

Traffic Incident Management in Seattle Consultant Recommendations and Status

Category	Item	Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe	Status	Complete
Establishing a Citywide TIM Program	A1	Formally enter into an MOU with relevant city agencies. Include specific TIM roles and responsibilities. Stakeholders should work together to create the MOU, and it should also be signed by relevant outside tow companies.	High	Immediate	In progress.	
Establishing a Citywide TIM Program	A2	In conjunction with an MOU, develop a mission statement for TIM in Seattle that is signed by all relevant city agencies.	High	Immediate	In progress	
Comprehensive TIM Training	B5.	Identify training officers within SPD and SDOT, ensure they receive the TIM training immediately and also ensure they become TIM trainers to facilitate future trainings.	High	Immediate	In progress. Training officers have been identified; training is underway.	x
Comprehensive TIM Training	B7.	Continue monthly citywide TIM meetings and include representatives from SDOT, SPD, SFD, the Port of Seattle, King County Metro and other agencies	High	Immediate	Complete. Monthly meetings are in progress	x
Comprehensive TIM Training	B12.	Identify champions for TIM training at SDOT and SPD to ensure the TIM training programs are well-attended and useful to the City and to the respective agencies.	High	Immediate	On-going	x
Best Practices in TIM and Leveraging the State's Expertise	C1.	Distribute the memo on "Best Practices in TIM," which was provided as a part of this project, to those responsible for implementing TIM programming at SDOT and SPD. Require those staff to read it and spread messages contained within throughout their organizations. Do the same with Washington State's Joint Operations Policy Statement (JOPS) on Incident Management.	High	Immediate	In progress. Memo has been distributed to agencies.	
Best Practices in TIM and Leveraging the State's Expertise	C2.	Identify trainers outside of SPD/SDOT to assist in official TIM training. Contact the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to request its assistance in setting up TIM training and using its TIM trainers. Also reach out to the Washington Traffic Incident Management Coalition (WaTIMCo.org) for assistance.	High	Immediate	Complete. Outside trainers are WSDOT and HNTB	x
Responding at the Scene (and SPD's Role)	D6.	Consider institutionalizing policy adjustments outlining how initial response occurs and the importance of traffic circulation (for example: preservation of crash scene vs. re-opening lanes to traffic, where applicable).	High	Immediate	In progress. Currently revising response protocols for limited access roads (WS Bridge, AWW)	
Responding at the Scene (and SPD's Role)	D9.	Qualified personnel (from SDOT and/or SPD) should be on scene to make decisions as to how a crash scene is cleared, with a clear escalation of command. Major decisions should not be left to the towing operator.	High	Immediate	Complete	x
Traffic Operations and SDOT's Role	E1.	SDOT should complete its "Tiered Response" map and protocols to better define escalation of command during traffic incidents.	High	Immediate	Complete. This map will continue to evolve.	x
Traffic Operations and SDOT's Role	E9.	SDOT should use real-time travel time and flow data for incident detection and share information with SPD.	Medium	Immediate	In progress	
Traffic Operations and SDOT's Role	E11.	Provide SDOT Emergency Laborers (E-Laborers) authority to shut down work sites during major incidents when detour routes are required to process higher-than-normal volumes.	Medium	Immediate	Complete	x
Towing Contract and Operations	F9.	To save time, allow SDOT to call in a tow from the TOC instead of waiting for a responding officer to arrive at the scene, when applicable.	Medium	Immediate	In progress	

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Towing Contract and Operations	F10.	Ensure that the existing tow contract is fully enforced by having the City's contracted tow company improve all aspects of its incident response, closest assets properly dispatched and complete cleanup of incident scenes that have impacted the right of way.	Medium	Immediate	Complete	x
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement	G7.	SDOT should share its CVE permit data with SPD so SPD's CVE officers can access the information.	High	Immediate	In progress	
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement	G9.	SPD/SDOT and the Port of Seattle should establish a joint operating agreement like the one established between WSDOT and WSP (JOPS) to clarify CVE roles	High	Immediate	In progress	
Data Collection and Elevating the Perception of TIM	H2.	Begin tracking secondary collisions that occur downstream of incident scenes.	High	Immediate	Complete. Methodology will improve over time.	x
Data Collection and Elevating the Perception of TIM	H5.	During major incidents, provide consistent media outreach and transparent information to the public on alternate routes as well as the status of incident-clearance efforts.	High	Immediate	In progress.	
Teamwork and Creating a Citywide Culture for Improved TIM	J1.	TIM training and messaging should saturate all levels of staff to ensure buy-in across relevant agencies. Leadership buy-in is critical for effective TIM practices to take hold.	High	Immediate	On-going	x
Teamwork and Creating a Citywide Culture for Improved TIM	J3.	Individual agencies should be encouraged to escalate command upward in severe incidents and work together on major decisions (through the citywide EOC if necessary).	High	Immediate	On-going	x
Teamwork and Creating a Citywide Culture for Improved TIM	J4.	SDOT, SPD and SFD can partner with King County Metro on roadway clearance practices and the use of Metro's equipment.	Medium	Immediate	In progress - to be including in the SDOT/KC DOT/METRO All Hazard Response MOU.	
Teamwork and Creating a Citywide Culture for Improved TIM	J5.	SFD should elevate its level of collaboration with SDOT and SPD to the type of working relationship SFD now has with WSDOT and WSP.	High	Immediate	On-going	x
Teamwork and Creating a Citywide Culture for Improved TIM	J6.	SDOT and SPD can utilize SFD resources for large crashes where rescue equipment could be useful for scene clearance.	Medium	Immediate	On-going	
Teamwork and Creating a Citywide Culture for Improved TIM	J10.	Pursue an MOU agreement between SDOT/SPD and Port of Seattle (via the Port's tenants) on the potential sharing of forklifts and other equipment needed during incidents or disasters.	High	Immediate	In progress	
Establishing a Citywide Tim Program	A4	Adopt new policy and procedures for each agency as they relate to TIM and the MOU to institutionalize Seattle's TIM response. Train relevant personnel in each agency on the MOU, TIM policy and associated procedures.	High	Short-term	In progress	
Comprehensive TIM Training	B1.	Require in-person TIM training for all SPD traffic unit personnel and managers. For existing officers, enforce training completion deadline. For new traffic officers, coordinate with the Criminal Justice Training Center (CJTC) to incorporate TIM training at the basic academy. If this is not feasible, then make training mandatory, once the officer has graduated from CJTC in Post Academy Field Training Officer (FTO) training.	High	Short-term	In progress	
Comprehensive TIM Training	B2.	Provide basic TIM training on quick clearance of incident scenes, escalation of command and other important TIM concepts to all SPD patrol officers in short one-hour blocks ("roll call training"). Patrol officers are usually first responders to incidents and need to understand the basics of managing a scene from the outset.	High	Short-term	In progress	

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Comprehensive TIM Training	B3.	Train SPD Dispatchers on towing protocols and quick response.	High	Short-term		
Comprehensive TIM Training	B4.	Expand recent TIM trainings at SDOT and ensure all relevant personnel are included in TIM training. Impose deadlines for initial training to be completed.	High	Short-term	On-going	x
Comprehensive TIM Training	B6.	Engage in multi-agency trainings including tabletop exercises or simulated incidents. Consider major citywide joint training exercises annually to test and improve response capabilities and identify gaps. Conduct training using actual heavy-duty equipment to simulate real clearance events. Include SDOT, SPD, SFD and other agencies. Include the City's tow contractor so it can use its equipment during the simulation	High	Short-term	On-going	x
Comprehensive TIM Training	B8.	Better integrate the traffic focus (TIM) into general Office of Emergency Management (OEM) NIMS (National Incident Management System) training sessions.	Medium	Short-term		
Comprehensive TIM Training	B9.	Bring SDOT into relevant SFD / SPD training courses as appropriate (i.e. for course on HAZMAT cleanup).	Low	Short-term	On-going	x
Comprehensive TIM Training	B10.	Have trainees play different roles during tabletop trainings to gain an understanding of other agencies' needs.	Medium	Short-term	In progress for SDOT internally	
Best Practices in TIM and Leveraging the State's Expertise	C3.	Establish a pool of trainers in Seattle from SPD, SDOT and SFD and utilize them for future trainings.	Medium	Short-term	In progress.	
Best Practices in TIM and Leveraging the State's Expertise	C5.	The City of Seattle should join the State's TIM Network for best practices and better coordination.	Medium	Short-term		
Responding at the Scene (and SPD's Role)	D1.	To quickly move disabled vehicles away from travel lanes, the City of Seattle should work with the City Attorney to ensure that state "Hold Harmless" laws apply in Seattle. RCW 46.52.020 (2) (b)	High	Short-term	Complete.	x
Responding at the Scene (and SPD's Role)	D2.	Ensure all personnel in SPD and SDOT are made aware of the "Hold Harmless" laws and that they understand the importance of clearing the roads to prevent secondary collisions.	High	Short-term	In progress.	
Responding at the Scene (and SPD's Role)	D3.	Establish policy and procedures for clearing traffic with push-bars. Engage in follow-up training with SPD and SDOT first responders in the proper methods of using push-bars to clear an incident. Review and research the ability to insert push-bar training during traffic week at the Washington State Patrol (WSP) Academy or during CJTC traffic week. If these options are not available, this training should be added to post-academy FTO training.	Medium	Short-term	In progress.	
Responding at the Scene (and SPD's Role)	D4.	Establish a policy and procedures for both SPD traffic and patrol units when responding to major blocking incidents, and provide these units with action plans to assist in detours, signal control, activating OEM's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and other on-scene tasks.	High	Short-term		
Responding at the Scene (and SPD's Role)	D5.	Create staging locations for response vehicles (such as safety service patrols) to quicken response to incidents as they occur.	High	Short-term		
Responding at the Scene (and SPD's Role)	D7.	To quickly move disabled vehicles away from travel lanes, the City of Seattle should work with the City Attorney to ensure ensure that the state's "Steer It, Clear It" law applies in Seattle. Consider posting signs and using public service announcements to inform the public of "Steer It, Clear It" messages during key times or prior to major events. All major choke points should have "Steer It, Clear It" signage consistent with WSDOT signage on interstate highways.	Medium	Short-term		

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Responding at the Scene (and SPD's Role)	D11.	Create cross-departmental teams with members from SPD and SDOT to investigate major scenes, where applicable. Include a forensic traffic engineer on teams responding to scenes of serious and fatal incidents.	Medium	Short-term
Traffic Operations and SDOT's Role	E2.	Formalize the full-time presence of traffic division officers from SPD in the SDOT TOC to coordinate in real-time as incidents occur. Consider placing portions of the 911 dispatch function in the purview of officer(s) stationed in the TOC. Provide guidelines to define when other relevant agencies should be present in the TOC, as needed.	High	Short-term
Traffic Operations and SDOT's Role	E4.	SDOT should provide "SigAlerts" or "Gridlock Alerts" that provide citywide notice of either major planned events that will cause congestion or following a major traffic incident that causes widespread strain on the road network. Consider "emergency level" communications that can reach most cell carriers.	High	Short-term
Traffic Operations and SDOT's Role	E5.	Improve communication structure between SDOT personnel in the TOC and SPD dispatchers in terms of incident detection, verification and notification. SPD should share and integrate the full version of its Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system with SDOT for use in SDOT's TOC to automate notification of incidents and reduce the amount of time needed to disseminate information. SPD should provide training on the CAD system to SDOT personnel. Review WSDOT's similar arrangement with WSP for reference on implementation.	High	Short-term
Traffic Operations and SDOT's Role	E6.	SDOT should pre-plan for major incidents and integrate this with its ability to make dynamic traffic signal changes to create detour routes. SPD and SDOT should create pre-set re-route plans for all major arterials. Plans should be in place for minor, intermediate and major incidents.	High	Short-term
Traffic Operations and SDOT's Role	E8.	Using available travel time and traffic flow data, SDOT should identify typical days of the week or times of the year with high congestion in certain locations, and put extra focus on quick incident response times for them at those times. Share this data in advance regularly with SPD.	High	Short-term
Traffic Operations and SDOT's Role	E10.	SDOT should create a media coordination area within the TOC for briefings on major incidents.	Low	Short-term
Traffic Operations and SDOT's Role	E13.	SDOT's TOC should increase coordination with similar traffic management centers housed in WSDOT (for the Seattle region) and King County Metro. These locations are generally more active through the course of the week than SDOT's TOC, which is not a 24/7 operation.	Medium	Short-term
Traffic Operations and SDOT's Role	E14.	Modernize SDOT's TOC to identify incidents more quickly through upgraded technology and better use of available resources: install a screen showing vehicle speeds in real time with travel time estimates displayed between key points; display a map with all current Variable Message Sign (VMS) displays; display signal patterns for real-time analysis and updates; roll forward planned "Active Traffic Management" investments for use in TIM.	High	Short-term
Towing Contract and Operations	F3.	Integrate the towing company into regular TIM training (including tabletop exercises) and include training in TIM requirements in any new tow contract for tow operators.	High	Short-term
Towing Contract and Operations	F4.	Create a Tow Officer position within SPD to coordinate training with the tow contractor and manage/enforce the contract.	Medium	Short-term
Towing Contract and Operations	F6.	SDOT and SPD should work with tow companies to ensure quickest possible response times (via routing assistance, traffic control, and/or escorts to scene)	High	Short-term

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Towing Contract and Operations	F8.	Ensure that responding officers are aware of which tow companies are allowed to move vehicles. Implement policies that allow the City to move vehicles using companies other than Lincoln Towing. Identify additional towing co(s) that can handle heavy loads and arrive quickly.	High	Short-term	
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement	G1.	Review relevant City ordinances to ensure full enforcement capability of all state/federal commercial vehicle regulations. Consider writing a new City ordinance that mirrors federal regulations on CVE. Train SPD's CVE unit on these regulations.	High	Short-term	
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement	G2.	Review which agency should supervise and oversee CVE and the duties and responsibilities of enforcement personnel. Identify a lead agency for CVE. Currently there is a lack of clarity on the roles of SPD and SDOT roles in CVE. Determine appropriate roles for armed and unarmed CVEs – this should include safety and enforcement considerations.	High	Short-term	
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement	G4.	Establish a policy and procedures for CVE officers to follow regarding training, re-certification and responsibilities during commercial vehicle collisions. Deploy CVE officers to scenes where a commercial vehicle is involved and consider mandatory post-crash inspections of commercial vehicles in major incidents.	High	Short-term	
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement	G5.	Work with the WSP Training Academy on CVE training and re-certification of CVEs. Ensure at least one to two CVE officers obtain certifications in hazardous materials regulations and enforcement.	Medium	Short-term	
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement	G8.	The Port of Seattle can assist with CVE by working with the City on any revisions to the CVE program, such as: leveraging SDOT's inspection equipment to perform CVE inspections on Port property; pursuing off-hour freight activity options; facilitating future meetings between City agencies and Port tenants; and participating in planning for a "Heavy Haul Corridor" in order to obtain federal funding for CVE officers and equipment.	Medium	Short-term	
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement	G10.	Involve the Port of Seattle, Port of Seattle Police, WSP and Harbor Patrol in tabletop exercises for disaster preparedness as it relates to CVE.	Low	Short-term	
Data Collection and Elevating the Perception of TIM	H1.	Under a formalized TIM policy, create specific performance measures to track clearance times and set goals for incremental improvements. SDOT should continue its data collection on clearance times and automate the process in conjunction with CAD upgrades at the TOC.	High	Short-term	
Data Collection and Elevating the Perception of TIM	H3.	Collect data on clearance times by defining the start time as the time at which a 911 call comes in. This data is currently unavailable at SDOT's TOC but it can be made available with CAD upgrades.	Medium	Short-term	
Data Collection and Elevating the Perception of TIM	H6.	Promote self-evaluation efforts and provide data successes to the public and local media.	High	Short-term	
Evaluation of TIM	I1.	Create an external evaluation group for citywide TIM performance (potentially consisting of members of FHWA's National Operations Center of Excellence).	High	Short-term	
Teamwork and Creating a Citywide Culture for Improved TIM	J2.	Identify and define thresholds for which TIM-level incidents are worthy of the activation of citywide Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and share these thresholds among SDOT, SPD and SFD.	High	Short-term	
Teamwork and Creating a Citywide Culture for Improved TIM	J7.	SFD should share its incident-response training videos with SDOT and SPD, and SFD should also create a multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional training video.	Medium	Short-term	Complete. x
Teamwork and Creating a Citywide Culture for Improved TIM	J8.	City agencies should partner with the private sector to create apps and spread information on travel conditions to private-sector employees (i.e. to switch to transit or work off-site).	High	Short-term	

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Teamwork and Creating a Citywide Culture for Improved TIM	J9.	The Port of Seattle can engage with SDOT and SPD on potential use of Port property to store vehicles after their removal from nearby crash scenes.	Medium	Short-term	
Establishing a Citywide Tim Program	A3.	Following the development of an MOU, create a comprehensive citywide TIM Policy Manual and distribute to all relevant city agencies and other parties.	High	Short-term	
Comprehensive TIM Training	B11.	Include TIM in standard training calendars for SPD and SFD, even if everyone cannot be trained immediately.	High	Long-term	
Best Practices in TIM and Leveraging the State's Expertise	C4.	Once TIM is strengthened in Seattle, partner with regional players. Create a regional entity for coordination on traffic incident management (e.g. an "I-5 Coalition") and foster better partnerships with WSDOT's traffic management center located in Seattle.	Medium	Long-term	
Responding at the Scene (and SPD's Role)	D8.	Develop a field guide to assist both patrol and traffic officers in handling a wide variety of incidents, from minor to intermediate to major.	Medium	Long-term	
Responding at the Scene (and SPD's Role)	D10.	Utilize SDOT Emergency Laborers (E-Laborers) and cross-train with WSDOT Incident Response personnel to supplement on-scene response to incidents. Outfit SDOT E-Laborers with sirens, extra gas and other equipment to provide more services on-site.	Medium	Long-term	In progress
Responding at the Scene (and SPD's Role)	D12.	Expand and roll out a COMPSTAT-like system to anticipate traffic crash locations and speed response.	Medium	Long-term	
Responding at the Scene (and SPD's Role)	D13.	Equip City vehicles with streaming video cameras to provide SDOT's Traffic Operations Center (TOC) with additional information from incident scenes.	Medium	Long-term	
Responding at the Scene (and SPD's Role)	D14.	Jointly develop outcomes for incident-based traffic control response using existing resources, such as Parking Enforcement Officers (PEOs). Redeploy existing resource or identify additional resources as needed to achieve outcomes.	Medium	Long-term	
Traffic Operations and SDOT's Role	E3.	Create a 24/7 Joint Operations Center dedicated to TIM staffed by SDOT and SPD; include representatives from WSDOT, WSP, King County Metro, SFD and others as required. Include links to media through a dedicated Media Center.	Low	Long-term	
Traffic Operations and SDOT's Role	E7.	Expand the TOC's camera program to cover additional streets and areas in Seattle not currently covered.	Medium	Long-term	
Traffic Operations and SDOT's Role	E12.	SDOT and SPD should jointly create a TIM plan to be enacted when the tunnel replaces the existing viaduct along SR-99. The plan should include planned re-routes for those times when an incident occurs in the tunnel itself.	Low	Long-term	In progress. SR 99 Tunnel Emergency Response Plan (WSDOT lead).
Towing Contract and Operations	F1.	Explore how new tow contracts and amendments can better serve the City's incident clearance needs. Consider amendments to the tow contract, opening up the contract to multiple tow companies through a competitive bidding process, and/or shifting tow responsibility (in part or in full) to SDOT or to SPD. An amended contract could also separate light-duty from heavy-duty tow responsibilities. It could also result in a "tow rotation" system on a regional level, based on the types of equipment type held by various tow contractors.	High	Long-term	
Towing Contract and Operations	F2.	With any new tow contract with multiple operators, ensure that tow contract terms are followed to allow the closest appropriate and available tow vehicle to respond to incidents. Implement clear regulations and recommendations on what towing options are available and make them available to all responding agencies.	Medium	Long-term	

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Towing Contract and Operations	F5.	Create a performance measurement framework and incentive programs for tow contractor(s), such as rewards based on quick response times.	High	Long-term
Towing Contract and Operations	F7.	Consider a “free tow” program to remove disabled vehicles from major highways (SR-99), arterials and bridges at no cost to the motorist. Conduct public outreach on the program to encourage its use.	Medium	Long-term
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement	G3.	Appropriately fund and equip CVE activity within the City, in whichever agency ends up owning it.	High	Long-term
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement	G6.	Identify possible technologies that may assist in CVE, such as weigh-in-motion, license plate readers and other automated enforcement systems already used by WSP.	Medium	Long-term
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement	G11.	Develop procedures for handling commercial vehicle backups on city streets: pre-plan staging areas, traffic control, etc. SDOT can provide permits to the Port of Seattle for traffic control on adjacent City streets.	Medium	Long-term
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement	G12.	Cross train Port commercial vehicle inspectors with WSP CVE officers in joint operations near and around the Port to reduce equipment violations and protect the City’s roadway infrastructure.	Low	Long-term
Data Collection and Elevating the Perception of TIM	H4.	Integrate Bluetooth travel time data into the TIM program and use this to evaluate scene-clearance effectiveness.	Medium	Long-term
Evaluation of TIM	I2.	Following the issuance of this report, conduct holistic reviews, at the six-month and one-year marks, of wholesale changes made to TIM in Seattle.	High	Long-term
Evaluation of TIM	I3.	In these reviews, identify both TIM successes and continuing problem areas, and then adjust these recommendations as needed.	High	Long-term