

Greetings from your Mayor,

I hope this update finds you well and I am sure, like me, you are looking forward to some warmer, sunny weather SOON!

By now the City Council will have voted for or against my proposal to bring a measure to you, the voter, in August on the question of funding Advanced Life Support in DuPont. I hope they voted yes and that you will do the same in August so that we can begin the process of bringing this much needed emergency medical service to DuPont.

Unless you have been out of town for the past few weeks, you are well aware of the challenges we are facing with the intersection of Barksdale and Wilmington by exit 119. With the Amtrak line becoming active this Fall, Sound Transit has been reworking the train and traffic lights at this intersection as part of the Point Defiance Rail Bypass project. Like the rest of you who live on this side of town, the ongoing changes to the lights have been a major source of irritation and unprecedented traffic delays. Traffic lights are not operated by the City, but we are exceptionally interested in their efficient operation. WSDOT maintains the traffic lights and we have been in nearly constant contact with them about the issues their contractors created in DuPont. The primary issue they are contending with is how to time/sequence the lights so as to prevent vehicles from stopping on the tracks. As many of you have pointed out, an at-grade crossing with high speed trains has significant potential for a catastrophic accident. The long term solution to the situation is the new exit being built as part of the I-5 expansion program that will come into town behind Barksdale Station (completely avoiding the current intersection and the Historic Village) and have grade separation as a feature of the new overpass. Unfortunately the current plan is several years away. So in the meantime:

1. Do NOT drive through red lights, even if you think they are malfunctioning, they are just cycling. The program will get better as the exact sequencing is worked out.
2. Do NOT stop on the tracks during a red light. We each have to be responsible about this change to our city's traffic situation and avoid being the cause of a major accident.
3. Let myself, the City Administrator or Public Works know if you believe you are experiencing a malfunction.
4. Notify WSDOT of your concerns. They need to hear from you.
5. I am engaging our elected leaders, County and State, about moving the 119 project up on the schedule to help mitigate this issue (no promises, but I will work on it).

None of us asked to have the Amtrak line moved onto the tracks running through our City, nor were we consulted. I cannot tell you of any benefit to the residents of DuPont for having this line run through our town other than the chance of having a Sounder train stop in the City in 20 years. The potential to get an actual Amtrak stop is slim, but we will also engage our political leadership and Amtrak about that.

I can tell you that we are working to mitigate this risk and inconvenience this is creating and the long term solution is very workable. In the mean time we all need to be smart and careful at this intersection.

As I have mentioned before, we are in the middle of a major commercial development cycle. This is great news for our city as we work to bring jobs, services and additional revenue to our City. The Self-storage/ACE Hardware project is moving along and will come to Council as a Development Agreement soon. The proposed repurposing of the former Intel Campus is moving along and will look to bring around 700 good paying jobs to the City.

This project is will NOT negatively impact the traffic situation or impact neighboring homes. The proposed development around The Home Course is moving along and will come back to Council as a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (non-binding agreement that establishes expectations for both parties prior to a development agreement) in May.

The Council has given some initial feedback that will come back to them for consideration. The proposal includes a range of activities for consideration in each part of the development. This allows for market forces to help shape best uses for a given property. The developer is also offering to provide significant financial support to the City for development of the Historical Sites in that area and Old Fort Lake as a recreational asset for the City. I have heard concerns about traffic in the City from this particular development. We believe a mixed use over the entire area will be most beneficial and successful. The 262 acres in question, around the golf course, remains under a consent decree (controlled by Department of Ecology) that limits what type of development can go there. Until that is sorted out, the full potential of the property cannot be realized. In the end, every aspect of how a development impacts the City will be addressed during the application, permitting and impact studies. Our commercial development stopped abruptly in 2007 when the recession hit, it is only now picking back up.

These new developments will have a major positive impact on our City and be able to pay their own way for services, insuring no burden is brought back onto the residents. Traffic flow and mitigation is major portion of any study and will be foremost in our efforts.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "M. D. L.", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.