

4.12 Public and Emergency Services

Public services include schools, community centers, cemeteries, and social service providers. Emergency services include fire and police stations and services, hospitals, nursing homes, and medical and dental clinics. Transportation projects can affect public and emergency services and utilities by increasing the demand for additional services, by temporarily disrupting service, or by increasing travel time for emergency services.

Within the study area, there are fire, police, and emergency medical services, as well as solid waste and postal services. This section examines potential impacts of the Center City Connector on public and emergency services in the study area, which extends for approximately a ½-mile radius from the LPA alignment and components (see Figure 4.12-1). The analysis determines whether the project would induce the need for additional services, impact accessibility or delivery of public services or affect response times of emergency services.

Applicable Regulations

WSDOT is the state's designated rail transit safety oversight agency pursuant to 49 CFR 659. In accordance with regulations adopted by WSDOT, a Streetcar System Safety Program Plan would be required.

4.12.1 Fire and Emergency Medical Services

The Seattle Fire Department (SFD) provides fire and emergency medical services in the study area, which is where the department headquarters and three stations are located:

- Headquarters, 301 Second Avenue S
- Fire Station 2, 2320 Fourth Avenue
- Station 5, 925 Alaskan Way
- Fire Station 10, 400 S Washington Street

The city's fire alarm center is located at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Washington Street. Emergency fire and medical units are generally dispatched from the station closest to the call site, although units can be dispatched from other stations as well. In addition to the emergency medical units provided by SFD, several hospitals (Virginia Mason, Swedish Hospital, and Harborview Medical Center) are located outside of the study area but provide emergency medical services to persons in the study area when patients are transported by SFD or other private ambulance service providers to these hospitals. Harborview Medical Center is the nearest hospital and is the location of the headquarters for the SFD Medic One Program, which provides advanced life-support activities and responds to fires, hazardous materials calls, and rescue calls in the study area.

The SFD's average response times in 2013 (from the time units were dispatched following a 911 call to their arrival at the site) were as follows:

- 4.45 minutes for fire and hazardous materials responses (provided by fire and special operations)
- 3.74 minutes for basic life support responses (provided by fire and medical units)
- 3.74 minutes for advanced life support (provided by Medic One) (SFD, 2014)

The introduction of a new travel mode to a transportation corridor creates another point of conflict with moving vehicles and the potential to increase the number of emergency incidents. Traffic safety is addressed in Section 4.1, Transportation, and in more detail in the *Center City Connector Transportation Technical Report* (SDOT, 2014). Currently, none of the intersections along the alignment is designated as a high accident location by the City of Seattle, which means they have fewer than 10 accidents per year.

4.12.2 Police

Emergency-response and public safety services are provided by the Seattle Police Department (SPD). The study area is within SPD's West Precinct. The West Precinct is located at 810 Virginia Avenue, approximately one block east of the main project route on Westlake Avenue. The SPD's Downtown Service Center is next to the West Precinct, at 820 Virginia Avenue. The main Seattle Police Headquarters is located in the study area, with the Seattle Justice Center, at 610 Fifth Avenue.

SPD provides law enforcement and responds to 911 emergency calls throughout Seattle. SPD has officers and civilian personnel in four main bureaus: Patrol Operations, Criminal Intelligence, Special Operations, and Field Support. The SPD protects public safety in many ways, ranging from officers patrolling beats to the deployment of special teams and task forces, which focus on a variety of issues, including auto theft, drug dealing and violence, and crimes against children.

As part of the existing streetcar patrol service, the SPD performs transit patrol services, law enforcement, and enforcement of streetcar rules. The SPD provides a streetcar safety training program for officers and security officers, which includes engagement with other security and public safety departments.

4.12.3 Impacts

4.12.3.1 No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative would not result in impacts on public service in the study area.

Traffic is expected to increase through 2035, which would slow traffic a little more than 1 minute in the southbound direction compared with today's travel during peak evening periods; therefore, response times are expected to increase, as well. Northbound is expected to be similar to today's travel times. There would be no change in the intersections, access points (driveways), or operations, other than slightly higher volumes of vehicles moving slower in 2035. Therefore, no changes in collision rates or types of accidents are expected.

4.12.3.2 Locally Preferred Alternative

Operational Impacts

Fire and Emergency Medical Services. The traffic analysis (see Section 4.1, Transportation) finds that operation of the Center City Connector would not delay traffic and emergency service response times along the planned route in 2018 compared to the No Build Alternative. However, in 2035, the LPA would increase travel time by as much as 1.5 minutes in the westbound direction on S Jackson Street approaching First Avenue compared to the No Build Alternative. To avoid delay, the streetcar trackway is designed to have a mountable curb, so emergency

vehicles may use the trackway to circumvent impediments en route to an emergency, at the discretion of the service operator. Emergency vehicles may choose to use other routes in the grid roadway network during peak traffic periods to avoid this delay in emergency service response. In addition, the LPA would divert traffic, resulting in approximately 6 percent more vehicles on adjacent streets. However, traffic movements throughout the downtown study area would remain acceptable during peak-hour commute periods—less than a half-minute increased delay at intersections within the study area compared to what they area today and slightly improved compared to the No Build Alternative. This is likely due to the convenience of the streetcar, which would reduce the need for multiple vehicle trips within the Center City area because drivers could park once and travel by streetcar to multiple destinations within the city. Therefore, on average, the LPA would not increase delays in emergency response times beyond the No Build Alternative.

Any moving vehicle has the potential to induce or be involved in a collision; however, the LPA would include several safety design features and standard operating practices that would help to avoid and minimize the potential for incidents to occur. The project's exclusive-transit travel lane would minimize conflicts with vehicular traffic, bicycles, and pedestrians. Left turns in front of the streetcar would either be eliminated or, where permitted, motor vehicles turning left would have a separate signal time to avoid conflict with streetcars. Outside of designated intersections, crossing the trackway for motor vehicles would be prohibited. However, the exclusive-transit lane would include a mountable curb for emergency vehicles to use the travel lane or to cross over at their discretion. In addition, the streetcar facilities would be made of nonflammable materials, and the vehicles would be electrically powered and would not use combustible fuels.

Where the streetcar would run in the roadway median, there is low potential for conflicts with ingress and egress points from parking garages (which would be limited to right-in and right-out access). The exception is where the LPA is proposed on the outside, eastbound lane along Stewart Street, which would pass in front of the Bon Macy's parking garage on Stewart Street and Third Avenue. In this case, the stations on Stewart Street near Third/ Fourth Avenue would be positioned east of the egress. A signal would alert vehicle drivers exiting into the shared traffic lane. Existing parking garages already include alarms to alert for cross-pedestrian and - vehicle traffic; therefore, the new signal would be consistent with expected vehicle driver responsibility to use judgment before advancing safely to avoid a collision.

In addition, bike lanes are planned to have perpendicular crossings of the streetcar trackway, which would help avoid accidents from bicycle wheels becoming lodged in the trackway. Bicycle routes are not planned to occur parallel to streetcar alignment. Pedestrians would be encouraged to access the station at crosswalks, which provide access to the center stations. For more detail on bicycle safety, refer to the non-motorized analysis found in Section 4.1.5 of this EA.

The Seattle Streetcar System Safety Program Plan (Seattle, 2013) would be expanded for the Center City Connector with input from public service providers. It addresses procedures relevant to fire and emergency medical services, including a fire/life safety committee; safety, security, and emergency plans; and emergency preparedness (i.e., exercises and drills) to provide a safe environment for passengers, employees, and persons interacting with the streetcar. Final design may add hydrants so that both sides of the roadway are served. If there are not adequate fire hydrants, streetcar service could be temporarily shut down during fire emergencies because SFD regulations and procedures prevent placing fire hoses across tracks when streetcars are in operation.

Police. The overall crime rate is not expected to increase as a result of the Center City Connector. Although an accident or crime-related incident could involve the streetcar, the risk of such occurrences would not be higher than presently exists for the public bus system in the area. Most crimes at transit stations are nonviolent incidents, such as vandalism and theft, or nuisance crimes such as disorderly conduct and drunkenness, and loitering. However, most rail transit passengers are 10 to 20 times less likely to experience those types of events while using rail transit than while walking, living, or driving in the neighborhoods near the rail transit system (FTA, 2006).

Postal and Solid Waste Services. The loss of the commercial loading zones along the streetcar route would affect pick-up and delivery services, such as postal deliveries and solid waste removal. To minimize this effect, several potential loading strategies are under consideration, including providing all-day loading zones where additional right-of-way is available, providing loading zones on side streets, allowing on-street loading/unloading during early morning or late evening hours (outside of streetcar operating hours), and using alleys for deliveries or loading zone access. Section 4.1.6.1 in the Transportation Section discusses impacts on on-street parking and loading zones. Similarly, solid waste removal could be restricted to non-operational hours where curbside service is the only option. Most of the waste removal zones are already accessed through alleyways or garages. Transportation Section 4.1.7 identifies mitigation measures appropriate to address impacts on public service delivery (postal service, waste removal).

Construction Impacts

Fire and Emergency Medical Services. Impacts on public services during construction would be minimized by dedicating two lanes to the construction of the LPA, diverting traffic to adjacent roadways, eliminating left turns at some intersection, and removing loading and unloading zones so that two lanes of vehicle travel can be maintained throughout construction. Also, only segments of up to four to six blocks would be under construction at any given time.

Potential effects during construction of the trackway (including OMF access/turnback track on Republican Street) would include slightly increased travel time or detours for emergency vehicles due to temporary lane closures and cross-road access restrictions or closures on evenings and weekends within the segment under construction. The delays would be negligible except for construction in the Pioneer Square area, where northbound traffic would be diverted from First Avenue to Alaskan Way. This would result in delays of approximately 15 seconds at intersections along Alaskan Way. This would be a relatively short-term impact because the total estimated construction period for the Pioneer Square segment is less than 8 months.

These delays are expected to be a minor impact, because the proposed construction would be phased as opposed to disrupting the entire alignment at once, and emergency service providers would have alternative routes available. Construction along Stewart Street and Olive Way would occur predominantly during evenings and on weekends, when traffic volumes are lower and access is more manageable, thus limiting impacts on emergency service.

Construction of the OMF expansions is not expected to affect public-service response times or access. There is a potential for construction-related incidents that could require emergency response.

Police. Crime incidents during construction are typically limited to trespassing and minor vandalism. Barriers would separate construction and staging areas; as a result, crime is not expected to increase substantially during construction.

Postal and Waste Removal Services. Removing on-street parking and delivery zones to accommodate the trackway would affect public services, such as postal service and private delivery services. Most waste removal services occur in the alleyways and therefore would not be affected.

4.12.4 Mitigation Measures

Potential operational impacts on public service and emergency service will be mitigated with the following measures:

- To minimize effects of delay in emergency response, the streetcar exclusive-transit lane will include a mountable curb for emergency vehicles to use or cross over at their discretion.
- To mitigate for loss of commercial loading zones, SDOT will provide all-day loading zones along the corridor where additional right-of-way is available and on side streets. Additionally, SDOT will allow on-street loading/unloading during early morning or late evening hours (outside of streetcar operating hours) and designate alleys for deliveries or loading zone access.
- Solid waste removal will be limited to access via alleyways and side streets; where curbside service is the only option, solid waste removal will be limited to hours when the streetcar is not operating.
- To address safety and emergency response coordination with the addition of the Streetcar service, the Seattle Streetcar System Safety Program Plan (Seattle, 2013) will be expanded for the Center City Connector with input from public service providers. It will address procedures relevant to fire and emergency medical services, including a fire/life safety committee; safety, security, and emergency plans; and emergency preparedness (i.e., exercises and drills) to provide a safe environment for passengers, employees, and persons interacting with the streetcar.
- To adequately respond to fires on either side of the streetcar track, during final design SDOT will consider adding hydrants so that both sides of the roadway are served.

Potential construction impacts on public service and emergency service will be mitigated with the following measures:

- Prior to construction, applicable agencies will review and approve construction activities and traffic control plans.
- Emergency service providers will be provided with information on lane closures, detour routes, and construction schedules.
- SDOT will coordinate with SPD and SFD to maintain reliable access for emergency services during construction and to minimize delays in response times from construction activities and detours.
- Relocation of access for deliveries and pick-up services will be implemented prior to construction. Relocation strategies for access and delivery include using alleyways, allowing early and late delivery periods that avoid construction periods, and making special provisions for nearby loading zones outside of construction areas.