



May 4, 2020

To: Mayor Jenny Durkan

Councilmembers: Herbold, Pedersen, Gonzalez, Morales, Sawant, Juarez, Strauss, Lewis, and Mosqueda

CC: Sam Zimbabwe

On behalf of the residents of the Highland Park, South Delridge and Riverview neighborhoods, HPAC is requesting a timely, comprehensive and detailed traffic mitigation and enhanced transit plan with a commitment to react to *real-time* problems for the neighborhoods of Highland Park, Riverview and South Delridge swiftly throughout the duration of the West Seattle Bridge closure. We have outlined several areas that need to be addressed before May 31, 2020, when traffic will increase as the stay at home order begins to lift.

As you know, this area is in the direct path of two of the alternate routes to the First Avenue South bridge, via SW Holden/Highland Park Way on the north, and Roxbury/Cloverdale on the south. These three neighborhoods are mainly residential and have had limited street infrastructure improvements over the last 25 years or more. The impact of additional vehicle traffic is already being felt, particularly on streets that were not designed to handle 20,000 vehicles a day, let alone up to 100,000 vehicles.

We are aware that the damage recently found on the West Seattle Bridge causing its subsequent closure has led to numerous impacts echoing across the peninsula, but we are now in week 7 of the closure and very few of the public concerns that have been raised have been adequately addressed. From all public accounts, the City of Seattle is supposed to have a plan in place if/when an earthquake happens. Were there no plans made if bridges and other infrastructure fail, including the West Seattle Bridge? Why are none of these plans, if they exist, being put into place?

The response from SDOT has been underwhelming to say the least, particularly having to wait TWO YEARS before the West Seattle Bridge is to be repaired or replaced. This is untenable and unacceptable for the residents of West Seattle.

We raised many suggestions and concerns to SDOT at HPAC's April 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, a meeting which we had to repeatedly request for them to attend. We would like to see proactive and ongoing engagement from SDOT with our neighborhoods throughout this situation.

Overall, we want to know how will SDOT "tweak" the traffic flow to allow the 100,000 vehicles to flow on/ off the peninsula? Having tens of thousands of vehicles snake through our neighborhoods on roads that are not built for that traffic flow requires out-of-the box thinking from SDOT and a mutual commitment between the City of Seattle and the public who live, work, and will eventually be going back to school, in the area.

**Issues and areas that need to be addressed before the stay at home order is lifted:**

1. At the intersection of Highland Park Way SW and SW Holden St:

- A left-hand turn signal is needed for turning onto SW Holden from Highland Park Way/9th Ave SW northbound. Currently, traffic coming up the hill on Highland Park Way and going right does not stop, with SW Holden being so narrow, only one car being turning onto SW Holden, so traffic trying to turn left are stuck at the light for several cycles or cutting through SW Portland St at higher speeds.
  - Extra traction on the uphill southbound lane on Highland Park Way.
  - Separate green signals for pedestrians and drivers in the northwest corner of the intersection.
2. Traffic signal adjustments to address traffic backups at the following intersections:
    - Add a left hand turn signal at 16th Ave SW and SW Holden St as previously requested for over the last 6 years.
    - Delridge Way SW and SW Holden St.
    - Orchard St. and Delridge Way SW
    - 8th St and SW Roxbury St.
  3. Traffic calming features on our neighborhood streets:
    - For the school zones of Chief Sealth HS, Roxhill Elementary, Sanislo Elementary and Highland Park Elementary.
    - Police presence to curb excessive speeding on 16th Ave SW
    - Signage at 4-way intersections to ease transit for vehicles, bikes and pedestrians. Signs along SW Thistle St at 20th and 18th Ave. Stop sign at 11th and Kenyon St.
    - Work with the neighborhoods to identify streets to become one-way to help mitigate cut-through traffic.
  4. Turning onto SW Holden St from streets both east and west of Delridge Way is extremely difficult with increased traffic.
    - Mitigation requested.
  5. West Marginal Way S:
    - Increase the number of lanes to get onto the on ramp for the 1st Ave bridge.
    - Request for better bike lane marking at the intersection with Highland Park Way SW
    - Request to fill potholes and fix road deterioration near the railroad tracks
    - Request for two lanes northbound at the intersection with Highland Park Way SW
  6. Pedestrian path on the east side of Highland Park Way after the SW Holden intersection:
    - Request to consider widening the path to allow for more use
    - Request to clean moss off from path
  7. Left hand turn signal requests at the following intersections:
    - 16th Ave SW and SW Holden St
    - 16th Ave SW and SW Roxbury St.
    - 8th Ave SW and Roxbury St.
  8. King County Metro Route 131
    - Make a **bus only lane** starting at SW Holden and Highland Park Way going on through to West Marginal Way then over the 1st Ave bridge towards Seattle.
    - Request to adjust signal at Highland Park Way SW and SW Holden for bus priority
    - Increase Route 131 service.

9. We want to clearly understand the traffic patterns throughout the peninsula. SDoT has never taken into consideration the east-west traffic flow throughout West Seattle. We want to know what routes people are taking and which streets are becoming major arterials. Monitoring should be placed at the following intersections:

- SW Orchard St. and SW 35th Ave
- SW Orchard St. and Delridge Way SW
- SW Holden St. and SW 35th Ave
- SW Holden St. and Delridge Way SW
- SW Thistle St. and California Ave SW
- SW Thistle St. and SW 35th Ave
- SW Thistle St. and Delridge Way SW
- SW Trenton St. and SW 35th Ave
- SW Trenton St. and Delridge Way SW
- SW Barton St. and SW 35th Ave
- SW Henderson St. and Delridge Way SW
- SW Henderson St. and 9th Ave SW
- SW Roxbury St. and 35th Ave SW
- SW Roxbury St. and Delridge Way SW
- SW Roxbury St. and 9th Ave SW
- Olson PI SW and 1st Ave S

10. For the City of Seattle to increase Metro bus service for access for east and west transit on the peninsula itself i.e. access to California St./ Junction areas only offer the 128, which is hard for the rest of the peninsula to get to without using their cars.

- The transfers through the Westwood Village has been difficult for Highland Park riders since the reroute of the 136/137. Highland Park and Delridge Neighborhoods have been designated food deserts by the city.

11. A commitment from the City to repair the streets that were damaged during the bridge closure.

- Once traffic resumes we will have a better understanding of which of the streets that will be, but assume at least: Roxbury St, Delridge Way SW, SW 35th Ave, Highland Park Way SW, and Olson Way SW.

12. Heavy freight routes clearly designated and enforced.

- This type of vehicle will cause massive and immediate damage to our more residential streets (i.e. Holden St) and will significantly slow traffic since these types of vehicles will have issues turning the tight corners. Both Avalon St. and Roxbury with their wider lanes and concrete enforced lanes are better suited for this type of transit.

13. **We want an immediate bridge replacement plan** without a \$33 million expenditure for the current bridge or a two-year evaluation period. SDoT's current plan will put an undue burden on the daily lives of our West Seattle residents.

Please learn from the I35 bridge failure and replacement in Minneapolis and the rapid rebuild of the Genoa, Italy bridge. No one waited for two years before making a decision on viability - just replace this bridge.

**Lastly, but most immediate: Reverse the closing SW Trenton St from 17th Ave SW to 10th Ave SW as part of the 'Stay Healthy Streets' initiative.**

- SW Trenton is a minor arterial road with usage of 7,000 vehicles pre-Covid and pre-bridge collapse. The street is used by residents of Highland Park and Riverview to access Westwood Village Shopping Center and buses/ cars to access Highland Park Elementary. This closure has blocked off the entrance and parking lot to the school.
- Please identify another location to serve our area with this innovative and needed initiative.

The residents of Highland Park, Riverview and South Delridge look forward to receiving acknowledgement about our concerns, an immediate action plan, and plan for how the City and SDOT will engage with our neighborhoods on immediate and long range solutions. We look forward to your response. Our next meeting will be May 27, 2020 via zoom and would appreciate an update on the progress of these requests.

Sincerely,

Gunner Scott, chair  
Marianne McCord, Vice Chair  
Craig Rankin, Vice Chair  
Kay Kirpatrick, member at large