



## Briefing Sheet

December 2018

### Seattle Transportation: “Seattle Squeeze”

“We’re building a better city,” said Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan. But, first comes what transportation engineers call the *Seattle Squeeze*.

Beginning in January 2019, Seattle transportation is expected to become significantly more congested and delayed as several major public and private construction projects impact citywide flow and access for the next two to three years.

#### PROJECTS AND TIMEFRAMES

##### Alaskan Way Viaduct/SR 99 replacement tunnel project

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) will demolish the existing overhead roadway and open a new tunnel along the city’s Central Waterfront and beneath downtown Seattle.

- **January 11 – early February, 2019: the most challenging period for mobility:**
  - The Alaskan Way Viaduct/SR Route 99 closes permanently to all traffic, forcing 90,000 daily drivers to find alternate routes
  - SR Route 99 closed between Spokane Street at the south to the Belltown neighborhood to the north
  - For drivers heading south:
    - exit to the stadiums and S. Atlantic Street will close a week before the viaduct shuts down
    - exit to the CenturyLink Field and Safeco Field and S. Atlantic Street will close a week before the viaduct shuts down
    - SR-99 restricted to one lane. The Battery Street Tunnel will remain open, but all drivers will be forced to exit at Western Avenue
  - For drivers heading north:
    - exit to Alaskan Way and Downtown Seattle will open two weeks after the tunnel as this ramp will take longer to finish
- **Early February, 2019: the new SR Route 99 Tunnel opens to all traffic**
  - Capacity will be 40,000 less vehicles per day than the viaduct
  - There are no downtown exits from the tunnel so traffic must flow all the way through downtown
- **Mid-February, 2019: Viaduct/SR Route 99 demolition (through July 2019)**
  - Demolition section by section, block by block
  - Staging on surface streets surrounding demolition will create periodic traffic blockages; once complete surface streets in those blocks re-open
  - Seattle Waterfront businesses will remain open during demotion but with variable access points

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### **Washington State Convention Center Additional Facility**

Construction is underway on a 252,166-square-foot additional convention center facility on the site bordered by Pine and Howell streets, and 9<sup>th</sup> and Boren. Construction is currently underway and continues for the next three years; the new facility opens in spring 2022.

- **Mid-March 2019:** Due to convention center construction, buses will be permanently removed from the Metro Transit tunnel beneath and re-routed on downtown Seattle surface streets, adding significantly to congestion. More than 800 weekday transit trips will be effected (impacts routes 41, 74, 101, 150, 255 and Sound Transit Express Route 550).
- **Re-routing of Olive Way**  
To accommodate excavation work, Olive Way between Ninth and Boren Avenues will be re-routed to the north, November 2018 through April 2020. Three lanes of access to Interstate-5 and Capitol Hill will be retained in the rerouted area, including one lane for buses and two lanes for other vehicles. The Clark-Lewis team will also construct a pedestrian walkway along the new Olive Way route from Terry to Boren that will remain throughout excavation activities. In 2020, Olive Way will return to its original location with a new street, sidewalks, lighting, and landscaping.
- **Convention Center Project Construction Updates:**  
<http://www.wscaddition.com/updates/construction-updates>

### **KeyArena Renovation**

\$700 million renovation of the arena on the Seattle Center campus on Lower Queen Anne Hill. The project, privately financed by the Oak View Group, nearly doubles the Arena's interior space, converts the south parking lot and loading zone into a light-filled public entrance, enhances outdoor areas on the property with new land and hardscaping, and brings the complex up to NHL and NBA standards. Construction begins in early 2019 with extensive excavation and related truck traffic, and is expected to be complete in 2020. The renovated arena is hoped to attract NHL hockey and NBA basketball teams.

- During construction, the arena project will restrict one curb lane along 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N. west of Seattle Center and one curb lane along Thomas Street, between the Center grounds and 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N. Excavation hauling is expected to run until summer 2019. Construction activity will be halted during major events at Seattle
- Seattle Center transportation updates: <http://www.seattlecenter.com/news/detail.aspx?id=2586>

### **RECOMMENDED TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES, 2018-2021**

#### **Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)**

- [www.seattle.gov/transportation](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation)
- Know before you go: [www.web6.seattle.gov/travelers](http://www.web6.seattle.gov/travelers)
- Learn about transportation/street projects: <https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/projects-and-programs/current-projects>

#### **Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT)**

- [www.Wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/Viaduct/realign99](http://www.Wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/Viaduct/realign99)
- Metro Transit: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/transportation/metro.aspx>

#### **Metro Transit Trip Planner**

- [www.tripplanner.kingcounty.gov](http://www.tripplanner.kingcounty.gov)

#### **Sound Transit (light rail, rail) Trip Planner**

- [www.soundtransit.org/tripplanner](http://www.soundtransit.org/tripplanner)

**Real-time status and alerts:**

- Follow SDOT on Twitter: [@seattledot](#), [@SDOTtraffic](#)
- Follow WSDOT on Twitter: [@BertdaDigsSR99](#), [#Realign99](#)
- Follow Metro Transit on Twitter: [@kcmetrobus](#)
- Follow Sound Transit on Twitter: [@soundtransit](#)

**Sign up for email and text alerts:**

- Alert Seattle: <http://alert.seattle.gov/>
- WSDOT: <https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/>
- Metro Transit (King County and Seattle): <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/transportation/metro/alerts-updates.aspx>

**Employer/commuter resources:**

- Commute Seattle <https://www.commuteseattle.com/>

**TIPS FOR SEATTLE VISITORS**

- Review SDOT and WSDOT resources regularly for the latest updates. Note that project plans change from one week to the next
- WSDOT generally advises major event venues of project status and issues three weeks and one week out; make a point to check its web site or to contact them if you don't otherwise receive updates. Be proactive in learning of traffic advisories
- Extend resource links to your event attendees and visitors so they can monitor traffic in real time and take responsibility for their own trip planning
- Meeting planners: prepare in advance push notifications, texts or e-blasts to your attendees in the case of a last-minute traffic deviation or closure
- Flexible scheduling. Avoid scheduling meetings and events during peak traffic periods (early morning and late afternoon)
- Metro Transit is adding additional service on many of its downtown routes; when appropriate advise visitors to ride the bus
- LINK Light rail is an excellent alternative between the airport and downtown hotels and convention center; travel time is usually around 30-40 minutes one way; <https://www.soundtransit.org/ride-with-us/know-before-you-go/new-to-sound-transit>
- Consider booking additional hotel rooms for key local participants of meetings and conventions