



**MAYOR'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON
AT-GRADE RAIL CROSSINGS ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS
February 11, 2016
Edmonds City Hall Brackett Conference Room (Third Floor)**

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. in the Edmonds City Hall Brackett Conference Room, 250 5th Avenue North, Edmonds.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT

Michael Nelson, Co-Chair
Jim Orvis, Co-Chair
Kirk Greiner, Edmonds Resident
Cadence Clyborne, Edmonds Resident
Phil Lovell, Edmonds Resident
Joy Munkers, Community Transit
Rick Wagner, BNSF (participated by phone until 11:00 a.m.)
Jodi Mitchell, Sound Transit (participated by phone until 10:50 a.m.)

TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT

Lynne Griffith, WSDOT – Ferries Division
Lorena Eng, WSDOT

CITY STAFF PRESENT

Patrick Doherty, Econ. Dev & Comm. Serv. Dir.
Phil Williams, Public Works Director
Rob English, City Engineer
Bertrand Hauss, Transportation Engineer
Jeannie Dines, Recorder

CONSULTANTS PRESENT

Rick Schaefer, Tetra Tech
Chuck Pernel, Tetra Tech Consultant Team
Sandy Glover, Parametrix

OTHER GUESTS PRESENT

Nicole McIntosh, WSDOT – Ferries Division

I. Review Workshop Objectives/Disposition of Solution Concepts

Mr. Schaefer reviewed the workshop objectives. He was hopeful solution concepts would come to the forefront as distinctly superior based on the three color rating system; if not, a weighting or numerical rating approach could be discussed. Some solutions may be complimentary to one another or short term solutions that are readily implementable.

TFM Mitchell asked at what point the impacts of the options to the station and Sounder service would be considered.

TFM Wagner advised BNSF will not consider any change to the vertical or horizontal alignment of the tracks through Edmonds for any of the proposed solution concepts; any concept that includes vertical or horizontal movement of the tracks has a fatal flaw. He described the rationale for that position; the existing track alignment works perfectly well for BNSF and changing the vertical or horizontal alignment will not add any value to their operations or to their business. The Task Force requested

BNSF to put their position in writing. [Note: BNSF subsequently provided an email confirming their position which is attached to this summary.]

Co-Chair Orvis encouraged task force members to identify any fatal flaws for their agency created by any of options.

TFM Mitchell said anything that impacts access to the station platform is a concern to Sound Transit that needs to be addressed. In addition, concepts that relocate the station would require further input from Sound Transit staff but would not be a fatal flaw. TFM Wagner advised BNSF needs to be included in discussions regarding any change that affects operations on the tracks.

Discussion followed regarding aspects of concept solutions that render them infeasible or non-implementable, defining feasibility and how lack of feasibility determines a fatal flaw, concern that several the concepts are not acceptable to the public, aspects of feasibility that may render some concepts not implementable, level 2 criteria, requirement for the State to adhere to the Shoreline Master Program, and height not being a fatal flaw at this point.

II. Concepts to Not Consider Further

Mr. Schaefer advised the reason for not considering further will be documented in the “cut sheets.” Discussion followed regarding the rationale for the decision to not consider further, inconsistencies in ratings, and a suggestion to create a category for things already underway (helipad, Port first aid training, wayside horns). The following changes were made:

- Add to the list of Concepts Not Considered Further/Do Not Address Purpose & Need:
 - Site 3: Helipad for evacuation
 - Rationale: can put out cones and create a helipad anywhere
 - Suggestions: may want to identify where helipad could be, inform public a helipad/access via helicopter is a possibility today.
 - Railroad Modifications 1 – 6
 - Rationale: reference TFM Wagner’s comments above
- Already Underway:
 - Railroad Modification 7: Double-track to optimize train passage and reduce passing time
- Move to Concepts for Level 1 Screening:
 - Ferry 8: Surface parking at Salish Center with flyover at Main Street

III. Review of Active Concepts

TFM Wagner advised BNSF may increase the required vertical clearance of 23’6” as the projected impacts of sea level rise are considered particularly along the Washington coast. All structures need to clear span BNSF’s right-of-way at least in concept until impacts are determined and then they would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Discussion followed regarding the effect that increasing the vertical clearance would have on approach lengths and height of structures, risk and liability benefits to BNSF of closing at-grade rail crossings, and the effect changes to track elevations have on BNSF’s operations.

Mr. Schaefer described each solution concept. Task force members discussed each concept and provided input. Changes were made to the ratings of several projects as well as the following changes:

- Add pedestrian access to description of Overpass 6

- Move to list of Concepts Not to Consider Further:
 - Operational 6: Improve emergency operation of crossing gates
 - Rationale: BNSF objection
 - Ferry 2: Expanded Terminal Concept (enlarged trestle for greater vehicle storage)
 - Rationale: does not address issues
 - Ferry 3: Mid-Waterfront Concept (vehicle storage @ Harbor Square w/ trestle @ Dayton)
 - Rationale: impacts on Port
 - Ferry 6: Vehicle holding garage off Dayton Street with overpass to Railroad Avenue
 - Rationale: lack of available right-of-way is a fatal flaw
 - Ferry 7: Trumpet flyover at Dayton Street with surface vehicle storage west of Railroad Avenue

IV. Summary Matrices

V. Next Meeting

- i. **Review/Affirm Updates Summary Matrices**
- ii. **Approaches to Level 2 Alternatives Development**

VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 1:12 p.m.

EMAIL ATTACHMENT

From: Wagner, Richard W [<mailto:Richard.Wagner@BNSF.com>]

Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2016 8:55 AM

To: Williams, Phil

Cc: Schaefer, Rick (Rick.Schaefer@tetrattech.com); Shurson, John C; Smith, Walter N; Hellman, Johan

Subject: RE: BNSF requirements for at-grade crossing alternatives (Waterfront Access Study)

Phil, my corrections to your notes are as follows:

1. There should be no changes to the current horizontal alignment of the tracks. We are assuming this would include any future tracks located within BNSF ROW as well. Based on the needs of any alternative, currently proposed or otherwise, **no changes** will be considered by BNSF to the horizontal alignment of the existing track(s) or currently planned alignment(s) of any future track(s).
2. There should be no significant change to the current vertical profile of the tracks. You suggested small variations, perhaps three feet or less, could potentially be reviewed by BNSF but that in general the Top-of-Rail should be expected to remain as is. No, this was very plain – again, based on the needs of any alternative, currently proposed or otherwise, **no changes** will be considered by BNSF to the vertical alignment of the existing track(s) or currently planned alignment(s) of any future track(s).
3. Any structures to be constructed must **clear-span** the BNSF right-of-way (R/W). Easements may, upon review, be granted in specific instances, but planning should assume clearing the R/W.
4. BNSF will not participate in the cost of the solutions (except where an at-grade crossing is eliminated or is modified to be grade separated, per Federal Railroad Administration requirements).
5. BNSF will not change their current operational practices or sacrifice any current operational flexibility to facilitate an alternative (except for brief periods during construction, and under specific **short-term** circumstances, **i.e. hours in length**).
6. The clearance required between Top-of-Rail and the bottom of any overhead structure would, of course, need to meet the specified minimum guidance for BNSF operations but may, at BNSF's option be increased by an amount reflecting any future need **to be determined solely by BNSF** to raise track **structure** based on projected **potential** sea level rise.

We also understand gate closure events are recorded locally by BNSF. We appreciate your offer to forward information collected from the Dayton Street and Main Street crossings, and we look forward to receiving that data soon. **Please do not expect that data soon, as I explained I am still waiting on the same data at other locations requested prior to the Holidays, the weather issues caused delays in that data, which is ahead of your request and the research required is time consuming.**

We appreciate BNSF has not been able to locate the original sources of oft-cited projections of growth in rail traffic i.e. 70 Trains per Day (TPD) by 2020 and 104 TPD by 2030, and that historically the volume of traffic has fluctuated with swings in the general economy and in

specific markets. We would, though, like to include in the analysis of alternatives a range of projected rail traffic volumes that might be consistent with BNSF's expectations for the next 20-30 years. Are there any projections BNSF can offer to the study?

No, we would not offer that information even if it were available. Furthermore, it is not our responsibility to locate sources of information which did not come from BNSF, we have told you repeatedly that the data is not accurate, nor offered by BNSF. Without substantiation of any projections taken from any source BNSF would advise that none are offered in any published analysis of alternatives.

Thank you Phil for the time to review and edit these notes. As always, I am available to discuss as needed for further clarification.

Rick

Rick Wagner
BNSF Mgr Public Projects
O – 206.625.6152
F – 206.625.6356

From: Williams, Phil [<mailto:Phil.Williams@edmondswa.gov>]
Sent: Monday, February 1, 2016 9:20 AM
To: Wagner, Richard W
Cc: Schaefer, Rick (Rick.Schaefer@tetrattech.com)
Subject: BNSF requirements for at-grade crossing alternatives (Waterfront Access Study)

EXTERNAL EMAIL

Rick,

I wanted to thank you for meeting with me and our consultants recently to discuss the Waterfront Access Study. The background information you provided will be helpful in our evaluation and screening of alternatives.

I would like to confirm our understanding of the general provisions you communicated on BNSF's requirements regarding prospective improvements to access issues at Dayton and Main Streets. Are the following requirements an accurate summary of our discussion?

1. There should be no changes to the current horizontal alignment of the tracks. We are assuming this would include any future tracks located within BNSF ROW as well.
2. There should be no significant change to the current vertical profile of the tracks. You suggested small variations, perhaps three feet or less, could potentially be reviewed by BNSF but that in general the Top-of-Rail should be expected to remain as is.
3. Any structures to be constructed must span the BNSF right-of-way (R/W). Easements may, upon review, be granted in specific instances, but planning should assume clearing the R/W.

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5. BNSF will not change their current operational practices or sacrifice any current operational flexibility to facilitate an alternative (except for brief periods during construction, and under specific circumstances).
6. The clearance required between Top-of-Rail and the bottom of any overhead structure would, of course, need to meet the specified minimum guidance for BNSF operations but may, at BNSF's option be increased by an amount reflecting any future need to raise trackage based on projected sea level rise.

We also understand gate closure events are recorded locally by BNSF. We appreciate your offer to forward information collected from the Dayton Street and Main Street crossings, and we look forward to receiving that data soon.

We appreciate BNSF has not been able to locate the original sources of oft-cited projections of growth in rail traffic i.e. 70 Trains per Day (TPD) by 2020 and 104 TPD by 2030, and that historically the volume of traffic has fluctuated with swings in the general economy and in specific markets. We would, though, like to include in the analysis of alternatives a range of projected rail traffic volumes that might be consistent with BNSF's expectations for the next 20-30 years. Are there any projections BNSF can offer to the study?

Again, thank you for your time in meeting with us and for your participation in our Task Force. The better information we have the more successful we can be in this important effort.

Phil Williams

Public Works & Utilities Director

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