

TPC 06.10.15
ITEM B.2.

Benishek Clark, Anne

Subject: FW: Madison Metro - audible turn signals

[EMAILS]

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Dan O'Callaghan" <
Date: June 5, 2015 at 4:31:20 PM CDT
To: district5@cityofmadison.com
Subject: Madison Metro - audible turn signals

Dear Shiva,

I understand that the TPC will soon be discussing the audible turn signals Madison Metro has installed on its fleet. I'm writing to express my opinion. I am a transit advocate and frequent Metro rider. While it's hard to argue against an initiative designed to increase safety--especially one that was initiated in the wake of a tragic accident that resulted in the loss of life--I encourage the TPC to look closely at the question of whether the audible turn signals actually achieve a measurably safer environment.

I realize that many safety initiatives come at a cost and some may even be a minor annoyance. But when it can be shown that the safety initiative works, I believe most people will get on board with the program. I'm just not convinced that's the case with the audible turn signals. The one thing I do know for sure is that they have become a daily annoyance, albeit a relatively minor one.

The home I share with my wife and four children is on a bus route, near an intersection, which means we hear the alarm every 15 or 30 minutes (depending on time of day) from 5:50 a.m. to 10:25 p.m., Monday through Friday. Believe my when I say that safety is important to me. If the audible signals can be shown to improve safety, we'd learn to live with the added noise. If not, we'd prefer that Madison Metro focus on other safety technology and/or training and ditch the alarms.

Thanks for listening,
Dan

p.s. Pasted below is a note I sent to Chuck Kamp last fall about the audible signals, along with Chuck's very thoughtful reply. Madison is fortunate to have what many people recognize to be one of the best bus systems in the nation for a city our size and Chuck and his team deserve a lot of credit. Keep up the great work, Metro!

-----Original Message-----

From: Kamp, Charles [<mailto:CKamp@cityofmadison.com>]
Sent: Thursday, October 30, 2014 3:55 PM
To: O'Callaghan, Daniel A
Cc: Bidar-Sielaff, Shiva; Beth O'Callaghan
Subject: RE: Left turn alarms

Dan - thanks for your email on our audible turn signals and the joy of the Rt. 19 returning to its regular route (I use the #19 fairly regularly too). The audible turn signal is indeed activated when the bus is turning, to alert pedestrians and bicyclists especially. It is one of the things we learned that other transit systems have done in response to serious bus/pedestrian accidents, which we have had. We do get an occasional complaint on the chirping, but as a pedestrian using Madison streets and sidewalks regularly, I note that the audible signal gets my attention and appears to get others when it is turning through the streets of Madison. We have tested several versions of the audible signal, and I think this strikes the right balance between getting your attention, and yet not causing as many complaints as we initially received from louder ones.

The issue of pedestrian safety (or, "safely" sharing the streets) has become more acute, I believe, with people increasingly using electronic devices as they bike, walk, skateboard, and travel about. I think our streets are getting more crowded for good reasons - more bicyclists and pedestrians and good urban development. So on balance, I think the potential safety gain outweighs the inconvenience of the chirping, but it is helpful to hear all feedback on this, so I will add his complaint to our feedback system.

Let me know if you have any other questions.

Chuck Kamp
Metro Transit

-----Original Message-----

From: O'Callaghan, Daniel A
Sent: Monday, October 27, 2014 10:01 PM
To: Kamp, Charles
Cc: Bidar-Sielaff, Shiva; Beth O'Callaghan
Subject: Left turn alarms

Greetings Chuck,

I am writing with a question regarding the left turn alarm pilot that began a year or so ago (yes, I guess I'm a bit behind the times). As a long-time Metro customer and resident of Commonwealth Ave., which has been under construction for the past six months, I am happy to finally see Route 19 back on track, headed up and down my block like clockwork. However, my wife and I have noticed that many of the buses that now run this route are equipped with left turn alarms, which strikes us as a new development (we're at the corner of Commonwealth and Allen, so we hear them both coming and going). Has the left turn alarm moved past the trial stages? While we are certainly in full support of safety enhancements to the system, the alarm has left us wondering what the data shows -- do the alarms measurably improve safety? We're also wondering if quieter alternatives to the audible alarm have been tested -- options that might be equally as effective (or perhaps more so) but less intrusive. As you can probably gather from the context of these questions, we're not crazy about the alarms, though we remain open minded. After all, one of the reasons we chose to buy a house in the neighborhood eight years ago was proximity to multiple bus routes.

Thanks in advance for your reply.

Best regards,
Dan

Subject: FW: Madison Metro alert system

----- Forwarded message -----

From: David Waugh <waugh@mendotalakehouse.com>

Date: Fri, Jun 5, 2015 at 12:13 PM

Subject: Madison Metro alert system

To: GaryPoulson@gmail.com

Cc: klebba@mendotalakehouse.com

Dear Mr. Poulson,

I am writing to urge your committee to seriously consider changing the audio alert system that is increasingly being deployed on Metro Buses. I run a bed and breakfast at the corner of E. Gorham and N. Blount. The constant beeping and outdoor audio announcements are detracting from the experience of my guests. While I appreciate the concern for safety, I believe these outdoor speakers are an over reach and are diminishing the quality of life for downtown residents and patrons. Please consider a moratorium on all outdoor announcements until a better solution can be found.

Regards,

David Waugh

Mendota Lake House Bed and Breakfast

704 East Gorham Street

Madison, WI 53703

608-251-7713

Subject: FW: Bus "safety" beepers

From: Dee Grimsrud
Sent: Saturday, June 6, 2015 12:33 PM
To: Zellers, Ledell
Subject: Bus "safety" beepers

Hi Ledell,

I'm in AZ on vacation, so won't be able to attend the 6/10 meeting about the annoying bus alert beepers, so am giving you my feedback. Please pass it on to those studying and making decisions about this issue.

Although Dennis and I aren't bothered by the alarm noise at a nearby bus stop like so many residents are (since they eliminated the convenient stops closest to us at Johnson & Gorham), I find myself opting to drive instead of riding the bus because of the annoyance of the incessant beeping while a passenger. (I tend to get headaches from such repetitive noise.)

We tolerate similar beeping from vehicles at nearby construction sites because we know it will end in a few months and there will be a positive/useful result. But the noise generated by this unjustified bus "safety" measure is entirely unacceptable, both because of the annoyance factor and the potential negative health effects.

I also worry about the stress/annoyance effect of the beepers on the bus drivers, which I haven't seen addressed on neighborhood listservs or in public media. Someone should take a survey of the drivers to get their feedback.

I searched the Internet for scholarly studies on the effects of such low-sound-level repetitive annoying noise, and found several fairly recent ones that relate to the effects of vehicle backup alarms (probably the equivalent of the new bus alarms). Here are links to a few:

- [Vehicle Motion Alarms: Necessity, Noise Pollution, or Both?](#)
- [The challenge of localizing vehicle backup alarms](#)

I also wonder whether Metro even considered other less annoying, but still effective alternatives to the standard beeping alarms:

- [Alarms Without Noise: Today's technology can alert people on work sites to backing machinery without waking up the whole neighborhood](#)
- [Comparison of sound propagation and perception of three types of backup alarms with regards to worker safety](#)

OSHA has weighed in on such alternatives:

https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=INTERPRETATIONS&p_id=24943

The fact that Metro has no data to back up their decision to implement these alerts, and has already addressed the safety issues that lead to the 2011 death (by driver training and mirror repositioning), AND is spending so much money to implement the alerts (which are passed on to riders), indicates that they are doing it mainly to "cover their butts" against potential lawsuits by inattentive pedestrians, skateboarders and bicyclists...which I feel should *not* be their responsibility (either morally or legally).

Thanks for going to bat for all of us yet again,

Dee Grimsrud
309 N Brearly St
259-1958

Subject: FW: Audible bus turn signal

From: christine knorr

Sent: Monday, June 08, 2015 9:23 AM

To: Benishek Clark, Anne; Kamp, Charles

Subject: Audible bus turn signal

I want to add my concerns to the comments about the audible bus signals. It seems that a less disruptive system could be ut in place. I agree that I would like to see some study showing that these loud beeps actually significantly increase safety. I, personally, would prefer a system that is less disruptive to our residential neighborhoods.

Christine Knorr

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Benishek Clark, Anne

Subject: FW: Metro Audible Turn Signals

-----Original Message-----

From: Zellers, Ledell
Sent: Monday, June 08, 2015 1:40 PM
To: Paul Creswell
Cc: Emily Reynolds; Benishek Clark, Anne; Kamp, Charles
Subject: Re: Metro Audible Turn Signals

Thank you Paul. By copy of this email I'm asking that it be added to the Legistar file and provided to members of the Transit and Parking Commission.

I appreciate you taking the time to contact me.
Best,
Ledell

Alder Ledell Zellers
608 417 9521

On Jun 8, 2015, at 1:10 PM, Paul Creswell wrote:

Hi Ledell,

Emily and I are unfortunately otherwise committed or we would be there in person for the Metro turn signal discussion on Wednesday. I have a couple of thoughts which you can share with others as you see fit.

Our apartment windows face Johnson and we've definitely been frustrated by the new signals. The street noise on Johnson is typically a low hum with a couple of peaks (e.g., motorcycles or diesel-engines) and valleys, but this turn signal noise is much more distracting and more akin to a random alarm. It's particularly problematic at night when we are trying to sleep.

One of the points that has come up in the recent discussions has been the idea that there are more 'close calls' recently between buses and riders. I feel this argument holds little water. The reality is that as Madison expands there will certainly be more and more 'close calls' between all forms of traffic (foot, bike, auto etc...). There are hundreds or thousands of 'close calls' in any city in the world on any given day. That isn't a good reason to dramatically reduce the quality of life for everyone. Perhaps outreach activities for at-risk riders would be a better approach.

I believe the other thoughts that people will bring up will echo mine. Thanks for your thoughtful approach to this issue. We really appreciate your work on this and all the concerns in Tenney.

Best,

Paul Creswell

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Benishek Clark, Anne

Subject: FW: Bus Audible Alerts

From: Eskrich, Sara
Sent: Tuesday, June 09, 2015 11:40 AM
Cc: Kamp, Charles; Benishek Clark, Anne
Subject: Re: Bus Audible Alerts

All:
Here's a resident comment for your meeting on Wednesday evening. Please share with the commission.

Bus Audible Alerts
REPLY REPLY ALL FORWARD
Mark as unread



Bodilly, Joel <joel.bodilly>

Mon 6/8/2015 3:05 PM
Inbox

To:
Eskrich, Sara;

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As someone who lives near a bus stop on Monroe street I find the audible bus alerts annoying. Especially in spring and summer when I like to have my windows open. I feel they do more harm than good by being installed on the Madison Metro busses. If they could be turned off or volume greatly reduced that would be great.

Thanks!

Joel Bodilly
Homeowner of 2022 Monroe st

Best,
Sara

Sara Eskrich
DISTRICT 13 ALDER
CITY OF MADISON
(608) 669-6979
district13@cityofmadison.com

Subscribe to District 13 updates at www.cityofmadison.com/council/district13/

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Benishek Clark, Anne

Subject: FW: Bus Noise

From: Nalynn
Sent: Monday, June 8, 2015 10:43 PM
To: Ahrens, David
Subject: Bus Noise

Good Evening, Dave.

I've been hearing high-pitched whistling noises for several weeks now, and it wasn't until I saw an article in the Capital Times, that I realized it was the buses making all that racket. According to the article, Madison Metro says they turned down the volume of the cursed signal, but it's incredibly loud. I live near the intersection of Turner Ave and Buckeye Rd. So, I hear those signals as the bus turns onto Turner and Buckeye.

Please add my objection to these devices to the list of City residents who are complaining about this "strategy". I can't believe it will achieve the objective that Metro is hoping for.

Sincerely,

Nancy L. Bryan
4705 Spaanem Ave.
Madison, WI 53716

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Benishek Clark, Anne

Subject: FW: bus beeping

From: peter wolff
Sent: Wednesday, June 10, 2015 5:27 AM
To: GaryPoulson@gmail.com
Cc: Kamp, Charles
Subject: bus beeping

i oppose this beeping. it is obvious that many people are affected negatively by it. the case for its usefulness is weak. besides the one freak fatality, the issue of being hit by a bus mirror is absurd. while this danger, from my experience, is real, the sight of a looming bus seems to me to be a much more effective warning than a beep. i suspect that the only people who are in any real danger are in fact waiting to board the bus and are already very aware of its presence. can the mirrors be raised above the height of almost all humans?

peter wolff
945 jenifer street
53703

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Benishek Clark, Anne

Subject: FW: Bus Beepers

From: Scott Thornton __
Sent: Wednesday, June 10, 2015 7:02 AM
To: Gary Poulson; Kamp, Charles
Cc: Rummel, Marsha; Verveer, Michael; Zellers, Ledell
Subject: Bus Beepers

The beeping signals on the Madison Metro buses should be removed. This is not a new problem for some of us. Some of the buses started beeping in 2012. They are a nuisance and should be removed.

The first time I heard them I talked to a Metro driver who described them as "insane" and unnecessary.

The buses on Jenifer Street are beeping constantly. Buses are pulling to the curb and pulling out on every block. The bus stop in front of my home is a "timed stop". Quite often the drivers do not turn off the signal when they pull over meaning the beeping does not stop. This means for me a bus may be beeping as long as 10 minutes.

This is not a noise that residents living along Metro routes are going to "get used to". It is disruptive and unhealthy.

Madison Metro has often acted regardless of the impact on their neighbors. This is not necessary or productive and really a slap in the face of anyone living along a Metro route, especially for those of us unfortunate enough to live with a bus stop.

Please be a good neighbor and end this insane beeping.

Scott B. Thornton
1104 Jenifer Street

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Benishek Clark, Anne

Subject: FW: [Bikies] poll on Madison Metro turn signals

From: Kamp, Charles
Sent: Wednesday, June 10, 2015 8:49 AM
To: Benishek Clark, Anne
Cc: Rummel, Marsha; Zellers, Ledell
Subject: FW: [Bikies] poll on Madison Metro turn signals

Anne – please add to the list, thanks.

Chuck

From: STRAWSER, Charles [mailto:]
Sent: Wednesday, June 10, 2015 8:37 AM
To: GaryPoulson@gmail.com
Cc: marsha.rummel@gmail.com; Kamp, Charles; bikies@danenet.org; Rummel, Marsha; jackkear
Subject: RE: [Bikies] poll on Madison Metro turn signals

Mr. Poulson, Chair of Transit & Parking commission,

I commute by bike from the near east side through downtown to campus almost every day all year round, and have since 1997.

On the occasional days when I don't ride, I take the bus, and I'm very grateful that we have a transit system that is the equivalent of transit systems in some cities much larger than Madison.

But I find the beeping the buses make an annoyance. I've already started trying to tune it out, so I think at best the beeping is a distraction, and at worst it's entirely possible that it makes the street environment less safe for some users. Last week as I approached the intersection of Williamson/Winnebago and Riverside, I heard the #4 bus (bound for the North Transfer Point) beeping from several blocks further west on Williamson. It passed the stop at Winnebago and Riverside and continued down Eastwood Boulevard. The beeping never stopped. I thought at the time that the mechanism must have been stuck for it to beep continuously like that, but after reading many of the comments on the bikies list serv about the intended function of the audible beeping, it may not have been stuck at all. Perhaps the bus was changing lanes on Williamson and again on Winnebago. The audible turn signal is not only not achieving it's intended objective of increasing safety for many road users, but is probably decreasing safety for some, and it should no longer be used.

Thanks for your time, and for considering my opinion during the presentation of the Metro Audible Turn Signal/Alert System at this Wednesday's Transit & Parking Commission meeting.

Chuck Strawser
1801 Helena St
Madison WI 53704

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Benishek Clark, Anne

Subject: FW: Metro beeping system

From: Kamp, Charles
Sent: Wednesday, June 10, 2015 8:50 AM
To: Benishek Clark, Anne
Cc: Rummel, Marsha; Zellers, Ledell
Subject: FW: Metro beeping system

Anne – please add to the list, thanks.

Chuck

From: john coleman
Sent: Tuesday, June 09, 2015 10:39 PM
To: GaryPoulson@gmail.com
Cc: Kamp, Charles; marsha.rummel@gmail.com; bikies@danenet.org
Subject: Metro beeping system

Mr. Poulson, Chair Transit & Parking Commission,

As a daily bike commuter for 20 years through the center of town I am very aware of the city buses. I love our bus system. On the few occasions I can not ride my bicycle, the Madison bus system is my preferred alternative. However, I have been distressed by the audible beeping noise that many buses make these days. I find it distracting and stressful as I find my way through the downtown. The level of noise in general in the downtown is excessive and the addition of yet another disorienting beeping noise makes my daily bike commute more stressful and difficult to navigate.

If the audible system does anything, I think it makes the streets less safe by creating additional auditory confusion and sensory overload.

Thank you for considering my view during the presentation of the Metro Audible Turn Signal/Alert System at this Wednesday's Transit & Parking Commission meeting.

john coleman

--
john coleman
413 S. Dickinson St.
Madison, WI 53703
608-256-8164
jcolemal@wisc.edu

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Benishek Clark, Anne

Subject: FW: City Bus Alarms

From: Baron Investments
Sent: Wednesday, June 10, 2015 8:59 AM
To: All Alders
Subject: City Bus Alarms

General Information

Name: Thomas Christensen
Address: 1243 Jenifer
City: Madison
State: Wi
ZIP: 53703
Phone: 608-255-4242
Work Phone: 608-255-4242
Email: _____
Should we contact you?: No

Message:

The installation of the atrocious alarms on city busses is a serious assault on the health and well-being of all stakeholders. This includes drivers, passengers, and all people within a city block in every direction from the alarms. This is clearly a case of the hegemony of "safety" over every other meaningful measure. A mistake was made with this decision and it needs to be reversed immediately.

Both my wife and I are awakened regularly by the beeping. We hear these beeps from 5 separate stops within a block of our home. Add to that that often several busses are at a stop at the same time, and the daily cacophony is simply terrible. If you count all the people that are losing sleep, and otherwise disturbed by these beepers, that stress and disease that this causes is far beyond the gain in risk protection the bus provides to the unwary or forgetful, for whom the beepers must be in place to serve.

Standing next to a beeping bus it is impossible to speak with anyone. Should I want to warn my grandson to not step in front of the bus, he could not hear me. And with the fear the pervasive sound generates he cannot think clearly enuf to bring his best judgement to the fore. I would never take any one I know on a city bus where they have to be subjected many times to this health destroying technology.

The presence of the beeping is a terrible fate to levy upon the citizens of Madison. But there is also the pure logic of these protection devices that escapes any confirmation or respect for the reasoning behind the decision. Where there is a street, and sidewalks, and intersections, and bus signs, and vehicles in motion, any normal human, normal enuf to be traversing the sidewalks of our city, will be fully aware that a bus in the vicinity and stepping in front of it is not advisable. On what occasions can an additional loud noise, be expected to add just that little bit of more information, that the unwary or forgetful will now pay the attention needed to stay alive? Of course accidents happen. But it is unhealthy to the general population to try to prevent every possible accident from happening....life just can't be made that safe, and very few of us paying

the price, want to pay that much to protect against the almost impossible event the noise is meant to protect against. This is logic run amuck, and pure wrong in its conclusions.

If it did make sense to make the busses loud speakers for noxious noise, then why not every other vehicle on the streets? Why not water utility trucks, MG&E trucks, UPS trucks, cars, and of course motor cycles. Again the logic that led to this decision is terribly truncated and if trusted would have us living in a chaos of noxious sound. Consider this in contrast to Japanese cities where the standard is "silence", where the noises of a city are reduced as much as possible, in service to the better health and well-being of citizens. Would that Madison was this intelligent...but then maybe we are, and this noise assault will be terminated very soon.

Given how unjustified the installation of these devices is, and the negative effects it has on our citizenry, it begs us to ask, just why was this system put in place? The obvious answer is not very complimentary to the bus systems management, "It covers our butt." The rest of Madison should not have to pay this high a price to have a few professional people unreasonably protected from an almost impossible event. All jobs have risk and drivers are expected to have professional training and judgment to mitigate the risks of their situation, If our drivers are putting people at risk, let's address driver training head on, and not put the cost of the lack of skill of our drivers onto the bodies and minds of all the rest of our citizens.

Stop those terrible warning sounds! - Tom C. 1243 Jenifer - 53703

Recipient:
All Alders

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Benishek Clark, Anne

Subject: FW: Bus noises

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Marsha Rummel** <marsha.rummel@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Jun 10, 2015 at 9:16 AM
Subject: Re: Bus noises
To: Kent Miller _____, "Rummel, Marsha" <district6@cityofmadison.com>

Kent-

Thanks for contacting me. I hope you don't mind that I forward your comments to the Transit and Parking Commission for their meeting tonight.

Marsha

On Wed, Jun 10, 2015 at 9:04 AM, Kent Miller <kent.miller@cityofmadison.com> wrote:

Hi Marsha,
Having just read the article in the Capital Times about bus "chirping " I would like to add my voice to those who find the noise extremely irritating. We live on the 1300 block of Spaight St and three bus routes pass our house, with a bus stop on each end of the block, thus the noise is quite frequent. But it's not only that, it's whenever one is out gardening, walking, or bike riding that this disturbs the peace that one tries to get by doing these outdoor activities. It's like, arrrghhh! Just one more thing I don't need!
Thanks for all you do in our great neighborhood.
Kent and Carol Miller

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Benishek Clark, Anne

Subject: FW: noisy beeping of city buses

From: Poore, Carol
Sent: Thursday, May 14, 2015 9:51 AM
To: GaryPoulson@gmail.com; Zellers, Ledell
Subject: noisy beeping of city buses

To: Ledell Zellers, City Council
Gary Poulson, Chair, transit and parking commission

Dear Ledell and Gary,

I would like to ask if it would be possible to cut down or eliminate the noisy beeping of the Madison city buses that travel on Langdon Street, especially at night.

I live in the Kennedy Manor (1 Langdon St.), on the 5th floor facing Langdon St. Almost every night the beeping of the buses wakes me up in the middle of the night. It seems as though there are times when the buses stop and idle for a while in front of my building, and the beeping goes on and on while the buses are not moving, I think. I know that the warning beeping was initiated because of tragic accidents involving city buses, but I think it is much too loud if it is waking me up on the FIFTH floor (and I'm not a light sleeper). Also, I think there is no reason for the beeping to continue while the buses are not moving.

I would like to ask if the beeping could be discontinued at night in residential areas in the interest of noise control.

Thank you,
Carol Poore
1 Langdon St., apt. 504
Madison, WI 53703