



October 5, 2018

The Honorable Lisa Herbold
PO Box 34025
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

Dear Councilmember Herbold:

Thank you for your September 12, 2018 letter regarding bus service from West Seattle to Downtown after the Alaskan Way Viaduct is permanently closed.

The Seattle Department of Transportation worked closely with King County Metro over the past year to identify pathways for the 4-5-week period after the Alaskan Viaduct is closed. As you noted, King County Metro buses will use 4th Avenue South inbound and 1st Avenue outbound to get into and out of downtown Seattle. Metro and SDOT identified a series of temporary measures to keep buses moving on these pathways, including:

- Temporary bus lanes on the Spokane Street Viaduct and 4th Avenue South.
- Locations where uniformed police officers will be stationed during peak periods to ensure Metro buses are not blocked by general purpose traffic.
- Special afternoon peak routing that will be limited to trucks and buses, connecting from Alaskan Way to E. Marginal Way S.

Following the 4-5-week closure, Metro and SDOT agreed that Metro buses will travel from SR 99 onto 1st Avenue S at Dearborn Street and use Cherry and Columbia Streets to and from 3rd Avenue for approximately one year before the Central Waterfront Project completes the two-way Columbia conversion from Alaskan Way to 3rd Avenue for bus use. Metro and SDOT are exploring additional adjustments to improve bus service on this temporary pathway, including a temporary bus lane on both Cherry and Columbia Streets.

Related to your request regarding 1st Avenue bus operations, SDOT reviewed street operations as well as the site. In 2014 SDOT studied seven higher risk areaways along 1st Avenue between King and Cherry Streets. The conclusion of the preliminary study is that with additional loading, the areaways were at high risk of failure. What this means is that the areaways would require additional analysis, and likely areaway strengthening to support curb lane bus loading. Also, without strengthening the areaways, the curb lane may need to be closed to buses and other overweight vehicles. Given this limitation, both buses and overweight freight vehicles would need to use the inside lane of 1st Avenue S; thereby not allowing for an exclusive bus only lane on 1st Avenue. We also know that the 2014 study was preliminary in nature, so over the next several weeks, SDOT Roadway Structures engineering team will revisit the 2014 study and provide additional analysis to further refine specific actions needed to improve the corridor capacity and provide a dedicated transit lane along 1st. Avenue.

The Honorable Lisa Herbold

October 5, 2018

Page 2

SDOT will be taking measures to keep traffic flowing through Pioneer Square, including changing existing parking restrictions to create two travel lanes instead of one. Currently, there are parking restrictions in Pioneer Square from 6-9 am, weekdays, in both directions. During the 4-5-week Viaduct closure, SDOT will restrict parking from 6 am-7 pm on weekdays to accommodate added traffic. Once that closure is over, parking will be restricted from 6-9 am and 3-7 pm Monday – Friday in both directions, to keep people and goods moving during commute times. This will be the permanent change to facilitate improve traffic flow through Pioneer Square. Heavy vehicles will be restricted to the left lane in both directions.

SDOT is working with King County Metro and other partners to provide many options for West Seattle commuters during this 9-12-month period and beyond. These options will include a new First Mile/Last Mile service in West Seattle, funded by the Seattle Transportation Benefit District. This service will begin by the end of 2019 and will connect riders to two major transportation hubs: Alaska Junction and West Seattle Water Taxi/ Seacrest Dock.

We look forward to working with you directly on addressing the transportation needs of residents in West Seattle as these changes move forward.

Sincerely,



Linea Laird
Interim Director, Seattle Department of Transportation

cc: Councilmember Sally Bagshaw