

Questions and Answers for RTC Members – One Center City and Service Restructures

Downtown Seattle

- How many buses and trips per day are coming out of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel?**
 More than 800 trips per day operate in the tunnel. Below are the daily trips by route that will come out of the tunnel at service levels as of March 2018:

Route	North	South
41	94	93
74	11	13
101	57	63
102	12	10
150	63	65
255	79	76
550	89	92
	405	412

- How much transit travel delay will be reduced or caused by the One Center City improvement bus plan?**
 The current set of proposed improvements would allow buses to operate 15-25% faster than they do today going through downtown on Fourth Avenue. A proposed new Fifth and Sixth Avenue pathway for transit would create more capacity for buses to travel through downtown. The full package of improvements would increase overall throughput (the total number of people that can be accommodated) by about 7500 people.
- Why are we moving transit away from 4th to 6th?**
 The proposed Fifth and Sixth pathway would be an additional route for transit to use in downtown Seattle. It would relieve pressure on all avenues. With fewer buses on Fourth Avenue, the remaining buses could move faster, and safety could be improved by reducing conflicts between buses and pedestrians or personal vehicles. While some riders would have to walk farther to reach transit on Fifth and Sixth Avenue, the creation of new stops could benefit some people who live, work or travel closer to that corridor.
- Why don't we create bus-only lanes downtown—at least during busy times of day?**
 Downtown Seattle has bus-only lanes in several places today, and the One Center City Plan would expand those lanes. For instance, Third Avenue is bus-only today during peak periods, but is expected to be extended to all-day bus-only use in 2018 as part of the OCC package of improvements. The proposed transit pathway on Fifth/Sixth Avenue would also operate as a bus-only lane.
- Besides improvements at Montlake, are any other capital improvements planned, or could they be planned, to help people move through downtown? Can anything else be done to make the downtown transit system work?** One Center City has been a multi-year planning effort that has looked comprehensively at many ideas to make the system work. In the end the

package of investments is designed to meet the needs of people using all modes to travel to, from, and within downtown Seattle.

- **Will the capital investments be in place in time to make the operating changes work?**
Most capital items are currently planned for completion by September 2019. Some prioritization of elements may become necessary as we move through the implementation process.

Montlake Hub/UW Station

- **How are you solving the Montlake transfer challenges? Vehicles and pedestrians operating and transferring in that area face a lot of challenges. What is the plan to add capacity at the Husky Stadium area, and what is the capital project?**

We understand rider concerns about transferring at Montlake and are developing a capital project to improve the transfer environment. We have committed to making Montlake improvements in time for service changes in September 2019. The concept we are advancing into final design includes new bus stops on Montlake Boulevard, next to the Link station, for buses coming in from the Eastside. For buses headed toward the Eastside, an outbound stop would be placed directly across the street. Street operations and signal changes would keep buses moving through this area.

- **What assumptions were used for how long it takes to transfer from a bus to Link with those changes and without them?**

Bus-rail transfers are assumed to take 6 to 8 minutes with the changes, depending on direction of travel. Without the changes at Montlake the bus-rail transfers are assumed to take 10 to 12 minutes. The capital project is expected to result in a savings of 4 minutes by locating new bus stops closer to the Link station to reduce walking distances and eliminate the need to cross the street for people coming from the Eastside to take Link. People transferring from Link to Eastside buses would still have to cross one street.

- **What will be the frequency of Metro bus service between the Eastside and the University of Washington Station, and will that frequency result in long waits? Will it meet the assumptions for average length of time it takes to transfer?**

Metro's current proposal would send Route 255 to serve the UW Station. The frequency of that service depends on the outcome of public outreach, but at a minimum it would be the same as it is today (10 minute peak, 15 minute all-day). However, one option that we will propose the public and stakeholders is to use hours saved from not going to downtown Seattle to increase frequency on this route and reduce the time it would take to transfer. Increased frequency would also provide better connections between Kirkland, UW, and Northeast Seattle. In general, service every 15 minutes or less is what we strive to provide when people are transferring from Link to bus, because with lower frequencies the transfer becomes much more time-consuming.

Montlake Freeway Station

- **What is the status of the Montlake Freeway Station?**
We expect WSDOT to close the Freeway Station as early as March 2019.

- **If WSDOT’s plan is implemented, how long will it be closed? How will the closure be mitigated?**

The Freeway Station will be closed for four to five years as part of the SR 520 “Rest of the West” project. The mitigation for the stop closure is unknown at this point. King County, WSDOT, and Sound Transit are engaged in director-level discussions on this issue.

Service Changes and Restructures

- **Have you considered a way to get riders more quickly and directly to South Lake Union from Montlake *other* than light rail, which doesn’t stop in or near South Lake Union? Is it possible to run a new direct bus connection to South Lake Union from Montlake? Some Eastside communities have learned that the majority of riders from their communities terminate their transit trips in the South Lake Union area.**

Yes. “Option C” from the Link Connections–SR 520 project outreach conducted in 2017 included new direct connections to South Lake Union. These would have replaced some of the existing connections to downtown Seattle. One challenge with serving South Lake Union is the absence of a freeway exit that would allow buses from SR 520 to serve South Lake Union en route to downtown Seattle. This means that buses traveling from the SR 520 corridor could serve South Lake Union or the downtown Seattle core, but not both. Metro has not had sufficient resources, including both operating funds and buses, to create new routes to South Lake Union. That is why the South Lake Union service considered during the 2017 outreach would have been feasible only by reducing bus trips into downtown Seattle. This is the type of tradeoff that Metro explores when we propose restructuring projects.

- **How will the proposed changes affect transit routes between South King County and downtown Seattle?**

In general, we expect that most routes from South King County will have minor or no changes. However, the three routes that currently use the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel will be affected. These are routes 101 (Renton-Seattle), 102 (Fairwood/Renton-Seattle) and 150 (Kent-Tukwila-Seattle). Operating on the surface streets is slower than in the tunnel, so riders on these routes will experience longer travel times, particularly to the north end of downtown Seattle. Metro will add more service hours to these routes to account for the longer travel times, but will not be adding any new trips.

Metro, Sound Transit and Community Transit are developing a comprehensive service plan for bus operations on surface streets after September 2019. This service plan, which will be available in May 2018, will propose which streets individual bus routes will operate on. It will consider all the north-south avenues, and will reallocate bus routes to these avenues depending on factors such as speed, reliability, markets served, connections to I-5, and routing considerations on either end of downtown.

- **If you truncate Route 255 at University of Washington Station, how many service hours would be saved and could be reallocated to Eastside service?**

Route 255 has about 68,000 annual hours. Depending on time of day, up to half of this route’s travel time is spent between downtown Seattle and SR 520. The potential reallocation would provide substantial service hours—at least 20,000 to 25,000, depending on the proposed changes along the full length of the route. Further consideration of a proposal for truncation will include discussion with the public about whether those service hours should be reallocated to

more service connecting the eastside with UW Station, or into intra-Eastside connections.

- **How many service hours can be added at the same time to help make the Eastside routes work as well as possible?**

The number of additional hours will be determined through Metro's 2019-2020 budget process. At a minimum, Metro would need to spend 8,700 hours on Route 255 if it moved to surface streets from the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel. This is the minimum number of hours that would be added in 2019 for Route 255/Eastside service, whether Route 255 is truncated or not.

Outreach

- **Request preview of the plan (how many meetings, online surveys, what other methods will be used? Timing?)** Service and capital projects have outreach processes that vary according to project needs. For major service changes that require King County Council approval, including potential changes to Route 255, Metro will conduct public outreach in 2018, propose changes to the Council in early 2019, and implement changes in September 2019. Outreach will include public meetings, online surveys, and a variety of other methods. Outreach may also include opportunities for feedback on other mobility service options, to help Metro provide additional services that meet the needs of the community.

Some of the changes related to One Center City, including moving buses to Fifth and Sixth Avenue, do not require Council approval because they will not move stops by more than one-half mile. For these changes, Metro would conduct informational outreach in 2018 and 2019.