

Feet First: Given the alignment has shifted a block west, are any buildings between First Avenue and Alaskan Way at risk from vibrations and ground settlement, and if so, which ones? How about utilities, what if any will be affected?

WSDOT: Protecting people and property is our top priority. We have taken and will continue to take steps to minimize the construction risks posed to utilities, structures and the natural environment along the proposed tunnel alignment. In addition to inspecting buildings and maintaining ongoing discussions with property owners, managers and tenants along the alignment, we have gathered soil samples in the area to better understand ground conditions. These measures will help us determine which buildings might require [mitigation](#) prior to construction.

Unfortunately, it is too early in the process to speculate about the potential mitigation needs of specific buildings and utilities. The building representatives we've spoken with to this point have been very helpful as we try to determine the best way to move the project forward, and we feel confident that we're taking every reasonable step to minimize construction risks.

Feet First: How much traffic is expected to go in and out of the south portal? What routings will the cars use? Are all of the vehicles going to be directed to Alaskan Way and First Ave?

WSDOT: The estimated number of vehicles that would use the proposed bored tunnel varies based on a number of factors including time of day and the type of tolling strategy that's ultimately implemented. Details about how tolling may affect traffic are available at: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/Viaduct/BoredTunnelTolling.htm> we released in January. A full traffic analysis will be presented in our second Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS), to be released this fall.

With the bored tunnel alternative drivers on SR 99 would have a choice as they approached the south portal: 1) enter the city street grid via a new off-ramp to Alaskan Way S. near S. Royal Brougham Way, or 2) continue on SR 99 and bypass the downtown core.

Drivers who choose to exit SR 99 would have a number of choices based on their destination. A driver traveling north on SR 99 from West Seattle to the Safeco Field parking garage would likely exit SR 99 and travel south on First Avenue S. to S. Atlantic Street. If the same driver were headed to the aquarium or shops on the waterfront, he or she would likely exit SR 99 at the same location and continue north onto a new waterfront street to be constructed in the footprint of the existing viaduct.

Feet First: Will existing streets need to be re-engineered to accommodate this volume? It is our understanding 59,000 cars will go to and from this portal daily, and possibly up to 30,000 more cars trying to avoid the tolled segment of SR-99. Please confirm these numbers. Are they accurate, should we expect more or less

from these corridors? How will you mitigate the increase in car volume significantly on streets around the portals?

WSDOT: Although the configuration for the proposed bored tunnel's south portal is still early in design, we do expect to significantly improve the functionality of the street grid in that vicinity. Capacity on Alaskan Way will be improved to accommodate the additional vehicles that would use it to access downtown.

The tolling study released in January shows how different tolling scenarios would affect traffic patterns in the area. Early analysis does show that tolling the tunnel would shift traffic volumes, but we're still in the process of studying when and where that shift occurs. I want to reiterate that a full traffic analysis has not yet been released. Additional details about traffic in the south end and throughout the SR 99 corridor will be included in the forthcoming SDEIS.

Feet First: Will ferry access still be from the south? How will the combined high volume of cars using the south portal and using the ferry terminal affect the design of Alaskan Way, and the way Pioneer Square connects to the future waterfront?

WSDOT: We are working closely with Washington State Ferries to determine the best way for all modes of travel to access Colman Dock in the future. At this point in the design process, no specific changes in access have been identified.

We recognize the importance of existing and potential future connections between Pioneer Square and the waterfront. Again, specific designs for the central waterfront won't begin to take shape for some time, but preliminary concepts show strengthened connections from the proposed south portal area – most notably on Railroad Way S. – to the downtown waterfront.

Feet First: What are WSDOT and SDOT committing to do to protect the character, viability, pedestrian environment, and urban fabric of the Pioneer Square historic district? What is actually funded and included in the various request for proposals and contracts?

WSDOT and SDOT are committed to protecting the history and vitality of Pioneer Square during construction. The decision to shift the alignment of the proposed bored tunnel was made in order to minimize risks to First Avenue and historic buildings in Pioneer Square.

We will continue to work with the neighborhood to minimize construction impacts. During the first quarter of the year, we visited the Pioneer Square Preservation Board three times to discuss how the S. Holgate Street to S. King Street Viaduct Replacement Project will affect the historic district. The board provided us with valuable feedback and issued a Certificate of Approval for the work in March.

In April, we launched a series of monthly neighborhood meetings in Pioneer Square. Organized and promoted in partnership with the Pioneer Square Community Association and the New Pioneer Square Blog, these meetings occur the third Thursday of each month at a location in Pioneer Square. They provide a vital link between program management and the residents, businesses, and property managers, whose hard work sustains the neighborhood and helps to make it such an important part of the city.

Feet First: The historic district also encompasses a segment of waterfront and the historic Washington Street Boat Landing (WSBL). Both the waterfront planning effort and Pioneer Square community have identified this area as a significant opportunity for a new water connection and park around the WSBL. Will tunneling under this area limit the opportunity for a lower impact seawall, possible beach, and park accessible from Pioneer Square?

Ultimately, this area falls under the purview of the City's central waterfront planning effort. The proposed bored tunnel will not preclude any possibilities for open space improvements at that location. A simulation that shows the relationship of the tunnel to the seawall and other below ground features can be found [here](#).

Feet First: What information does WSDOT have about the risk, cost and viability of the new proposed alignment so far? Are sample borings completed for the whole length, is it feasible to tunnel (whether cut and cover or bored) in the poor quality fill of this area? Has WSDOT fully determined if this proposed alignment is viable, including necessary approvals to tunnel directly under the Federal Building?

We've worked very hard to gather information about the proposed tunnel alignment. Soil samples have been gathered at locations approximately every 100 to 300 feet along the alignment. As mentioned, we are also meeting with property owners, including the federal General Services Administration, along the alignment.

Soil improvements would be necessary at the proposed portal areas, where cut-and-cover sections would be built. The bored section of the tunnel would begin once the cut-and-cover portion reached a certain depth. Much of the bored section of the proposed tunnel is deep enough that the boring machine would encounter mostly condensed glacial soils, which are preferred.

Based on the information we've gathered to this point in the design process, we are confident that the current proposed alignment is both feasible and the best possible alignment for meeting the objectives of the project.

Feet First: The south portal construction will cause back up of transit operations on both 1st Avenue South (e.g., routes 15-18-21-22-56 and Vashon routes 116-118-119) and SR-99 (e.g., routes 21x, 54, 54x, 55, 113, 120, 121, 122, 125), transit

will be reduced by one lane in each direction. Will WSDOT impose tolling on SR-99 during construction?

WSDOT: There are no plans to toll SR 99 prior to opening the proposed tunnel. It is also important to note that relocating the proposed tunnel entrance to Alaskan Way S. eliminated the need for long-term lane reductions on First Avenue S. First Avenue S., between S. Royal Brougham Way and Railroad Way S. will be reduced to one lane in each direction for several months beginning in December 2010 due to the S. Holgate Street to S. King Street viaduct replacement. In general, though, construction of the proposed south portal would have fewer impacts to First Avenue S. than the former alignment. WSDOT is contributing \$125

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR99/HolgateToKing/mitigation.htm>

to mitigate for construction-related traffic during the Holgate to King project. That investment includes \$30 million for King County Metro to provide additional transit that will help maintain reliable service.