



July 19, 2024

Dear King County Metro, King County Executive Constantine, King County Councilmember Dembowski, King County Councilmember Barón, Seattle Councilmember Moore, and Seattle Councilmember Rivera:

We are writing to express concern at the upcoming deletion of Route 20 as part of the Lynnwood Link bus restructure. Transit Riders Union and our Bus and Transit Service subcommittee have heard feedback from TRU members and community groups that this change will leave a substantial hole in bus service, felt most acutely by people with disabilities or other mobility issues for whom alternate bus routes may not be accessible.

As we have said in past letters, one of the basic tenets of transit service is that riders cannot use a bus that does not exist. Route 20, like the 26 that preceded it, is a coverage route that provides service in multiple areas along its path that don't already have service. While we understand that Metro is needing to optimize service hours wherever possible, we worry that this is a deletion that will do harm.

Even for the able-bodied, walking 15 minutes or more to a bus stop because Metro deleted a closer route may technically be feasible, but it's still a big inconvenience and indignity that discourages people from riding. The agency should not be asking riders to make this sacrifice in normal circumstances, especially when restructures are generally billed as service improvements rather than cuts.

Overall, Metro has done very good work with the proposed restructure. The addition of critical east/west routes like the 61 and 77 bring new connections to more areas, especially as the opening of Link further north prompts moving some bus service away from direct connections at Northgate. These new routes have no built-in rider constituency, so TRU does not want to make the assertion that the new routes are less needed or should be put aside in favor of keeping a static bus network.

However, TRU also feels that gaps in the bus system should not be created. Removing the 20 means there is no north-south bus service between the 62 and the 67, with I-5 in between. While we've heard that the number of boardings along Latona is small, those are trips that are either no longer possible or only possible with a substantial time penalty.

The Transit Riders Union strongly urges that:

- Metro take one last look to see if the 20 can be retained in some form, preferably at the current service level;
- If funding is a concern, appeal to Seattle to determine if our local Transportation Benefit District can cover the gap;
- As a final idea, explore if a Metro Flex-style operation would be feasible until the 20 or a route like it can be restored.

Thank you,

Members of the Transit Riders Union