



SR 520 Catastrophic Failure Plan



Traffic crossing Lake Washington on the SR 520 bridge during evening rush hour

Why does WSDOT need a SR 520 Catastrophic Failure Plan?

The SR 520 bridge and approaches are vulnerable to both windstorms and earthquakes, and are nearing the end of their useful lives. The SR 520 floating bridge currently carries approximately 160,000 people and 115,000 vehicles per day. As one of only two Lake Washington crossings, it is a vital regional corridor for transportation of both people and goods. If the SR 520 bridge were to fail, the effects to regional and statewide travel and the economy would be significant.

WSDOT is addressing SR 520 vulnerability by:

- Accelerating the project schedule.
- Advancing pontoon construction.
- Preparing for a catastrophic failure.

What is the SR 520 Catastrophic Failure Plan?

The SR 520 Catastrophic Failure Plan highlights short-term and long-term communications and traffic management strategies. The communications plan provides a framework for WSDOT communications with members of the public and with other agencies and jurisdictions. The transportation management plan represents a regional approach to managing state routes that are affected by a SR 520 bridge failure.

The plan was developed in collaboration with regional jurisdictions, transit agencies, emergency responders, and businesses. Planners and public information officers from jurisdictions and agencies, including King County Metro and Sound Transit, participated in a number of meetings that informed the catastrophic failure plan.

The plan provides a basis for local jurisdictions to develop or update their own emergency response plans.

What is in the communications plan?

The communications plan supports emergency response, bridge recovery and bridge restoration efforts through development, coordination and dissemination of emergency public information. To do this, the plan provides:

- A communications framework that ensures consistent messaging across agencies.
- Suggested guidelines, strategies and tools for jurisdictions and agencies to effectively disseminate critical, core information to their constituencies.
- Guidelines, strategies and tools for WSDOT communications staff in the event of a SR 520 bridge failure.

Communications activities and strategies are outlined for distinct phases of a SR 520 bridge failure scenario.

What is in the transportation management plan?

The transportation management plan identifies a toolbox of interdependent strategies to keep people moving throughout the central Puget Sound region in the event of a SR 520 bridge failure. They include:

- Traffic management strategies for individual affected corridors, including I-5, I-90, SR 522, SR 520 and I-405.
- Transit service.
- Transportation demand management and transportation system management.
- Freight considerations to help keep commerce moving throughout the region.

Where possible, roadway improvements were identified to prioritize efficient transit and HOV travel.

Key transit strategies include:

- Enacting emergency reroute procedures on detour and affected routes.
- Increasing transit service.
- Increasing public awareness and incentives.
- Adding park-and-ride capacity.
- Consolidating transit routes and reprioritizing service hours.



In the event of a SR 520 bridge failure, it will be critical to make the best use of the available infrastructure.

Transportation demand management uses existing infrastructure as efficiently as possible and implements programs to reduce demand for transportation facilities. Programs include encouraging increased use of carpooling, transit and alternative work arrangements.

Transportation system management focuses on operational improvements to the existing infrastructure to enhance capacity. Measures include intersection and signal improvements, freeway chokepoint and intelligent transportation system improvements.



WSDOT employees monitor traffic at the regional Transportation Management Center

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Department of Transportation**

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