

From: [Dayna Long](#)
To: [Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Please Don't Close State Street This Summer
Date: Wednesday, April 14, 2021 8:37:12 AM

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Hello,

I'm writing regarding Item #4 on the agenda for your meeting this evening. I am planning to speak at the meeting as well.

I am opposed to the Central Business Improvement District's Request that the city remove bus traffic from State Street over the weekends this summer.

For one thing, I think this plan will disrupt bike traffic on one of our city's most bike friendly streets. On more than one occasion during last summer's Streatery program, I tried to bike from the campus end of State Street to the Capitol and encountered barricades that made it impossible to continue without getting off my bike. Even if we abandon the barricades, increasing foot traffic in this area will also make it difficult to bike through, whereas State Street as it exists currently is, in my opinion, one of the most successful multi-modal thoroughfares in the city, where pedestrians, bikes, and buses all move comfortably.

Second and perhaps most concerning to me, the tenor of the public discussion of removing buses from State Street, best exemplified by but not exclusive to the Wisconsin State Journal's editorials on the subject, paints a negative picture of public transportation, one of our city's most important public resources. Their editorials pit buses against the public and public use of space, when in fact buses are one of the most efficient ways to utilize public space. Dave Cieslewicz, writing for The Isthmus, talked about how dirty and noisy buses are, when in fact they are constantly cutting against the air and noise pollution that would be created if every bus rider drove a car instead.

Agreeing to this temporary change to State Street is a concession to this perception of buses as a dirty infringement on public space that should be kept out of sight, when in fact buses and bus riders ARE the public, as well as employees and customers at State Street businesses. We should be encouraging more bus ridership by making it a convenient and pleasant experience, which means keeping bus stops close to the restaurants and businesses where bus riders work and spend money, on streets that feel comfortable due to less car traffic, more foot traffic, and more eyes on the street. The city should not give an inch on this point, especially as it prepares to make historic investments in improvements to public transportation.

Finally, I am concerned that conceding to this request on a temporary basis will lead to a permanent change that will inconvenience even more bus and bike riders than a temporary, weekend-only shift over the summer, including me personally. I have worked downtown since 2013 and am a daily bus rider or biker. In fact, both modes of transportation to and from work are so comfortable for me that I was able to give up owning a car a couple of years ago. I appreciate the service so much as it is. While I'm open to changes to routes and stops when they make transportation work better for other riders, this change stands to benefit a very small group of people while hurting public transportation overall.

Thanks for taking my thoughts on this issue into consideration.

Dayna Long