

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the Airport Way South Viaduct over Argo Railroad Yard Rehabilitation Project?

The Airport Way South over Argo Railroad Yard Rehabilitation Project includes replacement of the north and south approaches of the viaduct. The work will also include seismic retrofitting and structure rehabilitation work on the main span of the viaduct. Over 13,000 vehicles use the viaduct each day. These structural improvements will help maintain a safe and reliable transportation corridor for vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles. To complete this work, the viaduct will be fully closed to all traffic, bicycles, and pedestrians for 12 – 14 months. Construction is expected to begin in early 2011.

Can bike lanes be included as part of the work planned on the Airport Way South Viaduct?

As a Bridging the Gap project, funding has been allocated specifically to rehabilitate the north and south approaches and make the main span structure seismically safe. Creating bike lanes on Airport Way South is not part of the scope of work for this project. Additionally, the main span structural restrictions prevent any bike improvements to be made at this time. If you would like to learn about the City of Seattle's plans to create new bike lanes throughout the city, visit: <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/bikemaster.htm>.

How is this project being funded?

The project is part of the City of Seattle's Bridging the Gap program, and will cost approximately \$34 million. Bridging the Gap is a \$365 million levy passed by Seattle voters in 2006 that enables much-needed maintenance and improvement work by Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), such as roadway paving, sidewalk development and repair, bridge maintenance, and tree pruning and planting. It also supports the enhanced transit connections and large Neighborhood Street Fund Projects.

How was the decision made to fully close the viaduct during construction?

SDOT made the decision to fully close the Airport Way South Viaduct during construction after evaluating both a full and partial closure option, considering engineering factors, project cost and the construction schedule. SDOT considered community input and reached out to local government, community groups, businesses and neighbors. The majority of comments received were in favor of the full closure option because it allowed for more bridge work to be done in a shorter amount of time by increasing project safety, reducing the overall length of construction and requiring a less complicated, and more consistently predictable construction phasing. SDOT has also gathered feedback from the surrounding community to minimize impacts to the extent possible during construction. Throughout construction we will continue to create opportunities for the public to provide feedback and to learn more about the project.

What is the planned detour route during the viaduct closure and how will the detour route be signed?

Vehicles will be rerouted to 4th Avenue South, traveling along South Lucile Street and/or South Dawson Street/Denver Avenue South and South Industrial Way. South Dawson and Denver Avenue South will be used as a one-way road in the westbound direction to allow for larger vehicles and trucks to make a right turn onto 4th Avenue South. South Lucile Street will be open to eastbound and westbound traffic. SDOT will use variable messaging signs (VMS) and traditional detour signage to alert drivers of the viaduct closure and detour route.

The neighborhood has already been impacted by the closure of the South Park Bridge. Can the Airport Way South Viaduct over Argo Railroad Yard Rehabilitation Project be completed later?

SDOT is aware of other projects both small and large happening in the area and realizes there are impacts associated with the closure of the South Park Bridge. In preparation for construction on the Airport Way South Viaduct, SDOT conducted an analysis to evaluate the impact of the closure of the South Park Bridge as well as the Airport Way South Viaduct. The analysis found that the closure of the South Park Bridge would not significantly affect operations on the primary detour route for the Airport Way South Viaduct closure. Regardless, SDOT will make sure there is adequate signage posted throughout the greater area to alert drivers of the construction

project and detour routes to help minimize traffic back-ups and congestion in the project area. Additionally, SDOT is coordinating with other projects, including planned street paving work on Airport Way South and other Georgetown streets, to minimize the collective impact on the community.

What bus routes will be affected by the viaduct closure?

King County Metro bus routes #106, #131, and #134 currently use the Airport Way South Viaduct. Metro will reroute these buses to 4th Avenue South during the closure. SDOT is also coordinating with the local and regional transit agencies such as Sound Transit and Community Transit to make sure they are aware of the viaduct closure and to plan ahead for any possible impacts to bus service. SDOT will continue to coordinate with these agencies through construction.

What efforts has SDOT made to coordinate with businesses both prior to and during construction?

SDOT is partnering with the City's Office of Economic Development (OED) to help support businesses during construction. Georgetown has been selected as a featured business district through the office's city-wide Buy Local Campaign. The campaign is focused on driving traffic into neighborhood business districts. In addition to the partnership with the OED, SDOT is committed to keeping business vibrant and traffic moving through the project area during construction. SDOT will work with the entire Georgetown community in the months ahead to plan for construction and ensure work is completed as quickly and efficiently as possible.

During construction, can the City lift restrictions on parking in the business district during peak hours?

SDOT is aware that available parking is limited in Georgetown. SDOT plans to assess the situation once construction is underway and will then make a decision in whether to lift parking restrictions during business hours. SDOT will also work with the contractor to minimize the amount of lost parking during construction due to construction equipment and machinery.

During construction, will SDOT be able to close the spur of the Union Pacific Railroad at Airport Way South and South Lucile Street?

SDOT does not have the authority to close the railroad spur because it is owned by Union Pacific Railroad. At this time, SDOT and UPRR are working together to see if there are ways to minimize the impacts of construction on the community and traveling public.

Many streets are in poor condition in this area. Will SDOT repave any streets prior to the start of construction?

Prior to the closure of Airport Way South Viaduct, SDOT plans to repave South Lucile Street from Airport Way South to South Maynard Street, as traffic assessments have deemed this a primary detour route during construction. The contractor will also replace select concrete panels, perform select full depth roadwork base repair, and fix potholes on South Denver Street and Dawson Avenue South.

What types of noise can I expect to hear during construction?

SDOT will work with the contractor to minimize noise and environmental impacts during construction. However, neighbors can expect to hear construction activities near the viaduct during work hours. Currently, it is anticipated that the majority of work will be conducted during the daytime, Monday through Friday. Construction activities will include trucks, back-up alarms, and heavy machinery including excavators, cranes, and loaders.

Where can I find out more information about this project?

For the latest news and information, please visit our project Web site at:
www.seattle.gov/transportation/bridgerehab_airportargo.htm

If you have specific questions, please contact:

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