



April 24, 2020

Councilmember Alex Pedersen
600 4th Avenue
2nd Floor
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Councilmember Pedersen:

As Chair of the City Council's Transportation & Utilities Committee, we appreciate your steadfast commitment to helping the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) fulfill its number one priority: preserving public safety.

This responsibility is what drives the beginning, middle, and end of each day at SDOT. Be it our 238 areaways, 613 retaining walls, 502 stairways, or 124 bridges, SDOT is responsible for preserve public safety. We also have responsibilities relative to private structures in the public right-of-way. Through careful management, SDOT maximizes investments in Seattle's transportation infrastructure, preserves existing facilities, manages capital improvements, and maintains and operates these assets to provide a safe and reliable transportation system for the traveling public.

While robust oversight of our bridges is already carried out by SDOT and our state and federal partners, we rely on our close partnership with City Council for the resources needed to fulfill this tall safety order. That is why we look forward to working with you, the Office of City Auditor, and others, to help illuminate for the public and Council the physical conditions and maintenance investments needed to ensure the safety and longevity of all of the roadway structures owned by SDOT.

We also understand the impact of the March 23 emergency closure of the West Seattle High-Rise Bridge continues to have on the city as a whole and on adjacent communities on both sides of the Duwamish. While we continue to gather information necessary to understand what is happening, from what we have been able to gather to date, the accelerated deterioration of the High-Rise Bridge has happened quickly and was caught because of the diligence of our existing inspection approach and goes beyond the realm of regular maintenance.

Councilmember Alex Pedersen, April 24, 2020
RE: Response to CM Pedersen Bridge Audit

We look forward to working with you, the Office of City Auditor, and others to ensure we all have a clear understanding of what's needed to build a stronger, more livable, and secure city of the future right here in Seattle.

Sincerely,


Sam Zimbabwe (Apr 24, 2020)

Sam Zimbabwe
Director

Cc: Council President Lorena Gonzalez
Seattle City Council
Shefali Ranganathan, Deputy Mayor, City of Seattle
Anthony Auriemma, Council Liaison, Office of the Mayor
Elliot Helmbrecht, Office of Policy and Innovation
David Jones, City Auditor
Calvin Chow, Seattle City Council Central Staff