

Feb. 11 Testimony to the Transit and Parking Commission On Eliminating Bus Stops

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For the record, I am Susan De Vos and speaking for myself. Please reconsider the elimination of bus stops in the older more densely-settled parts of Madison in the name of speeding up bus service to transfer points. These are Transit Oriented Developments that were developed long before that name even existed and are a legacy Madison should treasure, while taking away bus stops only legitimizes Madison's sprawling development of the last few decades. Often touted as a way of increasing the tax base, urban sprawl is actually a net monetary drain on city coffers in the long term, such as when roads need to be redone. To develop, Madison needs to focus on tastefully increasing density within its current city limits, and rather than making segregated areas on the outskirts for low income, senior, or disabled people, Madison needs to make housing more affordable throughout. One of a number of ways to do that could be to eliminate the minimum parking requirement contained in the "new" zoning code. The unintended consequence of requiring a parking minimum has become an issue in other cities as well.

Since a common refrain Metro uses to justify eliminating bus stops is to say that speeding up travel was the number one issue in the 2008 report of the Long Range Plan, I thought it helpful to clarify the matter. Although some on this body were here when the Plan was being developed, others were not, so don't know that it is being misinterpreted. When the person who chaired the subcommittee making the statement about travel time recently came to the WilMar Center to OPPOSE stop elimination on Jenifer St., you have to question the supposed justification. But I'll also quote from the Plan's first short-term recommendation regarding service (page 11):

Although it is the natural inclination of any system to grow, it is important that any expansion of the Metro service area only be undertaken if it does not harm existing service. In other words, adding new destinations on the periphery of the Metro system should not be done at the expense of service on existing routes.

Eliminating bus stops in the older parts of town to service new areas on the periphery is exactly OPPOSITE what the report recommends.