



Puget Sound Regional Council

## 2024 FHWA REGIONAL COMPETITION: PROJECT SPONSOR FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

AGENCY: Seattle

PROJECT: Harrison & Mercer Transit Access Project

**Question #1:** Since the identified scope is more a menu of possibilities than confirmed elements, the scoring team needs additional detail to understand the outcomes of the specific project for which funding is being requested, beyond the general results that can result from the program type. With this in mind, please describe specific outcomes intended to result from this project, and how the different scope options would help achieve those outcomes. If possible, please also provide information about how the specific scope elements and locations will be determined, and/or the basis for removing potential elements from consideration.

**Answer #1:** At the time of application, our project is completing its Planning phase and entering a federally funded Design phase. Our Design phase will determine the extents of each treatment and will be informed by a wide variety of inputs. First, the traffic modeling work of our consultants (currently underway) will determine which segments would be benefited by dedicated transit lanes or queue jumps (short segments of transit lanes at intersections or chokepoints). Second, analyses from King County Metro will help us determine which segments (if any) require overhead catenary systems for charging electric buses. (These buses can easily run without the catenary lines for short distances.) King County Metro will also continue long-range network planning to provide more detailed estimates on the number of buses that will use this corridor each hour. Finally, our community engagement work will inform our scoping decisions as the project is conceived as a connection to the future light-rail station and community amenities and destinations to spur increased foot traffic, public space vibrancy, and the ability for small businesses to thrive.

In every potential scenario, we would identify and analyze the benefits and the tradeoffs of the specific scope item(s) proposed at a specific location, and the corridor as a whole. One of our project goals is to implement several key project elements including transit signal priority and signal retiming/optimization, new and upgraded sidewalks where warranted, lighting and greenery, and other public space upgrades to ensure a safe, attractive, and welcoming environment. During our Planning phase, preliminary traffic models clearly indicate the need for some combination of dedicated transit lanes

and/or queue jumps, although the extents of these treatments are not yet certain. Our plan is to implement these treatments as needed to ensure that buses do not encounter delays along the corridor – in other words, they can maintain their reliability, in contrast to the existing Denny Way option with its heavy congestion, long delays, and very low reliability.

In regard to the timing for these key decisions, we expect to receive inputs from Metro and from the affected community over the next year or more, continuing throughout the federally funded Design phase. Many of the key decisions, such as the locations of dedicated bus lanes, could be confirmed within the next year. Other details, like sidewalk widths and parking mitigation, may be made later in the Design phase. However, each of these decisions will need to be carefully considered and vetted during our federally funded Design phase rather than being a prior conclusion.