

December 22, 2009

Mr. Stephen K. Eugster
2418 W Pacific Avenue
Spokane, WA 99201-6422

Dear Mr. Eugster:

Thank you for your email. We have received the hard copy by mail and your check for the cost of copying associated with your Public Records Request.

You have requested that we reconsider the level of service we now provide in Browne's Addition. We are continuing the dialogue with the neighborhood council and others who, like yourself, have contacted us. Some are supportive of the service and some are not. Our goal is to determine through an ongoing dialogue whether there is consensus about continuing the improved service. If there were consensus for change, it would take effect in May 2010. We plan to hold two open houses in the neighborhood on January 23 and 28, and expect to make a decision in late February.

Because you took the time to explain your concerns I want to respond to them. My point is not to be argumentative, rather to add clarity and context.

First, by way of background, I respectfully offer the following:

- Transit service in Browne's Addition is historic, with 20 buses an hour at peak and 10 buses an hour off peak in the 1930s. When there was Interurban rail service, it too traveled through Browne's Addition (Pacific and Cannon).
- It is true that in the last decade bus routes in Browne's Addition served only the neighborhood. For decades prior to that time bus routes connected Browne's Addition to other areas.
- Your analysis of Bus Frequency omitted the Route 26/28 combination, which also provides eight buses an hour.

Here are my responses to six of your specific concerns:

1. *"The change (with increased bus service) will be increased demand for higher density development. The character of the neighborhood will change as a result. These changes will be contrary to the historic nature of the neighborhood and probably be contrary to the City of Spokane comprehensive Plan.*

Response: The City of Spokane's land use plan calls for the highest multi-family zoning possible outside the downtown core (15+ units per acre) in Browne's Addition, with the exception of some small neighborhood commercial at Cannon and Pacific.

2. *"In the materials furnished to me I can find nothing which indicates that STA sought any sort of environmental compliance."*

Response: There is no City environmental requirement relating to this improved bus service. STA complies with all City, State and Federal requirements.

3. *"I do not see in any of the materials that the City of Spokane was consulted in the diversion of these routes into the Browne's Addition Neighborhood. The Mayor was not consulted, the City Council President and Council Members were not consulted."*

Response: Spokane Transit is an independent municipal corporation governed by elected officials from the cities and county in the Public Transportation Benefit Area, including three Spokane City Council members. In June, the STA Board voted unanimously to approve the service change in Browne's Addition.

4. *The people and business of Southwest Spokane deserve and require STA service. If service is not provided, they should be relieved of the obligation to support STA."*

Response: A city must be included in the Public Transportation Benefit Area in its entirety. No part of it may be carved out (e.g., southwest Spokane). It would be ideal to provide service to every neighborhood, but there is no requirement to do so. Finite resources require we offer service where the ridership potential is the greatest.

5. *"These buses pass one another. The street in front of my house is 50 feet wide. There is parking on both sides."*

Response: Fifty feet is just shy of the street width at Broadway near the Courthouse where parked cars also line the street. During peak periods, 12 buses an hour traverse Broadway.

6. *The speed limit on West Pacific Avenue is 25 mph. Though I have not put a radar gun on the buses going east and west it appears to me that often they are traveling in excess of 25 mph. This is especially true regarding the buses as they travel west on Pacific Ave.*

Response: Bus drivers understand the importance of obeying the speed limit. We have communicated specifically with those who drive in Browne's Addition. We have also used radar 49 times since mid November to check their speed. With two exceptions at 27 miles per hour, all radar tests have shown operators obeying the speed limit. We intend to continue with these speed checks and following up immediately with any driver who exceeds the limit. We have also talked to the City about posting 'bus only' speed limit signs in the neighborhood, but to date there has been some reluctance to do so. We will continue the discussion.

Thank you again for your input.

Sincerely,

E. Susan Meyer
Chief Executive Officer

C: Mayor Verner, Council President Shogan, council members McLaughlin, Corker, Snyder, Apple, French, Rush, City Attorney Howard Delaney, STA Board, Laura McAloon, K & L Gates (STA Legal Counsel)