

From: [Jeffrey Schimpff](#)
To: [Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Public comment on Agenda Item 11, January 17, 2024 Meeting
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Item 11, rail station study report.

Dear Transportation Commission Members,

I want to support choosing the overall best location for a Madison Amtrak station. I have been using Amtrak long distance rail service for more than 25 long distance trips since 1978, and have seen a lot of the best and worst of passenger rail operations.

In my review of the report, it appears that the Johnson Street, Commercial Avenue and Aberg Avenue sites would all be good locations. As the analyses indicate, no site is going to be perfect.

The Commercial Avenue site may be the best overall, if it can truly be easily accessed by the proposed BRT line (which in my mind should only ever have been a light rail system...).

One thing we CANNOT have is a downtown or campus location where a train would have to back up to get back on the main line. If you have ever been to a station like Denver, this situation creates a long delay from the time the train arrives in the yard, within sight of the station, until it maneuvers a "Y" and stops at the station platform. This is OK if your destination or origin is Denver, but it's very undesirable for passengers eager to get to recreation destinations along the California Zephyr route, in Winter Park, Glenwood Springs and beyond.

Bus and/or - hey - a light rail shuttle - can get passengers to downtown and campus locations. While not ideal, this option would be far better than the current Amtrak service to Santa Fe, New Mexico. There, the station stop at Lamy is 18 miles from Santa Fe.

Regarding the lack of accommodations along the Oscar Mayer corridor, it is clear that developers in our area are very adept at filling such needs. A spacious hotel can rise from the soil near a station location far faster than rail service can be established here.

Further, the traffic in downtown Madison and the UW campus area is already often horrendous. Having traffic backups due to train operations, or train delays due to traffic jams, would create a sour experience for too many people. We want rail service that is comparable to what I have used on many occasions across western Europe.

I hope the commission will make a decision soon, so that Madison can move to regain the great rail service it once had.

While we're on the topic, I also urge the commission to work with Amtrak to move to an all-electric system, as is used along most European routes. The diesel exhaust from most engines poses a serious health threat to people with respiratory and heart diseases. That's one more reason why a location in densely populated neighborhoods is not a good choice.

Thank you.

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