



Wednesday, May 6, 2020

Greetings Vice-Chair Martin Westerman of the West Seattle Transportation Coalition:

Thank you for your letter on April 2 and for the opportunity to present to the West Seattle Transportation Coalition on April 24. We appreciate your thoughtful and purposeful actions, as well as the time your board has put into developing action. Our team looks forward to working with you and the West Seattle Community as we navigate this challenge together.

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.

Below are the specific requests we heard from WSTC with the status of each request:

Proposed Immediate Actions –

Create and install re-route plans and detour signage, to move traffic away from the WSBTC, including:

- SDOT to manage SODO and the Spokane Street corridor diversions
 - **Status/update:** 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.
- SDOT to work with WSDOT to manage I-5, SR 99 and SR 509 diversions, and use other statewide notification modes;
 - **Status/update:** We are working with our partners at the Washington State Department of Transportation on the traffic operations and reroutes of traffic as well as methods of communicating with the public about how to get around.
- SDOT to create individual street plans and detour signage, to reduce or eliminate cut-through traffic impacts on West Seattle neighborhoods
 - **Status/update:** 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.
- SDOT to install oversized signs to highlight high bridge closure and re-route requirements in key Peninsula centers – Alki, Admiral Junction, Alaska Junction, High Point, Morgan Junction, Fauntleroy Ferry Dock, 35th Ave. SW at Barton, Arbor Heights, Westwood Village, South Delridge, Highland Park, Pigeon Point, North Delridge, and the Junction Triangle.
 - **Status/update:** We installed standard size signs at appropriate locations after the High-Rise Bridge was closed. We are working to upgrade these signs since this will be a longer-term closure with reroutes.

- Install traffic signals at –
 - SW Holden and 9th Ave. SW-SW Highland Park Way (SDOT completed 03-29)
 - **Status/update:** A temporary traffic signal was installed at this location in early April 2020.
 - SW Delridge and 21st Ave. SW, to allow L & R turns onto Delridge, and ease pressure on SW Holden from SW Highland Park Way,
 - **Status/update:** This will not be installed. 21st Ave SW is not on our official detour route because of the geometry of the street near the intersection with Delridge Way SW.
 - AND improve signal timing and operation on all anticipated detour routes
 - **Status/update:** We have a dedicated team of signal engineers working in West Seattle to make both infrastructure upgrades to signals and retime signal phases based on new travel patterns. Each day, we are adding more and more West Seattle signals to the system that can be operated remotely. This allows us to make signal timing changes in real time.
- Allow (1) registered King County Van Pool vehicles and (2) medical staff vehicles to use the low bridge,
 - **Status/update:** The Low Bridge remains restricted to people driving freight vehicles, public transit buses, and emergency response vehicles. When traffic levels return to a more “normal” level following the easing of Stay Home Stay Healthy, we can re-evaluate access to the Low Bridge.
- Initiate SPD traffic patrols over the low bridge and authorize violation fines;
 - **Status/update:** We are working with our partners at the Seattle Police Department to enforce traffic control signs stating that the Low Bridge is restricted to people driving freight vehicles, public transit buses, and emergency response vehicles. They are authorized and have issued tickets to violators.

Proposed Longer-Term Actions –

Re-activate appropriate Seattle Squeeze transportations options, as when the general population returns to work, the high bridge will likely still be closed. Options would include, but not be limited to:

- Increasing West Seattle Water Taxi service if demand warrants, expanding parking for Water Taxi commuters, and coordinating 773/775 with new sailing schedule,
- Expanding 773/775 service to Morgan Junction, for the duration of the High Bridge closure;
- Adding midday bus service for Admiral area residents, who are most effected by the closure,
 - **Status/update:** We are working with our partners at King County to explore service changes for the Water Taxi in response to the bridge closure. King County Metro Transit is working on a transit plan for West Seattle and should have something to share soon.
- Helping coordinate re-routes for commuters from Vashon and Southworth-Kitsap, who drive more than 800,000 vehicles a year through Fauntleroy, and put additional pressure on Fauntleroy Way and the WSBTC.
 - **Status/update:** We are working with our partners at Washington State Ferries to make sure ferry riders know about the bridge closure and use reroutes. We have signs at the Fauntleroy ferry dock directing people driving off the ferry to head south and then toward the 1st Ave S Bridge. According to Washington State Ferries, most car traffic coming off of the ferries at Fauntleroy are not headed downtown.

- Prominently share information on SDOT's and the City of Seattle's main web pages, and add other informational tools that provide regular updates on progress toward bridge repair and re-opening,
 - **Status/update:** We ask people to visit www.seattle.gov/transportation/westseattlebridge to learn more about what's happening and sign up for email updates from SDOT. This is the best source of information.
- Simultaneously share this information with the West Seattle Blog, Westside Weekly, and other news outlets.
 - **Status/update:** We respond to reporters with timely and accurate information so they can share stories with their audiences. We have worked especially close with West Seattle based media on multiple stories.
- (From April 23 meeting) Please share the locations where SDOT has permanent count stations.
 - **Status/update:**

Location	Direction(s)
South Park Bridge	EB, WB
W Marginal Way SW and SW Idaho St	NB, SB
Highland Park Way SW and W Marginal Way SW	NB, SB, EB, WB
Delridge Way SW and SW Andover St	NB, SB
35th Ave SW and SW Raymond St	NB, SB
Roxbury and 15th Ave SW	EB, WB
Spokane St Bridge	EB, WB
1st Ave S and E Marginal Way	NB, SB
S Michigan St and 4th Ave S	EB, WB

We know the closure of the West Seattle Bridge has had a significant impact in West Seattle, particularly in adjacent neighborhoods. 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 you 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