



Latah Bridge Update

Weight Restrictions Effective Monday, January 8, 2024

For 110 years, the Latah Bridge (also known as Sunset Bridge or High Bridge) has played a vital role in the Spokane area's transportation network, spanning the Latah Valley and providing a key surface link between downtown Spokane and the West Plains.

Over the last decade, the bridge has begun showing its age. Portions of the bridge have deteriorated to the point that the City has restricted traffic to the two center lanes of the bridge and pedestrian access is limited. Projected growth in the West Plains and associated transportation infrastructure improvement projects intend to increase demand for the Sunset Boulevard Corridor and the Latah Bridge.



Photo Credit: Nathan Holth

As a result of its most recent inspection, the City of Spokane is requiring weight restrictions for the bridge effective Monday, Jan. 8, 2024. These restrictions will impact various community transportation needs.

Weight restrictions are determined on a case-by-case basis for each bridge. These are based on the results of the load rating process, which considers the original bridge design, age, condition, and other factors. The weight restrictions remain in place until there is a change to the structural capacity of the bridge. Nationwide, about 60,000 bridges (10 percent) are restricted with a weight limit.

All bridge owners have critical tasks in common as required by the Federal Highway Administration:

- Inspect the bridge for deterioration or damage;
- Determine if changes in condition have reduced the bridge's structural capacity to safely carry legally permissible loads, measured by its load rating; and
- Notify the public of any weight restrictions.

As a matter of public safety and as a way of safeguarding vital transportation infrastructure, State and local law enforcement agencies enforce weight restrictions on trucks and heavy vehicles traveling public roads. Not following the restrictions could result in a traffic violation and/or cause damage to the bridge.


Since 2021, Latah Bridge has been posted with weight limits for specialized hauling vehicles (single-unit trucks with 4+ axles).

What is changing?

Updated load restrictions are being expanded and will now include single-unit trucks with 2+ axles, all specialized hauling vehicles, and possibly some emergency vehicles. With the new weight restrictions for Latah Bridge, these trucks will now be limited to 22 tons. *Gross Vehicle Weights noted.*

Starting 1/8/24

Former allowances

LATAH BRIDGE WEIGHT LIMIT	
AXLES	
2-3	22 T
4	20 T
5	22 T
6	24 T
7+	27 T

SINGLE UNIT VEHICLES	
4 AXLES	26 T
5 AXLES	29 T
6 AXLES	31 T
7+ AXLES	33 T

Could the restrictions change?

Yes, as known structural capacities of the bridge change, the bridge load rating and signposting will be updated. There could be positive changes due to a bridge strengthening project or negative changes such as new bridge damage or deterioration.

How long will the restrictions be in place?

The City is working with a consultant to provide additional inspection of specific areas of the bridge and identify potential near-term bridge repairs that could increase load capacity.

What is the status and timeline for the bridge to be repaired or replaced?

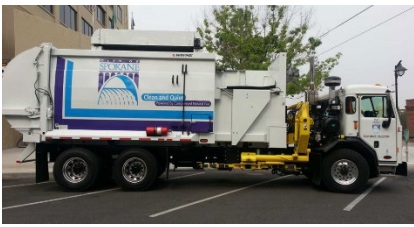
Stop-gap repairs to the bridge may be performed in 2024 pending the outcome of an additional, upcoming bridge inspection and investigation.

A larger-scale bridge rehabilitation project is dependent on securing grant funding; the City is identifying grant opportunities to pursue in the next year.

What are examples of restricted vehicles?

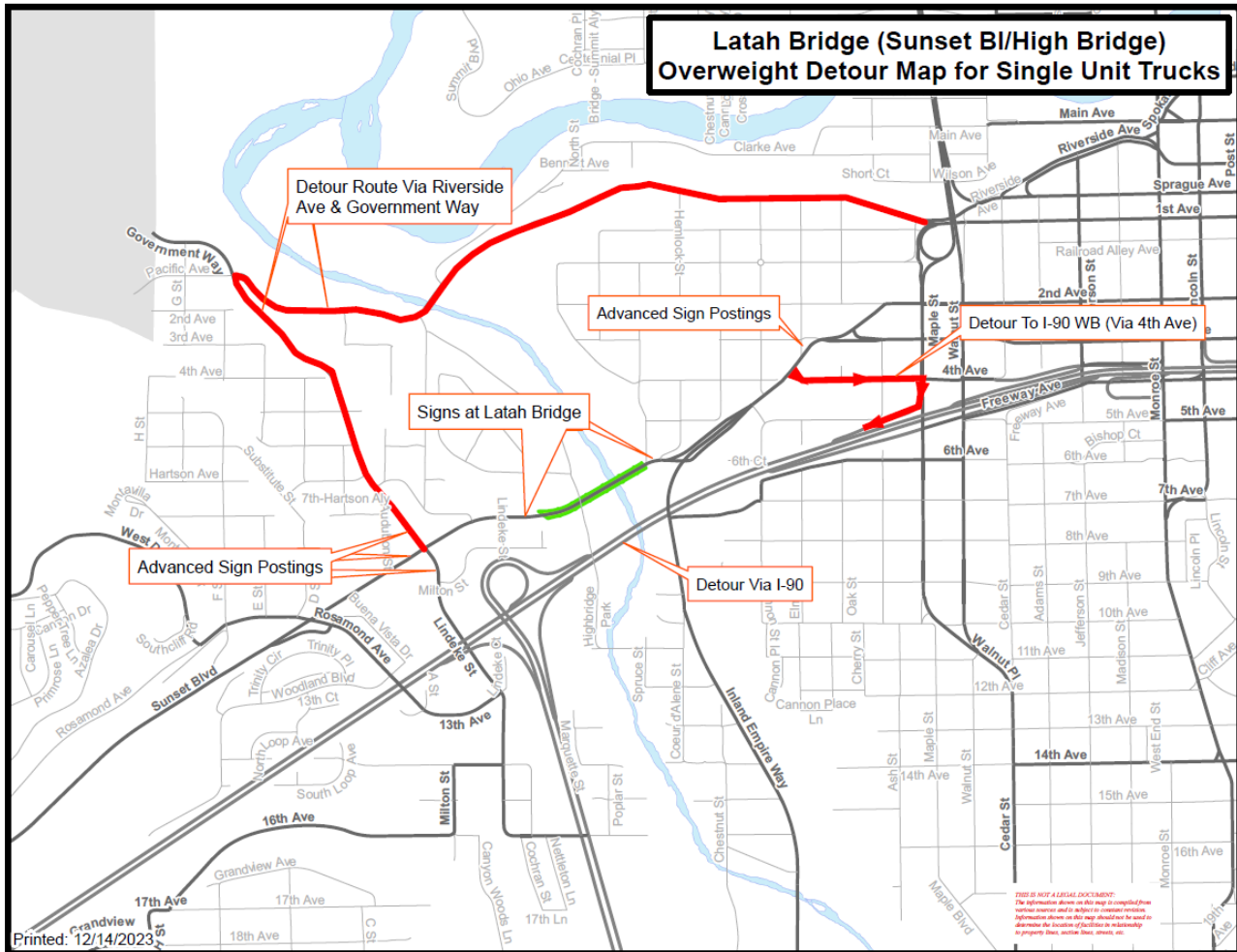
Single-unit vehicles or trucks, specialized hauling vehicles, some construction equipment, and some fire emergency vehicles will not be able to use the Latah Bridge.





What are the detour options?

If your vehicle exceeds the posted weight limit according to the posted weights, use an alternate truck route such as I-90, Riverside Ave, and Government Way. *Semi-Trucks and Truck Combinations do not need to detour if within the State Legal Weight Limits for Bridges.*



How does this impact emergency services?

Emergency response vehicles have been assessed for weight. The majority of Spokane Fire Department response vehicles will be able to use the bridge, maintaining response times for initial vehicles to arrive on scene.

How does this impact the STA bus system?

Spokane Transit Authority is aware of the updated restrictions and current operations do not require a detour because the coaches fall below weight restrictions. Always look for route changes and notifications at spokanetransit.com or on their Connect mobile app.

How does this impact school bus routes?

School buses that use the Latah Bridge as part of their route are not affected because even at full capacity, they are under weight restrictions.

How does this impact snow response?

City snow response equipment will be impacted by the weight restrictions and will adjust by using the designated detour routes.

Have more questions?

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