

MCC Minutes, 7 February 2012

Present: Susan Minogue, Ann Bucher, Jerry Arbes, Betsy Darrah, John Lahti, Alex Leavitt, Bill Mahoney, Barney Mansavage, Pieter VanDermeulen, Kim Herber, Francis Wood, Kevin O'Doherty, Lee Badovinus, Marilyn and Bob Henry, Casey Losh, Jim Stennett, Carla Caldwell, Winky McCoy, Jim Richardson, Annie Lamb, Levert Banks, Betsy Arel, Rebecca Parker O'Neil, Carolyn Pinkett, Ben Chotzen, Ed St. Onge, Henry Matthews, Pat Braus, Mary Gallway, Ruth Yeomans, Molly O'Brien-Smith, Else Fritzner, David Rudo,, Rob Ward, Frank Chiachieve, Marge Lutton, Joseph Singer, Jon Blake, Mishi Faruqee, Herschel Parnes, Jill Hostetter, Aly Frei, Lynn Kohner, Allie Howard, Shoshana Driver, Kamilah Brown (representing Larry Gossett), Kate Perry, Linda Cies, Lee Stephenson, Sheryl Allen, Jerry Sussman, Lauren Honaker, Terna Nesoff, John Stewart, David Allen, Ashley DeForest, Jack Latiman (Metro Planner), Jack Wizner and Jeremy (Metro Planners), Deirdre McCrary (That's 61)

Susan suspended introductions in view of the number present and the need to save time.

She reminded those present of the SNAP workshop on Thursday, Feb. 9, at 7 pm at Madrona K-8 and encouraged people to attend. She also reminded folks that Bingo Night is Friday at 6 pm at Madrona K-8.

Barney called for nominations for the various Neighborhood Appreciation Day awards, Nora Award, Local Hero, Tyrone Love Unsung Hero, Madrona Resident for Life and handed out a summary of specifics. Nominations can be sent to madronanews@gmail.com. Ceremony will occur at unspecified date in March at Madrona K-8.

David Allen from SDOT Maintenance Division (David.Allen@seattle.gov) asked for feedback from those present about the first phase done this fall of the sidewalk repair and removal of 6 trees on the northern 2/3 of the block. The plan had been to proceed with phase 2 this year, which they will proceed with unless comments cause them to change the timing. There is room left for plantings. Responsibility for doing so is the adjacent property owner's, but he suggested the community might want to take it on as a joint project.

Question: Couldn't they leave the trees and just fix the sidewalk?

Answer: The trees were put in by Forward Thrust at a time when there wasn't much understanding about which tree species to use. They have since learned that these trees pull up the sidewalk, and the City is looking for long-term solutions so that the don't have the continual expense of replacing the sidewalk. The City's policy is to replace two trees for every one removed--just replace them in more appropriate places so that they don't interfere with overhead wires, etc.

Question: Who is responsible for the sidewalk when trees uproot it?

Answer: The property owner is responsible for the sidewalk, but if the City has planted the trees that cause the problem, the City is responsible. The City has a record of every tree it has planted.

Sarah Westneat said that 29 trees are scheduled for removal and that her group is applying for grants to create solutions. She'd like more time to find funding, and the City

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doesn't now have sufficient funds anyway to proceed. Bob Henry asked whether a neighbor could do the work himself and was told he would need to coordinate with the City and get a permit.

Dave Allen said that the planning for phase 2 is still in the early stages, so if Sarah's group can come up with the plan and funding, they'll coordinate. One person asked that consideration be given to the pollen-producing nature of certain trees, which makes some streets impassible for asthmatics during pollen season. Dave Allen doesn't know trees, but he will find out an answer. A show of hands slightly favored waiting for a community plan and funding.

Ashley DeForest, Planner and Outreach for Metro introduced Jack Latiman, lead transit planner, and Jeremy (?) and Jack Wizner, Metro Planning Dept. Mr. Latiman described the purpose of the meeting--to get feedback on proposals and give accurate representation of people's responses in order to inform management, who will make the final decisions. He polled interest in three routes: #2, 3, and 27. Most were present to discuss changes in #2, a few for #3, and one for #27. Ashley invited anyone to email (ashley.deforest@kingcounty.gov) or call (206-684-1154) her with comments.

Question: Why is the #27 being given part of the #2 route?

Answer: Two routes now run parallel on First Hill only 15 minutes apart. Metro can attract more riders by putting the routes onto the same street. The change will create more capacity to bring passengers up the hill at Marion. This fall there was a charge to reduce congestion--the free ride will disappear, which will slow all routes because of the need to collect fares, which will lead to slower movement on Third Ave. When Third closed in 2005 for tunnel installation, the stop pattern changed so that buses now have to pass one another, which slows all routes. Where the #2 now turns off Third is the maximum load point, and Metro needs to reduce congestion there. The #2 is not the only popular route being proposed to split, and he named several throughout the city. Another reason is reliability--putting #2 and 12 on Madison will help with timing and connections to transfer.

Question: Why is Metro only now asking for comments when changes are already planned?

Answer: This is only the second round of proposals; the first round resulted in some amendments after comments were received.

Question(s): Why is there now no access to the retail corridor? Why can't Madrona have a dedicated bus not shared with Queen Anne? If 3rd and Spring is a choke point, why not put creative energy into solving that left-turn choke in a way that doesn't eliminate Madrona's convenient access to light rail, Seattle Center, downtown core? Some people chose their homes for access to convenient transportation. Transfers are painful for disabled people and they take more time.

Comment: The #2 is a lifeline for seniors and students of many local schools. A public vote in 1972 agreed to combine Seattle Transit and the suburban system into Metro with the promise to maintain the trolley lines. Madison is not a safe street for pedestrians--little going on at night; steeper hill; it's a dedicated street for emergency vehicles. When a brick house on Denny and 34th was torn down in order to put in a rectifier station, the City promised that the station would be attractive and that the community would receive good bus transportation in perpetuity, by an arrangement worked out between then-

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Councilman George Benson and the community. Question: Does Metro have any legal or moral obligation to honor that promise to Madrona?

Jerry Arbes made several points:

- The issue is the desire to have increased frequency on Madison, but the Transportation Management Plan says nothing about using the #2 to accomplish that. The TMP calls for #11 on Madison. It seems more important to have good coverage provided by the #2 route. The 10 and 12 do serve the Marion causeway, but cutting the 10 and 12 would move the #2 to cover that. To improve the efficiency of the #2, he proposed moving the existing bus stop at 3rd and Spring either forward or backward to accommodate a right-hand lane and install a transit-priority signal. Currently in the "Spring Street weave," the bus moves right, then left, then right and has to compete with traffic trying to get onto I-5. Make a transit-only lane on Spring St/ with an island for people to get off and get to the library. This proposal received enthusiastic applause.

Question: The #2 used to go down Madison to 6th, then to Union and left to 3rd. There were two right-turn lanes, one for cars and one for buses. Why can't Metro do that again?

Answer: The #2 ran on Madison before 1978, but the wires on 5th and 6th are now gone.

Question: First and Madison is not metropolitan Seattle, which is what Metro was designed to serve. There are many condos and apartments on First Hill that won't be served under the new proposal. They will need to walk to Virginia Mason to take the bus. Boren is too congested right now to use. Could the city eliminate the three or four parking spaces on the south side of the library between the garage and 5th or those by the Courthouse to eliminate the congestion?

Answer: No, those parked cars are a bomb buffer (sic?)

Question: What about costs of changes? Is there an existing trolley route on Madison? To move one bus stop is said to cost \$350,000. Is there funding?

Answer: Yes, there are trolley lines on Madison. SDOT does have funds for bus bulbs.

Question: Frequency and long waits are an issue with transfers. A direct route is more predictable and less time-consuming. The questioner feels skeptical about promises of frequency.

Answer: On 3rd many routes go uptown: #1, 13, 16, 24, 33--every 15 minutes.

Question: Many were not aware of the proposed changes until today and were made aware only by emails or neighbors, although they are bus riders. How many along the route would feel as the people represented here but haven't been informed?

Answer: The first round of outreach in November put posters on buses, but the posters were necessarily general in nature and were mostly about the RapidRide. Because there aren't dedicated buses for routes, posters specific to certain runs would have to be posted on the particular buses each day. A rider alert will go out in February giving details. This round as many as possible bus shelters were posted. Metro is doing

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more electronic notification, and Ashley encouraged people who use email to sign up. There is an updated Facebook page and a blog, as well. There has been more interest and coverage in the second round. Information gets sent but not necessarily posted by newspapers and blogs. All submitted comments are recorded by Metro. She also encouraged people to complete the second survey (different from the first one) because the information helps inform future planning efforts. Ashley reported that the Central Area was not well represented in the recent survey.

The Metro team explained that these are still proposals and that the call will be made at the management level with the City Council members as to which proposals take effect. Metro makes recommendations to the Council, and it acts on its own schedule. Someone asked what else we can do to show overwhelming community feeling about not changing the route.

Answer: Take the survey (www.kingcounty.gov/metro/HaveASay), which allows you to say what you like or dislike; write or email County Council representatives and executive, Dow Constantine, and City Council representatives, including Richard Conlin from Madrona. Metro will give its recommendation to the City Council on Feb. 22, but no decisions will be made then. Citizens can attend and sign up to comment at that meeting.

Three people expressed some liking for the changes, but all three found the overall proposal flawed, and two of them didn't want the route to change just for their convenience; the other thought some pieces could be kept but not all.

Someone made the point that the proposals seem to optimize movement into and out of the city at the expense of those living and working inside the city. This comment received applause.

Question: What is the productivity of the #2 in relation to other routes?

Answer: It is among the most productive routes but no longer pays its way--no route does. All of the most productive routes have been changed by Metro in an effort to improve them. Budget shortfalls have not driven any of the proposed changes. It's a zero-sum system.

King County Councilman Gossett's aide, Kamilah Brown, will be taking comments collected at this meeting back to him. He is on the Transit/Environment/Economy committee. Let him know your personal stories.

Question: What about the possibility of turning onto 3rd off Madison?

Answer: There are no switches, but Metro also doesn't want a turn at 3rd & Madison or Marion. They want to eliminate all left turns off 3rd. The #3 and 4 will still turn left at James because there's no alternative, but Seneca is at maximum load, and James isn't.

Question: What about the connection to the ferry?

Answer: The alternative current service is the #12. Metro wants to make more buses available at peak times.

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Question: How can you gauge the interest of people who might favor the changes but aren't likely to show up at a meeting like this one? Although some would be inconvenienced a couple days a week by the changes, what about daily commuters for whom these changes planned by professionals might be useful?

Question: Is 1st Avenue an option, since it was used for two years during tunnel construction on 3rd?

Answer: No, using 1st led to ridership decline, and it will be quite congested from 2012 to 2016.

Question: What about disabled and partially disabled people?

Answer: Metro has been holding special meetings at Center Park, Lighthouse for the Blind, etc. A new fleet of trolleys being purchased for 2014 will all have low floors.

Jerry Arbes and Ann Knight distributed flyers, urged people to go to the Metro open house meetings, contact Larry Gossett, Dow Constantine, Mayor McGinn, Richard Conlin.

Question: What about the #3? Nearly half of them don't go to Queen Anne. What will be the relation in the new proposal between the #3 and the #13?

Answer: The frequency will double to every 15 minutes.

Question: The #2 Express currently comes back to town empty. Why not make it a passenger bus back into the city?

Answer: They'll look at the possibility.

Adjourned at 8:55

Submitted by Deirdre McCrary, Secretary