



King County

Dow Constantine

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August 1, 2016

Chris Leman
President, Eastlake Community Council
117 E Louisa St., PMB #1
Seattle, WA 98102

Dear Mr. Leman:

Thank you for your letter of June 26, 2016, expressing concern about changes to Metro bus service in the Eastlake neighborhood implemented in March 2016. I sincerely appreciate your investment in the community and the transit service in Eastlake. Metro has been monitoring ridership and customer feedback since the service change, and was aware of crowding on Route 70. Metro Transit has already taken steps to address the problem, outlined below, and will continue to monitor ridership on this route.

Metro staff members appreciated the opportunity to engage with you during the public engagement process for Link Connections. For reference, I have attached an email of September 18, 2015, which provides some background information about ridership and travel times for former Routes 25 and 66 Express, as well as for Route 70.

As you noted, Route 66 Express was eliminated in March 2016. To mitigate this change, Metro added peak period service on Route 70, the remaining route serving the Eastlake neighborhood. In addition to adding service on Route 70, we scheduled this route to be assigned 60-foot articulated buses a majority of the time. In the first month following the service change, Route 70 had an average of 981 riders boarding this route between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m. Metro did not observe significant crowding on Route 70 at that time. Since then, ridership has increased almost 25 percent, with an average of 1,229 riders boarding Route 70 between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m. during the month of June.

Due to the recent increase in demand for service, we have heard crowding complaints from riders on Route 70. The increase in demand may be due to an increase in the number of summer employees heading to South Lake Union. The crowding can also be attributed to Metro operating 40-foot buses on some Route 70 trips. Two weeks ago we took steps to ensure we were prioritizing 60-foot-long buses for Route 70 trips to help ease that crowding.

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Those buses are now in service, but we know there is still significant crowding. Metro is continuing to monitor and assess the situation to see what adjustments can be made. Trips earlier in the day appear to have more capacity, based on preliminary information. However, during the high-demand peak window from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m., ridership is still very high.

You have requested that Metro reinstate Routes 25 and 66 Express, which were eliminated or revised during the March 2016 service change. When the proposed service changes were adopted, the hours of service used for those routes were redeployed on other routes, such as Route 70, so unfortunately service cannot be reinstated at this time. However, we will continue to make adjustments on the Route 70.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Metro Transportation Planner Jeremy Fichter at jeremy.fichter@kingcounty.gov or 206-477-5848.

Thank you again for providing this feedback.

Sincerely,



Dow Constantine
King County Executive

cc: The Honorable Mayor Ed Murray, City of Seattle
The Honorable Councilmember Rob Johnson, City of Seattle
City of Seattle Councilmembers
The Honorable Councilmember Larry Gossett, King County Council
King County Councilmembers
Harold S. Taniguchi, Director, King County Department of Transportation (KCDOT)
Rob Gannon, Interim General Manager, Metro Transit Division, KCDOT