

The Seattle Department of Transportation

# ACTION AGENDA

## 2013 Progress Report





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# MESSAGE from the MAYOR



Dear Friends,

Building and maintaining our transportation network helps to support our businesses, our quality of life, and our goal of building a more sustainable community. A year ago we published the Transportation Action Agenda, which lays out a clear set of policies and goals that guides our work on these priorities. I want to update you on what we've done so far, and share some new initiatives we are working on in the year to come.

In the last year we have focused on the basics by filling over 18,000 potholes, repaving major arterials including 85th Street and Ravenna Boulevard, and resuming sealing cracks and chips in our roads. We launched a Road Safety Action Plan, with a long-term goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries on our roads. We're building Seattle's first cycle track (on Linden Avenue N near Bitter Lake) and are updating the Bicycle Master Plan to show us where to build many more. We've begun construction on the First Hill Streetcar, and placed a seawall funding package on the ballot that voters approved.

This year we are continuing to build a great transportation system by planning for high capacity transit on three major corridors, launching Access Seattle to include new tools to help manage traffic flow, developing a new downtown cycle track network, and working on a new Freight Master Plan. That's in addition to our ongoing work to fill potholes, repave major streets like Delridge and Northgate Ways, and continue to provide great service to the public.

Together with the Seattle Department of Transportation and the City Council we will continue to work on achieving these goals and build a great transportation network that meets the needs of a growing, thriving city. I invite you to take a close look at this Action Agenda Progress Report, and to share your feedback with us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike McGinn". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Mike McGinn  
Mayor of Seattle

# MESSAGE from the DIRECTOR



Dear Fellow Seattleites,

A year ago SDOT put together the 2012 Action Agenda to lay the groundwork for advancing a safe, healthy, and vibrant transportation network. It serves as the guiding document for the diverse work we do to keep our growing city moving.

We continue to focus on basic needs like filling potholes and repairing sidewalks. At the same time, we're looking to the future to make sure Seattle continues to stand out, attract visitors and businesses, and serve its residents.

I'm proud to say that we did quite a bit in 2012. This progress report provides a quick snapshot of 2012 accomplishments and previews new initiatives for 2013. We're planning on a full report in 2014, to keep the community and ourselves aware of where we are or aren't meeting our performance goals. After all, we are here to serve the public and to be held accountable.

Sincerely,

Peter Hahn

Director, Seattle Department of Transportation

# INTRODUCTION

The 2012 Transportation Action Agenda outlines policies, actions, and performance measures for SDOT over a two-year period. It is organized around five core principles:



1. Keeping it Safe
2. Focusing on the Basics
3. Building Healthy Communities
4. Supporting a Thriving Economy
5. Providing Great Service

This progress report gives you a peek at how we are doing so far. Highlights include launching the Be Super Safe campaign to help reach Seattle's long-term goal of zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries; completing major paving projects on 85th Street and Ravenna Boulevard; optimizing 153 traffic signals to reduce delay; and beginning construction on the First Hill Streetcar.

And that's not all. We are doing more than originally outlined in the 2012 Action Agenda. The City is working to speed up studies for a Ship Canal Bridge crossing to support Ballard to Downtown high capacity transit (HCT) as well a Downtown to University District (via Eastlake) route. We are pleased to announce that phase two of the Mercer Corridor Project officially starts construction this March, helping to reconnect Uptown to South Lake Union, make it easier to walk and bike under the Aurora overpass, and improve freight movement. Speaking of freight, we'll be developing our first-ever Freight Master Plan to make sure our transportation system can keep goods and services moving. There's more. Continue reading to get the full story.

# WHAT'S NEW?

## High Capacity Transit (HCT) — The Ship Canal Bridge and Eastlake Projects

The Mayor is working to speed up the timeframe for two key transit planning projects identified in the Transit Master Plan. The first is an analysis of potential Ship Canal crossings for rail, bicycle and pedestrian use from Ballard to neighborhoods south of the Canal. The second project is planning for the Eastlake high capacity transit corridor connecting downtown to the University District. By initiating the Eastlake corridor, we will have started work on all of the high capacity corridors identified in the Transit Master Plan. The Mayor will submit a supplemental budget request to the City Council to fund these studies.







## Access Seattle

Seattle is growing, and we're experiencing unprecedented pressure on our transportation system from new employment centers, increasing population density, and multiple large-scale construction projects. To help SDOT share information with the public and to better coordinate growth and new projects, we're creating Access Seattle. The project includes technology improvements to help us better manage our transportation infrastructure (for example, real-time signage and signal systems upgrades) and increased public access to construction information and traffic conditions. To be rolled out in 2013, Access Seattle will allow SDOT to better serve the city through this period of growth and development.

## Waterfront Seattle

In the coming years, Seattle's waterfront will be transformed by the removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and the replacement of the Elliott Bay Seawall. These projects open new public space for parks and paths, access to the water, places to enjoy views, and a new urban street for all modes of travel. In 2013, we will review alternative design options and look for ways to reduce costs. Key to seeing this project through to fruition is the identification of a sustainable funding strategy. We're doing this by advancing the formation of a downtown waterfront Local Improvement District and leveraging private partnerships for an amenity the whole city can enjoy.

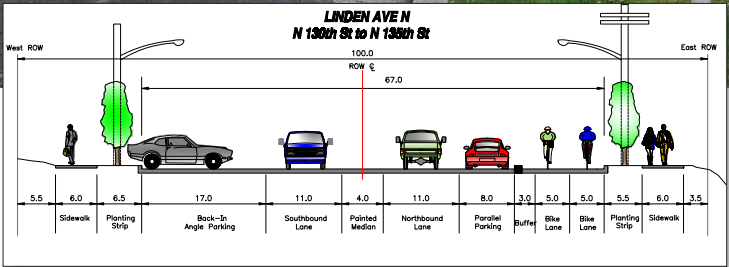




## Mercer Corridor West Phase

The reconstruction of Mercer Street is changing one of our busiest corridors into a truly welcoming gateway into the city. After the ahead-of-schedule reopening of the East Phase of the project, SDOT will begin work on the West Phase in March of 2013. The West Phase will complete the two-way Mercer Street connection between I-5 and Elliott Avenue W. As a part of this, we're building a wider street and sidewalk, making signal modifications, and constructing a bike path and bike lanes. Scheduled for completion in 2015, the project will provide more options and connections for accessing downtown, the Seattle Center, and nearby neighborhoods.

# WHAT'S NEW?



## Cycle Track Development

Cycle tracks are bicycle facilities that have a physical separation between people on bicycles and vehicle traffic. This separation can be achieved by building a curb between the bike lane and vehicle travel lane, adding flexible bollards between the two lanes, or moving the bike lane between the parking lane and curb. We've begun construction on the Linden Avenue cycle track, and construction on the Broadway cycle track will begin soon. We are planning more cycle tracks across Seattle, and as a part of the Bicycle Master Plan update, we're recommending cycle tracks on a network of city streets, including streets in downtown. To ensure that the downtown network is built as quickly as possible, we've already secured funding for conceptual designs and cost estimates. Our goal is to have a downtown segment ready for construction by the end of 2014.

## Freight Planning

Recognizing the significance of the freight community in helping sustain and stimulate Seattle's economic growth and long-term competitiveness, in 2013 SDOT will begin work on two very important projects. The first, the Industrial Areas Freight Access Project, in partnership with the Port of Seattle and funded by federal Surface Transportation Program money, will identify projects to improve truck mobility and access within and between the Duwamish and Ballard/Interbay Manufacturing and Industrial Centers. The second project, the Freight Master Plan, will take a more comprehensive and long-range look at the citywide freight transportation network and recommend projects to keep freight moving, add jobs, and grow our regional economy.



# KEEPING it SAFE

## 2012 Accomplishments

- Developed a Road Safety Action Plan and launched the Be Super Safe campaign
- Coordinated with Seattle Police Department to conduct safety emphasis patrols on Aurora Avenue N, Rainier Avenue S, Martin Luther King Jr. Way, the University District, Capitol Hill, and downtown
- Supported four statewide DUI emphasis patrols by posting enforcement messages to our city's network of dynamic message signs
- Expanded the Safe Routes to School program to include six new elementary schools
- Put school zone speed cameras in four school zones around the city
- Deployed speed watch trailers at 50 locations
- Installed 25 pedestrian countdown signals
- Distributed 58,350 Winter Weather Plan brochures and revised the plan for easier use



In every project, from filling a pothole to reconstructing an entire street, safety is our top priority. SDOT strives to upgrade our existing facilities with proven technologies and looks for innovative ways to ensure that Seattle's streets are the safest in the country.

In 2012, working with community partners, Seattle released the Road Safety Action Plan and became one of the first cities in the nation to adopt the goal of zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries. This is an aggressive but critical goal, as even one person seriously injured or killed is one too many. We know that everyone using the roads and sidewalks deserves to do so safely, and that as we travel, we're each responsible for our own safety and the safety of others.

Improving safety is about many things — how we design our streets, how we treat each other as we use them, and how we follow and enforce the rules of the road. Focusing on these, we hope to bring everyone safely home at the end of the day.

## *Project Highlight:* **Be Super Safe Campaign**

Based on collision data, public input, and traffic safety research, the Road Safety Action Plan identifies six focus areas for making Seattle's streets the safest in the country. The focus areas include:

- Fewer people speeding
- Fewer people traveling distracted
- Fewer people traveling while impaired
- More people who know and follow the rules of the road
- Safer roadway design
- Creating a culture of empathy

One of the ways we're achieving success in these focus areas is through the launch of the Be Super Safe outreach campaign. The campaign focuses on creating a culture of empathy on our streets and improving people's knowledge of and adherence to the rules of the road. We've distributed safety materials at numerous events, worked with the Seattle Police Department to coordinate education and enforcement efforts, and begun more targeted efforts along several key corridors.

While change in any of the focus areas will lead to some reductions in collisions, developing a roadway culture that recognizes our shared responsibility for ensuring everyone's safety is the only way to eliminate all serious collisions.





# FOCUSING on the BASICS

## 2012 Accomplishments

- Filled over 18,000 potholes
- Paved 21 lane-miles, including significant portions of N/NW 85th Street, Greenwood Avenue N, and NE Ravenna Boulevard
- Fixed three public stairways
- Completed the Ballard Bascule Bridge and North Queen Anne Drive Bridge repairs
- Started seismic retrofits of the Ballard and King Street bridges
- Avoided emitting 134 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> by using green paving materials in roadway projects
- Replaced street name signs at 1,584 intersections
- Planted 743 street trees



SDOT is committed to focusing on the basics by addressing maintenance issues and seeking new opportunities to improve our transportation system. We are responsible for over \$13 billion in transportation assets, from sidewalks to street trees, and bridges to bike racks — there's a lot to maintain, upgrade, and protect.

Keeping our existing assets in good shape and functioning well helps make Seattle an attractive place to live, do business, and visit. But focusing our efforts on maintenance doesn't mean that we're ignoring opportunities to build and operate new facilities and structures. Major new projects such as the Mercer Street reconstruction, the Spokane Street Viaduct, and the Elliott Bay Seawall contribute to the basic foundation of a growing, vibrant, and successful city. Other projects, some as small as filling potholes, repairing a sidewalk, or restriping a crosswalk, are also essential to improving the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

Whether small or large, SDOT is committed to maintaining what we have and building new facilities that will last well into the future.

### *Project Highlight:* Chip Sealing

One way that we're making our streets last a little longer is through chip sealing. Chip sealing is a preventive maintenance measure that helps to slow the deterioration of streets from the effects of sun and water. The treatment has the added benefit of increasing surface friction on the pavement, which improves safety for everyone.

Chip sealing requires a bit of preparation including pruning low-hanging branches on the street to allow paving equipment through and doing spot repairs to fix any existing pavement issues. Once this is complete, crews come out to lay the chip seal, which consists of a layer of an asphalt emulsion covered with a layer of small washed aggregate. For several days after, crews continue to sweep the street to pick up any loose aggregate and ensure that the final product will last the neighborhood for years to come.

The 2013 program will largely take place between July 15 and August 15 and will focus on residential streets bounded by 15th Avenue NW, NW 85th Street, Greenwood Avenue N, and NW 110th Street—about 34 lane-miles of Seattle streets!



# BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

## 2012 Accomplishments

- Remarked 501 crosswalks
- Installed 15 miles of bike lanes and sharrows and 608 bike parking spaces
- Constructed our first neighborhood greenways (residential streets prioritized for people who walk and ride bikes)
- Built 157 curb ramps
- Began construction of the First Hill Streetcar and secured funding to design the Broadway extension
- Began working on three high capacity transit planning studies
- Completed speed and reliability improvements on bus Route 44 from the University District to Ballard
- Installed six real-time bus schedule signs at five locations
- Made significant progress on updating the Bicycle Master Plan
- Started a new program to enliven and activate public spaces



Building a healthy community has a lot to do with our city's transportation system. Safe and comfortable facilities for walking and biking allow people to choose more active transportation, and buses, streetcars, and trains create sustainable and affordable options.

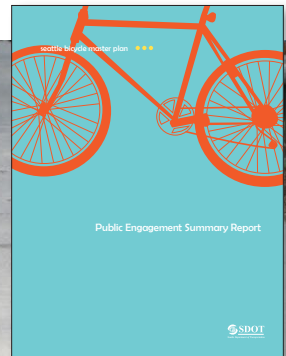
At SDOT, we're installing curb ramps, updating pedestrian crossing signals, and planning neighborhood greenways and cycle tracks to fulfill our commitment to building a healthy community. We're investing more in transit, like new bus bulbs and bus-only lanes to improve speed and reliability, and we're moving ahead on a number of other recommendations from the Transit Master Plan.

By focusing on improving transportation options, we're also creating opportunities for Seattleites to save money. When transit is less expensive than driving and walking and bicycling are free, we end up with more money for the things we truly need and enjoy. Beyond this, as our city grows, diversifying our transportation network is the only way we will be able to provide safe, healthy, and affordable travel options for today and into the future.

## *Project Highlight:* Bicycle Master Plan Update

Bicycling is a great way to get around our city and should be an option for everyone, from an eight-year old on their way to school to an 80-year old on their way to the store. With this in mind, in 2012 SDOT began updating our Bicycle Master Plan (BMP). The proposed vision is to create an environment where riding a bicycle is a comfortable and integral part of daily life in Seattle for people of all ages and abilities. This means creating a city where everyone who wants to ride feels safe and comfortable traveling by bike.

To do this, as a part of the BMP update we're working to identify and design new bicycle facilities that are comfortable for a wide range of users. The updated plan will include an extensive network of neighborhood greenways (residential streets prioritized for pedestrians and people riding bikes) and facilities that are separated from travel lanes called cycle tracks. We'll release the plan later in 2013, and are moving ahead to make sure we have funding to get these new facilities on the street as soon as possible.





# BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



## Project Highlight: Transit Master Plan Implementation



In April 2012, the City Council adopted the Seattle Transit Master Plan. It sets out a long-range vision and identifies four high capacity transit corridors and twelve priority bus corridors where we'll focus investments. Since then, we've been busy implementing the plan.

In terms of higher quality, higher capacity transit options, we've kicked off a Center City Connector transit study that's looking for ways to connect the South Lake Union and First Hill streetcars through downtown. We've partnered with Sound Transit to look at rail opportunities in the Ballard to Downtown corridor. We'll be working to advance the timeline for a University District to Downtown (via Eastlake) high capacity route. And along Madison Street, we've started traffic analysis to inform early design work of a bus rapid transit line.

In the NW Market Street/45th Street area and the West Seattle Junction, we've completed work on two priority bus corridors, each expected to reduce bus travel time by 15–20 percent. Along the Rainier Avenue S and Jackson Street corridors, we'll be installing 13 electronic bus schedule signs in early 2013. Across the city, we're focusing our efforts on improving transit speed and reliability, creating better transit facilities, and providing more rail and electric trolley bus infrastructure for everyone.

# SUPPORTING a THRIVING ECONOMY

## 2012 Accomplishments

- Worked with the Port of Seattle to launch an Industrial Areas Freight Access Project
- Opened Mercer Street to two-way traffic, after being a one-way street for 40 years
- Secured levy funding to rebuild the Elliott Bay Seawall
- Completed 20 art projects in the right of way
- Upgraded on-street parking signs to help drivers find parking faster and easier
- Adjusted on-street parking rates, hours of operation and time-limits in 19 of the city's 23 paid parking areas to ensure space availability
- Partnered with stakeholders and the Washington State Department of Transportation to improve access to waterfront and Pioneer Square businesses during Alaskan Way Viaduct construction
- Began seismic and system upgrades, and passenger waiting area restoration at King Street Station



As our country, region, and city emerge from the worst recession in almost 100 years, transportation is helping to lead the way to recovery. Transportation projects connect people to jobs and directly support growth in engineering, design, and construction fields. Our projects allow for goods to be transported from Port of Seattle piers to ports throughout the Pacific Rim and from local warehouses to neighborhood stores. More than this, transportation improvements translate into tax revenues for public projects and access to goods and services for us all.

Public transportation investments such as a streetcar line, public plaza, and wider sidewalks can encourage private developers to build housing, commercial buildings, and art and cultural institutions which, in turn, attract jobs, new residents and visitors.

Our job here at SDOT is to ensure that we continue to support this economic growth through quality projects that provide people of the region ready access to good jobs, education, and the destinations of their choice.

*Project Highlight:*  
**Elliot Bay Seawall Project**

Our waterfront is an essential component for encouraging a healthy economy throughout Seattle. One project that will foster this is the Elliot Bay Seawall Project, which replaces the existing seawall from S Washington Street to Broad Street with a structure that meets current safety and design standards. In 2012, voters overwhelmingly (77 percent) supported the passage of a levy that will provide \$240 million in Seawall bond funding. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2013 and will take about three years to complete.

The project is essentially a new seawall, 10-15 feet landward of the existing wall, that supports our city's environmental health and quality of life. The project includes habitat enhancements like a continuous fish migration corridor along the face of the wall, a new sidewalk with light-penetrating surfaces to allow light to pass through to the water promoting aquatic life, and a restored road that will return the functionality of Alaskan Way. As a part of the larger Waterfront project, we're truly transforming the face of downtown Seattle.

# SUPPORTING a THRIVING ECONOMY



# PROVIDING GREAT SERVICE

## 2012 Accomplishments

- Built nine Neighborhood Street Fund projects
- Secured over \$57 million in grant funding
- Consistently met our goal of responding to at least 75 percent of pothole repair requests within three business days
- Hired 13 Summer Youth Employment Program high school students
- Hosted an Elliot Bay Seawall outreach event that drew over 300 attendees and resulted in a 30 percent Women and Minority-Owned Enterprise (WMBE) inclusion commitment for the project's final design
- Met our Bridging the Gap funding package goals and outcomes
- Increased the number of SDOT Twitter followers to over 6,300
- Responded to 96 percent of online Street Use permit questions within two business days



Providing high-quality customer service to the people of Seattle is the basis for all that we do at SDOT. As a City department, we strive to serve Seattle by balancing the diverse set of transportation needs of our community. Whether you're walking, biking, driving, or delivering goods, travelling in Northgate, the Rainier Valley and anywhere in between, our goal is to design and operate a transportation system that meets the needs of Seattleites today and into the future.

The term “customer service” means much more than making the transportation system work. It also means that every encounter between SDOT staff and our customers, the people of Seattle, is marked by courtesy, transparency and respect. As we work with the public, we strive to listen, understand, and learn from the community. We make every effort to be transparent, share information, and to make designing and building our transportation system an accessible and open process for everyone.

## *Project Highlight:* **Neighborhood Street Fund**

A unique way that Seattleites can engage in improving transportation in our community is through the Neighborhood Street Fund (NSF) program. The program pays for neighborhood transportation projects that are identified and prioritized by the community itself and have the support of the local neighborhood District Council. The funds are provided by the nine-year Bridging the Gap (BTG) transportation levy passed by voters in 2006, with \$1.5 million set aside annually for the program.

One great 2012 NSF project, the Orcas Street sidewalk project, was able to leverage additional funding from the Safe Routes to School program. The project included a sidewalk on the south side of the street between Beacon Avenue S and 28th Avenue S. This sidewalk provides an essential connection to a crossing near Dearborn Elementary School, making a substantial safety improvement to the area. Also, because there were no overhead power lines on that side of the street, large trees were planted along the blocks. The end product is a greener and more pedestrian-friendly street for the whole neighborhood.



# PROVIDING GREAT SERVICE



*Before*



*After* (before planting)

# BY the NUMBERS

Orange indicates work funded in part or entirely with Bridging the Gap levy revenues.

<b>BIKES and PEDESTRIANS</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
bike lanes and sharrows installed (miles)	15	15
bike route signs installed (miles)	31	32
bike parking spaces installed	210	608
bike maps issued	34,366	21,856
new sidewalks built by Sidewalk Development Program (blocks)	10	12
sidewalk blocks rehabilitated	25	24
crosswalks remarked	306	501
curb ramps constructed	295	157
stairways retrofitted	3	3
walking routes to schools improved for safety	6	6
signage of school zones improved	10	11
pedestrian crossings improved	51	47
<b>BRIDGES</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
bridge repairs completed	230	281
bridges painted	1	2
guardrail replaced (feet)	1,891	1,934
<b>PARKING</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
pay station inquiries resolved	9,660	6,936
pay station transactions processed	10.5 M	11 M
<b>PAVEMENT</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
lane-miles paved	52	29
potholes filled	25,110	18,551

<b>TRAFFIC</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
construction and special event traffic control plans approved	2,436	2,256
lane-miles of pavement restriped	1,151	945
regulatory traffic signs replaced	5,065	3,012
street name signs replaced (number of intersections)	1,156	1,584
radar speed signs installed	12	2
speed watch trailers deployed	51	50
<b>TRAFFIC SIGNALS</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
traffic signals optimized	107	153
new traffic signals installed	3	2
traffic signals maintained	1,055	1,062
pedestrian countdown signals installed	26	25
<b>URBAN FORESTRY</b>		
street trees planted*	822	815
street trees pruned	3,385	3,099
landscaped maintained (square feet)	912	970
<b>OTHER</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
transit hours secured	44,000	44,000
SDOT public website visits	5.6 M	7.6 M
grants/appropriations/authorizations received	\$24 M	\$57 M
grants/appropriations/authorizations submitted for future funding	\$44 M	\$98 M

\* SDOT either plants or facilitates



The Seattle Department of Transportation  
700 5th Avenue, Suite 3800  
PO Box 34996  
Seattle, WA 98124-4996  
(206) 684-ROAD  
[www.seattle.gov/transportation](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation)