



Advocating for a Safe, Clean & Moving SODO

To: Sam Zimbabwe  
Director, Seattle Department of Transportation  
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Seattle WA 98124  
(Sent electronically to sam.zimbabwe@seattle.gov)

April 30, 2020

Dear Director Zimbabwe:

The past weeks have brought unprecedented changes to our social, economic, and physical landscape, and your Department is managing concurrent centennial emergencies. Please accept our thanks for your work dealing with the COVID-19 impacts and for your transparent communications regarding the West Seattle Bridge (WSB) closure and its impacts to users and nearby people and businesses.

Heather Marx and Matt Donahue have been accessible and have spoken to the SODO BIA, Port of Seattle, NWSA, and others regarding the bridge's condition and SDOT's detour management. They attended our virtual meeting Tuesday, April 21<sup>st</sup> as did Eric Strauch and Thomas Corrigan who provided updates on the Lander St Grade Separation and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave over Argo Bridge construction. All discussions make it clear we must prepare for two years of closure and longer should the WSB be beyond repair.


SODO and the Duwamish Manufacturing and Industrial Center (MIC) areas already see additional traffic on both the signed and other detour routes to and from West Seattle, and it is clear the network cannot absorb the number of vehicles that normally use the WSB. We strongly encourage SDOT to evaluate and defer all work that could reduce capacity on all roads through the Duwamish MIC. All north/south travel routes including Airport Way S and Interstate 5 must work efficiently as drivers learn to take alternate routes around the WSB closure.

SDOT has discussed improvements already made on these routes, and we believe crews should continue to move quickly to maximize capacity ahead of full traffic. In support, we have suggestions that

- Plan for weather
- Preserve access
- Improve visibility and road surface

The projects we have outlined will help move all modes to and through SODO and improve the network. This summer is an opportunity to anticipate and prepare for two years that will challenge us all, and we look forward to working with you to support Seattle's residents and businesses.

Thank you,



Erin Goodman  
Executive Director



Todd Biesold  
President

Cc: Heather Marx, Matt Donahue, Eric Strauch, Thomas Corrigan  
Att: Requests regarding WSB detour routes to and through SODO

## Requests regarding WSB detour routes to and through SODO

Ponding in SODO and vulnerable points along detour routes should be repaired before the rains make those fixes difficult or impossible.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave S between S Horton St and S Hinds St as well as S Horton St along the Lander St Grade Separation detour route should be maintained and drainage improved so ponding is minimized. This will help vehicles move between 1<sup>st</sup> Ave S and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave S to help balance volumes.
- Highland Park Way S between West Marginal Way S and S Holden St has been subject to slides. Please review existing shoring and take any preventive reinforcement measures possible to reduce the chances of emergency closures of this critical route over the winter.

Major construction should also be reviewed for opportunities for early completion

- The Lander St Grade Separation will be completed this fall, and afterwards, the detour route is scheduled to be reconstructed. Please accelerate the detour route reconstruction as much as able. This will minimize weather delays, minimize impacts to traffic at post-COVID volumes, and help vehicles move within SODO.
- According to the presentation Kit made, the 4<sup>th</sup> Ave S over Argo Bridge repair still is not permitted by Union Pacific. Railroads can be difficult to work with – especially at a distance. Is there a way to engage a consultant experienced in railroad contracting and permitting that is local to UP's office in California?

Roadway maintenance and review along formal and informal detour routes should also be a priority

- We request the Pothole Rangers move through the formal detour routes to repair what they can and then move to routes that will be impacted by additional traffic like 6<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Airport Way S, and S Lucile St. The Rangers normally respond to resident requests, but the detour routes have deferred maintenance that would benefit from spot repairs.
- We ask that maintenance crews prioritize the 2020 lane striping along the formal and informal detour routes after the Pothole Rangers and other crews have moved through the area.
- A two-pass strategy should also be considered with initial work performed as soon as practical and the second pass act as review and maintenance ahead of the rainy months.

Arterial Asphalt and Concrete should also review detour routes for maintenance needs. Locations such as the following should be considered

- 4<sup>th</sup> Ave S north and south of S Lucile St is a mix of asphalt and concrete, and the materials are wearing unevenly in the travel lanes.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Ave S between S Spokane St and S Industrial Way is also experiencing asphalt deterioration and saddling. This location, already used by large vehicles to access I-5, is experiencing additional traffic as drivers move to Industrial Ave S and then to Airport Way S and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave S.
- S Industrial Way has cracked concrete panels at the 6<sup>th</sup> Ave S intersection and should be replaced ahead of full traffic.

Union Pacific is also responsible for some crossings in the area, and along with the 4<sup>th</sup> Ave over Argo Yard permit effort, they should be asked to make repairs to crossings

- The UP railroad crossing on S Industrial Way east of 4<sup>th</sup> Ave S is deteriorating quickly and should be patched or repaired.
- The UP railroad crossing on S Lucile St west of Airport Way S has growing pot holes and should be patched or repaired.
- UP railroad tracks at East Marginal Way S at S Dawson St and Ohio Ave S are apparently no longer in use. Please explore removing these tracks and repairing the roadway surface.

WSDOT as a partner agency can help with some access issues along the detour routes. Could SDOT please convey the following suggestions?

- The signal controlling northbound 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave SW to eastbound Highland Park Way SW is part of the SR-99/SR-509 interchange and is managed by WSDOT. This area can be difficult to interpret, and striping and stop bars are faded which leads to further confusion. Please review and refresh signal heads and striping at this location. Please also replace the damaged sign west of 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave SW on Highland Park Way 'To SR-509 Burien' for eastbound traffic
- The exit from southbound SR-509 immediately after the 1<sup>st</sup> Ave S Bridge intersects 1<sup>st</sup> Ave S in a modified 'T'. Please trim the vegetation at the intersection so drivers can more easily merge onto northbound 1<sup>st</sup> Ave S and then access West Marginal Way.