

IV. South Park

Few things unite the business and residential communities in South Park as does their shared frustration over the fate of the South Park Bridge.

The good news is, local governments have finally agreed on a financing plan to replace the bridge that connected South Park with Georgetown and Seattle for 79 years. A new bridge should be open for traffic in 2013.

The bad news is, the government disputes that delayed bridge improvements for decades finally forced the bridge to close in 2010, bringing an end to the best connection between South Park and its neighbors to the northeast.

The loss of the bridge was the dominant topic in outreach to all South Park groups.

About 4,000 people live in South Park, according to 2009 US Census Bureau data, and an estimated 17,000 people work there. The area is located southwest of the Duwamish River.

Roadway conditions and replacing the bridge were the top transportation concerns of most industrial businesses interviewed for the report.

Major arterial routes such as S Kenyon St, 5th Ave S, S Holden St in northern South Park, and 8th Ave S just north of the city limit are in poor condition, with many large potholes, causing problems for truck travel. Several roads in north South Park have never been paved.

Most of the industrial businesses indicated that all or almost all employees drive alone to work because:

- Transit service is scarce and infrequent. (KC Metro Route 132 is the only bus route serving north South Park and it runs just once an hour.)
- Many employees live long distances from their jobs in South Park, making driving easier.
- Employees working swing or night shifts have limited transportation options.
- Workers whose jobs include physical labor may be less likely to bicycle to work.

Retail businesses voiced different concerns and suggestions. Overwhelmingly, their most urgent issue was the loss of the bridge and how it will impact their customers.

Their suggestions for improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure included:

- Bike route signage at 14th Ave S and S Cloverdale St
- Additional trash cans on 14th Ave S
- Additional lighting on side streets
- Bus schedules posted and available at all bus stops
- Measures to reduce loitering at bus stops – signs, police enforcement.

Sea Mar Community Health Clinic, the largest employer in South Park conducted a transportation survey asking employees about daily commute patterns, specifically bicycle and pedestrian options. The following reasons were stated for NOT biking or walking to work:

- distance from home;
- inclement weather;
- lack of shower or clothes-changing facilities;
- schedule conflicts; and
- lack of bicycle trails and lanes.

To help oversee the South Park report, an advisory committee was formed that included representatives from the South Neighborhood Association, the Environmental Coalition of South Seattle, the South Park Business Association, and the Department of Neighborhoods.

Due to the unique makeup and topography of South Park in the City of Seattle, the recommendations put forth vary in format. While the emphasis in a neighborhood like Georgetown may lie in identifying appropriate routes to navigate the long N-S orientation, in South Park the challenge is often more about linking together shorter road and sidewalk segments to encourage safe and efficient travel through the neighborhood.

The problem is not exclusively the lack of facilities in South Park, but the poor performance of the existing facilities due to safety and/or service impediments. Some sections of South Park clearly have clusters of businesses already engaged in a strong alternative mode program, but supporting facilities are in ill repair (inoperable lighting, unavailable crosswalks and bus platforms) making their use problematic. Businesses like Sea Mar, with regular transit service for their employees, have trouble accessing transit because of unusable stairs. Physical barriers and lack of upkeep can also prohibit use of some existing modes that are already available.

After the Bridge Closure

Neighborhood businesses and residents were revisited by TMA staff in January 2011 to assess impacts of the bridge closure in 2010.

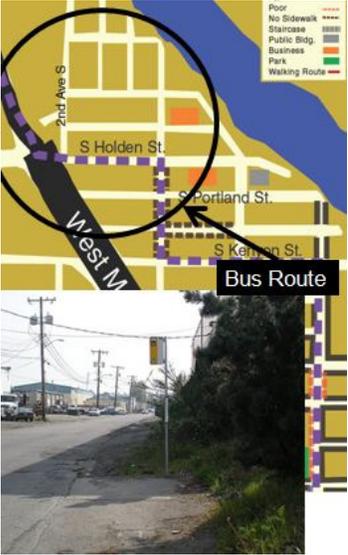
Industrial businesses had coped with the loss somewhat easier than retail businesses. By using flexible delivery hours, alternate truck routes, and working with customers they were able to make adjustments that couldn't be made by other businesses.

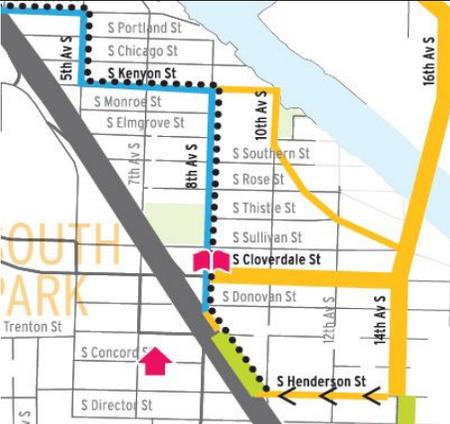
Due to the fixed location of restaurants plus retail and personal services, businesses had lost patrons that were either unable and/or unwilling to travel to their site. The loss of the South Park Bridge has denied Boeing employees and other businesses their lunchtime walk to access restaurants / personal services. This has caused a notable slowdown in South Park restaurants.

The reconfiguration of King County Metro bus routes reduced options for travel. Increased congestion on the 1st Ave S Bridge presumably caused many pedestrians and cyclists to omit discretionary trips.

Recommendations

The multi-modal group agreed to the following recommendations for safer pedestrian and bicycle travel in South Park, with a focus on conditions that would follow the opening of the new South Park Bridge. Key recommendations are referenced in the map in Appendix A.

ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION	LOCATION
<p>The Bridge</p>	<p>Rebuild the SOUTH PARK BRIDGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received TIGER II funding in June 2010 Estimated time of restoring bridge operation: 2013 	 <p><i>South Park Bridge prior to closure</i></p>
<p>Signage</p> <p>See item #s 15, 16 and 17 on South Park map</p>	<p>New kiosks and signs should be installed to help direct cyclists and pedestrians to and from the new bridge from the Duwamish River Trail, the 1st Avenue South Bridge, and West Marginal Way.</p>	 <p><i>Information Kiosk</i></p>
<p>Sidewalk / Transit Facilities</p> <p>#18 on Map</p>	<p>Improve the sidewalk network and access to transit facilities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> arterial bus routes in northwest South Park; an elevated bus platform at 2nd Ave S and S Holden St in the eastbound direction to provide protection from poor stormwater drainage; and develop a pavement plan in industrial areas to ease drainage and flooding issues. 	 <p><i>A bus platform is needed at 2nd Ave S and S Holden St in the eastbound direction.</i></p>

<p>Lighting</p> <p>#19 on map</p>	<p>Improve lighting and maintenance at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5th Ave S between S Kenyon and S Portland St; • 2nd Ave S and S Holden St (the edge of South Park near the freeway on-ramp/bus stop); • at 14th Ave S between S Concord St and S Cloverdale St trees cover existing lighting; • the intersections of S Cloverdale St and SR 99, and W Marginal Way S with S Holden St are well-lit. 	 <p><i>Lack of pedestrian-scale lighting makes the walk along S Cloverdale St between 14th Ave S and 5th Ave S difficult and potentially dangerous.</i></p>
<p>Stairway Signage and Maintenance</p> <p>#20 on map</p>	<p>New signs and improved maintenance to control debris, moss, and overgrown foliage would make it easier and safer for pedestrians and cyclists to use the staircase between 10th Ave S and 12th Ave S at S Trenton St near Sea Mar.</p>	 <p><i>Staircase to 10th Ave S and S Trenton St</i></p>
<p>Bike Route Connectivity</p>	<p>Sharrows should be extended north on West Marginal Way, 14th Avenue S, Dallas Avenue S, and east on S Kenyon St to provide better connections through the community.</p>	 <p><i>City of Seattle Bicycle Map – 2010</i></p>
<p>Hybrid commuting</p>	<p>Explore more opportunities for bike-bus hybrid commutes, starting with Metro Routes 131 and 134.</p>	 <p><i>King County Metro coach with three-bike capacity rack</i></p>

<p>Crosswalks</p>	<p>Crosswalks are needed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd Ave S on the north side of S Holden St • Off-ramp from W Marginal Way on the south side of S Holden St • S 96th St (located in unincorporated King County) lacks sidewalks to serve businesses at this location • South side of SW Michigan St, just west of 2nd Ave SW, lacks a sidewalk (there is a bus stop here for KC Metro Route 23, and several businesses located across the street). <p>The crosswalk at 2nd Ave SW and SW Michigan St needs restriping.</p> <p>Stripes are needed for the crosswalk along S Cloverdale St between 14th Ave S and 5th Ave S.</p>	
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Non-motorized Commute Network through the Duwamish M&I Center South Park Recommendations



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