

# Madison East-West Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Planning Study

## Public Meeting #2: Preliminary Alternatives Workshop

6:00-7:30 PM, May 14, 2019

Madison Senior Center, 330 West Mifflin Street

**Total Participants:** 84 signed in

**Video Recording:** <https://media.cityofmadison.com/Mediasite/Play/7be9640f9f32488bb1020269a3e4d82b1d>

### Format

The meeting began with a presentation by city staff and the consultant team to share information about the project background, goals, planning process, funding opportunities, and preliminary East-West BRT route alternatives. A video recording with sign language translation is linked above.

Following the presentation and Q&A, participants dispersed into three breakout rooms with maps and additional information about the east, west, and downtown segments of the proposed East-West BRT route. Members of the project team were available to answer questions, and participants were able to add comments to the maps (see below).

### Presentation Q&A

- With a 2024 starting date, how quickly can BRT be expanded to the outskirts, Sun Prairie and Middleton?
  - Tom Lynch: We will be working with partners to figure out how they may participate in BRT implementation, and sharing in the costs. BRT is expensive. May create a lighter service to the far east and west in the near term, and perhaps also to the north and south side; may begin to move forward with these changes prior to 2024.
- What can we do as general public to get an RTA? What is bogging this down? Need to make a grassroots effort.
  - Tom: RTAs are being re-termed "LTOs (local transportation options)"; the broader we can make this tool and appeal for all types of communities, both rural and urban, the more appealing it will be to the State Legislature (who will be needed to enact them).
- Will evening service be up until midnight or 24 hours?
  - Tom: Full 24 hours is unlikely, but we will explore. Costly to provide 24 hour service, so there may be limited service during some early morning times when ridership is extremely low.
- What does "two times slower for cars" mean?
  - Jeff Held: Total travel time; increase from 15 to 30 minutes from Square to East Towne Mall.
- What affect will BRT stations and runningways have on tree canopies?
  - Tom: Only a few spots considered for shifting curb locations that would impact trees – probably only about 5%; 95% of routes will not affect trees; stations might, but there are



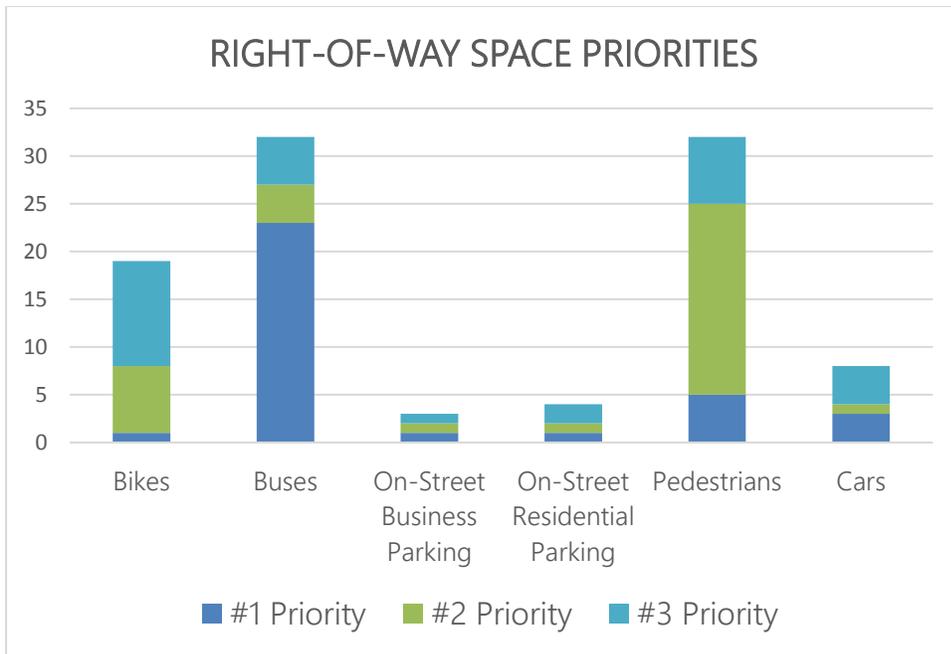
options to place stations in curb bump-outs within the parking lanes, which might help reduce impact to trees.

- BRT not building on current service?
  - Tom: Study done in 2013 shows highest ridership along east-west. BRT will complement existing Metro service. Would like to see better service on East Wash on the weekends. Will serve those on the periphery but also those working downtown. There are 70 events on the Square every year – events that the Metro routes detour— exploring putting buses back on Square during the Saturday farmers market; if possible, would like to have BRT stations operable on the Square, even if the bus routes are detoured. If people know to arrive at a station and a bus will be there, they don't care what route it would take between stations.
- Shared bus and bike lane? How would this work?
  - Tom: We want to have complete streets and accommodate all modes of travel; however, this is not always possible due to space constraints. City Transportation Policy and Planning Board (TPPB) is discussing designating certain streets for prioritizing certain modes. In Chicago, they have a modal hierarchy that begins with pedestrians because they are most vulnerable, then goes to buses because they carry the most people. These are hard choices, but will need to make strategic choices.
- Any changes to current bus service due to the delay of BRT?
  - Tom: Operating costs are limited by the city's levy. Metro is in competition with lots of city services when trying to increase bus service. We will explore how current services would serve the BRT, and hopefully look for some operating cost efficiencies.
- I live on East Wash; how will the BRT increase services to leisure riders, how can we increase the number of riders?
  - David Trowbridge: Working on a mechanism for developers and business owners to provide bus passes to their employees, as an incentive for them to use the bus.
- In terms of biking and walking, will increased pedestrian safety be involved in the BRT?
  - Tom: Capital budget requests are due Friday. We have requested funding for a pedestrian study; in some places, flashing crosswalks are used. However, on a road like East Wash with three lanes, it can seem unsafe. For example, if cars in two lanes stop but the third lane does not, it adds some risk. We will study it and see if there are new treatment options.
- When you talk about moving the buses for downtown events, would ticket kiosks be moveable?
  - Tom: No. Shelters are expensive, each costs just under \$500K. Investment will be nicer than bus stops and design will contribute to the speed. Our desire is to have stations operable as many days of the year as possible.
- Why do we need transfer points once BRT is implemented?
  - Tom: Very important for transfers from local service to BRT.
- You mentioned frequent service every 10-15 minutes; how can we guarantee that this service will be more frequent than what we have now with Metro?
  - Tom: Will have to adapt our system to meet the growing needs and demands of the next many years. Operating costs will go up about 5% and some local routes will need to change.



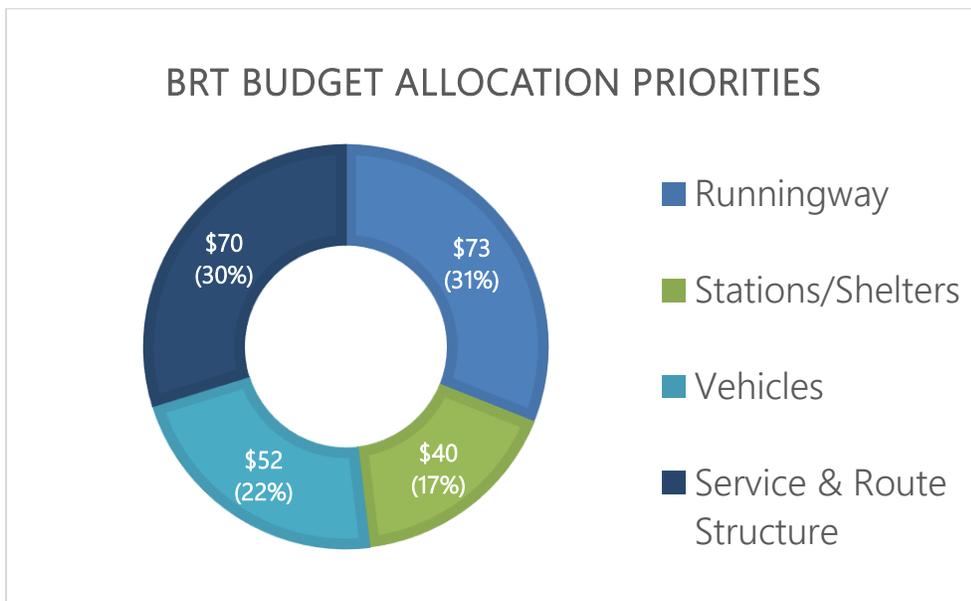
## Right-of-Way Space Priorities Input

The following responses were collected from 34 comment worksheets that asked participants to rank their top 3 priorities for the use of street and sidewalk space along the East-West BRT route.



## Budget Priorities Input

The following data was collected from 28 worksheets that asked participants to allocate \$9 among four BRT system features, with high, medium, and low investment options for each category. A new bus garage was identified as a necessary “given.” Participants allocated a total of \$235 across the four categories.



## Breakout Room Map and Discussion Comments

### General Comments

- Mode shift assumed. But no growth either.
- Don't make existing local service worse.
- More park and rides?
  - Yes
- Could driver's license be scanned instead of bus pass? A few free rides per month
- Any way to use RR Row for BRT?

### Downtown

- Do not bring BRT to the square. Use outer ring (revisit this) possibly change direction of outer ring flow
- Use current outer ring for all (No Henry)
- Like the closeness to city/country and convention center and hotels for outer loop
- Love using Doty/Wilson rather than the square. I have been caught out in the past by detours on the outer loop when I wasn't aware of them
- Like the capitol loop route. Most of the big employers are already there
- Incentivize people using park and ride for work so they will take BRT
- \*drawing
- Add APS at park crossing
- We have to adjust enforcement of current regulations (NO beer trucks in bus lanes on University), and change zoning- eliminate parking minimums for new and old residential and commercial
- Would like to see a stop for the hospital
- This needs to have good connections to other routes so it is accessible to more than just those who live on route- ex: older folks can't walk two blocks to transfer between on/off square stops. They won't use this.
- I'm sure you've considered how a route directly on the square will impact the pleasantness of being a walker at events or restaurants. Just want to put my vote in for the alt. route to walk on.
- Prefer option to use the capitol square. The experimental approach during the farmers market is working well.
- East Wilson and King- large tree (invasive) which blocks vision
- Wilson- no BRT, more noise, etc.
- Henry Street: Buses/trucks for overture parked there frequently

### East Side

- Remove parking on E Wash for dedicated bus lane
- Just get rid of parking on E Wash
  - Green stickers at South West and South East Corners of E Wash and N First intersection
- Need park-n-rides for folks living in Madison who don't live on the route otherwise they won't use it
- Bikes don't need to be on every street. Bikes vs. buses is bad for everyone. Bikes are flexible and can be prioritized on the next block
- Dedicated lanes for BRT! Whether removing a travel lane or removing a parking lane
- Eliminate E Wash parking!
- Don't worry about E Wash bike lanes- let them use Mifflin/Cap city: signed, a cyclist
  - "agree" was written by someone else on the same note
- Parking around her is not even used on most of the weekends (referring to block of E Wash between N Ingersoll and N Paterson)
- Keep parking – new businesses shouldn't be penalized



- Ped. Crossing! For Salvation Army folks to Beacon (referring to crossing of Blount St. at E. Wash)
- Median-running could work here on E Wash (between N. Blount and N. Blair)
- DMV- ID'S access
- Need good transit access to East DMV on Bartillon Drive, Main Street used to get IDs for voting. Could be in conjunction with MATC access
- Like the MATC route- I would ride BRT if I could get to MATC
- Like the idea of extending Mendota for bus only. Sitting at 51/151 intersection would cost too much time and too much disruption to the car traffic
- Do not divert to MATC, not enough ridership
- Can this (route on Anderson St.) connect to airport? Is there a traffic study for originating traffic at airport?
- Station here (Near cross of N Stoughton road and E Wash) needs lots of lighting!
- Heat lamps at hubs
- East side safe crossings over E Wash
- Accessibility is important
- North Street changes (red dots)
  - Stop at Southeast corner of Milwaukee St. and E Wash
  - Stop at Northwest corner of North St. and E Wash
  - Better pedestrian crossing between Oak St. and E Johnson St on E Wash
- Heavy populated areas pushing off E Wash; lots of pedestrians; Winnebago and Willie (S), Johnson and Gorham (N)
- Stevens Field—new venues lower Wash lots of pedestrians and on-street parking! Where is the parking going to go?
- Should MP stop at Oakwood village? Large senior population which is expected to double

### West Side

- Use mineral point. Odana rd. is dying and too narrow, dump current west transfer point
- Westgate has Hy-Vee and a convenient walk for west TP – but mineral pt. corridor is faster, has bus lane, makes more sense
- I hope we can keep the current west transfer point and find a route up to mineral point that cuts along west side and research park
- Bus transfer moved to Garner park
- West alternative route 2 will be more advantageous given that Westgate will go through redevelopment—provides better service to University Research Park.
- Can you provide options to get to Odana Road commerce from mineral point?
- What is the point if it doesn't link to useful landmarks?
- Odana to Watts, Schroeder (Woodman's)
- Dedicated lanes! (on the west end of Mineral Point Rd)
- Make the route on Mineral Point Rd. (or even keep it on University Ave) and move the transfer point west! (referring to transfer point at corner of Tokay Blvd and S Whitney Way)
- This commercial area (Near Tokay Blvd transfer point) is dead/vacant. Same with much of Westgate and Odana Rd and West Towne. Is all this going to be redeveloped as retail or residential?
- Preference for high investment in BRT to discourage driving
- BRT stations are too close together on Mineral Point and S Whitney Way
- Will regular bus service down Regent St. be adjusted due to BRT service? It seems too many resources using Regent St.
- Steep hill at Whitney and Sheboygan could be an issue for BRT on an icy winter day



- Need to add park and ride lot near BRT stop at Whitney and Sheboygan there is a great street park and ride [unclear word]
- I'd put the stop on this side (Northwest corner of intersection at Campus Drive and Highland Ave.) of the hospital complex. Anyone going to emergency is not likely to use a bus!
- It is a pedestrian nightmare to cross university at University Bay Dr.
- Dedicated bus lanes please (Campus Dr. after Midvale Blvd when going west)
- Segoe stretch will have conflicts with: regular bus traffic, BRT, regular auto traffic, bicycles using Segoe to get into Madison Yard, Madison Yard will have an opening for truck service
- I prefer that the station (regarding the station at Segoe and Sheboygan) be on Sheboygan maybe near old transportation building, stop closer to where many riders live.
- Use University Ave to WW instead of Sheboygan?

## Comment Cards

The following comments were collected from 27 comment cards, worksheets, and follow-up emails. Comments that addressed multiple topics have been separated in order to better categorize them below.

### General

- Very excited.
- Thank you all for all this work and all these options!
- Thank you for putting so much work into this! BRT is necessary given our climate crisis.
- We should actively discourage cars. BRT++; make driving as unappealing as possible, 2x slower trips on corridor is good. Long-term goal: car-free isthmus. Medium-term goal: free bus fare for all residents.
- In favor of High BRT Investment Level (provided there is no widening of roadways; just reusing existing pavement).
- Thank you for trying to reduce the problems of the East-West corridor. Riding the #6 bus was horrible when I was attending Madison College. I would definitely go out to East Towne Mall much more if the BRT would operate in any way!
- Thank you for doing an excellent job!
- I think your case would be enhanced if you specifically show how this helps low-income Madisonians. I hypothesize that it does by plugging them into a fast transfer (even if they don't live on the route), enabling them to live further from jobs. And de-clogging improves the economy overall.
- Electric is most important for local buses. We have to combat climate change or we won't have a planet we can live on. It does NOT need to be "sleek" branding, however.
- Buses should be for leisure as well!

### Parking and Parking Lanes

- Don't let the parking complainers get in the way of building a proper BRT system.
- On-street parking serves the lowest number of people and is not an equity-conscious use of public space. On-street parking should be the lowest priority for use of public right-of-way.
- On-street parking is generally dangerous for pedestrians and bikers who should be prioritized on this corridor. The number of parking spots on this route is small, and from what I can tell, they seem infrequently used in high capacity BRT is meant to help replace some of the car traffic. Use existing parking to add BRT lanes and prioritize the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians.
- We should eliminate parking and make it more expensive. I did not pay enough when I had a car. Speed and convenience for drivers should be significantly reduced in favor of other modes of transportation, to incentivize their use.
- Prioritize re-use of existing parking lanes to avoid street widening.



- On-street parking for both businesses and residences is a good target to omit/reduce.
- On-street parking on arteries (E. Wash) should be removed for dedicated bus lanes.
- Never, ever prioritize parking. I sold my car and bus/walk/bike everywhere. On a daily basis, at least 1-5 cars threaten my life by driving through stop signs, red lights, crosswalks, etc. This is due to drivers' perception that they are the priority in this city. As an isthmus, minimal room needs to be spent on parking/personal vehicles. Please, eliminate parking. Make BRT and multi-modal transit the best way to get around.
- I am absolutely in favor of eliminating parking lanes to allow BRT access.
- Must understand residential parking and street park & ride in the Hill Farms neighborhood.
- I am very much in favor of eliminating car lanes to make dedicated bus lanes. Parking too. We need to start moving away from cars as a primary means of transit and this is a great way to help encourage mode switching.

### Pedestrians

- Pedestrian walkability throughout the city needs to be encouraged through investments to make pedestrian travel safe.

### Bicycles

- Bicycle thoroughfares are important, but may not need to share space on arteries, especially when bike paths are nearby such as Cap City Trail.
- Regarding bike/bus shared lanes. I like Tom Lynch's idea of street typology vs. complete streets. In Chicago, having bikes and buses share lanes was disastrously slow. I don't think bikes need to be on every street. If they can use Jenifer Street, two blocks away with relatively few cars that's perfect for biking, then let's not slow buses down. Very against complete streets!
- Not sure that University and East Wash need dedicated bike lanes where parallel alternative off-street paths already exist.
- When improving roads, don't forget bikes.
- I favor street typology—bike-dedicated streets protect bikers.
- Not sure between personal vehicle lanes and bicycle facilities.
- East Wash— seems like there is no option to eliminate parking and car lane. What about protected bike lanes? How is a cyclist supposed to use that area without conflicting with bus or cars? (I just want to see a plan.)

### Station Design

- Increased hours of service! With considerations of putting stations in middle of street – otherwise, where will I put my trash? On the grass between sidewalk and street? Station on median island with secure crosswalks? Good bus service should not be limited to work-based needs but include recreational (for lack of better word) ridership. Why can't bus [?] be a requirement for new housing "providers"?
- I don't care how fancy the stations are, but heat please.
- A station should not cost more than a four-bedroom house!

### Lane Use and Stop Locations

- Use curbside lanes for travel, center travel lanes would have problems with snow.
- Make more bus stops after the signal. Bus drivers accelerating from a full stop at the signal—they often go through red lights, interrupting the flow of cross traffic. Implement red light cameras and use the revenue for buses.
- Why can't John Nolen be used? Take over part of far right lanes. No reason bus doors can't be adapted to switch sides—special order in bulk?
- Prefer shoulder vs. median running.
- Streamline as much as possible. Eliminate deviation to MATC-Truax. Use current outer ring alignment for all buses in BRT.



- Compromise will be required with personal vehicle lanes.
- I'm in favor of public transportation, but I don't think it should strongly impact current parking and other vehicles in an area that is as limited in space and options as downtown Madison. Goods will not be transported by bus, and for many situations and families bus transport will not be practical. (For example, you aren't going to take your sick child, dog, family member that can't climb steps, or wife about to deliver a baby on a bus.) So we still need space for trucks, cars, etc.

### Service

- In order for BRT to be successful, it needs to be accessible and useful to as many as possible. This means people who don't live on the route, and people who use the route to conduct their business. Practically, this means:
  - Maximal consideration for transfers. This route needs to be easy to connect to from feeder routes (esp. the square).
  - Maximal consideration for landmarks and activity centers on route. Skipping malls on west side for speed along makes no sense.
  - Par-n-ride for in-Madison riders at several points along route.
- Bus passes, apps need to be easy to use, promoted frequently and accurate. Love MCTS (Milwaukee) app but occasionally inaccurate.
- To more rapidly address north (Sherman Ave,) and south (Park St.) BRT routes, use Milwaukee County model of BRT-lite (e.g., blue, green, red, gold lines). This model requires much less capital investment, but should build ridership and support for eventually full BRT on those two routes.
- Crossing 6 lanes (University Ave/East Wash) requires special attention – creative solutions.
- 2024 is a long time from now. Could we start increasing frequency and hours of operation (BRT-Lite) sooner? I think this would increase support for BRT funding. BRT-lite for S. Park Street ASAP.
- Both regular commuters and occasional riders need frequent service. Weekend service is more optional, and practical to do by car.

### West Side Alternatives

- What about circling the west side – Mineral Point to Odana?
- Prefer Odana (2W), not MP. With this addition to E-W accessibility, moving the West Transfer Point would be hard on areas south of the Beltline, so I like 2W.
- I like option 2 for westbound (not Mineral Point).
- I think we should go with the west route option #2 since it goes closer to the grocery stores near the west transfer point.
- Use Mineral Point and then extend to Middleton. Odana Road is a loser – how much ridership do you generate there now, and what is the vacancy rate, and it's winding and narrow. We already have bus lanes on MP: use them!
- In favor of West Routing Alternative 1W.

### Downtown Alternatives

- I support off-the-square route.
- Prefer outer loop (2D) vs. Capitol Square
- I like option 2 for downtown (not Capitol square).
- In favor of Downtown Routing Alternative 1D (even during most events like Farmer's Market, etc.)

