

Confirmation Questions for Mr. Scott Kubly
Nominee for Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) Director
Response Requested by August 5, 2014

- 1) What goals do you have and what would you like to accomplish during your first year as SDOT Director and during Mayor Murray's first term in office?

Seattle is the fastest growing large city in America. Ensuring mobility in a city with 650,000 people – and more on the way – means growing our transportation capacity through more efficient use of our right-of-way (ROW); by making it possible for more people to walk, bike and take transit for both work trips and non-work trips; by making it easier for people to choose between driving a car share vehicle, using a taxi or Transportation Networking Companies (TNC's) service, bike share, bus or train, we can meet the demand of our growing population.

And transportation's role goes beyond big capital projects. Our role includes great customer service (from permit sales to filling potholes), appropriate regulation to help shape new industries (such as TNC's and car sharing), management of public spaces (sidewalk cafes and parklets), and the successful movement of freight in order to continue to support commercial industry.

With that context in mind, some of my early priorities include:

- A. Communicating the work SDOT is currently doing and planning to do**
- B. Ensuring that near-term high visibility projects are successful**
- C. Working with our partners to deliver large capital projects**
- D. Improving construction coordination to better manage growth**
- E. Ensuring our workforce – in-house and contractors – reflects the diversity of Seattle**
- F. Ensuring we have adequate funding to build and maintain the transportation system**

- 2) What immediate opportunities do you see to affect positive change at SDOT?

- Set clear priorities and direction for the department**
- Make everyone from deputy and division directors to line staff feel like the director is listening to them**
- Encourage SDOT employees to be creative and innovative in delivering projects and programs**
- Hire new WMBE Program Advisor and launch new training in equitable contracting for all project managers and relevant division management**
- Deliver improved project definition, cost estimating and make a close examination of overhead and soft costs associated with major capital projects**
- Integrate modal plans; develop policy and project implementation work programs; and develop a framework for addressing competing demands on the ROW**

- 3) How will you evaluate current staff and assess changes needed and/or new policies needed to ensure a highly motivated and well trained workforce?

SDOT has been a national leader in many areas over the past 10 years; from being first to develop a Complete Streets program and our well-respected commute trip reduction program, to the national example of getting the cab companies and Transportation Network Companies (TNC's) to agree on regulation . Many other cities have emulated SDOT's forward thinking approach to transportation.

It's time to be that cutting edge leader again. I believe the SDOT workforce has the creativity and drive to start setting the new standards in urban transportation - not just moving people around but creating public spaces and defining the built environment, while being mindful of climate change and the impact on social justice. I'm excited to lead and motivate the SDOT workforce.

I am already deep in the process of understanding existing work plans and specific roles and responsibilities within the SDOT divisions. From there, I want to understand staff outputs and outcomes as measured against goals and deliverables. Once I learn more about SDOT's current performance and set goals, I will assess what additional changes are needed to meet those goals.

In the last year, SDOT has taken an intentional look at training for employees and has put together a thoughtful program to advance growth and development throughout the department - from field crews to staff in the Municipal Tower.

- 4) In addition to the perennial lack of abundant financial resources, what other challenges face SDOT and what strategies will you use to meet those challenges?

One of the biggest challenges that I have heard from people inside and outside of SDOT, is difficulty taking a project, policy or new program from concept to ground breaking in a timely fashion. I know how hard it is to balance the need to collaborate, seek input and vet with the affected parties, and determining when it's time to act.

Acknowledging the resource constraint, I am very interested in pursuing creative ways of funding new projects, entrepreneurial partnerships, and looking at the way we currently do business and places where changes might benefit the transportation system.

I've also heard from people that we need to improve how and what we communicate to the community and other stakeholders. SDOT has a great communications staff but we need to revisit our strategies.

- 5) What process will you use to set priorities among different transportation projects/needs?

The City's adopted Comprehensive Plan frames the outcomes we are trying to achieve with our transportation system: These include community, economic opportunity and security, environmental stewardship, and social equity. Additionally, safety and complete streets are key policies for SDOT's work, as well as being in the Mayor's vision for the city.

SDOT also has a robust prioritization process for the Large Capital Projects Program to identify those projects that further the capacity of the city's transportation system. Most of the prioritized projects originate from the Council-adopted modal plans. We use our pedestrian, transit, bicycle and soon-to-be completed freight master plans to help us identify our infrastructure needs. We also have modal plans that identify policies and projects that are critical to improving the transportation system.

This prioritization process informs the budget process, which provides an important opportunity for Council and the public to help shape the City's transportation priorities.

Within the transportation budget, a substantial amount of funds are allocated to advance individual large capital projects, such as the Mercer Corridor. For other needs, there are annual programmatic budgets established, such as for bridge painting or the School Zone Safety programs in the CIP, and the annual parking data collection program in the O&M budget. Additionally, budget is often allocated for one-time activities, for example, this year for the Freight Master Plan development.

- a) How will you include the City Council in the prioritization process including the process of seeking funds from various sources such as the federal government?

Council makes the ultimate decision about how resources are allocated among many competing needs. I am committed to aiding you in your important role as decision-makers by explaining how we prioritize in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan, Climate Action Plan transportation priorities, and modal plans. During the budget process, I will outline for you the trade-offs involved in our investment decisions and offer you my recommendations for your consideration.

- 6) What strategies will you use to ensure that SDOT listens and responds to citizens, businesses, and organizations in a timely and helpful manner?

We have several opportunities for the public to contact us with their immediate concerns: SDOT website, the 684-ROAD line, phone, email, and we receive many concerns and questions directly from councilmembers and the Mayor's Office.

In addition, we conduct public processes for most of our projects both large and small. Our outreach teams are consistently listening and planning for the competing demands for resources and the personal preferences of individuals and neighborhoods. It is challenging to balance all the interests in order to provide the greatest benefit to the entire city, but in almost all cases, the input leads to better outcomes.

In September SDOT will perform its first comprehensive citizen satisfaction survey since 2003. The survey will measure satisfaction of services ranging from street sweeping to landscaping, street construction and maintenance, alternative transportation

availability, and many other topics. The survey will be repeated annually in the future to track progress in regards to increasing satisfaction, particularly for those activities most valued by citizens. It is also SDOT's intent moving forward to use the results of this survey to provide high priority to those areas that customers tell us are the most important to them.

Communication with the public is important to me, if you feel what we are doing now needs improvement, I'd like to work with you to improve our communications.

a) What system will you set up to focus on outcomes and on serving the public?

SDOT has recently set up, and is currently refining, a very unique online and outcome-based performance dashboard that greatly increases transparency and accountability. The dashboard includes 13 targeted goals based on Mayor Murray's vision for the city. Current goals incorporate metrics as varied as "Vehicle, Bicycle, & Pedestrian Fatalities", "Pothole Repair Response Time", "Streetcar Ridership", "Street Use Counter Permit Wait Time", and "Greenhouse Gas Emissions". While the selection of these goals was meant to reflect SDOT's business priorities, the dashboard itself is designed to be flexible so that individual goals can be added or taken away, and performance measured, as changes occur in organizational strategy or focus.

b) What system will you set up to directly hear from the public before a crisis arises?

I will ensure that we have an inclusive public engagement process for large scale capital projects and other smaller projects and that it is utilized to effectively communicate with constituents before situations become problematic.

And, I will be out at community meetings, open houses, touring neighborhoods, and job sites with you and members of the public. I am eager to learn the city and its issues first hand.

7) How will you foster cooperative partnerships with other local governments, local transit agencies, and the State and Federal government to develop good public transportation policy?

A key part of being a leading transportation agency is the ability to work well with others to advance the city's transportation agenda. I've spent my first few weeks here meeting with people and getting to know my peers in partner agencies.

To form a cooperative partnership, I need to engage with our agency partners (both internal and external to the city) by:

- **Reaching out to them to understand each other's goals and establish common ground**
- **Actively participating in forums that establish public transportation policy, such as various Puget Sound Regional Council committees**
- **Establishing regular agency-to-agency meetings to ensure we are not working in silos**
- **Forming ad hoc coalitions with other agencies around specific issues**

For example, SDOT already participates in a five-agency work group to identify how we can keep transit moving through downtown during the next 10 years of significant construction. I'm looking forward to serving on the Executive Committee and getting to know and work with my peers from Sound Transit, Metro, Community Transit and WSDOT.

- 8) Please detail your experience managing extremely large capital projects similar to the Seawall and Mercer projects.

Although I haven't directly managed extremely large capital projects similar to the Seawall and Mercer projects, I've been in leadership positions in organizations responsible for large project delivery, and I've learned some key lessons about what makes an organization successful with these types of challenges. I've also been directly responsible for managing extremely large programs, and many of the same core management principles apply, such as:

- **Developing clear scope, schedule and budget estimates early on, and maintaining estimates through the life of a project;**
- **Identifying and securing critical resources, including staffing and consultants, but also including approvals and support from other organizations;**
- **Proactive risk management – identifying project risks and strategies for reducing or managing risks before they occur;**
- **Establishing clear and tight guidelines and protocol for change management to identify issues as early as possible when the broadest range of solutions is available, and to take full advantage of available resources to solve problems;**
- **Being flexible and innovative – being willing to look for creative solutions and take risks;**
- **Clearly communicating with the public and with decision-makers about issues as they emerge (“no surprises”), and also making sure to communicate our successes.**
- **Relying on the input and advice of experts.**
- **Examples of the major projects that I was responsible for include:**
 - **In six months, launched Chicago's bike share program – the second largest in the nation**
 - **Installed and managed a camera enforcement program with approximately 100 automated speed cameras**
 - **Responsible for the day-to-day operations of Alta Bike Share: 15,000 bikes in three countries. On an annual basis we carried as many customers as Sound Transit's buses, light rail, and commuter rail combined.**

- a) With the retirement of a number of SDOT's senior managers, how will you know if you have a team in place to ensure success of such large projects?

During my transition, I'm working closely with Goran Sparrman, other senior SDOT staff, and some of our key consultants and stakeholders to assess our organization and what we need to move forward on these big projects. Ultimately, I will know if I

have the right team in place if the key project management principles described above is being followed. If not, I will move quickly to identify and fill any gaps.

- b) How will you independently assure budget and schedule success for the City's mega-projects?

I'm a big believer in metrics and clear and regular progress reporting. I will be working with the project teams on the big projects but also on smaller capital projects to re-institute regular project reporting so that we have a clearer picture of trends and can identify problems if and as they emerge.

For the bigger and more complex projects, if we run up against issues or decisions that I don't feel we have a strong foundation for, I will be reaching out to peer agencies and experts in the consulting community to make sure we are looking at the problem from all angles and taking full advantage of others' experience.

- 9) How will you communicate the department's goals to the public and the Mayor and City Council and how will you track and report on results?

I have made it clear to my team that being transparent and data driven is critical to building the public's trust in our ability to deliver a first rate transportation system.

Setting targets and tracking our progress is key but only one half of the equation. SDOT will soon have better tools with which to share our performance metrics directly with the public and Council. I intend to use a visually rich web-based dashboard that highlights the metrics we use and why.

As directors have done in the past, I will provide a written and verbal report to this committee each month. I will also meet with the committee chair once a month. As has been the case, the department's council liaison is available for any requests you may have of the department. And I will also be available should you need me for more urgent issues.

- a) What direction will you give to SDOT staff about working with the public and adjacent property owners to minimize risk and inconvenience to their lives and businesses? How will you monitor and evaluate compliance or success with your direction and goals?

I expect staff to be available to answer questions and be knowledgeable about their projects as well as the one up the street. This means not just knowing the project but the community in which it's being built. We also need to do a better job of reaching out to the people who don't come to community meetings and open houses.

As you all know, the city is seeing unprecedented growth and development in many of our neighborhoods—especially Downtown, South Lake Union, Capitol Hill, West Seattle and Ballard. SDOT is working with many partners across city departments, with public and private utilities and contractors to plan ahead and actively coordinate construction with all activity that impacts travelers.

SDOT's Access Seattle Program focuses on construction coordination, engaging travelers with real-time information on travel and transportation options and supporting business districts as thriving destinations by ensuring inviting experience and intuitive way finding.

There are easy to reach, designated staff who work in the field dedicated to making sure that construction is actively managed, pedestrians and cyclists are minimally inconvenienced, and can act swiftly when a construction site is out of compliance

We are taking active steps to monitor the success of Access Seattle—business owner surveys, direct contact with contractors and travelers, learning from our work as we go and making changes to our approaches to better serve our customers.

10) What direction will you give to SDOT staff about meeting goals and commitments to contracting with women and minority owned businesses?

a) How will you implement and hold department managers and their contractors accountable for compliance with the Mayor's executive order on inclusion?

We will continue the efforts that we initiated this year to commit to, reiterate, and incorporate inclusion for WMBE firms into the fabric of what we do. Trainings for staff and commitment to the new policies and procedures SDOT has developed will assist us, as well as specific incorporation of the WMBE program into our performance evaluation process at the end of the year. We are also forming an internal group of department leadership to meet and work with our WMBE team to assure SDOT's commitment to the WMBE program's goals.

b) Do you support an open exchange with consultants and contractors on improving contracting equity? If so, how will you carry that out?

Yes. The stakeholders group that SDOT has formed will begin meeting in September. This group will allow for an open exchange with consultants, contractors, and SDOT. Stakeholders include consultants and vendors from minority and women owned businesses. Also, we hope to soon fill the WMBE/HUB Program Advisor position. The person in this position will work with our existing team to develop and maintain open communication and relationships with the WMBE community, both internal to the city and externally. We will continue to build relationships with community organizations including Tabor 100 and the Minority Business Advisory Council to facilitate networking and dialogue with the WMBE community.

I also want to be sure we're evaluating our performance based on what we actually spend, not just what is listed in the inclusion plan.

11) SDOT processes permits and works closely with private and public utilities and other city departments.

a) How will you ensure that the Department responds quickly and in a constructive manner to requests for permits?

There are a number of ways SDOT is ensuring timely turn-arounds for both private companies and public utilities.

- **SDOT holds monthly coordination meetings with both franchise utilities (e.g., Puget Sound Energy) and public utilities (e.g., SCL, SPU) in order to coordinate and plan for upcoming workload demands. By having regular check-in meetings with utility companies, SDOT is able to better understand the utilities' constraints, commitments, and obligations. We**

also now have additional senior level engineering positions who manage the permits associated with utility projects.

- **Client Assistant Memos and other similar customer service documents are available to help the utility companies understand the permitting processes including fees, submittal requirements, and bonding.**
- **SDOT has developed multiple GIS mapping tools that include planned and permitted work for utilities and other public or private entities planning to work within city ROW.**

b) How will you ensure strong collaboration and coordination between SDOT and other City departments including the Seattle Police Department, City Light, and Seattle Public Utilities to minimize costs, delays, and inconvenience to the public?

This effort is one that continues to evolve but my approach will be rooted in initial and regular meetings with my counterparts in those departments, as well as working with those counterparts to confirm accountability and commitment to coordination and overall service to the public. I intend to have all levels of the organization work with other departments towards solutions and to think pro-actively in the best interest of the city as a whole.

12) The State Highway 99 Corridor is one of the few north-south routes through the City and to and from southwest Seattle neighborhoods. On June 10, 2014, an automobile crash south of the Spokane Street Viaduct at East Marginal Way and S. Nevada Street caused the closure of the Alaskan Way Viaduct for over five hours while the Seattle Police Department (SPD) conducted an investigation. Questions have been raised whether the investigation could have occurred without closing the Alaskan Way Viaduct for so many miles to the north of the crash scene.

Both SPD and SDOT have provided information on their response to questions relating to the management of this incident. In its response SDOT referred the Council to the June 2005 SDOT Alaskan Way Viaduct Emergency Traffic Management and Closure Plan.

The June 10 crash appears to be a Scenario 3 type of incident contemplated in the Closure Plan. Please review the incident with the relevant department representatives and provide the Council with a report on the incident including a determination as to whether the Closure Plan was followed. Also, please provide us with your assessment as to whether the Closure Plan needs to be revised to minimize the disruption to travel on SR 99 based upon the experience of SDOT and other departments since its adoption in 2005. Please tell us when your review and recommendations would be provided to the Council.

We will have our review and recommendations ready for you by September 30, 2014.

13) How will you ensure that the Department complies with Seattle's "Complete Streets" policy to ensure that pedestrian, freight, cyclist, and transit needs and requests are met?

I will continue the use of the modal plans to establish priorities for which projects will be appropriate for complete streets.

The department has developed a process and a checklist to assess these complete streets opportunities.

- **Outreach:** Early outreach with the community, modal boards (bike, pedestrian, freight), and key stakeholders like Metro, ensure that pedestrian, freight, cyclist, and transit needs and requests are considered during project development and implemented when appropriate.
- **Internal review:** Complete Streets Steering Committee comprised of division directors and key staff serves as a forum to discuss complete streets policy issues and confirm project scopes.

In addition, Council funded the multi-modal corridor development program in the 2015-2016 budget. This allows us to scope multi-modal projects as complete streets projects before they are advanced to the Capital Improvement Program. – Delridge, Beacon Ave., Greenwood, for example.

14) How will you incorporate the advice of Seattle's Bicycle Advisory Board, Freight Advisory Board, and Pedestrian Advisory Board into SDOT's work?

The city's three modal advisory boards each meet monthly to provide input to SDOT and other city departments on projects and programs. The Bicycle and Pedestrian boards are the stewards of their respective modal plans, and the Freight board is participating in the development of the Freight Master Plan.

I plan to research and propose a formal way for the boards to work together on issues of common interest. For example, I understand that a few years ago we had quarterly meetings with the chairs and vice chairs (or co-chairs depending on the board) and the SDOT director to discuss hot projects or topics.

I'd like to also look into whether or not integrating the boards for some activities or issues might be appropriate in the coming years.

15) What can be done to speed up implementation of Seattle's Bicycle Master Plan and Pedestrian Master Plan?

The 2014 BMP Implementation CIP project received \$6.5 million, which reflects the baseline Bridging the Gap funding for the program. Some trail projects are funded through separate CIP projects, and large projects such as Waterfront Seattle, the Mercer Corridor and First Hill Street Car include funding for some of the larger bicycle projects in the BMP

The prioritization criteria in the BMP and refreshed PMP will help us elevate some of the more transformative Protected Bike Lane projects through downtown and surrounding connections to the rest of the city. At the same time, we want to advance as quickly as possible some of the neighborhood greenway and intersection improvements that provide significant help in closing gaps in connectivity for the "all ages and ability" network while also addressing geographic equity.

Being smart about how we conduct outreach to genuinely seek and integrate input from stakeholders, while at the same time providing a predictable and transparent end point, is important to implementing projects promptly and cost-effectively.

16) How will you ensure that SDOT's roadways, crosswalks, signs, wayfinding, information, street furniture, signals materials, etc. are designed and provided in a manner to be useful and accessible to people with disabilities?

SDOT follows the MUTCD and the ROW Improvement Manual when addressing these issues. Accessibility is important to us and we try to make it a priority with businesses as well as our own staff.

17) How will you ensure that Councilmembers and their staff get all the information they need in a timely manner to respond to citizen requests and to make policy and financial decisions?

As directors have done in the past, I will provide a written and verbal report to this committee each month. I will also meet with the committee chair once a month. As has been the case, the department's council liaison is available for any requests you may have of the department. And I will also be available should you need me for more urgent issues. I will also provide my cell number to you should you need to reach me immediately.