

To: Councilmember Mike O'Brien, Sustainability & Transportation Committee Chair

From: Sam Zimbabwe, Nominee for the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) Director

CC: Council President Bruce Harrell, Councilmember Rob Johnson, Councilmember Kshama Sawant, Mayor Jenny Durkan, Deputy Mayor Shefali Ranganathan, Emilia Sanchez, Jodee Schwinn, Jasmine Marwaha, Calvin Chow, Anthony Auriemma, Elliott Helmbrecht, Bill LaBorde

Date: January 28, 2019

Re: Responses to Written Council Confirmation Questions

Please see below my responses to written confirmation questions transmitted by your office on January 15. I am honored by the Mayor's submittal of my name to Council for confirmation as the next SDOT Director. I look forward to discussing these questions and any others you and your colleagues may have at tomorrow morning's committee meeting, and at my subsequent appearance at Sustainability & Transportation, scheduled for February 15.

1. [What goals do you have and what would you like to accomplish during your first year as SDOT Director?](#)

Throughout my career, I have worked in transportation as a means to shape more people-centered and sustainable cities. The City of Seattle and the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) are already leaders in that approach, and I am excited to continue this trajectory as we build the city of the future while serving the residents, businesses, and visitors of today.

We face huge structural challenges nationally and globally: the threat of climate change continues to be laid bare and our window for action is running out; growing inequality in cities creates economic burdens for transportation, housing, and basic daily needs; our aging public infrastructure stresses cities, utilities, and all levels of government; and our ever-evolving economy shifts the flows of people and goods at the global and local levels. For all these reasons, there is an urgency to how I approach my work and how I will lead SDOT.

I have goals both for myself and for SDOT over the next year that can be shaped into six broad areas:

- Getting to know Seattle: I am new to Seattle and to the region. In the first year, I plan to immerse myself in the city and get to know it as well as I can. I will achieve this by hearing from residents, modal boards, community groups, and other stakeholders and learning about the past as much as about the plans for the future.
- Getting to know SDOT: Over the past year, Mayor Durkan and SDOT's interim directors have implemented a number of changes to the department's organization and processes for delivery of projects and programs. From what I can tell thus far, those changes have set SDOT on a path

for success. Over the next year, I plan to get to know the agency from top to bottom while I work to identify any additional changes to organizational structure, staffing, or staff development necessary to ensure SDOT can meet its Levy and ongoing program commitments.

- Maintaining Downtown Mobility: The Seattle Squeeze has now begun with the permanent closure of the Alaskan Way Viaduct. This is one of many changes in how we'll move in and around downtown Seattle over the next few years. While SDOT has now operationalized plans to mitigate traffic impacts, over the next year I anticipate working with SDOT staff and other agencies to make sure we are doing all we can to ease the burdens on travelers of all modes, while continuing to create the mobility framework for the future.
- Delivering on Levy and other capital project commitments: SDOT has more major capital investments underway than at any time in its history, including Move Seattle commitments and the Center City Connector Streetcar. I understand the challenges these projects have faced, and over the next year we will need to follow through on our promise for more openness and transparency to continue building the trust of the public in our ability to deliver large and small projects.
- Working with partner agencies to continue improving transit in Seattle: The next year will see some critical decisions for how Seattle and the region invests in public transportation going forward. Seattle's transportation success is tied to public transportation, and this region is building, operating and riding transit in ways that are the envy of the rest of the country. Working collaboratively with partners as we determine the ST3 Locally Preferred Alternatives and the future of the Seattle Transportation Benefit District, as well as the upcoming changes from the ongoing ST2 light rail buildout, will be essential as we continue to shape the public transportation system and how people interact with the city on a daily basis.
- Improving our delivery of "the basics": SDOT is fundamentally a service-delivery organization. While we are building for the future, we must also deliver on present day-to-day needs of Seattle residents and visitors to get around the city safely and efficiently. Over the next year, I plan to understand where we are performing well, where we need to improve, and what changes are necessary to strengthen our delivery of services to maintain, improve, and safely operate today's system.

2. How do you anticipate the Period of Maximum Constraint impacting your tenure as SDOT Director?

The Period of Maximum Constraint will be front and center over the next few years, in terms of SDOT's resources and response but also in terms of how residents, businesses, and visitors perceive the overall transportation system. I have been impressed already by the level of resources the Mayor has committed to improving the infrastructure within SDOT to respond to the Viaduct closure as well as future planned and unplanned incidents that we'll see in the years to come. Impacts will be fluid, with new iterations of the Seattle Squeeze arising to shift burdens to travelers from different directions and different modes. SDOT has established good plans and protocols but to remain flexible and responsive, we will need to continuously refine and improve on these approaches as we go forward.

While the Period of Maximum Constraint will remain at the forefront, it could be easy to lose sight of the larger responsibilities of the agency and potentially larger changes going on in the region. I bring experience from my time with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) in Washington, DC, where we have dealt with major construction impacts on Metro Rail in the past few years, layered on top of the typical day-to-day traffic incidents, motorcades, and a pace of large events unique to Washington, DC but informative for helping us mitigate the impacts of construction and traffic incidents in Seattle.

Defining key staff roles and responsibilities and maintaining sufficient capacity in all areas of the organization are critical to ensuring departmental leadership attention can be directed to incident response without sacrificing performance in another part of the organization. To this end, the Mayor's decision to bring on a Director of Citywide Mobility Operations will help coordinate the responses of 29 city agencies to the continued changes, while enabling me to deliver on all of the responsibilities of SDOT. General Worden and I have already begun building the collaborative relationship that will position everyone for success over the next few years.

3. What is your approach to management? How will you evaluate current staff and assess changes needed and/or new policies needed to ensure a highly motivated and well trained workforce?

My approach to management is open and collaborative. I enjoy hearing multiple points of view on issues before making decisions, and I will encourage this approach with my staff. Over the next few months, I plan to get to know SDOT intimately from top to bottom and hear from staff throughout the agency on what is working well and what needs improvement. I understand that morale has suffered somewhat over the last year due in part to the lack of permanent leadership. I will ensure that SDOT employees throughout the organization know they have a director willing to work collaboratively with them to establish goals and improve performance while also hearing their ideas and concerns. There have been organizational changes over the past year that need to be completed and I anticipate being able to reinforce these changes, or make adjustments, as needed. I believe that promoting openness and collaboration will help restore a sense of stability to the organization and improve employee morale while also improving our performance in both delivering capital projects and maintaining and operating our existing transportation assets.

During my time at DDOT, I worked through minor and major adjustments to the organization. While we came out of these reorganizations better positioned for success, they left residual tensions that left some people feeling confused about their roles and misunderstood. Engaging SDOT employees at all levels before and after changes are made will reduce such tensions and miscommunication while empowering our workforce to deliver on our commitments. I will work with the staff to identify skills development needs, including both hard and soft skills, that will make the agency better prepared to deliver across all the department's lines of business.

4. What does Transportation Equity look like to you? What experience do you have in advancing transportation equity for communities of color, low-income communities, immigrant and refugee communities, people with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, LGBTQ people, women and girls, youth, and seniors? What opportunities do you see for SDOT to lead with equity in its policies, programs, and projects?

Transportation has the power to be a force for positive transformation within communities. Safe, accessible, reliable, and intuitive transportation connects people with economic, and educational opportunities, and can even accommodate improved health and quality of life outcomes. Too often, however, transportation investments have had the effect of dividing or weakening communities, sometimes through neglect or even callous disregard, and other times through active disinvestment. Overcoming these historic inequities begins with listening and understanding the perspectives of groups that have been traditionally marginalized from the transportation decision-making process. To that end, SDOT is forming an external transportation equity workgroup to provide feedback on our first transportation equity agenda. The equity agenda will provide a framework for how we better address racial equity concerns into our departmental work.

In my career, I have had the opportunity to work on the issue of equity from a variety of perspectives. My work at Reconnecting America and the Center for Transit-Oriented Development focused on how new transit investments could be leveraged for affordable housing preservation and creation, as well as equitable neighborhood and economic development. My work at DDOT has focused on engaging people and communities in the transportation decision-making process so that our ultimate transportation investments reflect neighborhood, as well as citywide, needs and desires.

From what I have been able to see thus far, I'll have a strong foundation with the City of Seattle's demonstrated commitment to equity on which to build. The ORCA LIFT program is a nationally admired model for providing access to opportunities through discounted fares, and many of SDOT's recent infrastructure investments have improved safety and accessibility across Seattle in ways not seen in other cities. I am new to the Race and Social Justice Initiative and look forward to deepening my understanding of how RSJI can continue to shape SDOT's role in overcoming race-based inequities. Coordination of transportation investments with other housing, community, and economic development investments, as directed by the Equitable Development principles of the City's *Seattle 2035* comprehensive plan, is an important part of overcoming the institutional racism that SDOT and other City departments have historically (if not always consciously) played a role in perpetuating. I also see the RSJI Racial Equity Toolkit as an important analytical tool to guide SDOT in better understanding and responding to the risks of inequitable impacts from projects we deliver in communities of color, as well as more equitable delivery of services across the City.

As a public agency, leading with equity also includes providing equitable access to business and employment opportunities. I will continue to nurture SDOT's existing WMBE program to maximize opportunities our projects can provide to the minority and women owned firms that have been historically overlooked in public contracting. From what I understand, SDOT has come a long way over the past several years in improving its WMBE contracting performance. In my tenure as SDOT Director, we will continue to improve the opportunities we can provide for historically underserved businesses while also helping foster an increasingly diverse pool of talent at all levels of SDOT's workforce.

5. Please detail your experience in fostering cooperative partnerships with other local governments, local transit agencies, and the State and Federal government to develop good public transportation policy and deliver major capital projects. How will you apply these experiences to Seattle?

Throughout my career, I have found that the key to cooperative partnerships is in promoting consistency and understanding across agencies. I view interagency coordination as more than simply transactional. Long-term relationships enable staff to work across agency lines, overcoming the bureaucratic tendency to protect one's turf and more quickly come to consensus on shared policy and programmatic goals. In the District of Columbia, intergovernmental coordination is second nature to us. Almost every project we undertook required coordination with a Federal agency on permitting or regulatory approvals. While operating models are different, DDOT has also developed, and is responsible for, operating a streetcar line while also funding a growing share of all-day local bus service that must be carefully integrated with the regionally-operated Metro bus and rail network. Our success in improving all-day transit service has been dependent on fostering the kind of good long-term relationships with our partner agencies that are going to be critical for SDOT to foster with King County Metro, Sound Transit, Washington State Ferries and other transit agencies serving Seattle.

At DDOT, we have had a multi-level approach to collaborative partnerships. We would hold regular leadership meetings with major utilities that own assets within our right-of-way. In addition to strong working relationships at a leadership level, we would host monthly project coordination meetings with utilities, Federal resource agencies, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), and others to provide project updates and identify issues early on in project development. The combination of these approaches would flag issues before they contributed to project delays and facilitate quick resolution at upper levels of management when they could not be resolved easily by project staff.

In terms of interjurisdictional partnerships, I sat on the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) board, which facilitated working relationships with other regional jurisdictions. I also chaired our regular working group with the Federal Highway Administration DC Division Office, one of our primary sources of capital funding. At various points, we developed partnering working groups to tackle key project issues jointly. I believe these experiences will serve me well in working here with Puget Sound Regional Council and WSDOT, as well as federal agencies and our transit partners.

6. Please detail your experience managing large capital projects. How will you draw upon your experience, and the lessons learned from the Move Seattle Levy "Reset," to assure budget and schedule success for the City's Move Seattle Levy deliverables?

For the past 2½ years, I was DDOT's Chief Project Delivery Officer—a new position that is responsible for bringing together planning, project development, design, and construction to deliver projects more quickly and effectively. The largest capital project in DDOT's history—the \$500M+ Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge replacement project—is now under construction as a design/build project, and DDOT is delivering other projects in an approximately \$300M annual capital project portfolio.

As I have started to get up to speed on the Move Seattle Levy and its "Reset", I have been impressed with the work the SDOT team has done over the past year to identify challenges and begin implementing solutions. I've already discussed some of these lessons with the SDOT's capital project team, including:

- SDOT needs to include contingencies that reflect the complexity of the project in planning level cost estimates and better set those estimates to the planned year of expenditure;
- SDOT needs to share the realities of our project delivery for those that oversee our success, and for the public that does and should demand results, including unforeseen challenges that might emerge as design is refined, such as environmental risks or complex projects that require more intensive outreach; and
- SDOT needs to be transparent about changing funding conditions, whether accelerated inflation of labor or materials, or a changing federal landscape that may impact our success in seeking grants.

In terms of solutions, and how we assure success moving forward, I have already discussed some approaches with the SDOT team, including:

- Strengthening our project management processes, including how we approach risk management, and regular reporting to share good news and bad, both within the organization and with external partners;
- Developing realistic projections on a resource-restrained engineering and construction market in Seattle, as well as resource constraints from our funding partners and permitting agencies. The new Levy Workplan better accounts for these realities and risks, but this will remain a major focus for me as we ramp up project delivery over the remaining Levy term; and
- Continuing to find ways to make our delivery more efficient with more timely scope decisions. Clear, consistent, reliable decisions will address our highest risk sources of delay, which leads directly to increased costs. This can be addressed through openness and transparency, as well as clearer processes for determining project scope.

7. The [August 23, 2018 letter](#) from the Co-Chairs of the Move Seattle Levy Oversight Committee noted the need to re-establish trust with the Oversight Committee, modal boards and the public, as well as the need to improve organizational culture and increase transparency. How can SDOT be more accountable and transparent with community members, councilmembers, and the executive about the cost, scope, and impacts of projects?

- a) In particular, how will you ensure that Councilmembers and their staff get all the information they need about proposed projects and policies in a timely manner to respond to citizen requests and to make policy and financial decisions?

During 2018, SDOT conducted a thorough consultant-led assessment of the department's Levy delivery programs which led to the newly reset Workplan. The Assessment findings, along with the renewed Workplan commitments have been front and center in my mind as I familiarize myself with the department. From what I have been able to see, we are now in a position where all the cards are on the table and I intend to maintain this degree of transparency moving forward to deliver on our renewed

commitments to the public while also rebuilding trust with the Levy Oversight Committee (LOC), modal boards and City Council.

Because of the hard work done in 2018 to create the Updated Workplan Report, we now have a reset baseline for delivery of all 30 Levy programs that I believe is now achievable. We are committed to maintaining the original Levy-promised targets in our reporting to avoid “moving the goal posts” (as requested by the LOC), while we use the renewed Workplan targets to guide our delivery of programs and projects through the remaining years of the Levy.

SDOT has worked closely with LOC and the modal boards to establish new goals and metrics by which Seattle residents, elected officials, the LOC and modal boards can measure our performance and hold us accountable:

- We are currently working with the LOC on more thorough, streamlined, and consistent reporting. We want to provide LOC with the information they need—and when—so they can provide the level of oversight promised to voters in the Levy. The Q3 2018 report established a more robust report template that we will continue to produce quarterly for the Oversight Committee and general public. For 2019, our reporting calendar anticipates us issuing our 2018 Annual Levy Report on March 30, followed by quarterly updates published according to expectations established by LOC.
- A key finding from the Levy Assessment explained that SDOT had not been well organized to manage this level of capital project delivery. In response to this, the Office of Move Seattle has been established to better deliver on the higher volume of capital projects funded by the Levy. We have also launched a Project Portfolio Management system that will produce better project tracking, quicker reporting, and more accountability on all Levy projects and programs. This is also an area in which I can draw on my experience at DDOT building out and delivering on a similar capital program, will help inform my commitment to more successful delivery of multiple capital projects here in Seattle.
- I will continue SDOT’s recent practice of sharing more information about projects costs and trade-offs to the Pedestrian, Bike, Transit and Freight Advisory boards as we work to prioritize projects more realistically within the parameters of Levy funding available for each modal program.
- At the project level, we intend to be more transparent with the public and stakeholders, as well as relevant modal boards, each time we engage them on a project. This includes painting a realistic picture of project constraints, trade-offs, secured and unsecured funding, and other risks so the public is fully informed as we move through each phase of project development and implementation.
- Responding to LOC concerns, we have added more meetings to the calendar for 2019 to provide more time for members to ask questions about projects and programs. We have also made changes to our Capital Project Dashboard based on committee member feedback, tightening our own parameters when re-baselining projects and requiring strict indicator changes, among other improvements intended to make this online tool a better means for measuring our success in delivering levy-funded capital projects.

- Regarding Council, I would like us to brief the Sustainability & Transportation Committee on Levy performance each quarter, as we now do with LOC. We will also offer quarterly individual briefings to each Councilmember and Council staff to answer questions or respond to concerns about specific project or programs.

8. How will you approach the prioritization and allocation of the City's right of way among the different modes of transportation to advance the goals of Vision Zero, as well as to increase efficiencies in the flow of people and goods within our city?

- a) In your answer, please address how you plan to incorporate the advice of Seattle's Transit Advisory Board, Pedestrian Advisory Board, Bicycle Advisory Board, and Freight Advisory Board into SDOT's work.
- b) Please also describe your approach and experience with implementing adaptive signals, automated enforcement, and other emerging technology to manage the City's right of way.

The City has four 20-year modal master plans: transit, freight, pedestrian, and bicycle. These modal plans guide the prioritization and allocation of the City's right-of-way at the macro scale. When making individual micro-level investments, and/or changes in the allocation of limited space within the right-of-way in a specific corridor, conflicts that are not identified, or can't be resolved, at the macro planning level will often emerge during the project development phase. From my past experience, I have found that modal plans are often in conflict with each other, which can lead to challenges early on in scoping or planning a specific project. Some communities and stakeholders may also feel that previous engagement on modal plan development did not allow for adequate opportunity for input on siting of a new facility.

I have deep experience from my time in the District of Columbia working with communities to make difficult choices among competing demands for very limited right-of-way. At DDOT, we worked to integrate modal plans into a citywide transportation vision, and we were sometimes able to resolve concerns about a project through exploring alternative routing or corridors that were not considered during the development of citywide vision plan. The experience I've developed working through controversial projects in the District informs a more community-oriented, problem-solving approach to resolving conflict over competing demands on the right of way. My approach is to take on and then resolve these difficult issues early in order to avoid the kinds of conflicts that will continue to run deep in a community long after a project is completed.

I am committed to continuing to work with the modal advisory boards to develop the annually updated 3-5-year implementation plans for our Bicycle, Pedestrian and Freight Master programs, as well as working with the Transit Advisory Board to vet both transit service and capital priorities. We can also bring members of multiple boards together to resolve modal conflicts in complex corridors like Rainier Ave.

Achieving Vision Zero will require difficult tradeoffs as we apply best practices in traffic engineering and urban design within the context of a community's identified priorities. These tradeoffs are often in direct conflict with maintaining or increasing the flow for personal motor vehicles, so it is important to use measures such as person trips—rather than just vehicular trips—so more people and goods can

reliably travel through the corridors that serve this fast-growing City. Making sure the modal boards are engaged in decisions around metrics and evaluation criteria will help establish a clear understanding of individual project goals from the outset of project development.

With regard to specific technology deployment programs:

- The District's automated traffic enforcement (ATE) program has been led by the Metropolitan Police Department where MPD has the primary responsibility for installing and maintaining cameras and DDOT is responsible for siting of the cameras based on crash history. The District's history with automated traffic enforcement has shown substantial reductions in crash rates in before/after comparisons of ATE locations.
- DDOT has not yet implemented adaptive signals, in part because they would require a more substantial reconfiguration of the District's traffic signal system, given the density of the traffic signal network in most areas of the city and existing infrastructure constraints. We have deployed Transit Signal Priority (TSP) on approximately 1/8 of the District's traffic signals, which has created a form of adaptive signals. We are working currently with WMATA to evaluate TSP deployments and determine ways to improve the benefit for buses.
- We have worked to evaluate vehicle travel times using system-level data and used this information as part of the inputs into our citywide traffic signal optimization program.

Deployment of these new technologies has not always been smooth or well communicated. As we have deployed new technologies, we need to engage stakeholders and the general public in some of the evaluation approaches, including through our own Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Councils. I see a similarly important role for Seattle's modal boards in providing a platform for citizen feedback on how these emerging technologies are deployed and operated.

9. What is your overall strategy to achieve Vision Zero? What was your experience in Washington DC in implementing Vision Zero strategies, and are there lessons learned for Seattle?

Vision Zero is a clear goal, and achieving it is an incredible challenge to everyone. My overall strategy is based in the long-term thinking necessary to change a transportation system that kills over 40,000 Americans, including 15-20 people on Seattle streets, each year. This strategy includes:

- Re-engineering streets to reduce the chance of crashes and reduce the severity of those that do occur—with a focus on the most vulnerable road users. This is done through capital investments, policy and design standard changes, and low-cost operational changes to streets; and
- Re-calibrating society's expectations of the transportation system and the role of each individual in making the transportation system safer. This is done through policymaking, outreach, and public engagement.

In the District of Columbia, we adopted Vision Zero formally in 2015, with a pledge to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2024. Unfortunately, despite traffic engineering enhancements like additional HAWK signals, protected bike lanes, and new sidewalks, we saw our fatalities creep up

gradually from 26 in 2014 and 2015 to 36 in 2018. This past year a bicyclist, who had the right-of-way, was struck and killed within a protected bike lane while crossing through an intersection; and a mother and daughter were killed crossing the street when a vehicle turned against a red arrow that had been installed after a similar crash a decade previously.

These events led DDOT to redouble efforts to reduce crashes, rapidly deploying new strategies, such as left turn traffic calming, changes to dual turn lanes, and expanded use of Leading Pedestrian Intervals. However, engineering and design strategies alone will not achieve Vision Zero. The majority of traffic fatalities in the District of Columbia involve impairment and high speeds. Many also include inattention or recklessness with regard to the lives of people traveling the streets around us. These trends highlight the need for Vision Zero to be a shared value across agencies and shared by the traveling public. Otherwise, we will continue to struggle to achieve the zero-fatality goal.

10. What has been your experience with emerging shared mobility and micro-mobility services? How can we maximize the opportunity for these new options to help people get around, while at the same time avoiding their potential negative consequences?

I have a broad range of experiences managing shared mobility and emerging micro-mobility transportation within the public right-of-way. My overall philosophy regarding these platforms is that they provide mobility and accessibility benefits to their users which can translate into mobility and accessibility benefits for all transportation users. They also have the potential to result in inequitable mobility and access or impacts to certain transportation users if not appropriately managed. If the benefits outweigh the impacts, the systems can provide great value for cities.

Throughout my 7+ years at DDOT, I oversaw the Capital Bikeshare system, a regional, dock-based bikeshare program. We more than doubled the size of the system and brought new jurisdictions in the region into the program to meet rapid growth in demand for the service. We introduced a trip-based fee model and are working to incorporate e-bikes into the fleet on a permanent basis. Since its inception, Capital Bikeshare has provided open data to the general public, and we as public managers have benefitted from the insights and observations ordinary citizens have been able to make with the available data.

We have also long supported carsharing within the public right-of-way. I led the introduction of car2go into the District in 2012 and worked with Zipcar to expand access throughout the city. My core values in all shared mobility systems is to share data (while respecting privacy needs) and serving everyone. This means we have set geographic distribution requirements to ensure access and data sharing protocols to better understand how these services are being used.

In September 2017, after being approached by companies seeking to launch dockless bikeshare in the public right-of-way and realizing that we did not have an appropriate regulatory framework in place, we launched a 7-month demonstration period. Despite some growing pains, the program proved largely successful, and we extended the demonstration period by another 4 months to integrate e-scooters into the program. In August 2018, we announced some minor changes and an extension to the end of 2018, while also introducing proposed regulatory changes. Late last year, we opened a 2019 application period for operators and received 16 overall applications for service, including commitments to provide multiple forms of payment, discounted rides for low-income residents, and commitments to distribute vehicles throughout the District.

For each of the mobility platforms that have emerged over the past few years—and will likely continue to evolve over the coming decade—it is important for cities to engage with the private sector providers by leading with values around accessibility, equity, and safety, but then also to listen to what is possible, gather input from users and non-users alike and, finally, be able to communicate the decision-making process to both vendors and the public. The field is evolving so quickly that it tests the public sector’s ability to adapt, but we also need to make sure we are not compromising on core values for technologies that have emerged only over the past 12-24 months.

11. Please describe a time when you’ve had to implement a project that had divided community response. How did you navigate the different stakeholder pressures, and what factors influenced your decisions related to project design and implementation?

Over the past seven years at DDOT, I implemented many projects that produced a divided community response. Any change in the transportation system, whether it is new sidewalks or bike lanes or bus lanes, almost inevitably will lack full consensus to proceed if there is the perception that a stakeholder’s existing usage patterns will have to change. I have found that most stakeholders with strongly held positions have legitimate concerns and that dismissing those concerns out of hand, without listening and coming up with possible solutions, can lead to distrust and larger issues over time.

To navigate various stakeholder pressures, I have used several strategies, including:

- Public engagement from the very initial stages of a project. I have often approached communities before any designs have been developed to hear about concerns in the scoping and development of project purpose and need to make sure we capture as many issues as early as possible. This early stage engagement allowed us to evaluate different alternative approaches and either dismiss them as implausible or identify new options.
- Piloting solutions to evaluate impact. In cases where communities are divided about the potential impact of a project, I have undertaken pilot implementation approaches, including temporary installations as short as 2-weeks and as long as a year, to be able to understand impacts on traffic, parking, and pedestrian safety.
- Revisiting designs to address specific concerns. In some cases, where stakeholders felt there would be disproportionate impact on their daily activities, we developed alternative designs for as short as one block or one property to accommodate unique land uses but maintain the benefits of a larger corridor project.

In each of these scenarios, it is important for the department to lead with the values and goals of the project and evaluate alternative approaches within the context of the overall mission and vision. I have not always been completely successful in this regard—some projects have gotten stuck, and some have moved forward over the strenuous objections of some stakeholders—and I have taken lessons learned from both successes and failures to build better relationships and approaches for the future.