

Harnish, Sharon L

From: Margaret Bergamini <margaret.bergamini@wisc.edu>
Sent: Monday, June 6, 2022 4:11 PM
To: Harnish, Sharon L
Subject: FW: Please consider a "No" vote and vote to extend instead

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

My apologies Sharon, but I want to make sure this comment is seen by the entire board.
It was sent to me as an individual, but may also have already been sent to the entire group.

From: Dave Tolmie <dtolmie@charter.net>
Sent: Monday, June 6, 2022 1:51 AM
To: Margaret Bergamini <margaret.bergamini@wisc.edu>
Subject: Please consider a "No" vote and vote to extend instead

Good morning Margaret,

I tried to get on the public hearing but being almost totally blind now I was unable to get registered to speak last week. Below is something I feel very strongly about, as do I feel strongly that the board needs a disabled member to represent the group.

Please share with as many as you can, but at least consider the disabled and elderly, with the draft plan as it stands will greatly reduce our ability to have functional ridership.

Here is what I sent to the board, just hoping it made it.

David Tolmie
7434 Sawmill RD
Madison, WI 53717
(608) 960-1598
6/5/2022

Dear members of the Madison Transportation Policy and Planning Board,

I am writing to strongly encourage you to vote no on the current draft plan of Metro's redesign. I did attend the public hearing but was unable to get registered to speak. I am blind and did not have anyone at home to assist getting me in for the meeting. In addition, I was unable to fill out the survey that was announced for the disabled as the only notification I received on the survey was on Friday 5/27 at 3:41 PM, stating the survey was ending that night. I work full time and was not afforded sufficient time to fill it out. I am happy to provide a copy of the email I received from Metro on this.

For several years I was a member of the Madison Transit and Parking Commission representing the disabled of Madison. I took that appointment seriously and take my commitment to stand up for the disabled seriously. The new plan proposed for the Metro redesign is poorly thought out, dangerous for the disabled and elderly, and is based off of pandemic numbers. The Equity study was not completed, and this should have been step #1. Below are the list of my concerns that I have voiced in writing in prior meetings, and feel have not been addressed.

1. The additional walking distance to the new design requires not only me to cross very busy streets and walk a fair distance, but many people will have the same issues. As I have pointed out in the past, and the Wisconsin Council for the Blind also stated in the public hearing, street crossings are very dangerous. In my case I am blind, and without audible crossing signals, it can be a matter of life and death. Add the Wisconsin winters and storms, and this is a recipe for disaster. I would strongly advise voting “No” until the city can evaluate the safety of all new proposed street crossings and make the necessary improvements to make the street crossings safe for all residents, disabled or not.
2. Evaluate timings on traffic lights where street crossing will increase due to the new proposed plan. For the disabled and elderly, it can take us longer to cross a street safely, and if the timings are too short, we are put at great risk for being hit. In my neighborhood I had requested an audible signal be put in on the intersection of Old Sauk and Westfield Road. The city did complete this work, but the timing is too short, and the audible messages are too quiet to hear with traffic. I complained about this, and the city said it was up to code. When I recently received my new guide dog and was working with my trainer, a certified Guide Dog Mobility instructor (GDMI), as well as an instructor at the Hellen Keller Institute for the blind and deaf, she pointed out that this intersection is too dangerous because there is not enough time to cross safely, and the sound is too quiet to hear. I don’t have a choice but to cross this intersection to get to my dentist and doctor. I will also now have to cross it to get to the new bus line that is proposed. I have almost been hit crossing this street once, as the timing is so short, I was not across the street in time. If the driver was not able to brake as fast as they did, not only would I have been badly injured, but my guide dog injured or killed as well. If improvements to crossings like this are not taken into consideration, how many injuries or deaths will it take to have this changed?
3. The longer walks to catch the bus in the winter is exceptionally dangerous for the disabled, especially for those in wheelchairs, the blind, or those with slight balance issues. The city needs to commit to enforcing sidewalk and curb cleanups to reduce injury due to falling on ice or snow. In my neighborhood, the city park by where I catch the bus is often not plowed by the city for days or even a week after a snowfall, making the sidewalk dangerous for pedestrians. I have received injuries due to this, and the new longer walk only increases the risks.
4. The change for the BRT busses boarding on the driver side of the buss is exceptionally dangerous, as we will now need to be in the median. An example of how badly this can go, can be found by looking at the traffic accident rate increase in Albuquerque New Mexico when they implemented the same type of change on part of the city. The accident rate almost tripled. Is the city of Madison going to adequately improve signage and patterns to reduce the risk for drivers?
5. With the additional walking distances that will be required, I feel this will greatly reduce the use of the bus systems for those who use it for shopping. I have no problem carrying a bag of groceries a block from the bus stop, but now if I must carry the same bag ¼ mile, I simply won’t use the bus. Now think about how this impacts the elderly and disabled. Many who spoke at the public hearing use the bus as their only mode of transportation, if this is supposed to be an improvement, the added walking distance carrying bags is a game changer. For me, what would be a quick trip to Target, would now be a half mile walk, a transfer and almost a doubling of my commute time. I am sure I am not the only one with the exact same issue. It does not matter if the bus comes every 15 minutes, it still takes me 15 to 25 minutes to walk the distance I would now have to, and in the winter, maybe more. This is a terrible disservice to the disabled and elderly.
6. Looking at all the comments from the hearing, it is very clear to me that communication to the public that will be greatly impacted is greatly lacking. I spoke with many people in my neighborhood that simply know nothing of this change. Something this big and this impactful to the great residents of Madison needs to be much better communicated, and a greater time for public input needs to be done. As the well-spoken gentleman from the NAACP said, we need to determine how this impacts the riders using the system today, not base our decisions on a study that was not performed, and numbers that are based on pandemic ridership. Not to mention the equity difference if the UW students are removed from the low-income bracket to see the true areas of low income in Madison. The students are not always here, but those of us who live here permanently need to be accurately counted. I also strongly feel that a sudden vote on a system that has so many amendments at the last minute to patch serious issues is a vote in haste and shows the communication is greatly lacking. The gentleman representing the Dean clinic on Fish Hatchery is a great example. Something so critical to the residents as

healthcare was overlooked and had to be fixed with a last-minute change. It shows the communication was lacking, as they had prepared their statement without knowing the amendment existed. Again, this shows lack of communication and a plan that is not well designed at this point in time.

I strongly request that you vote no on such a critical issue done in haste, without regard to the necessary improvements for safety for the disabled and elderly, and without the completion of the proper equity study and the invalid use of pandemic numbers. Please postpone moving forward with this design until all these critical issues have been adequately addressed.

Thank you,

David Tolmie