

July 18, 2022

Dear SDOT Interim Director Simpson, Mayor Harrell, CM Morales, CM Mosqueda, and CM Sara Nelson, Seattle Mayor Chief of Staff Samuels, and Senior Deputy Mayor Harrell:

CC: Rainier Valley Greenways and Safe Streets, Transit Riders Union

As residents, workers, and business owners in the Rainier Valley, we greatly appreciate the completion of the new transit-only lanes completed this week on Rainier Ave S. These lanes begin to address long-standing issues of reliability and speed for Metro Route 7 and other bus lines that use Rainier Ave S. Route 7 is a vital transportation connection for many of us, providing access to destinations throughout the Rainier Valley, Chinatown/International District, Downtown, and beyond. Unfortunately, every rider of Route 7 is familiar with frequent delays, “bunching” of buses, and unreliable service that limits the usefulness of the route and ridership. We hope that the new transit-only lanes will allow for more consistent service while also providing a safer and more pleasant experience for other road users by reducing dangerous driving and providing separation between the sidewalk and general purpose traffic lanes.

We encourage the Seattle Department of Transportation to use this project as an opportunity to develop a vision for Rainier Ave S as a corridor that serves all Southend residents regardless of their preferred mode of transportation. Rainier Ave S is the only flat and direct route both within the Rainier Valley and to the central area of the city, and is therefore critical for both pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-drivers. However, Rainier Ave S remains one of the most dangerous streets in Seattle for drivers, bikers, and pedestrians alike, particularly in the project area and north, especially at the I90 interchange and S Dearborn St intersection. Near daily collisions caused by speeding and distracted drivers create an unsafe environment, and these conditions are exacerbated by the infrastructure: wide lanes, narrow sidewalks, and poor maintenance. As the Department develops the next phase of the project (Phase 2), we hope that the project team will work with the community to develop a shared vision for the future of this critical corridor beyond transit-only lanes. This vision should not be constrained by status quo design elements or street use and should reflect the community’s values in a comprehensive design. We look forward to engaging with project staff during outreach for Phase 2 and beyond as this vision is developed.

Signed,

Braeden Van Deynze, Rainier Valley Greenways and Safe Streets (RVGSS)

Jason Rock, RVGSS

Nicole Comforto, RVGSS

Stephen Dolan, RVGSS

Polly Thompson, RVGSS

Erin Aten, RVGSS

Yochi Zakai, RVGSS

Christina Thomas, RVGSS

Bob Svercl, RVGSS

Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos, Position 1, 37th LD
Andrew Ikechukwu Ashiofu, Candidate Position 2, 37th LD
Charlotte Gamble, RVGSS
Margaret McCauley, Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee
Roger Klorese, RVGSS
DeAnne Dey, RVGSS
Katie Wilson, General Secretary Transit Riders Union

Rainier Valley Greenways and Safe Streets



Transit Riders Union



— — — — —
Context link:

<https://sdotblog.seattle.gov/2022/06/27/bus-only-lanes-rainier-ave-s/>