



# City of Seattle

Mike McGinn, Mayor

*Seattle  
Freight  
Advisory  
Board*

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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

April 26, 2012

Michael McGinn, Mayor  
City of Seattle  
P.O. Box 94749  
Seattle, WA 98124-4749

Seattle City Council  
P.O. Box 34025  
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

Dear Mayor McGinn and Councilmembers:

A presentation on the transportation study underway as part of the proposal for a new sports arena in SODO has given your Seattle Freight Advisory Board pause about the comprehensiveness of the effort as well as about the timing of potential Council action before the real transportation impacts are well understood. Our board conclusion is that the study carries neither the breadth nor depth to sufficiently weigh the likely effects of additional traffic congestion and parking deficits upon general freight movement and, more particularly, upon international trade. We, therefore, ask that the mayor's office and the council refrain from taking additional steps toward any memorandum of understanding with the project sponsor until a more thorough look can be taken.

One of the board's key charges is to comment on "...city policies, plans and projects as they may relate to freight capacity, safety, access and mobility throughout the City, with a particular focus on the City's industrial lands, and the business they support ...." The Manufacturers Industrial Council, Port of Seattle and Seattle Mariners have raised serious concerns, and the well-regarded consultant group, Heffron Transportation, recently pointed to well-documented traffic and parking problems that include further deterioration at the intersection of First Avenue South and South Atlantic Street. Heffron, noting that significant overlap in team schedules is likely, added that "Even one concurrent event could have monumental impacts to traffic and parking in the area."

Several board members have expressed concern that more traffic will adversely affect freight and transit movement and that these impacts should be weighed before moving ahead on the arena. Major waterfront and rail terminals lie very close to the arena site and three large transit bases are located in the area. The close proximity of waterfront and rail terminals provide Seattle with a key transportation advantage in the efficient

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

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movement of cargo, but the relatively compact maritime transportation area also makes it more susceptible to disruption from the increasing infusion of general traffic into SODO.

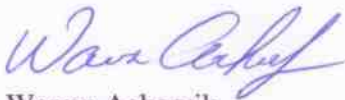
“Game traffic” already causes freight to detour from usual truck routes to longer and more roundabout courses in a South Industrial Area lacking in good east-west connections.

The unanswered question before SFAB is whether additional congestion generated by a new arena would further damage the efficiency of marine terminals and rail yards, impair critical waterfront supply traffic between SODO and the Ballard-Interbay industrial areas or add more delay for trucks bringing in exports from Eastern Washington. The arena process, as outlined publicly by the city and county, seeks council approval of a memorandum of understanding and the arena location without any real discussion of freight impacts or responsibility for any mitigation.

This is one of the unresolved “external issues” noted by the city’s Arena Advisory Committee, and the Advisory Board believes that a transportation discussion should be held sooner rather than after an arena location is picked and cemented in a MOU or in the public mind. The advantages of a great natural harbor and the historic efficiency of port and rail services to eastern U.S. markets have helped give Washington citizens the highest per capita trade income of any state in the Union. Efficient freight mobility in SODO is critical to the \$40 billion maritime shipping industry and to jobs all over the state. The board believes these considerations are impossible to set aside and that a mainstay of the city’s economy should not be sacrificed to less than informed enthusiasm for adding yet another sports venue to SODO.

We hope you will consider altering the time table for decision and rethinking the implications of the proposed location, this time, with serious thought to freight mobility issues. The Freight Advisory Board stands ready to cooperate in additional studies or participate in additional discussions related to this issue. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Respectfully,



Warren Aakervik  
Board Chairman