

DEARBORN STREET UPGRADES FAQ

Updated: July 2019

This document reflects Frequently Asked Questions we've received about the [Dearborn Street Upgrades](#) that aren't already prominent in other materials such as the [project fact sheet](#).

1. What modifications were made after the traffic diverter was installed?

We heard from neighbors and observed non-compliance after the traffic diverter was installed, where drivers were continuing westbound onto or across Rainier Ave S from S Dearborn St.

We made immediate changes to make the new traffic flow clearer:

- Installed 2 new "Do not enter" signs on the left and right sides of the existing "Do not enter sign" on the westbound approach to Rainier/Dearborn, and the existing sign was relocated closer to the centerline so it's more visible from the intersection of Dearborn/Hiawatha
- Extended the eastbound bike lane striping to the alley to visually narrow the lane
- Added additional yellow median markings preceding the traffic diverter to increase visibility and define the space
- Added a through arrow pavement marking in the center of the eastbound travel lane
- Added all-way stop control and stop bars at the intersection of Dearborn/Hiawatha

2. What additional modifications will be made to improve traffic flow?

Since the diverter was installed, our Traffic Operations team conducted vehicle counts and on-site observations in the area. We also received feedback from neighbors about how the diverter is changing traffic patterns, particularly at S Charles St and Hiawatha Pl S.

Based on that feedback and data, in late July, SDOT crews will add northbound and southbound stop signs on Hiawatha Pl S at S Charles St - making this an all-way stop.

We expect that change to:

- Organize the Charles/Hiawatha intersection more clearly
- Facilitate smoother traffic movement on S Charles St

Please note that vehicles need to be parked 30 feet back from stop signs.

3. People are parking too close to my driveway. What can I do about that?

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Drivers are supposed to park 5 feet from driveways to help with visibility. Here's a link with a couple suggestions for what you can do if drivers continue to park too close to driveways:

<https://sdotblog.seattle.gov/2011/03/15/driveways-and-parking-dont-mix/>

4. Why was the traffic diverter installed?

There are 3 main reasons for diverting westbound drivers at Rainier/Dearborn:

- a) **Improve traffic flow on Rainier Ave S and on S Dearborn St** (where we have a high number of transit riders) by eliminating this signal phase and allowing for longer green lights for people traveling through the Dearborn/Rainier intersection.
- b) **Reduce cut-through traffic within the residential area.** Many drivers were using S Dearborn St as a direct cut-through through the neighborhood rather than using more major streets. Reducing this cut-through option should reduce general traffic in the neighborhood as people learn about the change and change their driving accordingly.
 - To accommodate drivers who live within the neighborhood, we added left turn pockets at Charles and Rainier, so drivers have their own turn phase, rather than having to yield to oncoming cars. This helps facilitate getting in and out of the neighborhood.
- c) **Accommodate the width of the new protected bike lanes** which connect people biking from downtown to the I-90 trail. This is one of the major connections between downtown and Southeast Seattle so we're working it make it safer and more comfortable for all ages and abilities.

There's more information about the traffic diverter [on our webpage](#).

5. Can you install a left turn from S Jackson St onto Rainier Ave S?

A left turn lane and signal at Jackson and Rainier would be a significant capital investment that requires a thorough traffic engineering study. A study would evaluate the feasibility of the turn lane, perform traffic analysis, and develop concepts and cost estimates. To fund the study, community members could apply to a [Neighborhood Matching Fund – Community Partnership Fund](#). This grant can be up to \$25,000 which could fund a consultant study to explore this improvement further.