

Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program
Advisory Committee on Tolling and Traffic Management
Meeting Summary – Nov. 1, 2012

Committee Members in Attendance

- Claudia Balducci
- Kurt Beckett
- Rick Bender
- Marcus Charles
- Cynthia Chen
- Maud Daudon
- Bob Davidson
- Tessa Gregor
- Sharon Maeda
- Peg Staeheli
- Sung Yang
- Henry Yates

Committee Members Not in Attendance

- Phil Fujii
- Rob Johnson
- Charley Royer

Agencies and Staff in Attendance

- Linea Laird, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Kimberly Farley, WSDOT
- Craig Stone, WSDOT
- Mark Bandy, WSDOT
- Amy Turner, Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program (AWV)
- Dan Eder, Seattle City Council Central Staff
- Bob Chandler, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
- Eric Tweit, SDOT

Agenda Item #1 – Welcome and Introductions

Advisory Committee on Tolling and Traffic Management (ACTT) co-chair Maud Daudon welcomed everyone to the meeting. She reviewed the previous ACTT meetings and introduced the day's topics.

Agenda Item #2 – Responding to Recurring Questions

WSDOT Toll Division Director Craig Stone explained how the SR 99 tunnel compares to other facilities across the country and in Washington state. WSDOT Urban Corridors Traffic Engineer Mark Bandy outlined the different types of traffic diversion, gave an update on SR 520 traffic and described WSDOT's previous analysis on segment tolling. Seattle City Council Central Staff member Dan Eder and SDOT Assistant Director of Strategic Projects Bob Chandler expressed

concern that segment tolling would toll some drivers who don't use the tunnel, could create diversion in areas not previously studied, and could hurt the city's competitiveness in the region.

Question: Do any other states have privately owned toll facilities?

Answer: Indiana went through a transfer of their turnpike to a private entity, which was very controversial. Ohio is currently looking at a similar model.

Question: Was the SR 520 toll rate structure set to only pay off the bonds and not to maintain the facility?

Answer: SR 520 tolls are used to manage traffic and pay off debt. Tacoma Narrows Bridge tolls are used to pay off debt, but not to manage traffic. Both facilities use tolls to pay for some portion of Operations and Maintenance (O&M) and Repair and Replacement (R&R).

Question: What are some creative strategies other states have to make toll facilities more affordable for low-income people? For instance, one idea is to give employers a discount for purchasing a packet of tolls.

Answer: In Washington state drivers can use EBT cards to pay for tolls. Some employers have explored using commute trip reduction funds to pay for tolls. It's important to remember that other types of funding are often more regressive than tolls. We also have to keep in mind that we have one tolling system in Washington, so treatment should be the same across all facilities.

Question: What are the volumes on SR 520 currently, and what were they before tolling was implemented?

Answer: Before tolling they were approximately 100,000. Now they are approximately 68,000.

Question: It was previously stated that the Dynamic Traffic Assignment model didn't assume mode shifts. Now it seems that you're saying the model does capture mode shifts. Can you explain this?

Answer: The regional model, whose data forms the basis of our Dynamic Traffic Assignment modeling, does account for mode shift to transit. When we modeled tolling for the environmental impact statement we used the regional model and found that tolling the SR 99 tunnel did not create significant shifts to transit. This is largely due to the fact that there are not equivalent transit through-trips in the area we're tolling. Because we modeled the highest toll rate for the environmental process, we did not re-run the regional model for these lower rates, knowing that the route choice behavior would not change significantly.

Question: If the ACTT were to recommend further study of segment tolling, would a formal environmental process have to take place, and how would the City of Seattle participate?

Answer: Yes, a formal environmental process would have to occur because this would affect a broad area of people not previously considered. The City of Seattle was a signatory to the SR 99 tunnel's environmental impact statement. Furthermore, because the Legislature has to approve

tolling on state facilities, legislative approval would have to be sought to implement segment tolling.

Comment: Please include figures with descriptive measures so that we have a way to consistently compare information.

Agenda Item #3 – Round 2 Scenarios and Committee Feedback

SDOT Project Manager Eric Tweit and Mark Bandy introduced the scenarios recommended by WSDOT and SDOT staff for the second round of modeling.

Question: How much revenue would scenario four raise?

Answer: We would need to complete the traffic and revenue modeling to be able to answer this, but the intent of scenario four is to raise \$200 million for project costs and cover ownership costs.

Question: What is the freight charge in scenario five?

Answer: Scenario five assumes the State of Washington's standard practice of per-axle charges. Once modeling is complete we can discuss how freight rates react with the different types of charges that we've studied.

Question: Are there other alternative structures for freight pricing, and are we required to toll freight?

Answer: Charging per axle is typical in the tolling industry. Other methods include charging on the size of the vehicle. The Washington State Transportation Commission has the authority to decide toll exemptions. However, they have elected to charge freight on a per-axle basis on all toll facilities.

Question: What is the difference between your proposed portal tolling and segment tolling?

Answer: The primary difference is that with portal tolling only tunnel users are tolled. In segment tolling drivers could be charged a toll without entering the tunnel.

Question: How does the portal tolling scenario reduce the expected rate of diversion?

Answer: The driver going the shortest trip would normally choose to divert from the tunnel and find an alternate route. By charging them less they would find the tunnel a more attractive option.

Question: Doesn't the portal tolling option ask people who live farther away to pay more, and is that equitable?

Answer: This option brings drivers back into the tunnel who would have otherwise diverted and not paid a toll at all.

Question: When the modeling results come in, will we be able to see the impacts to Alaskan Way and downtown streets?

Answer: Yes, we will provide volumes as we have in the past and travel times on a variety of routes.

Question: In previous scenarios, how significant were the travel time savings from using the tunnel?

Answer: Depending on the trip there were significant changes in travel time.

Question: Is this our last opportunity to model? When would we be able to introduce mitigation measures into the modeling?

Answer: There is room in our schedule to run some tests, which are abbreviated versions of the full model, to apply some of the mitigation strategies the committee is interested in.

Question: If the Washington State Transportation Commission requires a per-axle charge on tolled facilities, is our modeling of other measures moot?

Answer: A number of things that are being discussed and modeled would necessitate a change in state policy. It is within the ACTT's purview to study and make recommendations on these types of things.

Question: The pricing structure of portal tolling is more complicated than those of the other scenarios. How will you maintain the essential element of trust by users of the system?

Answer: I-405 will have different toll rates depending on the length of a trip, so this will not be unique method to the SR 99 tunnel.

Comment: It seems like portal tolling would incentivize more people to come through the downtown corridor.

Comment: If we know what mitigation strategies we're going to recommend, it would be good to get those to the Legislature in the upcoming session. For instance, mitigation funds for transit that were part of the South Holgate Street to South King Street Project will expire in 2014.

Agenda Item #4 – Mitigation Discussion Follow-up

Maud Daudon explained that due to overwhelming interest in the mitigation subgroup, mitigation will be discussed in detail by the full committee at future meetings. She asked that committee members with specific transportation perspectives come prepared to discuss how the overall system will be updated across all modes by 2017.

Agenda Item #5 – Progress Report

Maud Daudon explained the outline of the committee's progress report, noting that it is not a set of recommendations but only an update on the committee's work to-date, including the upcoming round-two analysis and mitigation discussions.

Comment: I would like to ask that Metro be a separate recipient from King County.

Agenda Item #6 – Committee Work Plan and Schedule

Committee administrator Amy Turner introduced the updated committee work plan, explaining that staff expects to have traffic results from round-two modeling in early February, and revenue results after that. While the progress report that is currently being drafted will be submitted to various groups in December of this year, actual recommendations by the committee will be made in April 2013.

Agenda Item #7 – Next Steps and Action Items

Maud Daudon thanked everyone for attending. The next committee meeting will be held on Nov. 14, 2012.

Action items:

- Staff will email information relevant to the federal Environmental Justice policy, an environmental justice study by the University of Washington, and the results of the 2010 segment tolling analysis to the committee.
- Staff will bring ideas about public feedback to a future ACTT meeting for discussion.