

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Metro Rapid Route B - Locally Preferred Alternative Report

May 2024

Introduction

This public and stakeholder involvement summary provides an overview of the public and stakeholder engagement that was completed for the initial planning phase of the North-South Bus Rapid Transit (Rapid Route B) project, which provided input for the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). Engagement included in this document took place from approximately October 1, 2023 through April 30, 2024

Public Participation Goals

The public participation goals for the Madison North-South Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is to involve a broad spectrum of residents in learning about, and providing input on, station locations, routing, location of bus-only lanes, and related roadway, biking and walking improvements.

The purpose is to build broad community awareness and buy-in through an equitable, transparent and iterative approach that reduces barriers to participation and incorporates a range of community needs, concerns and priorities into the final plan.

The engagement process included a mix of online and in-person meetings to provide residents and stakeholders with various opportunities for engagement. The online and public meetings were part of a broad public participation strategy, while individual and small group stakeholder meetings were part of a focused public participation strategy.

Public Involvement Timeline

Two phases of public involvement were included in this effort:

Round 1 (Fall 2023)

- Public Meeting #1: Project Kickoff
 - Nov. 1: South Madison
 - Nov. 2: Northside
 - Nov. 8: Virtual
 - Nov. 9: Fitchburg
- Stakeholder meetings
- Meetings with elected officials and relevant City of Madison Boards, Committees and Commissions

Round 2 (Spring 2024)

- Public Meeting #2: Review Updates and Provide Feedback (10%)
 - April 22: Virtual
 - April 23: South Madison
 - April 25: Northside
 - April 29: Fitchburg
- Stakeholder meetings
- Meetings with elected officials and relevant City of Madison Boards, Committees and Commissions

Other Efforts

In addition to public and stakeholder meetings, staff used other outreach and engagement tools have been used to share information and gather feedback to support development of the preliminary route and station options.

- Focus groups co-hosted by the Madison MPO to reach specific community groups
 - Access to Independence: December 6, 2024
 - Vera Court: December 9, 2024
 - Wisconsin Hmong Association: March 30, 2024
- Open-house style information sessions at Madison Public Libraries
 - Various dates, February through April 2024
- Bus rider surveys
 - March 1-8, 2024

Public engagement opportunities and project information are widely promoted through the following channels:

- Project website (www.madisonbrt.com)
- Informational flyers (digital and print)
- Metro bus on-board promotion (interior and exterior)
- City of Madison and Metro Transit social media
- Press releases
- Email blasts
- Individual outreach to local organizations

Summary of Round 1 Engagement and Feedback

Public Meetings

The first round of public meetings served as project kickoff meetings, with staff sharing background and goals of the project with a particular emphasis on the location where the meeting was held. The in-person meetings included a presentation with open-house style portions at the beginning and end of the meetings with small group discussions around various exhibits. The virtual meeting included a presentation and question and answer session. Participants were encouraged to share feedback using printed or digital comment forms, either at the meetings or at another time, and had the opportunity to post sticky notes to exhibits.

Attendees were asked to provide feedback about the proposed route, station locations, needs for pedestrian and bicycle improvements near stations, and any other comments they had about the project.

In-person meetings were covered by local media outlets and the virtual meeting and Fitchburg meetings were both recorded and available for viewing later.

South Madison Public Meeting

Meeting Logistics:

Date: November 1, 2023

Time: 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Location: Urban League (2222 S. Park Street, Madison)

Approximate Attendance: 20

Language Interpretation Available: Spanish, Hmong, Mandarin

Feedback:

Themes from feedback received at the South Madison meeting are listed below:

- **Safety:** attendees recommended reducing speed limits, agree with having protective barriers at stations, asked for stations to be on the outer lanes so that riders don't have to cross to the median and asked for the Erin Street crosswalk light be timed for pedestrians.
- **Parking:** attendees were concerned about losing street parking and wanted to know if new parking spots and/or park-and-ride lots would be added.
- **Airport:** attendees wanted the North-South route to connect to the airport.
- **Bikes:** attendees requested more information on bikes lanes and shared-use paths on Park Street and asked for secure bike parking at stations.

Northside Public Meeting

Meeting Logistics:

Date: November 2, 2023

Time: 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Location: Warner Park Community Center (1621 Northport Drive, Madison)

Approximate Attendance: 30

Language Interpretation Available: Spanish, Hmong, Mandarin

Feedback:

Themes from feedback received at the Northside meeting are listed below:

- **Routing:** attendees wanted the North-South route to connect to the airport, asked for the route to take Sherman Avenue along with a station at Sherman/Dryden, wanted to know if BRT would connect to the new Amtrak station and mentioned that the E. Washington Avenue route from the Capitol to Milwaukee Street is over-covered.
- **Pedestrians:** attendees wanted improved pedestrian crossings along the route, suggested traffic calming measures to protect bikes and pedestrians, expressed concerns about crossing to the median for the BRT stations and requested improvements to pedestrian infrastructure near Kennedy Heights.

- **Stations:** attendees were concerned about losing stops and thus emphasized the importance of placing the stations, wanted shelter from the elements and inquired about electric charging areas.
- **Scheduling:** attendees said the route from the north side to East Towne takes too long, mentioned that the old transfer points provided more reliable scheduling and mentioned that wait times at Northport/Sherman can be long.

Virtual Public Meeting

Meeting Logistics:

Date: November 8, 2023

Time: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Location: Virtual - Zoom

Approximate Attendance: 110

Language Interpretation Available: Spanish

Feedback:

Themes from feedback received at the South Madison meeting are listed below:

- **Scheduling:** Attendees were interested in the total time for end-to-end service, asked about BRT schedules after 8 p.m., asked if on-time performance will be improved and commented that railroad crossings can effect on-time performance.
- **Safety:** Attendees brought up the importance of crossing safety at Park Street/Erin Street and Park Street/Badger Road, asked if driveways will be reduced to improve safety on shared-used paths and wondered how passengers get from the bus to the curbs.
- **Running way:** Attendees expressed concern about cars using the bus-only lanes, requested an explanation for the mix of center and side running lanes and asked how left turns will be made with center running lanes.
- **Termini:** Attendees supported a stop at the airport, asked if the Mendota Mental Health Institute could be a stop and were interested to see how far south the BRT route can be extended once the project is complete.
- **Bikes:** Attendees would like to see improved bike safety along Park Street, requested a bike lane added on the north side, expressed concern for bike storage on the buses and asked about connections to existing and future bike paths.

Fitchburg Public Meeting

Meeting Logistics:

Date: November 9, 2023

Time: 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Location: MainStay Suites (5421 Caddis Bend, Fitchburg)

Approximate Attendance: 20

Language Interpretation Available: Spanish

Feedback:

Themes from feedback received at the Fitchburg meeting are listed below:

- **Parking:** Attendees were concerned about losing parking along Park Street for their customers and staff as well as for deliveries.
- **Termini:** Attendees supported a stop at the airport and requested that BRT reach Fitchburg City Hall.

- **Bikes:** Attendees wanted to see improved bike/pedestrian paths on Park Street and where they would be located and mentioned that bicycle riding on sidewalks is illegal in Fitchburg.

Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholder meetings were critical to ensuring broad and diverse outreach and participation in the public engagement process. By interacting with the project stakeholders at existing meetings, events and community locations, the project team was able to reach audiences who may otherwise not have participated at broad public engagement meetings.

City staff organized meetings with a range of elected officials, community organizations and interest groups, and responded to requests submitted through the project website, which offered informational presentations to any interested group or organization. These stakeholder meetings were facilitated throughout the project to inform and gather feedback from as many community members as possible. Meetings held included:

1. Sept. 20: Ald. Charles Myadze
2. Sept. 26: Ald. Marsha Rummel
3. Oct. 4: Ald. Tag Evers
4. Oct. 10: Ald. MGR Govindarajan
5. Oct. 12: City of Fitchburg - Transportation and Transit Commission
6. Oct. 13: Ald. Amani Latimer Burriss
7. Oct. 18: OutReach LGBTQ+ Community Center
8. Oct. 25: Madison Downtown Rotary Club
9. Oct. 25: City of Madison - Transportation Commission
10. Oct. 31: Urban League of Greater Madison
11. Nov. 7: Nehemiah Center for Urban Leadership and Development
12. Nov. 8: Fitchburg Mayor Julia Arata-Fratta
13. Nov. 10: Downtown Madison Inc.
14. Nov. 17: Madison Area Bus Advocates
15. Nov. 27: Madison Bikes

Staff Responses to Feedback

Staff evaluated options to address key themes from public feedback. In some cases, changes to the proposed project were made, and in other cases, no changes were made but feedback was acknowledged. Below is a summary of how key themes prompted changes or not. More details are provided in the main report document.

Specific Station Locations

A variety of public comments requested adding or rearranging station locations on the corridor. As a result, stations were rearranged on Northport Drive and on S. Park Street resulting in two additional stations.

Station Spacing

Staff received feedback requesting narrower station spacing to allow for shorter walking distances to/from stations. Staff reviewed these comments, although continues to recommend stations that are

located approximately one-half mile apart as this is an industry standard for bus rapid transit systems. Two additional stations have been added to address mobility concerns.

Pedestrian Safety

Several comments included concerns about pedestrian safety along the route and near specific station locations. Staff is working to incorporate improved safety measures throughout the project and will do so as part of the design process—in consultation with the Vision Zero team and following guidance from the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), of which the City of Madison is an active member.

Routing on Sherman Avenue and to the Airport

A number of comments suggested staff consider routing Rapid Route B on Sherman Avenue and/or to the airport. Staff evaluated options and continues to recommend routing on Packers Avenue and Northport Drive for the higher speed and higher ridership potential.

Parking and Bike Lanes

Staff met individually with businesses and bike advocates to discuss concerns and proposed compromises that address some concerns while maintaining bus operations in those segments.

South Terminal

Although discussions are on-going, due to operational inefficiency, cost, and lack of transit-oriented density south of McKee, staff does not currently recommend extending the southern terminal.

Summary of Round 2 Engagement and Feedback

Public Meetings

The second round of public meetings focused on presenting the draft LPA and describing how staff has responded to themes from public and stakeholder feedback. The meetings provided an opportunity for the public to ask questions and provide comments on the draft LPA before it was presented to local commissions and elected officials for approval.

In-person meetings were covered by local media outlets and the virtual meeting and Fitchburg meetings were both recorded and available for viewing later. Below is a summary from each meeting.

Virtual Public Meeting

Meeting Logistics:

Date: April 22, 2024

Time: 5:30 - 7:00 pm

Location: Virtual - Zoom

Approximate Attendance: 105

Language Interpretation Available: Spanish

Feedback:

Themes from feedback received at the virtual meeting are listed below:

- **Bikes:** Attendees would like to see enhanced bike facilities added along more of the route (Northport Drive, Packers Avenue, S. Park Street, Fish Hatchery Road) and other parts of the route (both on-street and off-street options were requested), and several had concerns about the proposed removal on-street bike facilities along S. Park Street and Fish Hatchery Road.

Many were concerned the proposed multi-use path on S. Park Street and the existing multi-use path on Fish Hatchery Road is only located on one side of the street.

- **Electric Buses:** Several attendees asked questions and voiced concerns about the use of electric buses on the BRT system, specifically concerned about reliability in cold weather, battery performance, cost, and general operational challenges that other transit systems have dealt with.
- **Vehicle Conflicts:** Several comments and questions were provided related to conflicts with other vehicles, including how vehicles in turn lanes would interact with buses, concerns that lane widths are too narrow, concerns about buses transitioning from dedicated lanes to mixed-use lanes, and concerns about driver incursion on the dedicated bus lanes.
- **Dedicated Bus Lanes:** Several attendees voiced support for the proposed dedicated bus lanes and supported maximizing dedicated lanes wherever possible.
- **Airport:** Although attendees tended to agree with the proposed northside routing, which does not include a connection to the airport, comments supported expanded transit options to the Airport through other means, such as a shuttle or increased frequency on the existing D2 route.
- **Signals:** Several questions about traffic signals at stations were asked, comments requesting more pedestrian prioritization at signals were received.

South Madison Public Meeting

Meeting Logistics:

Date: April 22, 2024

Time: 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Location: Urban League (2222 S. Park Street, Madison)

Approximate Attendance: 25

Language Interpretation Available: Spanish

Feedback:

Themes from feedback received at the South Madison public meeting are listed below:

- **Bikes:** Attendees are concerned that the substandard bike facility on S. Park Street would be largely removed with the draft LPA stating that parallel routes are inferior. Some attendees also voiced concern that the proposed multi-use path that would run along the west side of S. Park Street south of Fish Hatchery Road due to the number of driveways that intersect that path, as well as the lack of a path/access to the east side of that portion of S. Park Street. Additional comments related to adding bike parking and bike access to businesses along S. Park Street were also shared.
- **On-Street Parking on S. Park Street:** Attendees asked questions and voiced concerns about the staff recommendation to retain on-street parking for three southbound blocks on S. Park Street to serve small businesses in the area. Some worried that forgoing a dedicated bus lane in this area would impact transit operations and were concerned about the transition from a dedicated bus lane to a mixed-use lane would cause confusion for drivers; others argued that a bike facility should be maintained over a parking facility on this part of the corridor.
- **Dedicated Bus Lanes:** Several attendees voiced support for the proposed dedicated bus lanes and supported maximizing dedicated lanes wherever possible.
- **Left Turns:** There were several questions and comments regarding plans for eliminating left turns at various points on the southern route segment. Specifically, the plan to eliminate a southbound left onto Cedar Street was not popular.
- **Routing on Hughes Place:** Many attendees expressed concerns about the recommended routing onto Hughes Place and Cypress Way near the S. Park Street and W. Badger Road intersection. Some attendees cited concerns about travel time, while others mentioned

concerns about additional bus traffic on a local street near a quieter, residential area and Splash Park.

Northside Public Meeting

Meeting Logistics:

Date: April 25, 2024

Time: 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Location: Warner Park Community Center (1621 Northport Drive, Madison)

Approximate Attendance: 12

Language Interpretation Available: Spanish

Feedback:

Themes from feedback received at the Northside public meeting are listed below:

- **Stations:** Attendees asked many questions about the proposed stations, how they would look, how people would safely access them, etc.
- **Aberg Ave Station:** Attendees requested improvements to pedestrian access to and from Aberg Avenue stations, specifically connecting to the existing grocery store east of the area where the stations will be located.
- **Project Timing:** Several questions about why Rapid Route B planning is happening only after the Rapid Route A is under construction and about to open (i.e., why was the Northside and South Madison not prioritized first?)
- **Traffic and Pedestrian Safety:** Several expressed concerns about existing traffic and pedestrian safety along the northern segment of the route in various locations, including near Dryden Drive, Schlimgen Avenue, and Aberg Avenue

Fitchburg Public Meeting

Meeting Logistics:

Date: April 29, 2024

Time: 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Location: MainStay Suites (5421 Caddis Bend, Fitchburg)

Approximate Attendance: 10

Language Interpretation Available: Spanish

Feedback:

Themes from feedback received at the Fitchburg meeting are listed below:

- **Bikes:** Attendees were concerned that a center-running bus lane on Fish Hatchery Road would result in the removal of the existing outside-running shared bus-bike lane. Although there is an existing shared-use path along this segment on the west side of the street, attendees were concerned that it does not serve destinations on the east side and that the number of driveways along the path make it less safe than riding on the shared bus-bike path. Some attendees also echoed comments about bike facilities along S. Park Street that were provided at the South Madison public meeting.
- **Terminal at McKee Road:** Attendees asked questions about the recommended terminal at McKee Road, if there were other locations that would be more convenient for pedestrians, and the recommendation not to extend the route further south at this time (in lieu of exploring improved local service in Fitchburg). Attendees were generally supportive of the recommendation.

- **Routing on Hughes Place:** Like at the South Madison meeting, many attendees expressed concerns about the recommended routing onto Hughes Place and Cypress Way near the S. Park Street and W. Badger Road intersection, largely due to concerns about travel time and transit efficiency.

Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholder meetings to discuss components of the draft locally preferred alternative continued from January through June 2024, totaling more than 50 stakeholder meetings for this phase of the project.

1. Jan. (several dates): Park Street Business Owners
2. Jan. 29: South Madison Planning Council
3. Jan. 30: Northside Planning Council and FEED Kitchens
4. Feb. 2: MadREP
5. Feb. 5: Catholic Multicultural Center
6. Feb. 8: Northside Resource Fair
7. Feb. 12: Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce
8. Feb. 16: Madison College
9. Feb. 20: Disability Pride Madison
10. Feb. 20: UniverCity Alliance
11. March 1: Access to Independence
12. March 5: Darbo/Worthington Neighborhood Resource Team
13. March 11: The Arc-Dane County
14. March 12: South Madison Neighborhood Resource Team
15. March 15: SSM Healthcare
16. March 18: Park Street Business Meeting
17. March 21: UnityPoint Health - Meriter
18. March 27: City of Madison Transportation Commission
19. March 30: Wisconsin Hmong Association
20. April 2: Wisconsin Latino Chamber of Commerce
21. April 4: Alder Tag Evers
22. April 5: Access to Community Health Center
23. April 8: UW South Madison Partnership
24. April 10: Dane County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
25. April 11: City of Fitchburg - Transportation and Transit Commission
26. April 16: Alder Isadore Knox, Jr.
27. April 16: UW Madison - Transportation Services
28. April 17: Fitchburg Center and Promega
29. April 18: UW Health
30. April 25: City of Madison Disability Rights Commission
31. May 6: City of Fitchburg - Board of Public Works
32. May 6: City of Madison - Planning Commission
33. May 13: City of Fitchburg - Transportation and Transit Commission
34. May 14: City of Fitchburg - Common Council
35. May 15: City of Madison - Transportation Commission
36. May 22: Dryden Terrace Apartments
37. June 4: City of Madison - Common Council

Staff Responses to Feedback

Staff evaluated options to address key themes from public feedback, below is a summary of responses. More details are provided in the main report document.

Bike Accommodations Along the Route

A major theme of feedback from this round of public involvement surrounded concerns about the plans for bike accommodations along the route. As a response to this feedback, staff will share more information about the following planned and funded projects in addition to recommending additional improvements described below. More details, including a map, have been incorporated into a memo attached to the main LPA report. Recommended improvements could be incorporated into the Rapid Route B project, or be completed under a separate but coordinated project.

- **Northern Route Segment (Northport Drive and Packers Avenue)**
 - Planned Project
 - City is applying for funding to support a planning effort that will identify a route and implementation plan for a high quality bike route on the Northside.
- **S. Park Street - North of Fish Hatchery Road**
 - Planned Projects
 - Traffic calming with new bike lanes on S. Mills Street from the UW Arboretum to Erin Street (funded)
 - Rapid Flashing Beacon at S. Park Street and Delaplaine Court (funded)
 - New Recommendations
 - Improve the transition from on-street bike facilities to W. Shore at the intersection of S. Park Street / W. Washington / Vilas Avenue; more feedback will be necessary and level of improvements will be subject to project budget availability
 - Explore options for extending planned bicycle route on Mills
 - Improvements to Parr Street to improve the bicycle connection between S. Park Street and W. Shore Drive
 - Explore options to improve the bike connection from S. Park Street to S. Brooks Street; details to be determined after additional public engagement
- **S. Park Street - South of Fish Hatchery Road**
 - Planned Projects
 - Shared-use path to be added on the west side of S. Park Street from W. Badger Road to Fish Hatchery Road
 - Traffic calming project on Fisher Street to from Buick Street to W. Wingra Drive (funded)
 - Improvements to Beld Street from S. Park Street to Cedar Street
 - Intersection improvements at S. Park Street and W. Wingra Drive (funded)
 - Extending the Cannonball Path to Duane F. Bowman Park from Fish Hatchery Road (funded; awaiting final railroad-related approvals)
 - Extension of bike boulevard on Hickory Street (funded)

Retaining On-street Parking in Key Locations along S. Park Street

Despite several concerns addressed about the recommendation to retain on-street parking in select locations along S. Park Street, staff did not make changes to the recommendation. Extensive outreach and analysis provided input to this decision. Additional information has been made available through a memo attached to the main report to provide more details relating to this decision. As a result of this recommendation, buses will travel in mixed traffic for a three-block southbound segment between

Vilas Ave and Erin Street on S. Park Street. Additional information is included in the report about how signals and lane delineation will minimize impacts to bus operations and traffic along this segment.

Routing on Hughes Place

Despite concerns related to the routing on Hughes Place, staff did not make changes to the recommendation. Travel delays are expected to be nominal, since routing through the S. Park Street and W. Badger Road intersection will also result in delays, and the station location on Hughes Place is a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Additional outreach with the neighborhood will be conducted when a more detailed draft design is developed.