

CENTRAL WATERFRONT STAKEHOLDERS GROUP

MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting #5
July 26, 2011

MEETING INFORMATION

Meeting #5, July 26, 2011
5:15 – 7:15 p.m.
Seattle City Hall, Bertha Knight Landes Room

ATTENDANCE

Stakeholders

- Warren Aakervik
- Brett Allen
- Don Benson
- Kevin Clark
- Bob Donegan
- Jan Drago (for Leslie Smith)
- Katherine Fountain Mackinnon
- Craig Hanway
- Susan Jones
- Brian Kenny
- Charles Knutson
- David Ramsay
- Genevieve Rucki (for Nicole McIntosh)
- Brian Steinburg
- Heather Trim
- Keith Weir (for Lee Newgent)

Staff

- Bob Chandler, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
- Steve Pearce, SDOT
- Jennifer Wieland, SDOT
- Hannah McIntosh, SDOT
- Brian Holloway, SDOT
- Paul Elliott, SDOT
- Dave Smith, Seattle City Light
- James Corner, jcfo
- Tatiana Choulika, jcfo
- Erin Taylor, EnviroIssues

Approximately nine members of the public were in attendance.

WELCOME

Bob Chandler, Seattle Department of Transportation Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Program Director, welcomed the group to the fifth Central Waterfront Stakeholders Group meeting, and asked for introductions. Bob reviewed the meeting objectives:

- Update on seawall ongoing work,
- Introduce T1/T2 utility relocation work, and
- Review Waterfront Seattle early design concepts.

HOUSEKEEPING

Erin Taylor noted that a summary of the fourth Central Waterfront Stakeholders Group meeting was included in the meeting materials; she asked if anyone had questions or

Advising on Waterfront Seattle and the Elliott Bay Seawall Project

clarifications to the document. There were none, and the summary was considered final. Erin reviewed the meeting ground rules and emergency information.

ELLIOTT BAY SEAWALL PROJECT UPDATE

Jennifer Wieland, Planning and Design Lead for the Elliott Bay Seawall Project, reported on the project team's progress since May. The team is currently drafting environmental discipline reports, coordinating with Waterfront Seattle, and working on moving forward from the bookend alternatives to a preferred alternative. Jennifer clarified that the team has cross-checked to ensure Waterfront Seattle's first design iterations fit within the Seawall team's bookend alternatives. The team is moving toward 35 percent design. Coordination is ongoing with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); the team is preparing to schedule a "feasibility scoping meeting." This partnering milestone helps establish the potential federal interest in the Elliott Bay Seawall Project, setting the stage for potential cost sharing. The next six months will include both a refinement of the bookend alternatives and updated project costs to be presented to the Mayor and City Council.

With regard to habitat field work, the team continues to conduct two types of fish surveys: land-based observation and snorkeling surveys. Land-based survey methodology was adjusted due to allow better observations of fish behavior, now consisting of 30 minute observations, plus an additional six hours spent following specific schools of fish to see how long it takes for them to move around a pier. Fifteen species of fish and 80,000 individuals have been observed – an increase since the beginning of the migration season. Four different salmon species have been observed, with chum in the greatest abundance. Most species are observed in areas near the water's surface, in full sunlight. Occasionally some fish cross the shade line at piers, but then typically dart back into sunlight. Biologists are observing fish spending many hours to travel in the sunlight around a pier, rather than risking travel through the darkness under a pier. Many other species are also observed, including macro algae, bull kelp, giant octopus, a harbor seal and pup, and Dungeness crab. These surveys help inform ongoing design work. By understanding species' behavior, the team will be better suited to select design elements that are cost-effective, and have positive habitat impact.

Jennifer also described the Seawall team's recent community outreach efforts including six festival events. Seawall staff are hearing questions related to the history and structure of the seawall, construction details and impacts, and funding sources. A walking tour for federal delegation staff was conducted to keep elected officials apprised of project progress and to reiterate the project's urgency.

Question: Have methods for artificial under-pier lighting been tested?

Response: The team is exploring a pilot light experiment to begin at the beginning of the next migration season. The current study also includes measurement of light levels under and around piers.

T1/T2 UTILITY RELOCATION PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Dave Smith, Seattle City Light, introduced the Transmission Lines 1 and 2 (T1/T2) Utility Relocation Project. Seattle City Light operates 115,000-volt transmission lines that have been attached to the Alaskan Way viaduct structure since 1982. The transmission lines carry loads which service Seattle's shopping and central business district. The viaduct's demolition requires the transmission lines be relocated underground. The project has been in design for the past year and is currently in the procurement stage.

The project is divided into three pieces: the installation of switchgear at the Union substation, civil work including duct banks, vaults and paving, and cable installation. The estimated total project cost is \$20 million. The City Light team is coordinating specifically with the Seawall and Waterfront Seattle projects to place the lines in a permanent location without interference with either project's plans. Work will occur between Yesler Way and the Union Street Substation (near Seattle Steam). In the northern section, the Central Waterfront design team recommended that the lines be relocated on the east side of the viaduct area right of way. Near Colman Dock, the lines will be placed in the center of the right of way. Construction is anticipated to begin by December 2011, which allows the team to work within a time period of an annual "outage window," and to be the least disruptive to the neighborhood by avoiding high tourist season (spring and summer). The Elliott Bay Seawall Project and Waterfront Seattle public outreach teams will address community concerns and impacts before construction begins, especially with concurrent projects occurring along the waterfront.

Question: In an earthquake, what is the risk - will the current wires remain live? Where do the lines run past the Union Substation?

Response: Should an earthquake occur, these lines do not present an electric hazard, however the central business district would lose power. The transmission lines connect with transformers that convert them to street voltage, and from there (at the Union Substation) they spider web into distribution facilities.

Question: What is the parking plan for the waterfront during construction? Waterfront parking has already been negatively impacted, and it appears there will be no long-term plan in place before the December construction.

Response: A comprehensive construction staging and parking plan will be presented in September, which will incorporate many waterfront project plans.

Question: What is the status of the electronic parking signage system for the waterfront?

Response: The electronic signage system is a voluntary program that began as a pilot program with parking operators, and SDOT is working as fast as they can to enlist operators.

Question: How much of the T1/T2 project is funded by Seattle City Light?

Response: Seattle City Light will fund the entire \$20 million project. The cost is built into the rates.

Question: Will the lines be relocated underground?

Response: Yes, all lines will be located underground in a duct and vault system. New cable will replace the current 30-year old cable.

Question: How will construction be phased?

Response: The utility vaults will likely be placed first at distinct areas. Following this, work may jump around to spot locations. The bidding contractors will be asked to present a proposed construction sequence to complete the project on time and provide minimal impacts.

WATERFRONT SEATTLE PRESENTATION

Steve Pearce, Project Manager for Waterfront Seattle, summarized the recent progress of the Waterfront Seattle team. He reminded the group that the team is still early in the design process, and construction will not begin until the Alaskan Way Viaduct is removed in 2016. Over the next year, the team will present its second and third iterations of designs. The concept design is anticipated to be complete by June 2012. Before a cost estimate is presented, the team will identify a phasing approach, and will complete a finance and strategic plan. A plan for future stewardship of the waterfront will also be compiled.

James Corner, jco, described the rare opportunity Seattle has to transform its waterfront. The project will add value to the city over time with added productive space and economic benefit. He described the challenges of a complicated site, technical restraints, logistics, and varied interests. He described public feedback gathered at Waterfront Seattle's public events including features that visitors would be disappointed to see (large scale commercial and/or view blocking structures, oversized roads and parking lots, and unauthentic tourist-oriented uses), and features that the public would love to see on the waterfront (water access, parks and open space, and opportunities for views). The team has found that the most attractive features to waterfront visitors are parks, places to stroll and sit, concert events and destinations, and diverse eating locations. There are also a number of other local planning initiatives the team will cooperate with, including the Seattle Aquarium expansion, Colman Dock, and tunnel portal design guidelines.

The design team created three design concepts at three scales: the city scale, urban framework scale, and the waterfront scale. The city scale focuses on re-centering Seattle around Elliott Bay. The concept builds off the idea of a "bay ring" intensifying the relationship of attractions around the bay. Some elements may include the Olmsted Park and Boulevard System and green ring -- Gasworks, Madrona, Smith Cove, and Alki Beach.

The urban scale's focus is to connect the city to the waterfront with an emphasis on attracting people to the waterfront's pedestrian friendly, safe, and accessible environment. Challenges in creating that environment include topography, transit, mobility, and parking. The design team currently envisions maintaining First and Third avenue as the intense transit corridors, with lighter transit on the waterfront. The east/west connections could be enhanced to bring people to the waterfront from the city. This effort would need to include enhancement to parking facilities, improvements

to pedestrian access, and a new signalized and pedestrian-friendly Alaskan Way. James noted that Alaskan Way would still accommodate vehicular demand including freight.

There are two concepts that make up the waterfront scale. The first is focused on the tidelines. Corner described Seattle's original shore and tidelines and potential interactions between the water and land. The second concept is based on the idea of "folds," connecting the city to the waterfront and creating public spaces. Four locations have opportunities for folds: Pike Place Market, Belltown, Colman Dock, and Pier 48. The Overlook fold at Pike Place Market could pass over the new Alaskan Way and create a new public plaza in front of the Aquarium with buildable space beneath. The idea emphasizes strolling with ease from the market down to the piers, Aquarium, and a new Waterfront Park. These folds are intended to create 24-hour uses that are effective at activating the space.

The Belltown Balcony could include view locations from an elevated deck or balcony looking south across Elliott Bay. Colman Dock's ferry fold could include a new landscaped roof on top of the ferry terminal, and a new Marion Street bridge, allowing which would allow ferry passengers or pedestrians to go straight from the ferry or First Avenue to the roof of the new structure. The Pier 48 fold could include public landscape on top of the pier, with potential for year-round activity (e.g. restaurant, exhibition, and/or performing art space). Habitat enhancement and public access to the water are also visualized in this space. Installation of public art could be incorporated into all of these concepts.

Question: Is a beach possible near the Pike Place Overlook fold?

Response: A beach is possible near the new Waterfront Park. "Beach" should be in quotes – it may not be a typical beach, but water interaction, as the water is very deep in that area and would require a significant amount of fill or pull back of the seawall to establish a stereotypical beach.

Question: How will a pedestrian get from the Belltown Balcony to the waterfront?

Response: The team is aware of traffic issues in that area, and additional definition will be needed. The street would be designed to be signaled, with pedestrian priority. The team wants to avoid creating a continuous flow of traffic by limiting speeds to ensure safety and walkability.

Comment: The idea of the bay and green rings is intriguing. A series of concentric rings establishing 15-minute walking increments between should be added.

Question: Why is only half of Colman Dock covered in the fold concept?

Response: The jco team met with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Washington State Ferries (WSF), who requested that the designs balance WSF's operational needs, especially with regard to the asphalt queuing area. For example, additional covered area may require pillars that could impede this queuing area. The proposal must be feasible for WSF, and the next step is to explore opportunities to do even more.

Comment: The designs feel linear, as opposed to multi-dimensional. We are concerned that current waterfront visitors cannot tell where the tide is, that the design should help show this dynamic.

Comment: The waterfront should connect people to the city in many different places, not just the large, dramatic areas.

Question: Is it possible to use energy from waterfront visitors to power any new elevators or escalators?

Comment: The design drawings show the existing pilings in place from the older piers, however they are toxic, creosote soaked pilings that should be removed, consistent with shoreline management plans.

Comment: Natural light penetration should be considered in the design schemes.

Comment: As an environmental group, People for Puget Sound would fight the inclusion of any built feature that is not water dependent over the water, especially parking.

Comment: The designs should not be constrained by WSF's economic concerns.

Comment: WSF is reinitiating the environmental review for the new Colman Dock project, likely to be announced in the fall. The new project is anticipated to have a smaller scope than in years past.

Response: The Waterfront Seattle team is meeting with all types of project partners in order to move the project forward. The team's meetings with WSF have been positive and both groups are confident that a vision can be achieved together. WSF would not be expected to pay for the new open space aspects of the Colman Dock design.

Question: Do these concepts assume any transit on the waterfront?

Response: Transit is still being studied, but these plans bring transit to the waterfront via east/west connections. North/south transit is currently assumed on First Avenue in order to leave enough physical space for the waterfront elements.

Question: Could Pike Place Market be extended over the Overlook fold?

Response: Coffee and flower shops and other activating retail could be incorporated on top and beneath any of the folds.

Comment: A broader concept of uses, not just water-based uses, should be considered for spaces like Pier 48 which have potential to activate Pioneer Square. Indoor and outdoor environments such as an off-site convention center or multi-use space would activate the space.

STAKEHOLDER ONCE AROUND

Bob Chandler invited the stakeholders to give their input and ask additional questions about the presentations. The following comments and questions were heard:

Bob Davidson: I am thrilled with the imagination and scale of the concepts developed. The connections between the uplands and waterfront will not only restore dimensions of the city that were lost decades ago, but will also create connections that have never existed. The Aquarium is just beginning to develop a response to these opportunities. Logistical details obviously will need more attention, such as the survival of institutions like the Aquarium during construction.

Susan Jones: The concepts are beautiful, and I appreciate the connections to the Olympic Sculpture Park and Belltown. I am concerned about the volume and square footage required for the overlooks, as there is more real estate available than what can be filled by coffee and flower shops. I prefer green space over leasable, private or publically owned square footage.

Response: To clarify, the potential coffee and flower shops and smaller uses would be on top of the folds to maintain an open space character. The space underneath is sizeable, but not always contiguous as it is often split up by rail or other barriers.

Brett Allen: I encourage the team to be more aggressive toward finding bigger solutions for west/east connections. The uphill walk is difficult for many people, and is therefore avoided. The north/south connection is important as well; a shuttle bus might be helpful.

Brian Steinburg: Seattle has a tendency to think too small and settle for less. I praise the team for thinking big. We can refine our ideas later. It is important to realize that although it may not happen at once, this is a concept that could be easily implemented over time. With regard to the transmission line project, I am concerned that we would be ripping up sidewalk that is potentially part of a waterfront design element.

Response: The City is spending a great deal of time ensuring that the lines are placed in the correct long-term locations. We also anticipate that they will be in the most discreet locations to avoid large impacts.

Brian Kenny: I like the ideas of lids and overlooks, but I am also interested in spaces at grade. Is there potential for using the open parking lot space on the waterfront near Spring and Seneca streets?

Genevieve Rucki: Washington State Ferries must better understand the planning process schedule, and how the Waterfront Seattle vision will consider millions of ferry passengers and vehicles access and egress.

Don Benson: I am glad to see outreach extending beyond downtown, because the design should embrace the entire city. I am concerned about conflicts between transportation modes.

Warren Aakervik: Will the transmission line relocations occur in the easterly corridor of the roadway, even though the future Alaskan Way may not be in the same location? Will truck routes be compromised during construction? Regarding the design concepts, does anything compromise the ability to maintain a freight corridor? I am concerned about trucks stopping and starting along the corridor – this has the potential to increase time and pollution.

Response: The signals in at least one lane each direction would be developed for freight to keep continuous traffic moving during peak times. Off-peak and weekend signalization would prioritize pedestrians. There are also new, developing systems being considered that are adaptive and responsive to real-time vehicle and pedestrian demands.

Keith Weir: I like the bay ring concept – it is like a circle hugging the waterfront, our city's vital life force. With regard to the utility relocation, will phase rotation be impacted or fixed?

Charles Knutson: The team's knowledge of our city is impressive. Continue to incorporate amenities that we already have such as the Olympic Sculpture Park and Pier 48. The Chamber of Commerce will continue to expect the smooth flow of people and goods via all modes (foot, transit, vehicular, and freight) as well as limiting impacts to the Port of Seattle and WSF.

Katherine Fountain Mackinnon: The designs are beautiful. I agree that the suggestion should be bold, and the team can pull back after thinking big. I concur that transit along the waterfront is critical.

Kevin Clark: Who is considering the potential for additional volumes of visitors in the future, their modes of transportation, and their parking needs? Mass transit does not always meet the needs of visitors.

Response: Currently a mobility/multi-modality plan is being tested through modeling. We still anticipate that Third Avenue will continue to accommodate transit, and the theory is to increase east/west connections to the waterfront. We are also considering new adaptive response technologies for parking. One example is a computer system that is capable of analyzing vacancies using GPS technology. We can optimize existing parking facilities and enhance parking in places like the conceptual folds – subterranean areas that would not suit other uses.

David Ramsay: I like the pedestrian emphasis of the concepts. We should be able to accommodate transit in this space, as Santa Barbara has done with their skinny corridor. I recently visited the High Line in New York City, and hope to achieve a similar sense of detail and whimsy here in Seattle.

Heather Trim: The Shoreline Master Plan includes a museum or national park at Pier 48, which was discussed years ago. That would be an opportunity to display historic ships and potentially reactivate Pioneer Square.

NEXT STEPS AND ACTION ITEMS

Bob Chandler summarized the action items captured during the meeting:

- ✓ Respond to questions about transmission line phasing.
- ✓ Respond to questions about parking issues.

The sixth Central Waterfront Stakeholders Group meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, September 21, 2011.