

CCEC BRT Update

2021-07-13

Metro Rapid, Madison's BRT system will connect residents, jobs, retail, education, and healthcare into one easy to use and rapid network.

The BRT route chosen will provide front door access to the heart of Madison's retail, employment, cultural, medical, and educational institutions. About 120,000 jobs, 80,000 residents, 3 hospitals, and 2 higher educational institutions will be within a 10 minute walk of BRT.

Madison cannot continue to grow without finding a more efficient way to transport people.

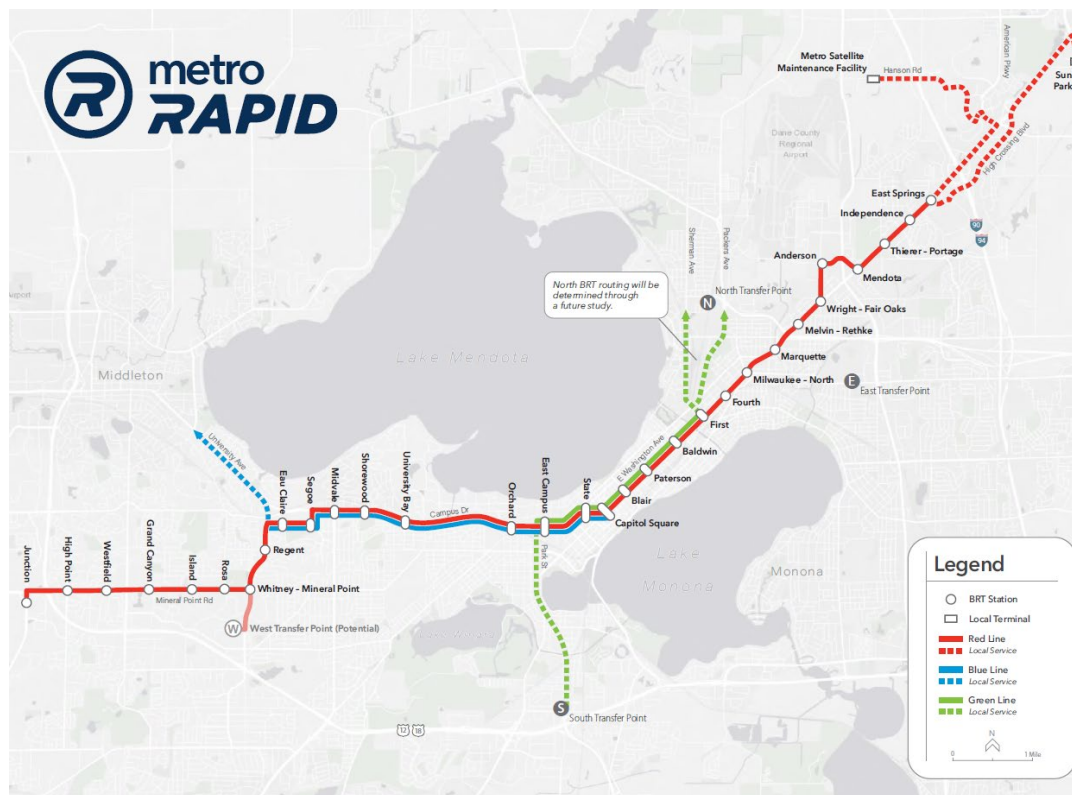
Madison is projected to gain 45,000 jobs by 2050, with 14 to 18,000 jobs occurring within the isthmus. Our streets will soon again be at capacity and we simply cannot meet travel demand without significant investment in transit.

Summary of BRT

Bus rapid transit (BRT) is a frequent, faster, and more reliable bus system that uses larger buses to transport more riders. BRT's features include frequent all-day service and direct routes with fewer stops. It use special traffic signals to help buses get through intersections faster, dedicated bus lanes, stations with off-board fare payment, and larger buses.

BRT will alleviate congestion on our streets. One of the key benefits of BRT is that larger buses travel in dedicated lanes where possible, which will improve traffic flow for drivers. Increased BRT and bus ridership will also decrease the number of drivers in the corridor, helping to mitigate increasing roadway congestion.

Metro Rapid will run along East Washington Ave., around the Capitol, through the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison) campus, continuing west on University Ave. and Mineral Point Rd., to the West Towne Mall. The following [service map](#) illustrates Metro Rapid.



The BRT Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) has been evaluated since 2013.

The initial routing was identified in the [2013 Madison Transit Corridor Study](#). Further studies include the [2019 Downtown Routing Report](#) and the [2020 Revised Locally Preferred Alternative Report](#). The Common Council adopted the Locally Preferred Alternative alignment in March of 2020 (Legistar [59665](#)) and reaffirmed the Locally Preferred Alternative alignment in January of 2021 (Legistar [63184](#)). All reports and adopted LPA's included State Street in the BRT alignment. There was considerable public involvement in all phases of the study. Phase 2 engagement activities are summarized in the 2019 [Public Engagement Summary](#).

This LPA information was forwarded to the Federal Transit Administration for rating and funding recommendations, which they included in the [Annual Report on Funding Recommendations FY 2022](#).

State Street is part of the BRT routing because of its importance as a cultural and retail destination - it is part of the “heart” of the City.

The Capitol Square and 3 blocks of State Street were identified as part of the Locally Preferred Routing Plan because:

- It provides the most direct access to the visible economic and cultural center of the City.
- It provides the opportunity to transfer from local routes to BRT easily.
- Eastbound and westbound stations are within eyesight of each other.
- It avoids a 2200 foot walk for transit riders between station pairs.

- With this selection, it was acknowledged that BRT would be detoured for events. The year-round benefits to riders outweigh the detours that routinely occur already.

BRT will have 2 stops at the top of State Street, it will run on 3 of the 8 blocks of State Street (100 to 300 blocks). About a quarter of a million people boarded buses on upper State Street in 2019 – the majority of which interacted with businesses on State Street. Reliable and frequent 6 am to 12 midnight has the potential to expand customer bases and make transit an easier option for downtown service workers. Bringing customers directly to State Street provides significant transit service improvement for all residents, workers, and visitors. Many cities such as Cleveland OH have found that BRT significantly increases business development and revitalization.

Madison staff have been working to address legitimate State Street business concerns over the past several years.

In the 2019 studies, it was clear the value that the Square and State Street stations were to transit riders. However, it also was clear that there are nuisances created by buses – particularly in the summer months. During peak hours high volumes of buses stack at intersections on State Street. Bus idling is loud and detracts from outdoor dining and fumes can be noticeable. Over the past two years we have taken several actions to address these real concerns, including:

- We are constructing a bus lane on West Washington, which is being installed this summer. This bus lane will allow Metro to remove local routes from State Street.
- In the Metro Network Redesign workshops held in May, 2020, all local routes were relocated from State Street to Johnson/Gorham and Wilson/Broom.
- Introduce premium BRT service on State Street, which reduces bus volumes and will primarily use electric buses to reduce noise and fumes.

In 2024 when BRT is implemented:

- Upper State Street will have 60 percent fewer buses during peak hour than what existed in 2019.
- The majority of those buses will be electric with much lower noise levels.
- Lower State Street is likely to have NO buses running on it.
- The 10 current bus stops are likely to be consolidated into just 2 bus stops.
- State Street will have service every 5 minutes through the day, and consistent service from 6 am to midnight connecting it to West Towne, Hilldale, the Cap East District, and East Towne.

The State Street BRT station designs (one EB, one WB) have been refined, reduced in size, and made more context sensitive in response to stakeholder comments.

Business owners have legitimate concerns over the impacts of proposed changes on State Street, in particular that larger stations could block the views of their windows and take up too much space. We have consulted many store owners to understand their concerns. We have modified station designs for State Street that are considerably (60%) smaller and more transparent with fewer vertical elements, which will have much less of an impact on visibility.

The recently announced design represents stations that:

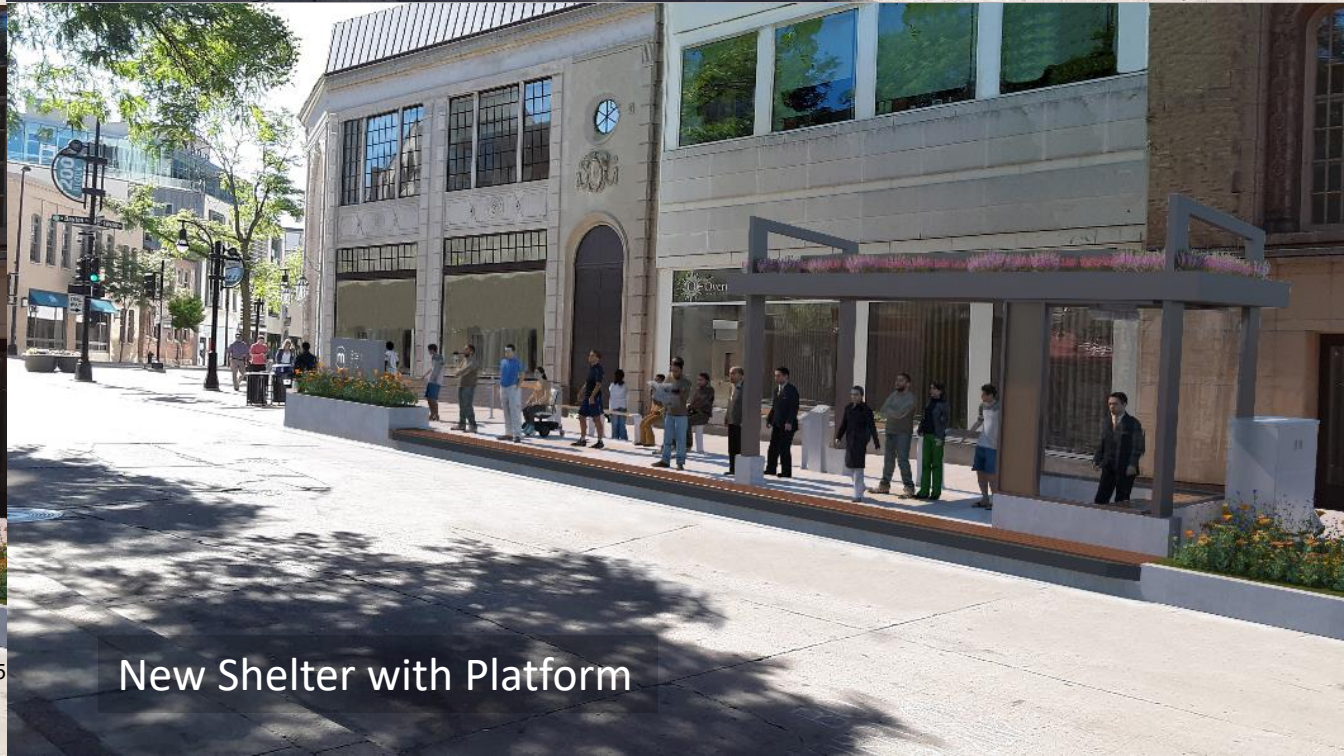
- Have smaller platforms, reduced from 75 feet to 50 feet. These platforms are raised to help riders with mobility challenges.
- Have small shelters that are the same size as those which exist today.
- Been redesigned to reduce visual impacts.
- Sidewalk café or street vending areas will not be affected.

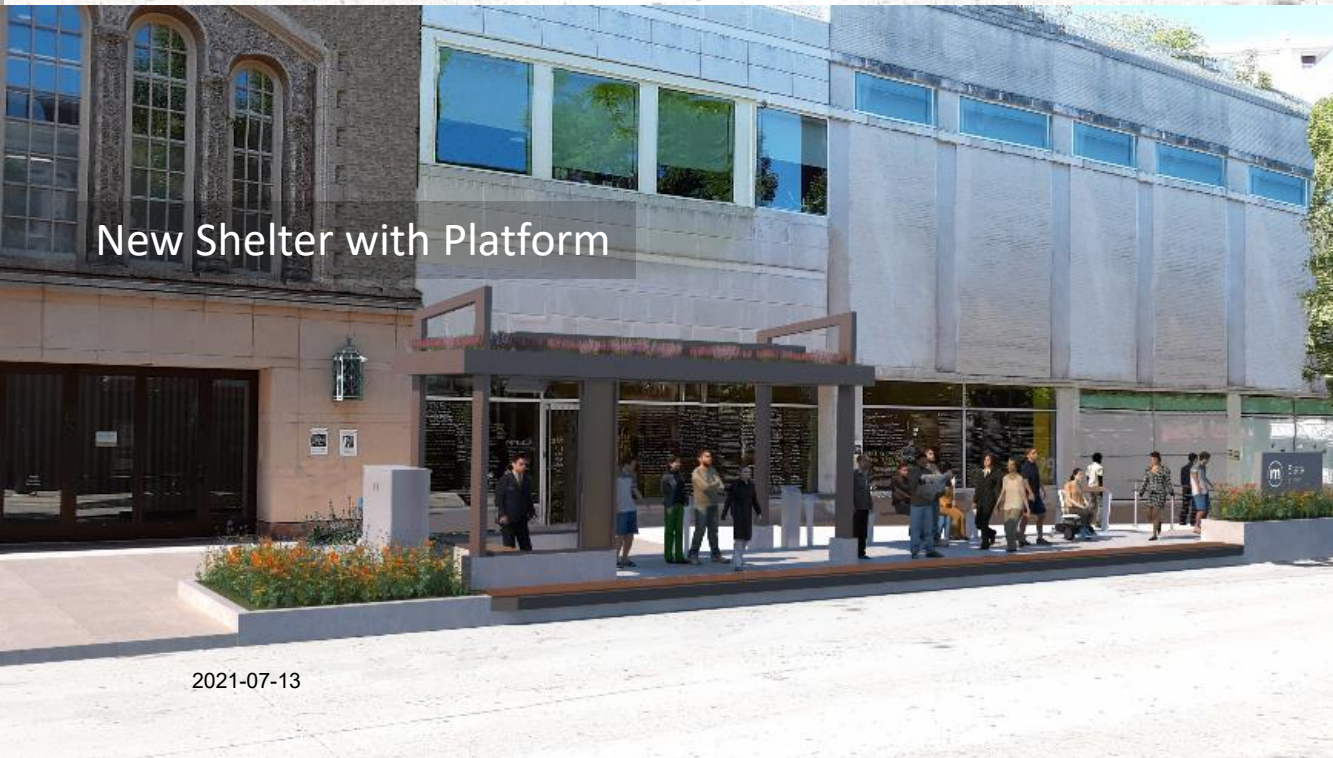
An example of the revised station design is illustrated below. The attached .pdf shows BRT station concepts for each location that was evaluated. Note that BRT will have only one eastbound and one westbound station.



Madison has been pursuing high capacity rapid transit for 30 years and we are closer to implementation than ever before.

\$80 million has been set aside in President Biden’s Budget with funding recommendation from the Federal Transit Administration for FY 2022. Madison’s federal BRT application is one of only six in the nation recommended for funding for fiscal year 2022, out of 35 applicants. Madison is poised for construction in 2022/23. We have the opportunity to capitalize on favorable political and funding environments. Delays will introduce risk.









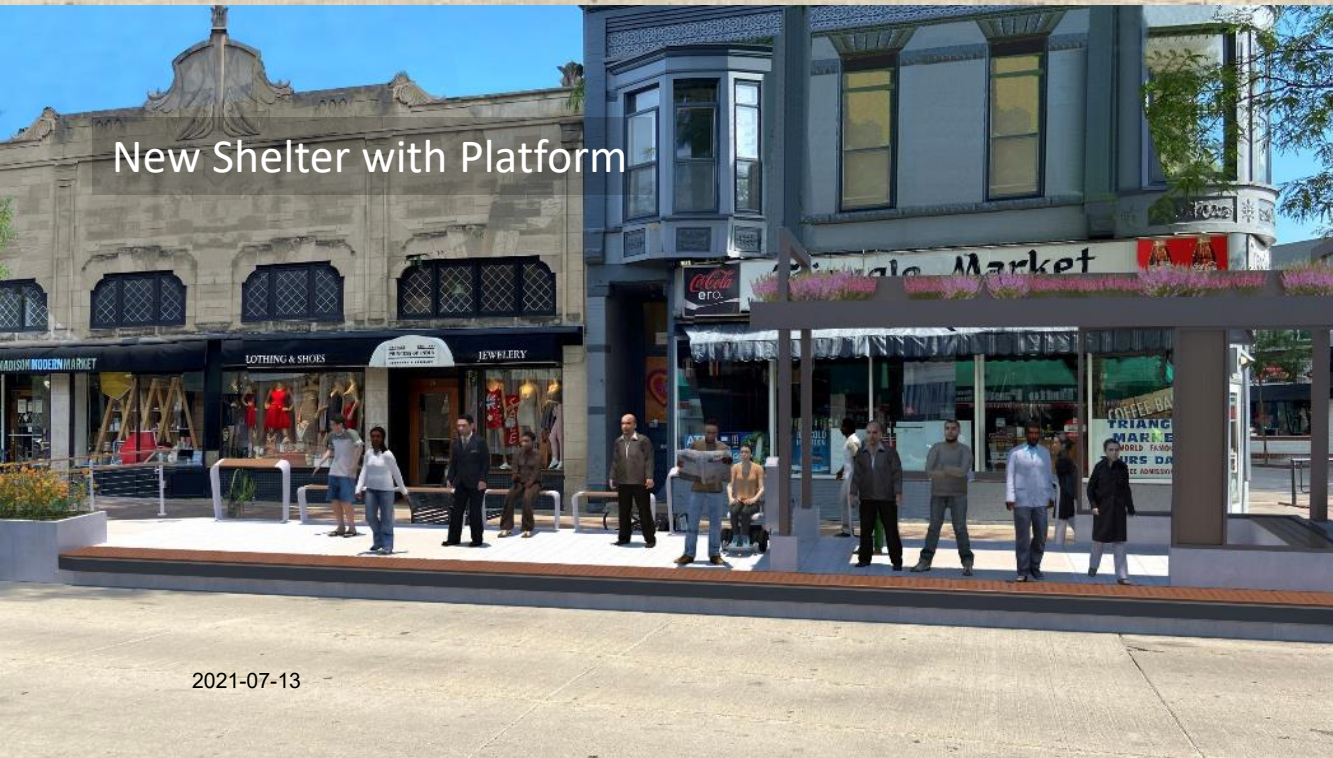
Existing Location Triangle Market



Existing Shelter with Platform



New Shelter with Platform





Existing Shelter



Existing Shelter with Platform



New Shelter with Platform