April 2020

West Seattle Bridge Closure: Traffic, Timing, Real Estate

Lucas, your trusty Realtor, sat through a 3-hour city council meeting to bring you a little more info on the WS Bridge closure. Was it worth it, you ask? Unclear. Hopefully this is helpful, though. Here's the bullet points:

- Closing WS Bridge is similar in scope (# cars/congestion) to closing the viaduct, but this is happening with no notice and fewer alternative routes.
- No traffic is expected on high-rise bridge during 2020 and 2021. 2022 is possible.
- The low bridge remains open to public transit, freight, emergency, pedestrians & bikers.
- Two issues with bridge:
  - Spreading cracks of concrete
  - Stress on Pier 18 (it is locked up and weak)
- First step will be starting feasibility and planning to shore around Pier 18 and repair
  - This may be necessary even if the bridge gets demolished and rebuilt

- If repaired, bridge will likely only have an additional 10 years of life (when it was built in 1984, it was supposed to last unti 2060).
- Everything is still in planning stage. For instance, they plan to put together a technical advisory board… but they don't yet know who they're going to invite to be on it.

Lucas' own personal opinion on the affect on real estate in West Seattle:

- This is a short-term thing. I think in periods of 10+ years. I'd guess this is 3 years. So, this doesn't change my long-term view of value.
- This will deflect some buyers from West Seattle. If a buyer is looking at WS, Ballard, Columbia City, for instance… they'll probably cross WS off the list.
- It's a mistake to assume that just because 100,000 cars use the WS Bridge between 7am and 10am each day, there will now be 100,000 extra cars running through Highland Park. It will be less.
  - Some people will move away from WS
  - Some people will work remotely
  - Some people will travel during non-peak hours (this is my go-to)
- The Corona virus will soften the impact. Every office worker has now experimented with working remotely. That's going to cause a permanent shift in work habits.
- WS real estate appreciation will lag behind the rest of the city. Then it will leap right back, once the bridge is up again. For investors and WS citizens interested in buying, I would watch closely as this would be an opportune time to buy.

Alright guys – hit me up with any questions and check out my youtube video if you have a spare 56 seconds.