



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 1

COUNCILMEMBER LISA HERBOLD

October 4, 2019

Sam Zimbabwe, Director
Seattle Department of Transportation

Director Zimbabwe,

Thank you for receiving and considering the many dozen emails that I have referred to you over the last week about the impact on West Seattle traffic of the re-implementation of the northbound bus lane on SR99 between the West Seattle Bridge and the South Dearborn Street exit. Thank you as well for acknowledging the importance of coordination with Metro King County and Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) in the discussion at the Budget Committee this week.

Though I would have preferred to hear from you or a representative of the Seattle Department of Transportation, I was nevertheless very glad to learn from the West Seattle Blog yesterday that the decision has been made to seek WSDOT's approval to make adjustments to extend the merge 1,000 in order to minimize the backup. Please let me know as soon as you have an update.

So that I can fully inform District 1 constituents, I would welcome additional information about why the bus lane was re-installed as well as why it was removed in the first place.

- Please describe the decision-making process for re-installing the bus lane, and for the removal of the bus lane when the Alaskan Way Viaduct was removed.
- While the SDOT Director has authority over City of Seattle streets, SR99 is a state highway. Has WSDOT delegated authority, or any element of their authority, over this section of SR99 to SDOT?
- Was any traffic modeling done to guide these decisions?
- Is SDOT currently analyzing traffic data?

I appreciate your consideration of the importance of evaluating the results of changes to the roadway, and willingness to be flexible in the face of the evaluation of those results. Another example is your willingness to be flexible in recent months regarding the travel path for West Seattle bus routes through Downtown, to first re-time signals and add traffic control to 1st Avenue, test using 4th Avenue, and then revise southbound routes onto 4th Avenue.

In addition to writing to thank you, I am writing to underscore my on-going concern that this is just the latest in a series of challenges resulting from the closure of the Alaskan Way Viaduct. Additional changes that will affect West Seattle commuters are coming soon as well. As you know, on November 9, tolling will begin on the SR99 tunnel, which will likely generate new impacts, including potential diversion of traffic through Downtown. In early 2020, buses are planned to be permanently re-routed onto a bus lane on Alaskan Way, and access Downtown on Columbia Street.

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- Please explain how you will be evaluating the impact of extending the merge; the impact of tolling in the SR99 tunnel; and the transition of West Seattle bus routes onto Alaskan Way.

Sincerely,

Lisa Herbold
District 1 Councilmember

CC: Jenny Durkan, Seattle Mayor

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