

Benishek Clark, Anne

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**Subject:** FW: [JamesMadisonParkNeighborhood] CNI Statement on Metro Audible Turn Signals [1 Attachment]

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**From:** Zellers, Ledell  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 07, 2015 3:32 PM  
**To:** Kamp, Charles; Benishek Clark, Anne  
**Cc:** Bidar-Sielaff, Shiva  
**Subject:** Fw: [JamesMadisonParkNeighborhood] CNI Statement on Metro Audible Turn Signals [1 Attachment]

Please include this on Legistar and provide a copy to members of the Commission.

thank you.  
Ledell

Alder Ledell Zellers  
608 417 9521

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**From:** [JamesMadisonParkNeighborhood@yahoogroups.com](mailto:JamesMadisonParkNeighborhood@yahoogroups.com) <[JamesMadisonParkNeighborhood@yahoogroups.com](mailto:JamesMadisonParkNeighborhood@yahoogroups.com)> on behalf of Jeff Vercauteren [[JamesMadisonParkNeighborhood-noreply@yahoogroups.com](mailto:JamesMadisonParkNeighborhood-noreply@yahoogroups.com)]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 5, 2015 7:57 AM  
**To:** [cni\\_ec@yahoogroups.com](mailto:cni_ec@yahoogroups.com); Capitol Neighborhoods; [BassettNeighborhood@yahoogroups.com](mailto:BassettNeighborhood@yahoogroups.com); [FirstSettlementNeighborhood@yahoogroups.com](mailto:FirstSettlementNeighborhood@yahoogroups.com); [MansionHillNeighborhood@yahoogroups.com](mailto:MansionHillNeighborhood@yahoogroups.com); [MifflinWestNeighborhood@yahoogroups.com](mailto:MifflinWestNeighborhood@yahoogroups.com); [jamesmadisonparkneighborhood@yahoogroups.com](mailto:jamesmadisonparkneighborhood@yahoogroups.com); [MarqNA@yahoogroups.com](mailto:MarqNA@yahoogroups.com); [tlna@yahoogroups.com](mailto:tlna@yahoogroups.com)  
**Subject:** [JamesMadisonParkNeighborhood] CNI Statement on Metro Audible Turn Signals [1 Attachment]

[Attachment(s) from Jeff Vercauteren included below]

Please find attached a statement from Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc. on Madison Metro's audible turn signals. The Transit & Parking Commission will discuss this issue next Wednesday, June 10, 5:00 p.m., Madison Municipal Building, Room 260.

For additional background on this issue, please see today's CapTimes article: [http://host.madison.com/ct/news/local/writers/steven\\_elbow/residents-fuming-over-metro-bus-alerts/article\\_d3a63e4c-89e5-5cbf-a15f-b108dfcbf9a0.html](http://host.madison.com/ct/news/local/writers/steven_elbow/residents-fuming-over-metro-bus-alerts/article_d3a63e4c-89e5-5cbf-a15f-b108dfcbf9a0.html)

Jeff Vercauteren  
Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc.  
608.445.9384 (mobile)

Attachment(s) from Jeff Vercauteren | View attachments on the web

1 of 1 File(s)



CNI Statement on Madison Metro 06-03-2015.pdf

Posted by: Jeff Vercauteren <

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## STATEMENT ON MADISON METRO AUDIBLE TURN SIGNALS

*June 3, 2015*

Capitol Neighborhoods represents and advocates for those who live, work, and recreate downtown, including working to maintain and improve the quality of life for downtown residents. Several of our residents and neighbors have expressed concerns with the new audible turn signals installed on Madison Metro buses. These audible turn signals have at times caused disruption to the quality of life downtown, particularly in residential neighborhoods and during late evening and early morning hours.

Accordingly, Capitol Neighborhoods encourages the Transit and Parking Commission and other city leaders to explore alternatives to the use of audible turn signals. The Commission should consider modifying the existing system or moving to a different system.

## Residents fuming over Madison Metro bus alerts



JUNE 05, 2015 9:00 AM • BY STEVEN ELBOW | THE CAPITAL TIMES

Brooke Seeliger loves her apartment. So much so that she's considering shelling out \$1,500 for a custom-made soundproof insert to block out the constant "chirp, chirp, chirp" of the buses that stop right outside her Langdon Street home.

"It sucks. And I'll tell you how bad it is," she said, running down the list of ways the audible turn alerts Madison Metro has

installed on buses has disrupted her life.

Seeliger's Kennedy Manor apartment faces a Langdon Street bus stop for the No. 81 campus bus, which passes by every half-hour until 2:30 a.m. on weekdays, and 3:30 a.m. on weekends. And even if she closes her window, the incessant chirping shatters her peace of mind.

"I can have the windows closed and the TV cranked up, and I can still hear it," she said.

The \$50,000 system was installed incrementally, starting with one bus in 2012. Currently 200 of Metro's 214 buses are equipped with the rooftop speakers that emit a chirping sound whenever a bus' turn signal is activated. The entire fleet should be outfitted with the devices by September, Metro officials said.

Seeliger said the piercing chirps even stalk her when she leaves her home. Enjoying a respite at Tenney Park on a recent morning, she said, the peacefulness was obliterated by buses stopping on nearby Sherman Avenue. And bus-heavy State Street, a frequent destination for a leisurely stroll, has become a misery of chirps.

"It interferes with your ability to be in the public," she said.

And she's not the only one. Her neighbor at Kennedy Manor, Allison Smith, started noticing the noise in January. She found it so annoying that she's organizing something akin to a movement against them, speaking at neighborhood meetings and urging people to attend a June 10 Madison Transit and Parking Commission meeting where the alerts will be addressed. The meeting will be in Room 210 of the City-County Building, 215 Martin Luther King Blvd.

"It's extremely disruptive," she said. "And I'm not the only person that is disrupted by the noise. Their sleep has been disrupted by the noise. It's more than just an annoyance. It's a health issue."

Smith recently penned a column with Madison Bus Advocates President Susan De Vos in which they argue that not only is the noise a nuisance, it likely violates Madison's ordinances on noise.

"An entire chapter of general city ordinances is devoted to 'offenses against peace and quiet,'" they write. "Specifically, Metro may be in violation of ordinance 24.04.3(a) which states such noise making devices can only be used between noon-1:30 p.m. and 5:00-7:00 p.m."

Since Metro installed the first alert on a bus in 2012, the transit agency has received 68 complaints on its internet customer feedback system, though Metro spokesman Mick Rusch said the complaints have lessened considerably since Metro reduced the volume.

"After reviewing feedback, testing different pieces of equipment, experimenting with speaker locations, and a variety of volume levels, we settled on the version that is now out on the street," he said in an email.

But if the volume of complaints is decreasing at Metro, they seem to be ratcheting up on neighborhood listservs as spring gives way to summer and windows are flung open.

"Those bus beepers are driving us nuts!" said one resident on the Schenk-Atwood-Starkweather-Yahara Neighborhood listserv. "Wake us up at night. Blare thru the hood. Nobody who lives in dense hoods like on the Isthmus would have made this decision."

"I now avoid riding the bus because the beeping is so annoying," said another resident.

Neighborhood groups are starting to weigh in. Capital Neighborhoods Inc. has drafted a statement calling on Metro to find an alternative to the noisy devices.

Marquette Neighborhood Association President Lynn Lee expects his group to follow suit.

"The neighborhood is frustrated and definitely getting engaged in the issue," he said. "The majority of neighbors find it to be a nuisance and question how effective it is, or if it's effective at all."

Isthmus area Ald. Ledell Zellers said she and several other alders are fielding numerous complaints about the alerts. She said that part of the collective anger comes from the fact that the public wasn't told that the alerts were being rolled out.

"It was disappointing that this kind of thing wasn't better publicized and discussed," she said.

While the measure came as a surprise to some alders, west side Ald. Chris Schmidt, a member of the Parking and Transit Commission, said Metro officials discussed the implementation at a previous commission meeting.

"I don't feel that it was snuck in or anything," he said. "This is the kind of safety thing that you just go forward with, and if there's a problem we deal with it."

He said he's only had one constituent complain about the alerts.

Although Zellers said she appreciates Metro's efforts in finding a tolerable volume, the people she's been hearing from say it's still too loud.

"Whenever a bus is changing directions, positioning itself at a stop or coming to a stop, there are these beeps," she said. "And they're loud enough still, my understanding is from constituents, to wake people up, and that's not good for people's health."

The alerts are a response to the 2011 accident that killed a longtime UW-Madison Library employee who was hit in the crosswalk by a Metro bus as she crossed University Avenue. As part of a safety initiative, Metro also has repositioned its buses' rearview mirrors to eliminate blind spots.

Rusch said the alerts are also meant to address numerous "close calls" Metro drivers have experienced with pedestrians, bicyclists and skateboarders, which have been on the increase as use of distracting electronic devices proliferate.

"These chirps also alert people standing at stops that the bus is pulling in," he said. "We have had a number of incidents where people are not paying attention as a bus approaches a stop, step towards the bus, and have been hit by our mirrors."

But Zellers said the jury's out on whether the alerts further Metro's goal to enhance safety.

"My problem is I still haven't seen any data or gotten any solid information where this does any good," she said.

And Metro doesn't have any. Zellers passed along this April 6 email from Metro chief Chuck Kamp:

"We do not have data on this. We are asking some of the safety groups we deal with whether there is national data on this, and the last time we checked we couldn't find any. We will check again. Our decision to do this was based on observations that more people are paying attention to buses on turns and pulling into stops."

Near west side Ald. Shiva Bidar-Sielaff said she's been getting ongoing complaints.

"If your house is nearby, it's constant," she said. "It goes on until late in the evening."

And she wonders if the alerts are causing "alarm fatigue."

"If you hear the sound constantly, you start tuning it out," she said.

Zellers noted that studies suggest that when an issue arises that generates complaints, only one of 27 people who are affected by that issue go to the trouble of complaining. And given the complaints rolling in at Metro, there is likely a substantial number of Madisonians who detest the beeping.

"For every complaint Metro gets, there are a lot of people out there who are unhappy but don't bother to let Metro know," she said.

She said she's leaning toward calling for Metro to abandon the devices until there is some proof that they are serving a purpose.

"At this point I don't see data that supports them as really doing what they want them to do," she said. "But I certainly have information on the distress they've been causing."

## Steven Elbow



Steven Elbow joined The Capital Times in 1999 and has covered law enforcement in addition to city, county and state government. He has also worked for the Portage Daily Register and has written for the Isthmus weekly newspaper in Madison.



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