



Wednesday, May 6, 2020

Dear Georgetown Community Council and community members:

Thank you for your letter on April 22 and for the opportunity to present to the Georgetown Community on April 30. We appreciate your thoughtful and purposeful actions, as well as the time your community has put into developing action. Our team looks forward to working with you and the West Seattle community as we navigate this challenge together.

While this is only the continuation of an ongoing conversation and partnership, included below are answers to many of the important questions you raised. We have worked diligently to be as responsive and prompt as possible and acknowledge that this is only the start.

Below are the specific requests we heard from the Georgetown community with the status of each request:

- S Michigan St needs traffic counts throughout day/night and accurate predictions based on total pre-bridge closure volumes for all of West Seattle to address higher volumes causing gridlock; Continue traffic counts and monitoring post COVID-19 knowing traffic impacts will come in stages; Continual monitoring of traffic counts and patterns. Will timing of lights, detour signage, the mitigation reflects changes in baseline figures; do we have current data?
 - **Status/update:** We have "before" counts in the community that we've taken over the years that serve as a pre-COVID baseline. We're in the process of collecting more data and have been getting feedback from community members too.
- Remove Carpool lane between West Seattle Bridge and Corson Exit to allow for more efficient traffic (if traffic lights are adjusted to handle).
 - **Status/update:** We have contacted our partners at the Washington State Department of Transportation about operational changes to freeways. They have not indicated that they will be removing any existing high-occupancy vehicle lanes.
- Request revised traffic flow to alleviate congestion (adjustment of traffic lights at Corson; Michigan; White Center; etc)
 - **Status/update:** We're developing a neighborhood-specific plan to evaluate concerns like these and should have drafts ready to discuss with you in as soon as two weeks.
- Request to maintain local roads prior, during and after detour is imposed.
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- Request to maintain local roads prior, during, and after detour is imposed.
 - **Status/update:** We are committed to maintaining the roads in Georgetown and will continue to assess our work list based on observed pavement conditions in your community, especially considering new traffic patterns from the bridge closure. In addition to our work, community members are asked to use Find It, Fix It, a service request mobile app for service requests. We encourage residents to download and use this app when they see something that needs repaired. More information is at

<https://www.seattle.gov/customer-service-bureau/find-it-fix-it-mobile-app>. You can also call 684-ROAD with specific locations if the app doesn't work for you.

- Ensure additional traffic is not routed through neighborhood streets
 - **Status/update:** We are responding to cut-through and safety service requests as we receive them from community members and based on observations by our traffic engineers in the field. We are also working to keep the arterial street network moving efficiently to encourage its use instead of the residential system some choose to use for longer trips.
- Implement improvements at the intersection of S Bailey St, Corson Ave S, and S Michigan St. In addition to completed plan, consider closing the southbound ingress of Carleton from MI/Bailey to prevent speeding cut throughs
 - **Status/update:**
 - We've made some minor timing adjustments at 4th and Michigan.
 - SDOT's current plan is to develop one or two high-cycle-length signal plans for Michigan Street to help flush traffic. Whether this plan will be regularly scheduled or only used during certain times is still to be determined. We have not started on this effort yet.
 - We are looking at issues with Michigan/Bailey/Carleton but solutions are likely to be tactical.
- Request to implement a traffic control device to address hazard accessing Airport Way S
 - **Status/update:** We will look at possible improvements at this location and include follow-up in the neighborhood-specific plan we are developing to evaluate concerns like these. We should have a draft ready in as soon as two weeks.
- Do not abandon/shelve plan/study the Georgetown to Downtown bicycle facility planning. Implement low cost protected facilities to provide safe bike travel option. Begin with higher risk areas.
 - **Status/update:** We are working with our colleagues who are managing that project to see whether it's status has changed in light of either the bridge closure or impending budget reductions caused by the pandemic. We will let you know what we learn.
- Implement "local access only" signage and law enforcement monitoring
 - **Status/update:** We don't install local access only signs because our partners at the Seattle Police Department tell us they are challenging to enforce and our own teams tell us they have minimal effect on traffic calming. Public streets are open to everyone and these signs can also have the unintended consequence of making people feel unwelcome in a community, which goes against our goals as a city.
- Implement Georgetown City Hall Transit Hub.
 - **Status/update:** We're going to connect with our Georgetown planning team and King County Metro to learn more about this concept and then follow-up with you.
- Implement low cost separated bicycle network facilities.
 - **Status/update:** We are working to develop a series of bike facilities to and from Duwamish crossings to help people get around more efficiently and safely without a car during the bridge closure.

- Implement Safety Improvements at Bike Pedestrian Safety Analysis intersection locations impacted by detour routes.
 - **Status/update:** We're developing a neighborhood-specific plan to evaluate concerns like these and should have drafts ready in as soon as two weeks. This plan will look at existing plans and analysis such as the Georgetown Mobility Study and Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Analysis for guidance.
- Implement Airport Way Speed Management and install business area Gateways
 - **Status/update:** We are planning to post lower speed limits on Airport Way and all other arterial streets in Georgetown.
- Assistance in improving/establishing a robust community emergency response plan for Georgetown residents and businesses.
 - **Status/update:** We understand why emergency response is top-of-mind considering what's happening with the bridge. Can you please tell us more and if you are already working with our emergency response partners at EOM, SFD, and SPD? We have designated emergency response routes and have already prioritized emergency response vehicles during the bridge closure. But it sounds like you're looking for more and we want to better understand this request so we can be helpful.
- Public acknowledgment of impacts in Georgetown and river communities, commitment to emergency funding and mitigation to the level it is being pursued for neighborhoods along alternate routes in West Seattle
 - **Status/update:** The City of Seattle has publicly acknowledged that the indefinite closure of the West Seattle High-Rise Bridge will have far-ranging negative impacts on all Seattle communities. We are truly sorry this is happening and understand why Georgetown and the other Duwamish communities are concerned and frustrated.
- Prioritize and complete, and expedite current projects that will address bridge closure traffic impacts (e.g 4th Ave bridge). What criteria is used to prioritize capital projects?
 - **Status/update:** We are developing neighborhood specific plan for Georgetown and are currently developing criteria, and want to include feedback from the community as part of our prioritization process.
- What are SDOT and SPDs plans for directing traffic post-COVID stay at home orders? On site traffic control by law enforcement officers?
 - **Status/update:** We are in near-constant contact with our partners at the Seattle Police Department about traffic control related to the bridge closure. And long-range planning about how people are going to get around both during and after the Stay Home, Stay Healthy order is in effect is a top priority. Right now, we are developing comprehensive traffic operations plans and targets for updated mode splits that would help people understand the kinds of travel shifts that would reduce the likelihood of major traffic congestion once SHSH is lifted. We are creating signed detour routes and updating signals to direct traffic, for example.

- Limited access, signage, enforcement, Waze and other directions apps to address safety in the neighborhood with cut through traffic on side streets. What is SDOT plan for limiting cut thru traffic when drivers get frustrated or creative. We see huge increases in volumes and speed just with recent 4th/Michigan roadwork detours, alleys, residential.
 - **Status/update:** We are responding to cut-through and safety service requests as we receive them from community members and based on observations by our traffic engineers in the field. We are also working to keep the arterial street network moving efficiently to encourage its use instead of the residential system some choose to use for longer trips. We are in contact with online map service companies and have let them know about our concerns about cut-through traffic. We are limited in our abilities to regulate this behavior since drivers are being sent to public streets accessible to all and not encouraged to break any laws or speed. That being said, we will continue to monitor and react to concerning and illegal driving behavior.
- Air quality monitoring in established hot spots to address environmental concerns with increased traffic volumes. Are there any plans for mitigation?
 - **Status/update:** The City has long-standing plans to reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, particularly those associated with transportation. We can check with partner agencies to see if there are plans to monitor air quality above what's happening today.
- Include Georgetown leaders at ongoing task force for short- and long-term decision making/ monitoring/adjustments. How will SDOT and other city agencies guarantee partnership and consultation knowledgeable people in the community
 - **Status/update:** We want Georgetown community and business stakeholders to be "at the table" as we make decisions and get through the bridge closure together. Thank you for being proactive and helping us learn what the signers of your letter are currently prioritizing.
- Discuss and plan as part of emergency response planning (immediate needs and long range): Emergency services access with higher traffic volumes
 - **Status/update:** Please see our response above about emergency response questions. Let's connect about that specific issue so we can learn more about your concerns and problem-solve collaboratively.
- Discuss with Freight Advisory Board: freight access with increased volumes. What are the impacts on freight mobility and access points to local businesses?
 - **Status/update:** We met with the SDOT Freight Advisory Board about the bridge closure and are coordinating with freight stakeholders about a freight action plan.
- From April 23 Meeting: Reach out to Recology and Waste Management to discuss how their freight patterns might change. There is a current arrangement with these two to no send freight up Carlton, Corson, and Ellis.
 - **Status/update:** We are working with our freight community partners on this idea and will confirm that the haulers have been included in the conversation. They are engaged in traffic management planning during the bridge closure.

- From April 23 Meeting: Ask contractors working at the Georgetown Wet Weather Treatment Station to stop parking on the sidewalk on 4th Ave S
 - **Status/update:** We are in contact with our partners at King County with this request, and have set up a construction coordination system for Georgetown and South Park that is typically reserved for Downtown neighborhoods with higher construction volumes. We understand that the large and impactful construction in Georgetown and South Park will be even more onerous during the West Seattle Bridge closure and will actively coordinate impacts.

We know the closure of the West Seattle Bridge has had a significant impact in Georgetown, as well as South Park, Highland Park, and SODO. The West Seattle Bridge was really the center of many of our lives. We understand the concerns addressed both in the April meeting and your letter, and we will work closely with you on traffic management and safety until these issues are better understood.

Please let us know if you have any additional questions or comments. Otherwise we look forward to continuing the dialogue with you and will follow-up with any outstanding answers to existing questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Heather Marx, Seattle Department of Transportation