


From: "Sullivan, Maureen" <SullivM@wsdot.wa.gov>
Subject: **AWVblogletter.doc**
Date: September 27, 2004 5:08:52 PM PDT
To: "'dsucher@citycomforts.com'" <dsucher@citycomforts.com>
Cc: "MacDonald, Doug" <MacDonD@wsdot.wa.gov>, "Mullen, Linda A." <MullenL@wsdot.wa.gov>, "Lentz, Tom" <LentzTE@wsdot.wa.gov>

Mr. Sucher,

You are correct that traffic contingency planning for a possible loss of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and/or the Seaway and Alaskan Way is very important. As you might imagine, we really got into contingency planning for a viaduct closure in a big way the day of the Nisqually Earthquake. We had the viaduct closed and the potential of 100,000+ vehicles per day being diverted wherever they could go. We immediately set up a group of traffic and communications experts from the City, State, and Metro to start developing emergency traffic and transit plans and to get the word out to the public on what alternates might exist. As you probably remember, traffic was very difficult, but we did learn a lot. It was also a reminder of what a critical link the Alaskan Way Viaduct is in the regional system.

Using this emergency effort as a base, **we started to develop a more detailed contingency plan about a year and one half ago.**  The draft was developed in conjunction with Seattle, King County METRO transit, other transit agencies and Washington State Ferries. We looked at two traffic closure scenarios: 1) the viaduct closed and Alaskan Way open and, 2) both the viaduct and Alaskan Way closed. The plan has developed a proposed detour routing plan as well as laid out measures to lessen the congestion and traffic impacts that will exist.

The contingency plan is in draft form at this time. We have recently discussed the plan with the Seattle Freight Mobility Advisory Committee and the Port of Seattle. We will be meeting soon with local private water transportation providers (i.e. Victoria Clipper and Argosy) to discuss passenger transport using their fleets. In addition, we are contacting the organization of downtown building managers and property owners to get their latest ideas on methods to inform their tenants and business employees, a critical component of the plan's implementation for public outreach.

What happens to traffic during construction of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project is a major area of study for us as well. We have analyzed construction staging and construction methods to allow the existing viaduct to carry a couple of lanes of traffic in each direction during construction of a replacement facility. As part of this study, we have developed a list of potential improvements and traffic changes within the downtown area to improve traffic flow. Once a preferred alternative is selected, further planning and analysis will be necessary to determine specific components of the construction traffic management plan to include in the project. Some of these improvements could even be implemented sooner to improve traffic flow now and aid in implementation of the disaster contingency plan.

Tom Lentz, the WSDOT lead on the Contingency Planning, tells us that **we should expect to see a final draft plan within the next few months.** We do expect this to be a living document and continue to evolve as we learn of more opportunities to reduce the traffic impacts, where we can, should we close all or part of the viaduct in the future for construction or in the event of an emergency.