

EXPANDED ACCESS TO THE SPOKANE ST SWING BRIDGE (LOW BRIDGE)

Frequently Asked Questions

How did SDOT develop the new low bridge access policy?

We know that people who live and work in West Seattle are in a unique and unprecedented situation, dealing with the high bridge closure as well as struggling daily with the ongoing global pandemic. We've continued to collect traffic data about low bridge traffic volumes since we began automated enforcement in January 2021. These monitoring efforts have shown that there is additional limited capacity on the low bridge. We've heard from many community members through the project email address and phone calls with reasons why low bridge access could help. We've also reached out to businesses and organizations in West Seattle, focusing on communities of color, to better understand their challenges.

As part of this updated policy, we are temporarily expanding access to the low bridge for people seeking lifesaving medical treatment, on-call medical workers, West Seattle restaurant and retail businesses, and those who use vans, shuttles or official carpools with [state-issued rideshare license plates](#).



We can't expand access for everyone, so we've had to make some hard policy choices. We'll continue to conduct outreach to West Seattle communities, and will continue our ongoing traffic monitoring and analysis to understand how these policy changes are affecting low bridge capacity.



How do I apply for low bridge access?

Can I get help filling out the application form?

Apply online: www.seattle.gov/transportation/lowbridge

The application is also available by using the QR code on this page. Applications are available in the following languages: English, Spanish, Korean, Somali, Chinese (Traditional), Vietnamese, Oromo, and Khmer. To request applications in other languages or in paper format, please contact us at WestSeattleBridge@seattle.gov or 206-400-7511.



We are happy to assist you in filling out the access request form. Email us at

WestSeattleBridge@seattle.gov or call us at (206) 400-7511, and someone will contact you to assist you.

If you or someone you know does not speak English and needs assistance in completing the request form or has questions, you can call (206) 400-7511 and leave a voicemail or email WestSeattleBridge@seattle.gov. Provide your name, contact info and language needed and someone will return

Project Information and Contact

Website: www.seattle.gov/transportation/lowbridge
Email: westseattlebridge@seattle.gov | Phone: (206) 400-7511



Seattle
Department of
Transportation

Why are you restricting traffic on the Spokane St Swing Bridge (low bridge)?

When the West Seattle High-Rise Bridge (high bridge) closed on March 23, 2020 due to cracking, we had to restrict access to the Spokane St Swing Bridge (low bridge). The high bridge carried significantly more vehicles with its seven lanes compared to the two lanes on the low bridge. Attempting to shift all the traffic from the high bridge to the low bridge would result in traffic congestion and delay that would block the efficient movement of emergency vehicles, transit, and freight.

How does automated photo enforcement work on the low bridge? Will I get a \$75 ticket?

If you are not authorized to drive on the low bridge, you will get a \$75 ticket for every time you drive across the low bridge. The automated photo enforcement system is taking photos of license plates when the low bridge is restricted on weekdays from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. and on weekends from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. The automated photo enforcement system takes photos of vehicles to record the license plate number but not the people inside the car. The photos are only intended to be used for enforcing the restrictions on the low bridge and are not intended for other law enforcement action. The automated photo enforcement system will then cross-reference those license plate numbers with a database of authorized users to identify whether a vehicle is allowed to use the low bridge at that time. Seattle Police Department officers will review the images of every potential violation before sending a \$75 ticket. Emergency vehicles, buses, and freight trucks do not need to provide their license plates to SDOT.

If I cannot drive on the low bridge, how else do I get to and from West Seattle

Alternate routes for those traveling to and from West Seattle by car include the 1st Ave S Bridge or South Park Bridge. The low bridge is also open for you if you're riding transit, in a vanpool, walking, rolling, riding an electric foot scooter, or biking. People driving emergency, public transit, and freight vehicles can use the bridge at all hours of the day.



We're working to help make detours easier by updating the markings on the road, adjusting signal timing, and improving road signs. We are also working with nearby communities to prioritize projects that will reduce the impact of increased detour traffic; prioritizing transit connections to and from West Seattle; building new bicycle projects; and establishing and improving detour routes. For help with your commute, visit the new West Seattle and Duwamish Valley Travel Options website at:

<https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/west-seattle-travel-options/>



What if there is an emergency and I need to drive across the low bridge?

We know that emergencies happen, and you may need to drive to the hospital instead of calling an ambulance. Now that automated enforcement is in place, a \$75 ticket will be sent to all people driving unauthorized vehicles across the low bridge on weekdays from 5 a.m. and 9 p.m. and on weekends from 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. The \$75 ticket will include instructions on how to contest it. We can't guarantee that you will not be responsible for paying the fine, as this is ultimately determined by the Seattle Municipal Court.