

Dear Mayor and City Council:

I read the story in the March 19, 2017 Lawton Constitution about the possible bus service cutbacks on Saturdays with a mixture of sadness and disappointment. I felt sadness because the cutbacks would cause hardships to those who rely on the bus service for their transportation needs. I felt disappointment because our city leaders neglected the bus fleet so much that it is no longer reliable enough to maintain the current schedule, much less expand to meet future needs.

To gather evidence as to whether my sadness was justified or not, I talked to one father of three too poor to own an auto. The father, a man in his 40's, was angry both about the proposed cutbacks and about the \$1.50 per ride charge which he said he couldn't afford. His usual mode of transportation was a bicycle he said. Lawton, low wage town that it is, needs an expansion of bus service to seven days a week, not a cutback to five days a week.

My disappointment with the proposed cutbacks has to do with the expansion of roadways and other developer friendly capital improvements to the city while at the same time neglecting the bus fleet. In the past 15 years since bus service was initiated, the City has spent tens of millions on roadway widening projects like the 2nd street project and the 38th street project but neglected poor person friendly needs like affordable housing, walk-able neighborhoods and the bus fleet. Doesn't the philosophical and moral imperative to take care of our poor hold any sway in our city? Why doesn't the physical courage we so much admire in our military translate into moral courage that favors good government and concern for our poor, including for those poor who don't own automobiles?

It is an all but a proven fact that current multi-million capital improvement project such as the widening of East 45th Street and the construction of the 9-mile Creek Sewer Project, while wonderful to a small moneyed group of real estate investors, will turn out to be a disastrous waste of money for the city as a whole. To cite, Suburban Nation, The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream (a prophetic book that came out with its first edition in the year 2000), a 1992 study done in Franklin, Wisconsin concluded that "a new single family home pays less than \$5,000 in property taxes but costs the city more than \$10,000 to service (p 117, 10th anniversary electronic book edition)". The same book makes the case that the victims of sprawl include "Cul-De-Sac-Kids . . . . Soccer Moms . . . . Bored Teenagers . . . . Stranded Elderly . . . . Weary Commuters . . . . Bankrupt Municipalities " and last but not least, "The Immobile Poor."

**My bottom line** regarding the consideration the Council is giving to reducing Saturday bus service, is do whatever it takes to **take care of our "Immobile Poor" and keep the service**. Also, long range, let this crisis be a wakeup call to stop the madness of supporting sprawl and wider, faster streets in favor of capital improvements that give our poor (and other victims of bad choices by our leaders) the respect and support they so desperately need and deserve.

Sincerely,

Ray Dryz  
1209 NW Bell Ave  
Lawton, OK 73507-6544