduct, which begins in earnest this fall,” said Paula Hammond, Washington Transportation Secretary. “In addition, it will create jobs, which is a top priority during these difficult times.”

The project is a safety priority because the southern mile of the viaduct rests in unstable soil that could liquefy in an earthquake and cause the viaduct to be permanently closed. The foundations of the replacement structure will reach down into stable soil, making it more resistant to large earthquakes.

“This contract begins construction on the new mile of SR 99 near the sports stadiums,” said Grace Crunican, Seattle Department of Transportation Director.

The new southern mile of SR 99 will have three lanes in each direction, and will be a side-by-side road instead of today’s double-deck structure. It will include new on- and off-ramps near the stadiums. A new undercrossing at S. Atlantic Street will eliminate long backups that now occur due to frequent rail crossings near the entrance to the Port of Seattle’s Terminal 46.

“The Port supports tens of thousands of jobs in our region. Without efficient roadways to move cargo,

those jobs are in jeopardy,” said Tay Yoshitani, Port of Seattle CEO. “A more reliable railroad crossing will increase the port’s productivity and reduce congestion throughout the area.”

Most of the work will take place on property near the sports stadiums that is owned by the state. During construction, there will be occasional detours and lane closures on surface streets in the area; however movements and business access will be maintained and traffic on the Alaskan Way Viaduct will not be affected.

King County will begin more than \$30 million of new bus service over the next three years to ease construction-related congestion associated with the major road work to begin next year.

“Transit is a vital piece of this effort,” said Harold Taniguchi, King County Department of Transportation Director. “The idea is to give people options for their commute. With the state’s contribution we can help keep traffic moving during this essential construction project.”

Governor Chris Gregoire, King County Executive Ron Sims and Mayor Greg Nickels in January recommended replacing the central waterfront portion of the viaduct with a bored tunnel beneath downtown, a new waterfront surface street, transit investments, and downtown city street and waterfront improvements. The central waterfront seawall will also be replaced.

For more information on the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Program, please visit www.alaskanwayviaduct.org.

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