

West Seattle Transportation Priorities

West Seattle Chamber of Commerce

Government Affairs Committee

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Over the last few years the City of Seattle has undertaken a number of transportation planning initiatives that identified areas of needed improvement in our West Seattle community. Some of these items were specifically mentioned in the Move Seattle levy that was passed by the voters in 2015. Other identified needs are identified for work in the Parks Improvement District that was approved by voters in 2014. Finally there is the upcoming Sound Transit 3 ballot measure that we will see later this year. It is important that we have a vocal and firm voice in advocating for the needed improvements here on the West Seattle peninsula.

To move our west Seattle interests and priorities forward and to insure that these are incorporated and that funding is allocated into these plans the West Seattle Chamber of Commerce's Governmental Affairs Committee (GAC) brings forward this Transportation Priorities document. Therefore, we are using this document to bring forward an assessment of priorities for the West Seattle community and place these specific ideas to the City of Seattle for consideration in their planning processes.

The purpose of this undertaking was to take a detailed look at the West Seattle /Delridge transportation infrastructure and identify areas where improvement and investment are needed.

The GAC analyzed and discussed transportation as it related to the following areas:

- Neighborhoods (Alki, Delridge, Fauntleroy, High Point, Morgan, Pigeon Point, etc.)
- Elements of the Transportation Systems (streets, sidewalks, bridges, traffic control, bike, etc.)
- Stakeholders (pedestrians, freight, employers, consumers, seniors, low-income, businesses, etc.)
- Heavily used areas, corridors and gateways

REQUEST FOR ACTION:

The West Seattle Chamber of Commerce requests that the Mayor, Seattle City Council, Seattle Department of Transportation and the various citizens appointed transportation committees appointed by the city give serious consideration to these transportation improvements that have been identified as a priority in this document. Then work with the West Seattle community in deciding how to effectively allocate future transportation dollars.

California Avenue SW

between Admiral Way and Fautleroy Way SW

Description of area:

The section of California Avenue SW between Admiral Way and Fautleroy Way SW (section between SW Alaska and Fautleroy Way SW carries more than 12,000 vehicles per day); is part of the RapidRide route; and is the primary street that connects Morgan Residential Urban Village to the West Seattle Junction Hub Urban Village.

Update: Existing documentation regarding development of the West Seattle and Morgan Junction focus almost exclusively on the design of the commercial corridors. There is limited definitive information on whether or not the requests were implemented in their entirety or in part. Setting aside the issue of implementation, the request are in and of themselves non-specific – e.g. they do not identify with sufficient specificity the problem areas along the considerable stretch of California Avenue between Admiral Way and Fautleroy Way SW.

Recommendation: Revisit the specific requests with DPD directly and in greater detail to determine if indeed the areas of concern have not been addressed. Develop a more detailed set of requests that identifies particular locations for improvement.

Reviewed/Related Documents: Morgan Junction Neighborhood Design Guidelines (REV 2013); West Seattle Junction Neighborhood Design Guidelines (REV 2013); West Seattle Triangle Urban Design Framework (REV 2011); Seattle 2035 Plan (2015)

Requests:

- Repave section(s) of California Avenue SW as warranted and enforce timely repair of road work required for underground property maintenance of hookups to Seattle Public Utilities water and waste water lines.
- Consider utilizing concrete in high-traffic transit lanes and stops
- Make pedestrian improvements along the corridor
- Consider bike enhancements along the corridor

Benefits:

Improves safety

Makes most of infrastructure

Investments by locating improvements near density

Who Benefits:

Pedestrians & Bicyclist

Nearby residents

ADA/seniors/Transit/Motorist

Admiral Way

Description of area:

This heavily used east/west arterial through West Seattle connects the North and West quadrants of the community to the West Seattle bridge. Admiral way is one of two routes to access Alki Beach and carries many users daily to and from the park(s) there. And Admiral is the core of the Admiral Junction.

We will look at Admiral in two parts East and West:

EAST:

The east stretch of admiral Way between the west foot of the West Seattle bridge and California Avenue SW has been recently rechanneled. The new realignment plus heavy speed enforcement have improved traffic flow and safety.

Suggested improvements:

- Clarify bike access. West bound cyclists can be confused as to the proper way to traverse the Harbor Avenue/Avalon Way/Spokane intersection up to Admiral. East bound cyclists have the same issue. Signage is non-intuitive and should have more study.
- West bound cyclists are caught at the Admiral View Point (Belvidere Park) by a lane pinch at the totem pole.
- East bound cyclists contend with poorly maintained curb lane (debris, continuous drainage, potholes).
- The curb lane on west bound Admiral Way at California Avenue SW should be "Right turn only except for transit" lane.
- Use the overhead information sign. For example post time to I-5 entrances and perhaps Seneca.

WEST:

The west side of Admiral Way from 63rd Avenue SW to the west side of California Avenue SW serves as both a route to and from Alki and the main arterial accessing homes and schools in the surrounding neighborhoods. SDOT should revisit their plan that is under implementation taking into the account the following.

Suggested improvements:

- Upgrade the controls at the intersection of 59th Avenue SW. Currently there is a crosswalk and pedestrian controlled stoplight. Poor sight lines, high traffic and pedestrian volume, excessive speeding and an irregular layout make this intersection dangerous with or without the stoplight. A "stop all ways" intersection should be considered.
- Newly installed stoplight at 47th Avenue SW helps to manage the momentum down the hill during the day. Perhaps sue the sensors so that the light flashes red all ways at night.

- Unattended “Your Speed” signs have become ineffective without enforcement.
- SDOT should reconsider the number of parking spaces that face elimination in their plan. Admiral way is wide enough in most spots (lots of asphalt) to leave at least some of the parking and add the desired dedicated bicycle lane at the same time. Could parking be restricted during peak commute times for example?

35th Avenue SW

Between Fauntleroy Way SW & Barton

Street

Description of requested improvements:

Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) has responded to community safety concerns for the 35th Avenue SW corridor in 2015 which addresses most 2011 Transportation Policy requests. New opportunities are possible with recent city announcements.

Requests:

- Annually report the results of 2015 corridor safety projects to the community
- Perform the 35th Avenue SW paving project request in the Move Seattle Levy by 2018
- Implement bus lanes at signaled intersections allowing transit to jump the traffic queues.
- Provide left turn signals where transit turns to intersecting streets.
- Ensure that potential pedestrian zone development is closely tied to SDOT's short term plans to coordinate the neighborhood projects at:
 - o 35th Avenue SW at SW Morgan Street
 - o 35th Avenue SW at SW Holden Street
 - o 35th Avenue SW at Barton St
 - o 35th Avenue SW at Roxbury Street

See:

seattle.gov/dpd/cs/groups/pan/@pan/documents/web_informtional/dpds022272.pdf

See maps of all the potential West Seattle pedestrian zones including the nine in White Center.

Who Benefits:

Motorists, Transit Riders, Pedestrians, Bicyclists, Adjacent residential neighborhoods, Persons with disabilities, Seniors, Low income residents and Developers and new retail shops in the pedestrian zones.

Ongoing concerns:

- Improve safety for pedestrians
- Continue to monitor for speed reduction
- Improve parking conditions
- Re-assess if the road diet is having its intended results
- Has the reduced speed limit had its desired results
- Repair pavement (project proposed as part of the 2015 Move Seattle Levy)
- Provide bicycle facilities on adjacent (parallel) greenway routes
- Provide more SPD enforcement, especially during peak commute times

Delridge Avenue SW

Between SW Holden and the West Seattle Bridge

Description of area:

This section of Delridge Avenue SW between SW Holden and the West Seattle Bridge carries more than 20,000 vehicles per day. It is the only north/south arterial that serves Delridge, Pigeon Point, Roxbury and the Highland Park neighborhoods. Additionally, it is a primary connector to the White Center community. Delridge Way SW also provides a vital connection to Westwood-Highland Park Urban Village.

Delridge Way SW is used by a population that is heavily reliant on transit with limited access to a vehicle. A great deal of thought should be exercised by SDOT and ST to make sure that the desires of the community are considered in any transit related changes. The Move Seattle levy seems to indicate that Delridge Way SW would become a Rapid Ride line. The Seattle Transit Master Plan designates Delridge Way SW as a Rapid Ride line. Great care should be taken to not denigrate the level of service that this corridor now has. The elimination of any stops should be an item of last resort for this heavily transit oriented community.

Requests:

- Repave this section of Delridge Way SW
- Consider utilizing concrete in high-traffic transit lanes and stops
- Upgrade pedestrian facilities along this entire corridor. Install new sidewalks in some areas, add more dedicated/controlled crosswalks and upgrade curb ramps for ADA/Seniors
- Consider bike enhancements
- Work to solve the drainage issues specifically in the Brandon Node
- Give this entire stretch a more boulevard feel instead of just a piece of concrete running through a mostly residential area
- Work with OED to enhance the recently developing business district(s)

Pedestrian Zones

Pedestrian zones can boost economic development and help distribute densification.

The pedestrian retail areas (pedestrian zones) ordinance (Ordinance 124770) was adopted by the Seattle City Council on May 11, 2015 and signed by the mayor on May 15, 2015. The ordinance went into effect on June 1, 2015.

This legislation amended the Land Use Code and the official Land Use Map to add or expand a pedestrian designation in 42 neighborhoods and modifies the development standards that apply in pedestrian zones to meet the changing needs of these neighborhood business districts.

A pedestrian zone identifies the core of a neighborhood business district and protects and promotes active commercial destinations. In commercial zones outside of these areas a wider range of uses is allowed at street level including a broad range of commercial uses, housing and live-work units.

Project Goals

The city's goal is to identify and map areas in neighborhoods around the city where residents could meet their daily needs. In pedestrian zones, people are invited to park their car conveniently and walk from business to business if they choose to drive in a pedestrian retail area.

By adding a pedestrian retail area designation to a neighborhood commercial (NC) zone Seattle's Department of Planning and Development aims to:

- Preserve areas that offer a mix of street-level, pedestrian-oriented destinations accessible by foot, bike and transit.
- Identify and encourage areas that have potential to transition to a pedestrian-oriented neighborhood business district.
- Encourage more walking, biking and transit use within neighborhood business districts by preserving and promoting active destinations.

West Seattle Intersections

Spokane/Chelan/Marginal Way/Lower Spokane/Delridge Way SW

Description of area:

High traffic intersection that is heavily utilized by bicyclists, freight, commuters and marine passage. This intersection is confusing for both pedestrians and bicyclists. Also, has poor lighting and visibility.

Request:

Implement Lower Spokane Street Freight Only Lanes Pilot Project/Feasibility Study as recommended in the West Seattle Bridge/Duwamish Waterway Corridor Whitepaper and Priority Investment List (9-12-2015). This study should take into account future operating capacity of Terminal 5.

Delridge Way SW & SW Andover Street

Description of area:

High traffic intersection that is utilized by large freight. Intersection supports North Delridge Business District and one of West Seattle's largest employers (Nucor).

Request:

Add light at Nucor/business park driveway onto SW Andover Street to allow for vehicles to exit driveway without blocking SW Andover Street.

SW Avalon Way/SW Yancy/30th Avenue SW

Description of area:

Avalon Way SW is a high-speed arterial with a number of apartments and condos on each side. No controlled crossings between SW Genesee and SW Spokane Street. There is significant pedestrian activity due to the Luna Park businesses, Rapid Ride Stop and Delridge Skate Park.

Request:

Install a controlled intersection and improve pedestrian signage.

59th avenue SW & SW Admiral

Description of area:

Main through street for east/west bound commuters to/from Alki area with uncontrolled crosswalk adjacent to residential homes, and business.

Request:

Install a controlled intersection and improve pedestrian facilities.

Fauntleroy Way SW and Oregon

Description of area:

High traffic with designated 3rd right turn lane for traffic turning west on to SW Oregon

Request: Do not implement plan to eliminate this turn lane.

Fauntleroy Way SW and Avalon

Description of area:

High traffic intersection with designated 3rd right turn lane for traffic turning east on Avalon Way

Request: Do not implement plan to eliminate this turn lane.

Bicycle Master Plan

The City of Seattle adopted its Bicycle Master Plan in March 2015. This was an update from the plan that was originally passed by the Seattle City Council in April 2014.

The master plan benefits from input from active bicyclists in Seattle (and particularly West Seattle) who continue to monitor the plan's implementation. As a community we should trust that local cyclists will advocate for safe and useful bicycling amenities in West Seattle and access to our geographic neighbors. The Chamber's role should be to help align the business community needs to the objectives in the Bicycle Master plan vision and implementation.

Pedestrian Master Plan

This plan is still in the process of being completed at some point in 2016. The vision statement for the plan is:

The Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan is a long-term action plan to make Seattle the most walkable city in the nation. The plan establishes the policies, programs, design criteria and projects that will further enhance pedestrian safety, comfort and access in all of Seattle's neighborhoods. Through the Pedestrian master Plan, Seattle will make its transportation system more environmentally, economically and socially sustainable.

How can members of the West Seattle Chamber's business community attract pedestrians?

West Seattle walkways offer challenges to pedestrians caused by lacking, broken, inferior infrastructure of our sidewalks.

- West Seattle is mostly well served by sidewalks in our junctions and this assists us in navigating our often dramatic elevation changes between parallel streets.
 - o Do we have adequate infrastructure to support purposeful walking to access employment, products and services? That is a question that Chamber members can assess by knowing their neighborhoods. If we have a need then SDOT should be engaged to consider a study of our proposals.
- The Move Seattle levy passed by the voters in 2015 included funding to improve "Safe Route to Schools" with the construction and renovation of 250 blocks of corner cuts and sidewalks connected to school sites.