



# City of Seattle

Ed Murray, Mayor

*Seattle  
Freight  
Advisory  
Board*

Warren Aakervik, Chair

Linda Anderson

Bari Bookout

Katherine Casseday

Terry Finn

Timothy Hillis

Mike Sheehan

November 6, 2014

Mr. Scott Kubly  
Director  
Seattle Department of Transportation  
PO Box 34996  
Seattle, WA 98124-4996

**Re: Freight Advisory Board Input into the Update to the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual**

Dear Mr. Kubly:

As you know, the purpose of the Freight Advisory 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.” (Resolution 31243)

It is in this spirit that we are providing early input, comments and recommendations to support the current effort to update the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual (ROW Manual). We have decided to provide you with detailed comments early in the process to ensure that the update can adequately incorporate both freight community and Freight Master Plan recommendations, in advance of an adopted Freight Master Plan (FMP). The Board understands that the ROW Manual is an important working document that can be a valuable tool to implement both transportation infrastructure and urban design policies and plans. For this reason, it is essential that the ROWIM document provide detailed guidance to ensure the City’s transportation infrastructure is designed to maintain and improve freight mobility.

Below is a summary of our comments related to both the roadway network and the other freight travel-ways that cross the city – including rail lines ( BNSF, Union Pacific and private lines), waterways (Duwamish River, Lake Washington Ship Canal) and ports and dock facilities (Port of Seattle and Fisherman’s Terminal). Thank you in advance for working with your staff to address our comments and we look forward to the opportunity for review and input to the Updated ROWIM.

1. Reinstate ROWIM guidance for freight facilities. In reviewing the current document, we discovered to our dismay that some of the recommended freight references and guidance incorporated into the 2005 document appear to have since been removed. Noteworthy missing freight-specific aspects of the 2005 document include:

---

Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 3800, PO Box 34996, Seattle, WA 98124-4996  
Tel: (206) 684-4103 Tel: (206) 684-5000 Fax: (206) 684-5180

Web: [www.seattle.gov/sfab/](http://www.seattle.gov/sfab/)

An equal opportunity employer. Accommodations for people with disabilities provided on request.

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

- Guidance that: “intersections with high volumes of truck turns should have wider curb radii—including aWB-62 or greater should site-specific conditions necessitate the wider radii.”<sup>1</sup> The current Manual makes no mention of a vehicle larger than a WB-62 in this context. (Section 4.8.3)
- “Section 4.26: Freight Facilities was added to the chapter on design criteria to summarize the information in the ROW Manual that specifically supports freight mobility, and to alert a project applicant that freight impacts must be fully considered when ROW modifications are made.” This section no longer exists.

To our knowledge, there was no effort to solicit input from the freight community when these revisions were made. We would be grateful if you could take note and ensure that all future update processes are designed include the active solicitation of input from the Board.

2. Reinstate the “Freight Facilities” section, noted above (Section 4-26).
3. Please be sure to include reference to all freight planning efforts in the Manual, parallel to other modes. In the Comprehensive Plan discussion, include reference to the many freight travel-ways that cross the city, including reference to the Container Port Element, rail lines, waterways and terminals plus roadway connections among these freight facilities.
4. The ROW Manual should provide clear guidance that maintaining and/or improving the functionality and capacity of truck movements is an essential criterion for all projects affecting streets that are important to freight. This currently includes Regional Connector Streets and Industrial Access Streets as well as specifically designated corridors such as Over-legal Vehicle Routes, Major Truck Streets and Seaport Intermodal and/or Highway Connectors. This recommendation also applies to any future new truck street classifications designated through the Freight Master Plan and the soon-to-be-implemented Heavy Haul Corridor. As population and traffic grow, it will become ever more important to protect those routes that provide for the movement of freight in the City.
5. It would also be helpful if the reference to these designated freight corridors—which are outside of the street definitions used in the Manual—could be more prominently linked to the guidance to clarify the expectations for the design.
6. Similarly, any environmental analysis for a project affecting these designated freight corridors and facilities important to freight should be required to evaluate the impacts on freight. The current ROW Manual does not even mention freight, but does address transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facility impacts (Section 2.12).
7. Any project affecting one of these freight facilities should automatically trigger careful review, including review with the Freight Advisory Board. Freight should receive the same level of consideration transit and non-motorized users receive. Projects should be designed to maintain the capacity and functionality of these routes for the movement of trucks through truck-specific priority design features and minimum design criteria for each of these freight facilities. These should address:

---

<sup>1</sup> Citations under Comment 1. from a 12/27/05 letter by SDOT Director Grace Crunican to Charlie Sheldon, Managing Director, Seaport, Port of Seattle.

- Turn radii and design vehicles that meet the needs of industry (which may be a WB-67 at some locations, and a WB-62 on many Major Truck Streets as well as Seaport Intermodal and Freeway Connectors and Heavy Haul corridors).
- Placement of street furniture, medians, crossing islands, curb bulbs and utilities to ensure trucks can safely move and turn
- Placement, selection and maintenance of trees and other vegetation to provide sufficient clearance and sight lines
- Lane width to accommodate large trucks with big side mirrors
- Pavement thickness that is appropriate for the type and weight of vehicle using the facility
- Truck route signage
- Grade—5% are desired, and grades above 7% should be avoided

We realize that some of these design criteria are already listed in the current version of the ROW Manual, but would like to ensure that there is a comprehensive approach to define design criteria for freight facilities (see Comments 1 and 2.). We would be happy to work with your staff on these details.

8. Throughout the ROW Manual there is specific mention of the need to identify/mitigate the impacts of proposed projects on transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Impacts on truck/freight facilities should be included in the same context, especially on the facilities listed under Comment 4. above, and whenever consideration of project impacts on these other modes is mentioned.

The Board is looking forward to working with your staff on these issues while both the ROW Manual Update and the Freight Master Plan are under development. Getting an early start should ease the process of incorporating Freight Master Plan policy recommendations into the ROW Manual. As always, I would be happy to talk with you about our concerns and answer any questions you or your staff might have. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Warren Aakervik  
Chair  
Freight Advisory Board  
City of Seattle