metro transit

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Feedback Received

Metro Public Hearing – Redesign Items
Wednesday, November 9 – 6:00 pm

General Comments	Suggestions
21	5
TOTAL RECEIVED	**26**

General Comments – *Received from 10/13 – 10/26*

1. I am in favor of the re-design. The busses that come through our neighborhood are usually empty. My only concern is the children that depend on the bus to get to and from school. There are at least 20 of all ages that use the nearby stop, and that will need to be addressed. *(Brandenburg Way at Honor Court)*

2. This is a question concerning the route redesign to take effect in 2023. Since BRT won't be operational until 2024 what will happen to service on Routes 6/67 in 2023? It should eventually be replaced by the Red Line but what services will we have in that year between redesign and BRT implementation?

3. If the transfer points are being eliminated completely, then where are connections to be made and are there going to be adequate shelters.

4. I wanted to share some comments to be considered during your upcoming hearing in striving to improve Metro service. I used to ride Metro with a good deal of frequency and that has lowered significantly over the past few years. I'd like to share a few examples as to why. My home is near the intersection of Raymond/Frisch Rds. My workplace is located near Odana/Potomac. The distance between my workplace and my home is 2.5 miles or a 50 minute walk. Under the current bus schedule, in order to reach my workplace by 8a, I'd have to leave home at 6:37a. When I leave work at 5:15p, the bus would get me home at 6:14p In both cases, under the current system simply walking would be a more efficient means of commuting. At one point when Routes 56/57/58 were running, my bus commutes were a much more reasonable 30 minutes, without having to wait 30-45 minutes for a next bus. I ran into a similar issue attending Concerts on the Square this Summer. I opted to drive as opposed to rely on Metro because the excessive wait times would have meant getting home after 10p from a show that ended at 8:30. I have also chosen to drive when attending Madison's fireworks shows because it was questionable if buses would still be running after the weekend event in order to get me home. Ideas: More frequent service, Later service on Sat evenings.

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Additional service during major city events. I also have a few concerns about the proposed system. My belief is that under the new proposal I would need to cross Mineral Point Rd. to transfer buses. In considering the fatal bicycle accident I'm curious what the plan is for passenger safety when making this transfer. I'd hate to be put in a position of having to choose between crossing a busy street in an unsafe manner or missing a connecting bus and thus being late for work. Ideas: Pedestrian Bridge as on E. Wash and/or have Rapid Transit busses wait longer at what would essentially become the new transfer points. Not sure if it would be feasible to transfer in the median in a way than eliminates passengers having to cross traffic lanes to transfer busses.

Suggestions

1. When considering biking to a bus stop, (to make the distance to the bus-stop easier to reach), it would be nice if you could lock up a bike at a stop and board the bus. So, my suggestion is for future bus-stops (on city land) to include an area to lock bikes to. If it may be considered unnecessary, since bikers should just fasten their bikes to the front of the bus that is boarded. But, remember that some people travel with recumbent 3-wheeled recumbent bikes (which can’t attach to a bus). And others just don’t like to rely on the buses bike rack.

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General Comments (Received 10/27 – 11/4)

1. This redesign leaves my community without transit, which makes mobility a difficult and leaves us with expensive options. Truly reinforcing that this is an underserved community.I'm still driving, but the time is coming when I won't, and walking 3/4 mile to a bus stop is not a good choice. Similar to vaccines, I believe there are things we do for one another, and one of those things is provide good transit options to underserved communities.

2. Since bus riders come in all ages and a wide range of abilities and physical capabilities, I wish to push back on something I have heard brought up in defense of the bus service redesign as currently constituted. The point I wish to focus on is in reference to those city residents who no longer meet the standard of still being among society's 'young and hale' demographic. Those who are no longer 'young and hale'are learning that the 'Upcoming Service Redesign' will require them to traverse longer, more difficult distances (often in Wisconsin's seasonal weather chaos) both on their way to catch a bus and returning home from their bus trip. They will have to deal with more risky travel many days per month in order to access one of the hundreds fewer bus stops on one of the noticeably fewer bus routes to be provided in this redesign of Metro Transit. And these less than 'young and hale' folks finding out that they should 'just start using the Metro Transit's Paratransit service.'

   For those who wish to review the qualifications which need to be met in order to be allowed to utilize Metro Transit's Paratransit service, you will find those requirements enumerated in Metro Transit's website at the following URL — the "How to Apply" section (from which I will quote) begins near the bottom of the second page of the PDF at this URL):
   https://www.cityofmadison.com/metro/documents/paratransitinfo.pdf

   There you will find that, in order to use the Paratransit service, one must pass an in-person assessment by Metro staff of one's disability, including providing references from two professionals attesting to the extent one is disabled. That in-person assessment consists of "a physical, and/or cognitive, and/or sensory evaluation of the applicant's functional abilities, which include but are not limited to gait and balance, step climbing ability, bus route and landmark identification, short term memory and attention span."

   Additionally, the "How to Apply" section states: "Eligibility determinations are not based on symptoms, type of disability, use of a mobility aid, age, income, ability to drive, or access to a private automobile." Then, if one does gain approval to use the Paratransit service, every ride will cost $3.25 _each_ way. While hours and days of service for the Paratransit service "closely match Metro's fixed-route bus service," each Paratransit rider must make an appointment for a ride by 4:30 p.m. on the day _before_ the day for which the ride is needed. 'Standing rides,' such as to go 'to and from' one's work, are also an option within the Paratransit service. Metro Transit's Paratransit program is certainly an essential service and I believe it is already meeting the needs of as many area citizens as possible. It is difficult to imagine, however, that there is even a small amount of what is known as 'excess capacity' available in the program for even a few more additional Paratransit users. I hope there is empathy in our community for the many dozens and dozens of souls who will be desperate to get into the Paratransit program for the aid it might provide in preserving their life and limb, while they try to use the newly-designed Metro Transit.

3. I am a daily rider who uses the bus to get to and from work. In the redesign plans I will need to take the c1 or c2 bus as I go smack dab in the middle of them. I will need to walk 10 or more minutes, which is not a long time but very difficult in the winter as there are hills to get from my place of work to the stop. If I happen to miss the bus, I will then have to wait 30 or 60 minutes. I often have to wait

now as the buses miss the transfer at the transfer point almost every evening, but at least I am in a well lit location with seats and shelter. If I miss in the redesign, I will need to wait in front of someones house without strong lighting along a very busy road. There is no way to go try and get a different bus as the next routes are way too far. In the winter, not only will it be dark but cold and dangerous. I urge the committee to decrease the wait time between all Standard routes, not just in the downtown. There should be a main route c that comes every 15 minutes out the whole route c1and if there needs to be slower branches none should have a wait longer than 30 minutes. At least during peak weekday times. I am also very concerned that there are no vertical routes connecting buckeye to Milwaukee street- I take the 32 daily and the majority of people get on and off on Thompson or ace wood or meadowlark. It is a long walk if you live in the middle that will be very dangerous for anyone with mobility issues in the winter to a stop on Milwaukee/cottage grove/or buckeye.

4. For the past 11 years, I have ridden the bus to the VA Hospital once a week.
   The discontinuation of Route 15 bus service in Wexford is very disappointing. As a tax payer, I consider the elimination of this route through our neighborhood is an insult. Where is our civic leadership? Does anyone care? From my perspective, something is being taken away - proximity to the bus stop and forcing a transfer. I suspect that those who are proposing this change don't commute by bus, anyway. So, they are either oblivious or not interested in how present ridership is affected. In short, city administration doesn't appear to be looking out for our interests. The interests of today's present ridership is being ignored or, at least, discounted. On a personal level, I will have a greater distance to walk and will need to transfer. As a result, it will probably be necessary for me to drive my vehicle - simply adding to traffic congestion. In this era of heightened awareness of our environment, the resultant increase in forced automobile traffic is hypocritical. This reminds me of the adage, "I am from the government and am here to help you."

5. The proposed BRT changes are going to be massively disruptive to those of us who use the bus to commute from places that are not downtown. I live in the Meadowwood neighborhood, and the stops I rely on to get to work will all be closed. I am unable to drive, and bought a house near a bus line specifically so I could get to the West Transfer Point to catch my bus to Epic. Looking at the new routes, there will be at least 2 transfers on low frequency routes before I even get to the park and ride, and that's without knowing the actual times and if they will even line up in a reasonable way, and from a stop that is further away. This is untenable. It is not trivial to just walk another 10-15 minutes. Much of my commute is spent in freezing/sub zero weather, walking on icy, unlit sidewalks. As a woman, I also have to deal with being approached after dark. The buses are never running on time in the evening and I can spend up to a half hour at the transfer point - it is very likely I will end up stranded in a strange part of town while in between lines, with no recourse. This new arrangement does not help when it so greatly reduces coverage, in the name of "frequency" that only benefits people who are able to live down town. I am lucky enough to have some other options/sources of help, but I know there are others who are disabled/elderly/lower income that will not have these other options. And no matter what, I will now be an additional car on the road despite voting for/paying into taxes intended to support and expand public transit. The money being used on this would be better served to provide proper heating/shelter at stops and transfer points.

6. Disappointed in the fact that you are getting rid of the Transfer Points. I use the North Transfer Point on a weekly basis. I travel to Madison from out of town and park and ride the bus to UW Campus. For those of us who do this, where are we to park and ride with this new system?

7. It is going to be a huge inconvenience for almost everyone here with the proposed new bus routes. So many hospital workers commute from the west side, and not one easily accessible bus goes through the hospital loop. You need to get more busses going up the hospital loop since there are so

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many commuters who get off at the hospital stops.

8. I am unable to be at the public hearing. I am sure that you are watching traffic numbers but it seems as though more UW students are living further away from campus. I take Route 7 and traffic went up after the pandemic because there were less neighborhood routes, though it seemed manageable. This academic year the bus is very packed as students move further out. With increases in the population, either more routes or more frequency will be needed.

9. I am writing to express my deep concern about the current direction of Metro's redesign and bus rapid transit program. While I was originally enthusiastic about the potential of both initiatives, I fear that current budget constraints and deficiencies in process have led to a plan that is severely flawed. A "ridership" oriented redesign was intended to increase ridership through simplified route structure and a predictable high-frequency network. The end results we are given are overwhelmingly not simple, predictable, or high-frequency. Early on we also heard much about goals of improving the consistency and level of service on evenings and weekends. This is also not in the end results. There is also much reason to be concerned about the course of public engagement and transparency throughout this process.

   Complexity in Place of Simplicity - The redesign sought to "untangle" our bus routes, but we are left with a map that still perplexes. It still has many strange loops, indirect routing that strays off continual alignment with main streets, branching lines that split to vastly divergent endpoints, confusing naming conventions mixing letters and numbers, complicated interlining to boost frequencies, and transfer locations now far-flung across the system. Any claims of "simplification" are laughable at best.

   A Failure of Frequency - Only a small core set of routes mostly confined to the central isthmus offers "high frequency" of 15 minutes--notably, 15 minutes is often considered the minimum for "high frequency" service standards among US transit systems. Even though we gave up coverage for a route structure built with high frequency in mind, large portions of the Metro service area will have frequencies of 30-60 minutes. Riders are asked to make a trade off of a longer walk to stops for no actual gain of frequent service. The lack of actual high frequency in such a network also makes any trip with transfers much less reliable since the wait time for a missed connection will be substantial. This is a complete mismatch of route design and service level--a ridership network that sacrifices coverage must operate at sufficient levels of frequency to justify the increased travel time to stops, or it risks effectively being a service cut.

   Decreased Evening and Weekend Service - Early in the redesign process, Metro officials stressed the goal of improving night and weekend service. The lack of sufficient late night and weekend service has long been an impediment to employment in the service industry in Madison, as well as a hindrance to enjoying our city's vibrant nightlife. Unfortunately, this plan fails to deliver, and in fact is a regression in evening and weekend service.

   Even the BRT—which is definitionally supposed to have consistent, predictable scheduling—has service levels below "high frequency" standards on weekends, and many lines appear to have last runs ending earlier than comparable current service levels. Many lines that currently run at 30-minute frequencies have equivalents diminished to 60-minute frequencies. For example, near west side areas served by Route 6 or 7 at 30-minute intervals today will now have 60-minute intervals on the D1.

   Failures in Engagement and Communication - While Metro pursued a quite extensive public

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engagement process, this all occurred during a time of decreased ridership and through electronic means which limited rider awareness and restricted participation to those with the means to use electronic tools. Only a single hybrid meeting was held at the end of the process, well after much of the plan was already heavily revised, limiting the ability for participants to further contribute to refinement of neighborhood-level plans. Last-minute blind-spots like the lack of engagement with the Southdale neighborhood and a sudden awareness of translation shortcomings also seem to indicate some major gaps in the overall engagement strategy. As an advocate I have to suspect there are still constituencies among Metro riders that will be caught largely unaware of these changes and adversely affected by the impacts of the redesign. For those of us who have been thoroughly engaged, we have found the communication of plans frustratingly incomplete and at times even seemingly deceptive. For example, the baseline for which we are pointed to for comparing the redesign is the 2020 post-COVID cutback network, but shouldn't we really be looking at the full-scale Metro network prior to emergency cutbacks as our basis for full service? It seems like a more honest exercise in planning to use that as the basis for what a full post "bounce-back" system should look like in terms of coverage and operating hours. Materials about the redesign have also been a moving target as far as being able to track changes and compare to the present state--obviously, part of this is understandably the nature of a plan in progress--but for example, Metro has presented proposed start/end times and service frequencies in several different format charts over the course of the redesign. It has been difficult to compare over time whether the proposals have been substantially changed from one phase of the design to another. Multiple copies of the route maps have been haphazardly posted across multiple versions of the design site with poor version control, leading to confusion as to the current state of what's actually proposed, even as recently as this week (as of writing this on 10/27/22). Metro still has not provided a simple overlay of current vs. new route structure for people to have a basic comparison of how new routes align relative to the routes they are currently familiar with, nor have they provided something like a side-by-side listing of existing network route start/end times and frequencies to compare against with the new routes. It seems that an honest and transparent presentation of this proposal should provide a crystal-clear comparison of proposed and current state that does not require citizens and policy makers to dig through schedules past vs. present vs. future to figure out if we're being swindled with a service cut.

I will end this on a personal note: as someone who doesn't drive due to a progressively worsening disability, I have been able to prosper thanks to quality transit service. I hoped this plan was going to make my life in Madison even better. Now I'm looking at a longer, more unreliable commute, a tougher time reaching medical care, and greater challenges to enjoy the amenities our city has to offer. I'm privileged enough that I can solve this problem for myself: I'm now starting to look at other cities I can move to that have transit that will serve me well into the future. Unfortunately, most people dependent on Metro service are not as lucky as I am to have that privilege, and this redesign may harm them tremendously. I urge you to pause this redesign to re-examine these deficiencies and find a sustainable funding model that provides a truly transformative level of improved transit service for the Madison area.

10. I am disappointed at the service span cuts proposed for revamped bus systems to go into effect during the Summer of 2023. The Start/End service times table (see attached) lists service span cuts of 30 minutes to Saturday evening service (10:00 from 10:30), 90 minutes to Sunday evening service (9:00 from 10:30) and suggests elimination of holiday service since start/end times for holidays are not listed. (See attached.) Admittedly, ridership on weekend evenings has likely been low during the pandemic since many would-be riders have opted to stay home during these times (myself included). As the severity of the pandemic (hopefully!) continues to lessen, the demand for bus service on weekend evenings will very likely increase. Please reconsider these significant proposed cuts for

weekend evening service as well as the apparent proposed elimination of holiday service.

11. I am so distressed about redesign that I am moving from the East side to the North side. My most frequent destination is the Warner Park Recreation Center. I go two or more times a week for exercise, Bingo, and chair yoga. Thus I am selling my home of 29 years. I mentioned in my previous survey that I can visit three transfer points on a two hour transfer as it is easy to do this. Your redesign schedule will take me to the square and no where else. After I move, it will be difficult to go to my church of twenty five years. In addition, I am visually impaired so travel to get around will be trying. Your redesign schedule is discriminatory for people with disabilities by making it harder to get around our city. I have been riding your buses for over sixty years so it would be nice to be treated better.
12. I am unable to attend the public hearing on November 9, but I wanted to submit a comment to be considered by the committee. I live along the proposed R2 route in Middleton. I currently ride route 72 daily to and from campus. That route is primarily used by people that live in Middleton or Waunakee that work at either UW or for the state that would rather not pay to park downtown. Depending on what job a person has, their start time can be either 7:45 or 8:00. Having the route only serve the area on an hourly basis during both rush hours is a disservice to those that rely on that route for their commute. It may require people to shift their work hours in order to catch the bus to their place of work or home in the evening, and that is not always possible. Presently, riders have the option of taking the 72 which runs every half hour or the 70 which runs hourly. These two routes together provide a lot of flexibility for riders that may start at different times. It also provides flexibility for riders that may have to work late. Changing this to one single route that provides service hourly may lead to additional car traffic during times where we are trying to reduce that traffic as much as possible. Please consider making R2 run every half hour during the peak commuting times in the morning and afternoon.
13. I am a big fan of the Transit Network Redesign Final Plan and I support its implementation in 2023. I feel that this will make the bus system more useful for residents all over the city. Even though I live near O'Keefe school and work at UW (two of the best-served locations in the network), the Existing Network does not always work well for me. If I miss a bus going to or from work, the next bus is either a long walk away or a 30+ minute wait, especially if I need to travel after 6 pm or on the weekend. The situation was much worse when I worked outside of the Transfer Points because routes were extremely infrequent, circuitous, and frequently depended on transferring at a Transfer Point, which was far from any useful destinations for me. More frequent and direct buses, with 'daytime' service running from 6 am - 7 pm, and transfers made at locations throughout the city, will make the bus more useful for many riders.

14. I am transit dependent rider and a Senior citizen who has to deal with Metro's mistreatment of passengers. I have called Metro to complain but there has been no improvement. You will see riders who are physically and mentally disabled. Riders on crutches, use a cane, use a walker, use a scooter, use a wheelchair, use a shopping cart for balance, and this also includes using a stroller for kids. This is some of the problems I have to deal with when riding the bus. Drivers do not lower the bus so you can get on and off the bus safely. The drivers also do not lower the bus so a shopping cart and rider can get on and off safely. Buses do not get next to the curb so now you have to jump the space to get off and on the bus. I may fall as result of this problem. The drivers do not use the ramp for people using a walker. The person with the walker has to somehow get off the bus walking backwards. I did see a driver actually use the ramp for person with a walker in their 80's. This a rare occurrence that a driver cares about the safety of the rider. The use of the ramp or lowering the bus may be necessary for a stroller with kids and loaded with packages. I saw one driver actually help a woman with a cane and a stroller exit the bus safely. This is extremely rare as I have only seen it once. The bus moves forward and passengers are unable to sit down. Passengers are left to fall. I have bruises on my arms

from grabbing the posts in order to sit down in a moving bus. For example, a Senior citizen got on the bus with a cane and packages and almost hit the floor as the driver did Not wait until he could sit down. The drivers do not enforce the requirement that the front seats are for the older passengers. Drivers do not put the seats back down for future use after the wheelchair is gone. Drivers are not trained to deal with securing wheel chairs and scooters. Drivers fail to announce what route they will be at the transfer point. You need to get off the bus and look as driver will not respond to the rider. There is only one female driver who uses the speaker system to announce the route number. The bell ringer is not accessible on new busses. The rider has to get up to push the strip to ring the bell and I do not have the balance to do this in a moving bus. The libraries do NOT have redesign materials to look at. I do not have the internet and the transit dependent will not have a voice in the new plans. The bus redesign will be hell on the passengers especially, older adults, disabled, and riders with children and strollers. That will be another email as I probably will end up dead with many of my neighbors. We are losing significant service on the Route 18 in the Allied-Crescent-Red Arrow area. We currently can get to the South and West Transfer Points and to the rest of the city every 30 minutes.

15. I am a resident of the Allied-Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood. I don't know if I will be able to make the final hearing of the redesign, but I did want to express my general support and approval of the new routes. Overall it looks like our neighborhood will have much more convenient routes to downtown and to the southwest side of town with no transfers. Route D2 will be super-convenient for getting to the Target/Hyvee/Aldi shopping area on McKee/PD. Route H will go on Raymond Road, then will take Gammon past Woodmans and West Towne. I do think there was a missed opportunity to send Route D2 straight north up to the Hilldale Area, which would have provided good connections to other westside routes, the BRT route on University Avenue, and the UW Hospital. For example if D2 continued on Midvale boulevard, students going between Allied Drive and West High School wouldn't need to go out of the way to Crazylegs plaza to make the transfer (I do know that they can still use the direct school tripper service). But I understand it's a little late to be making a big change like that.

16. This new system looks awful. Fewer routes. Having to walk further for a bus stop. Definitely not thinking about older people.

17. I don’t see this making ridership goals or money I think they are making a gigantic mistake.

18. I was reviewing the proposed transit redesign documents, first of all I am excited about the project and think overall it will be much improved over the current system. I do wish to make a few suggestions as I think my situation is common. I work at UW Hospital live in Middleton and would love to commute by bus, it is not feasible at this time due to the current routed 70 and 72 either getting me there undesirably early or cutting it way too close to my 7AM shift start. Many employees across many departments begin their shifts at 7AM, 3PM, 7PM and 11PM. As such it would make sense for the many routes that serve UW Hospital (and the other hospitals in town) to have busses that accommodate those start times (for instance arriving at 645 AM to allow for a comfortable commuter option for a 7 AM worker). Conversely it would make senses for routes to serve the hospitals with buses stopping an hour later at 745 PM for the worker whose shift ends at 730 PM. Parking at UW Hospital is prohibitively expensive for many employees and the bus could be an excellent option for many employees from across the area if there is strong outreach to staff and options to get employees there at times that are congruent with common shifts. Some routes do an excellent job of this already however many do not!

    The other semi-related thought I had was in regard to the proposed F and R routes, I believe it would

make sense to stagger the F and R routes in 15 minute increments to better serve the entire west side and Middleton, as proposed unless I read incorrectly the F and R routes would leave downtown at roughly the same time and chase each other west down University Ave, by having the two ~30 minute services that share a lot of overlap specifically in Middleton you could provide a more flexible option for the commuter heading west while still maintaining two efficient unique routes with unchanged headways. Congrats on all the system has accomplished thus far and look forward to continuing to be a loyal Metro rider! Hoping with the system redesign myself and many others can use the bus as a more viable commute option!

19. Very in favor of the network redesign. Keep up the great work, looking forward to the new service and the new opportunities it presents for me.

Suggestions

1. Weekday-only routes are awful things to have to live with and I urge you to change them to daily routes. Not everyone has a M-F schedule and even those that do deserve the ability to be able to leave their homes on their days off and get to places of interest. Currently the draft map leaves high-density residential and commercial areas on the west and south sides high and dry on the weekends, which is bad for both retail workers getting to jobs and retail customers getting to stores. Please change the J, O, and at least one R branch to daily service. I know people on all of those routes, myself included, who simply won't be able to reach places on the weekends without those lines. I moved to where I now live because of easy bus service, not just to work M-F, but also to get shopping, groceries, and services when I'm not working.

2. For stops slated to be removed with metro redesign, please consider keeping Buckeye at Davies. This stop is near Allis elementary (soon to be home to Nuestro Mundo). Having a stop nearby is beneficial for ridership who are affiliated with the school (e.g. parents, teachers) and those living in nearby neighborhood. No new stops seem to provide an accessible option.

3. I feel that Metro should improve the way that it is representing the frequency and span of frequency to the public with the Final Plan implementation. How have the frequencies changed between Existing Service, the Draft Plan, the Final Plan, and the Final Plan implementation? It is hard for me to tell even though I have been following this process closely since 2020. I find the new frequency table to be very difficult to understand. The 'Route Headway Chart' from the Final Plan was a bit easier to understand. The frequency table from page 7 of the Draft Plan Report was the easiest to understand because it was very clear when service with different frequencies began and ended. Could a figure that matches the Draft Plan Report format be uploaded so that the headways are easier to understand?

4. A meeting of this level, should be held in person. Open forum. A very large room for plenty of people to speak. They are only doing criminal trials by zoom for those unwilling to cooperate or participate. What are you hiding? For example, I'd like to know how 2 separate buss trains going down Mineral point rd. In opposite direction every12? Minutes is going to completely screw up (already existing) traffic? What about passage on Regent ? Already a bottleneck. Plus 2 years construction at West High. C'mon Connweigh!