



City of Seattle

Mayor Katie B. Wilson

Office of the Mayor

City of Seattle

Katie B. Wilson, Mayor

Executive Order 2026-01: An Executive Order directing the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to design and install at least one dedicated bus lane on Denny Way and other supportive transit infrastructure where needed with the primary goals of (1) increasing on-time performance and reliability for existing transit riders and (2) creating irresistibly good transit service that grows ridership along this vital corridor.

WHEREAS, Route 8 is a high-ridership bus route connecting Seattleites from Mount Baker to the Central District, through Capitol Hill, along Denny Way in South Lake Union, and to Seattle Center, serving approximately 7,000 daily riders and ranking among King County Metro's top ten routes by ridership; and

WHEREAS, Route 8 has long struggled with reliability, performing significantly below system averages, particularly during weekday peak periods; in July 2025, eastbound afternoon trips arrived on time only 31% of the time, the lowest performance ever recorded for the route; and

WHEREAS, these reliability challenges stem from predictable congestion chokepoints especially along Denny Way through South Lake Union where buses lack dedicated right-of-way and routinely lose substantial travel time in general traffic; and

WHEREAS, King County Metro and SDOT analyses have repeatedly identified targeted transit-priority improvements along Route 8 as high-impact, cost-effective strategies to improve travel time and reliability; and

WHEREAS, public transit provides an affordable, sustainable, and essential means for Seattle residents to access jobs, healthcare, education, services, recreation, and community, and is a critical tool for increasing economic mobility; and

WHEREAS, unreliable transit disproportionately affects historically and currently marginalized residents of our city, taking hours from their days that could otherwise be spent on work, family, or rest; and

WHEREAS, the City is actively encouraging people to choose transit during WSDOT's Revive I-5 program on the Ship Canal Bridge, one of the most significant construction impacts in decades, and has a responsibility to ensure that transit remains a viable and reliable option during this period; and

WHEREAS, Seattle invests in transit service and capital improvements through the Seattle Transit Measure and the Seattle Transportation Levy, and money spent on buses stuck in congestion is an inefficient use of public funds that the City has a responsibility to address; and

WHEREAS, a robust, reliable transit network is essential to meeting Seattle's climate goals, including reducing transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions by 82% from 2008 levels and increasing the share of zero-emission personal trips to 90% by 2030, which requires transit mode share to grow from 11% in 2023 to 24% by 2030; and

WHEREAS, Seattle is home to a record 74,100 carless households (20% of all households) whose residents rely heavily on transit and are more likely to be from currently and historically marginalized identities; and

WHEREAS, 70% of Seattle's right-of-way is currently dedicated to car travel and parking, underscoring the need to rebalance street space toward sustainable modes that can accommodate the continued growth of our region; each articulated bus can carry up to 90 people, equivalent to a mile of roadway if those riders were driving alone; and

WHEREAS, improving transit quality, transit reliability, and reducing delay also enhances safety for all road users by reducing unpredictable traffic patterns, minimizing lane-weaving, and creating more orderly, predictable streets; and

WHEREAS, community members, transit riders, and neighborhood organizations have consistently expressed strong support for improving Route 8 reliability and reducing delays, recognizing the route as a vital connection between some of Seattle's fastest-growing neighborhoods;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Katie B. Wilson, Mayor of Seattle, hereby order the following actions:

- A. The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is directed to design and install at least one dedicated bus lane on Denny Way, with the goal of significantly improving

the reliability, speed, and performance of Route 8 and other transit services operating in the corridor.

- B. SDOT shall work in close partnership with King County Metro to identify, evaluate, and implement additional transit-supportive infrastructure along the Route 8 corridor and adjacent streets including signal priority, queue jumps, stop consolidation, and other proven tools to achieve meaningful and measurable improvements in transit travel time and reliability and to ensure operational feasibility, rider benefit, and coordinated delivery.
- C. SDOT shall develop and execute an engagement plan to support design and implementation that includes outreach to users of the corridor, including transit riders, bicycle riders, pedestrians, freight, and organizations and businesses that rely on the Denny corridor for access.
- D. SDOT shall develop and conduct a comprehensive performance evaluation of the Denny Way corridor before and after implementation, including impacts on:
 - Route 8 and north-south bus routes (ie: RapidRide E Line, C Line, Route 40, etc) in the area which cross Denny;
 - Pedestrian safety and comfort;
 - Bicycle travel and access;
 - Freight travel and access;
 - Major event and cultural access;
 - General-purpose traffic; and
 - Emergency response access.

The evaluation shall include clear metrics, transparent reporting, and recommendations for further improvements.

- E. SDOT is directed to expedite planning, design, and installation of these enhancements, recognizing the urgent need for reliable transit alternatives and construction schedule coordination during major projects, such as the Revive I-5 program, SDOT Transportation Levy projects, and Sound Transit 3 construction period and the City's role and responsibility to support viable alternatives to driving.
- F. The City affirms that this project represents the beginning of a broader, sustained effort to make transit in Seattle irresistibly good - fast, frequent, reliable, safe, and

welcoming - consistent with the City's adopted climate goals, transportation policies, and the repeated, clear priorities expressed by Seattle voters.

- G. SDOT shall return to the Mayor's Office a timeline, budget, and implementation plan for these improvements by April 17th, along with recommendations for additional corridors where transit-priority investments can deliver high-impact benefits for riders and the City as a whole.

Inquiries by City departments and offices regarding this Executive Order should be directed to Mark Ellerbrook.

Dated this 15th day of January, 2026.

Katie B. Wilson
Mayor, City of Seattle