



November 12, 2013

46th Legislative District
Attention: Senator Frockt, Rep. Pollet and Rep. Farrell
10215 Lake City Way, Suite K
Seattle, WA 98125

**RE: CONCERNS REGARDING MAJOR CUTS TO METRO TRANSIT SERVICE
PROPOSED FOR NORTHEAST SEATTLE DUE TO LACK OF
TRANSPORTATION FUNDING PACKAGE**

Dear Senator Frockt, Representative Pollet and Representative Farrell:

On behalf of the Wedgwood neighborhood in Northeast Seattle, the Wedgwood Community Council (WCC) would like formally submit our concerns to our legislators regarding the **major reductions in King County Metro transit service proposed by mid-2014**. In fact, Northeast Seattle will arguably be hit harder than any other community in King County by the proposed service reduction and route elimination proposal, due to the lack of a statewide transportation funding package.

As we understand it, the congestion reduction charge, authorized by the state legislature and then approved by the King County Council in 2011, was meant to preserve Metro service for two years while a transportation package was created. Given a package has yet to be passed in Olympia, Metro has no choice but to plan for up to 600,000 annual hours of bus service cuts to close their forecasted budget gap. In all, 74 of the 214 routes would be deleted, while other buses would grow more crowded or run less often.

Many of these hours will be cut from Northeast Seattle, including Wedgwood, which already lacks any frequent transit service.¹ For the routes that are left and/or implemented in lieu of existing routes, **Wedgwood (plus Ravenna, Bryant and Maple Leaf) riders will be subject to low frequencies and slow speeds, further impairing our neighborhood's connection to downtown, the University of Washington, Bellevue/Redmond, and other critical areas** of the county.

We cannot spare these hours and routes in a neighborhood long missing adequate public transportation options. These **changes would likely increase single occupant vehicle trips** from Northeast Seattle neighborhoods and **negatively impact traffic volumes** on city streets and state highways at a cost to our neighbors, city and state taxpayers, and the climate.

¹ "Frequent transit service" is defined as any routes with service every 15 minutes or less during weekdays, from 6 am to 6 pm, as defined by the Seattle Transit Blog (http://seattletransitblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Seattle15minMap_2013Oct.pdf)

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Here is a summary of the proposed changes that would affect Northeast Seattle riders²:

- The 71, 72 and 73 routes would be **collapsed** into just one route that snakes north from downtown to Northgate, via the University District, Ravenna Boulevard and Roosevelt Way.
 - The current 71 route would turn into an hourly, **daytime-only** feeder route between NOAA and 65th St.
 - The 72 would be **collapsed** into the 372.
 - Service on 15th Ave NE, currently served by today's 73, would be **reduced** to peak hours only via the 373 and 77.
- The 66 and 67 routes would be **eliminated**; meaning north of Roosevelt, there would be **no service** on 5th Ave NE.
- The 68 would be **eliminated**.
- The 74 would remain during peak hours, but the 30 would be **eliminated** altogether.
- The 243 would be **eliminated**, meaning **no direct connection to Bellevue** during peak hours.
- There would **no longer be 'straight shot' routes** providing Ravenna and Bryant riders with a direct connection to downtown OR the University District; all riders would have to take two buses.

It is important to note **we believe Metro has done everything within their agency power** to ensure our neighborhood is served with public transit, while trying to balance the needs of riders county-wide. Now, **it is time for the state to match Metro's commitment** to local ridership and transportation choices.

Not only is transit funding critical for communities across the state, including Northeast Seattle, but **funding for other statewide programs such as Safe Routes to School are critical for communities like ours as well**. Wedgwood Elementary School, for instance, has not yet been successful at receiving Safe Route to School funding for planned pedestrian improvements – despite being recommended for funding by the Washington State Department of Transportation.³ Instead, the funding for this project, as well as another in the 46th District (Lake Forest Park) is pending on the passage of a transportation package from the state legislature.

The WCC implores you to be strong advocates for public transportation funding within any comprehensive, multimodal transportation package that's on the table to ensure maintained service levels in Northeast Seattle.

If an overarching transportation package is not passed in the special session, **please work with King County to ensure adequate emergency measures are taken to keep our transit service and choices in place**. The lives and livelihoods supported by public transit in Northeast Seattle are at stake.

Respectfully,

Keeley Hughes
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Wedgwood Community Council

² Via King County Metro (<http://metro.kingcounty.gov/am/future/proposed-changes.html>) and the Seattle Transit Blog (<http://seattletransitblog.com/>)

³ According to the WSDOT Safe Route to School Project List 2013/2015, Wedgwood Elementary School has requested \$439,000 from the state, with \$454,000 matched by the City to construct the Wedgwood Elementary Children and Neighbors (WeCAN) Safety Project (<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/SafeRoutes/SRTSgrants.htm#project46>).