

Executive Summary

PROPOSED I-90 SERVICE CHANGES SEPTEMBER 2018

2018 Service Implementation Plan Amendment

This 2018 Service Implementation Plan Amendment, with Board approval, would amend the adopted 2018 SIP with proposed changes to ST Express routes in the I-90 corridor beginning in September 2018. Service changes are necessary to accommodate construction related to the delivery of East Link. When Sound Transit opens East Link service will extend to 10 stations in Judkins Park, Mercer Island, Bellevue and Overlake by 2023 and to Redmond by 2024.

Why Restructure I-90 Bus Routes?

Construction of the new Judkins Park Link Station requires closure of the Rainier Freeway Station and the I-90 bus ramp that connects buses to the downtown tunnel. Routes 550 and 554 will no longer stop at the Rainier Freeway Station and will no longer use the I-90 bus ramp that connects buses to the downtown tunnel beginning in September 2018. Service changes will be necessary to continue serving customers who use those routes to get to jobs, education, services and recreation around Seattle and the Eastside.

Since the Rainier Freeway Station provides important access to the Eastside and Downtown Seattle for communities in the Rainier Valley, Sound Transit determined that bus routes need to change when construction starts to maintain service to the Rainier Valley area. When East Link opens in 2023, the Rainier Freeway Station will re-open as the Judkins Park Station.

Proposed Changes to Route 550

Route 550 will no longer stop at Rainier Avenue South due to the closure of the Rainier Freeway Station. Buses will continue to access the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel via I-90 and service all normal Downtown Seattle stops (International District, Pioneer Square, University Street, Westlake). This route will proceed on the I-90 mainline into Downtown Seattle. It will not use the transit-only roadway on I-90 to get downtown.

Proposed Changes to Route 554

Traveling westbound, buses will exit I-90 at Rainier with new stops at South Charles Street, then travel north on Rainier Avenue South to Dearborn Street, before accessing Downtown Seattle via the same streets as today. When returning to the Eastside, buses will use Dearborn Street to Rainier Avenue South, stop at new stops on South Charles Street, then enter I-90 eastbound to continue the existing route. Because travel times will increase modestly, riders should expect to wait an extra few minutes for their bus throughout the day on weekdays, as buses will come slightly less frequently.

Changes Riders Will See Starting in September 2018

- Closing the Rainier Freeway Station
- Maintaining bus access to Rainier Avenue via two existing bus stops near Rainier Avenue South and South Charles Street
- Closing the I-90 bus ramp connecting buses to the Downtown Seattle tunnel
- Beginning Link light rail construction at the Rainier Freeway Station
- Changes to Sound Transit Routes 550 and 554 (with Board approval)
- Changes to King County Metro routes

Rider Outreach

To help riders plan for changes to ST Express service, the Sound Transit customer outreach and service planning teams collaborated with King County Metro for a “plan ahead” outreach effort that included drop-in sessions, notifications at transit stops and centers in the corridor, and a comprehensive online information center/open house. Through numerous notification methods, thousands of people across the corridor were notified of opportunities to engage. Over 5,500 people actively engaged with outreach staff during this time both in person or online.

Coordinated Planning Process with King County Metro

Sound Transit and Metro’s primary goal is to maintain a comparable level of service to riders during construction of the Judkins Park Station. Service Planners at Sound Transit worked with planners at King County Metro to develop coordinated service changes to both King County Metro and ST Express routes. The table below shows route changes for both agencies.

I-90 Service Changes: Route by Route

	Route Number										
	ST 550	ST 554	Metro 111	Metro 114	Metro 212 (AM - West, PM - East)	Metro 212 - Reverse peak (AM - East, PM - West)	Metro 214	Metro 216	Metro 217	Metro 218	Metro 219
Affected Stops:											
Rainier Freeway Station	🚌→	🚌→	🚌→	🚌→	🚌→	🚌→	🚌→	🚌→	🚌→	🚌→	🚌→
Alternate Stops due to Rainier Freeway Station Closure:											
Rainier Ave South & South Charles Street	🚌→	✓	🚌→	🚌→	🚌→	✓	🚌→	🚌→	✓	🚌→	🚌→
Accessibility:											
Can I get to Rainier Avenue?	🚌→	✓	🚌→	🚌→	🚌→	✓	🚌→	🚌→	✓	🚌→	🚌→
Can I get to the Downtown Seattle?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

KEY ✓ Bus access 🚌→ No bus access

*Note - Route changes do not affect stops on the Eastside. All major route changes affect stops in Rainier Valley.

Document Contents

- **Proposed September 2018 I-90 Service Changes:** Detailed description of the proposed changes to routes and customer experience when the Rainier Freeway Station and the I-90 bus ramp close
- **Service Change Alternative Analysis:** Discussion of the four alternatives extensively reviewed in order to select the proposed service changes.
- **Title VI Analysis:** Evaluates impacts to the minority, low income, and Limited English Proficient populations affected by this change.
- **Public Outreach Summary:** Describes the variety of joint outreach efforts that were undertaken by Sound Transit and King County Metro during the I-90 service change process.