

Comments on Proposed Service Changes for August 2013
Yvonne Schwinge, Sheboygan Ave.

My name is Yvonne Schwinge, and I appreciate having the opportunity to speak this evening. I have lived on Sheboygan Ave. for nine years, and I specifically selected to live in this area because of the large variety of buses that are available on Sheboygan Ave. and at the nearby west transfer point. I use Metro nearly daily, I am a member of the Madison Area Bus Advocates, and I do not drive. I work in four different locations during the week so it is important to me to have access to more than just one bus line. I am grateful Metro is working to address overcrowding on the number 2 bus and to improve the routes in this important transportation corridor.

I am concerned with the proposed service changes as the focus seems to be on improving service for passengers traveling to the University, the VA and UW Hospitals, and the downtown area during the work week but will cause more transfers, longer walks to bus stops, and probable increase in commute time for riders who are also commuting but to other locations.

Specifically I have two main concerns. One is the changes to the 14 and 15 in their proposed removal from Sheboygan Avenue and also the south loop east of the transfer point and the other is the lack of additional service for the 2 on Saturdays.

I am concerned with the proposed changes to the routes 14 and 15 as this eliminates the current direct access from Sheboygan Ave. to the east transfer point and to areas extending past the proposed 9 and 10 routes. The map included on the Metro website showing the possible alternative route for the 15 on Old Middleton Road is unclear. I am unable to determine if the bus will use Old Middleton only when traveling during peak times in a certain direction and remain on Sheboygan at different times or if it will travel only on Old Middleton. I believe alternating between the two streets on trips at different times of the day would be confusing for riders. I have experienced the overcrowding of the 15, especially in the afternoon, but I would like to see at least one stop per trip remain on Sheboygan Ave. in order to give riders who are traveling outside of the proposed 9 and 10 route loops a continued option for a 15 bus stop near their home.

I am also concerned with other changes to the 15. Currently I use the 15 in the morning to travel to two different work locations, one west of Sheboygan Ave. and outside of the proposed 9 and 10 routes and a different day to the east to the intersection of Buckeye and Vondron, also outside of the proposed 9 and 10 routes. This current trip takes around 45 minutes. I believe this commute time will increase significantly with the proposed changes, but it is difficult to determine as no timetables were provided for this route. The proposed staggering of busses for the 14 and 15 is also a concern because it may be helpful for commuters traveling in primary commute direction and for park and ride users, but it is not as helpful for commuters who need to transfer from other bus lines. As I have experienced with the current offset of the 3 route at the west transfer point, often

the transfer times do not correspond to other buses and this requires waiting an additional 15 minutes outside between connections.

Also, with the proposed changes I would need to take the south loop bus from the east transfer point, and once again I am concerned because the proposed changes indicate this loop will see a reduction in frequency as it will not interline with the 14 and 15, but yet the frequency would be maintained in the commute direction. For the riders commuting to locations opposite what is defined by Metro as the commute direction, this causes a significant problem.

I am also concerned by the lack of attention to the extreme overcrowding issue that often occurs on the 2 bus on Saturdays. Currently the 9 and 10 only operate on weekdays, and I did not understand from the proposed description if these routes would operate on weekends too. Overcrowding has become even more pronounced in the past couple of years with the revitalization of the Hilldale area and especially with the opening of Target. Combined with the seasonally heavy ridership during the farmer's market, UW sporting events, races, parades, events at the capitol, graduation, and so forth, the 2 is unreliable for boarding and is also frequently late in reaching the west transfer point.

I am disappointed that with the fare increase enacted partly to increase revenue to help alleviate overcrowding that there seems to be no proposal for service increase on Saturdays. I appreciate the need for Metro to stay within the budget, but I would like to ask for routes to be reexamined so as to provide continued service for commuters who rely on the bus to reach locations other than the University, hospitals, and downtown area. I feel it is important to consider balancing the needs of different types of riders who rely on the bus system as this will make Madison a stronger community.