

Seattle Department of Transportation
Waterfront Seattle - Alaskan Way/Promenade/Overlook Walk
SEPA Determination of Significance and Request for Comments on Scope of the
Environmental Impact Statement

Description of proposal: The proposed action would create new public open spaces and a new roadway between King Street and Battery Street with provisions for bicycle, transit, pedestrian, car and freight traffic, and parking. The proposal would be constructed primarily within existing public right-of-way, but may include some property acquisitions. The proposed new public open spaces would include a promenade adjacent to Elliott Bay from King Street to approximately Virginia Street, and a new structure providing a pedestrian connection between the Pike Place Market and the new promenade. The proposal would accommodate new local transit service along the waterfront. The proposal would also include the replacement of pedestrian bridges to the waterfront at Lenora and Marion Streets and improvements to Columbia and Seneca Streets between Alaskan Way and First Avenue. No construction in Elliott Bay would be required. Alternatives will be considered, including the configuration of the proposed roadway, promenade, and connection to the Pike Place Market.

Proponents: City of Seattle Departments of Transportation, Planning and Development, and Parks and Recreation.

Location of proposal: The project area includes streets and public spaces located along and connected to the downtown Seattle Waterfront, originating on Alaskan Way at King Street in the Pioneer Square Historic District and extending along Alaskan Way north to Pine Street. From Pine Street it would extend along a new roadway in the footprint of the existing viaduct in the Belltown District and end at Battery Street and Western Avenue.

Lead agency: City of Seattle Department of Transportation

EIS Required. The lead agency has determined this proposal is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) and will be prepared. The lead agency has identified preliminarily the following elements of the environment for potential discussion in the EIS.

Transportation

The proposal would substantially change the existing transportation network of Seattle's waterfront. It would affect operations and safety for vehicular traffic, transit, freight, bicycles, and pedestrians; parking and loading zones; and access to piers, Colman Dock, Pike Place Market, and other locations along the waterfront.

Land Use

The proposal would intersect a variety of land uses including retail, commercial, office, recreation, hotel, government, and residential uses. Construction of new public open space and new roadways could indirectly affect the type and density of development along the waterfront compared to existing conditions.

Historic and Archaeological Resources

There are numerous historic properties in the vicinity of the proposed project including, but not limited to, the Pike Place Market and Pioneer Square Historical Districts, both listed in the National Register of Historic Places; and multiple individual structures eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places or as City of Seattle landmarks. The project vicinity also has known potential for archaeological resources that could be buried beneath the existing surface streets, sidewalks, and other infrastructure.

Noise and Vibration

It is anticipated there would be construction-related noise and vibration impacts and the potential for operational noise level impacts based on changed traffic patterns and pedestrian use. Additionally, some activities in new public spaces, such as concerts, could increase sound levels on adjacent properties.

Aesthetics/ Light and Glare

Views from the project area that are protected by Seattle City Code include the Olympic Mountains, Elliott Bay, the Seattle Skyline, and Mount Rainier. Construction along the waterfront may alter the views from affected viewpoints within the project area.

Public Services and Utilities

Project components including construction of a major street, and improved and expanded public spaces, would alter the existing public service patterns along the downtown waterfront including fire, emergency medical, law enforcement, solid waste and recycling, and disaster preparedness services. Public and private utilities will also have to be relocated, expanded, and/or updated within the project area.

Hazardous Materials

Contaminated materials are present in the project area and could pose a risk to the environment or worker health and safety if appropriate BMPs and protocols are not managed properly. No contaminated materials are expected to pose a risk during operation.

Water Quality

During construction, ground disturbance and other activities could diminish the water quality causing high turbidity and suspended sediment concentrations in Elliott Bay. There is also the potential for inadvertent spills or leaks of toxic materials, or solid waste, which could potentially reach Elliott Bay. During operation, it is anticipated that all stormwater would be treated in accordance with the City of Seattle Drainage Code.

Vegetation and Wildlife

During construction, noise, vibration, and sediment movement could affect upland vegetation and wildlife, and due to the proximity to Elliott Bay, marine habitat and organisms. Operation is not expected to pose a risk to vegetation and wildlife.

Scoping: Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on alternatives, mitigation measures, probable significant adverse impacts, and licenses or other approvals that may be required. Comments may be submitted by mail to the SEPA Responsible Official below. Alternatively, comments may be submitted by email to UplandEISscoping@waterfrontseattle.org, or online at waterfrontseattle.org.

A scoping meeting will be held from 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM on September 9, 2013 in the Bertha Knight Landes Room in Seattle City Hall, 600 Fourth Avenue (Between Cherry and James Street), Seattle, WA. Comments must be submitted by 5:00 PM September 25, 2013

Responsible official:

Peter E. Hahn, Director
Seattle Department of Transportation
c/o Mark Mazzola, Environmental Manager
P.O. Box 34996
Seattle, WA 98124-4996

Signature: _____



Date: 8.9.13

Peter E. Hahn, Director