



**CITY OF KIRKLAND**  
**Department of Public Works**  
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3800  
[www.kirklandwa.gov](http://www.kirklandwa.gov)

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Kurt Triplett, City Manager

**From:** June Carlson, Transportation Strategic Advisor  
Joel Pfundt, Transportation Division Manager  
Kathy Brown, Public Works Director

**Date:** April 4, 2019

**Subject:** 2020 LIGHT RAIL CONNECTION IMPACTS

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

City Council receives a briefing about Sound Transit construction activity impacts, and on the status of transit and traffic operations in downtown Seattle as a result of the March 23, 2019 Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT) closure to buses.

### **BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:**

Regionally, Sound Transit Link light rail is growing. In 2020, the existing tracks that serve roughly 80,000 people per day will need to be connected to the future Link light rail line extension that will serve the Eastside starting in 2023.

This complex operation has been nicknamed "[Connect 2020](#)". Construction of this connection will occur at the south end of the DSTT and will impact rail service from January to mid-March 2020. Light rail will be reduced to a single track in the Westlake, University, Pioneer Square, International District, and Stadium stations, with service maintained to and from stations north and south of the Pioneer Square station. Sound Transit is committed to providing as much light rail service as possible, but the frequency of trains will need to be reduced during this time.

As a result of the timing of Connect 2020, implementation of the North Eastside Mobility Project (NEMP) transit service changes has been delayed from September 2019 to March 2020. This is because the transit connection between Kirkland and downtown Seattle that will be implemented as part of NEMP will depend on transferring at the UW Link Station between Metro Route 255 and Link light rail. That will require frequent and reliable Link light rail service. If the transit service changes were implemented in September 2019 as originally discussed, there would be a significant disruption in the quality of the service for 10 weeks shortly after implementation. Therefore, King County Metro decided to delay implementation until after completion of the Connect 2020 project.

On a related topic, the DSTT closed to buses on March 23, 2019 to accommodate both future Link light rail expansion and the construction of the Washington State Convention Center expansion. By the time Council meets on April 16, the tunnel's closure to buses will have had an impact on downtown Seattle traffic and transit operations, including the Metro Route 255, for three weeks. The Council will be provided with a summary of those changes and impacts.

An overview and status report on Connect 2020 and the March 23, 2019 closure of the DSTT to buses will be presented by the following Sound Transit and King County Metro staff:

- Marie Olson, Sound Transit Corridor Operations Director
- Ariel Taylor, Sound Transit Government and Community Relations Officer
- Grace Carlson, King County Metro Service Planner

**NEXT STEPS:**

The City, Sound Transit, and King County Metro will continue to brief City Council periodically throughout implementation of transit changes.