

The Seattle Department of Transportation

## Madison Street Corridor BRT Study

# Open House #2 and Design Workshop Summary

December 2014



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## MEMORANDUM

### Madison Corridor BRT – Summary of Design Workshops and Open House #2

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This memorandum provides an overview of public and stakeholder engagement events held for the Madison Corridor BRT Study during November 2014. Events included three segment-based design workshops and a public open house, the second held for the project. All events were held on November 19 and 20, 2014.

Design concepts and input from these workshops will be used to develop alternatives to be analyzed in detail during the next phase of the study.

## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Design workshops were held in three key segments of the corridor: Downtown, First Hill, and Capitol Hill/Central District. Following the workshops, an open house was held for community members to comment on the ideas developed during the design workshops, to suggest additional ideas, and to provide input on other aspects of project design and development.

A brief summary of takeaways from each event follows.

### **Downtown Workshop:**

- Participants developed four alternatives using different combinations of downtown streets and side- vs. center-running transit lane configurations. Key design challenges addressed during the workshop included automobile access to I-5, steep grades, pedestrian safety, and potential BRT alignments and station locations.

### **First Hill Workshop:**

- Three design concepts were developed including two concepts with BRT running in a curb-side lane and one with BRT running in center lanes. Station locations between Summit and Boylston were also developed. Design discussions focused on providing level-grade pedestrian access to key medical facilities and campus portals and developing a high quality connection to the streetcar stop at Broadway and Marion.

### **Capitol Hill/Central District Workshop:**

- The Capitol Hill/Central District workshop produced three center-running concepts and one side-running concept, with stations considered at 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> avenues. Design discussions focused on reducing pedestrian exposure to traffic, right-of-way changes needed to accommodate BRT

stations, and bicycle movements through the Madison, Union, 12<sup>th</sup> Ave intersection.

**Open House:**

- Participants at the open house contributed a variety of comments on each corridor segment, as well as on specific topics included on the comment card, such as station amenities and the overall project. Participants generally expressed interest in system legibility and station design, including level platforms.

## 2 DETAILED OUTREACH SUMMARY

Three workshops were held in each segment of the corridor: Downtown, First Hill, and Capitol Hill/Central District. Invitations were sent to the project mailing list, which includes all community members and stakeholders that have participated in previous outreach events or expressed interest in the project. Each of the design workshops included a project introduction and overview, a tour of a “focus location” (with the exception of the Downtown workshop), and a design session in which planners and designers from the project team facilitated small group discussions and developed concepts for how BRT transit-only lanes and stations could be located in the corridor.

Figure 1 shows the Capitol Hill/Central District design workshop.

**Figure 1** Capitol Hill/Central District Design Workshop



The workshops did not address each block of the corridor; rather the focus was on unique opportunity areas where creative design ideas could be developed to reflect community interests and unique opportunities. Lessons learned from the workshops will be applied by the project team in other parts of the corridor.

Following the workshops, an open house was held for community members to comment on the draft drawings, add comments, or suggest additional design ideas.

Detailed descriptions of each event follow.

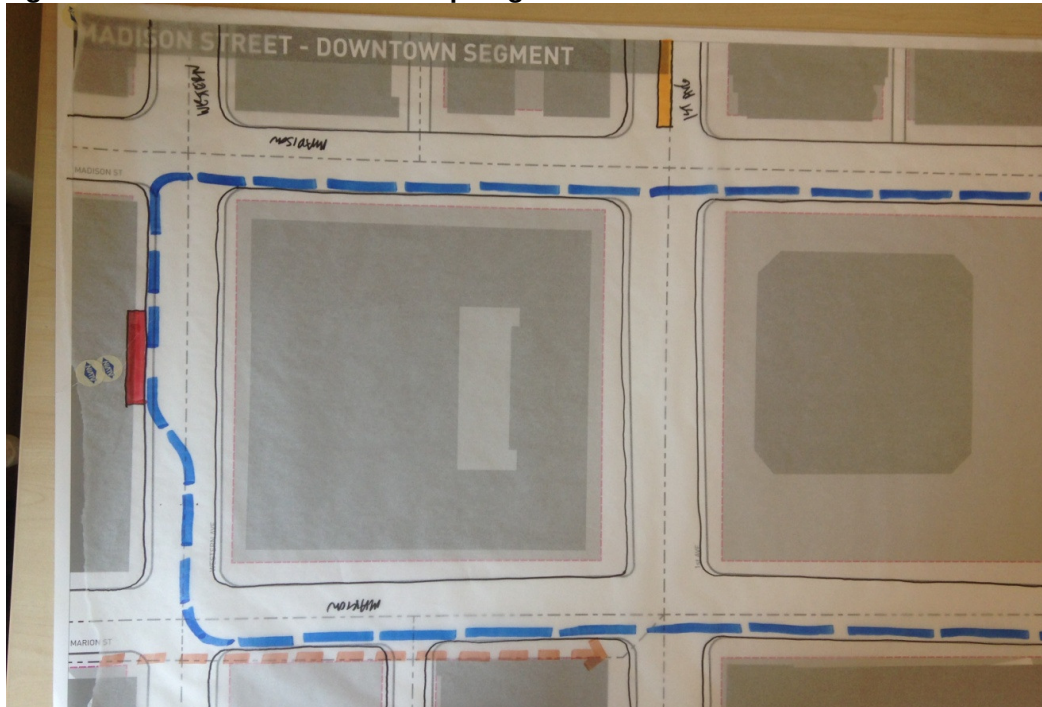
## Downtown Workshop

Downtown workshop participants focused on alignment and design of the segment west of Interstate 5 and produced several design concepts, described in Figure 2. All of the Downtown alignment concepts assumed stations at Third Avenue and stations at either First Avenue or Western.

**Figure 2 Downtown Alignment Concepts**

#	Description	Location Details		
		Western	1 <sup>st</sup> Ave	3 <sup>rd</sup> Ave
1	Madison/Spring side-running, terminus at 1st		Center platform on 1 <sup>st</sup> at NE corner Madison	Curb platform on Madison W of 3 <sup>rd</sup>
2	Madison/Spring side running W of 3rd, center east of 3 <sup>rd</sup> , terminus at 1st		Center platform on 1 <sup>st</sup> at NE corner Madison	Curb platform on Madison W of 3 <sup>rd</sup> and on Spring W of 3rd
3	Madison/Seneca side-running, EB turns from Seneca to Spring at 3 <sup>rd</sup> . Terminus at 1st		Center platform on 1 <sup>st</sup> at NE corner Madison	Curb platform on 3 <sup>rd</sup> S of Seneca and on Madison at W of 3rd
4	Madison/Marion side-running, terminus at Western	Curbside platform on W side of Western	Center platform on SW corner Madison at 1st	Center platform on SW corner Madison W of 3 <sup>rd</sup> , side platform on Marion at W of 3rd

Figure 3 Downtown Workshop Alignment 4



Key feedback from Downtown workshop participants is summarized below:

*BRT transit lanes and stations:* Participants had a number of ideas and concerns related to alignment, locations of stations, and connections to major destinations and other transit services.

- Westbound on Madison approaching Sixth Avenue, traffic can back up to Boren, or even Broadway. A left-side bus-only lane could be used to ameliorate this.
- The transition from Marion to Madison for buses at Sixth is very slow.
- A station at the Third Avenue transit spine is important.
- A strong connection is needed to the future Center City Connector streetcar on First Avenue.
- A station at First Avenue was also viewed as important for access to SODO stadiums.
- A station at Western Avenue could help to “energize” the area and could provide good access to Colman Dock with an improved connection to the Marion Street Pedestrian Causeway.
- Some thought service should terminate at Colman Dock, but recognized the challenges of creating a reliable turn-around on or west of Alaskan Way.
- Some felt that stations are needed every two-to-three blocks downtown due to steep grades.

*Pedestrian and bicycle:* There were a variety of concerns, particularly about grades and pedestrian safety.

- Designs should take into account grade-related issues including ADA accessibility and escalator access through buildings.
- Designs must also take into account pedestrian safety, particularly where there are turning lanes near stations.
- There were concerns about maintenance of street infrastructure in the area and how heavier bus volumes might affect street maintenance in the future.

*Traffic:* In general, there were concerns about BRT designs that would reduce lane capacity for general purpose traffic on downtown streets.

- There were concerns that limiting traffic on Madison, in particular, would create spillover problems onto James and other streets, as it is a major access route to I-5.
- Building access for parking and loading is an important issue along the Madison and Marion corridors, as is access to I-5.

*Urban design:* Participants provided input related to general design issues in the segment.

- Madison Street in downtown is “a great place to see the city and see the water.”
- I-5 creates a significant gap in urban form and an inhospitable pedestrian crossing, the project could help to improve this condition.
- The Seattle Public Library is a unique asset that should be taken into account. Work is planned to make the 5<sup>th</sup> Ave entry to the Library more prominent.

## First Hill

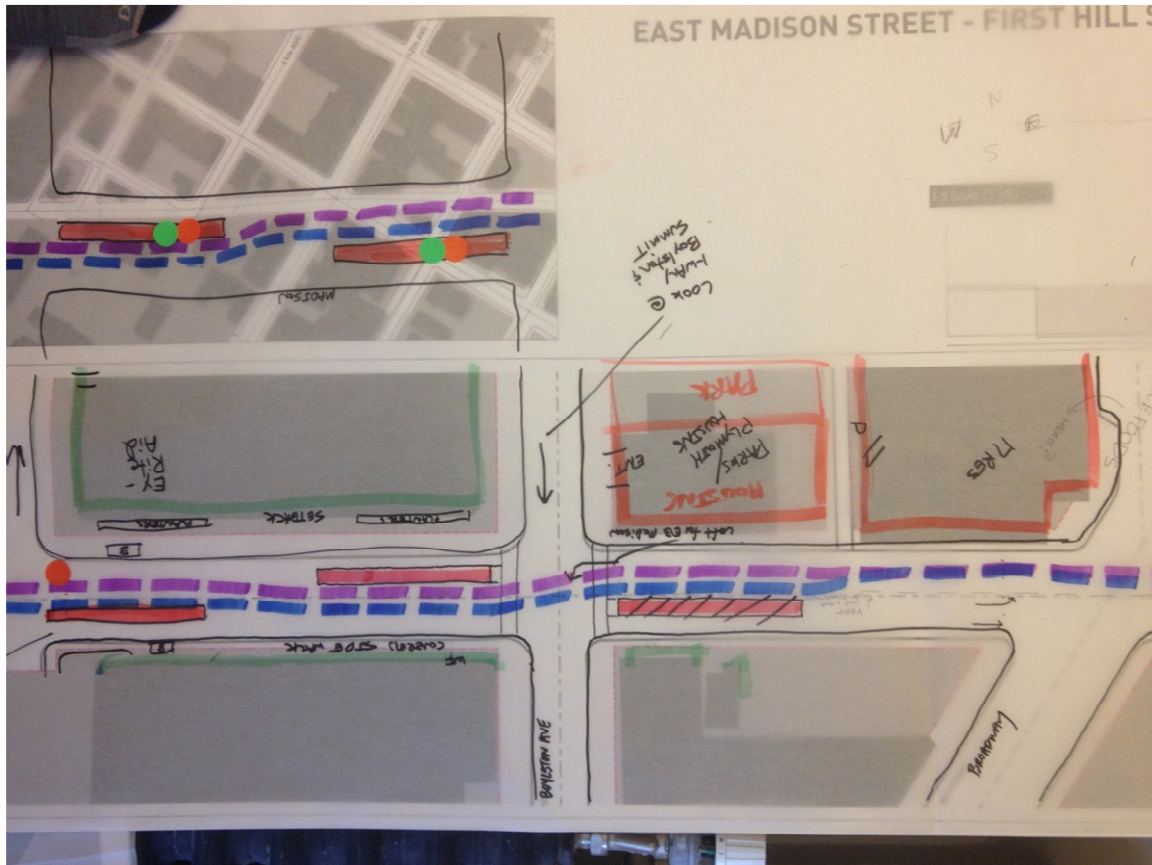
The First Hill workshop focused on Madison between Minor and Broadway. The design alternatives, described in Figure 4, produced included stops at either Summit or Boylston. Figure 5 shows a segment of one of the design alternatives.

**Figure 4 First Hill Alignment Concepts**

#	Description	Location Details	
		Summit	Boylston
1	Center-running	EB side platform E of Summit	WB side platform W of Boylston; EB stop E of Boylston
2	Side-running		EB side platform E of Boylston; WB side platform W of Boylston
3	Side-running	WB side platform E of Summit	EB side platform W side of Boylston



Figure 5 First Hill Alignment 1



Additional notes and comments received by participants in the First Hill workshop follow:

**BRT transit lanes and stations:** Participants provided input on service design as well as the physical design of the BRT project. Participant sentiments on center-running compared to side-running alternatives were mixed; some felt that center-running BRT forces people to change the way they access transit, while others prefer side-running for the potential for improvements to sidewalk and pedestrian environment. The increased transit travel speed and reliability of a center-running BRT line was attractive to participants.

- A BRT station at Terry Avenue was seen as desirable. Redevelopment in this area could provide more space for a BRT station and create a high-quality pedestrian environment.
- First Hill stakeholders and public participants were strongly supportive of eastbound and westbound stations being located between Boylston and Summit. They felt this location provided a level boarding environment with relatively wide sidewalks and overhead coverage on the south side of Madison. The location also provides quality pedestrian access to a prominent pedestrian access way at Swedish Hospital.



*Traffic:* As in the Downtown workshop, participants expressed concern about traffic volumes on Madison and the impact that BRT could have on traffic and I-5 access, particularly during peak travel periods.

- Participants noted that First Hill is a destination that many people visit by car, so project planning should recognize auto access needs.
- The major medical institutions are significant drivers of access demand and future development on First Hill. Participants noted the need to review the traffic volumes for institutions along route and expressed about the need to ensure maintenance of emergency vehicle access.
- To address vehicular access needs and increase on-street parking and loading zone supply, some participants suggested examining the conversion of some north – south streets to one-way travel and the addition of angled parking on side streets.

*Urban design:* Participants also had a number of comments related to general design issues in the segment.

- Participants noted that First Hill is short of open space and that the project should look for opportunities to create pocket parks and develop new public spaces.

## Capitol Hill/Central District

Capitol Hill design concepts focused on the area between 10th and 14th Avenues, which was mentioned many times in previous outreach as a particularly challenging section of Madison. The multi-legged intersections created by Madison's diagonal cut through the street grid create a number of challenges and opportunities. Concepts developed during the workshop, summarized in Figure 7, included station locations at 11th, 12th, and 13th. Figure 6 shows the Capitol Hill/Central District site visit.

**Figure 7 Capitol Hill/Central District Concepts**

#	Description	Location Details		
		11th	12th	13th
1	Center-running east of 12 <sup>th</sup> , side running in N (WB) lanes west of 12th	WB side platform E of 12 <sup>th</sup> , EB center platform E of 12th		
2	Center-running west of 12 <sup>th</sup> , side-running in N lanes (WB) East of 12th		WB side platform E of 12 <sup>th</sup> ; EB center platform E of 12th	
3	Center-running		WB center platform E of 12th	EB center platform W of 13th
4	Side-running			WB Side platform W of 13 <sup>th</sup> ; EB side platform W of 13th



Figure 7 describes the designs developed during the workshop, while Figure 8 shows a segment of one of the design alternatives.

**Figure 6 Capitol Hill/Central District Site Visit**

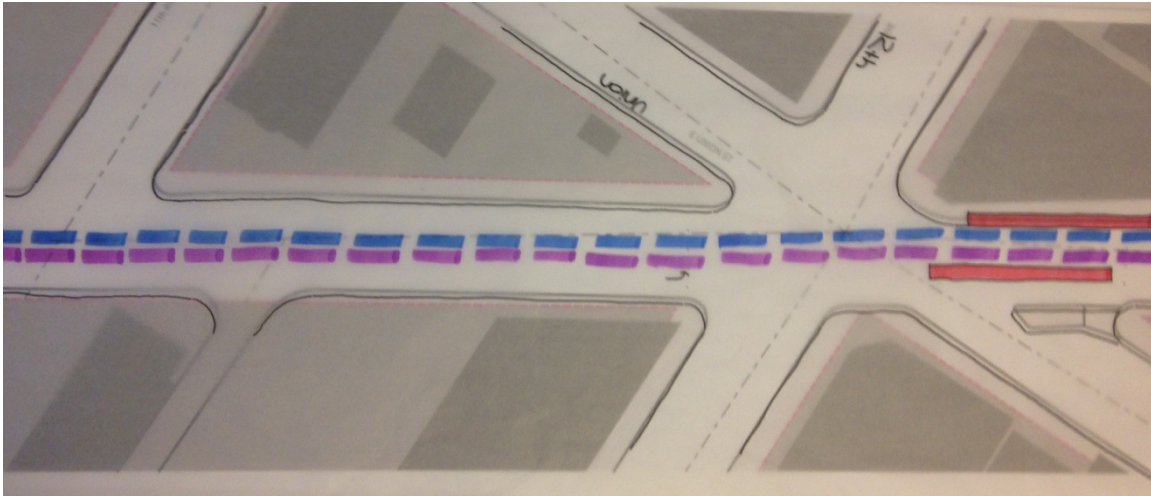


**Figure 7 Capitol Hill/Central District Concepts**

#	Description	Location Details		
		11th	12th	13th
1	Center-running east of 12 <sup>th</sup> , side running in N (WB) lanes west of 12th	WB side platform E of 12 <sup>th</sup> , EB center platform E of 12th		
2	Center-running west of 12 <sup>th</sup> , side-running in N lanes (WB) East of 12th		WB side platform E of 12 <sup>th</sup> ; EB center platform E of 12th	
3	Center-running		WB center platform E of 12th	EB center platform W of 13th
4	Side-running			WB Side platform W of 13 <sup>th</sup> ; EB side platform W of 13th



Figure 8 Capitol Hill Workshop Alignment 2



Additional notes and comments from the Capitol Hill/Central District workshop are below:

*BRT transit lanes and stations:* BRT design issues included questions about the project need as well as specific suggestions for routing and station locations.

- Most participants supported a center-running option compared to side-running.
- Some participants liked the concept with split stations between 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>.
- The current westbound bus stop at Madison and 12<sup>th</sup> was mentioned as important as it provides a quality transfer location for passengers using Route 2.

*Pedestrian and cycling environment:* Improving pedestrian and bicycle movements across and along Madison were a key topic of workshop exploration.

- Center stations were seen as a possible means to reducing pedestrian crossing challenges, slowing traffic, and providing a median refuge.
- There was strong interest in an all-walk pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Madison, Union, and 12<sup>th</sup>.
- A better pedestrian crossing at 14<sup>th</sup> and Madison was also mentioned as a needed improvement.
- High speed eastbound right turns from Madison to Union could be slowed by extending the curb and requiring vehicles to make a sharper, slower right turn movement.

*Traffic:* Unlike the Downtown and First Hill workshops, traffic was not mentioned as a significant concern in the Capitol Hill/Central District workshop. However, it was noted that some participants felt strongly that it is important to retain eastbound traffic on Union between 12<sup>th</sup> and Madison and 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

*Urban design:* A number of concepts were explored that would increase the amount of public space in this segment.

- A concept that gained particularly strong support from participants was to eliminate westbound travel on Union between 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Madison. Because of the current right-turn only restriction, this street carries low volumes of traffic. It could be repurposed for open space and/or a better bicycle facility.

## Open House

Following the workshops, an open house event was held at which members of the public could view and comment on the design concepts developed during the workshops. Comments received on post-it notes attached to drawings and comment cards included the following comments about each corridor segment.

The following comments are taken directly from participant notes.

### Downtown

- Bus only lanes are great. Spring and Madison for the route downtown is a great idea, no left turns.
- It is imperative for downtown stations to be closely spaced. Perhaps have the inbound stations spread so people can walk down hill to their destinations, but outbound stations should maintain current spacing.
- I like the Madison and Spring routing concept- avoids the congestion on Madison at 6th and Madison jog, and avoids trouble of not having enough room for exclusive lanes on Madison bridge across I-5.
- The Madison/Spring concept downtown looks great! Better connection to Link/DSTT, no left turns.
- Run eastbound BRT up Spring Street to 9th Ave then south on 9th to Madison and continue east on Madison. Shares improvements on Spring Street with the Route 2 and improves speed uphill and directly serves the public library, is closer to light rail station and more level platforms.

### First Hill

- Three stations on First Hill, net zero parking loss, BRT up Seneca, follow #2, right on 9th, extend to MLK.
- Would like to maintain left turn at Minor. At the least, if left is restricted remove restrictions at Spring and Boren – maintain ways to cross Madison.
- 8th Ave station is important, expected to be densely populated.

## Capitol Hill/Central District

- Depict how Route 2 bus stops will be integrated into planned East Union bike lane. Always be respectful and conscious of current transit infrastructure.
- All-walk for pedestrians at Madison/12<sup>th</sup>/Union.
- Please study the Madison/John/24<sup>th</sup> Ave intersection, this is the walk/bike route to YMCA, Garfield High School, consider an all way walk. Please study bike-pedestrian crossings at Union and 24<sup>th</sup> Ave E and 27<sup>th</sup> Ave E for Greenways.
- Keep King County Metro route 12 all the way through 19<sup>th</sup>. It is the only bus down Madison corridor, downtown, 10 and 43 not substitution, keep left turns on Madison.

## Station Elements

The comment card asked respondents to comment on which station elements they think are most important to the project. The following comments were taken directly from comment sheets received at the project open house:

- Shelters, recycle, trash bins, ticket machines, level boarding.
- Cohesion with current Metro theme, level boarding, high-end shelters are excessive if frequency is every 5 minutes, and branding should not be kitschy.
- Shelter transparency – please spend more on sidewalk and pedestrian improvements than on stations and branding.
- Covered shelters, lots of lighting, ticket vending machines, where you can tag your ORCA card, schedules like one bus away.
- I like center lanes, split platforms.
- Good architecture, bold, positive, distinctive, want to feel proud, compared to Rapid Ride, which is a visual embarrassment.
- Small stations on Madison, right side on Madison.
- Stations located to make it easy to get to popular destinations or to transfer to other buses.
- Shelters, lighting, wayfinding, public art, sense of place and history, open space improvement and neighborhood beautification.
- Exclusive right of way is top priority in order to avoid traffic congestion. Right now, I walk to work (4<sup>th</sup> and James) from Madison Valley because it's just as fast as bussing. I want buses to get from Madison Valley to Madison Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave as fast as possible.
- Level boarding is very important. I like the center-running split platform ideas for this, plus they shorten the street crossing distances and make them safer. Shelters, ORCA readers, and benches are important, as are real-time signs.



- I guess what doesn't slow down cars the most. I don't think visibility of stations is an issue.
- Off-board payment, lighting, safe/clean, next bus signs, name it the "M".
- Pedestrian friendly, bike friendly, smooth connections, prioritize reliability over speed. Could head west on Madison to 5<sup>th</sup>, south to Columbia, west to 1<sup>st</sup>, north to Spring, and Spring to 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Transit priority over entire corridor – all with a bus lane in each direction. Center-running lanes maximized. Quality, convenient transfers as close as possible to connecting lines – must be at 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, Broadway, etc. Physical separation where space permits; add lots of street trees.
- Level boarding is highly desirable. Shelters need visibility (transparency), and lighting.

## General Comments

Additional comments from the open house comment cards are below:

- Side stations probably make more sense, with opportunities for pedestrian/sidewalks improvements. Give us a much better pedestrian experience.
- Dedicated lanes for buses are essential for moving through traffic. A lot of bus lanes lines are unreliable because they have to fight car traffic. Center-running BRT would probably be best.
- Make sure stations are not crime attractors, we've had issues. Stop blocking sidewalks for construction, revoke permits for this.
- Madison BRT should have an attractive name, positive branding, no traditional "transit" terms, modern, contemporary station architecture that feels like it belongs in Seattle.
- It's too short, especially for something which will get separate branding. It's just a glorified shuttle. Extend it into the Central District.
- I'd like to see routes continue past 23<sup>rd</sup> & Madison (e.g. like the current 43, 48, 8, 11, etc.) even if there are no BRT improvements. That way people wouldn't have to transfer to another bus.
- Pedestrian accessibility from neighboring streets is very important (crosswalks, signals, etc.) I like the center-running ideas better, but both are good as long as there are exclusive lanes.
- Center-running lanes as much as possible, less crossing for pedestrians and less impacts from traffic. Must design best route for transit – don't let SOV convenience drive the design, if turn lanes must be removed then so be it, the more you accommodate SOVs the more you get clogging the street. Madison- Marion Route. Must be a more direct transfer at Broadway/Madison to connect the streetcar. Route the 2, 11, and 12 on the transitway service to Madison Park, 19<sup>th</sup>, and Union via Madison.

- The plan needs to accommodate other bus services that operate directly to locations beyond BRT. (How many people want to ride to 23<sup>rd</sup> and Madison?) The route to Western Ave may meet needs of ferry rides, but a lot of us on First Hill need to get to the Pike/Pine shopping area.
- Dream big! Make sure this serves residential needs, not just major institutions