

# METRO NETWORK TRANSIT REDESIGN

Public Outreach Phase Three - Final Report

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

In November 2020, Metro Transit hired Jarrett Walker + Associates (JWA) to analyze and ultimately redesign the existing route system to meet the needs of Madison-area residents and businesses. Urban Assets (UA) was brought on to lead community engagement efforts for the project.

The project team working on this project has included staff from JWA, UA, Metro and the City of Madison's Department of Transportation.

Phase One of this project was completed June 2021 and provided information on the community's values and choices with regard to the existing Metro Network. Phase Two, which was launched in August 2021 and completed in November 2021, engaged the community in the evaluation of two competing network alternatives — ridership or coverage.

In Phase Two, the project team presented two competing network alternatives:

Ridership - maximizes frequency and the number of riders the network will draw. Service would cover less geographic area but would be more frequent and get people to their destination quicker.

Coverage - maximizes the number of people near bus service. More people would be near service, but service would be less frequent, and travel times would be longer.

The Phase Two survey results indicated a slight majority of respondents would prefer a network that prioritized ridership over coverage. The project team presented the Phase Two results to the Transportation Planning and Policy Board (TPPB). Based on the input, the TPPB directed the project team to develop a Draft Network that was mostly ridership with some coverage.

The Draft Network was available on the project website, as was the survey. Community members were also engaged through a series of community meetings and engagement sessions where they were educated about the Draft Network, able to ask questions and share concerns, and were encouraged to take the survey.

This document summarizes input received in the third and final phase of public input and how this input has informed the amendments proposed in the development of the Final Network, which will be proposed for adoption by the Common Council.

## PHASE THREE ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

The Draft Network design was presented throughout March, April, and May to a wide array of Madison communities at more than 50 community and neighborhood meetings. Community members were informed on the Draft Network, engaged in discussion with Metro staff, and encouraged to take the third community survey during these sessions. The community survey had 3,332 respondents; it was available online in

Spanish and English and was conducted between February 14, 2022, to May 1, 2022. Paper copies in Hmong, Spanish, and English were also available at Madison libraries.

Community meetings and the survey were promoted extensively by Metro throughout March, April, and May. These efforts included:

- Message boards at transfer points
- Posters bus wraps on buses
- Madison libraries
- Posters at downtown bus shelters
- 15 and 30-second radio spots (426 in total): WMMM, WOLX, Z104, WIBA-AM, WIBA-FM, Star Country, LaMovida, 93.1, and Magic 98.
- Metro Transit project website (Spanish and English pages)
- City of Madison online calendar
- Metro Rider Alerts
- Emails to key stakeholders: Metro Service Partners, Boys and Girls Club, Centro Hispano
- Social Media paid Facebook ad
- Social Media event, draft plan, and meeting dates posted on Facebook, Twitter, Twitter-Spanish, and Instagram
- Text Alerts for community meetings
- Newspaper ads: Fitchburg, Middleton, Middleton buyers Guide, Wisconsin State Journal, Capital Times
- 14,000 postcards to mailing zones with low-income housing
- Madison College Students: Goodman South Campuses, Truax Campus
- Posted to UW-Madison transportation website
- Email to every UW-Madison bus pass-holder
- Posters on UW-Madison campus
- Email sent to UW-Madison ASM
- Multiple UW-Madison newsletters: Inside UW, Working at UW, FPM employee newsletter
- Posters posted in on-campus bus shelters
- Email to entire UW-Madison student body

## Survey Takeaways and Themes

- A plurality of survey respondents felt the Draft Network presented would make their lives, families, community, and neighbors worse off than the current Metro Network. (46 percent worse vs 35 percent better).
- A plurality of respondents feel that Draft Network is better for Madison as a whole (40 percent better vs. 27 percent worse). With many people (26 percent) not sure what to think for Madison as a whole.
- 60 percent of respondents identified as “frequent riders” prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pre-COVID frequent transit riders were significantly more likely to feel that the Draft Network would be worse for them and their families (55 percent) vs. respondents overall (46 percent).
- Groups where the majority of respondents felt the plan would be worse for them, their families, and neighborhoods included seniors 65+, people with disabilities, and pre-COVID frequent transit riders.

- Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC)<sup>1</sup>, low-income, and frequent rider populations had a plurality against the Draft Network, even if opinions weren't as strong as the 65+ demographic.
- However, there were no statistically significant differences in net approval or disapproval of the network between BIPOC respondents vs. White respondents or all respondents.
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- Groups where a majority of respondents felt the plan would be better for them, their families, and Madison as a whole included younger adults ages 18 to 35.
- The most common request for additional service if more money were available is service to more places, anytime service is running (30 percent).
- Survey respondents are concerned about loss of bus routes, access to bus stops, and access to services (food, jobs, etc.).
- Seniors and people with disabilities hold the most trepidation around the Draft Network and feel their lives will be negatively impacted if finalized.

## Community Meeting Takeaways and Themes

The overall input received during the community meetings can be generally categorized into the following themes:

- Support for more of a coverage model vs. ridership
- People will have to walk farther to bus stops which will be difficult, especially in winter
- Service does not go into neighborhoods
- Plan is inequitable to low-income riders, people of color, and those with disabilities

The specific areas of concern that were raised multiple times included:

- Reduced all-day coverage on the north side (Route 21)
- Service to Pick 'N Save on Aberg Ave. (Route 17)
- Direct service from Old Sauk to downtown (Route 15)
- Allied Dr. and Nakoma Rd. neighborhoods (Route 19)
- Olin, Bay Creek, Bram, Capitol View, Burr Oaks, Fish Hatchery (Routes 13 and 4)
- Service on Buckeye east of I-39/90 (Route 35)

## Draft Network Plan Amendments

As the survey and community meetings were underway, the project team received continuous feedback from the public in the form of:

- Weekly snapshots of the survey responses
- Questions and concerns shared at the community meetings
- Hundreds of project emails received at [metroredesign@cityofmadison.com](mailto:metroredesign@cityofmadison.com)

This feedback provided critical real-time input on the Draft Network. As a result of this input, Metro staff began drafting amendments to address areas of concern, with a particular emphasis on low-income people, BIPOC, and existing Metro riders. As the amendments were developed, they were shared at the ongoing community presentations and further refined based on the input received. A total of 19 amendments were developed, some with multiple alternatives.

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<sup>1</sup> This term encompasses all people who identified with a defined race or ethnicity other than "White or Caucasian".

The Final Network will be based on the Draft Network, as modified by the amendments adopted by the Common Council. The Common Council will start from the basis of the amendments referred by TPPB. TPPB's referral of amendments will itself start from a recommendation provided by Metro staff.

## Metro Transit Draft Network Redesign Survey Results

Survey Duration: two and a half months (February 14, 2022, to May 1, 2022)

Total Respondents: (3,332 responses)

### What We See

The data below show how people responded when presented with the Draft Network on its impact on them individually, their families, their communities, and the city. The data also presents where people feel investments should be focused if extra resources are left in the budget.

Before digging into the data, it should be noted the Draft Network was a network design based upon TPPB's direction and the previous survey where respondents were presented with two network alternatives, a ridership network, and a coverage network. Respondents to the survey on alternatives had indicated a marginal preference for the elements of the ridership over the elements of the coverage alternative.

The questions and answers that follow are in response to being presented with a Draft Network that prioritized the elements of the ridership alternative, with some modifications to increase coverage, following the direction of TPPB.

**Question 1:** "Compared to existing service, would the proposed Draft Network be better for you and your family?"

Answer Choice	All	Frequent Transit Riders	Lower Income	BIPOC	Seniors (65+)	18-35 Years	Persons with Disabilities
Much better	17%	15%	18%	18%	12%	27%	13%
Somewhat better	18%	15%	15%	19%	10%	24%	11%
Neither better nor worse	13%	10%	11%	11%	11%	12%	8%
Somewhat worse	16%	19%	10%	14%	18%	14%	12%
Much worse	30%	36%	38%	33%	41%	19%	47%
Im not sure/I can't tell	6%	5%	8%	6%	8%	4%	8%

Table One: Draft Network individual and family impact n=3,332

Overall, 46 percent of survey respondents felt the Draft Network would be "somewhat worse" or "much worse" for them and their family, while 35 percent felt it would be "somewhat better" or "much better".

The group most in favor of the Draft Network were respondents 18 to 35 years old; 51 percent of respondents from this group believed the Draft Network would be "somewhat better" or "much better" than the existing service.

A majority of respondents from the following groups believed the Draft Network would be "somewhat worse" or "much worse" than the existing service for them and their families:

- People with disabilities (59 percent)
- Seniors aged 65 and over (59 percent)
- Frequent transit riders prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (55 percent)

**Question 2:** “Compared to existing service, would the proposed Draft Network be better for your neighborhood and community?”

Answer Choice	All	Frequent Transit Riders	Lower Income	BIPOC	Seniors (65+)	18-35 Years	Persons with Disabilities
Much better	15%	12%	15%	17%	10%	23%	11%
Somewhat better	17%	15%	16%	19%	9%	24%	10%
Neither better nor worse	12%	10%	9%	10%	10%	12%	10%
Somewhat worse	16%	19%	14%	13%	18%	13%	14%
Much worse	30%	34%	35%	33%	43%	19%	46%
Im not sure/I can't tell	10%	10%	12%	9%	9%	10%	8%

Table Two: Draft Network neighborhood and community impact n=3,273

A plurality of respondents also believed the Draft Network would be worse than existing service for their neighborhood and community. This trend is shown in table four below. 46 percent of survey respondents believed the Draft Network would be “somewhat worse” or “much worse” than the existing service.

Similarly, to responses to Question 1, the group most likely to think the Draft Network would be “somewhat better” or “much better” were respondents 18 to 35 years old.

A majority of respondents from the following groups believed the Draft Network would be “somewhat worse” or “much worse” for their neighborhood and community:

- People with disabilities (60 percent)
- Seniors aged 65 and older (61 percent)
- Frequent transit riders prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (53 percent)

**Question 3:** “Compared to existing service, would the proposed Draft Network be better for Madison as a whole?”

Answer Choice	All	Frequent Transit Riders	Lower Income	BIPOC	Seniors (65+)	18-35 Years	Persons with Disabilities
Much better	18%	15%	16%	18%	11%	27%	12%
Somewhat better	22%	20%	17%	23%	16%	27%	14%
Neither better nor worse	8%	8%	5%	7%	9%	8%	8%
Somewhat worse	12%	14%	14%	11%	18%	8%	18%
Much worse	15%	16%	25%	20%	16%	10%	28%
Im not sure/I can't tell	26%	27%	22%	20%	30%	21%	21%

Table Three: Draft Network city-wide impact n=3,273

When asked whether the Draft Network would be better or worse for Madison as a whole, a plurality of respondents (40 percent) believed that service would be “somewhat better” or “much better” than the existing service.

As in questions 1 and 2, the respondent group most likely to believe the Draft Network would be “somewhat better” or “much better” were people 18 to 35 years old (54 percent). A plurality of BIPOC respondents (41 percent) also believed the Draft Network would be better for Madison as a whole.

A significant plurality of respondents with disabilities (46 percent) believed the Draft Network would be “somewhat worse” or “much worse” than the existing service. Unlike in questions 1 and 2, however, no respondent groups had a majority believing that the Draft Network would be worse for Madison as a whole

It is also worth noting that many respondents weren’t sure how to answer this question (26 percent). This compares to 6 to 10 percent of respondents who weren’t sure about questions 1 and 2. This suggests that many respondents felt that question 3 was more difficult to answer.

Question 4: “If Metro Transit had additional money they could use to expand service, what is the ONE improvement you think they should invest in FIRST from the following list?”

Answer Choice	All	Frequent Transit Riders	Lower Income	BIPOC	Seniors (65+)	18-35 Years	Persons with Disabilities
More frequent weekend service	11%	10%	12%	11%	13%	12%	9%
More frequent evening service	8%	8%	9%	7%	4%	12%	8%
More frequent service at peak or rush hours	16%	17%	14%	21%	4%	20%	10%
More service after midnight	5%	5%	9%	6%	3%	7%	4%
Routes to more places, anytime service is running.	30%	29%	32%	28%	37%	27%	39%
Routes to more places, peak or rush hours specifically.	15%	17%	8%	11%	14%	11%	11%
Something else (please specify)	16%	15%	17%	15%	24%	11%	21%

Table Four: What to do with additional money for Metro Transit n=3,177

Responses to question 4 suggest that respondents were interested in a wide variety of possible improvements to transit in Madison, with no clear consensus on a single type of improvement. However, the most commonly requested improvement (30 percent) was “routes to more place, anytime service is running”.

The second and third most common were “more frequent service at peak or rush hours” (16 percent) and “routes to more places, peak or rush hours specifically” (15 percent). This suggests that concerns about peak hour service (31 percent in total) were about as prevalent as concerns about all-day service coverage (30 percent).

Both of these concerns mirror ways in which the Draft Network is different from existing or pre-COVID transit service in Madison.

- The Draft Network explicitly reduces the number of places located very close to a bus route. Asking for routes to more places would counter this.
- The Draft Network explicitly did not include a full design of the peak-hour network. Lack of information about the full range of peak-hour services may have caused concern.

The respondent groups most likely to want an expansion in all-day service coverage (“routes to more places, anytime service is running”) were people with disabilities (39 percent) and seniors aged 65 and over (37 percent).

The respondent groups most likely to be concerned with rush-hour service (“more frequent service at peak or rush hours” or “routes to more places, peak or rush hours specifically”) were pre-COVID frequent transit riders (34 percent). This is likely explained in part by the way transit service in Madison was organized prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, with twice as much service at peak hours as in the middle of the day. In other words, people who frequently used transit pre-pandemic may have been more likely than average to be concerned about peak-hour transit service.

## Open-Ended Survey Questions

Questions four and five asked open-ended questions. With Question Four, respondents were asked to elaborate if they wanted Metro Transit to spend additional money on “something else.” Question Five asked if there was anything else respondents wanted to let Metro Transit know about the Draft Network. The responses were put into common themes to analyze.



Question 4 (open-ended responses only, 5 percent of total responses to this question): "If Metro Transit had additional money they could use to expand service, what is the ONE improvement you think they should invest in" specification:

Tags	Number
Coverage	32
Frequency	81
Fish Hatcher/St. Vincent	18
Transfer Points	31

Table Five Respondents specifying open-ended part of Q4 n=162 (5% of n = 3,177 total responses to Q4)

A small number of respondents answered that their preferred improvement to transit would be "something else" in question 4 and specified what that something else was. Most of these responses were about frequency or coverage concerns, in some cases with reference to specific locations or routes.

Representative Comments

- "Expand current routes to stretch further to suburbs and reach more neighborhoods on the Isthmus."
- "I want more frequent routes during weekday peak/rush hour and during the evenings."
- "There is no route planned for Fish Hatchery Road, this is concerning for the food pantry located there, the laundromat, and Goodman South Madison college down the road from there. "
- "Maintain North transfer point for commuters from outlying areas to be able to access Metro services."

Question 5: "Is there anything specific that you like or dislike about the Draft Network Plan? Anything you'd like Metro Transit to know?" (Open-ended response).

Tags	Response	Total Tags
Loss of routes	34%	979
Access (to bus stops)	28%	815
Access (to services)	19%	552
Frequency	14%	397
State St/Downtown	11%	325

Table Six: Open-ended response on anything specific to add n=3,038

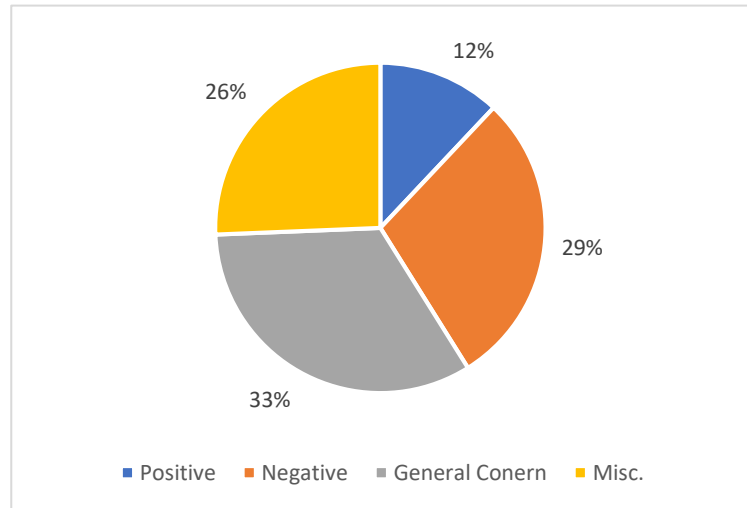
When asked to answer what about the Draft Network Plan they liked or disliked, the most popular silos of comments were 34 percent mentioning a loss of routes, 28 percent brought up access to bus stops, and 19 percent said access to services such as a grocery store.

Comments among those concerned with a loss of routes are populated with people talking about how the bus is their only way to access the city itself. Responses that brought up access to bus stops comments are

populated with concern about the distance between stops or walking distance, especially for people with disabilities. And access to important resources, cited in 19 percent of responses to this question, should be noted as important and impactful to these people's lives— food, jobs, healthcare, etc.

While the largest number of respondents were specifically concerned with the loss of specific routes, many comments regarding access to specific bus stops also mentioned the loss of routes. Considering the demographics who were most dissatisfied with the Draft Network (seniors and persons with a disability), we felt digging into access to bus stops more illuminating overall than loss of routes.

Graph One breaks down open-ended answers on bus stop accessibility. Most people commenting made either negative or comments of general concern. Common comments revolved around increased or excessive walking distance to a bus stop were quite common. This seems to provide context to the low favorability of the Draft Network among respondents that are older and/or people with disabilities. A particular concern is noted for those living outside of Downtown and the Isthmus or those trying to access resources outside of those geographic areas of the City of Madison.



#### Representative Comments

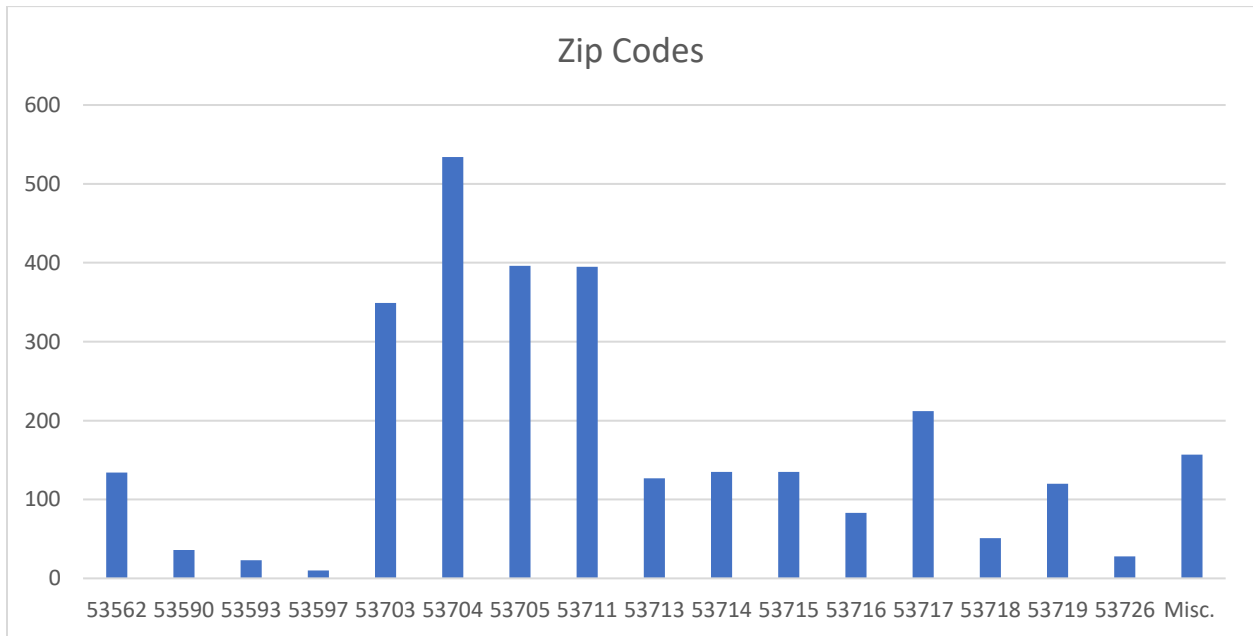
- “As someone who has been riding Madison Metro for 30 years, I see the new routes for those of us who live outside the Isthmus and Campus area getting less service. People ask me about riding the bus and they say they don't have routes where they live. I tell them they could park in a lot or on the street along the route and take the bus to avoid high parking expenses but that is too inconvenient for them. Now that I have a quite noticeable limp, walking a couple more blocks is a big problem for me, especially in winter. By making the bus more inconvenient to people outside campus and the isthmus, fewer people will ride. To get more people to use Metro, you need more routes outside the isthmus and campus. Even as the price of gas increases, people will not take the bus if it is not convenient to where they live.”
- “While walking longer to certain new routes may be okay on days where the weather is nice, the weather in Madison is oftentimes not very good; there is oftentimes rain, snow, extreme cold, or extreme heat. I do not like the prospect of having to walk out in bad weather to catch the bus.”
- “It eliminates too many routes inside residential neighborhoods, discouraging people from using public transit. It would make the bus much slower an option than car because of the extended walking distance.”
- “I love the incorporation of BRT and how well it fits. (I have separate issues with BRT in principle, but for a city of Madison's size — and in a plan like this — it makes a lot of sense.) Perhaps the best thing about this is the fact that at the far west end of town, I'll be able to directly access BRT that goes all the way downtown. That's \*SO\* great! I just wish I could safely bike from the South Point

Rd/Station 12 area to the BRT station on the far west end. As it stands, the roads I would take to get there are far too dangerous to make that feasible.”

- “I like the route to Hilldale and the East Side much better! I take the bus to work at Hilldale and the East Side and I volunteer on the East Side as well, so I am looking forward to this change!”
- “Ridge St in Madison does not have any sidewalks — a lot of children and family uses these roads to walk and ride their bikes. A bus route on this street is dangerous! This is a quiet neighborhood - the addition of a bus route along Ridge is not feasible. The road is too narrow, and traffic already has a hard time going in both directions as is.”
- “West Washington between Park and Regent would change from a major bus line (5) to zero coverage. Many seniors and disabled would effectively be cut off from Metro. A quarter-mile walk, more than 4 football fields, is not an option, and disabled service is woefully inadequate, and the first to be canceled during inclement weather, etc. While this proposal may suit many riders, those of us who have no alternative would suffer the most.”
- “Removing Route 2 and 28 service to Sherman Ave and Sherman Terrace would severely reduce accessibility for the many residents in the condos and apartments in this dense neighborhood.”
- Referencing state street/Downtown: “This will make Metro Transit a more viable option for people in my family and our neighborhood, whether we need to get to work or to go downtown for an event. I am excited about more direct routes to different hubs around the city without having to go downtown as well.”

## Survey Respondent Demographics

### Zip Codes



Zip Codes n=2,925

The highest percentage of responses (25%) responses came from the North and Northeast sides (53704) followed by the near West and Fitchburg (53711) and the Westside (53705)

### Metro Transit Use Prior to Covid-19

Answer Choice	Response
Never	11%
Occasionally	29%
Frequently	59%

Table Seven: Average use of Metro Transit n=3,011

Nearly 60 percent of respondents considered themselves frequent riders prior to Covid-19. This group is likely to be more sensitive to changes in the transit network than the average Madison resident, and expressed higher levels of trepidation about the Draft Network than respondents overall.

### Age

Answer Choice	Response
17 or younger	0%
18-24	10%
25-34	28%
35-44	19%
45-54	15%
55-64	13%
65-74	9%
75 or older	3%
Do not wish to answer	2%

Table Eight: Respondents Age n=3,034

While the 25-34 age demographic, at 28 percent, make up the largest single age bracket, the age population of the survey is comprehensive across age.

### Race/Ethnicity

Answer Choices	Response
Asian/Pacific Islander	6%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0%
Indigenous/Native American	1%
Black/African American	3%
African descent	0%
Hispanic/Latinx	3%
White or Caucasian	67%
Multi-racial	3%

Prefer not to answer	8%
Other (please specify)	1%
Skipped question	9%

Table Nine: Race/Ethnic identity n=3,462

Since the sample size for individual demographics were small (1% to 6%), the responses were grouped into BIPOC. For the purposes of the analysis, BIPOC includes Other, Hispanic/Latinx, Multi-Racial, African Decent, Black/African American, Indigenous/Native American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and Asian/Pacific Islander.

#### Income

Answer Choice	Response
Less than \$20,000	8%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	11%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	10%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	16%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	12%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	16%
\$150,000 or more	11%
Do not wish to answer	15%

Table 10: Income range n=2,975

There was a wide variety of incomes from the sample of respondents.

#### Disability Status

Answer Choice	Response
Yes	14%
No	77%
Prefer not to say	9%

Table 11: Disability status n=3,026

People with disabilities that are also 65+ make up 85 of 424 (20 percent) of the total of respondents who answered they identify as people with disabilities. The City of Madison is currently conducting a survey seeking additional input from people with disabilities.

## Community Meeting Results

The engagement team, Madison Metro, The City of Madison, and Common Council Alders, promoted and held a series of community meetings throughout the city presenting the Draft Network and seeking input. Community members were educated about the Draft Network, able to ask questions and share concerns, and encouraged to take the survey. Over 50 meetings were held, including:

- Northside (Districts 18 and 12)
- Southside (District 14)

- Near west and westside (Districts 5, 10, and 11)
- Far eastside (Districts 3, 16, and 17)
- Downtown (Districts 2, 4, 8)
- Isthmus near eastside (Districts 6 and 15)
- South Madison and near westside (Districts 13 and 14)
- Westside (District 19)
- Far westside and southwest (District 1, 7, 9, and 20)
- Neighborhood resource teams (9)
- Neighborhood associations (13)
- Community organizations (6)
- UW Students and faculty (2)
- Community meetings (5)
- Commission meetings (7)
- Affordable housing complexes (3)
- Metro Driver Appreciation Events (3)

Since the meetings were either geographically (i.e., aldermanic districts or neighborhood associations) or stakeholder (i.e., service providers or community-based organizations) based, the input received at each meeting was generally focused on specific neighborhoods, routes, bus stops, destinations, or specific stakeholder needs.

Recordings and presentations from many of the meetings are posted on the project website ([mymetrobus.com/redesign](http://mymetrobus.com/redesign)). Meeting notes are available upon request.

#### Representative Quotations from Community Meetings

##### DMNA - Feb 3rd, 2022

- "Southwest area access is not adequate now, and was not in COVID, but this is an improvement."
- "Saturday service is really important to get to all the activities that are downtown."-

##### Equal Opportunities Commission - Mar 10th, 2022

- "I worry about seniors having to walk further, especially in the winter."
- "Will the cost of fares be changing?"

##### Northside - Districts 12 & 18 - Mar 10th, 2022

- "This new plan will help with off-peak hour jobs."
- "I am concerned about additional walking distances for moms with kids and grocery bags. It will be even tougher for those with difficulty walking abilities."

##### Near Westside - Districts 5, 10, 11 - Mar 22, 2022

- "I am happy to see the amendments which will restore routes that were lost or reduced."

##### Fitchburg - Mar 28th, 2022

- "I appreciate the value of getting someplace faster, but I am concerned about people in wheelchairs. I am concerned about the distance they will have to travel to get to bus stops."

##### Northside Planning Council - Mar 29th, 2022

- "It is vital that we maintain access to the Pick n' Save on the Northside."

Lake Edge NA - Apr 18th, 2022

- "I am excited you have listened to input and are willing to make changes."