

Most Popular

Crosscut articles of the past 10 days with the most clicks.

Vance Report: Early lines on 2010 races

Mike McGinn era: saying less, polling more, spending less

That was the week that sucked

2010 is big year for progress on tunnel

A 'dismal decade,' with more to come

Olympia lawmakers eye Oregon for tax lessons

Seattle school levies: thoroughly hated and extremely effective

Another inconvenient truth: Why McGinn is right about seawall

A lunch counter Filipinos call home

Running out of budget gimmicks, states face grim years

amazon.com

[I Dreamed A Dream](#)
Susan Boyle
New \$9.99

Privacy Information

Most Commented

Crosscut articles of the past 10 days with the most reader comments.

2010 is big year for progress on tunnel (21 comments)

That was the week that sucked (17 comments)

State of the Obama agenda: uncertain (17 comments)

Seattle school levies: thoroughly hated and extremely effective (10 comments)

Olympia lawmakers eye Oregon for tax lessons (6 comments)

Mike McGinn era: saying less, polling more, spending less (6 comments)

Another inconvenient truth: Why McGinn is right about seawall (6 comments)

Uptown Market goes truly uptown

Alaskan Way Viaduct »

ADD THIS

January 28, 2010

Another inconvenient truth: Why McGinn is right about seawall

Ignoring the cultural resource issues around Native American burial sites was long a part of development. Learning from that mistake is key to creating a safer Seattle waterfront.

By Paul Byron Crane

In the past, we have ignored the cultural resource issues and European settlement impacts to Native Americans. You see, it hasn't been until recent years that laws have required that, when we construct developments in areas where there is proof of 5,000 years of indigenous human habitation, we must carefully excavate under the eye of an archaeologist. If cultural artifacts or human burial remains are discovered, the project quickly becomes an archaeological dig.

When the World Trade Center Seattle was constructed along the northern portion of the waterfront, human remains from Duwamish Indian Nation burial sites were found and repatriated to the tribe. When the remains were discovered, it was apparent that they were relocated there from previous upland excavations.

The entire Seattle waterfront contained numerous tribal villages with a human habitation that extending back 5,000 years. The Alaskan Way Viaduct, its foundations, its northern tunnel, and all development under the viaduct happen to transverse these indigenous cultural-resource village sites. The existing seawall area, being on the water side of these sites, is less likely to contain cultural artifacts or relocated burial remains from a past of cultural insensitivity.

When the viaduct foundations are removed, a tunnel is dug, or any other significant excavations occur between Western Avenue and Alaskan Way, there is a likelihood artifacts, burial remains, or both will be found. Then, an archaeological dig will begin.

The extent and type of artifacts that exist could potentially be similar to but not as extensive as the Washington State Department of Transportation's Ediz Hook discovery when the Hood Canal Bridge was being replaced. It will, at least, necessitate more years of excavation and research. By decoupling the seawall and the viaduct projects, we are addressing the pressing public safety issues, while making time to fully investigate and protect the cultural resources of the Duwamish Nation.



Courtesy of the Washington state Department of Transportation

An archeological dig followed the finding of Native American remains, from the village Tse-whit-zen, during a state Department of Transportation project.

Related Stories:

Seattle's sister city: Pompeii?

Nothing motivates like fear itself, but in Seattle, where potential natural catastrophes abound, the politics of safety can both be overplayed and underplayed. Knowing which is tough.

THE RIVER Why

by David James Duncan

FEB 9 to MAR 7

206.216.0833

BookIt REPERTORY THEATRE

ADVERTISE ON CROSSCUT.COM AND REACH INFORMED, THOUGHTFUL PEOPLE!

CLICK HERE

Crosscut Public Media

(6 comments)

Peruvian dishes with a little slice-of-life on the side

(6 comments)

An odd-duck singing style with one foot in the grave

(5 comments)

[ALL COMMENTS >](#)



Popular Blog Posts

Crosscut blog posts of the past 10 days with the most clicks.

The city council shows some backbone

Council, mayor: You first. No, after you

Crosscut Tout: No electric guitars at new festival

Air America radio network goes silent

Sports Roundup: Felix, golf, and more

A first look at new world of campaign spending

Portland Timbers cut a new deal

Sports Roundup: Sputtering Husky b-ball teams, ex-Dawgs, M's

McDermott knows hope

Sports Blog: Huskies traumatize Seattle U., game statisticians

Burial sites are traditionally located in upland areas away from the shore villages. As with the World Trade Center site, what was relocated where and when in the last 100 years is an unknown.

The likelihood of the viaduct foundation removal and a tunnel option becoming an archaeological dig will add significant costs and time to the tunnel-related projects. The time issue is one that we cannot afford to accept if we tie the seawall to the same schedule as the tunnel and viaduct-demolition plans.

Veterans of the many previous waterfront charrettes have had the same briefings by state transportation engineers and access to reams of written material, which explains the critical need to replace the rotten seawall post haste. As of three years ago, tidal waters were just below the surface pavement at the Yesler Way and Alaskan Way intersection.

If we were to lose the rotten, crumbling seawall, tidal waters would inundate the waterfront and breach through street corridors into Western Avenue. The economic impacts of closing down the waterfront, with its critical infrastructure, would have severe implications to a city budget already in crisis in this historic recession. Mayor McGinn's proposal is a critical decision that warrants the full support of the city council and the voters of Seattle if, we as a city, are to enact preventive measures averting events of a catastrophic nature.

Paul Byron Crane, BLA, MA, is a landscape architect who has traveled internationally to explore and document built examples of sustainable design. He has participated in the City of Seattle's waterfront and open space development planning, leading and contributing to various waterfront charrette teams.

[Print this](#) | [Email this](#)

Topics: [History](#), [Science / Environment](#), [Seattle City Hall](#)

Like what you just read? Support high quality local journalism by [becoming a member of Crosscut.com today!](#)

[Login](#) or [register](#) to speak your piece.

Comments:

Posted Thu, Jan 28, 6:45 a.m.

Paul Byron Crane, do you have a photo of you hugging Mike McGinn last July at the "Great City's Summer Street Scene"?

Or, maybe there is another Paul Byron Crane that posts comments on the Great City web site saying, "see you there".

Eh, just askin'

<http://www.greatcity.org/2009/07/09/save-the-date-for-great-citys-summer-street-scene/>

— Mr Baker

Posted Thu, Jan 28, 7:06 a.m.

And, how did the "McGinn for Mayor Voluntee Drive" go?

Or, is that some other Paul Byron Crane on the right hand side of this page? Hey, there's Julie McCoy, awesome!

http://af-za.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=204802780455

— Mr Baker

Posted Thu, Jan 28, 6:26 p.m.

If we just Retrofit the Viaduct for \$1 billion, there is no need to disturb any artifacts either in the fill or the undisturbed old beach. No delays for digs, and a structurally sound VIADUCT THAT PERFORMS AS WE CURRENTLY ENJOY IT WITHOUT DISRUPTION DURING OR AFTER CONSTRUCTION.

— arties4453

Posted Thu, Jan 28, 8:22 p.m.

It seems that the writer here seems to think that the tunnel can only be built after removal of the viaduct. That is not the case. The plan currently is set up to dig the tunnel while keeping the viaduct operational. Only after the tunnel is operable will the viaduct be closed and the process of demolition begin.

— Little_Wheedle

Posted Fri, Jan 29, 8:03 a.m.

I thought this was a "deep bore" tunnel? Seems like excavation in the south starts in fill over what had been water. In the north, excavation is dealing with lower Queen Anne Hill, where there has been intense urbanization already. Sure, there's some risk. But it doesn't seem like a show stopper.

Why do the Viaduct columns that are underground need to be removed? Why not just leave them in place and build over them?

McGinn opposes having the entire city pay for Viaduct cost over runs by the state and says that a state law he opposes leaves the entire city on the hook. Fine, even though the law targets only the people who benefit directly.

Why should the residents of the entire city pay to fix the seawall, which benefits a few downtown land owners who bought and built on the risk?

— Jan

Posted Fri, Jan 29, 11:45 a.m.

You can see the actual historic shoreline here...

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/cms/groups/pan/@pan/@plan/@proj/documents/web_informational/dpd018623.pdf

So PBC's trumped up reasoning to support the Mayor's new found concern for the waterfront is ridiculous...unless the native communities along Seattle's waterfront lived under water.

PBC and the Mayor want to accomplish 1 thing...DELAY the tunnel. They will try anything to do so, because delay is what causes costs to rise. If the mayor was really concerned about cost overruns, he would support moving forward and stop trying to meddle with the schedule.

Don't get me wrong, the seawall is important and critical to fix, but the vote in May is ridiculous and doesn't stand a chance to succeed. Not only that it puts the entire tax burden for the seawall on Seattle citizens instead of partnering with other sources, or finding ways to break out the taxes so it isn't completely dependant on prop tax.

— loudquack96

[Login](#) or [register](#) to speak your piece.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE!
Contribute **NOW** to journalism in the public interest.
JOIN TODAY!
Crosscut
News of the Great Nearby

The Crosscut Daily E-Mail
On your doorstep — er, desktop — every weekday morning.

For a free subscription, click here.



Become a Member
DONATE
Join Now!



FREE DAILY NEWSLETTER

HOW TO ADVERTISE

JOBS AT CROSSCUT

ABOUT CROSSCUT

Follow Us:



