

From: [McGuigan, Patrick](#)
To: [McGuigan, Patrick](#)
Subject: FW: University Ave reconstruction
Date: Wednesday, January 08, 2020 4:15:45 PM

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From: **Robbie Webber** <robbie@robbiewebber.org>
Date: Wed, Jan 8, 2020 at 4:00 PM
Subject: University Ave reconstruction
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Members of the Transportation Commission -

As a close neighbor and multimodal user of University Ave and its cross streets, I have been following the plans for this project closely. We have a once-in-a-lifetime chance to transform what is currently a barrier for the neighborhood -- and in fact three communities: Madison, Shorewood Hills, and the UW -- into a 21st century transportation corridor. I hope your recommendations will move us in that direction.

Many improvements to the plans have been made to make it easier to walk and bike both along and across this large roadway. Crosswalk enhancements, no-right-on-red at key intersections, wider sidewalks on the south side and a full sidewalk on the north side are all welcome.

But while staff have made plans to move transit stops to the far side of intersections and presumably lay the groundwork for signal preemption for BRT, I am concerned that we are still planning on running the future BRT in mixed traffic on this critical link of the system. I know from personal experience that the current buses are already full and bogged down in traffic during peak hour. It is hard to encourage more ridership when the buses are both stuck in the same traffic as everyone else and then must wait for traffic in front of them to clear just to reach the stop to unload and load.

This project needs to include transit-priority lanes, at least during peak hour. Make the right lane transit-only or bus, bike, and right turn only. This will give transit -- both current buses and future BRT -- a time advantage over those driving alone in mixed traffic.

Several people asked about this possibility at the last public meeting, in prior public comments, and all the way back to the first public meeting for the neighborhood. Each time, city staff said that this might be possible "in the future," but there were no plans to start off the BRT with exclusive or priority lanes on University Ave at launch.

One reason given was that reducing the SOV capacity of the road by converting one lane to transit-priority would, "Back up traffic all the way to Middleton and result in drivers cutting through the neighborhood." I am skeptical of these claims and would like to see models that take into account human behavior, not just vehicle throughput.

If traffic is really that backed up, and yet buses are zipping by the rest of traffic, is it not possible that some people would either shift to transit or change the time of their trip? And since there are no roads that offer a truly parallel alternative to University, I find it hard to believe that people would chose to wind through neighborhood streets instead of taking the most direct route, even if that route is slower than today.

There are already 58 buses that travel inbound on this portion of University during the peak hours of 7:00 - 9:00 am. Because of the number of buses -- most stopping every couple of blocks -- most drivers have already learned to avoid the right lane so they don't get stuck behind a bus. Yet enough people are driving in the right lane to keep many buses from efficiently reaching the transit stops.

Do the right thing and take the next step: make the right lane transit only or transit-priority during peak hour.

Thank you for your service on the commission and your careful consideration of this important project.

Robbie Webber

Transportation geek

All opinions are my own, and not necessarily those of any group or organization with which I am affiliated.

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