



Seattle
Department of
Transportation

SR 99 Closure & Seattle Squeeze

Business, Community and Neighborhood Organization Messaging Toolkit

Hello, Neighbors!

We have put together this toolkit for you to share with your friends, neighbors, customers and community organizations. Whether you are a member of a local neighborhood group, have customers traveling through Seattle to visit you, engage on message boards and in other public forums, or are just curious about what's happening in Seattle during the next five years, we need your help to spread the word. It's time to start preparing for the SR 99 three-week closure that begins on January 11, 2019, and the following years of downtown construction impacts. We call this new era of tough traffic the "Seattle Squeeze."

Here's What's Happening:

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 Jan. 11, 2019 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 will begin when WSDOT permanently closes the Alaskan Way Viaduct, or SR 99, on Jan. 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:

Last updated: 11/21/18

- The three-week closure of SR 99 and the impending removal of WSDOT’s aged Alaskan Way Viaduct
- The opening of the new SR 99 tunnel.
- 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 adding 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 during the SR 99 closure and 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 and accessible by all alternative commute options listed above!
- 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 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. Opening 24/7 Transportation Operations Center
 - c. Sharing real-time construction and traffic data with public and private partners
 - d. Activating 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. Partnering with major employers
 - b. Reducing the impact of rideshare companies (TNCs)
 - c. Focusing on alternative work policies for the City's 12,000 employees
4. Pillar 4: Managing the Public Right-of-Way
 - a. Managing impact of construction projects
 - b. Enforcing right-of-way use and traffic laws
5. Pillar 5: Communicating with the Public
 - a. Outreach and resources
 - b. Education campaign

Contact Info

SDOT:

- **Website:** www.seattle.gov/traffic
- **Know Before You Go:** <https://web6.seattle.gov/travelers>
- **Follow Our Blog:** <http://sdotbloq.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

Sample Text

Here's some sample text to help you send out an email, blog post or newsletter message. **Start Preparing Now for the "Seattle Squeeze."**

Short Version:

- WSDOT permanently closes the Alaskan Way Viaduct on Jan. 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Extended Version:

Dear Friends,

On Jan. 11, 2019, Seattle will close the Alaskan Way Viaduct forever, marking the beginning of a five-year period of growth and an increase in challenges for getting around our city. The City of Seattle has put together some information to help us prepare for this event, which I want to share with you.

After the [Nisqually earthquake shook Seattle in 2001](#), WSDOT determined that it needed to replace the aging and structurally unsafe viaduct with a tunnel beneath downtown Seattle. To do this, they will close SR 99 from the Battery Street Tunnel to South Spokane Street through downtown Seattle on Friday, Jan. 11, 2019 for three weeks to realign the highway into the tunnel. During this closure, both the Alaskan Way Viaduct and the SR 99 tunnel will be closed. We will feel significant traffic impacts for six weeks as crews work to open off-ramps before and after the tunnel opens. More info on the Viaduct project is available on WSDOT's website at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/Viaduct/realign99>.

This project is the first of many over the next five years. Our downtown is facing over 1,000 projects that will impact our transportation system between now and 2024, and we will all face region-wide traffic disruptions. This five-year phase is being called the Seattle Squeeze. As we face more congestion and additional street closures and delays, things will get tougher before they get better.

Bottom line: **We need to start planning now for how we are getting to and through downtown.**

It's going to be worth it!

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 can we do?

Some ideas for avoiding gridlock:

- 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.
- Shift your travel time earlier or later to avoid the busiest times on the roadway
- Bike or walk to work or school
- Start or join a carpool, vanpool or vanshare
- Use transit, particularly light rail and King County Water Taxi
- Stay off the road: work from home if you can
- Be prepared for your new route when the closure ends and [the new tunnel opens](#)
- Are you an employer? Start a telecommute program for employees
- Are you an employee? Talk to your employer about changes you can make during the closure (and beyond).

[WSDOT's handout further describes these travel alternatives.](#)

But, there's more to do than plan our commutes. Imagine Greater Downtown is a partnership between local government agencies where we can share our thoughts about what Seattle can look like in the future. Check out their website at www.imaginegreaterdowntown.org.

Social Media Examples

Here's some sample text and images to help you post this information on Facebook, Instagram, Next Door or your other preferred social media sites.

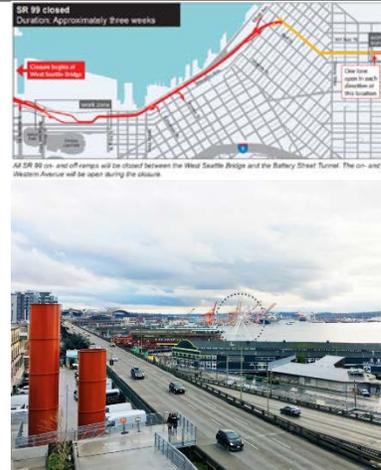
Social
Media
Examples
for
Community
Groups

Hey neighbor! The Viaduct closes on January 11 and the new SR-99 tunnel opens three weeks later. During the closure, everyone who travels in the region will be affected. And that's just the beginning of several years of downtown traffic projects. The City of Seattle is encouraging us to prepare by visiting www.seattle.gov/traffic. #GetReady #Realign99

Wondering how to use the new SR 99 tunnel when it opens? Check it out: WSDOT is launching a series of "how-to" videos showing how we'll be able to drive through the tunnel!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bGJ9ObcP3Jg&feature=youtu.be>

Hey neighbor! Beginning with [WSDOT's #Realign99 project](#) and including lots of construction projects downtown until 2024, the City of Seattle is encouraging us to prepare for the #SeattleSqueeze. We are entering a new era of tough traffic, and we need to start planning and preparing now. Check out www.seattle.gov/traffic #GetReady



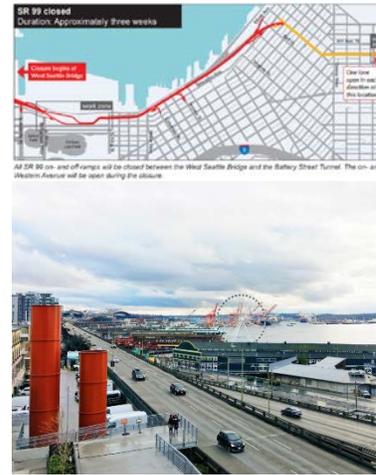
Here's some sample text and images for small businesses to use to help you post this information for your visitors, customers, and clients.

Social Media Examples for Businesses

We're looking forward to your next visit. To help you prepare for upcoming traffic changes downtown, we wanted to let you know that the Alaskan Way Viaduct closes on January 11, 2019. It will be another three weeks before the new SR 99 tunnel opens downtown. Travel throughout the region will take longer, so please visit www.seattle.gov/traffic and plan ahead. #SeattleSqueeze #GetReady #RealignSR99

Come see us soon, and be prepared for downtown traffic changes. The City of Seattle is encouraging people to begin preparing for the #SeattleSqueeze, the period beginning with [WSDOT's #Realign99 project](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Realign99) to remove the Viaduct and open the SR 99 tunnel early in 2019. Visit www.seattle.gov/traffic to start planning now. #GetReady #RealignSR99

Wondering how to use the new SR 99 tunnel when it opens? Check it out: WSDOT is launching a series of "how-to" videos showing how we'll be able to drive through the tunnel!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bGJ9ObcP3Jg&feature=youtu.be>

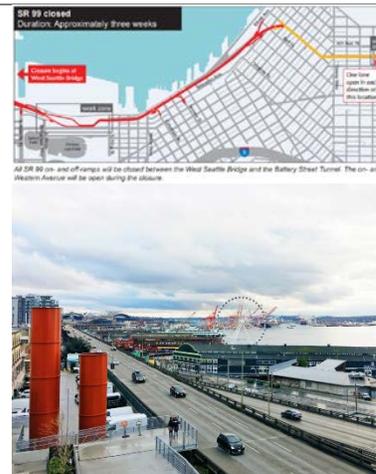


Social Media Examples for Arts or Organizations

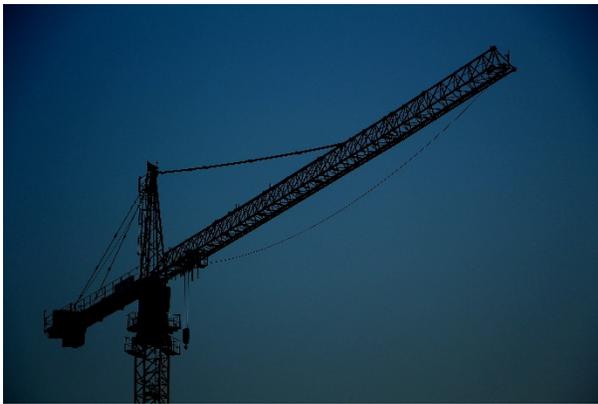
Normally, we like our performers to be the only showstopper in the room... But with the closure of the Alaskan Way Viaduct on January 11, 2019, the impacts to our transportation system are setting the stage for a brand new Seattle. Six weeks of traffic impacts means we need to prepare now — visit www.seattle.gov/traffic to #GetReady #Realign99

Coming to our next show? We can't wait! To make sure you give yourself plenty of time to arrive on time, check out the City of Seattle's new website, www.seattle.gov/traffic, to make sure you plan ahead during the #GetReady #Realign99

Wondering how to use the new SR 99 tunnel when it opens? Check it out: WSDOT is launching a series of "how-to" videos showing how we'll be able to drive through the tunnel!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bGJ9ObcP3Jg&feature=youtu.be>



Photos



Graphs

Check out these helpful graphs from WSDOT showing how traffic will shift with the closure of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and the opening of the SR 99. Use these photos in your emails, social media posts, and other communication channels, and encourage yourself and your audience to picture their commute in these new routes and start planning for these changes now!







HOW YOU GET AROUND IS CHANGING Get Ready for January 11, 2019

Seattle is entering a new era of tough traffic.

The Washington State Department of Transportation (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.

We call this the Seattle Squeeze.

All this will be worth it, but everyone needs a plan.

Visit www.seattle.gov/traffic for the tools and information you need to get around during the **#Seattle Squeeze**.

Can you change the way you get downtown? Here are some ideas:



Come in earlier or later.

Most people commute in the morning between 7 – 9 AM, and in the afternoon between 3 – 6 PM. Talk to your boss about changing the hours you work.



Leave your car at home.

Try biking, walking, carpool, vanpool, or public transit.



Give yourself extra travel time.

Traffic will be slower and will last longer throughout the day.



Tell us your questions and ideas.

We are here to help.

Postcard: [Seattle Squeeze Postcard 112818.pdf](#)



GET READY FOR

January 11, 2019, when travel in and around Seattle will change significantly.

[#SeattleSqueeze](#) | www.seattle.gov/traffic



Visit www.seattle.gov/traffic to stay up to date on all things [#SeattleSqueeze](#)

Get Informed

1. The Alaskan Way Viaduct is closing on January 11, 2019.
2. The new SR 99 tunnel below downtown Seattle will replace the Viaduct.
3. The tunnel will not open until early February 2019.
4. Big construction projects will continue to change how we get around Seattle for the next five years – we call this the Seattle Squeeze
5. All this will be worth it, but everyone needs a plan.

Get Ready

Can you change the way you get downtown? Here are some ideas:



Come in earlier or later.

Most people commute in the morning between 7 – 9 AM, and in the afternoon between 3 – 6 PM. Talk to your boss about changing the hours you work.



Leave your car at home.

Try biking, walking, carpool, vanpool, or public transit.



Give yourself extra travel time.

Traffic will be slower and will last longer throughout the day.



Tell us your questions and ideas.

We are here to help.

Contact us at 206-684-7623 or 684-ROAD@seattle.gov

WSDOT Factsheet



Get ready: three-week SR 99 closure begins Jan. 11, 2019

What: Three-week SR 99 closure and up to six weeks of traffic disruption

When the new SR 99 tunnel is ready to open, WSDOT will need to close the highway for approximately three weeks to realign SR 99 into the tunnel. The closure will extend from the south end of the Battery Street Tunnel to the West Seattle Bridge. There will be up to three weeks of additional ramp closures before and after the three week closure.



All SR 99 on- and off-ramps will be closed between the West Seattle Bridge and the Battery Street Tunnel. The on- and off-ramps at Western Avenue will be open during the closure.

One week before closure

Southbound off-ramp to South Atlantic Street (access to I-5 and I-90) closes about one week before the full closure.



One to two weeks after closure

After the new SR 99 tunnel opens the northbound off-ramp to downtown will remain closed for up to two weeks.



Why do we need to close the highway?

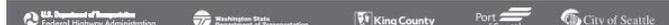
The current alignment of SR 99 near the stadiums is temporary, which allows traffic to weave through an active construction zone. Crews have to work in this alignment to connect SR 99 to the new tunnel. The closure is unavoidable due to the large amount of work involved in realigning SR 99. The graphics below show the path of SR 99 today (yellow) and the work zones during the closure (orange).



Americans with Disabilities Act & Title VI Information

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information: This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing the Office of Equal Opportunity at wadotada@wsdot.wa.gov or by calling toll free, 855-362-4ADA(4232). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.

Title VI Notice to Public: It is the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its federally funded programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with WSDOT's Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO). For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact OEO's Title VI Coordinator at (360) 705-7090.



Stay informed

Website: 99Tunnel.com
Tweet: [@BerthaDigsSR99](https://twitter.com/BerthaDigsSR99)
[#Realign99](https://twitter.com/Realign99)
Email: viaduct@wsdot.wa.gov
Call: 1-888-AWV-LINE

EXPERIENCE THE TUNNEL

Step Forward
 Portal to the past, present & future

DURING THE CLOSURE

Say goodbye to the viaduct, hello to the future waterfront, and experience the new tunnel. The Step Forward event is two action packed days of fun including a tunnel walk, STEM activities, 8K fun run/walk and bike ride.