



Seattle Department of Transportation

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Grace Crunican, Director

July 11, 2005

Honorable Richard Conlin, Chair
Transportation Committee
Seattle City Council
City Hall, 2nd Floor
Seattle, WA 98104

**SUBJECT: EMERGENCY TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND CLOSURE PLAN FOR THE
ALASKAN WAY VIADUCT AND SURFACE ALASKAN WAY**

Dear Councilmember Conlin:

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is pleased to deliver the draft *Emergency Traffic Management and Closure Plan for the Alaskan Way Viaduct*. The plan is the work of SDOT in close collaboration and consultation with the Seattle Police Department (SPD), Seattle Fire Department (SFD), Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle City Light, and Emergency Operations Management, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and King County Metro.

The plan was first drafted in 2003 by WSDOT, with input from SDOT and King County Metro. This revised edition reflects updates resulting from a series of tabletop exercises and workshops among SDOT partners, creating a set of action plans to address four possible scenarios:

1. Complete closure of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and surface Alaskan Way
2. Complete closure of the Alaskan Way Viaduct, with surface Alaskan Way open
3. Traffic incident-based temporary closure of the Alaskan Way Viaduct
4. Additional weight restrictions on the Alaskan Way Viaduct

SDOT has developed action plans for each scenario, including preparatory interagency coordination, detailed detour planning, public communication, and step-by-step directions for SDOT staff to implement.

In addition to working with multiple city departments and partner agencies to strengthen the plan, we have spent the past several months soliciting input from outside stakeholders, including: the Freight Mobility Advisory Committee, the North Seattle Industrial Association, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Seattle Association, and the Building Owners and Managers Association.

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King County Metro, the Port of Seattle, Washington State Patrol, Washington State Ferries and WSDOT participated in exercises to test and strengthen the plan based on the four scenarios.

An emergency closure of the Alaskan Way Viaduct requires more than one department for successful response. Close collaboration is crucial. In the event of an emergency requiring closure of the Viaduct, SDOT will provide significant support to SPD and SFD as they take the lead in life safety efforts. After life safety efforts have been stabilized for the affected area, SDOT will take the lead in restoration of travel and traffic operations on Seattle streets.

Over the past six months, efforts have yielded improvements in the plan and SDOT deploys it when responding to serious traffic incidents. As with our other emergency response plans, SDOT will update the *Emergency Traffic Management and Closure Plan for the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Surface Alaskan Way* to respond to changing conditions.

I welcome your review, comments and input and my staff looks forward to presenting the plan at the Committee of the Whole meeting on July 18.

Sincerely,

Grace Crunican
Seattle Department of Transportation
Director

Cc: Jan Drago, Seattle Councilmember, President
Jim Compton, Seattle Councilmember
David J. Della, Seattle Councilmember
Jean Godden, Seattle Councilmember
Nick Licata, Seattle Councilmember
Richard J. McIver, Seattle Councilmember
Tom Rasmussen, Seattle Councilmember
Peter Steinbrueck, Seattle Councilmember