



Seattle City Council

September 11, 2009

The Honorable Kurt Triplett
King County Executive
King County Chinook Building
401 5th Avenue Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Executive Triplett,

We are writing in support of King County's efforts to fund the replacement of the South Park Bridge. We support the County's application to the national economic stimulus TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) Discretionary Grant Program.

The South Park Bridge forms an important segment in our region's multimodal freight transportation system and provides important freight access across the Duwamish River. The replacement project will help maintain the region's transportation system. The bridge carries more than 10 million tons of freight each year, and over 2,600 trucks per day. Over 30,000 jobs are located within one mile of the bridge.

The South Park Bridge is 78 years old, and in poor condition; it cannot be retrofitted due to unstable piers that are cracked and tilting. We understand there is a possibility that King County may need to shut down the bridge in 2010 due to safety issues.

If the bridge closes, 20,000 vehicles per day would need to use other river crossings. This would likely result in increased traffic congestion throughout the region, and additional delays elsewhere, including on First Avenue South. Planned construction related to the replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct, in particular relating to the planned South Portal exit for a bored tunnel, could further increase delays.

The South Park Bridge is an important link for the multi-ethnic South Park neighborhood of Seattle, located to the south of the bridge. Without the bridge, the South Park community would be less well served by the regional transportation network. Bus routes 60 and 131/134 serving South Park use the bridge.

In addition, the bridge is important for public safety. Fire and medic response times would likely be slower in some situations without the bridge.

Response times for backup units supporting Fire Engine 26 in South Park would increase in the event that more than one fire engine is needed, as responding units would need to use the First Avenue South Bridge. The secondary response unit for South Park, Fire Engine 27, is located in Georgetown, across the Duwamish River, and uses the South Park Bridge for access to South Park.

In addition, if the South Park fire engine was responding to an event and a call came in for South Park, response times would increase due to closure of the South Park Bridge. The presence of a higher volume of traffic on the 1st Avenue South Bridge could further hinder response times.

If the medic unit serving South Park were busy, a similar problem would exist without the South Park Bridge.

It is our understanding that in King County's TIGER grant application, King County will pledge to fully fund the completion of the South Park Bridge. With that understanding, we offer our support for King County's application.

Sincerely,


Councilmember Nick Licata


Council President Richard Conlin


Councilmember Sally Clark