

Alaskan Way Viaduct
Stakeholder Advisory Committee – Dec. 18, 2008
Meeting Summary

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome, Introductions and Overview of Meeting

Washington State Department of Transportation Deputy Secretary Dave Dye welcomed Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) members and the public to the meeting. He thanked everyone in attendance for their continued dedication to the process, especially given the snow falling at the time of the meeting. He noted he hoped to have an abbreviated meeting so all could get home safely.

Meeting attendance was as follows:

Stakeholder Advisory Committee attendees

- Jeff Altman, Northwest County
- Carol Binder, Pike Place Market
- John Coney, Uptown/Queen Anne
- Bob Donegan, Seattle Historic Waterfront Coalition
- David Freiboth, King County Labor Council
- Gene Hogle, Working Families for an Elevated Solution
- Rob Johnson, Transportation Choices Coalition
- Mary McCumber, Futurewise
- Cary Moon, People's Waterfront Coalition
- Mike O'Brien, Sierra Club
- John Odland, Manufacturing Industrial Council
- Vlad Oustimovitch, West Seattle
- Rob Sexton, Downtown Seattle Association
- Tayloe Washburn, Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce

SAC Members not in attendance

- Warren Aakervik, Interbay/BINMIC
- Chuck Ayers, Cascade Bicycle Club
- Mahlon Clements, Ballard/Fremont
- Kathy Fletcher, People for Puget Sound
- Mary Hurley, Ballard/Fremont
- Don Newby, Southwest County
- Jim O'Halloran, Northeast Seattle
- John Pehrson, Belltown
- Peter Philips, Seattle Marine Business Coalition
- Susan Ranf, Sports Stadium

- Earl Richardson, Southeast Seattle
- Pete Spalding, West Seattle
- Sue Taoka, International District
- Herald Ugles, International Longshore and Warehouse Union
- Todd Vogel, Allied Arts

Agencies and staff announced in attendance:

- David Dye – WSDOT Deputy Secretary
- Grace Crunican – SDOT Director
- Harold Taniguchi – KCDOT Director
- Ron Paananen – WSDOT Urban Corridors Deputy Administrator
- Ron Posthuma – KCDOT Assistant Director
- Bob Powers – SDOT Deputy Director

Agenda Item #2 – Public Forum and Bored Tunnel Briefing Review

Dave reported that there were over 150 people at the public forum on Dec. 15. He believed the meeting was a successful means of engaging the public at this important step in the process. He also noted that the project team has received over 300 public comments on the central waterfront since the beginning of December.

Next, Dave reviewed findings from the bored tunnel briefing held on December 16. He said that it was a good working session with several stakeholder members in attendance. Experts from the project team, Cascadia Center, and Arup were on hand to present and answer questions on some of the state-of-the-art bored tunnel technologies and design features. Arup plans to review the project team’s cost estimates and construction timeframes and submit comments. Dave said that Arup’s comments would be circulated as soon as it becomes available.

Agenda Item #3 – Feedback from Stakeholder Advisory Committee

Next, committee members provided feedback to the project staff.

David Freiboth, King County Labor Council:

This group was brought together to address a significant transportation issue and will be accountable for what happens on the central waterfront. The money spent to solve the problem will be a footnote in the historic record. I have taken the position to continue to study the viability of a subsurface option. I do not believe that we should rely on the legislature to fund anything beyond the \$2.8 billion currently allocated. In advancing the subsurface option, the local community has to come up with the additional money if that is the solution chosen.

Lastly, I think the way we move forward from here, is to include the subsurface along with the I-5/Surface/Transit and Elevated solutions in the environmental impact statement (EIS). We also need to include work on I-5 or other areas of mitigation as we need to have capacity to continue our economic vitality. If the residents of Seattle are willing to invest in this area, the elected officials should be as well. Let’s try to work together on this and see if we can find a compromise and support the work of this group.

Tayloe Washburn, Seattle Chamber of Commerce:

As part of the proposal I put forward, we are not asking the state to spend anything over the allotted \$2.8 billion. We are asking that the EIS include a bored tunnel option. I submit that this is the time for this region to step up, and say, we the region, will serve as a partner to the state, and will propose a regional funding package. We can do this because we must. If we start from a few sensible building blocks and a few sensible principles, we can build a bored tunnel.

King County, the City and the Port all have a vested interest in making Seattle the best and most prosperous it can be.

- Those that benefit from this investment should pay for it.
- There will be increased benefits - retail sales on the waterfront that would not be there with a replacement elevated viaduct.
- Those who use the investment should help pay for it.

Also, we can look to the federal government for assistance. With all the creative minds in this region, and with those in Washington DC looking out for us, we can get this package put together. The long term benefits of an improved waterfront and providing capacity is the clear solution. I think we can do this and I think the region is ready for this.

Jeff Altman, Northwest County:

My first choice is a bored tunnel, through new regional and already committed state funding. I encourage the team to couple the I-5/Surface/Transit with the bored tunnel. My second choice would be just the I-5/Surface/Transit.

I strongly support a bored tunnel. There have been several suggestions that traffic disruptions can be mitigated by leaving the elevated up until the bored tunnel is complete. I believe that we need to tear down the viaduct by 2012 regardless of whether or not the tunnel is completed.

Aside from that I have a major concern about the hybrid proposals. The previous proposals had four park and rides. The hybrids only include three. The one that appears to have been removed is the Lake Forest Park Park and Ride. I would appreciate it if that park and ride could be put back on the table and you reconsider assigning two park and rides to Burien and Shoreline.

Ron Posthuma noted that there is public ownership of the land in Burien and Shoreline (where two park and rides are planned) but that the project team could look at possibilities for Lake Forest Park.

Rob Sexton, Downtown Seattle Association (DSA):

We have all dedicated a considerable amount of time, reviewed a great deal of information and learned a significant amount from this process. I came here as a representative of the DSA, which represents a relatively small geographical area, but after 12 months I have an appreciation of each of the people at this table and their perspectives. The DSA strongly supports the I-5/Surface/Transit hybrid. As stated in a letter we submitted recently, we also feel strongly that a subsurface option must be included and we feel that the best of the subsurface options is the bored tunnel.

We need to hold firm on the \$2.8 billion coming from the state. We have the responsibility if there is something we want, or an investment we want to make, to pay for it. We have the capacity, creativity, and the tools to make this possible.

The bored tunnel should move forward through the EIS process. This is a single project, and the EIS will help us vet out potential issues. It will help us develop a final design for the project.

Carol Binder, Pike Place Market:

This process has been long and informative. A few weeks ago, I spoke up and said Scenario C, the one-way couplet, was the least desirable from the market standpoint. I am here to say that the market neighborhood supports the surface/subsurface option. We still have some concerns about alignment of things on Western Avenue, but we need to look forward and toward the improvement of the rest of the city. We need to move the traffic underground. Projects that are well informed and thought-out are generally well funded in this city. I think it's important to move forward with this.

John Coney, Uptown/Queen Anne:

It appears we have reached a near consensus that the I-5/Surface/Transit option is the preferred alternative, but we must hold in reserve the possibility of a bored tunnel as a bypass. If the bored tunnel portal is at Denny Way in the north, I suggest studying lowering Aurora Avenue between Denny Way and Mercer Street.

John Odland, Manufacturing Industrial Council (MIC):

On Tuesday night the MIC executive committee voted to support further study of the bored tunnel as long as it can be designed to meet the needs of BINMIC area. Based on our experience, we have supported anything that maintains existing through capacity and minimizes construction.

As I said on Dec. 11 we believe that both hybrids are fatally flawed with regards to maintaining capacity and minimizing construction. I hope all of the statements made at the Dec. 11 meeting will be shared with the legislature.

Grace Crunican asked John what type of connection he would hope to see in Ballard. John replied that he hoped that the spur be considered that would reconnect SR 99 to the Ballard neighborhood.

Cary Moon, Peoples Waterfront Coalition

I recommend starting on the I-5/Surface/Transit hybrid now and continuing to study the deep bored tunnel later if it is deemed necessary and funding becomes available.

As presented the surface and transit scenario works to maintain movement of people and goods. It is a risk, and people will have to use different modes and/or routes. I understand people's fears and worries that it might not be enough.

The state's contribution should be limited to the \$2.8 billion and the rest of the I-5/Surface/Transit option could be covered through regional sources. I think it is very important to move forward with a project that is within the budget given. It would not be helpful for us to shoot for the moon right now, we need to take fiscal responsibility seriously, but we should keep the door open for a bored tunnel.

Vlad Oustimovitch, West Seattle

I think what is done with the Alaskan Way Viaduct is the most important decision for Seattle in a generation. I am glad that this is not a decision-making body and that I do not have a vote on this. It is important that it be something that elected officials make a collective decision on. I think that the I-5/Surface/Transit plus the bored tunnel option has just the right balance to address this unique situation. It moves us into a world that is changing, but at the same time recognizes the economic vitality and the necessity of the viaduct as a transportation corridor.

Something to keep in mind is that generally, people measure things in terms of time. They want to know how any construction or removal will impact their trip times. In terms of I-5/Surface/Transit plus the bored tunnel proposal, it has the added benefit for people who like the existing viaduct in that it could keep capacity open while the tunnel is being constructed.

Rob Johnson, Transportation Choices

As the decision-makers move forward to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct, keeping the \$2.8 billion mark is critical. That said we should look at potential regional funding options. Regardless of what the decision is for the central waterfront, we have to take the viaduct down. One reason Transportation Choices has been supportive of the surface and transit option is that it has the shortest construction period. We have to figure out a way to ensure mobility in the immediate, medium and long term.

I also think there's a unique opportunity for us to continue to build consensus and provide for future capacity needs. The bored tunnel is a unique opportunity to add capacity later if determined necessary. I think the best way to move forward is for the EIS to review the I-5/Surface/Transit with and without bored tunnel.

Mary McCumber, Futurewise

Futurewise believes in connecting the city and the waterfront. We believe in making sure the regional economy is strong and we support tolling and highway pricing.

I support the I-5/Surface/Transit option and encourage work to begin as soon as possible. I support the EIS reviewing the hybrid with and without the bored tunnel so we know how it would fit with the surface hybrid.

Mike O'Brien, Sierra Club:

As a society we are transitioning the way we view transportation and are looking for alternatives to the automobile. Through this process I have grown to respect and understand that the business community is skeptical of a surface and transit hybrid and I can understand why. Finding a solution that keeps the economy alive and takes the environment into consideration is a huge task.

I strongly support the surface hybrid. I also support studying an option that includes a deep bored tunnel so we have some options in the future. I hope that we all find that the surface works, but I also understand that many think it's risky.

I support the viaduct coming down in 2012 and I accept the \$2.8 billion limit. We are strong supporters of pricing and tolling that will help manage demand on our system. I hope we can do everything in our power to make a surface option work, but we will be open to further options.

Gene Hoglund, Working Families for an Elevated Solution:

I can understand the importance of having a wonderful waterfront. It will be challenging to pay for the additional billion dollars necessary for a bored tunnel. If it is important to DSA and the Chamber of Commerce, then they should come up with the funds. That's a lot of money and increased property values for business owners downtown.

Seventy percent of Seattle residents voted down a tunnel in the vote held in March 2007. We know the history of Big Dig-type construction and a bored tunnel does not improve or maintain connections for Ballard and the maritime industry. The pros and cons have not been vetted on the bored tunnel.

I do not want to see the deep bored tunnel go forward. I am not saying it should not be in the EIS, but potential safety issues involved with a tunnel have not been addressed. I support the elevated structure for the replacement and the surface as a backup.

Bob Donegan, Seattle Historic Waterfront Coalition:

I have been asking for months for more data including traffic counts by major streets, transit users by mode, costs by detail, base costs plus risk and inflation, contingency costs, and travel times by major routes. The project team has done great graphs and charts for other information, and seeing costs broken out along those same lines would be helpful.

We worked to not take a position until last Thursday. Based on information we have seen so far, the waterfront has decided to support a deep bore tunnel/surface hybrid. Both elevated and surface options significantly impact the waterfront. We are hoping that the bored tunnel moves forward.

This emerging consensus was missed by the press. I hope they have seen the letters from all of these groups supporting this. I encourage the agencies not to focus on financing, but to focus on the cost to Seattle.

The elected officials asked us to find a consensus and we have done so. It would be wrong if this consensus is ignored. We are excited to help in anyway we can.

Tayloe Washburn, Seattle Chamber of Commerce:

The Seattle Chamber of Commerce consists of about 2,400 businesses, and we have not taken a formal vote, but the throughput issue is of vital importance to all of our businesses. Many of the businesses do not have the confidence that the surface option will support their needs, but many

think an elevated would. However, participating in this process has brought a few key things to my mind:

- Would an elevated ever be built again?
- An elevated structure would devastate waterfront businesses.
- There would be a long term missed opportunity to do something more for our city.

Dave Freiboth, King County Labor Council:

I too have some that I represent that feel that the elevated rebuild meets our needs. I have also talked to all of them, and they are comfortable and supportive of building consensus. I want to affirm that as we enter this next phase of this process that we try to maintain consensus.

Next, Harold Taniguchi read a statement sent in by Peter Philips of the Seattle Marine Business Coalition. His statement is as follows:

Peter Philips, Seattle Marine Business Coalition

“We continue to hold the position that seismically retrofitting the viaduct as currently configured is the only option that provides the capacity and access necessary to move freight and people efficiently between the BINMIC and Duwamish industrial neighborhoods. These are the only two industrial neighborhoods in the city, and are interdependently reliant on the viaduct to move freight and people.

The maritime and fishing industries alone represent 22,000 direct jobs contributing average salaries of \$70,000 a year to the city's economy, according to a city-sponsored economic impact study (Sommers, 2004). The 2000 census tells us that the average family in Seattle consists of 2.87 people, which means our marine industrial businesses support 63,000 city residents.

The efficient movement of freight and people offered by the current viaduct is essential to the continued economic viability of the maritime industrial sector.

Absent a long-term seismic retrofit of the existing structure, a short-seismic retrofit to allow continued use of the structure must be part of any viaduct scenario moving forward. Such a short-term solution would allow for continued use of this essential arterial during any construction of an alternative system of moving people and freight within and through the city.

According to independent seismic bridge engineer, Kit Miyamoto, such a short-term retrofit of the existing structure can bring the viaduct into compliance with the new seismic standards of a 1,000-year return earthquake, and would extend the viaduct's useful and safe life for at least a decade. Current estimates tell us that the cost of such a shorter term solution is \$200-\$300 million. Amortized over ten years, our investment averages \$20-\$30 million per year. This is cheaper than even the rosy estimates of Terry Moore's \$66 million negative economic impacts of construction--and far more attractive than the more believable \$2-3 billion yearly economic impact estimate of Jim Hebert.

Further, we hold that the state DOT must complete the structural engineering, geotechnical engineering and other work recommended by Mr. Miyamoto in his letter to the state (attached).

Miyamoto's expert opinion is that this necessary due diligence has not yet been completed, and must be completed before any responsible decisions can be made about the future of SR-99.

I have been encouraged by those who have told me that the governor is insisting on complete and accurate data before moving forward with a recommended alternative. The resources to complete the necessary work are available to us. I hope our elected officials and public agencies see fit to use them.”

Agenda Item #4 – Final remarks and action items

Dave thanked SAC members for their comments and then asked some of the agency and elected officials in attendance to say a few words. They are as follows:

Dow Constantine, King County Council

As frustrated as I can sometimes be with decision-making in this region, I am very glad that in this case it has taken us this long. In the preceding eight years, we have never had this much agreement about where we ought to go with the Alaskan Way Viaduct. Based on what we know about costs and resources, I think this group has arrived at the right decision for moving forward with the EIS.

The robust transit additions that will be needed for mitigation should not be rolled back when we are done with construction. I think this region could be better served by making investments in transit. I am willing to commit on working hard on that part of this package. I look forward to building on the foundation established by this group.

Jan Drago, Seattle City Council

I think this was a remarkable project. When I realize the positions people started with and think of how you listened to each other and incorporated different points of view to reach consensus it is remarkable. I am happy with the outcome and what the SAC is recommending. The City of Seattle voted eight times on what we felt was the preferred alternative. In the beginning it was the cut-and-cover tunnel, and then it was the urban mobility plan. I think this proposal really is a combination of where we were and where we want to go.

The council has not taken another position as we wanted to wait until this committee had spoken. The legislature needs to be listening to what this committee has to say. The difference between now and even a few days ago is that the state will put in \$2.8 billion and no more, so if we want an option that goes beyond that, then we are going to have to step up and pay for it. I believe we are very capable of doing this and there are funding sources that are available to us.

Tim Ceis, Seattle Deputy Mayor

I am hearing a great deal of consensus from this group about a potential solution. Having been involved in a lot of transportation issues over the last 20 years, I understand the importance of consensus. If we can achieve a political consensus, then this is the first time we have had a real chance of moving forward.

We believe the combination of improvements needs to start now. We need to commit to the transit service and its ongoing funding. Transit is going to be the greatest source of capacity we can achieve going forward.

The mayor will work with the port, state, and county and we may be back and talking to you after the executives make their decision. We're going to continue the transparency and openness that you have been a part of in the last year.

Tim Flynn, King County Director of Intergovernmental Relations

Executive Sims thanks everyone for their hard work and support. King County supports the bored tunnel moving forward with the I-5/Surface/Transit into the EIS.

Mike Merritt, Port of Seattle Local Government Relations Manager

Tay Yoshitani would like to relay a message to support moving forward the subsurface option. The commission wants to maintain Seattle as a great place to live, work and trade with the rest of the world. We do agree that funding for the subsurface option would need to come from outside of the dedicated state funding.

Next, Harold thanked the SAC and said that he continues to be impressed with the level of commitment of the group. He noted that the outcome of the process had everything to do with the group's spirit and integrity. He also thanked Dave and Grace and said it has been a pleasure working with them.

Dave noted that he thought the SAC process was something that should be taken apart and modeled in the future. He commended the SAC on all the time and dedication they have shown.

Grace said that she particularly appreciated the personal time everyone sacrificed to attend meetings and review the materials. Next she said that the tri-agency team had certificates of appreciation and pieces of the viaduct to recognize the time and dedication each SAC member had shown.

After all of the certificates and pieces were handed out, Grace noted that the tri-agency did not anticipate holding another SAC meeting. She thanked them again for their commitment on behalf of the agencies and citizens of Seattle.