

The Seattle Department of Transportation

Madison Corridor BRT Study

Open House #1 Summary

September 2014



 **SDOT**
Seattle Department of Transportation


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Madison Corridor Bus Rapid Transit Study– Open House #1 Summary

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first open house for the Madison Corridor Bus Rapid Transit Study was held on September 30th, 2014. Meeting attendees were asked to complete an open-ended comment card. Several themes emerged through comment cards, follow-up e-mails, and conversations with meeting attendees:

- Overall, there is very strong support for making Madison a high-quality BRT project. The majority of comments emphasized speed and reliability as very high priorities, including emphasizing dedicated transit lanes, even if it means taking parking or travel lanes.
- Transit connections are important, including seamless transfers and connectivity to other services in Downtown Seattle.
- There is support for removing parking along Madison.
- Concern about the project was limited, but centered on traffic impacts and changes to existing service, including route and stop consolidation.
- With regard to service design, most comments favored some version of an “open” service design. There is some support for continued service to Madison Park or at least MLK without needing a transfer.
- There is very strong interest in pedestrian and streetscape improvements, as sidewalks are narrow and uncomfortable in many locations.
- Sentiment was mixed on whether a bicycle facility should be on Madison or on lower-traffic streets. Grades were the primary concerns mentioned with regard to facility design.
- A number of specific intersections were mentioned as needing improvement, including 12th and Madison, 15th and Madison, and 23rd – 24th and Madison.

Several photos of the open house are included on the following pages.

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Source: SDOT



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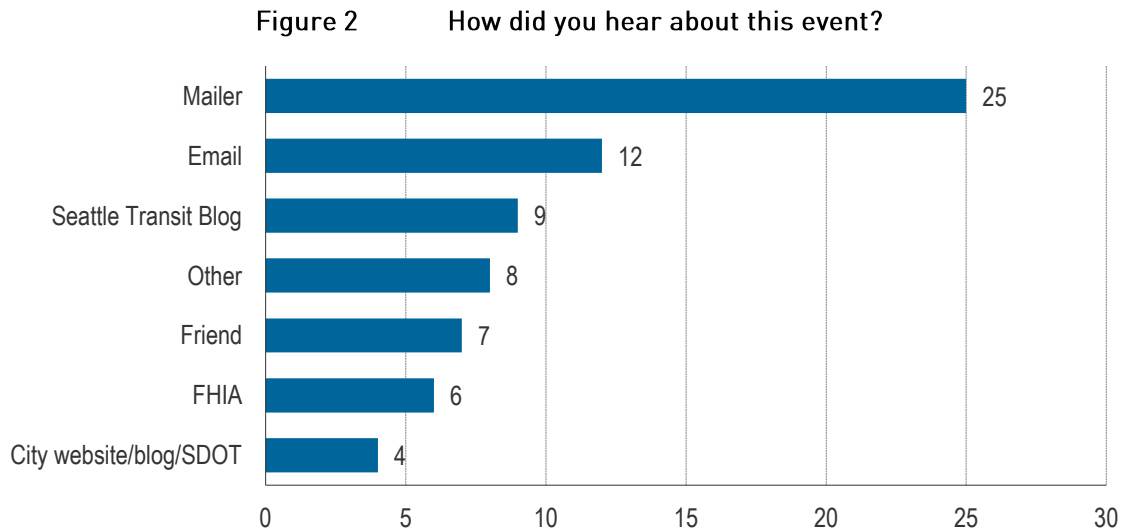
2 DETAILED OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY

The first Madison BRT open house was held on September 30, 2014 at the Silver Cloud Hotel on Broadway and Madison. The open house included a brief presentation to provide an overview of the study process and an orientation to the open house. The event included a series of stations about the study process, bus rapid transit, stakeholder input, existing conditions, and draft purpose and need statements. There was also a corridor map where participants could identify and comment on specific locations in the corridor needing attention. Participants were offered multiple ways to comment, including written comment cards, writing on the map of the corridor, and sending an email to the project website. A total of 90 participants signed in to the meeting.

Figure 1 shows the total participants by ZIP code. The most common ZIP codes were 98122, 98104, and 98112. As shown in Figure 2, the largest group of participants (25) heard about the meeting through the mailer sent by SDOT to addresses near the Madison corridor. Other ways that people heard about the meeting included e-mail, the Seattle Transit Blog, friends, the First Hill Improvement Association, the City of Seattle website or blog, and “other”.

Figure 1 ZIP Codes of Meeting Participants

Zip Code	Count
98122	32
98104	19
98112	11
Blank	10
98101	8
98108	2
98102	2
98144	1
98123	1
98118	1
98117	1
98105	1
98103	1
Grand Total	90



Comment Cards

Meeting attendees were asked to complete a comment card that had space for open-ended comments.

Comments on Bus Rapid Transit

There was general support for the Madison Corridor Bus Rapid Transit project, and considerable consensus among supporters of the project that dedicated transit lanes are a top or even essential element of the project. Comments expressed the sentiment that the project would not be worth building without dedicated transit lanes for part or all of the corridor to improve speed and reliability, and that these lanes should be clearly marked and enforced. Reasons for supporting transit-only lanes included making transit more appealing to new riders and the potential throughput of a bus-only lane compared to an auto lane, as well as the ability of emergency services vehicles to use the lanes. Although few comments included specific opinions regarding the system design, several attendees liked the idea of a center-running BRT that would utilize right-side doors.

Relatively few comments addressed transit vehicles and station amenities, but there was support for electric vehicles and the full suite of BRT amenities such as well-lit shelters with improved safety, off-board payment, seating, and real-time arrival information. Aside from those concerned about traffic impacts (discussed in a following section), only one commenter expressed general objection to the project. Comments on the BRT project and design included:

- General support for project (7)
- Support for dedicated lanes and transit priority (17)

- Support high/5-minute frequency (4)
- BRT vehicles
 - Use electric vehicles (2)
 - Stress the difference in BRT vehicles/cool vehicles (2)
- Center/Side-Running
 - Support center-running buses with right-side doors like San Francisco, allowing the “best of both worlds” (3)
- Amenities
 - Do not invest in shelters unless necessary (1)
 - Off-board payment (2)
 - Light and visible stops and shelters (3)
 - Trash/recycling at stops (1)
 - Real-time arrival information (1)
 - Seating (1)
 - Develop innovative design for persons with limited mobility
- Not sure Madison is the best place for BRT (1)

Transit Service Design

There were many different ideas and suggestions for transit routing in the Madison Corridor. Numerous comments mentioned preferences for an “open” system with continued service on existing routes or routes very similar to existing service. There is interest in maintaining service on Route 2 as well as service to Madison Park/Madison Valley without a transfer. One attendee noted that if an open system is pursued, strategic improvements should be made outside of the corridor to protect reliability of routes using Madison.

Connectivity between transit systems and other modes was also mentioned as important. Sentiment was mixed with regard to stop spacing, with some meeting attendees supporting stop consolidation, while others were concerned about the impacts of stop consolidation on persons with limited mobility and did not want to lose local service.

Comments on transit service design included:

- Transit connections
 - Provide a direct connection to Link (3)
 - Provide a better connection to 3rd Avenue spine/retail core (3)
 - General support for good transit connections (3)
 - Support a 1st Avenue turnaround to improve Colman Dock connectivity (1)

- Not sure ferry passengers are connecting to 23rd (1)
- Integrate fare payment so passengers don't pay multiple times (1)
- Need a stop at 3rd (1)
- Ensure good connections across modes e.g. transit, bicycle, bikeshare (1)
- Stop spacing
 - Concern about stop consolidation/losing local service (2)
 - Consolidate stops (3)
 - Consider skip-stop or underlying local service (2)
- Maintain Route 2 (6)
- Suggestions for Downtown operations
 - Two-way on Madison w/contraflow lane (1)
 - Consider a Madison-Seneca-9th live loop instead of Madison-Marion-6th and put Route 2 on it (1)
- Simple, legible route is important (1)
- Prefer open system (2)
 - Extend service at least to MLK (3)
 - Extend service/trolley wire to Madison Valley/Madison park (5)
 - Maintain service on 19th (2)
 - Consider shifting route 10 to 19th avenue around Aloha to terminate at Route 12 terminus (1)
 - New service requests
 - Service to 15th north of Madison (1)
 - Service on 12th south of Madison (1)
- Western terminus
 - Turn around at Colman dock, build terminus into new ferry terminal (1)
- Eastern terminus
 - Move the tail of Route 12 to 23rd and turn around at East Mercer Street
 - Consider layover on East Thomas between 20th and 21st near Miller Park
 - Consider a turnaround at John Street to connect to Route 8
- Corridor
 - Consider Union east of 12th instead of Madison

Existing Transit Service Performance

There were very few comments on the current performance of transit service in the corridor; perhaps because some stakeholders perceive service in the Madison corridor positively already. Several attendees noted issues with crowding as well as a lack of coordination between services currently operating in the corridor. These comments included:

- Buses are crowded at peak (2)
- Sync up the 11 & 12 schedules
- Address bus bunching (1)
10, 49, 11 arrive at the same time

Traffic

Although there were few comments expressing concern about traffic impacts, some attendees were concerned that removing parking to accommodate bus-only lanes would have negative impacts on traffic on Madison as well as possible traffic diversion to other streets. Some expressed frustration with other projects that have reduced travel lanes and in some cases increased the impact of transit operations in the remaining mixed-traffic lane.

- Removing lanes near I-5 entrance will increase congestion (1)
- Consider changing lane flow by time of day to help traffic (1)
- General concern about traffic impacts (4)

Streetscape/Pedestrian Improvements

There was strong interest and support in improvements to the streetscape and pedestrian environment that could be associated with the Madison BRT project. As outlined in the project need, pedestrian conditions in many parts of the corridor include narrow and cracked sidewalks and unpleasant streetscape characteristics, sentiment echoed in many comments. Suggestions and comments regarding the streetscape included:

- Support potential for streetscape improvements (6)
 - More greenery/trees (3)
 - Consider moving sidewalks/escalator like the existing Mid-Levels escalators in Hong Kong (2)
 - Lid or deck over freeway (1)
- Pedestrian Improvements
 - Improve connections through and across neighborhoods (1)
 - Sidewalks are too narrow/widen sidewalks (3)
 - Improve sidewalk quality (4)
 - Building exhausts into sidewalk zone are annoying (1)

- Pedestrian crossings need improvement (4)
- Would like to see more pedestrian priority, e.g. limit right turns on red, leading pedestrian intervals, etc. (1)
- Land Use
 - Rezone along line to add density (1)

Bicycle Facility

In general there was support and interest in a bicycle facility, although few comments proposed specific routing. Several comments preferred a facility on Madison (including one design for a cross-section with bike lanes), or noted that some cyclists will likely continue to use Madison regardless of the parallel facility design. However other comments indicated support for a parallel facility, particularly on a lower-traffic street with manageable grades. The steep grades in both the eastern and western portions of the corridor are significant concerns, even to the corridor's current bicycle commuters.

- General support/interest in a bicycle facility as part of this project (3)
- Comment that hill has been a barrier to cycling in the corridor/easy grades needed (3)
- Specific routing suggestions
 - Use Seneca (2)
 - Would like facility on Madison or at least to not preclude one in the future (4)
 - Support a lower-traffic/parallel street (4)
 - Eastern portion of Madison is the best way to climb this hill (2)
 - Grades east of 23rd are almost too steep to ride (1)
- Specific facility suggestions
 - Cycletrack (1)

Parking

Although there was mixed opinion on whether to retain or eliminate parking on Madison, the vast majority of comments favored eliminating parking. There is a strong feeling among stakeholders that parking is a significant cause of transit as well as auto delays on Madison, causing bottlenecks where traffic merges. The few comments opposed to parking removal emphasized the role of parking for local businesses as well as the current constraints on parking supply for residents. One comment noted that between 17th and 23rd, the occasional parked car allows the curb lane to function as a de-facto bike lane. Sentiments expressed related to parking included:

- Eliminate parking

- Eliminate all parking (11)
- Eliminate all parking and replace with bus only lanes (2)
- Eliminate parking at least during peak hours (3)
- Turn parking lane in east Madison into bike lane (1)
- Retain parking/mitigate loss
 - Provide mitigation for parking loss (2)
 - Do not remove parking on Madison (1)

Specific Locations

Comments that referred to specific locations within the corridor identified several locations where improvements are desired, with the most commonly-mentioned the intersection of 12th and Madison. Comments on this location and others mentioned in the comment cards included:

- 23rd and Madison
 - This intersection is unpleasant for anyone not in car; doesn't have wheelchair ramps (1)
- 19th and Madison
 - Clayton Corner Park is in design and should be coordinated with this work (2)
(Note: Steering Committee meets the first Wednesday of the month at Miller Park Community Center)
- 14th and Madison
 - Crossing at 14th is difficult; pedestrian signal is too short and diagonal crossing is tricky (1)
 - Have noticed people trying to turn left on 14th, perhaps because turning on 12th is so hard
- 12th and Madison
 - A turn lane or left turn light is needed (4)
 - This intersection is a problem (2)
 - A walkway plan was done for PSRC 10 years ago or more, please incorporate
- 11th and Madison
 - Connect to the green street between SU campus and Cal Anderson & Capitol Hill Eco District (1)
- 6th and Madison
 - Eastbound, a bus-only lane from 6th into Downtown could reduce congestion that slows Route 12 (1)

- 2nd and Madison
 - Intersection at 2nd and Marion is a mess, especially with valet parking service. Confusing for all modes (1)

Purpose and Need

There were very few comments on the project purpose and need:

- "Reason for project: Seattle needs more frequent, consistent, and fast east-west transit"
- "My main request is to not make this watered-down "BRT" such as what RapidRide turned into. Make people want to take the bus, not feel like they have to. Please do this well and keep your priorities in order. In order of importance:
 1. Pedestrians
 2. Cyclists
 3. Transit
 4. Freight
 5. Private motor vehicles
 6. Parking"

Meeting/Planning Process

Several attendees offered specific suggestions and comments related to the meeting itself as well as the larger planning process:

- Provide bicycle parking at transportation events; there are no bike racks here
- More chairs
- This project doesn't recognize the residents on First Hill and their needs or help them
- First Hill needs a neighborhood-specific outreach effort
- This project can't be done in a vacuum; what's going on with Metro is huge (cutting service, over-crowded, poor on time performance)
- SDOT should reach out to college-aged and young people who can design the system they want to use long-term
- Make sure to involve the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities from early stages

Other

- Consider a streetcar (1)
- Help homeless so they don't have to live in bus shelters (1)
- Provide full cost comparison for trolleys compared to clean diesel buses to justify trolley investment (1)
- Would like to see American-made products used as much as possible in the project (1)
- Improve signal timing for autos and transit (1)

3 MAPPING EXERCISE

Participants were also asked to make comments on a large map of the corridor denoting where they would like to see improvements. The comments and map mark-up were transcribed and are represented in Figure 4-Figure 7. The mapping instructions are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Map Mark-Up Instructions

INSTRUCTIONS

This map shows the Madison Bus Rapid Transit Study area. BRT service operating on Madison could extend beyond the study area.

Using sticky dots and notes, please identify locations:

- (1) where there are issues with transit (overloading, frequent delays, etc.) (red dots)
- (2) that are unsafe or uncomfortable as a pedestrian or cyclist, particularly accessing transit (blue dots)
- (3) where there are concerns about loading or on-street parking (yellow dots)
- (4) where there are needs or opportunities for public space or streetscape improvements (green dots)

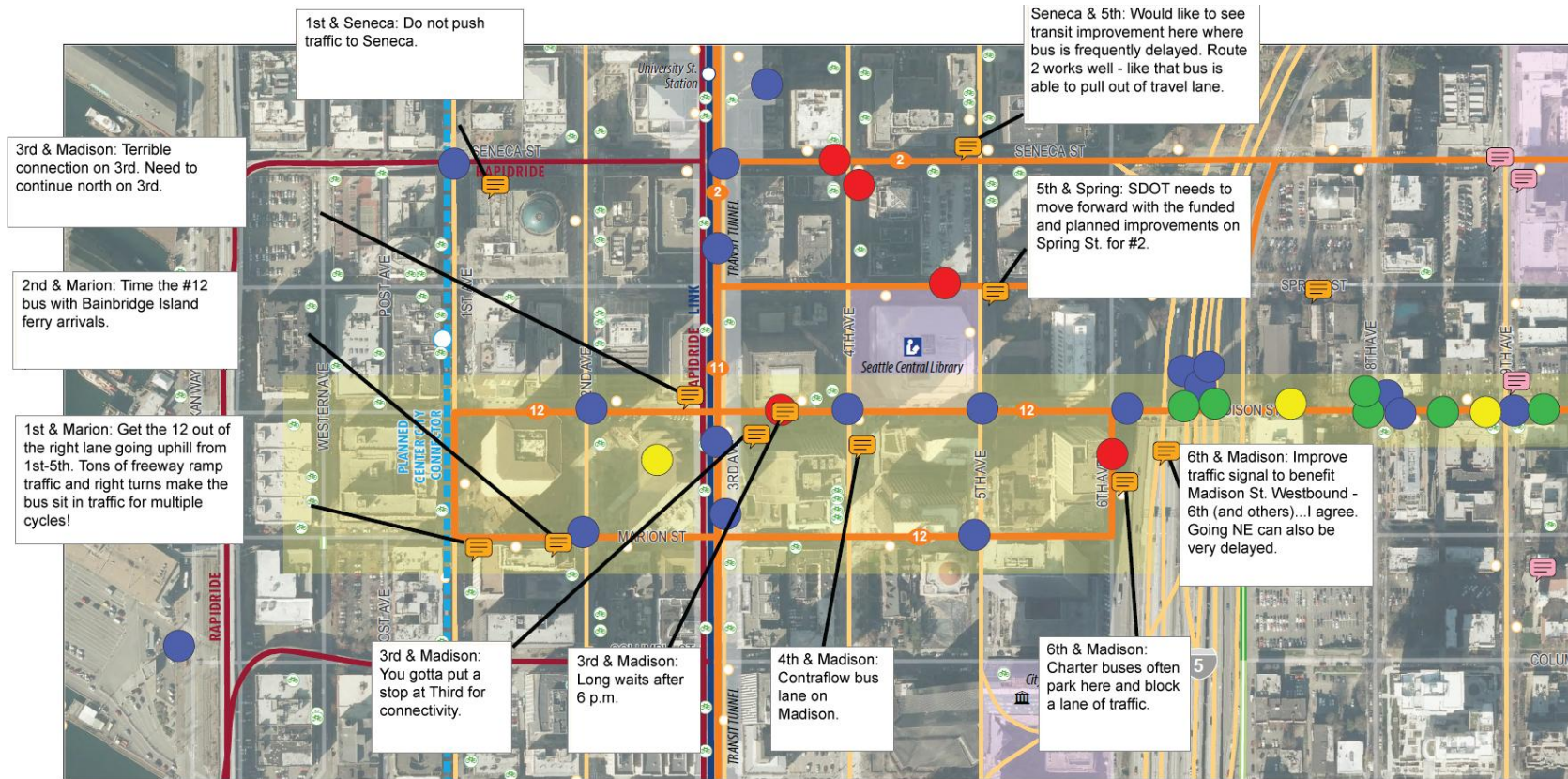
Several common themes emerged from the comments on the map, although many comments addressed specific issues at different locations within the corridor.

- Parking creates bottlenecks at several locations within the corridor, particularly around Madison and Boren/Minor.
- In the eastern portion of the corridor, comments noted desire for BRT service to extend at least to MLK, and for service to continue to the Madison Valley.
- In First Hill, there were numerous comments supporting continued transit service on Seneca.
- Pedestrian and bicycle conditions are poor around 23rd and Madison and 12th and Madison.
- Pedestrian crossings and narrow sidewalks create challenging conditions for pedestrians throughout the corridor

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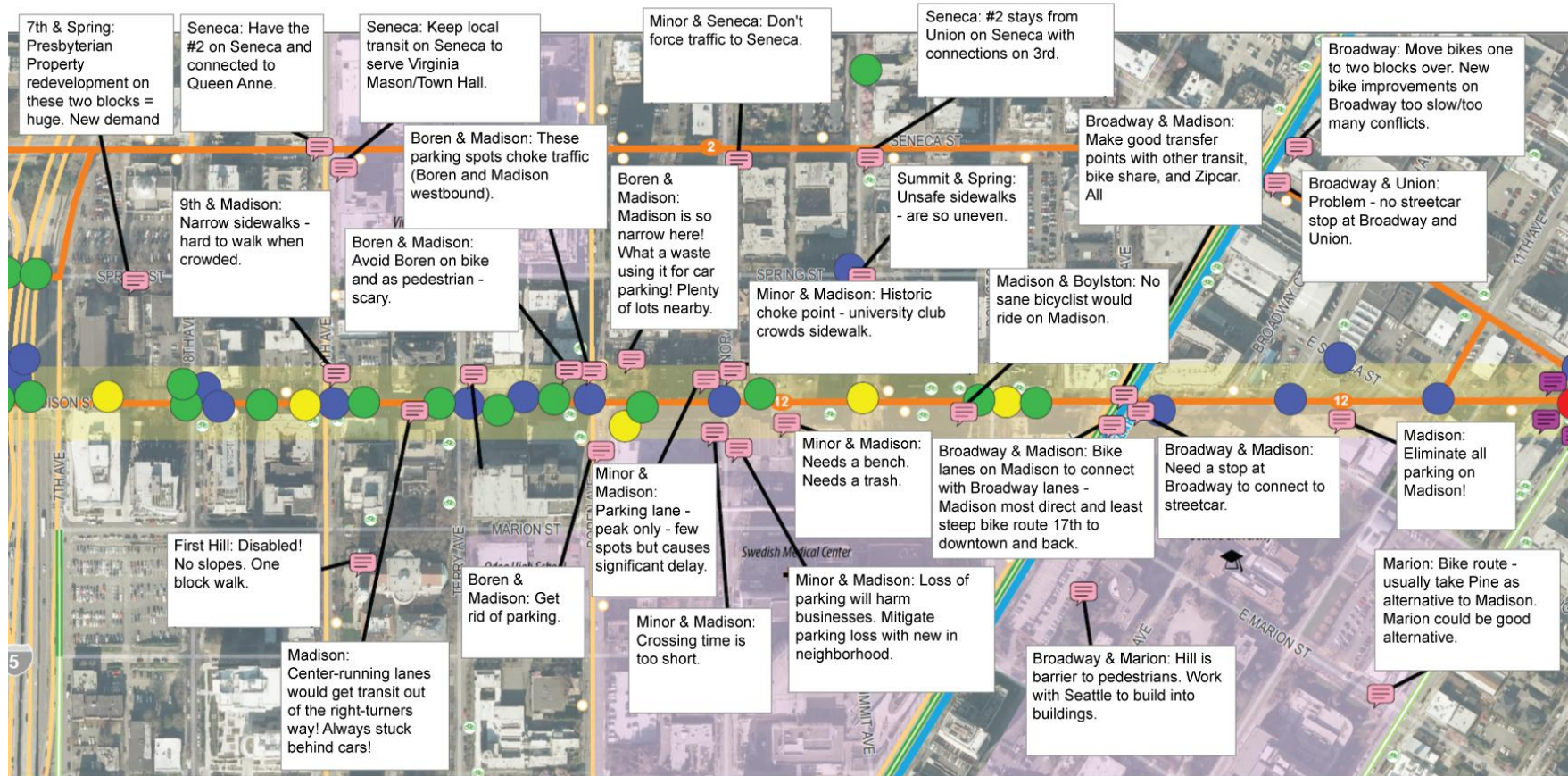
Figure 4 Downtown Segment Comment Map



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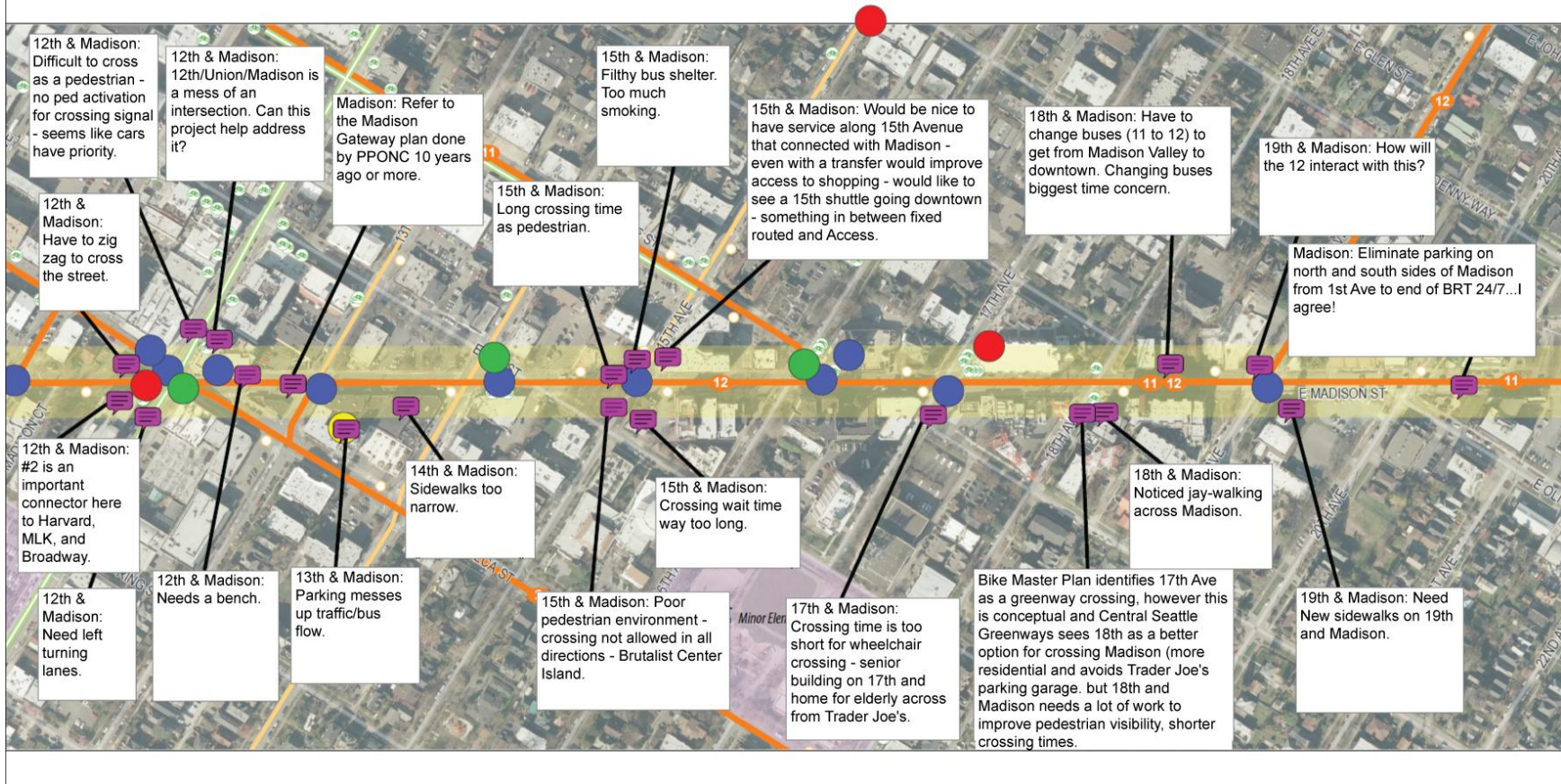
Figure 5 First Hill Segment Comment Map



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Figure 6 Central East Segment Comment Map



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Figure 7 East Segment Comment Map

