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Mayor Rhodes-Conway and Metro Transit Release New Designs of State Street BRT Stations to Address Concerns

Today, Madison Mayor Rhodes-Conway and Metro Transit released new renderings of the two Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations planned for State Street. BRT will have two stops at the top of State Street as it will run on only three of the eight blocks of State Street (100 to 300 blocks) before turning off the street.

About a quarter of a million people boarded buses on upper State Street in 2019. BRT will make it faster and more convenient to access all the stores, theatres and amenities in this cultural and retail destination. Many cities have found that BRT increases business development and revitalization opportunities.

“Madison has been pursuing high capacity rapid transit for 30 years. With \$80 million set aside in President Biden’s budget, Madison is now on the brink of success,” said Mayor Rhodes-Conway. “Our federal BRT application is one of only six nationwide recommended for funding next year. I believe we can accommodate many of the legitimate concerns raised by business owners and reap the benefits of rapid transit for our residents, our economy, and our transportation system.”

The station design being released today represents stations that have:

- Smaller platforms, reduced from 75 feet to 50 feet. These platforms are particularly helpful for disabled riders.
- Reduced shelter sizes that are the same size as those which exist today.
- More transparent shelters with fewer vertical elements – making it easier to see storefront windows through them.
- A reduced impact on stores, sidewalk cafés and street vending areas through their street positions.

“We have been listening to, and working to address the concerns of, State Street businesses over the past several years. Today we are releasing a modified BRT station design which is more context sensitive and will improve the transit situation for the entire street,” said Transportation Director Tom Lynch.

In 2024 when BRT is implemented:

- Upper State Street will likely have about 60 percent fewer buses during peak hours than what existed in 2019. And the majority of those buses will be quiet, zero emission electric vehicles.
- Lower State Street is likely to have NO buses running on it.
- The ten bus stops on State Street are likely to be consolidated into just the two BRT bus stops.
- State Street will have consistent service every 5 minutes from 6 am to midnight connecting it to West Towne, Hilldale, the Cap East District, and East Towne.

A multi-year public consultation process created the “Locally Preferred Routing Plan” for BRT, which was approved by the Common Council twice. It involved over 14 public meetings and 7,000 contacts and responses. The Capitol Square and three blocks of State Street were identified as part of this plan because:

- It provides the most direct access to the visible economic and cultural center of the city.
- It connects the UW and the Capitol Square using a fast and direct route.
- It provides the opportunity to transfer from local routes to BRT easily.
- Eastbound and Westbound stations are within eyesight of each other.
- There is space to accommodate stations as well as pedestrians.
- It avoids a 0.4 mile 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.

This Locally Preferred Routing Plan was evaluated by Federal Transportation Administration, given an excellent rating and recommended for \$80 million in funding in the FY 2022 Federal Transportation Budget. Any delay could put this \$160 million infrastructure project at risk, thus risking the jobs it will bring and Madison’s transportation future.

View the additional PDF email attachment to see the new proposal regarding BRT stations.

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