



Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Dear Highland Park Action Committee and community members,

Thank you again for the opportunity to present and answer questions about the West Seattle High-Rise Bridge Safety Project at the Highland Park Action Committee (HPAC) meeting April 22. Adiam Emery, James Le and I attended to share information and answer questions about the West Seattle Bridge closure and its impacts to the Highland Park neighborhood.

The meeting resulted in several questions and comments from HPAC committee members, which we recapped and shared with you April 24 and committed to responding to share additional information by today, May 5.

While this is only the continuation of an ongoing conversation and partnership, included below are answers to many of the important questions you've raised. We have worked diligently to be as responsive and prompt as possible and acknowledge that this is only the start. While some of HPAC's thoughtful requests require a more comprehensive evaluation and response that we hope to address through continued dialogue, SDOT has been able to complete or directly answer many of your suggested improvements. Please let us know if you or your committee members have follow-up questions or comments.

We also want to confirm receipt of your May 4 letter and thank you for the time and thought HPAC put into refining and bringing new suggested improvements to our attention. Within a matter of days and hours, we have also worked hard to directly address all of these additional items. We look forward to attending your May 25 monthly meeting to continue discussion on traffic management during the bridge closure and talk specifically about the [Highland Park Way SW and SW Holden St Safety project](#). Thank you for the initiation. We remain committed to attending any HPAC meeting you'd like us to participate in – the same standing offer SDOT has provided to all organizations in Southwest Seattle.

Below are the specific requests we heard from HPAC – at both your meeting and in your letter – with the status of each request:

#### **Highland Park Way SW and SW Holden St Intersection**

- Request for a left-hand turn signal for turning onto SW Holden St from northbound lane on Highland Park Way SW
  - **Status/update:** We installed a temporary traffic signal at this intersection and it's not currently possible to add a left-hand turn signal to it. We are, however, sharing this feedback with the team designing the permanent traffic signal scheduled to be installed in 2021.
- Request for extra traction on uphill southbound lane on Highland Park Way SW
  - **Status/update:** The Highland Park Way SW and SW Holden St Safety project team will evaluate high friction surface treatment. This treatment has typically been done where crashes have occurred when roadway conditions were slippery.

- Request for separate green signals for pedestrians and drivers in the northwest corner of the intersection
  - **Status/update:** We installed a temporary traffic signal at this intersection and it's not currently possible to add these features to it. We are, however, sharing this feedback with the team designing the permanent traffic signal scheduled to be installed in 2021.

### Turning from arterial streets onto SW Holden St

- Request to see painting and/or signage to prohibit blocking of the intersections
  - **Status/update:** Because these treatments have limited effectiveness and high maintenance costs, SDOT is focusing on more effective tools, many of which are below and will also be reflected in the neighborhood traffic plans we are preparing.

**Traffic calming in the neighborhood Status/update:** SDOT is developing a neighborhood-specific plan to evaluate concerns like these and should have drafts ready as soon as two weeks.)

- Request to add more traffic calming throughout the neighborhood
  - **Status/updated:** We are responding to cut-through and safety service requests as we receive them from community members and based on observations by our traffic engineers in the field. We are also working to keep the arterial street network moving efficiently to encourage its use instead of the residential system some choose to use for longer trips.
- Request to add calming near Sanislo Elementary School
  - **Status/update:** In summer 2018, SDOT crews completed improvements for [the Sanislo Elementary Safe Routes to School \(SRTS\) project](#), making it safer and easier for kids, families, and neighbors to walk and bike to Sanislo Elementary School through the intersections of SW Orchard St and 18th Ave SW and SW Myrtle St and 18th Ave SW. **Question for HPAC:** Can you clarify specific locations of additional traffic calming you would like SDOT to focus on?

### Requests for dedicated turn signals

- 16<sup>th</sup> Ave SW and SW Holden St
  - **Status/update:** SDOT can do a restripe here consistent with the Your Voice, Your Choice project that was selected for construction this year. It does not provide a turn signal, but provides a dedicated place for people to wait for a gap in approaching traffic.
- 16<sup>th</sup> Ave SW and SW Roxbury St
  - **Status/update:** This is a complicated request that would require channelization changes with additional impacts. We can get back to you on this idea as we engage the neighborhood on the collaborative neighborhood traffic plan that we are developing. We will bring a draft to your next meeting.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Ave SW and SW Roxbury St
  - **Status/update:** We are not currently budgeted to add this signal to the existing mast arm.

### Traffic signal adjustments to address traffic backups

- 16<sup>th</sup> Ave SW and SW Holden St
  - **Status/update:** In progress. SDOT is planning to make this adjustment by the end of May.
- Delridge Way SW and SW Holden
  - **Status/update:** Timing changes were made in the last couple of weeks and we will continue monitoring this intersection.
- SW Orchard St and Delridge Way SW
  - **Question for HPAC:** Can you provide more specific information on what signal adjustments you'd like to see at this intersection?
- 8<sup>th</sup> Ave SW and SW Roxbury St
  - **Status/update:** We are updating the controller on this signal in the next two weeks.

### SW Roxbury St, Olson PI SW, and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave SW

- Request for additional marked crosswalks
  - **Status/update:** We're making safety improvements for people walking at the SW Roxbury St and Olson PI SW intersection as part of Seattle's Vision Zero program. This intersection is in both the City of Seattle and unincorporated King County and requires cross-jurisdictional collaboration. The West Seattle Bridge team is in contact with the Roxbury/Olson intersection project team to share HPAC's request for expedited implementation. We will update you when we learn more about the timeline.

### King County Metro Route 131

- Request for bus only lane on Highland Park Way SW
  - **Status/update:** We will have further details in our next response to HPAC on May 19. We are collecting traffic counts here to see if this is feasible with the changing travel patterns since the bridge closure.
- Request to adjust signal at Highland Park Way SW and SW Holden St for bus priority
  - **Status/update:** This request will also be evaluated as part of the Highland Park Way SW and SW Holden St Safety project.
- Request to increase Route 131 service
  - **Status/update:** We shared this idea with Metro, and they are engaged in a transit planning exercise for West Seattle.

### Pedestrian path on the east side of Highland Park Way SW after the SW Holden St intersection

- Request to consider widening the path to allow for more use
  - **Status/update:** The Highland Park Way SW and SW Holden St Safety project team is exploring options on widening the path to make it more attractive for pedestrians and bikes. We will have further details in our next response to HPAC on May 19.
- Request to clean moss off from path
  - **Status/update:** SDOT will clean this pathway in the next two weeks.

## West Marginal Way S

- Request for better bike lane marking at the intersection with Highland Park Way SW
  - **Status/update:** We will have further details in our next response to HPAC on May 19. The Highland Park Way SW and SW Holden St Safety project team will be looking at ways to widen the existing path (east side of Highland Park Way SW) and will also look at markings to enhance bike visibility to the widened path.
- Request to fill potholes and fix road deterioration near the railroad tracks
  - **Status/update:** SDOT has driven and regularly monitors the detour routes, including West Marginal Way S. As part of this process, we identified and prioritized pothole improvements along those routes. The location where West Marginal Way S and the railroad meet is maintained by BNSF Railway. We have notified BNSF of these issues.
- Request for two lanes northbound at the intersection with Highland Park Way SW
  - **Status/update:** Due to the geometry of the intersection, this would require removing a southbound lane approaching the intersection and would have unintended consequences. We are not moving forward with this recommendation.

## Cut-through traffic on local streets

- Request to add signage on local streets to help with cut-throughs
- Request to add stop signs at unmarked intersections
- Request for east to west monitoring, specifically at 35<sup>th</sup> and Delridge
- Request to make some streets one-way to help with cut-through traffic
- Request for a stop sign at 11th and Kenyon
  - **Status/update:** Cut-through traffic is a complicated issue. Any attempts to eliminate or discourage cut-through traffic may solve the issue on one street, but most likely will have secondary, unintended impacts on adjacent streets within the neighborhood. As a result, evaluating cut-through traffic requires a comprehensive neighborhood traffic study to quantify the problem, develop neighborhood-wide solutions and build consensus. We can get back to you on this idea as we engage the neighborhood on the collaborative neighborhood traffic plan that we are developing. We will bring a draft to your next meeting.

**HPAC Question:** Can you send us a list of all the locations where stop signs are requested noting which leg(s) of the intersection the signs you're requesting would face? We will cross-reference past requests and follow-up with you about next steps.

For monitoring traffic, we are installing cameras at these intersections for SDOT staff to monitor in real-time:

- 35th Ave SW and SW Roxbury St
- 35th Ave SW and SW Barton St
- 35th Ave SW and SW Holden St
- 35th Ave SW and SW Morgan St (installed)
- Delridge Way SW, 16<sup>th</sup> Ave SW, and SW Roxbury St

## Additional requests and comments

- Request for Seattle Police Department enforcement in the neighborhood, specifically on 16<sup>th</sup> Ave SW
  - **Status/update:** Our Vision Zero team will share this request with SPD during its monthly coordination meeting. In addition, I am briefing SPD command staff to discuss traffic enforcement based on new travel patterns created by the West Seattle Bridge closure.
- Request for SDOT to reconsider requests from previous Your Voice, Your Choice applications and the report from Mayor Murray walkthrough
  - **Status/update:** We are reviewing each and every Your Voice, Your Choice application from the community to see what's feasible in light of the bridge closure.
- Request for more information about East Marginal Way S project
  - **Status/update:** Visit the project website for more information: <https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/projects-and-programs/programs/freight-program/east-marginal-way-corridor-improvement-project>. Construction timing of this project is dependent on funding and is not anticipated until 2021 at the earliest.
- Request for improvements on 20<sup>th</sup> Ave SW, including a new sidewalk
  - **Status/update:** Sidewalks are prioritized based on several metrics and are a long-term improvement that requires a comprehensive planning process.
- Request to look at bike network through the neighborhood, specifically the greenway on 11<sup>th</sup> and improving Webster.
  - **Status/update:** We are working on a comprehensive bike network in West Seattle. Implementation of this effort is not funded. We will include these ideas in the collaborative neighborhood traffic plan that we are developing and will bring a draft to your next meeting.
- Request for additional passenger-only ferries from Fautleroy and Alki
  - **Status/update:** We are working with King County Metro Transit, Washington State Ferries, and private companies on this idea. Shifting some of the personal vehicle trips to ferry or water taxi trips is a high priority during the closure.
- A commitment from the City to repair the streets that were damaged during the bridge closure.
  - **Status/update:** We prioritize paving based on street pavement condition, traffic volume, geographic equity, cost, and opportunities for grants or coordination with other projects in the area. We will continue to reassess our paving list based on observed pavement conditions in your community because of new traffic patterns from the bridge closure. In the meantime, we are breaking ground on a major paving project on Delridge Way SW this year.
- Heavy freight routes clearly designated and enforced.
  - **Status/update:** This has been completed. In addition to revising the detour routes for clarity, we have also modified signing for clarity approaching the Low Bridge and signal operations along the alternate routes. We have freight route maps and are communicating all bridge-related updates with SDOT's Freight Advisory Board and freight stakeholders.
- We want an immediate bridge replacement plan without a \$33 million expenditure for the current bridge or a two-year evaluation period. SDOT's current plan will put an undue burden on the daily lives of our West Seattle residents.

- **Status/update:** Along with our partners, we have made the reopening and mitigation of the West Seattle Bridge closing a top priority with teams working tirelessly to safely restore access. At present, however, the bridge will remain closed until further notice. At this time, we cannot give a definitive date for when the High Bridge will reopen, but we anticipate a lengthy closure. In the immediate term, we will take all measures to preserve the integrity of the bridge so a long-term solution can be put in place. We are working tirelessly with our partners to assess what near-repairs need to be made now and in the future, how long they will take, and how to fund them. We will continue to share updates as we have them.
- Reverse the closing SW Trenton St from 17th Ave SW to 10th Ave SW as part of the ‘Stay Healthy Streets’ initiative.
  - **Status/update:** We are contacting our colleagues who worked to bring Stay Healthy Streets to your community with this feedback.

### Follow-up Questions

- Will there be more shuttles running within West Seattle? Will there be on-demand shuttles similar to when the 99 bridge was closed?
  - **Status/update:** We are working with King County Metro Transit on this idea. They are engaged in a transit planning exercise for West Seattle.
- What is the plan for if the Low Bridge has to be closed?
  - **Status/update:** We do not anticipate the Low Bridge to be closed unless the High-Rise bridge is at risk of failure. If this is the case, our safety plan can be found [here](#). We have implemented more frequent monitoring of the Low Bridge, as well as completed maintenance to ensure it remains open and safe during the High-Rise bridge closure.
- Has King County Metro considered providing free bus service to encourage more people to take transit?
  - **Status/update:** We have shared this idea with King County Metro Transit. They are engaged in a transit planning exercise for West Seattle.
- Can we get “in neighborhood” buses between Highland Park and Westwood Village to minimize driving within the neighborhood by residents?
  - **Status/update:** We have shared this idea with King County Metro Transit. They are engaged in a transit planning exercise for West Seattle.

We know the closure of the West Seattle Bridge has had a significant impact in Highland Park, as well as South Park, Georgetown, and SODO. The West Seattle Bridge was really the center of many of our lives. We understand the concerns addressed both in the April meeting and your letter, and we will work closely with your community on traffic management and safety until these issues are better understood.

Please let us know if you have any additional questions or comments. Otherwise we look forward to continuing the dialogue with you and will follow-up with any outstanding answers to existing questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Heather Marx, Seattle Department of Transportation