

Summary of Public Input Sessions Held October 9 & 11, 2013

A public input session was held at the Wednesday, October 9 meeting of the Transit & Parking Commission, to gather feedback from customers about how Metro's service currently meets their needs, and what could be improved. More public input was gathered two days later with Metro's first-ever "Tweet Chat Session".

The comments Metro received at the input sessions covered a wide variety of issues, including:

- Schedule suggestions for specific trips
- Service expansion requests (both geographic coverage and extended hours of operation)
- Overcrowding & missed connection complaints
- Suggestions for improving information available at bus stops, online and via apps
- Policies on strollers and bus seating configuration

See attached document for more detail.

Staff will continue to review the input that has already been received. Because of the success of last fall's sessions, similar sessions will be scheduled annually to gather customer feedback.

Currently, the biggest challenges faced by Metro are:

- Chronic overcrowding on many routes, even off-peak and weekends.
- No additional buses to handle overcrowding during the peak periods.
- Even if more buses could be acquired, there is no space in the existing facility to house them.
- Requests from Epic/Verona for additional service (overcrowding on existing service).
- The UW Hospital East (American Center) will be opening in the spring of 2015. Part of the plan approval for the project involved funding of transit service at a level similar to what is provided at the other hospitals within the service area. The estimated cost for operating this service is \$300,000 annually, an amount which UW Health has agreed to fund.

Public Input

October 9 - October 11, 2013

Route 2

- Time for outbound peak to WTP needs improving – Route 2 bus almost always late and missed connections to Route 55
- Route 2 overcrowding on the weekends (especially Saturdays).
- Appreciates increased headways of Route 2 but weekend service is still inadequate – needs to be more service during wknd peak hours.

Improved weekend service would require additional funding. TDP calls for upgrading weekday midday frequencies on route 2.

Route 6

- Route 6 every hour on the weekend.

Trunk of route 6 currently has hourly frequencies on weekends. “Split” on east end of route has 2-hour directional frequencies. TDP calls out overhaul of route 6 as a short term goal (1- 3 years); would also require upgrade of route 7 and additional funding.

Route 8

- Route 8 timepoint at University & Norman to get pushed back 5 minutes to facilitate transfers from Route 78.

Would affect timepoints elsewhere along the route. Staff has explored combining routes 8 & 78; would affect the funding level of both Middleton and Madison.

Route 10

- Route 10 needs to be changed so it goes closer to the Square- maybe more commuters will chose to ride.
- Differentiate vias with new names like 10-H or 10-E
- Start times for Route 10 are confusing.
- Route 10 limited access to Capitol/Downtown area.
- Happy with Route 10 frequency near Sheboygan Ave.

*Commuter link between University Ave west of Highland Ave and Capitol Square is weak; more route 2 buses available but trip is longer because of the “hospital loop” & Old University Ave
Numbering scheme has been discussed Metro’s Service Development Committee.*

Route 16

- Are you looking at adding buses during the school year for Route 16.? Very congested due to 25+ students getting on board. Bad between 2p – 4p. Eastbound worst, but southbound is also bad.

An extra already operates on route 16 during the school year. Some students have shifted to route 31. Will continue to monitor for any overload reports.

Route 15

- I think the changes you have made are admirable. Splitting of the 15 into 2 directions was odd decision. For the 15 - might have been better to run every 20 minutes and run the deming way loop before going up junction less confusion.
- Route 15 to run every half hour.

Far west end of Route 15 is confusing, but is designed to “favor” the commute direction. Increasing frequency would require additional funding.

Route 31

- I am loving the new 31 bus, I just wish it went to the square instead of ETP. More people would ride too

One of the main goals of this route was to serve the needs of students in the Owl Creek area, better connecting them with Sennett & LaFollette, and rest of system via the East Transfer Pt.

Route 40

- Route 40 stop at Steward St. & Watford Way is in a dangerous spot. Opportunities Inc. has contacted Colin prior to but she hasn't heard anything. Want the stop to move back to old location (before August).

Metro has been working with Traffic Engineering to improve pedestrian conditions there. Further changes to route 44 in 2014 may eliminate the issue (dependent on Fitchburg).

Route 57

- Route 57 needs to be better coordinated with Route 51 to better serve Mesa.

No detail provided for when this is an issue.

Route 70

- Route 70 buses arrive 10 minutes earlier than website scheduled online – specifically 8:33p and 9:33p
- Would like to see Route 70 once an hour throughout the day.

Improved frequency on Route 70 would require additional funding from Madison and Middleton. Potential reworking of Middleton service is being considered for 2014-15.

Route 75

- Route 75 standing room only especially on 7:40a and 5p trips

Additional trip at 5:30 p.m. began operating in late 2012. Bus availability precludes additional trips in the morning. Also would require additional funding from Verona/Epic.

Driver Compliments

- Route 2 drivers are great!
- Route 72 AM driver, Bob, is excellent
- Route 38 AM driver is amazing!

Bus Shelters / Schedule Displays

- Detour stops need to be more clearly marked especially in the downtown area.
- More bus stops need to be affixed with lighting and proper walkways
- Paper schedules at every stop with additional information such as nearby stops
- New shelters – would like to be able to request shelters at certain stops

To reduce confusion, Metro has been working towards standardized detours for downtown events. A potential capital expenditure would be to install detour boards in the shelters of frequently affected stops. In concert with the City's ongoing sidewalk projects, Metro specs boarding pads and sidewalk extensions for existing and planned bus stops. Funding for new schedules would have to be included in the annual capital budget process.

Apps

- Bus Radar – are there buses without transponders? Often glitches
- Do 'extra' buses appear on Bus Radar? Should but we'll review
- Bus Radar for Iphone
- New Transit Tracker hard to read (at least on Iphones)

Verona Service

- Long term planning for Metro in Verona
- Senior transportation especially in the Verona area.

Additional funding would be required from Verona. (RTA?)

Fitchburg Service

- Would like to see improve connectivity to Fitchburg near Great Dane area

Ongoing discussion with Fitchburg about alternative routing/scheduling.

Middleton Service

- Would like to see service to Middleton on Sunday. Possibly extend service to Greenway Station and create a transfer point there.

Combining routes 8 & 78 might facilitate this. Funding impact on both Madison and Middleton.

School Dodgers

- Please bring back 4 PM Route to Sennett - Don't view as district issue.

Precluded by bus availability

General Service Comments/ Suggestions

- Any chance of changing the 3 minute rule for delayed buses? Missed connections at STP.
- Later service on Holidays – after 8p
- Needs more than 1 hour service near Edgewood Campus
- Service as a whole needs to extend an hour later on the wknd.

Unfortunately, delaying buses at transfer points delays everyone's trip and often causes lost connections at the "other end" of the route. Schedule extensions have direct impact on operating costs.

General Technology/Green Comments and Suggestions

- Bike Racks with high capacity. Route 72 racks often full.
- Would like to see WiFi on every bus.
- Hybrid Buses need windows that can be opened. Save money to reduce on air conditioning. Also, blue lighting is distracting for riders.
- It may be time to experiment with Hydrogen Buses if we can get them at a discount for experimenting.
- More electric signage with the capability of multiple line messages
- Stop announcing systems need to be updated to announce stops earlier.
- Articulated buses are a good option for the Madison area – or even Trolley buses

Will look into any adjustment parameters for stop announcements in the TransitMaster system. Blue lighting reduces glare in windshield for drivers. Bus Size study has been completed.

General Policy/ Marketing Comments and Suggestions

- Bus seating configurations need to be better thought out to maximize amount of seated passengers
- Transit should be included in all traffic engineering projects – create signified bus lanes throughout the City
- Reduce littering on the bus- possibly do a campaign to increase awareness.
- Encourage riders to fill up the back of the bus first
- Surveys need to be taken in both summer and winter to catch commuters that may bike in the summer.
- Very hard to carry child and break-down stroller. Maybe need to re-work policy.
- Are you looking to switch to refillable fare cards?
- Route numbering—confusion resulting from routes with "vias"

Perimeter seating increases aisle space for strollers, grocery carts and the like.

BRT Study did recommend further analysis of transit lanes

Refillable fare cards are a distinct possibility with the upcoming farebox replacement

Route numbering/naming will be on the agenda for Metro's Service Development Committee.