



Seattle
Department of
Transportation

West Seattle Bridge Program
Virtual Public Meeting Summary

September 2021



Contents

Project overview 3

Virtual public meeting..... 3

 Overview 3

 Attendance and participation 4

 Question and Answer Session..... 4

 High-level themes 4

 Question and answer summary 4

 Poll results..... 19

Next steps 23

Project overview

On March 23, 2020, SDOT closed the West Seattle High-Rise Bridge (high bridge) to all vehicle traffic. The sudden announcement to close the bridge stemmed from regular inspections that indicated accelerated growth of new and existing structural cracks. Historically, the high bridge is the city's most-used bridge, carrying an average of over 100,000 cars, trucks, and buses every day. The closure has caused a significant disruption to traffic in West Seattle, Duwamish Valley neighborhoods, and in Seattle as a whole.

[We completed phase 1 stabilization](#) of a two-part repair process in December 2020. Crews will begin construction for [phase 2 rehabilitation](#) by the end of 2021, and we remain on track to reopen the high bridge in mid-2022. We're also continuing early design work for an eventual replacement of the bridge.

Virtual public meeting

Overview

On July 21, 2021, we hosted a virtual public meeting on Zoom from 5:30 – 7:15 PM. The purpose of the event was to share updates on the bridge repair, low bridge access, and travel options around West Seattle and the Duwamish Valley and engage with the community and answer their questions.

The format of the public meeting included a presentation, polls, and a Q&A session with panelists. Community members could submit questions throughout the presentation via the Q&A feature in Zoom or “Raise Your Hand” during the Q&A session to be called on. At the event of the meeting, SDOT shared a video of interviews with West Seattle, South Park, and Georgetown community members, which can be viewed on our [webpage](#).

Topics discussed in the presentation included:

- Project overview
- High bridge repair
- Funding
- Traffic mitigation projects through Reconnect West Seattle
- Travel options
- Low bridge access policy updates
- How to stay engaged in the project

SDOT provided live captioning in English and interpretation in Spanish, Mandarin, and Vietnamese. A meeting recording will be posted online later with subtitles in Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, Khmer, Somali, and Oromo.

Attendance and participation

A total of 257 people attended on Zoom and 65 viewed the meeting (in English) on YouTube. 175 questions and comments were received during the Q&A session. Some of the participants' questions were answered live by panelists during the presentation. The answered and unanswered questions are addressed in the Q&A section below.

Question and Answer Session

High-level themes

During the online presentation, attendees were encouraged to submit questions through the Zoom Q&A feature. The project team responded to some questions, starting from the questions that were submitted at the beginning of the event. They also answered some live questions. Due to the time constraints of the event, the project team was not able to address all questions.

Below we have summarized the answered questions and addressed questions that the team did not have time to answer during the virtual public meeting.

The most common themes and topics included:

- High bridge repair timeline and design methods
- Traffic mitigation projects in West Seattle and the Duwamish Valley
- Public transportation options
- Low bridge policy updates
- Replacement planning timeline and considerations

Question and answer summary

The following questions and answers are organized by categories/projects within the West Seattle Bridge Program.

Note: Next to some questions, you will see a number in parentheses (e.g., (2)) This number indicates how many times attendees asked a certain question in the Q&A.

High bridge repair

Answered questions

Q: What can be done to speed up the repair? (2)

A: We can assure you there is urgency in our work to achieve the repairs. The design of the repairs and the material procurement are aspects of construction that take time. Everyone at SDOT is working urgently, day in and day out.

Q: Why hasn't the design been done over the time the bridge has been closed? (2)

A: Design has been underway for a significant portion of the closure. The stabilization design started in March, right after the closure, and the full repair design started in November 2020.

Q: Will a mayoral change mean changes in the bridge program?

A: The City Council approves funding, and no dramatic change would be possible without Council support.

Q: What could have prevented the bridge from getting to the point it needed to close, and what's being done to keep other bridges from getting to that point?

A: The bridge was built to the standards of the time and the construction records have not revealed a fatal flaw. The stabilization work, and repair work, require opening up the bridge deck, so whenever the problem was caught, it would have resulted in a closure. As for other bridge structures, we've added real-time monitors, including cameras, to look for the kind of problems that might require closures.

Q: Has SDOT considered opening the bridge for limited traffic? (4)

A: Safety is our highest priority. The high bridge is not safe for travel. No traffic, not even a single lane of traffic, will be able to utilize the bridge until the rehabilitation is complete.

Q: Could adding a fourth lane on the bridge and not limiting the weight of vehicles have led to the cracking? (2)

A: We don't plan any change to the operation of the high bridge when it opens. There's no indication that the change in travel lanes led to structural problems.

Q: Will the same number of lanes be used when the bridge opens? Will the 0.4-mile bus lane be removed when the bridge reopens? (3)

A: We expect to return the bridge to its original configuration. There may be wider shoulders on the westbound side. Bus traffic was using the high bridge before the bus-only lane was installed, and will continue to use the bridge when it reopens.

Q: When will we start seeing workers on the bridge?

A: This fall. However, much of the phase 2 rehabilitation work will be done inside the bridge. That means that work will be happening, but you may not always see it. Later this year, we're expecting to raise the work platforms below the bridge as we begin the final repairs.

Q: Did the heat wave cause any new cracks? How did the bridge perform?

A: Our stabilization work prevented anything from going awry. The stabilization repairs resulted in no new cracking on the bridge. We're very confident in the work we've done.

Unanswered questions

Q: Why is the repair taking so long? When does the next phase of repairs begin? (3)

A: We're following an aggressive schedule to design and complete the high bridge rehabilitation work and remain on track to reopen the bridge in mid-2022. You might have seen that we recently

announced on our blog that our teams have reached the intermediate design milestone, and in May, [we selected the construction firm Kraemer North America to complete the final phase of West Seattle High-Rise Bridge repairs](#). Kraemer will begin final repairs this year and work to reopen the bridge in mid-2022.

During phase 1 stabilization, which we completed in December 2020, our teams added post-tensioning to stabilize the bridge until we had a clear path forward on whether we were going to rehabilitate or replace the high bridge.

As we've been developing the [design of phase 2 repairs](#), the extensive monitoring that was in place before and throughout the stabilization work is continuing. This monitoring has shown that the bridge is behaving as expected, even in February's snow and June's heat, keeping us on schedule as we simultaneously worked to complete intermediate design and advertise the construction contract. This next phase (rehabilitation), which will begin later this year, takes us to the finish line so the bridge can re-open to vehicle traffic.

Q: Is there any chance the bridge might open prior to mid-2022? Please define mid-2022. (2)

A: We'd love to see the bridge reopen sooner than expected. But we also want to do the work that's needed and give the construction contractor the time and resources they need to complete the job safely. We'll share a more detailed reopening schedule once we establish a detailed construction schedule with the contractor.

Q: How much funding is required to complete the repair? (2)

A: We have secured \$37.7M in federal funding. Remaining sources of funds will come from federal, state, and local resources and grants, and from local partners.

Q: Is the construction contractor under contract now?

A: In May, [we selected the construction firm Kraemer North America to complete the final phase of West Seattle High-Rise Bridge repairs](#). Kraemer has been working with us on design and they will begin final repairs later this year and work to reopen the bridge in mid-2022.

Q: How likely is it that the opening of the bridge will be delayed due to most of the actual construction happening in the winter months?

A: We rehabilitate bridges in Seattle year-round and have contingencies built in for unexpected delays. We are optimistic that the work can be completed in time to reopen the bridge in mid-2022.

Q: What is the estimated length of time this revision to the bridge will last (in years)?

A: We expect the repairs to the bridge to last up to 40 years with continual maintenance. To be ready when the time comes, we are continuing to plan for an eventual replacement.

Q: Are you able to provide a safety rating for the bridge, prior to the closing, and what you are anticipating the rating to be after it reopens? And what is the safety rating of the low bridge currently? (2)

A: We maintain a list of bridges, ranked based on their condition, to determine ongoing maintenance and replacement needs of all City-maintained bridges. One of the things we look at is bridge “load rating,” which evaluates a bridge’s ability to support different vehicle weights. Our phase 1 stabilization work was an important first step to increase the load rating of the high bridge. Once phase 2 rehabilitation is complete, the bridge will go through extensive testing to ensure that the bridge is safe for travel again.

Q: What is the plan if a major earthquake happens?

A: If a major earthquake occurs, the West Seattle High-Rise Bridge (high bridge) and Spokane St Swing Bridge (low bridge) will be inspected for damage. We will look for signs of structural damage and determine the next steps. We will also communicate that information transparently to the public.

Q: What can be done to keep the freight trucks off of the high bridge when it reopens? (2)

A: There are no plans to limit freight that meet legal load requirements from using the high bridge.

Q: Can some of the materials for repair be procured before this fall?

A: We’re working on getting the materials ordered and delivered as soon as possible, and may be able to procure some materials as soon as October 2021.

Q: The post-tensioning cables are routed in an arch, parallel to the contour of the bottom of the bridge. So, when the cables are tensioned, do they pull the arch of the bridge downward as tension is applied? How does that add "upward" support to the bridge structure?

A: Post-tensioning is an important method we are using as part of the repair process. New post-tensioning cables compress, or tighten, the concrete before vehicles travel on it, allowing the bridge to carry heavier loads. By post-tensioning the bridge, we are causing the concrete to flex slightly, before adding the load of traffic (see diagram). To learn more about post-tensioning and the other methods we are using to rehabilitate the bridge, visit our [high bridge repair webpage](#).

Post-tensioned concrete: How does it work?

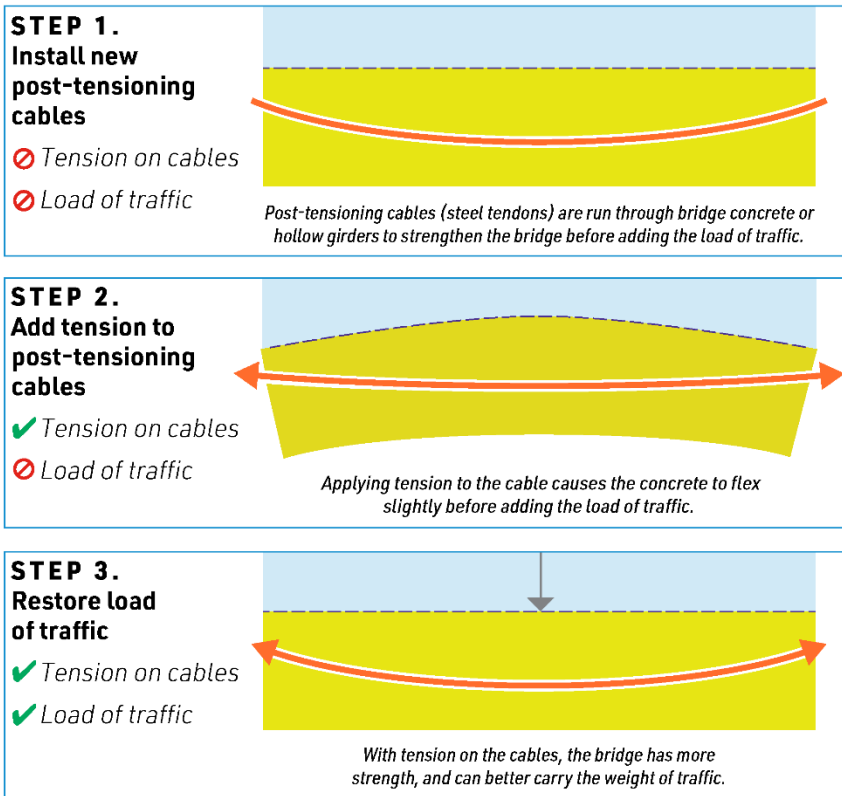


Image credit: Phoenix7777, under Creative Commons. Material modified. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Post-Tensioned_Concrete.svg

Q: Will the high bridge and the low bridge be repaved?

A: No, the high bridge and low bridge will not be fully repaved. Our teams are reviewing opportunities to maintain and make spot improvements to the pavement on the high bridge, but plans are not yet finalized.

Reconnect West Seattle

Answered questions

Q: Have there been any thoughts on increasing the frequency of or extending hours of water taxis, and adding one from Fauntleroy? (2)

A: King County water taxi's summer sailing schedule was set to end on October 15, however, we worked with King County to increase water taxi service to and from West Seattle this fall and winter. We will provide the funding needed to maintain full daytime service from 6 AM to 7 PM all winter long as repairs continue on the high bridge. Learn more on our [blog post](#).

Q: There's construction everywhere – how is it being coordinated? (2)

A: We understand your concerns about construction on detour routes. We are coordinating construction projects and we do everything we can to be sure we can complete work in off-peak hours, especially if

it's along the detour routes. We're constructing improvements now to help people move more efficiently until the high bridge reopens. Also, the Delridge Way SW/RapidRide H Line, a major construction project in the Delridge area, will be completed in mid-September.

Q: Is Sam Zimbabwe, the SDOT Director, working from home or commuting?

A: Sam answered that he is doing a mix of both. He commutes into the office on transit a couple of times a week.

Q: What is law enforcement doing to prevent line cutting, especially at the SR 99/509 on-ramp by the transfer station?

A: Law enforcement is the best way to address line cutting. There has been enforcement in this area and we'll continue this effort.

Q: How are you addressing residential side street safety?

A: Regarding residential street safety, we've been focusing on traffic calming through the Home Zone program in Highland Park, South Park, and Georgetown. We also evaluate reports of increased speeding or traffic volume concerns on neighborhood streets. Please email westseattlebridge@seattle.gov if you have specific areas you want to see evaluated.

Q: How can all these construction projects improve traffic – should we be doing so many while the bridge is closed?

A: Large- and small-scale projects have been completed to improve traffic. Some of these projects require construction, such as the vital emergency traffic signal at Highland Park Way SW and SW Holden St. Traffic improvements are essential to improve traffic flow and community safety while the high bridge is closed.

Q: Does SDOT intend to promote a kindness initiative for drivers using the detour route?

A: We are all in this together. All the people on the detour routes are your friends, your family, and your neighbors. We advise you to extend to people the grace you hope they would extend to you. You will begin to see signage around the detour route mitigation projects to "please be kind."

Q: Can the bike paths be cleaned? (2)

A: Yes, we can look into cleaning the bike paths. You may be happy to know that we swept the Duwamish Trail on July 23. If you have specific issues that you'd like to bring to our attention, please consider reporting it via the [City of Seattle's Find It Fix It app](#).

Q: Why did all construction projects have to start at the same time?

A: We're trying to mitigate the bridge impacts as quickly as we can. There is no perfect time to start a construction project. We began construction on the [Delridge Way SW RapidRide H Line](#) in June 2020, in the middle of a global pandemic, and just two months after we closed the West Seattle High-Rise Bridge to traffic. The closure significantly changed the way people move through, to, and from West Seattle. The RapidRide H Line Project is expected to have the roadway work complete by mid-September.

In order to keep the West Seattle community moving during and after the high bridge closure, we are working as quickly and efficiently as possible to complete construction. You can learn about the Reconnect West Seattle efforts [here](#), which are a part of the West Seattle Bridge project. As far as timing goes, it is also important to note that we did not know the path forward for the high bridge was going to be repaired until [November 2020](#).

Q: The intersection of SW Thistle St and 35th Ave SW has become problematic with detour traffic.

A: The project team will analyze the signal timing and see if other improvements can be made.

Q: How are you managing traffic at the intersection of Highland Park Way SW and West Marginal Way SW? (2)

A: We are constantly monitoring intersection operations and adjusting signal timing as needed, especially along detour routes. We recently completed construction at this intersection to allow for concurrent turning movements, adding more capacity for motorists and improving the pedestrian environment.

Q: Can you install signage at the Chelan Ave SW, Delridge Way SW, West Marginal Way SW, and SW Spokane St 5-way intersection? (3)

A: We will be installing additional signage at this intersection to help people navigate and also avoid the low bridge if they don't have permission to use it. At Chelan Ave SW and West Marginal Way SW, we will work with the Seattle Police Department on enforcement to prevent cutting, which is the complaint we have heard most, and investigate other engineering solutions.

Q: How are you going to make it so that it doesn't take over an hour to get anywhere in Seattle?

A: Through the [Reconnect West Seattle](#), we aim to move as many people in and out of West Seattle as possible despite significantly reduced travel lanes, while also reducing the impact of detour traffic through Highland Park, South Park, and Georgetown. The number of lanes we have to cross the Duwamish River Waterway is seven less with the high bridge closed, so we are asking community members to do their part by taking transit or water taxi, or using a bike or scooter when they are willing and able to reduce travel times getting off the West Seattle peninsula.

In April, we shared the most recent Reconnect West Seattle [quarterly report](#) focusing on the work we've completed to date, as well as upcoming work to improve traffic flow in West Seattle.

Q: Is it possible to limit the opening of the 1st Ave bridge to nighttime as long as the West Seattle bridge is closed? (4)

A: The 1st Ave S Bridge is managed by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). To provide feedback, contact WSDOT using [this form](#). Due to the unexpected closure of the high bridge, the City has coordinated with WSDOT regarding openings of the 1st Ave S Bridge.

Unanswered questions

Q: Are you aware that the traffic mitigation projects have in fact created more issues in certain cases and areas, or was that unforeseen of what was hoped for the changes? Or has there been no research/studies into the delays as a result of traffic changes?

A: Through our [Reconnect West Seattle](#) framework, we're making changes to improve mobility in and around West Seattle. We are implementing traffic mitigation projects to encourage traffic to stay on the arterial streets (detour routes) rather than cutting through neighborhood streets, to keep those streets moving slowly, as they were designed. We're also making improvements along the detour routes, including Highland Park Way SW and West Marginal Way SW, to keep traffic moving. We have done traffic modeling to determine how efficient those improvements would be and have found that they are beneficial to the detour routes. That said, we recognize that there are some delays caused by the construction of these improvements, so we're doing everything we can to minimize the impacts to weekday commutes and even weekend travels by having the crews start work on those projects at 2 AM on weekend mornings and wrapping up work activities by roughly 1 PM. We appreciate your patience as we implement these changes. Please be kind to your neighbors on the detour routes and the folks working on our streets and directing traffic.

Q: Are you considering installing dynamic speed limit signs on Delridge Way SW before the 1st Ave S Bridge?

A: As part of Seattle's [Vision Zero](#) initiative to end traffic deaths and serious injuries on city streets, we are committed to the safety of people over the speed of vehicles. We have been making [changes to speed limits since Vision Zero started in 2015](#) and the speed limit along Delridge Way SW will remain the same.

As the number of people who live and work in Seattle has grown over the past few years, the number of people who drive has remained steady but [we are seeing more people walk/roll, bike, and ride transit](#). We want people to be able to travel safely in whatever way they are able. To support these speed limit changes, we have been doing a lot of work in the background, such as re-timing our traffic signals and adjusting our project designs to the new speed limit.

Q: Can the cameras at Highland Park Way SW and West Marginal Way SW be adjusted so travelers can see how far up the hill the traffic is? (2)

A: The traffic camera at Highland Park Way SW and West Marginal Way SW was adjusted so that travelers can see more of the traffic on Highland Park Way SW. We also recommend that you follow the traffic queues via our [travelers webpage](#). This page allows you to see the backups as the traffic cameras may not be able to show you the end of the queue due to the curves in the road.

Q: Will the water taxi operate year-round?

A: In April 2010, the [West Seattle water taxi route](#) began operating year-round service. There are both summer and winter sailing schedules.

Q: What is being done to address safety issues on East Marginal Way S?

A: The [East Marginal Way Corridor Improvement Project](#) is improving safety and reliability for movement of people and goods. In addition, in 2020, we restriped the northern section of the corridor to ensure motorists and people riding bikes are in predictable spaces, and we have sent out SDOT crew members to fix potholes on East Marginal Way S.

Q: Are there any plans to improve congestion both ways between SR 509 and Olson PI SW?

A: We are working to improve traffic flow through traffic signal timing. We base the timing on the direction of peak flow (i.e., flow out of West Seattle in the morning, into West Seattle in the evening, and a balanced pattern during the off-peak hours). You may be aware that we are making changes to the traffic signal timing at the intersection of Highland Park Way SW and West Marginal Way SW.

Q: How can we make more health services (specialists, labs, dialysis, behavioral health) establish in West Seattle? People who need regular services are tired of driving to the medical district/First Hill for their appointments.

A: For people seeking life-saving medical treatment, there is a [low bridge access request form](#). Please visit our [webpage](#) to see if you are eligible.

Q: 16th Ave SW, just north of the Highland Park neighborhood, between SW Dawson St and SW Holden, is experiencing heavier traffic and speeding. Can this area be evaluated?

A: We have collected data and we are working with the community to install traffic calming devices on 16th Ave SW between SW Austin St and SW Dawson St. Through the Reconnect West Seattle Home Zone program, we continue to evaluate traffic safety and patterns in the Highland Park, Georgetown, and South Park neighborhoods.

Q: Has any consideration been given to redirecting the Fautleroy ferries to downtown terminals until the bridge reopens?

A: We evaluated redirecting Fautleroy ferries to downtown terminals with [Washington State Ferries](#) in spring 2020. Since Colman Dock in downtown Seattle is under construction, the dock has limitations on vehicle storage and ferry berths and cannot accommodate the Fautleroy ferries and their traffic.

Q: Why has the reduction of 1 lane on West Marginal Way SW at the Duwamish Long House not been temporarily eliminated, so that the 2 lanes can ease the flow of traffic and reduce the "squeeze" that happens as travelers are heading south experience at the lane reduction?

A: There are two "squeeze" points along West Marginal Way SW: one at the Chelan Ave SW 5-way intersection to Marginal PI SW, and one at SW Alaska St (Duwamish Longhouse). SDOT is unable to eliminate the "squeeze" point at Marginal PI SW, so this section acts as the limiter for southbound capacity. At SW Alaska St, poor sightlines exist with a two-lane configuration, and based on traffic counts, people driving continue to travel through the single lane above the speed limit and without delay. Learn more about the planned improvements along [West Marginal Way SW at our website](#).

Q: Is the city considering raising the speeds back to their previously posted limits?

A: At this time, we do not have plans to increase the speed limits in West Seattle and on the detour routes. We know that speed is the critical factor in the frequency and severity of crashes. As we redesign Seattle's highest injury streets, we are also taking systemwide approaches, like lower speed limits across the city. We've been making changes to speed limits since [Vision Zero](#) started in 2015 and the new speed limit signs are an important part of that work.

Q: What are the rules for the Stay Healthy Streets? Does it mean drivers can only drive one block or if you're a local you can use the streets?

A: Stay Healthy Streets are open for people walking, rolling, biking, and playing and closed to pass through traffic. The goal is to open up more space for people rather than cars as a way to improve community and individual health. People driving who need to get to homes and destinations along Stay Healthy Streets are still able to drive on these streets; drivers should use extra caution and yield to people. Otherwise, drivers should not drive on these streets. Please visit our [webpage](#) for additional details.

Q: Traffic on the bridge was an issue before the closure. How does returning to the same traffic pattern address the previous issues of congestion and travel time? Is there anything we can do now to try and help make it easier to get in and out of West Seattle, particularly during peak commute hours?

A: We are in the process of developing a bridge reopening plan. We will be evaluating traffic improvements that can be done in advance of the bridge opening as well as signal changes that need to occur after the reopening of the bridge. The other improvements we're making to detour routes are also intended to help reduce traffic congestion, even after the high bridge reopens.

Travel options

Answered questions

Q: Can we promote more local services in West Seattle to "stay local"?

A: Yes, [Sal the Salmon has promoted local businesses](#) and SDOT will continue to use creative means to do so. Councilmember Lisa Herbold is happy to use her weekly newsletter to promote local services. We're thankful for the Office of Economic Development (OED)'s work to fund small businesses throughout the pandemic.

Q: Could new park-and-ride lots be set up near the low bridge?

A: There is a [Spokane St Park & Ride](#) located under the high bridge, which is rarely used to its current capacity. This is a place with convenient access to transit that goes over the low bridge, as well as walking and biking across the low bridge.

Unanswered questions

Q: What is SDOT doing to identify and address the different needs of commuters versus industrial/commercial users?

A: We have done extensive data collection and analysis surrounding low bridge volumes and vehicle classification to better understand the bridge usage. We are supportive of approved users to make

urgent and unplanned trips across the low bridge. We have also worked with the University of Washington Supply Chain & Transportation Logistics Center, which provided us additional information about commercial vehicles use and need while the high bridge is closed. We continuously work with regional large employers on ways to promote alternative modes of transportation for their employees as more people begin to return to offices downtown and elsewhere in the region. We are also developing a Travel Options Rewards program to help encourage people to change a drive-alone commute trip to a multimodal or carpool option to prevent congestion.

Q: What are your suggestions for people who need to commute to the east side?

A: We recommend that you explore alternative commute options to driving single-occupancy vehicles, such as [state-issued rideshare plates](#) for carpools, [King County vanpools](#), biking, and transit. Transit riders and vanpool users can apply for access to the low bridge, and people biking already have access. Please check out [King County Metro's webpage](#) for transit opportunities to the east side. Also, check with your employer to see if they have any employee-commuter incentives or internal opportunities to travel in a different way, such as employer shuttles or [vanpools](#).

Q: Considering that you are adding 30,000 annual transit hours, will this mean King County Metro will be creating more jobs, or will this be spread out between the current Metro workers?

A: Over the course of 2021, King County Metro has been working hard to hire more drivers (including hiring back many drivers laid off during the worst months of the COVID-19 pandemic) to support returning service levels. These efforts support not only the 30,000 service hours planned for West Seattle, but also the restoration of suspended transit service across the city and county.

Q: Can you give West Seattle residents free public transportation until the bridge is reopened?

A: For people who live and/or work in West Seattle and South Park, our Flip Your Trip incentives program launching this month offers the opportunity to sign up to earn free rides on transit and micro-mobility. We also offer free vanpool. You can sign up at www.flipyourtrip.org, and find out more about travel options in general at the [Seattle Traffic](#) website.

Q: Can West Seattle residents be compensated for time, gas, depreciation on cars, and lost income for businesses? (3)

A: We are unable to compensate West Seattle residents. We appreciate the question and understand the impacts the bridge closure has had on residents.

Low bridge access

Answered questions

Q: Why can't you expand low bridge general public hours?

A: We expanded weekend hours in April 2021 so the low bridge is open to all drivers from 9 PM to 8 AM on Saturdays and Sundays. Any updates to the low bridge access policy are informed by the close traffic monitoring and data analysis being performed by our teams, as well as by input from community members. Data has shown that demand is still high on weekdays from 5 AM to 9 PM and on weekends

from 8 AM to 9 PM. The increased congestion at these hours would exceed available capacity on the bridge and impact emergency response, transit, and freight.

Q: Why can't Uber/Lyft use the low bridge during restricted hours?

A: To ensure reliable capacity and travel time for emergency vehicles, we can't expand access to all rideshare apps, including Uber and Lyft, during restricted hours. Our [low bridge access policy](#) outlines our goals and objectives for low bridge access center around health, life, and safety; mobility and system operations; and economic growth and sustainability. Rideshare apps can use the low bridge during general access hours (9 PM to 5 AM on weekdays and 9 PM to 8 AM on weekends).

Q: Are motorcycles allowed to use the low bridge and if not, why? (2)

A: Motorcycles and scooters (such as a Vespa) can use the [low bridge](#) from 9 PM to 5 AM on weekdays and from 9 PM to 8 AM on weekends. At all other hours, motorcycles are not currently allowed under the dynamic low bridge access policy. While an individual motorcycle is smaller than a car, it still requires roughly the same amount of room on all sides to travel safely. This is because a large truck or bus needs just as much room to stop safely when they are following a motorcycle as they do for any other kind of vehicle. While motorcycles could travel side by side, most motorcycles travel on their own and occupy an entire lane.

Note: The one exception to this policy is users who choose to walk a Vespa or other scooter/electric-assist mobility device (class 3 mobility device) across the low bridge pedestrian path. This is permitted, and you will not receive a ticket through automated enforcement on the low bridge.

Q: Will SDOT be offering low bridge passes for students who have to cross the Duwamish?

A: School buses and regular transit are allowed to use the low bridge. Students can also apply for [ORCA Youth Cards](#), allowing them to ride King County Metro transit at a discounted rate. The low bridge is not available for commuting, even to school, for single-occupancy vehicles. Students who carpool can also obtain [state-issued rideshare license plates](#) and then apply for low bridge access on our [webpage](#).

Q: Has SDOT considered a tolling system to mitigate traffic on the low bridge? (2)

A: We're reducing congestion on the low bridge – and ensuring timely access for emergency vehicles, transit, and freight – by giving access to specific user groups, such as on-call medical workers and patients receiving life-saving treatment, based on need and priority. A toll would require a public vote, and might raise equity concerns because it would open access to those who could pay rather than for specific groups who need to use it for urgent trips. Restricting low bridge access is temporary while the high bridge is closed.

Q: Is 9 PM the best time to open the low bridge to the public? There's a backup at 8:58 PM every night.

A: Unfortunately, a backup is likely to occur right before the restriction is lifted at whatever time the bridge becomes unrestricted. The low bridge is opened to the general public at 9 PM because the traffic demand is still high on weekdays and weekends until 9 PM.

Q: Are you coordinating the Terminal 5 opening with the Port of Seattle? (2)

A: Yes, we're working closely with the Northwest Seaport Alliance, which is the marine cargo operating the partnership of the Port of Seattle and Port of Tacoma. Terminal 5's first berth is expected to open in early 2022. Freight is an incredibly important part of our system and that's why we need to ensure things flow smoothly.

Unanswered questions

Q: When can the general public access the low bridge?

A: The general public can access the low bridge between 9 PM and 5 AM on weekdays and 9 PM and 8 AM on Saturdays and Sundays. People walking, rolling, using an electric foot scooter, or biking can cross the bridge at any time. If you use the bridge during unauthorized hours, you will receive a \$75 fine.

Q: Why can't 12-hour night shift medical workers use the low bridge?

A: In April, we expanded access to on-call health care workers. Because of limited capacity on the low bridge, we prioritized on-call workers that have to reach their shifts within 30 minutes.

Q: Why can't trucks going to the Port and Terminal 5 go around like other freight carriers coming to West Seattle rather than all getting to use the low bridge?

A: All freight vehicles greater than 10,001 GVWR can use the low bridge. The low bridge is a critical heavy freight corridor, particularly given the proximity to the Port and shipping terminals. Hundreds of freight trucks require access to the low bridge each day to move goods throughout the city, region, and country. By prioritizing freight movement on the low bridge, we're working to decrease heavy trucks along detour routes and maintain the economic health of our supply chains.

Q: What happens during an emergency response event in which a boat causes the lower bridge to open? Does the boat wait or is the emergency vehicle redirected?

A: Per US Coast Guard regulation, maritime traffic has priority over vehicles (with exceptions if approved by the Coast Guard). However, the regulations do provide the bridge operator some discretion if an emergency arises. If an emergency vehicle is in-bound and the bridge operator is made aware with sufficient time to notify mariners that the bridge opening will be delayed, the Bridge Operator can delay the opening.

Q: In the future, can there be set timeframes for maritime traffic to go under the low bridge?

A: Federal waterway navigation laws require that maritime traffic and crossings are prioritized. We cannot restrict maritime traffic on the Duwamish, but have contacted our partners at the Coast Guard to request that they avoid opening while the low bridge is open to general traffic, especially around 9PM and 5AM.

Q: Will the increased traffic from the additional Port opening be better regulated?

A: The Port of Seattle is one of many businesses that help fuel the thriving economy in Seattle. We are working with the Port and recognize that in order to accommodate the increased truck traffic traveling

to Terminal 5, we will need to further restrict low bridge access for some users. We'll work closely with existing bridge users in advance of any changes.

Q: Why are real estate agents not able to apply for low bridge access?

A: Currently, we aren't expanding low bridge access to real estate agents. Real estate agents do not fit into the West Seattle-based restaurant or retail business user group category, who can use the low bridge only for urgent trips. We're prioritizing these businesses because of the disproportionate impact on these sectors by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q: How are the fines being collected for bridge abuse? How much has been fined?

A: Unauthorized vehicles on the low bridge will receive a \$75 ticket for every trip. The low bridge is photo enforced, and you will receive a ticket in the mail within a week or two of crossing. The Seattle Municipal Court handles the citation process.

Replacement planning

Answered questions

Q: Once the bridge is reopened, will work continue to plan for a replacement?

A: Yes, replacement planning work will continue. In our current study, we're focused on determining the best location for the eventual replacement. Future work could entail pursuing funding for the future replacement and initiating the final planning, permitting, and design work as we approach the end of the bridge's service life.

Q: What is the plan for light rail on the new bridge? (6)

A: Current schedules for eventual replacement of the West Seattle High-Rise Bridge and the Sound Transit West Seattle to Ballard Link Extension (WSBLE) project do not align. However, in parallel with our replacement concept evaluation, we are studying the potential challenges and opportunities of a joint light-rail and vehicular bridge to better understand if a joint structure warrants further study in the unlikely event that circumstances change and project timelines align. Regardless of this investigation, both agencies are planning future work in this constrained corridor and need to be coordinated. Our ongoing planning and coordination helps inform each other's work.

Unanswered questions

Q: What is the plan if repair measures fail before a permanent solution is implemented? (2)

A: In addition to the required routine bridge inspection, the continual 24/7 monitoring devices installed in the high bridge will allow us to detect and address any issues. While we expect the repair work to be successful, we are conducting the replacement planning effort which will save months of time should the department need to respond in the unlikely event of another emergency.

Q: Are we considering an immersed tunnel for replacement?

A: Yes. As part of our replacement planning study, we're exploring 4 replacement concepts in locations near the bridge. Long-range planning for replacement concepts will consider potential locations on or

near the high bridge. These replacement concept locations are just north and south of the bridge, in alignment with the existing bridge, and underground in a tunnel.

Q: Acknowledging that the current bridge was built correctly, but still failed unexpectedly, is the City planning to open the replacement bridge ahead of the 2060 end-of-life expectation for the repaired bridge?

A: As we continue to work to repair the West Seattle High-Rise Bridge (high bridge), we are also [continuing to plan for an eventual high bridge replacement](#) so that we are ready when the current bridge nears the end of its service life around 2060.

Outreach and engagement

Unanswered questions

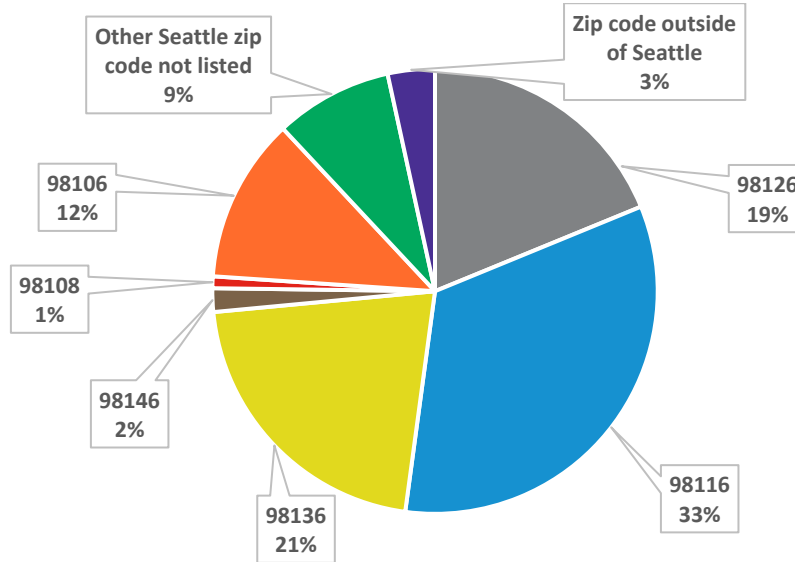
Q: Have we acknowledged that the West Seattle Bridge is on Duwamish Land? Can we give a special lane for tribal members when the bridge reopens?

A: We acknowledge that we are on the land of the Coast Salish People here in Seattle, and that our work should prioritize those whose original land we are on. As such, safe access to and from culturally significant sites along the Duwamish River has been of paramount importance to us. That is why the first thing we committed to doing on West Marginal Way SW, once funding was secured, was an important set of improvements to, from, and around the Duwamish Longhouse and Cultural Center (the Longhouse). In 2021, SDOT will build an interim pedestrian signal and painted crosswalk at the Duwamish Longhouse. This interim signal will stop traffic for people crossing West Marginal Way SW. SDOT will plan and design a permanent signal for this same location in as soon as 2022. Additionally, SDOT will install a sidewalk on the west side of West Marginal Way SW in 2021 between the Duwamish Longhouse and SW Idaho St. The new sidewalk will provide direct access for people in wheelchairs and rolling to the Duwamish Longhouse from the parking lots on the east side of West Marginal Way SW and meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards.

Poll results

Four poll questions were released at different times during the presentation. The results were shared with the attendees after each poll closed.

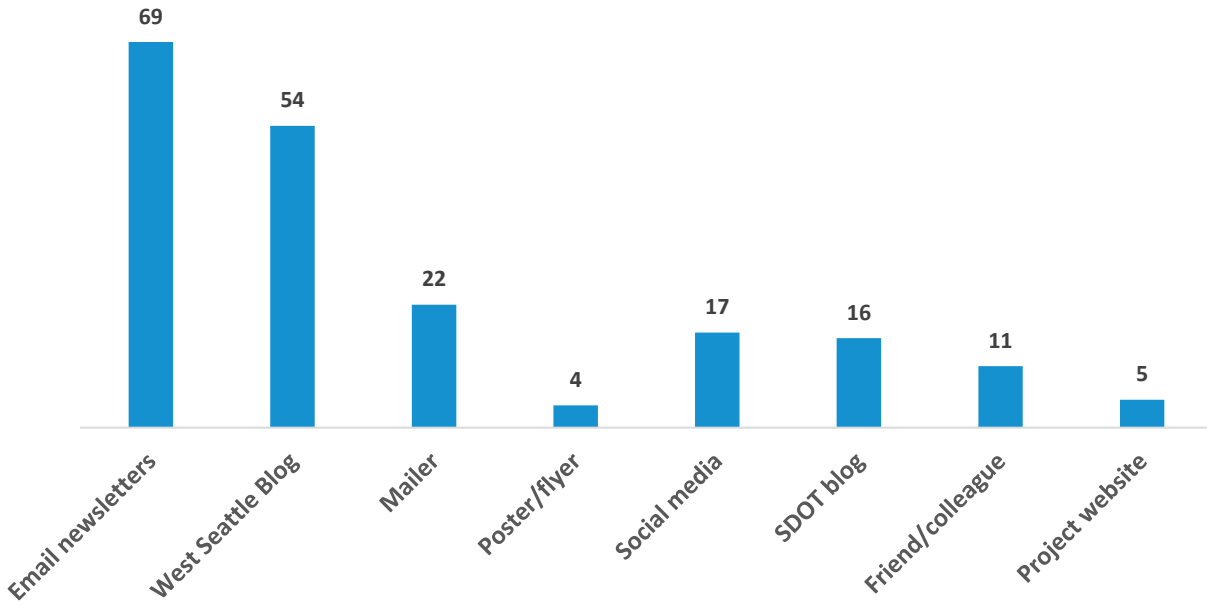
Question 1 | Which zip code are you tuning in from?



Zip code	Count	Percentage
98126	22	19%
98116	39	33%
98136	25	21%
98146	2	2%
98108	1	1%
98106	14	12%
Other Seattle zip code not listed	10	9%
Zip code outside of Seattle	4	3%

Total respondents | 117

Question 2 | How did you hear about this meeting? (Check all that apply)*

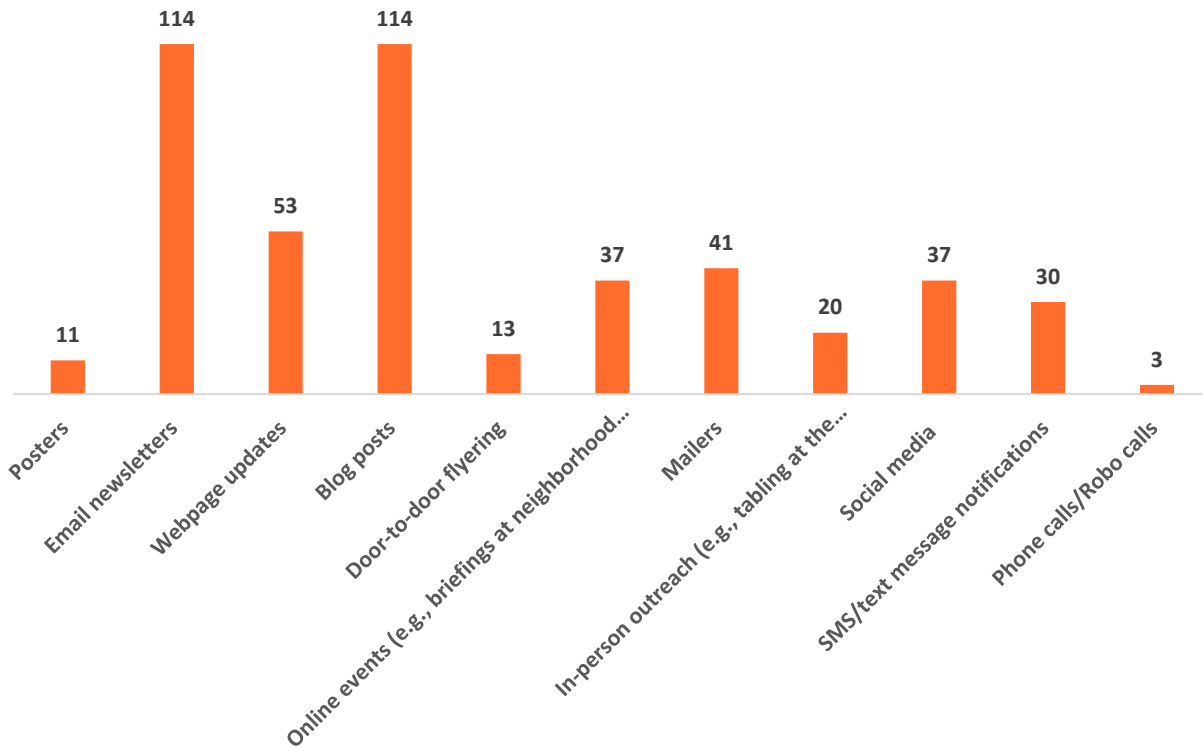


Update type	Count
Email newsletters	69
West Seattle Blog	54
Mailer	22
Poster/flyer	4
Social media	17
SDOT blog	16
Friend/colleague	11
Project website	5

Total respondents | 127

*Respondents could select multiple choices; hence, the count of responses does not match the number of total respondents

Question 3 | How do you want to receive West Seattle Bridge Program updates in the future? (Check all that apply)*

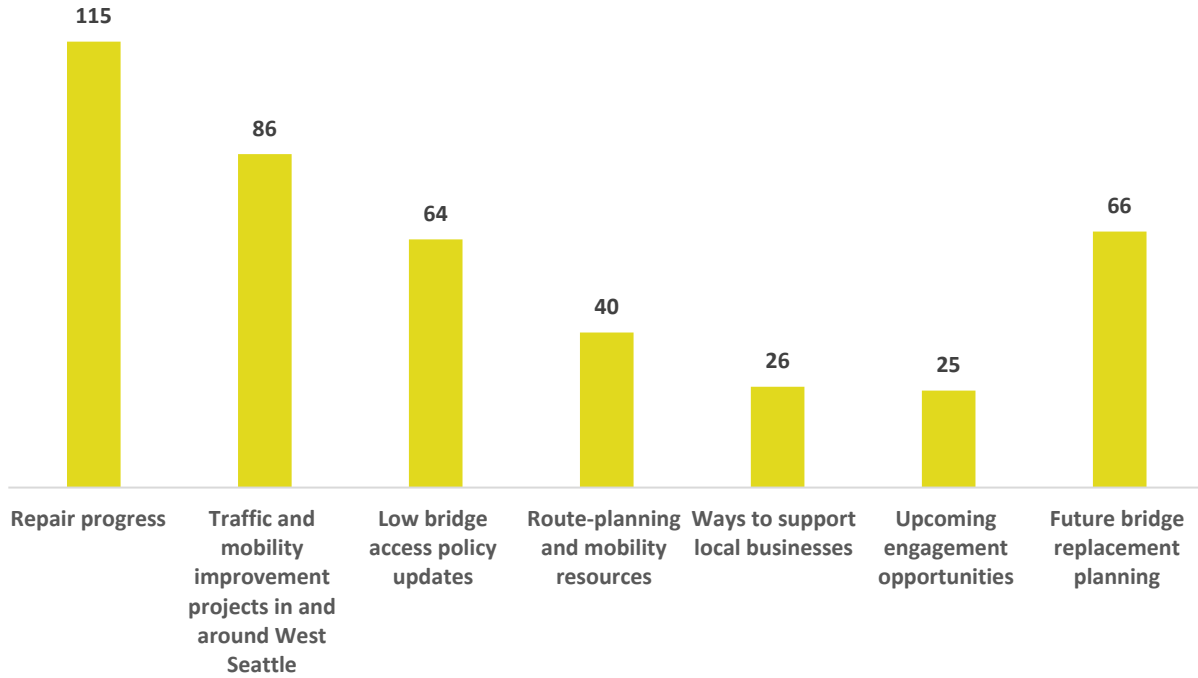


Update type	Count
Posters	11
Email newsletters	114
Webpage updates	53
Blog posts	114
Door-to-door flyering	13
Online events (e.g., briefings at neighborhood associations, other community meetings)	37
Mailers	41
In-person outreach (e.g., tabling at the Farmers Market or other community events)	20
Social media	37
SMS/text message notifications	30
Phone calls/Robo calls	3

Total respondents | 131

*Respondents could select multiple choices; hence, the count of responses does not match the number of total respondents

Question 4 | When you hear from SDOT, what program updates are most important to you? (Check all that apply)*



Update topic	Count
Repair progress	115
Traffic and mobility improvement projects in and around West Seattle	86
Low bridge access policy updates	64
Route-planning and mobility resources	40
Ways to support local businesses	26
Upcoming engagement opportunities	25
Future bridge replacement planning	66

Total respondents | 132

*Respondents could select multiple choices; hence, the count of responses does not match the number of total respondents

Next steps

We sincerely appreciate the community's engagement with the West Seattle Bridge Program. We thank the West Seattle and the Duwamish Valley communities for their patience and resilience.

The Q&A session and the poll results informed the project team about key community interests and concerns. We will use this information to highlight topics that the community is most interested in in our updates. We also learned which outreach activities work best for the public and reach the largest audience. The project team will continue to keep the public updated through our webpage, email updates, blog posts, and other outreach methods. We will also respond directly to individuals who have reached us through westseattlebridge@seattle.gov or our hotline, (206) 400-7511.