

Seattle Freight Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: November 19, 2013 / 9:30 a.m.

Location: Seattle City Hall

Draft

Members Present: Warren Aakervik, Christine Wolf (For Bari Bookout POS), Terry Finn/BNSF, Mike Sheehan, Linda Anderson

Guests Present:

Transpo Consultant team: Bruce Haldors, Jon Pascal, Jeanne Acutanza

City Staff Present:

Tony Mazzella, Ron Borowski, Chris Eaves, Kevin O'Neill, Cristina VanValkenburgh, Sara Zora, Kristen Simpson

1. Welcome and Introductions

Board members, City staff, and other attendees introduced themselves

2. Public Comment - None

3. Approval of minutes

4. Chair's Report and Announcements

There were no announcements.

5. Industrial Areas Freight Access Project Workshop

SDOT initiated the Seattle Industrial Areas Freight Access Project this month. SDOT conducted a special interactive workshop for Seattle Freight Advisory Board members to hear their perspectives and recommendations about 1) freight related mobility and access problems and 2) possible solutions within the Freight Access Project study area. There were two sessions, one on freight mobility problems, and the second on solutions. SDOT requested feedback on current and future timeframes. The planning horizon is approximately 20 years.

Staff provided handouts to the audience indicating what feedback staff are looking for from the Board, and guidance on the potential problem categories: traffic operations and congestion, obstruction clearances, signals, paving and other categories.

Data Provided – Maps on Display

- Downtown Seattle Traffic Control Zone – Freight restricted zone where trucks >30' are restricted 6 days a week
- Port Heavy Haul Network map prepared by Port of Seattle

- WSDOT Annual Tonnage map (state ratings by weight) from 2011
- Port Trucks Seaport Map – Intermodal Connectors
- Port Trucks Seaport Map – Highway Connectors
- Major Truck Streets Map
- Industrial Centers: BINMIC and Duwamish MIC Maps
- Greater Downtown Map
- Freight Projects Inventory Map

Highlights of input provided by Freight Advisory Board members:

STREET PAVING

Issues

1. Advance notification prior to paving and construction so trucks are aware of construction
2. Traffic control at construction sites not set for large capacity vehicles, cones through intersections create bottlenecks, especially when left overnight (after 3PM) when the site is closed
3. Provide more concrete, less asphalt needed on arterials
4. Paving projects often become “Lane Reduction” projects. Designers should keep freight in mind when developing complete streets, specifically if street is a major truck street
5. Focus of Principal Arterials should address freight needs especially if they are major truck corridors or provide a last mile (intermodal) access to the Port of Seattle
6. Roadways with rutted/potholed streets in the curb lanes result in trucks straddling the center lanes

Solutions

1. Funding
2. Provide one lane for autos to park and one lane for commercial vehicles
3. Develop flow planning
4. MAP-21 funds for dedicated major truck streets
5. Opening construction sites back up to meet peak demands after 3PM (not so much paving because they do that already)
6. Will last mile numbers be part of the freight study? Find out how much gross domestic product (GDP) is lost to businesses and trucks due to congestion at these points. What is the cost to consumers?
7. Construction traffic control plans to account for large truck movements

TRAFFIC SIGNALS

Issues

1. Optimize traffic signals to flow better for trucks during peak hours, 1st /Atlantic does not have enough clearance for trucks

2. Pedestrians do not obey “Don't Walk” signs creating conflicts for trucks and reducing time for trucks to clear the intersections.
 - a. There is a lack of enforcement to jay walkers (mid-block) or walking against “Don't Walk”
 - b. Peds cross rail during events
3. Signals are not responsive to traffic flows (smart signals)
4. Magnolia Bridge Gates flyover signal timing does not fully address demand scenarios

Solutions

1. New funding
2. A truly adaptive signal system in the Elliott/15th Corridor, 1st and Atlantic and other major truck corridors
3. More enforcement of pedestrians and bikes for illegal crossings (jay walking, speeding etc.)
4. More signals for uncontrolled crossings where peds run in front of or impeded trucks
5. Demand responsive signals timed for effective freight traffic flow
6. Truck signal priority and pre-emption in major truck corridors

OBSTRUCTIONS CLEARANCES

Issues

1. Lots of issues with railroad crossing delays at Holgate, Lander, and Broad with no alternatives
2. Buses stopped in lanes (e.g. Ballard) and trucks can't get around. Other obstructions include bulb-outs and other devices that narrow the travel way
3. Consider revising event traffic management plans for before and after events to address freight movements
4. Freeway connections like 1st/Atlantic, north of the ship canal, north of the CBD turns are a challenge
5. Improper lane width for turning trucks slows commercial traffic specifically on East-West arterials leading to I-5 (left-turns are also a problem)
6. When congestion, accidents, or other blockage occurs on I-5 or SR 99, there are no overflow or parallel bypass options for trucks
7. Bridge openings should be managed better. Boats have been observed requesting bridge openings even if they fit under the bridge. Can bridge openings be limited to specific times of the day?
8. There is substantial congestion on I-5 South of the CBD making it hard to get into the SODO
9. Narrow lanes on arterials including left turn lane
10. Difficulty making turns for super chassis at intersections like 6th/Spokane and 1st/Spokane
11. Pedestrians cross the railroad tracks unprotected during sport/other events

Solutions

1. Real time information about obstructions and getting information to operators
2. More grade separations

3. Provide U-turns at railroad crossings including pulling back stop bars to provide clearance and open adjacent driveways (Example school district driveway near Holgate)
4. Update stadium area event TMP to reflect or consider freight and specifically work with (SDOT and SPD) at East-West grade separations in the Duwamish
5. Provide priority for freight at ramp meters
6. Improve boater information like heights that justify bridge openings or use laser height detection to reduce boats opening bridges unnecessarily
7. Improve I-5 ramps on Industrial Way for freight and transit
8. Re-evaluate maintenance at problem spots
9. Design treatment at intersections for turning movements of trucks

TRAFFIC OPERATIONS CONGESTION

Issues

1. Waterfront function including SODO interference, terminal rail junction, etc.,
2. Ferry on-street queue blocking issues at Pier 51 (Colman Dock). Does waterfront design accomplish solution for access, freight and business vitality now, during the interim period while the tunnel is being constructed and after tunnel opens, with tolling
3. Management of loading zones citywide. Are loading zones and parking for non-zoned vehicles working effectively?
4. Bridges take extremely long (12-20 minutes) to open and close (examples Lower West Seattle, Ballard, and 1st Avenue) could the open/closing times be sped up? Are protocols for bridge openings and closures consistent? Must consider maritime rules and Federal Waterways.
5. Major truck streets should not be compromised to other modes (in-line BRT, consider opening BAT lanes to trucks). Truck streets should be a priority for trucks. (e.g. 1st/Elliott)
6. Need alternative routes and bypass for trucks during emergency conditions or congestion on key truck routes (I-5, SR 99)
7. Consider opening lanes for trucks as a bypass when major truck streets congested (e.g. Ballard)
8. Central waterfront number of lanes on Alaskan Way may not be adequate either in number of lanes or overall width
9. Elliott/15th corridor is impacted by BAT lane and potentially will impact future traffic
10. 1st Atlantic's and future congestion will be compounded by potential vacation of "safety valve" Occidental Avenue
11. Game day traffic impacts trucks

Solutions

1. Installation of adaptive traffic signals, for example along Elliott/15th corridor
2. Grade-separations
3. Allow trucks to use transit lanes or create dedicated truck lanes
4. Create a dedicated Truck Way, east-west at Terminal 7
5. Work with SPD on traffic truck flows during (before and after) events so they know not to close off necessary streets
6. More enforcement of load zones and bus zones. Provide more parking load zones

7. Define a complete major truck street. What does a truck street look like?
Not promised to maximize freight, but rather how not to compromise too badly for economic purposes

OTHER

Issues

1. Transit service reductions may increase total vehicles
2. Bicycles on arterials including truck routes and in turn lanes
3. On -street loading areas are not available.
4. Potentially use in-street lanes like two way left turn lanes
5. Keep off-arterial circulation open for truck loading areas (keep these)
6. Narrow lanes allow trucks to take two lanes
7. On-street parking results in conflicts and reduced capacity for trucks
8. Planning for bus and freight weights on streets from 18,000 to ____ gross vehicle weights (GVW). State guidance increases from over 80K to over 100K as legal. This issue will be discussed in the near future.
9. Federal laws that contribute to congestion or impact freight for example required rests after hours of service
10. Bicycles ignoring traffic laws without consequences
11. Safety
12. Create a circulation and access during next decade of construction including a freight route through CBD
13. Not enough information for truckers on where they can go or how to get to open (and clear terminals using cameras)
14. Wayfinding needed for trucks to state and interstate systems
15. Need on-board cameras and traffic timing systems
16. Need real-time traffic info for trucks that is a voice-based to avoid distraction
17. Confirm that there is a viable waterfront design match solutions
18. During or after I 90 and SR 99 tolling, how to deal with diversions
19. Bridge openings create congestion for trucks.
20. truck parking overnight and early morning

Solutions

1. Freight Advisory Board could write a letter to the legislature regarding the importance of transit funding as a way to reduce congestion and the freight
2. Better enforcement of traffic laws for bikes including possible licensing with revenue going to SDOT and Metro
3. City support to make deliveries with freight
4. Mitigation for tolling I 90 and SR 99
5. Use of Metro layovers (peak period layovers) for trucks instead of allowing on-street car parking
6. Improve reliability
7. Complete major truck streets plan and design standards

8. Optimize freight without compromising other modes