

Recommendation Status: SDOT Bridges

PRESENTATION TO THE TRANSPORTATION &
UTILITIES COMMITTEE

APRIL 21, 2021

Seattle Department of Transportation:
Strategic Approach to Vehicle Bridge
Maintenance is Warranted

September 11, 2020

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Seattle Office of City Auditor



Key Takeaways from our 2020 Report

- SDOT's bridge conditions are similar to other cities, but this is not good news
- SDOT meets bridge maintenance expenditure targets, but the amount budgeted is far below what is needed
- Accurate estimates of need and several other issues need to be addressed for SDOT to establish a strategic bridge preservation program
- SDOT concurred or partially concurred with all 10 of our recommendations, and established plans to implement them by the end of 2022 or 2023



SDOT Expected 2 of 10 Recommendations to be Completed by the end of 2022

#	OCA Recommendation (2020)	SDOT Plan (2020)
1	The Seattle Department of Transportation should take immediate steps to resolve all the issues identified in the 2019 Federal Highway Administration review.	<i>[By the end of 2020, SDOT will create a new position] dedicated to...capital replacement and maintenance needs plan for bridges based on the results of the new component-based condition assessment...this position will also assist with addressing administrative bridge inspection issues found during the informal 2019 FHWA audit.</i>
7	The Seattle Department of Transportation should conduct a cost benefit analysis of technology upgrades needed to improve staff efficiency as part of their staffing analysis.	<i>SDOT will identify technologies needed to conduct inspection and work order execution more efficiently along with associated costs for new technology.</i>



SDOT Expected the other 8 Recommendations to be Completed by the End of 2023 (p1 of 4)

#	OCA Recommendation (2020)	SDOT Plan (2020)
2	<p>The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) should reduce the share of the department’s bridge maintenance workload that is currently dedicated to reimbursable projects unrelated to SDOT bridge maintenance. Such a change could be done incrementally.</p>	<p><i>...Our implementation plan is to complete the staffing analysis mentioned elsewhere in this audit and to use it to determine the appropriate staffing and funding levels for the Roadway Structures Division as a whole.</i></p>
3	<p>The Seattle Department of Transportation should develop draft legislation to replace Ordinance 96715 to address current City of Seattle bridge maintenance priorities and ensure adequate oversight of private bridges.</p>	<p><i>...SDOT Street Use Division and the City Attorney’s Office [will work] to draft a reworked ordinance for consideration by City Council.</i></p>



SDOT Expected the other 8 Recommendations to be Completed by the End of 2023 (p2 of 4)

#	OCA Recommendation (2020)	SDOT Plan (2020)
4	The Seattle Department of Transportation should develop policies and procedures to adequately oversee private bridges that align with a revised version of Ordinance 96715, as mentioned in Recommendation 3.	<i>[SDOT] Roadway Structures will work with the SDOT Street Use Division and the City Attorney's Office to draft a reworked ordinance for consideration by City Council.</i>
5	The Seattle Department of Transportation should conduct a staffing analysis to determine the number and type of staff required for the implementation of a bridge preservation program.	<i>SDOT will use the federal guidelines recommended in the audit to conduct a staffing analysis based on element level condition data.</i>



SDOT Expected the other 8 Recommendations to be Completed by the End of 2023 (p3 of 4)

#	OCA Recommendation (2020)	SDOT Plan (2020)
6	The Seattle Department of Transportation should incorporate the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative values into the staffing analysis of its bridge program.	<i>SDOT will conduct a Racial Equity Tool Kit exercise to analyze proposed new methodologies for staffing analysis.</i>
8	The Seattle Department of Transportation should update the estimated useful life of their bridges using the condition data of individual bridge components.	<i>SDOT will develop an implementation plan for this based on available staffing and funding levels.</i>



SDOT Expected the other 8 Recommendations to be Completed by the End of 2023 (p4 of 4)

#	OCA Recommendation (2020)	SDOT Plan (2020)
9	The Seattle Department of Transportation should use the updated useful life estimates of its bridges to plan for preservation work and lifecycle costs.	<i>SDOT will develop an implementation plan for this based on available staffing and funding levels.</i>
10	After the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) has accurate condition data, updated estimated useful life calculations, and lifecycle cost data, SDOT should develop a strategic asset management plan for its bridges and the City should develop and implement strategies to fill the bridge maintenance funding gap.	<i>SDOT will develop a strategic asset management plan for its bridges and the City will work with state, federal and other funding partners to develop and implement strategies to fund bridge maintenance more fully.</i>



Acknowledgements and Questions

We appreciate SDOT's cooperation and assistance

A copy of our 2020 report can be found on our website at:

<https://www.seattle.gov/cityauditor/reports>

