



City of Seattle

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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

November 19, 2020

Deputy Mayor Shefali Ranganathan
City of Seattle, Office of the Mayor
600 4th Ave, 7th Floor
Seattle, WA 98104

Subject: West Marginal Way SW Roadway Revisions at Duwamish Longhouse

Dear Deputy Mayor Ranganathan:

The purpose of this letter is to reinforce previous Seattle Freight Advisory Board (SFAB) concerns expressed to SDOT Director Sam Zimbabwe on July 8, 2020, regarding lane reductions that may become permanent on West Marginal Way SW (WMW). Our letter to Director Zimbabwe is attached. As staff has completed the Reconnect West Seattle public survey and plan development, our concerns have deepened. SDOT's modifications to WMW were initially presented to the SFAB as part of a safety improvement near the Duwamish Longhouse. Our concerns are specific to the lane reduction. We continue to support the proposed crossing safety improvements related to the Duwamish Longhouse that include:

- 1) Adding a signalized crosswalk,
- 2) Adding a sidewalk adjacent to the Duwamish Longhouse, and
- 3) Adding vehicle activated speed feedback signs with increasing enforcement

We are in deeply opposed to removing traffic lanes to add a protected bike lane on WMW. Since late 2019, the SFAB has continually made known our concerns regarding what was described as a "temporary" lane reduction on WMW. We believe the Longhouse crossing safety is a separate issue from the southbound lane reduction to accommodate protected bike lanes. There is already an existing bike lane on the east side of the Longhouse. It is unnecessary to create a redundant bike facility at the expense of freight traffic on a facility designated as a Major Truck Street, Seaport Highway Connector, and a Heavy Haul Corridor.

Last year, the southbound traffic lane was removed and described as a short-term solution to address safety crossing issues near the Longhouse. A year ago, the SFAB was told that a range of alternatives would be considered as part of developing a permanent solution. We believe the proposed signal and sidewalk improvement near the Longhouse will improve safety so that the southbound traffic lane can be restored as a through traffic lane on this Major Truck Route.

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Our greatest concern is the continued discussion by staff of permanently losing this southbound traffic lane on the north half of WMW between West Marginal Place and possibly as far south as the Longhouse to accommodate a new Protected Bike Lane. WMW is the *only* four-lane, north-south arterial in West Seattle explicitly used for freight. Mobility for freight should be expanded during the bridge closure, not curtailed. West Seattle is Seattle's most populous neighborhood; every effort should be made to enhance connections from West Seattle to the rest of the City. The SFAB requests the City restore this traffic lane and drop all proposals for a future lane reduction on the north half of WMW.

Due to the West Seattle Bridge's closure, WMW is now carrying triple the number of vehicles, increasing the need to restore the southbound traffic lane. Industrial businesses along this Major Truck Street have shared their concerns about how difficult it is to get in and out of their properties, especially with their trucks and semi-trailers. With the West Seattle high-bridge out-of-service, detour traffic further increases the pressure to keep all lanes available on WMW as a detour and alternate route. As the Port of Seattle's Terminal 5 comes back into service, we anticipate even greater truck use of WMW.

The existing Duwamish Trail provides cyclists a connection from the Lower Spokane Street Bridge, south on West Marginal Place. Cyclists can use a neighborhood greenway street, 16th Ave SW, and then for a short distance, use the sidewalk to reach the crossing at about the 4500 block of WMW. They may cross the street at a signalized crosswalk and use the protected lane on the eastside of West Marginal Way as far south as Highland Park. SDOT staff has proposed converting a traffic lane to a Protect Bike Lane (two-way) on West Marginal Way from West Marginal Place SW to the 4500 block crossing or, potentially, all the way to the Longhouse. This creates a redundant path for bikes at the expense of freight and industry.

City staff notes that the loss of the lane will "only slow down throughput" traffic movements by about 10 seconds per vehicle. As always, our most significant concern is around operations and safety for large trucks, specifically:

The loss of *any* travel time on West Marginal Way is problematic. This route is working harder than ever as a West Seattle Bridge detour route and will continue to do so into the foreseeable future.

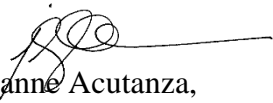
Only a fraction of the transportation system is explicitly designated for freight. This freight corridor should not be compromised – a position we apply unbiasedly across the City on the long-established freight network.

Adjoining businesses already have great difficulty getting in and out of their businesses. Access for large trucks is a significant issue, especially with heavier detour traffic. Reducing the number of lanes doubles the frequency of vehicles/trucks. This also reduces the number of gaps for safe crossings.

Our July 8, 2020 letter to SDOT Director Zimbabwe outlined these and other specific design and safety concerns. These concerns have never been addressed. As our economy

returns following the pandemic, we anticipate increased traffic pressures, exacerbating the impacts of the long-term closure of the West Seattle High Bridge. The City leadership should consider the impacts on manufacturing and industrial businesses. These businesses are essential and will be critical to the City's recovery and ongoing vitality. Please recognize the importance of maintaining all available traffic lane capacity to serve as an alternate West Seattle access and an established freight and industry Major Truck Street. On behalf of the Seattle Freight Advisory Board, we request that West Marginal Way, a Major Truck Street, be restored as a five-lane facility. This cross-section should be preserved for freight now and into the future if we wish to keep and support our industrial-based economy and their related family-wage jobs.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Acutanza,
Chair, Seattle Freight Advisory Board

Cc:

Sam Zimbabwe, Director SDOT

Elliot Helmbrecht, SDOT

Sarah Scherer, Office of Economic Development, Maritime and Manufacturing Adviser,

Heather Marx, SDOT Director of Downtown Mobility

Meghan Shepard, SDOT Deputy Director of Downtown Mobility

Venu Nemani, SDOT Staff Liaison to Seattle Freight Advisory Board

Attachment July 8, 2020 Letter Director Zimbabwe