

To Burien City Council members

I have been a metro rider for many years. I saw a bus bill board with a slogan that "I ride the bus because it is convenient". It is anything but convenient to get to and from work. It takes 2 sometimes 3 buses to get from Burien to Fremont and 1-2 hours. I can drive the same distance in 30-45 minutes. There are disruptive people, drunk people, smelly people, loud people and people (mostly tourists) with loads of questions. All I want to do is get to work in peace and get home after a long day of working. Now there is talk of reducing the bus services, adding lanes to 520 and a car tab tax.

I have a car in order to drive to a park and ride or I can walk a block up the street to the bus stop. Not everyone has a car to get to a park and ride or are within walking distance of a bus. I enjoy the walk to the bus stop in the summer and spring when the weather gets better. The 123 (the two times before 6am) that I ride the most, always has a dozen or so people on it from Gregory Heights before it gets to the park and ride or after it leaves the park and ride to Gregory Heights. That would be hundreds of people a year without options. It could even force people (who have cars, including me) to give up on mass transit.

The solution to congestion is not more freeway lanes or bridges with more car lanes. We should be moving people around the Sound NOT cars! We need to find ways to produce less CO2 from going into the air that end up in our bodies of water. Have we learned nothing from movies ("A Sea Change" [www.aseachange.net](http://www.aseachange.net) or "An Inconvenient Truth") or scientists or other countries (Norway and Germany)? What about "green roofs" to reduce heat going into the air among other benefits? I don't want to give up on the planet. I don't want to even imagine what the world would be like without zooplankton or whales. It is all connected. One link is broken and we won't have coral reefs, fish, mammals or sharks. Because when we kill the smallest animal or plant that we think is insignificant, we are killing ourselves. I don't have kids but I do have a niece and nephews and I have cousins and friends with kids.

What are we leaving behind? Can we afford to follow the same path by adding car lanes, damming up rivers, digging up coal, and so on? Can we continue to cut bus routes, hoping that people will still be able or willing to ride them? I believe the answer is "no". Instead of ranting on about the problems we face as a city, nation and world, I have a few ideas.

- A. Pay when a person gets on the bus regardless of the direction they are going (Italy, Ireland).
- B. Separate bus route that loops between Seattle Center and Safeco field.
  - 1. limited ride free zone operated by separate buses.
  - 2. Step on/ off bus (Australia). Pay \$0.25 when getting on the bus or a \$5.00 pass for the day.
- C. No ride free zone AT ALL.
- D. Ride free zone funded differently (either as is or limited as in point B).
  - 1. Use tab tax on car.
    - 1. Give discount if you can show you ride the bus more than 2x a week (i.e. \$50.00 if you don't, \$20.00 if you do).
  - 2. Create non-profit or use an existing City/State program.
    - 1. Give free pass if unemployed, retired, disabled, earn less then minimum wage or veteran.
    - 2. Supported by businesses and nonprofits. I always heard that the ride free zone was created to promote shopping.
- E. A license for bikes that would have a small (\$10-20) yearly renewal fee (Oregon).
  - 1. Money could fund :
    - 1. Metro
    - 2. Bicycle lanes
    - 3. Bicycle racks on buses
  - 2. Tickets for breaking the law could also help to fund the above.
  - 3. I have a car and ride the bus. Same as having a bike and riding the bus.
  - 4. I pay taxes for education but I don't have kids. Same as having a bike but not riding the bus.

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We can look to other countries for their incentives for riding mass transit (bus, train, ferries..) and their system of payment. Canada has a public transit tax credit (canada.gc.ca). Australia has the bus route for tourists. Europe buses you pay when you get on the bus. At train stops in Europe the buses were going into the towns and surrounding areas. Now is not the time to look to the past or do what has always been done. But rather to think beyond yesterday and into the future. It is time to ask how can it be done better, what are other cities & countries doing (Australia, Canada, Germany) for mass transit. The question is, how do we connect the dots and not sever them. In other words, how do you provide the bus service that benefits everyone and not cut service.

We need to look at ways to reduce CO2 from going into the water. With high CO2, shellfish and a type of very small animal that Salmon eat, can't keep strong shells. There are whole food webs that start with the tiniest of creatures. We need to look to companies such as Johnston and Johnston for using methane from a land fill to produce energy for their plant or Google who put solar panels on their buildings. Countries like Norway who are looking into wind mills to provide energy for their whole country or the hotel that uses the ocean to produce energy for their Hotel. Hybrids and electric cars another way but not everyone can afford them.

There are those that say it would be too expensive but it only costs 1-2% of th GNP to use non CO2 producing energy methods. People need incentives to use these alternatives (buses, green roofs, solar energy, wind energy, trains, etc.) or to be able to afford hybrids or electric cars.

I hope you read this letter and take into account the ideas I put forth for your consideration. I am a Washington native, Seattle Aquarium Volunteer, Beach Naturalist and a concerned citizen. I have seen many changes in Seattle & Washington, not all of them good. I think to cut back on buses and ferries would be a mistake that the city can't afford to make. The environment needs people to stay on the buses, ferries and trains to reduce pollution.

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