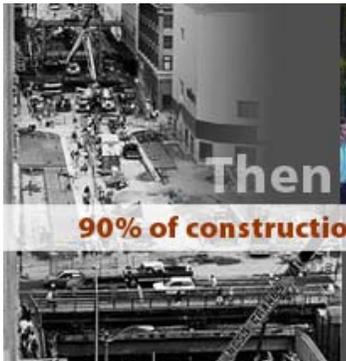


DOWNTOWN SEATTLE TRANSIT TUNNEL CLOSURE

Performance Report on Surface Streets in the Central Business District First Update – Post Tunnel Closure

February 10, 2006



On September 24, 2005, the transit tunnel closed for two years to be retrofitted for use by both trains and buses. During the closure, tunnel buses are using downtown streets, primarily Third, Second and Fourth avenues. More than \$16 million in mitigation projects were implemented to ease the impacts of this change. The tunnel will reopen in 2007 for bus use, and trains will begin running in 2009 when the light rail line from

Downtown Seattle to Sea-Tac Airport opens.

Monitoring and Responding to Changes

The performance of the downtown transportation system continues to be monitored and changes are being made as needed. Quarterly reports will be published during, and up to one year after, the tunnel reopens in September 2007. This fact sheet describes highlights from the first report.

- More than two thirds of commuters surveyed say getting to downtown is about the same or easier. Fewer than one third say it's harder.
- Traffic restrictions on Third Avenue are moving twice as many buses as before, with improved travel times.
- On average, bus travel times through downtown are 2½ minutes slower. Much of the observed slow-down for transit as well as general purpose travel is in the Virginia and Stewart Street corridors. Several corrective actions have occurred in these corridors. We continue to monitor the situation and results will be presented in the second update.

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- General purpose traffic travel times remained about the same in the morning and off-peak periods. In the evening peak period, some corridors experienced slower travel times, but significant delays appear to be the result of incidents or freeway congestion rather than tunnel closure.
- Downtown bus stops are more crowded, as expected, but not to the extent anticipated.
- Transit ridership and employer participation in transportation demand management programs are on the rise.



The report also summarizes some of the quick response measures used to address problems in the days, weeks and months following tunnel closure. Examples include: shortening p.m. peak period restrictions on Third Avenue, which improved access for general purpose traffic; and modifying signal timing to reduce backups.



In summary, the tunnel has been closed for more than three months, and we're happy to report that both transit and general purpose traffic continues to move through downtown as projected. With more buses on the street during peak periods, and traffic restricted in some areas, the downtown system does become congested more easily, and takes longer to recover from incidents. But overall, the agencies' hard work has paid off. We are demonstrating that we can keep the city moving while delivering critical transportation improvements.

Questions on the report? Contact: Ellen Bevington at Ellen.Bevington@MetroKC.gov.

For general questions visit the project Web site at: Seattletunnel.org.

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