

# West Seattle Bridge Safety Program

Low Bridge Policy Update  
April 8, 2021



City of Seattle

# Low Bridge Automated Enforcement and Equitable Access Update

## Changes on Low Bridge since January 11

- ~38% decrease in daily traffic

## Equity Focus

- Longer detour travel affecting everyone

## Temporary Excess Capacity

- Distributing in alignment with updated goals; informed by outreach
- All access is conditional except for transit, freight and emergency vehicles

## Preparing for future changes

- Most users will be given a monthly number of trips to take; these can be increased or decreased
- All conditional users will be allowed **fewer or no trips** in 2022



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# Access Updates - April 2021

- **Temporarily double the number of daily trips** allowed on the bridge and set a target for monthly trips for most users
- Update **weekend morning hours of restriction to 8am-9pm** (Saturday and Sunday); weekday restrictions remain 5am-9pm
- Add access for **Lifesaving Medical Treatment** and **On-Call Medical Providers**
- **Redefine and expand business access** to retail and restaurant sectors most impacted by COVID-19
- Align vanpool use with Department of Licensing **rideshare definition** to promote high-occupancy vehicle use
- **Maintain current access** for maritime/industrial business and ILWU Local 19

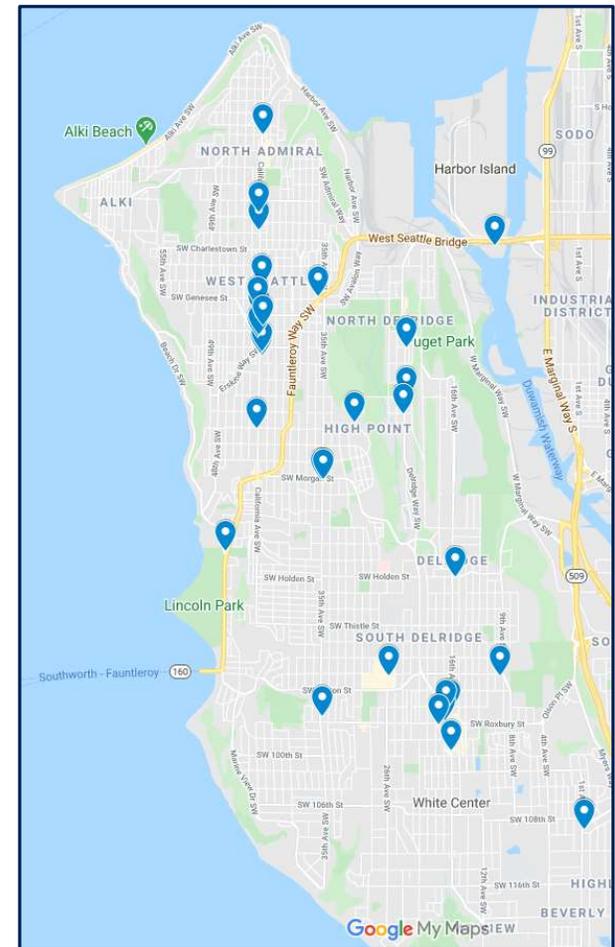
# Low bridge equitable access - goals

- Engage in community based and in-language outreach to ensure BIPOC perspectives are heard
- Use data to focus on most-impacted community members
- Level the distribution of low bridge access to address racial disparities
- Minimize the number of people receiving citations for using the low bridge



# Outreach update - approach

- **Community discussions** with essential workers, small business owners, low-income residents, Uber/Lyft drivers, seniors, BIPOC community orgs
- **Interviews with BIPOC owned and operated businesses** in West Seattle (Restaurants, landscapers, plumbers, assisted living centers, janitors, nail/hair salons)
- **Surveys** (healthcare workers, Harbor Island employees, social service providers in West Seattle)



BIPOC-owned businesses in West Seattle offered an interview.

# Outreach update - what we are hearing

- Travel time has doubled and sometimes tripled for people
- Challenges with increased cost of doing business as travel distance and time have increased
- Challenges over material sourcing as some companies no longer deliver to West Seattle due to bridge closure
- Concern over healthcare patients spending more time driving and sitting in discomfort in the car for a longer amount of time
- Delaying critical medical care due to increased distance/cost to reach their provider/emergency services
- Increased travel time impacts people getting to/from their workplaces, combined with increased gas costs
- Parents concerned about the need to take their child across the bridge for a medical emergency



# Program Goals and Objectives

Goals	Objectives
<b>Health, Life, and Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure reliable travel time for emergency vehicles at all times of day</li> <li>• Prioritize trips that improve patient and provider access to lifesaving medical treatment</li> </ul>
<b>Mobility and System Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain Spokane Street corridor performance throughout the day, including a 1 to 1 recovery time following a bridge opening or incident</li> <li>• Prioritize public transit, high-capacity modes, and high-occupancy vehicles</li> <li>• Reduce single-occupant travel and detour route congestion</li> </ul>
<b>Economic Growth and Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize freight movement to support economic health and decrease detour route traffic</li> <li>• Support businesses with critical and urgent needs including businesses impacted by COVID-19</li> </ul>

# Approach to Regulating Low Bridge Travel Privilege

- Allow **conditional, temporary travel privilege for user groups** supported by program goals and objectives and within the total trip allowance
- Set a **target for number of trips per month** for all conditional users that can be increased or decreased
- Hold the right to **revoke or reduce conditional user privileges** at any time
- Set vehicle capacity limits and hours of restriction to provide the greatest community benefit while **ensuring that emergency vehicles, freight and public transit** are always able to cross reliably
- Launch a **translated common application portal** to engage all potential users equitably and to provide consistent and timely information to all applicants



# Defining the User Groups - Medical

Must receive approval before using low bridge

## On-call Healthcare Providers access

- Permitted when traveling to or from an on-call medical shift
- Must be certified by employer (employer collecting plates or letter certifying on-call nature of employment)
- Application begins by the end of April

## Life Saving Medical Treatment access

- Permitted when travelling to or from a life-saving medical treatment appointment
- Permitted for medical need for shorter travel time if verified by the medical provider
- Application form and process is like disabled parking or WSF preferential medical access; must be renewed every 90 days
- **Applications in eight languages available tomorrow**

# Defining the User Groups - Business

Must receive approval before using low bridge; Updated application available by end of April

## Maritime/Industrial Businesses

- Access is permitted for urgent/unplanned trips for maritime and/or industrial businesses proximate to the low bridge
- Number of plates per business varies
- Number of trips: 5 per business per day

## Government Use

- Access is permitted for urgent/unplanned trips for 20+ government agencies
- Number of trips per month: agency specific targets are being set

## West Seattle business sectors: restaurant and retail

- Access is permitted for urgent/unplanned trips for West Seattle retail and restaurant sector businesses (600+ businesses)
- 3 registered plates allowed per business
- Number of trips per month: 10 per business (not per plate)

## ILWU Local 19 when dispatched to terminals from the hall at 3440 E. Marginal

- Up to 225 trips per day across all users

# Defining the User Groups - Transit and HOV

## Transit

- All transit and paratransit vehicles trips allowed without pre-authorization
- All school bus trips are allowed without pre-authorization

## Freight

- Vehicles over 10,000 GVWR allowed; no pre-authorization required

## Approved Vanpool, Shuttle and Rideshare Vehicles

- Employer shuttles
- Department of Licensing (DOL)-licensed rideshare vehicles, including vanpools
- Updated application form available by the end of April
- Must receive approval before using low bridge

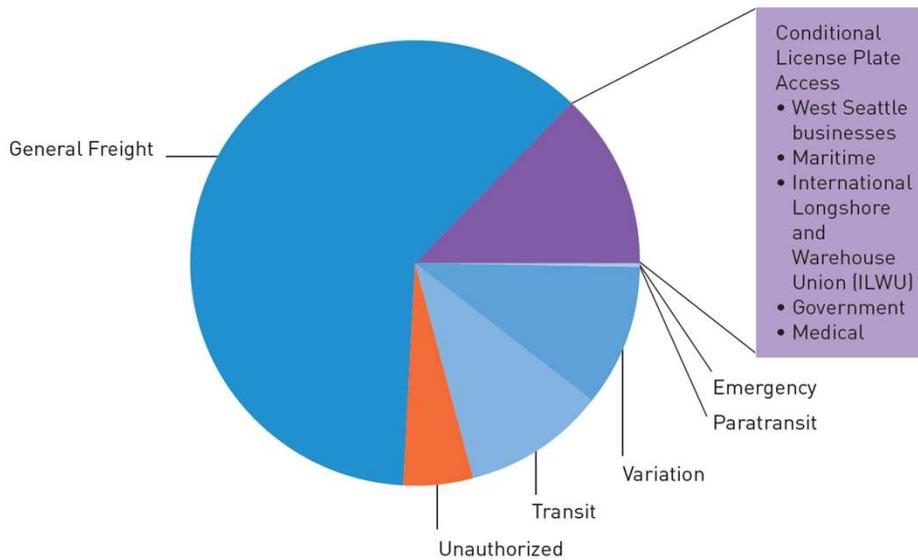


# Changes in Trips Per Day for 2021

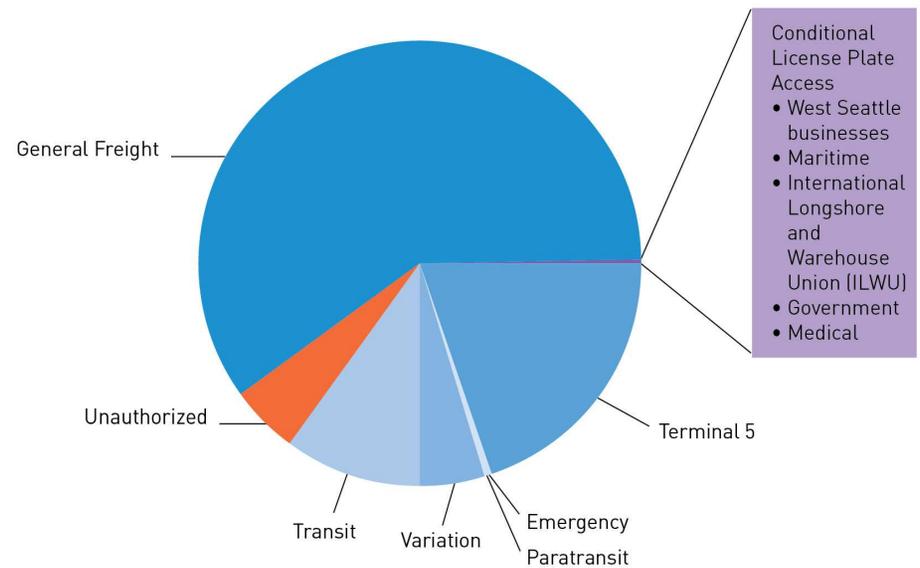
Conditional User Group	New allotment of trips per day (Q2-Q4 2021)	Old allotment of trips per day (Q1 2021)	Change from 2021 Q1
West Seattle Business <i>(note: definition now redefined for restaurant and retail sectors due to COVID-19 impacts)</i>	225	35	+190
Maritime and Industrial Businesses Proximate to Low Bridge	150	150	-
ILWU	225	225	-
Medical access (provider and recipient)	225	0	+225
Government	75	40	+35
Totals	900	450	+450

# Capacity Scenarios

2021 CURRENT CONDITIONS WITH EXPANDED MEDICAL AND BUSINESS



2022 POTENTIAL CONDITIONS WITH TERMINAL 5 OPEN



# Next Steps

- Outreach and engagement continues to inform our approach to regulating low bridge access
- Lifesaving Medical Treatment Access applications available tomorrow
- **Common application** for other trips available by the end of April
- **No new trips** are authorized until approval is received from SDOT and a license plate is added to the system; existing users remain unchanged through May 31
- Change in weekend restrictions hours (8 am to 9 pm) starts this Saturday and Sunday, April 10-11
- Monitoring and data analysis continues to inform the number of trips that can be taken monthly and prepare us for future changes to maintain the low bridge corridor

# Thank you!

[www.seattle.gov/transportation/WestSeattleBridge](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/WestSeattleBridge)

