



SR 99 Closure & Seattle Squeeze

City of Seattle Staff Toolkit for External Engagement

Last update: 11.29.18

The purpose of this communications toolkit is to provide guidance on cohesive SR 99 Closure and Seattle Squeeze messaging for City of Seattle departments. It contains:

- Elevator Statement
- Agency Partner Resources
- SDOT Internal Contacts
- Content Copy (Blogging & Newsletter Copy)
- Brand Story
- Presentation Slide Deck
- Social Media Suite

ELEVATOR STATEMENT

- WSDOT permanently closes the Alaskan Way Viaduct on January 11, 2019, and the new SR 99 tunnel opens three weeks later in early February.
- This closure, which is the longest highway closure in the history of the Puget Sound Region, is just the beginning. Over the next five years, private and public construction projects will continue to change how we move and deliver goods.
- Traffic disruption during this period is unavoidable and commutes are going to get longer. Everyone traveling to and through Seattle needs to have a plan.
- All this will be worth it. We're building a reimagined waterfront, more light rail, and other important investments to keep pace with our fast-growing city.

AGENCY PARTNER RESOURCES

SDOT:

- **Website:** www.seattle.gov/traffic
- **Know Before You Go:** <https://web6.seattle.gov/travelers>
- **Follow Our Blog:** <http://sdotblog.seattle.gov>
- **Twitter:** @seattledot | @SDOTtraffic
- **Email:** 684-ROAD@seattle.gov
- **Phone:** (206) 684-ROAD

WSDOT:

- **WSDOT Live Traffic Cameras:** www.wsdot.com/traffic/seattle/default.aspx
- **WSDOT Travel Times:** www.wsdot.com/traffic/traveltimes/default.aspx
- **Twitter:** @BerthaDigsSR99 | #Realign99
- **Website:** www.99tunnel.com | www.AlaskanWayViaduct.org
- **Email:** viaduct@wsdot.wa.gov

King County Metro:

- **King County Metro Trip Planning Resources:** www.kingcounty.gov/getready
- **Metro Transit Trip Planner:** <https://tripplanner.kingcounty.gov/>
- **Metro Matters Blog:** <https://kingcountymetro.blog/>
- **Twitter:** @kcmetrobus
- **Phone:** 206-553-3000

Sound Transit:

- **Sound Transit Trip Planner:** <https://www.soundtransit.org/tripplanner>
- **The Platform Blog:** <https://www.soundtransit.org/blog/platform>
- **Twitter:** @soundtransit
- **Phone:** 888-889-6368

SDOT INTERNAL CONTACTS

If you have questions regarding this toolkit, please contact the following SDOT contacts:

- Heather Marx, Director of Downtown Mobility, heather.marx@seattle.gov
- Meghan Shepard, Downtown Mobility Advisor, meghan.shepard@seattle.gov
- Molly Wright, Downtown Mobility Communications Lead, molly.wright@seattle.gov

CONTENT COPY (BLOGGING AND NEWSLETTER COPY)

When talking about the Seattle Squeeze, please ensure that all language is consistent with the [Seattle Squeeze Message Framework](#). This is our guiding document for speaking about the Seattle Squeeze and has been approved by the Mayor's Office and all City of Seattle departments.

Content copy:

As we build a better city together, how you get around is changing.

Beginning with WSDOT's permanent closure of the Alaskan Way Viaduct on January 11 and continuing over the next three years, Seattle is entering a new era of tough traffic. As we make important investments to help keep pace with our fast-growing city, our traffic is going to be even more difficult for everyone.

This new era of tough traffic begins when WSDOT permanently closes the Alaskan Way Viaduct, or SR 99 on January 11. Just before the new SR 99 tunnel opens to traffic in early February, travelers will experience the longest major highway closure the Puget Sound Region has ever seen – approximately three weeks without SR 99 in downtown Seattle.

Even after the new SR-99 tunnel opens, the tough times will continue; traffic will forever change how it moves to and through downtown Seattle. Throughout all of this, our City will continue to grow – and private and public megaprojects will continue to reduce capacity on our City streets and contribute to gridlock.

All this will be worth it. It won't be easy, but as we continue through this new era together, we will have a new SR 99 tunnel under downtown, a reimagined and reconnected waterfront with 20 acres of park, an expanded Washington State Convention Center, a new arena at Seattle Center, and more light rail to and from Seattle.

What's happening now?

Seattle's transportation landscape is drastically changing. Here's what's happening now:

- The opening of the [new SR 99 tunnel](#)
- The impending removal of WSDOT's aged [Alaskan Way Viaduct](#)
- Over 60 active construction cranes for megaprojects like the expansion of the Washington State Convention Center

Work is expected to intensify over the coming months.

Timeline of downtown major construction:

Alaskan Way Viaduct Closes

January 11, 2019 | WSDOT will close SR 99 through downtown Seattle for approximately three weeks to build roadway and ramp connections, realign SR 99 and open the new SR 99 tunnel.

SR 99 Tunnel Opens

Early February 2019 | The new 2-mile stretch of SR 99 tunnel opens to traffic.

Alaskan Way Viaduct Removal and Related Projects

Early 2019 - 2020 | After the tunnel opens, AWV demolition begins by the waterfront, the Battery Street Tunnel will be decommissioned, and surface streets around Aurora Ave N will be reconnected.

Bus Service Ends in the Light Rail Tunnel

March 2019 | King County Metro bus routes 41, 74, 101, 102, 150, 255 and Sound Transit Express Route 550 buses will no longer use the transit tunnel and will operate on surface streets, including a new transit pathway on 5th and 6th Avenues.

Waterfront Construction

2019 - 2021 | Built by the City of Seattle's Office of the Waterfront, the new Alaskan Way street will be transformed along the waterfront with a new promenade and connections to the Pike Place Market.

SR 99 Tunnel Tolling

2019 | The SR 99 tunnel will be free to use when it opens for a period before tolling starts. Tolling could begin as early as summer 2019.

WA State Convention Center (WSCC) Addition

Currently in construction - 2022 | WSCC has launched a transformative project that will provide economic and public benefits, including affordable housing, cycling, and pedestrian improvements, and a study of lidding more of I-5 – as part of its \$92 million expansion. Construction is expected to be complete in Q3 2021, with the addition open to the public in Q1 2022.

Key Arena

November 2018- December 2020 | Oak View Group (OVG) has partnered with the City of Seattle to redevelop the Arena at Seattle Center. The newly renovated Arena will be a vital asset for the residents of our region and visitors from around the world for existing and future professional sports teams, other sporting events, concerts, and shows.

Rainier Tower 2 Construction

Currently in construction | At the corner of 5th Ave and Union St, Rainier Tower 2 is a new building being built in Rainier Square and will become an iconic new skyscraper on Seattle's horizon. It will house new space for offices, retail stores, a hotel, residential units, and parking. Construction is set to continue into 2021.

What can you do?

Traffic disruption during this period is unavoidable, and commutes are going to get longer. To minimize those disruptions and ensure that first responders and emergency vehicles can still move quickly through Seattle, everyone traveling to and in Seattle needs to have a plan for commuting to work or school, appointments, and/or running simple errands.

The City of Seattle cannot make mobility changes alone and are asking the traveling public to help maintain mobility on our streets by reducing daily downtown Seattle trips:

- ✓ 15% reduction in employee drive-alone trips
- ✓ 1200 daily drive-alone trips reduced in 2018
- ✓ 3000 daily drive-alone trips reduced in 2019

What you can do:

- Be prepared for your new route when the SR 99 tunnel opens.
- Talk to your employer about shifting your travel time if possible.
- If you can, explore alternative commutes like biking, walking, carpool, vanpool, or transit, particularly light rail and King County Water Taxi if you can access it.
- Avoid driving by yourself downtown, but remember, downtown remains open for business!
- We recognize that for some people these aren't realistic options, but if you can, work from home, or postpone discretionary trips.
- Please visit www.seattle.gov/traffic for all your Seattle Squeeze information and resources, subscribe to travel time updates for the paths you take to get to and through Downtown Seattle, and to get fast connections to tips and tools from our partners at WSDOT, King County Metro, Sound Transit and Commute Seattle.
- Please also visit www.kingcounty.gov/getready for trip planning resources provided by King County Metro.

What is the City of Seattle doing?

SDOT and its partner agencies are working together to manage congestion during this challenging period, limit the impact on commuters, visitors and businesses, and keep downtown open for business.

To prepare, the City of Seattle has prioritized five key downtown mobility strategies:

1. Pillar 1: Monitoring and Managing Our Transportation System
 - a. Improving signal timing
 - b. 24/7 Transportation Operations Center
 - c. Share-real time construction and traffic data with public and private partners
 - d. Activation of the SDOT Department Operations Center
2. Pillar 2: Investing in Transit and Expanding Access
 - a. More trips on key Metro routes
 - b. Transit priority on 3rd Avenue
 - c. Free-floating bike share to access transit
 - d. More West Seattle Water Taxi service
 - e. ORCA Opportunity and ORCA Lift
 - f. First-last mile service to access transit
3. Pillar 3: Reducing the Number of Drive-Alone Trips Downtown
 - a. Partnerships with major employers
 - b. Reducing the impact of rideshare companies (TNCs)
 - c. City of Seattle focus on alternative work policies for its 12,000 employees
4. Pillar 4: Managing the Public Right-of-Way
 - a. Managing impact of construction projects
 - b. Enforce right-of-way use and traffic laws
5. Pillar 5: Communicating with the Public
 - a. Outreach and resources
 - b. Education campaign

BRAND STORY

Visuals:



PRESENTATION SLIDE DECK

Full Presentation:

This presentation may be used any time that you have a public speaking opportunity, both within and outside of your organization. We encourage you to look for times to present this information as early as possible in order to best prepare everyone for these upcoming impacts. Speaking points are provided for each slide at the link below.

The presentation may be found at: [SeattleSqueeze.SDOTWSDOT.template.pptx](https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/strategies-to-keep-people-and-goods-moving-in-and-through-seattle)



Single Slide for Presentations:

We encourage you to place the following slide in presentations where space and time may be limited. This slide summarizes the high-level information that people need to know to be informed during this period. Please share with any staff who are presenting, both internally and externally, to have them include it in their next presentation.

The slide may be found at: [One Slide Seattle Squeeze.pptx](#)

How you get around is changing.

Get ready for January 11, 2019.

- **WSDOT permanently closes the Alaskan Way Viaduct on January 11**, and the new SR 99 tunnel opens to traffic in early February.
- **This is just the beginning.** Over the next five years, private and public construction projects will continue to change how we move and deliver goods.
- **All this will be worth it.** We will have a reimagined waterfront, more light rail, and other important investments to help keep pace with our fast-growing city.
- **Traffic disruption during this period is unavoidable**, and commutes are going to get longer. Everyone traveling to and in Seattle needs to have a plan.

Our 5 Pillars for Downtown Mobility



Monitoring and managing our transportation system



Investing in transit and expanding access



Reducing the number of drive-alone trips downtown



Managing the public right of way



Communicating with the public
- Visit www.seattle.gov/traffic



SOCIAL MEDIA SUITE

As part of our social media strategy, we are asking for your help to post on your social media channels about this upcoming period of tough traffic and the impacts to travel, as well as share posts from our partner agencies. We want you to start a conversation around the upcoming impacts to ensure that everyone is informed, encourage people to plan and prepare, and share our new website and other resources for people to use.

We encourage you to post on any social media channels available, including Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. Along with the content copy above, this text may also be included in newsletters, emails, and other communication channels that exist within your department.

Suggested language is provided below, but please feel free to craft your own messages! Please ensure that you avoid the use of long acronyms/jargon and write in a direct, clear, and friendly style to keep our messaging consistent across departments.

For help guiding the timing and tone of your messaging, our communications phases are listed below.

- PHASE 1 | Inform: October 1 – November 1
- PHASE 2 | Time to Plan and Prepare: November 4 – January 1
- PHASE 3 | Sound the Alarm: January 2 – 10
- PHASE 4 | Real-Time Updates & Rapid Response: January 11 – Early February
- PHASE 5 | Sustain: Early February through the end of Alaskan Way Viaduct projects (2020)

Language

NO: “Permanent Viaduct Closure (PVC)” | YES: “SR 99 Closure”, “Alaskan Way Viaduct closure”

NO: “Period of Maximum Constraint (POMC, PoMAX, MaxCon)” | YES: “Seattle’s new era of tough traffic”
“Seattle Squeeze”

NO: “5 Pillars” | YES: “The City has five strategies for managing congestion, limiting impacts on commuters and businesses, and keeping downtown open for business”

Other questions? Let us know!

Sample Social Media Text

- Spread the word! Beginning with the permanent closure of the Alaskan Way Viaduct on January 11 and continuing over the next three years, Seattle is entering a new era of tough traffic. The City of Seattle is preparing in lots of ways – check out www.seattle.gov/traffic to learn more.
#GetReady #Realign99 #SeattleSqueeze
- How are you preparing for the “Seattle Squeeze”? Share your commute changes below!
#GetReady #Realign99 #SeattleSqueeze Commute ideas and more helpful tips:
www.seattle.gov/traffic

- We're all in this together. Everyone traveling to and in Seattle needs to have a plan for commuting to work or school, appointments, and/or running simple errands during the SR 99 closure and beyond. What's your plan? Tell us below! #GetReady #Realign99 #SeattleSqueeze www.seattle.gov/traffic
- It's almost here! The Alaskan Way Viaduct is permanently closing on January 11. Curious about what the City has done to prepare? Visit www.seattle.gov/traffic for more information. #GetReady #Realign99 #SeattleSqueeze
- Q: Do you know what's happening on January 11, 2019? A: The Alaskan Way Viaduct is closing – and it will be another three weeks before the new SR 99 tunnel opens. Q: Do you know where those cars will go? A: Onto our city streets and other highways around the region – and we need to be prepared for when that happens! More info: www.seattle.gov/traffic #GetReady #Realign99 #SeattleSqueeze
- Are you ready? We are! All of us at the City of Seattle are working together to manage congestion during this challenging period, limit the impact on commuters and businesses, and keep downtown open for business. Learn more: www.seattle.gov/traffic #GetReady #Realign99 #SeattleSqueeze

Suggested Hashtags

#GetReady #Realign99 #SeattleSqueeze #No1DoesntKnow

Don't forget to tag our partner agencies! Use the "@" symbol and the agency name to show our partnerships and increase our reach.