



June 26, 2016

County Executive Dow Constantine
401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98104

Mayor Ed Murray
601 Fifth Ave., Floor 7, P.O. 94749
Seattle, WA 98124-4749

County Councilmember Larry Gossett
516 Third Ave Rm 1200
Seattle, WA 98104-3272

City Councilmember Rob Johnson
601 Fifth Ave., Floor 2, P.O. 34025
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

PERFORMANCE OF METRO ROUTE 70 AFTER MARCH ROUTE RESTRUCTURE

To the County Executive, County Council, Mayor, and City Council:

In March, despite significant concerns expressed by the Eastlake Community Council and many others in our community, King County Metro made substantial changes to bus service here. Unfortunately, with the route changes now in place, these worries appear to be justified, and we ask that corrective actions be taken now.

Until the restructure, Eastlake was served by three bus lines -- the 70 series, the 66X, and the 25 -- that each took a different route to and from downtown. Now Eastlake is served only by the 70, which goes through the most congested corridor in the city. During the public comment period, we and many others pointed out that the 70 bus was prone to extreme delays downtown and in South Lake Union, and that to avoid these delays, residents should be able to continue to take the 66X or 25. These concerns were not heeded, and the restructure removed our only express, and our only bus routes that avoided the Mercer Mess. Metro put all of Eastlake's bus service eggs in one basket, and too often, that basket is badly broken.

At a recent ECC public meeting and in other ways, many who live or work in Eastlake have expressed outrage about bus service since the restructure. Their concerns included buses arriving far behind schedule or not at all, multiple stacked buses arriving at the same time instead of with the promised headways, buses skipping stops because they are overcrowded, buses taking significantly longer to reach downtown, and new buses stalled or out of commission because they cannot stay connected to the trolley wires overhead.

We hope that these reports are not news to Metro about problems with route 70, and we request a full response on what is being done to correct the situation. We request data and explanations regarding the key metrics and targets used to evaluate the performance of routes 70, 25, and the 66X before and of route 70 after the restructure. We request in-depth and ongoing discussion with Metro and SDOT's transit division about these issues. And we ask Metro to take immediate action to improve route 70's performance.

Eastlake is a designated urban village with about 5000 residents and 5000 office, R&D, service, and industrial employees. Our development is predicated on the promise of high-quality transit service—in fact, on-site parking requirements are exempted because we are said to have “frequent” transit service that is no such thing—unless one is talking written schedules rather than actual experience as a (would be) bus rider. As we have objected to for many years, Metro does not recognize Eastlake as transit and employment center but rather as a corridor between the University District, South Lake Union, and downtown, which receive better bus service while our bus service languishes. And now via the March restructure Metro appears, in worsening Eastlake service, to have saved money that it is spending on improving bus routes elsewhere.

Given the unwise decision to limit Eastlake’s bus service to a poorly functioning route 70, it is essential that Metro devote the attention and resources necessary for this route to be truly frequent and reliable, and to reinstate the 25 and 66x routes that served us so well for many years.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Leman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chris Leman, President
Eastlake Community Council
info@eastlakeseattle.org (206) 322-5463
<http://eastlakeseattle.org>

cc: County Council; City Council