



# City of Seattle

Ed Murray, Mayor

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*Seattle  
Freight  
Advisory  
Board*

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The Seattle Freight Advisory Board shall advise the City Council, the Mayor, and all departments and offices of the City in development of a functional and efficient freight system and on all matters related to freight and the impact that actions by the City may have upon the freight environment.

City Council Resolution  
31243

May 12, 2014

Via e-mail: ColmanDockEA@wsdot.wa.gov

Seattle Multimodal Terminal at Colman Dock Project  
c/o Ms. Marsha Tolon  
WSDOT Ferries Division  
2901 3rd Ave, Suite 500  
Seattle, WA 98121

Re: Seattle Freight Advisory Board Comments on the Seattle Multimodal Terminal at Colman Dock Project Environmental Assessment (EA)

Dear Ms. Tolon:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the EA for the Seattle Multimodal Terminal at Colman Dock Project. You may not know about us, Seattle's Freight Advisory Board (SFAB), so we would like to introduce ourselves briefly: The purpose of the board is to "advise the City Council, Mayor, and all departments and offices of the City in development of a functional and efficient freight system and on all matters related to freight and the impact that actions by the City may have upon the freight environment."

Although the Colman Dock project is a WSF project, the terminal's operations affect one of the most critical freight corridors within the City of Seattle: the only non-freeway connection between the City's two Manufacturing Industrial Centers. The EA makes it clear that the corridor will experience significant congestion due to the interplay of Colman Dock operations, overall traffic demand, and the way the corridor will be managed in the future, which is in the City's purview. You are working closely with the City's Central Waterfront team to address these issues. It is in this context that we submit the following comments. It is also the reason we ask you to come, jointly with your City partners, and talk with us before any final decisions are made. Since we meet monthly we could not have that conversation between the time the EA was published and the comment period ends.

The Freight Board supports the rehabilitation of Colman Dock. We understand that you must mitigate the risk of seismic failure presented by the old wooden pilings. We want you to ensure that the facility can serve as a regional multimodal transportation hub. We care about safety and support your efforts to reduce conflicts between vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians while improving on-dock operations.

However, the EA makes it clear that Alaskan Way is likely to be congested during various construction phases, as well as in the long term, especially during the pm peak. The congestion appears due to the cumulative impacts of the City's Waterfront project, the tolled tunnel and

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ferry terminal traffic. We understand that in the long term, congestion would occur with or without the Colman Dock Project. We understand that Colman Dock is not the only contributor to the projected congestion, and that conditions are not impacted in a significant way by the project itself. However, the EA makes it clear that terminal operations contribute significantly to the congestion. We urge you to continue to work with the City's Central Waterfront team to improve the design of the interface between Colman Dock and Alaskan Way to reduce congestion and impacts on freight mobility along Alaskan Way. There is an urgent need to optimize the signal operations along the corridor to ensure that freight needs are served. We need to make sure that this corridor—the only surface arterial through downtown that freight can use—can serve as a functional link between the two Seattle Manufacturing Industrial Centers.

SFAB is concerned about the long queues and deteriorated intersection levels of service in both directions at S Jackson and Madison Streets. We worry about the congestion that appears to be due to conflicts between left turns onto the dock and through-movement. These concerns apply both during construction and in the final configuration. The EA evaluated average pm peak volumes. That means there will be many weekdays, in addition to Fridays in the summer, when congestion will be worse. Congestion will be even worse on many weekdays with larger events at Safeco and Century Link Fields. Are there ways the intersections at and near Colman Dock can be managed differently to reduce the impact on freight moving through the corridor? Are there additional strategies for managing the traffic demand for access to Colman Dock and the associated congestion?

We are also concerned about back-ups caused by insufficient vehicle storage capacity on the dock, especially during, but also after construction. The EA assumes that vehicle storage needs will not exceed ferry boat capacity and schedules and further indicates that that demand will be accommodated in the final configuration. We agree that there will be many days when that will be true. However, our members regularly use the corridor to move freight between the two Manufacturing Industrial Centers. Their experience tells us that there will be weekdays when there will be more cars trying to get on afternoon sailings than can be accommodated by the boats and by on-dock storage. We appreciate that the issue is in part addressed during construction, when Pier 48 will be used for employee parking, increasing space for passenger cars. Can the pier serve this function after construction? WSDOT also owns the WOSCA site. Portions of it will not be needed once the tunnel has opened and the surface connections at the south portal are complete. Is there a way to use some of that land for ferry staging? We encourage you to explore the options to manage the spillover of ferry traffic onto Alaskan Way – to keep it from impacting freight movements through the corridor.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the EA. We have asked our staff to coordinate with you and are looking forward to a productive discussion with you and your SDOT partners during one of our next board meetings. We hope that you will be able to answer our questions at that time. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to call on the Board if you have any questions of your own.

Sincerely,



Warren Aakervik, Chair