Memorandum

To: Madison Area Transportation Planning Board Members

From: Bob McDonald, Transportation Planning Manager

Date: July 25, 2008

Re: Wednesday, August 6, 2008 Madison Area Transportation Planning Board Meeting

Enclosed are an agenda and materials for the next Madison Area Transportation Planning Board meeting, to be held Wednesday, August 6, 2008 Madison Area Transportation Planning Board Meeting. Please mark your calendars accordingly. If you have any questions, please call me at 266-4518 or send me an e-mail at rmcdonald@cityofmadison.com.

Enclosures
MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT
Madison Area Transportation Planning Board
A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
August 6, 2008
Madison Water Utility
119 E Olin Ave, Room A-B
7 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Roll Call

2. Approval of July 2, 2008 Meeting Minutes

3. Communications

4. Public Comment (for items not on MPO Agenda)

5. Consideration of Resolution TPB No. 16, Regarding Amendment #4 of the 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Dane County Area
   • Section 5309 Grant for City of Sun Prairie to Purchase a Small Bus for Shared-ride System

6. Consideration of Release of Draft 2009-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Dane County Area for Public Review and Comment

7. Consideration of Letter of Comment on the Long Range Metro Transit Planning Ad Hoc Committee Final Report
   • Overview of Final Report by Chuck Kamp

8. Consideration of Resolution TPB No. 17, Authorizing an Amendment to the 2008 MPO Budget for Staff to Conduct Reviews of Transportation Demand Management Plans Provided to the City of Madison

9. Consideration of Letter of Comment to WisDOT Regarding Proposed Hoepker Road/USH 51 Intersection Improvement Project

10. Status Report by TPB Board Members on Projects Potentially Involving the TPB:
    • Transport 2020 Implementation Task Force
    • USH 51 (USH 12/18 to I 90/94/39) Corridor Study
    • North Mendota Parkway Implementation Oversight Committee
    • USH 51 (McFarland to Stoughton)

11. Discussion of Future Work Items:
    • Approval of 2009-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
    • Draft 2009 Unified Planning Work Program
    • Verona Road/West Beltline Interim Improvements
    • Ped/Bike Safety Education Program

12. Announcements and Schedule of Future Meetings

13. Adjournment

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Next MPO Meeting:

Wednesday, September 3 at 7 p.m.
Madison Water Utility, 119 E. Olin Ave., Room A-B

If you need an interpreter, materials in alternate formats, or other accommodations to access this meeting, contact the Planning & Development Dept. at (608) 266-4635 or TTY/TXNET (866) 704-2318.

Please do so at least 48 hours prior to the meeting so that proper arrangements can be made.

Si Ud. necesita un intérprete, materiales en formatos alternos, o acomodaciones para poder venir a esta reunión, por favor haga contacto con el Department of Planning & Development (el departamento de planificación y desarrollo) al (608)-266-4635, o TTY/TXNET (886)-704-2318.

Por favor avísenos por lo menos 48 horas antes de esta reunión, así que se puedan hacer los arreglos necesarios.
Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (an MPO)
July 2, 2008 Meeting Minutes

1. Roll Call
   
   Members present: Tom Clauder, (arrived at Item #5), Joe Clausius, Jerry Mandli (arrived at Item #3), Al Matano, Paul Skidmore, Duane Hinz, (arrived at Item #7), Satya Rhodes-Conway, John Vesperman, (left after Item #5), Robbie Webber, Mark Opitz, Charles Kamp.

   Members absent: Eileen Bruskewitz, Ken Harwood, Robin Schmidt

   Staff present: Bob McDonald, Bill Schaefer

2. Approval of June 4, 2008 Meeting Minutes

   Moved by Skidmore, seconded by Opitz, to approve June meeting minutes. Motion carried.

3. Communications

   McDonald said there were several at member’s places. The first is a letter from Aileen Switzer, WisDOT Planning, to Dwight McComb, FHWA, which McComb then forwarded to McDonald approving the change to the work program to conduct the transportation analyses for proposed urban service area amendments for the RPC. The second is a letter from the WisDOT Secretary approving Amendment #1 to the 2008-2012 TIP. The third one is a City of Madison resolution approving the final report of the Long Range Metro Transit Planning Ad Hoc Committee and its recommendations, which has been referred to the MPO for comment. He said the Board could decide on whether to send a letter of comment or adopt its own resolution regarding the report. Webber suggested discussing it at the next meeting and then sending a letter of comment. McDonald said he’d put it on the agenda for the next meeting and ask someone from Metro Transit to provide a presentation on it. McDonald reported that the last communication was a copy of a letter sent out to a large group of persons and organizations regarding an amendment to the current coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan for Dane County and the process that will be undertaken to create a new more comprehensive plan. Schaefer added that the MPO Board had already approved as part of TIP amendments the projects that were the subject of the letter. WisDOT had told the MPO that this was the process that needed to be followed, seeking input on the projects. The MPO received over twenty responses back from the letter and there was overwhelming support for all of the projects.

4. Public Comment (for items not on MPO Agenda)

   None.

5. Presentation on the Dane County Clean Air Coalition by Dave Merritt Project Coordinator

   Merritt handed out some materials, including a copy of a power point presentation that he referred to. He provided some background information on the Clean Air Coalition (CAC), which is a public/private partnership of businesses, government agencies, and schools. The MPO was a founding member of the CAC. The CAC was formed four years ago to voluntarily reduce air pollution in order to keep the air healthy and ensure that Dane County continues to meet all State and Federal air regulations. He reviewed some of the programs that the CAC has implemented, including the Clean Air Action Days whereby notification is given to the general public and CAC member organizations when it is anticipated that the air quality will reach unhealthy levels for sensitive groups. Member organizations then activate specific response plans and the public is asked to take actions as well such as using alternative transportation and not refueling their cars in the afternoon. Free bus rides are provided on those days. Other programs implemented under various grants include a green gas station initiative, an EPA clean school bus diesel retrofit program, an EPA off-road diesel retrofit program for city and county equipment, a gas can
exchange program, and an ongoing bio-diesel school bus fund to help school districts purchase Dane County bio-diesel fuel.

More recently, the focus of the CAC has expanded to include the issue of fine particle pollution as well as ground level ozone. On April 1, the U.S. EPA notified Governor Doyle in a letter that Dane County and a number of other counties in the state had violated the 24-hour Federal public health standard for fine particle pollution. The EPA adopted a more stringent standard for fine particle pollution or PM 2.5 in 2006 and that is the reason for the violation. The new standard is 35 micrograms per cubic meter compared to the old standard of 65. The 3-year average PM 2.5 level for Dane County is 37, so we are just over the standard. This may result in the county being designated non-attainment for this pollutant by the EPA. The Governor has taken a position that although Wisconsin counties are in violation of the standard new Federal rules and programs that have been recently adopted will reduce some of the major precursors of PM 2.5 pollution such as nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide, VOC’s, and ammonia. As those programs take effect, we will become in attainment of the standard. Levels of PM 2.5 precursor pollutants have actually already been going down in Wisconsin and elsewhere over the last decade. Merritt then reviewed the timeline for actions on PM 2.5. Final designations by EPA are due in December of this year. We are anticipating a letter in late July from EPA with its initial non-attainment designations. Dane County will likely be listed as being non-attainment. We’ll then have 60 days to respond to that initial determination from EPA. At a recent meeting the CAC decided to seek from EPA what is called an early action compact or agreement. Dane County is in a somewhat unique situation in that MG&E has already pledged to shut down its coal burning operation at its Blount Street plant by the year 2011. A feasibility study is underway for the UW Charter Street plant regarding reduction of emissions from that plant. The proposal to EPA will ask that the agency not designate the county as non-attainment because the actions that have been and will be taken to reduce emissions combined with the Federal rules and programs will bring the area back into attainment of the standard. The WisDNR has agreed to conduct additional modeling to determine the effect of the reductions in PM 2.5 precursor pollutants from these actions. Because emissions from motor vehicles account for over 50% of the problem, the CAC plans to include some actions addressing motor vehicle pollution as part of the proposal.

Some discussion followed about the timeline for non-attainment designations for both PM 2.5 and ground level ozone. Merritt said that Dane County is close to violating the standard for ozone so that is a concern as well. He also mentioned some of the ramifications of being designated non-attainment, including transportation conformity. Schaefer explained that this means the MPO must demonstrate through modeling that the long-range transportation plan and TIP are consistent with the emissions budget for motor vehicles included in the DNR’s plan to come into attainment with the air quality standard. Matano asked if the presumption is that building more highways helps air pollution by improving traffic flow. Schaefer said generally the answer is yes. Rhodes-Conway asked if there was data on the percentage breakdown of PM 2.5 pollution sources, and Merritt said not yet. Merritt added that the other question that we’ll get the answer to with modeling by DNR is how much of the problem is due to local pollution sources. For ozone, the answer is we contribute no more than 5%, but for PM 2.5 it could be as high as 20%. In response to a question, Merritt explained that area sources are miscellaneous small sources such as gas lawn mowers, underground gas tanks, etc. In response to a question regarding the trend in air quality, Merritt explained that the emissions of PM 2.5 precursor pollutants have been dropping, but the levels of PM 2.5 depend to a large degree on meteorology. Last December, there was a major air inversion from the large snow cover and 40-50 degree temperatures. This trapped pollutants close to ground level and led to high PM 2.5 levels for several days. Merritt added that if the data from 2008 put the county back into attainment, we could apply for redesignation back to attainment status should the EPA designate the county non-attainment. Rhodes-Conway asked about the availability of information on cost effective pollution control measures from other parts of the country that have been dealing with this problem. Merritt said such information is available. Rhodes-Conway commented that the community should get serious about reducing pollution faster so we get further away from the non-attainment line, and she encouraged MPO staff to help the Board evaluate the potential air quality implications of its decisions.
Matano asked about car buy back programs to get high polluting vehicles off the road, and Merritt said that is something that could be considered, but it takes money.

6. Consideration of Resolution TPB No. 15, Regarding Amendment #3 of the 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Dane County Area

Schaefer said the TIP amendment was requested by WisDOT and includes three projects. One is for emergency pavement repair work on I-94 that needs to be done this year. For the other two projects, WisDOT would like to start design work this year and that is the reason for the TIP amendment request. One of these is the addition of left turn capacity at the intersection of Verona Road and CTH PD. There are issues out there today, but WisDOT also wants to get this done before work on the Verona Road/Beltline interchange projects starts since CTH PD will be a primary alternative route. The other project is a bridge deck replacement project for the USH 51 (Stoughton Rd.) bridge over Cottage Grove Road. Construction is programmed for 2011 for both of these projects.

Moved by Mandli, seconded by Skidmore, to approve Resolution TPB No. 15. Motion carried.

7. Review of Preliminary Draft Listing and Scoring and Ranking of Candidate Projects for STP Urban Funding for 2009-2013

Schaefer reviewed the draft listings by year starting with the current year projects. He noted that because the CTH M/Valley View Road intersection project was delayed until 2010, additional funding was freed up for the East Washington Avenue and Monona Drive Segment 1 reconstruction projects in 2009. Schaefer said a new sheet for this year was at member’s places, because staff had incorrectly divided up the funding between the two projects. The funding was divided up based on the amount each project was short of the full cost share amount. The available funding still falls short of the full amount potentially available under the MPO’s old cost sharing policy. Because the CTH M/Valley Road project was supposed to occur in 2009 and the MPO committed 80% funding for that project, staff proposes to fund it at that level even though 2010 is the first year of the new 50/50 cost share policy. Webber expressed concern about the lack of an agreement on the local share funding for the CTH M projects and wanted to get that cleared up. Schaefer said that staff would be discussing the issue at its annual intergovernmental meeting on the TIP. It must be worked out or the project sponsor must agree to cover the full local share.

Schaefer then reviewed the projects in the remaining years. In 2013, the projects are CTH M (Cross Country to CTH PD), the last phase of Monona Drive, and East Johnson Street (Butler to First St.). In response to a question about Raymond Road, Schaefer said the plan is to eventually cul-de-sac Raymond Road before it intersects CTH PD and connect Raymond Road directly to Mid-Town Road.

Clauder commented on the long list of projects below the funding cutoff line in 2013, and was concerned that these projects would get delayed further. McDonald said that to be honest the chances of many of the projects below the line being funded in 2014 was slim. It depends upon what other projects get submitted for funding in 2014 and beyond. If there are no new major projects, then some of them might get funded, but there is no guarantee. Webber commented that everyone is struggling with the fact there just isn’t enough money and that is why she favors doing maintenance projects before capacity expansion projects. Schaefer said that the chances of a project that scored below 34-36 being funded were slim since new projects will continue to be added that they will be competing against. McDonald said the draft listings were presented for information only. They’ll be presented to our technical committee at its next meeting and then staff will prepare a complete draft TIP to release for public hearing.

8. Status Report by TPB Board Members on Projects Potentially Involving the TPB:

Transport 2020 Implementation Task Force: Matano reported that the Federal New Starts application had been submitted to FTA and the press release on it had some good information. The membership of the Finance/Governance subcommittee has been expanded to include representatives from communities outside Madison, businesses, and others. Also, a legislative council study committee is being set up to draft RTA legislation.
USH 51 (USH 12/18 to I-90/94/39) Corridor Study and USH 51 (McFarland to Stoughton) Study:
McDonald said there has not been a meeting recently as WisDOT has had to go back and follow a new agency consultation process required under SAFETEA-LU.

North Mendota Parkway Implementation Oversight Committee: Hinz reported that public meetings were scheduled for July 14 and 21 to review various alternative roadway alignments and the E-Way boundaries. Opitz added that the Town of Springfield had been holding meetings trying to get some public input. Meetings have also been held in other communities as well as meetings with property owners.

9. Discussion of Future Work Items
McDonald said the draft TIP will be released in August with a hearing in September and MPO action in October. Staff will also be putting together next year’s work program for review at the September meeting. A presentation will be scheduled on the proposed draft Verona Road/West Beltline interim improvements. A presentation will also be made at a future meeting on the ped/bike safety education program.

10. Announcements and Schedule of Future Meetings
The next meeting is August 6, 2008 at the same location.

11. Adjournment
Moved by Rhodes-Conway, seconded by Skidmore, to adjourn. Motion carried.
Re:
Consideration of Resolution TPB No. 16 Regarding Amendment #4 to the 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County Area.

Staff Comments on Item:
The City of Sun Prairie has requested this amendment to add a Federal Section 5309 grant project to purchase a small bus for the city’s shared-ride taxi service. The bus would be used to expand capacity for the “corner” service provided to transport kids to school and as a back-up vehicle for the limited weekday shuttle service provided to East Towne. The private provider that the city contracts with already uses a small bus and a van for these services, which were purchased by the city in 2004 with the assistance of Federal capital funds. The city is exploring the possibility of expanding the shuttle service by adding another weekday trip or providing weekend service.

Materials Presented on Item:
Resolution TPB No. 16

Staff Recommendation/Rationale:
Staff recommends adoption of Resolution TPB No. 16.
Resolution TPB No. 16

Amendment #4 to the 2008–2012 Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County

WHEREAS, the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (TPB) – A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) approved the 2008–2012 Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County on November 7, 2007; and

WHEREAS, the Madison Area TPB approved Amendment #1 to the 2008–2012 Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County on March 5, 2008; and

WHEREAS, the Madison Area TPB approved Amendment #2 to the 2008–2012 Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County on June 4, 2008; and

WHEREAS, the Madison Area TPB approved Amendment #3 to the 2008–2012 Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County on July 2, 2008; and

WHEREAS, the Madison Metropolitan Planning Area transportation projects and some transportation planning activities to be undertaken using Federal funding in 2008–2011 must be included in the 2008–2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and

WHEREAS, the City of Sun Prairie has requested a TIP amendment to add a Section 5309 grant project to purchase a small bus (<30 ft.) for the city’s shared-ride taxi system; and

WHEREAS, the project is consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan 2030 for the Madison Metropolitan Area and Dane County, the adopted long-range regional transportation plan for the Madison Metropolitan Planning Area, and the 2004-2008 Transit Development Program for the Madison Urban Area;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Madison Area TPB approves Amendment #4 to the 2008–2012 Transportation Improvement Program for the Madison Metropolitan Area & Dane County, adding the following project (with costs in $000s):

1. Add the following City of Sun Prairie project to the Transit Capital section on page 27:
   Purchase Small (<30 ft.) Bus; $42 (Capital-New/Repl, Fed-Sec. 5309), $10 (Local-SP), $52 (Total) in 2008.

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Date Adopted         Al Matano, Chair
Madison Area Transportation Planning Board
Re:

Consideration of Letter of Comment on the Long Range Metro Transit Planning Ad Hoc Committee Final Report

**Staff Comments on Item:**

The City of Madison’s Long Range Metro Transit Planning Ad Hoc Committee is requesting the Board to provide comments on its final report prior to consideration of adoption by the Madison Common Council. The report provides an analysis of the Metro Transit System and provides a number of short-term, mid-term, and long-term recommendations.

**Materials Presented on Item:**

1. Draft letter of Comment
2. Copy of the Final Report

**Staff Recommendation/Rationale:**

Staff recommends approval of draft letter of comment
August 6, 2008

Mark Opitz, Chair
Long-Range Metro Transit Planning Ad Hoc Committee
Metro Transit
1101 E. Washington Ave.
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Mr. Opitz:

The Final Report of the City of Madison Long-Range Metro Transit Planning Ad Hoc Committee, dated June 2008, was referred to the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board for comments prior to consideration by the Madison Common Council.

The Board has reviewed the document and concurs with many of the findings and recommendations contained in the report. We are pleased to see that many of the mid and long-term recommendations are consistent with the policy objectives and recommendations of the region’s long-range Regional Transportation Plan 2030, and reinforce recent policy actions taken by the Board, particularly in regards to the creation of a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) if supported in a referendum.

The Board recognizes that the Metro transit system faces numerous challenges, including the need to provide service to an increasing number of riders, increasing costs, and a service area that is growing in population and geographic area. Given these challenges and pressures, it is clear that Metro’s funding structure is not sustainable in its current form. The short-term marketing and customer service strategies, the recommended ride pass programs, fare card options, and partnerships with business identified in the report will help to begin to address funding and ridership challenges. However, a more regional approach similar to an RTA is needed, in addition to the short-term strategies, to provide a structure that is sustainable in the long-term.

Provision of express bus service as a mid and long-term objective covering large employment centers, park and ride lots, the Capitol Square, the University of Wisconsin, the airport, and connections between transfer points is also a major objective and part of a key transit concept in the region’s long-range transportation plan. It is the intent of Board to work with Metro, to the extent possible, to bring these important and commonly held objectives to fruition. It is also the Board’s expectation that many of the short and mid-term recommendations in the report will be considered in the update of the Transit Development Program (TDP) that is currently underway by Metro and MPO staff.

The Board appreciates the opportunity to comment on the report and looks forward to working with Metro to achieve the transit and transportation needs of the Madison Metropolitan Area.

Sincerely,

Al Matano
Chair

cc: Chuck Kamp
Final Report
of the
City of Madison
LONG-RANGE METRO TRANSIT PLANNING
Ad Hoc Committee
June 2008
Committee Members:

Carl Durocher  Richard Wilberg  
Amanda White  Edward Clarke  
Jed Sanborn  Juli Aulik (Resigned 10/4/07)  
Susan De Vos (Resigned 3/15/08, opposed to final report)  Lance Lunsway  
Ida Thomas  Satya Rhodes Conway  
Mark Opitz  Gary Poulson  
Michael Heifetz  Joe Clausius

Introduction

Madison has a strong and popular bus system. However, the Metro system faces numerous pressures, including the need to provide service to an increasing ridership, increasing costs, and a service area that is growing in population, number of riders, and geographic area. There is tremendous opportunity here for the Metro system — the Madison community generally supports public transportation and is increasingly concerned about issues such as air quality, traffic congestion, the price of gasoline and transit oriented development. Metro can offer solutions to address these concerns, but it must do so in a way that is both creative and fiscally responsible. In order to succeed, Metro needs to be able to improve and expand its service and needs to find a stable source of funding to do so.

The Metro Transit System is owned and operated by the City of Madison, and provides fixed route and paratransit services in the greater Madison area. It partners with the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW), Middleton, Fitchburg, Verona, Town of Madison, the Village of Shorewood Hills, the Madison Metropolitan Area School District, Madison Area Technical College (MATC), Edgewood College, St. Mary’s Hospital, University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics, and The American Center for services and unlimited ride pass contracts.

Metro provides a high level of service compared to communities of similar size, and ridership productivity and cost effectiveness performance ranges from above average to very strong. (See Table 1 on page 5.) However, Metro's funding structure is not sustainable. Wisconsin is the only state in the Midwest that does not yet allow for the formation of regional transit authorities. Costs, including an astronomical increase in the price of fuel, continue to rise. State assistance has been diminishing in real terms (actual figures are increasing but at a lower rate than inflation) and the City has been making up the difference. Given other budget pressures, it is increasingly
difficult for the City to fill the gap with general fund revenues as it has in the last few years, thus the purpose of this Committee is to make recommendations that will strengthen the system.

The Committee was originally charged with “exploring ways of improving Metro service and securing adequate funding that moves Metro beyond the cycle of fare increases, service cuts and extraordinary increases in general fund support.” The Committee was asked to address the following topics:

- Potential for the greater use of pre-paid employee and/or student passes;
- Technological changes such as hybrid buses, alternative fuels and other technologies that might reduce costs;
- The possibility of the use of smaller buses and demand response, route deviation methods on certain generally low-use routes at certain off-peak times;
- The possibility of expanding the scope of inter-city commuter service;
- Opportunities for regional transit, potential structures for governance of a regional transit entity and necessary statutory changes;
- Opportunities for new revenue sources that have a regional focus and that include expanded advertising revenue;
- New or expanded techniques to market transit;
- Other topics related to its charge that the Committee deems appropriate.

Based on this charge, the Committee adopted the following mission and guiding principles:

**Mission:** To explore options to secure the long term financial stability of the Metro Transit system, including but not limited to expansion into new markets both geographically and demographically, intensification of service, new technologies, marketing and partnerships and to provide guidance on priorities for the Metro Transit system.

**Guiding Principles:**

The Metro bus system:

- Is an essential component of a balanced transportation scheme for Madison
- Is a crucial part of our public infrastructure
- Should provide service that is available to everyone
- Should be attractive and convenient for everyone
• Should have a broad and stable funding base, including public funds from the city, state and federal governments

• Should build partnerships with other communities, businesses, community organizations, etc.

Because of the high level of community interest in the Metro system and the Committee’s commitment to participatory government, the Committee held six public meetings and posted two surveys online to solicit public input.¹ Many of the ideas submitted as public input found their way into this report, and the Committee wishes to thank the citizens who took the time to read and respond to earlier drafts.

Overview

Funding and Cost Management

Peer analysis shows that Metro provides a very high level of service compared to communities of similar size, and that ridership productivity and cost effectiveness performance ranges from above average to very strong (see Table 1). For example, Metro’s cost per passenger is lower than the peer group average, both its passengers per revenue hour and passengers per capita are higher than average.

Table 1 – The Wisconsin Department of Transportation annually assesses the cost-efficiency of public transit systems in the state and compares them to similar systems around the country. This table contains data from 2004, the most recent available. Note that Madison is the only member of its peer group that does not have a regional transit authority. Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation 2007 Cost-efficiency Analysis for Wisconsin’s Public Transit Systems

¹ The surveys and public input can be found at www.mymetrobus.com/adhoc.html or by contacting Ann Schroeder at (608) 267-4967 or aschroeder@cityofmadison.com.
Metro must have a funding structure going forward that is more sustainable and equitable than its current funding. Metro staff reports that the current transit funding structure is broken, from several perspectives (see Table 2). State funding, which used to be set at 42% of all operating costs for all Wisconsin transit systems, has fallen and has not kept pace with inflation. For 2006, Metro received 38% state funding. From a local funding perspective, the existing state funding tier structure means that Madison gets a fixed dollar amount for a two-year budget, corresponding to the biennial state budget cycle. If service expansions occur, the state dollars for transit are diluted and cause increases in costs for jurisdictions that are not expanding services. Combined with the fuel price increases of the past two years, this factor is also contributing to the City of Madison's share going up 35% in 4 years, a larger increase than any other City department. Wisconsin is the only Great Lakes state in the Midwest that does not allow the formation of regional transit authorities, which limits Madison’s options of revenue sources to support Metro.

Table 2 – Funding for the Madison Metro system by source in the years 1995, 2001 and 2007 (the most recent year for which data is available). Federal and State funds come in the form of Federal grants, state operating assistance and State capital grants, the Local Share is from the City’s general operating fund and investment partners, Passenger revenue includes all fares, including ride pass revenue, and Miscellaneous System Generated Revenue includes advertising, New Year's Eve, sales of scrap, parts and equipment and Dane County pass through funds.
The Committee reviewed a variety of revenue sources, many based on public input, that have some potential for addressing existing shortfalls. These included: alternative funding sources, increased state/federal dollars, property tax, gas tax, wheel tax, grants, naming rights, advertising, special event fees, parking fees, federal money for fixed guideways/express lanes, raising fares, unlimited ride pass programs, developer fees, and other public/private partnerships. From these options, the Committee identified a shorter list of preferred recommendations. Most importantly, the Committee recommends that local transit funding be stable and predictable.

In the realm of cost management, the Committee looked at a number of cost issues including overtime, workers' compensation, absenteeism, small vs. larger buses, and cost efficiency measures to compare Metro with the transit systems in its peer group around the country. Overall, Metro compares very favorably in cost efficiency and effectiveness measures (see table 1), but improvement in some areas should be made.

**Marketing**

Metro's most recent market research was conducted by Chamberlain Research Associates in 2000. This research was limited to the Metro Transit service area, and county-wide research was
conducted by DaneTrak in 2004. Riders and non-riders alike have a high opinion of Metro Transit with nearly 7 out of 10 Madison residents stating their general impression of Metro Transit is good or very good (Madison Metro DaneTrak Summary Report, page 3 – Gene Kroupa & Associates).

Metro targets two broad markets for its marketing activities: riders and non-riders. It is a well-known marketing strategy that it is more cost-effective to retain existing customers and encourage them to use your product more than it is to attract new riders. It should be noted that Metro needs to attract approximately 25% new riders each year to maintain existing ridership levels, due to the turnover of riders who are in the Madison area for post high school education. Marketing efforts have been focused on the following approaches: maintaining existing riders; encouraging increased trip-making among existing riders; encouraging non-riders to try the system by working with employers; promoting cost effectiveness of Metro in light of fuel costs; promoting environmental benefits of Metro; promoting special event services and special fares; and, maintaining a positive image within the Madison urban area.

Currently, Metro Transit implements the following marketing activities:

- Metro buses are used as a main communication tool, with on-bus flyers, Rider Alerts, Rider Reader quarterly passenger newsletter, informational interior message posters, Ride Guides, System Maps and exterior ads
- Metro communicates via electronic media with weekly (at least) Rider Alert Email messages and its website (www.mymetrobus.com)
- Advertisements and trades with local media
- Ride Guides and other external publications
- Customer feedback, received via phone calls, emails and the Metro Website, can serve as informal “market research”
- Bus exterior advertisements
- News releases, news conferences and public relations events

In order for Metro to achieve long-term financial success, the organization must reach beyond its current upward ridership trend. To meet higher ridership goals, Metro must implement a strong, strategic Marketing and Customer Service plan that is supported with a Marketing and Customer Service budget to adequately meet Metro’s growth needs. The Committee has created a matrix to offer marketing strategies for communicating the Ad Hoc Committee’s final recommendations. The marketing strategies will be on two levels – core, daily marketing activities and higher level, targeted strategies. The matrix will serve as a guide for Metro staff and the Committee in the following ways:
• Inform the public of the Committee’s recommendations.

• Ensure that the work of the Committee will move forward after the group has dissolved.

Ridership and System Improvements

Metro ridership is higher than it has been in many years and is increasing (see Figure 1). Although ridership trends are positive for Metro, the Committee stressed increasing ridership as a core strategy for financial stability. Similarly, although Metro regularly adjusts its route system and other aspects of its service, the Committee thought it important to discuss longer-term, broader issues and provide guidance. Although the Committee did not discuss them at length, some of the underlying issues that impact the Metro system encompass questions of land use planning and the provision of public infrastructure to peripheral development. The Committee acknowledges the apparent contradiction of encouraging Metro to both increase core service and expand its partnerships with outlying communities, but we believe that the two are not as mutually exclusive as they might seem. However, it is increasingly clear that access to transit must be a factor in our land use planning. Metro cannot be expected to expand at the same rate as the City without significant increases in funding.

Figure 1 – Annual ridership on the Metro system, 1971 – 2007. A ride is defined as a person boarding a bus, and does not distinguish between methods of payment, so transfers are included as a separate ride.

We discussed a whole variety of barriers to ridership and ways to overcome them. These discussions focused on the ridership experience and the characteristics of the system (schedule,
map, equipment, etc.), both of which are critical in the retention and recruitment of riders. A very long list of suggestions was prioritized based on public comment, and the top recommendations are presented here.

**Recommendations**

The Committee’s recommendations are grouped by the timeframe in which we recommend that they be addressed. We recommend that short-term items be addressed immediately and/or be included in the 2009 budget. Mid-term items should be addressed in the 2010 to 2012 timeframe, and long-term items are expected to take longer to implement – 2013 and later. However, we recognize that each of these items will realistically span several time frames. Within each time frame, recommendations are listed by priority. It is hoped that the relevant bodies will take these items up, discuss and implement them in a timely fashion. Specifically, the Committee expects Metro staff to analyze our recommendations and present specific proposals to the Transit and Parking Commission, the Common Council and the Mayor, who are expected to act on these proposals.

Overall, the Committee sees great potential in the Metro system. There are significant things to be worked on, and we hope we have addressed those in the recommendations that follow. We are hopeful that this crucial part of our public infrastructure will receive the support it deserves so it can be a safe, attractive and convenient service for everyone.

**Short-Term (2008-2009)**

1. **Provide A Positive Customer Experience.**

The golden rule of marketing is that it is more cost-effective to invest in the current customer base then to invest in finding new customers. Metro’s number one priority is and should be to continually improve the customer experience to keep current customers and increase their usage. In order to see a significant rise in ridership, Metro should improve the customer experience to make riding the bus as safe, convenient and user-friendly as possible. Before Metro can successfully market its product, the system must be one that people want to participate in.

The first priority should be maintaining and improving personal safety on buses and at bus stops. In the final round of public comment, concerns about personal safety were among the top ten most frequent comments received. Several of the following recommendations include ways to improve safety, but the Committee feels that the issue merits specific and continued attention by Metro to address any unsafe situations and to overcome any public perception of Metro as unsafe.
The Committee also recommends the following customer service expansions and improvements:

- **Customer service training**: Every Metro employee, but most especially drivers and customer service staff, should consider themselves ambassadors for the Metro system and should be unfailingly polite and helpful to the riding public. Metro should do everything it can to make this possible, including providing a safe and pleasant work environment and the appropriate training and career development opportunities. Drivers and Customer service representatives are on the front line in terms of encouraging people to use Metro service as well as providing solutions to those who call in with complaints. Professional customer service training is recommended to give these employees the tools needed to market Metro as well as to professionally manage customer concerns and complaints, so that customers will consider using the service again. Providing professional training may reduce employee turnover and frustration.

- **Greater emphasis on Metro’s customer feedback**: Metro should not only ask for feedback, but also should continue and expand efforts to gain feedback, reply to feedback, and use feedback to improve Metro’s systems. (see also recommendation #17)

- **Improved telephone assistance**: The Committee suggests Metro conduct an internal analysis of current and expected customer service staffing and communication needs and budget accordingly in 2010 (also mid-term)

- **Increase customer service phone staff**: Due to increased ridership, phone calls and emails to the customer service center has greatly increased in recent years. Confirm that phone operators identify themselves. Metro should also consider how the adoption of a 311 system would impact its need for dedicated customer service staff. (also mid-term)

- **Expansion of customer service hours**: Metro should expand customer assistance through later hours into the evening with the goal of providing assistance to match Metro’s actual bus service time. Currently, Metro phone operators are only available to customers until 6:00 PM on weekdays, and 4:30 PM on weekends/holidays. Customers with fixed-route questions or paratransit travel concerns are left with little customer service support outside these times.

2. **Ride Pass Programs**

Metro will benefit from increased promotion of unlimited ride pass agreements. By entering into an unlimited ride pass agreement, the customer pays per ride for a high volume of rides and distributes these rides through free passes for its constituents or employees. The customer receives a discount for volume purchasing.
Metro currently holds unlimited ride pass agreements with UW-Madison, City of Madison, St. Mary’s Hospital, Edgewood College and MATC. Giving people the opportunity to ride for free can dramatically increase ridership.

The unlimited ride pass agreement structure lends itself to be a viable option to pool together small businesses in order for employees to receive the free ride pass that larger institutions such as UW-Madison and City of Madison employees currently receive. A small business unlimited ride pass pool could increase ridership for Metro while providing an attractive employee benefit and parking demand reduction for small businesses. In 2008, Metro should propose a plan for the 2009 budget to internally manage and deliver a new program to sell unlimited ride passes to small businesses.

Metro should also analyze the costs and benefits of offering a broader range of ride pass agreements. In some cases, offering a bulk rate on passes with a fixed number of rides could be an attractive option.

Considering the success of current unlimited ride pass contracts, Metro should more actively pursue businesses and organizations interested in entering into ride pass agreements. These agreements offer Metro guaranteed revenue and a new pool of riders who may not have otherwise considered commuting via bus.

Further opportunities for increasing ridership through additional ride pass agreements (unlimited or otherwise) could be explored in the following categories:

- State of Wisconsin and Dane County (for employees)
- Apartment Building Owners and Condo Associations
- Corporate Real Estate Proprietors
- Small Businesses
- Large Centers of Employment
- Hotels and other Hospitality Groups (Greater Madison Convention and Visitor’s Bureau)
- School Communities, including students, employees, Parent/Teacher Coalitions and the like.

Metro should also explore ways to retain current riders who have unlimited ride passes once they leave the institution that gave them the pass. For example, Metro might offer graduating UW students or former St. Mary’s employees an opportunity to purchase an unlimited ride pass at a similar discount for some limited amount of time, in effect “easing them in” to paying full fare. (also mid-term)
3. Service Improvements

Destinations, route maps and frequency of service are the most common topics that this Committee received feedback on. While we are reluctant to make recommendations about specific route numbers, stops, or even neighborhood service, we can and do recommend certain standards and guiding principles.

Core service: Although it is the natural inclination of any system to grow, it is important that any expansion of the Metro service area only be undertaken if it does not harm existing service. In other words, adding new destinations on the periphery of the Metro system should not be done at the expense of service on existing routes.

Metro service goals and standards: The current standards are written from a “route” perspective (i.e. service frequencies by route, stop spacing by route, etc). We recommend that these be supplemented with a user or neighborhood perspective. Stop spacing, for example, should be determined both by what types of routes serve the stops and by the neighborhood in which they are located. Neighborhoods with higher densities of housing might require more frequent stops, for example. In addition, common destinations should continue to be a priority for stop placement. Similarly, riders are often concerned with the frequency at which any bus comes by a stop, not just the frequency of one route. From a user’s perspective it may be important to time routes to either provide more frequent service options from a stop, or to facilitate transfers.

Priority neighborhoods: Metro should make it a priority to provide a higher level of service to low income and transit dependent neighborhoods. Demographic data showing income and car ownership by neighborhood are readily available and can be used to prioritize the allocation of bus service. These neighborhoods should, ideally, be served more frequently, for more hours in the day and more days in the week.

Stop location and common destinations: There was a clear desire expressed by members of the public for buses to stop closer to major destinations such as shopping malls, grocery stores, etc. Metro should explore partnering with the management of these businesses to establish bus stops in their parking lots, and the planning department should consider making bus access a condition of approval for future development. This concept might be expanded to other destinations (medical facilities, schools, employment centers, community centers, parks, etc.) as well.

Transit time: Unsurprisingly, transit time is of primary importance to Metro’s ridership. This is dealt with under other recommendations (express service, bus rapid transit, etc), but we restate it here as an important criteria for planning and decision-making. One recurring complaint about the transfer point system is that it increased transit times significantly. In addition, as Madison has grown and added miles and miles of new streets, the area Metro needs to cover, and thus the time it takes to cover it, has grown as well. An ideal, if not always achievable, goal is to make it faster to ride the bus than to drive. A more realistic standard might be to make it no slower to
take the bus. This is one of the key factors in deciding to ride the bus, and as such, should be an important factor in planning route placement and timing.

**Service hours:** Another critical aspect of Metro’s service is the hours during which it is available. We recommend extending service on key routes later at night to serve:

- Theater-goers and others patronizing the arts, especially downtown
- Second and third shift workers, including employees in the food service sector
- Bar patrons, especially those who shouldn’t be driving

Similarly, we recommend adjusting morning commute hours to serve early shift workers such as those in the construction trades. Finally, we recommend improving service on weekends such that at least the core routes run on the same schedule as during the week. Decreased service and different schedules on the weekend can discourage ridership.

**Service to schools:** Metro currently partners with the Madison Metropolitan School District to provide school specific service. In addition, a large number of K-12 students ride the Metro system. The Committee encourages Metro to continue this partnership and to look for ways to address concerns about safety, long transfer times and lack of service for after-school activities.

**Creative approaches to route design:** The Committee received many comments related to route design, with an emphasis on two things. The first was the desire to have routes that relate differently to the transfer points, either by going directly between them rather than via downtown (i.e. increasing service between the North and East transfer points) or by designing routes that overlap transfer points rather than beginning and ending at them (i.e. East High to Warner Park via the North Transfer Point). The second was the desire to have “simpler” routes that don’t “wander through neighborhoods.” This directly contradicts Metro’s stated goal of placing bus stops within a certain distance of all residential areas. There may be a compromise consisting of some looped routes that attach to a backbone of more direct routes, possibly in combination with express routes or Bus Rapid Transit. The Committee did not discuss in detail this idea, but encourages Metro to consider how to creatively design routes to address these concerns.

**4. Fare Card Options**

Limiting the barriers to purchasing fare cards and offering a broader selection of fare card options may assist in increasing ridership. A compilation of possible fare card enhancements derived from Committee work and public feedback is listed below. Metro and the Transit and Parking Commission should research these possibilities and implement solutions that increase the availability of a wide range of fare options and help overcome the “exact change” barrier.

- Consider ways to help riders obtain correct change for the fare if they do not have a fare card.
• Increased Number of Rides Per Ticket – A current limiting factor may be that few options exist between purchasing an unlimited 31-Day pass and the 10-Ride Ticket. Increased Fare Card options such as 25 or 50 ride tickets or an unlimited annual pass should be researched.

• Online Purchasing – Customers may not only purchase passes online, but may also have the option to print them at home.

• Reusable Cards – Once a fare card is exhausted, customers may have the option of adding rides to it and reusing the same ticket. Consider making these multi-use – could they also be used in the new parking meters? As a library card? As a debit card at local businesses? As an ID? (also mid-term)

• 24-hour fare card machines – These fully automated machines could accept credit cards or cash and may be located downtown on the Square, at the transfer points, on buses, and in other accessible areas to the riders and the public. (also long-term)

5. Partnerships with Business

Maximizing opportunities to partner with businesses should be an ongoing focus for Metro Transit. A strong relationship with Madison’s business community can provide Metro with key contacts, new marketing opportunities, and an avenue for Metro to reach out to thousands of potential new riders.

By promoting and supporting Metro Transit, businesses may also benefit in a variety of ways such as saving money on parking by encouraging their employees to use transit, enhancing the company’s employee benefits package, marketing themselves as a sustainable business, and publicizing their community leadership.

Metro Transit and local businesses may partner in a number of ways to reach mutually beneficial goals. Examples of increased partnership opportunities include:

• Provide an area for bus stops – Businesses may offer space in front of their store/office building for a Metro bus stop. These stops could include benches and/or shelters sponsored by the business.

• Sponsorship of benches and shelters - Nearby business and neighborhoods could sponsor existing facilities. The sponsoring organization could advertise on the shelter/bench that “This shelter/bench is provided by....”

• Increased sales outlets – Partner with high-traffic businesses who will sell passes to both employees and the public.
• Partner with realtors and apartment owners – Offer realtors and apartment owners an opportunity to buy bus passes at a discount to use as an incentive for buying/renting downtown homes. (also mid-term)

• Angel System – provide a “bus buddies” program, which connects experienced riders with novice riders at the same or a nearby employer. These “Angels” would help new riders plan their routes and navigate the system.

• Airport Service – Partner with the County, Airport, UW, Convention and Visitors Bureau and downtown hotels to not only create better bus service to the airport, but also provide Metro information to out-of-town visitors.

• Businesses near high volume stops - Consider bringing in vendors with newspapers, coffee, breakfast and lunch food, etc. where such vendors do not already exist adjacent to the stop, shelter or transfer point. Heating and pay phones are other amenities that riders would welcome.

• Transfer Points - Develop transfer points encouraging the location of services immediately adjacent – dry cleaner, childcare, market, etc. (also mid and long-term)

• Marketing - There are many opportunities for Metro to enter into partnerships and take advantage of co-marketing opportunities with those partners

• Schedules - Partner with businesses to display schedule information and advertise which Metro routes are close to their business.

6. Regional Transit Authority (RTA)

The Committee urges the State Legislature to grant local governments the authority to establish an RTA to help with the governance and funding of metropolitan transit systems. At the same time, existing funds that sustain Metro Transit must be protected so that they aren’t reallocated to other transportation modes. We support enabling legislation that works for municipalities around the state, ensures accountability and provides adequate representation of all involved municipalities. The Committee supports Metro’s involvement in a state study process if one develops. We also strongly support continued local discussions about what an RTA will look like in the Metro service area.

For the Metro service area, the long-term goal should be to have an expansion of services, a countywide RTA, and any RTA should only occur after a referendum on the RTA is held. In the shorter term, the municipalities that make up the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (MPO) should convene to determine if there is MPO-wide support for an RTA. At a minimum, an RTA in the Madison area should have boundaries contiguous with the MPO boundaries. Those municipalities wanting to be part of the RTA should convene to draft a resolution that
addresses the a) governance structure, b) taxing structure, and c) by-laws of the RTA and seek approval from each local governing body, with the goal being to have a regional referendum with the same language for creating the RTA.

7. Employee Cost Controls

Metro makes up 16% of city employees and currently uses about 29% of city sick leave and absent without pay (AWOP) absences not related to Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or paid sick leave absences. Metro is strongly encouraged to continue working collaboratively with labor representatives to reduce absenteeism and control costs at Metro. Examples of strategies could include wellness programs (including exercise opportunities to counteract the effects of sitting all day), attendance policies, etc.

Metro might also consider an incentive program for safe and responsible drivers. For example, heavy acceleration and braking uses more fuel. If drivers can reduce their fuel use via their behavior, Metro could reward them with a portion of the cost savings. (also mid-term)

8. Bus Size and Type

Metro should develop a scope of work for an outside group to review the pertinent issues related to determining whether smaller, larger, or a mix of buses should be used to serve the Metro area. Issues should include current and peak hour requirements, purchase costs, fuel and parts costs, life-cycle costing, fuel options (diesel, hybrid, etc.), ridership and fuel costs projections, school supplemental service needs for older buses, current garage limitations, interlining, and federal spare ration requirements. This study should be done by the MPO during the Transit Development Planning Process (TDP) starting in 2008. The TDP’s focus should be on peak ridership analysis, and if further study is required after the TDP, a consultant should be contracted to do a more detailed study.

This review should specifically include consideration of the use of different sized buses, both larger and smaller than the current equipment. Metro staff brought an articulated bus (55 or 60 feet long) to Madison for a day this past summer to review the possibility of future purchases of such buses for use on the UW campus routes where ridership averages 80 - 100 rides per bus per hour.

Metro should also continue its review of the pilot program with hybrid diesel/electric buses. (also mid-term)

9. Bus Stop Signs

City Traffic Engineering currently installs and maintains all bus stop signage along rights-of-way controlled by the City of Madison. Their policy has been that bus stop plaques are predominantly meant to address passenger vehicles and convey the associated parking restrictions in bus stops zones. This is the reason the sign plaques are installed at a 45-degree
angle facing the street (as opposed to perpendicular to the street or even facing the sidewalk, where they could be more easily read by passengers and pedestrians). This makes it harder for Metro passengers to identify bus stops from the sidewalk, since bus stop signs are hard to distinguish from other street signs.

In situations where a bus stop falls before, or nearside of an intersection, the sign plaque must be installed at the start of the parking zone restriction – approximately eighty feet from the corner – despite the fact that passengers actually board the bus at the intersection itself. In these situations, the City of Madison sign shop installs a supplementary plaque on the rear side of the bus stop sign, stating “Board Bus at Corner”.

Metro Transit currently serves just over 2,000 unique bus stop locations. About 1,000 of these signs are expected to lack any information on the rear side of the signage at present. The Committee proposes a pilot project to mark both sides of bus stop signs. The pilot project would consist of applying an adhesive sticker, produced by the City of Madison sign shop, to the rear sides of bus stop signs. Metro should pick a trial route to test, install these stickers and collect passenger feedback. If the presence of stickers makes it easier to identify stops and thus to ride the bus, they should be placed on all remaining signs.

Example of “Board Bus at Corner” sign

10. Bus Amenities and Bus Stop Amenities

The experience of riding the bus is critical to retaining existing riders and recruiting new ones. Safety and comfort should be baseline expectations for all buses and stops. Driver attitude alone has an impact on the experience of a bus trip, enhancing or negating all other amenities in place.
The Committee recommends an overall emphasis on improving the passenger experience via simple amenities on the bus and at bus stops. These could include:

On the Bus:

- Emphasize customer service in driver training, and create a work environment for drivers (including basic things like bathroom breaks) that fosters a good attitude.
- Metro must maintain its concern for rider and employee safety.
- A system for trash receptacles could be provided on buses to achieve and maintain a goal of cleanliness.
- Feedback tells us that bike racks on buses are often full. Metro should explore providing space for more bikes on popular routes.
- Many Metro users are commuters who may benefit from access to the Internet, especially during longer rides. Metro could explore providing access to Mad City Broadband. Consideration of providing wireless (WiFi) laptop access en route may be obviated by the growing use of GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications), which is a service subscribed to the individual as opposed to a service that Metro would provide. (mid and long term)
- Air temperature in the buses and a heating system from the floor has been brought up in public comments.
- It may help riders confirm that they’ve boarded the right bus if internal annunciators announce route number inside as the external ones do when a bus pulls up to a stop. This would be especially helpful when buses switch from one route to another.

At Bus Stops:

- All stops should be accessible by sidewalk and should have nearby crosswalks so riders can access them from both sides of the street. (also mid-term)
- Riders would benefit from benches and/or shelters at more stops. This could be done in partnership with nearby business and neighborhoods (see #5).
- Consider bringing in vendors with newspapers, coffee, breakfast and lunch food, etc. where such vendors do not already exist, especially at transfer points. Heating and pay phones are other amenities that riders would welcome (see #5).
- Metro can work with the City Streets Department about placement of new automated trash containers at bus stops that will be emptied by the Streets Department on their weekly cycle.
• Enforcement of the smoking ban in bus shelters.

• All bus stops should have schedule information available.

• Increased use of destination signs (indicating landmarks a bus goes to) is recommended.

• Consider making it more convenient for riders to mode shift from bus to bike or vice versa. This could include secure bike parking at transfer points and major stops, “bike center” facilities such as lockers. Anything done on this front should be in harmony with the Platinum Biking Committee Report.

11. Proactively Approach the Media

Metro Transit has an excellent story to tell. Ridership is at a record-setting high, new hybrid bus technology supports the green trend, and Metro has one of the lowest per rider costs among peer groups. Unfortunately, it’s the negative press that appears more often in the papers. Recently, Metro has begun to forge stronger relationships with local and statewide media. The Committee recommends that Metro continue to build relations with local media representatives and proactively pitch stories on a routine basis that are intriguing, current, and reflect the many positive aspects of Metro Transit. Metro should also explore partnering with radio and television stations that provide traffic reports to announce route changes, detours, delays, etc.


Metro should implement three targeted market research surveys to identify key audiences, to gain a better perspective on public perception and customer satisfaction, and to provide a base for strategic marketing planning.

The surveys should target:

• Current customers through an onboard survey

• Core Madison service area (riders and non-riders)

• New areas for potential growth (riders and non-riders)

Using an integrated approach to surveying including telephone, email, and focus group surveys is encouraged. Previous marketing surveys completed in 2004 were conducted by a paid consultant. In the future, Metro may financially benefit by partnering with large research-orientated institutions such as the Wisconsin Department of Transportation or UW-Madison to assist in conducting and analyzing the research.
13. Image

Metro should always be working towards improving its brand and image. It’s important to reinforce the positive experience of riding the bus and the sense of community experienced while sharing the ride. Metro’s main message and image should be based upon results from market research and staff input. The message and image should be simple and be marketed through rider testimonials and pictures to capture and clarify a more personal connection with Metro.

Metro currently has a graphic artist/photographer on staff who can utilize archived pictures as well as new to produce promotional items such as posters, calendars, etc. to capture the image of Metro through riders and leaders in the community using Metro Transit.

14. Within-City Advocacy

The Committee recommends that Metro’s General Manager be a strong advocate for the Metro system when dealing with other parts of the City of Madison – including other departments, committees, the Common Council and the Mayor. Metro relies on other City departments for services – snow removal, for example – and the General Manager should advocate strongly for Metro in those contexts.

With respect to snow in particular, the General Manager should urge the City to reevaluate the current snow clearance policy to give clearing bus stops higher priority.

15. External Advocacy

Metro needs strong advocates at the state and federal governmental levels. The Committee recommends that the Mayor’s Office track and lobby for policy that will support Metro’s goals and growth, especially increased funding.

16. Transportation Demand Management

Metro should develop a demand response taxi zone in at least one periphery area of the Metro Transit service area to test whether such service is more cost effective than traditional bus service. Propose this service in 2009.

17. “Secret Rider” Program

Metro should establish a system, similar to “secret shoppers”, to solicit feedback from riders on their bus riding experience. Riders would fill out surveys, either Web or paper based (or both), covering the following:

- Demographic information
- Driver behavior
- Ride experience
- Safety
- Cleanliness
- Schedule and transfers
- Origination and destination points, timeliness, convenience of stops, etc.

To the extent possible, questions should be parallel to the Rider Survey questions, which cover many of these topics, so the data can be combined.

There are two possible methods of recruiting these “secret riders”:

Short term or one time participants: Advertise the opportunity, make forms available, and reward complete forms with entrance in a drawing for a free 10-ride pass. This has the advantage of a wider potential pool of feedback, but the possible disadvantage of only catching the negative experiences.

Long term participants: Offer a free 10-ride pass or a discounted monthly pass in exchange for evaluating a minimum number of trips per week or month. This would be more likely to get feedback on positive or neutral ride experiences in addition to negative ones, but has the disadvantage of getting feedback from a smaller pool of people.

The Committee recommends that Metro pilot one or both of these methods for six months and evaluate the response rate. If successful in collecting feedback, the program should be made permanent.

**Recommendations**

**Mid-Term (2010-2012)**

**18. Schedule – Ease of Reading and Accessibility**

Accessing and understanding the system map and ride guide is a significant barrier for new and potential Metro riders. A new rider needs to know quickly and easily where, when and how to catch a bus – and shouldn’t have to puzzle her or his way through a two part multi-page system to figure it out. The Committee recommends the following steps to make Metro schedule information readily available and easily understandable:

- Try to make the Ride Guide more intuitively comprehensible and prominently display in the Ride Guide details of finding Metro scheduling information online, including
information by bus stop ID number, not just route. Metro already has that information on its Website, but it is a little known feature. Ride Guide route maps need to be upgraded to provide more visual context as well. The Committee recommends that rather than incrementally improving the Ride Guide, Metro staff consider if there are other print systems of conveying route and schedule information that are easier for a new user to navigate.

- Installation of “next bus” real time digital signs at all transfer points and at stops with higher numbers of boardings.
- Installation of current paper schedules at all stops (see #23).
- Partner with businesses to display schedule information and advertise which Metro routes are close to their business (see #5).
- Finish the implementation process with Google Transit by 2009. The Committee supports and encourages Metro’s efforts to work with Google to provide its online bus schedule via Google Transit, replacing the current trip planner. The Committee also encourages all outside City of Madison agencies involved with this process to support Metro in finalizing its relationship with Google so that this valuable service can be provided as soon as possible.
- Acquisition of enhanced customer notification technology including software that would improve upon Metro’s current Rider Alert e-mail alert system by expanding text and voice notices beyond the work and home computer to cell phones and PDA’s.
- When designing routes, remember that simpler is better. The current system of core, peak and off-peak service makes a lot of sense to Metro, but can be confusing for riders. Wherever possible, simplify the number of routes to reduce confusion.

19. Increase the Marketing Budget

Metro’s annual marketing budget of $163,000 is small and comprises only 0.4% of Metro’s overall budget. When compared to Metro peer systems, its marketing budget ranked last. Metro peer system budgets averaged $492,600 and 1.5% of overall budget. (Metro Transit peer survey, March 2007.) A strong marketing budget is essential to continue increasing ridership.

Metro should increase its marketing budget to $500,000. By increasing the marketing budget, Metro will have the financial means to carry out important new marketing activities. While the Committee feels strongly that the marketing budget needs to grow, it does not recommend that such growth come at the expense of a decrease in service.
20. State Funding

The State should be a stable funding partner by covering 42% of transit operating costs, consistent with the strong state role in Wisconsin in previous years. If RTA enabling legislation is approved, then the goal would be for the base state transit operating assistance to be at the current percentage level (35%) and move toward the historic level of 42%.

The State should also start to play a role in helping with important transit investments, by contributing capital funding to local transit systems. This could be achieved by providing half of the non-federal share of capital assets, so that the federal-state-local mix would be 80-10-10. Investments in technology, cleaner burning transit vehicles, and other innovative capital projects should be targeted for state funding at a minimum.

State government should also enact a commuter choice income tax benefit plan based on the federal model to reward bus riders.

The Committee urges all Metro financial partners to write to area state legislators to support this goal. The outreach staff being recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee should consider adding this effort to their list of tasks and should help communicate to local businesses and other stakeholders the importance of stable state funding for public transportation in Wisconsin. City and Metro leadership should also meet with the editorial boards of the local newspapers on this important effort. Finally, Metro should work with local transit advocacy groups and encourage the formation of statewide transit advocacy to support higher levels of state funding for public transportation to achieve goals related to increasing economic development (transit returns $3.61 for every dollar of investment), improving access for older adults and people with disabilities, and reducing carbon emissions to improve the environment. (Wisconsin Department of Transportation – The Socio-Economic Benefits of Transit in Wisconsin, Phase II: Benefit Cost Analysis, Final Report No. 0092-05-14, May 2006.)

21. Federal Funding

Federal funding needs to be increased to provide a minimum of 20% of operating costs, and sufficient capital funding for keeping pace with necessary bus and other basic replacements, technology funding, and new starts for bus rapid transit (BRT), commuter rail, and other possible investment scenarios being considered. Federal studies on infrastructure for transit, roads and bridges consistently show that basic investment and replacement needs are not being met. Higher fuel economy standards are causing a reduction in fuel consumption, which is a good thing. But the lack of a stable federal funding source for transit needs is the downside of this trend. A recent federal study (Transportation for Tomorrow: Report of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission) called for a significant increase in investment in our surface transportation system and a comprehensive overhaul of the current federal funding system, including expanded federal revenue sources. We believe that something on this scale is needed and would benefit Metro. Metro, its partners and the City are encouraged
to make clear to the federal government the importance of a streamlined funding system that increase the amount of support coming to local transit systems.

22. Express Bus Service

Public comment centered on several key issues following the release of the Interim Report. One of these was the need for express bus service covering:

- Large employers or employment centers
- Park and ride lots
- The Capitol Square
- University of Wisconsin
- Airport
- Connections between transfer points

The challenges to providing each type of service relate to schedule, equipment and funding. As such, they are mid and long-term objectives. However, at least one of the express bus concepts has been adopted and shows potential for application in other parts of Metro’s service area. As discussed in the building public/private partnerships section of this report, the commuter service and financial model, which was successfully applied to The American Center (a large employer and employment center), has the potential to be used as a solution to meet other express bus service needs.

Rush hour commuter service, for example, could be provided from park and ride lots to the square. If this service is combined with the recommendation elsewhere in this report to adopt a policy for locating new park and ride lots at transfer points rather than on the perimeter of the urban area, commuters could park their automobiles or transfer to local or express service to the square. Depending on density and time of day, this concept could also be applied to the University of Wisconsin as a destination.

Express service to and from the airport is more problematic as the volume of flights is not concentrated by time of day similar to starting and quitting times at employment centers. Airport express service, however, does have a good potential for financing if the scheduling issues can be worked out. The Committee recommends working with Dane County, the UW and local hotels to implement express service to the Airport from the Downtown/Campus area.

Deadheading empty buses back to the garage could provide express service options if origins and destinations of potential passengers can be identified and routes to the garage could be designed to meet passenger needs. This effort would also address a perception issue that empty buses are wasteful, not environmentally sensitive and fiscally un-sound. Whether this is actually the case
is not the issue. The issue is a marketing perception problem, which an express bus option has the potential to address.

Metro should also consider establishing signal priority for express routes. This could be implemented as soon as practical, or as part of the transition from an express route system to a Bus Rapid Transit system (see #34).

23. Schedules At More Bus Stops

One significant barrier to ridership is not knowing when the bus comes to a stop near you. Metro currently posts stop level departure data at the four off-street Transfer Point facilities (Kiosk posters) and approximately 150 bus shelters maintained by Metro (Shelter posters – including the Middleton Transfer Point). Metro also provides laminated shelter posters for some additional bus shelters owned and/or maintained by other entities (i.e East Towne Mall, locations on the UW campus). A printable PDF file of stop level departure data for every bus stop location is also available on Metro’s website, so that riders may produce their own copies of this information for any stop they need.

In most instances, the present data format of the printable PDF file would fit within the dimensions of an information display unit identified by staff. The exception may be at certain high-density stops with multiple routes, where a second display unit may be needed in order to fit all the stop level departure data.

The Committee recommends a pilot program that would install display units with schedule information at “inbound” bus stops along the Route 2 corridor (operating between the West and North Transfer Points, via University Avenue and Johnson/Gorham Streets). Inbound bus stops are those locations where the predominant passenger activity would be boarding for travel towards the downtown or UW campus area. Fifteen bus stop locations are identified for this pilot, on the basis of their proximity to major intersections and generally how they fill in gaps between bus stops with information currently posted (i.e. bus stops with shelters). The listing of proposed stops is in the table below:

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Metro should install schedules at these stops and solicit rider feedback to evaluate the success of the pilot. If successful, this pilot should be expanded to as many bus stops as possible, starting with heavily used inbound routes and expanding from there.

24. Target Specific Audiences

Metro Transit is available to most Madisonians, however, there are certain populations who are more likely to become riders. Metro should increase efforts to hit these target audiences and strategically prioritize them according to market research results.

Potential target audiences may include:

- Environmental organization staff and members
- Other civic organizations including health, education, social, etc.
- Residents and businesses in heavily-traveled bus corridors
- Residents and businesses in densely populated, mixed use neighborhoods with lower parking per capita
• Residents and businesses in neighborhoods with lower than average per capita car ownership

• Downtown businesses

• Large employment centers

• Senior citizens

• Working families

• University faculty, staff, and students

• People who participate in other forms of non-single occupancy auto transportation – ride sharers, car sharers, bikers, walkers, etc.

25. Increase Co-marketing and Partnership Opportunities

There are many opportunities for Metro to enter into partnerships and take advantage of co-marketing opportunities with those partners. Some ideas include:

Public Sector

• Preferred entry at city, county and UW events for those who arrive by transit

• List Metro information (Web links, general information, which bus to take) on Overture and other city/county websites

• Promote Metro services at city/county-sponsored events (County Fair, Halloween Festival, Dane Dances, etc.)

• Co-market Metro with Monona Terrace “green building” certification

• Increase collaboration work with RideShare, etc. and UW Transportation.

Private Sector

• Expand unlimited ride pass contracts (see #2)

• Expand Commuter Choice Program

• Purchase passes for employees

• Coordinate brown bag lunches to educate employees on how to use Metro

• Increase business sales outlets
• Make schedules and Metro information available at the workplace
• Sponsor customer amenities such as benches and shelters (see #5)

**Non-profit Sector**

Employees and members of environmental and other non-profit organizations should be Metro “ambassadors” by communicating Metro’s good work to the public and leading by example. Metro should be active and well-connected in Madison’s strong environmental community.

**26. Advertising**

The Committee supports the use of advertising to fill some of the funding gap that Metro is currently experiencing. It also supports gaining a broader perspective of advertising on buses, including:

• Doing cost analyses on revenue potential for various advertising modes
• Conducting interviews with rider and general citizen focus groups regarding Metro’s use of advertising and the bus wrap advertising program
• Conducting formal or informal surveys of riders and Madison citizens to get a flavor of how Metro’s advertising endeavors are being perceived

The Committee also encourages Metro to conduct a cost/benefits analysis of full bus wraps compared to partially wrapped buses.

In addition to further research into public perception, the Committee supports exploring additional advertising opportunities such as advertising in shelters, on benches and at stops. Another way to reach the advertising goal is by selling naming rights for existing shelters and transfer points. Businesses could also play a role in improving the customer experience by sponsoring new benches and shelters in exchange for advertising or naming rights.

At least one percent of Metro’s revenues (approximately $500,000) should be derived from advertising (see #19).

**27. Outreach Staff Person**

Currently, the Marketing Department consists of 4 full-time staff people. This is not enough staff to carry out the marketing needs for a $55 million organization. A full-time outreach staff person would concentrate on activities that promote Metro within the residential and business communities. Potential activities could include management of an unlimited ride pass program for small businesses, outreach with neighborhood groups, coordination with civic groups, and attendance at local networking events.
28. Paratransit Service

Metro should develop a plan with Dane County to anticipate the changes that will be implemented related to the new State of Wisconsin Family Care model. It is estimated that when the Family Care model is implemented in Dane County in 2011, Dane County will reduce most or all of the $2 million in Medical Assistance funding that is currently passed through to Metro paratransit services. The plan should include strategies that address identifying both new local funding sources from Dane County and methods to reduce barriers that will encourage some consumers to migrate from paratransit service to fixed route service.

29. Direct Mail/New Customer Promotion Pilot Program

In the past, Metro has not used direct mail in large volume, primarily due to limited resources. The Committee recommends the creation of a postcard direct-mail pilot program, which targets neighborhoods of under-utilized bus routes to promote awareness of the routes and gain new riders to increase the efficiency of these under-utilized assets. Other mailers may include a citywide audience near Earth Day, or a mailing to businesses for a small business bus pass. Further use of direct mail could include targeting new riders by conducting special promotions, such as offering 10-Ride cards, as incentives to try service for free. The pilot should include a method of evaluation (such as promotion codes) and be assessed for its impact on ridership.

30. Intelligent Transit Systems

Metro should explore expanding intelligent transit technologies to the point where Metro is viewed as a first-class, modern technology based public transit system with real-time information, scheduling capacities, and other information on the Internet. In order to implement several of these recommendations and continue to upgrade the information technology Metro currently uses, Metro may need more information technology (IT) capacity. Metro should conduct a review of staff IT needs to provide a serious investigation of a first class automatic vehicle location (AVL) system implementation. (also long-term)

31. Free Fare Promotions: During the past two summers, Metro has partnered with the City of Madison to give free rides on Clean Air Action days. The days are determined by the Department of Natural Resources and there is usually less than 24-hour notice. While any decrease in emissions on days with poor air quality is welcome, it is unclear if ridership actually increases on these days. Metro should evaluate the impact of these days on both ridership and revenue.

In addition, Metro may see more positive results if special promotion days/events could be set months ahead of so as to give plenty of opportunity to market the event and urge new riders to try Metro. These special events could include print and media promotion ahead of time encouraging people to try the bus on a certain promotion day. On this particular day, ambassadors at transfer points and the Capitol Square could greet riders and give assistance and
guidance to anyone trying Metro that day for the first time. Special drawings, giveaways, and refreshments could be provided to encourage and welcome new riders while also acknowledging all the current riders using Metro on a continuous basis.

Metro should work with its ride pass partners to come up with a funding system for this idea that benefits Metro, its partners, and potential new riders.

32. Expand Sponsorship Participation

To increase its visibility as a supportive community organization, Metro should play a more significant role in sponsoring events that are health-oriented, environmental, cultural, and business-related. Strategically sponsoring events will offer Metro publicity opportunities and a chance to connect with the community.

Recommendations

Long-Term (2013 and beyond)

33. Parking Policy

There is a direct connection between the presence of a robust transit system and the need for parking at key destinations. Metro and the Parking Utility should quantify the impact of Metro service on the need for parking, especially in downtown Madison.

The Committee recommends that the City reevaluate several aspects of its parking policy. First, the City should find a way to set aside enforcement or other non-bond funds (e.g. parking revenues) to be used for transit. Second, the Parking Utility should consider innovative parking policies that would let the market set the price of parking while ensuring that customers have complete and easy access to downtown businesses. The City should consult with the UW to see if we can learn from their extensive transportation demand management policies.

34. Bus Rapid Transit

The Committee talked several times about the concept of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and heard multiple visions of a possible BRT system, including concepts from the Madison Area Bus Advocates, Metro staff, and Transport 20202. BRT has potential for the Madison area, but a full BRT system carries a relatively high infrastructure cost because of the need for dedicated lanes. It is possible to implement elements of BRT without a high infrastructure cost.

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2 The three Bus Rapid Transit reports can be found at www.mymetrobus.com/adhoc.html or by contacting Ann Schroeder at (608) 267-4967 or aschroeder@cityofmadison.com.
Metro should explore the feasibility of a bus rapid transit system for the Madison area, with the goals of improving the frequency of service and reducing transit times. Any BRT system should build on and be informed by existing express routes (see #22).

A BRT system would have to be phased in over time, but Metro and the Transit and Parking Commission should begin planning for one soon so as to take advantage of any opportunities to reserve right-of-way for a BRT system or to incorporate future BRT into developments currently being planned. Future transportation and land use planning should consider setting aside dedicated lanes for bus access, express buses and/or a BRT system. Similarly, any future land use planning should fully incorporate transit.

35. Service to Employment Centers via Partnerships

The American Center Case Study provides an excellent example of how to leverage private funds to establish and expand public transportation at employment centers. The case study illustrates techniques of public / private participation which could have applicability for extending Metro service to new employment centers in the Madison region.

The American Center is located on the far northeast side of Madison and employs 6,100 people. Service began in 2002 following employer surveys and employee preferences determined through surveys and focus groups. The program included commuter only service (AM and PM) with a guaranteed ride home. Newsletters and flyers were produced to announce service to all park businesses. Free rides for four-months of introductory service were financed by The American Center Owners' Association through an annual assessment on members.

Four businesses were identified as Founding Members. They contributed 50% of the financing and marketed the concept to the remaining businesses. The average cost to each remaining business was approximately $300 per year, which was fully supported by businesses as reasonable to start Metro service. The cost to the Association and to founding members was reasonable.

Information booths and personalized posters were set up at key businesses to promote the service. Although the program started with one run in the morning and the afternoon, one additional morning and afternoon run was added in 2005 and service improvements have been proposed for the fall of 2008.

Route 25 ridership trend line shows positive results from the total effort. (See Figure 2.)
Figure 2 – Number of riders per month on Metro route 25, which services the American Center, between April 2002 and January 2008.

The Committee recommends exploring similar partnerships:

- To create or expand service to employment centers, particularly those not serviced by regular routes or at times when shifts start/end

For limited-stop shuttles to/from hotels to Amtrak/airport/bus depot

- To link shared-ride taxi service and Metro, similar to the East Towne Mall and Sun Prairie service
36. Public/Private Partnerships

Metro should set an initial goal of 1% of revenues to come from public/private partnerships in the mid-term and reevaluate for a possible higher rate in the long-term. Examples of public/private partnership strategies include:

- Development fees - Agreements to have new development include transit fees (such as the Eau Claire model where a new Transitional Living Service facility that was developed contributed to the payment of paratransit service costs)

- Pilot projects - For example, The American Center contributing to Route 25 services initially (see #35)

- Participation in ride pass programs (see #2)

37. Park and Ride Lots

Metro should consider the need for additional park and ride lots in the area. No research on this topic is available at the state and national level for transit systems Metro's size, but for larger areas like Washington DC and Seattle park and ride lots are viewed as integral parts of increasing ridership. Metro is exploring the possibility of expansion of the North Transfer park and ride lot, is negotiating a lease with Swiss Colony to use the lot near the East Transfer Point, and is beginning to plan for lots at the West and South Transfer Points. In general, the policy for the location of future lots should be near transfer points, or at locations of high ridership potential rather than the current policy of locating lots at the edges of the urbanized area. Wherever possible, Metro should lease space in existing underutilized lots. Consideration should also be given to formalizing “informal” park and ride areas, where Metro riders park in neighborhoods with unrestricted parking and catch a bus to their final destination.

38. External Fundraising

Metro should investigate the potential for a 501(c)3 Friends of Metro Transit Group, similar to the “Friends” groups that work on behalf of our libraries and parks. The purpose of this group would be to promote Metro in the community and fundraise. Potential activities of the Friends of Metro group may include:

Fundraising support – The Friends group may solicit donations from individuals, businesses, and foundations to support Metro’s mission. Possible activities may include membership drives, an annual dinner to thank supporters, and corporate giving.

Business Advisory Group – This group may also act as a liaison with the business community by recruiting key business leaders to communicate Metro’s message to the business community.
Metro has contacted peer groups to learn about their foundation programs. The Committee recommends that Metro continue their investigation into the feasibility and potential benefits of forming a non-profit foundation.

39. Facilities

Metro should examine whether or not there would be cost savings by having Metro's operating facility moved to another location, or whether two smaller operating facilities would be more cost effective than one. A preliminary analysis shows that if each bus runs an additional 10 minutes of dead-head time every service day for a year, there is a cumulative effect of $570,000 in annual costs for Metro. The existing operations facility at 1101 E. Washington Ave is centrally located, but consequently dead-head times from the edges of the service area can be long. An alternative or complementary solution to this issue is to “express” buses instead of dead-heading them (see #22)

40. Re-brand Metro:

There are a variety of avenues Metro can take regarding a re-branding process that range in price. One proposed solution is for Metro to hire a marketing firm to guide Metro through a re-branding process, including a new logo. However, in addition to the cost of the marketing firm, costs of re-branding Metro signs and equipment with a new look are a significant budget consideration. In addition, it would not be wise to re-brand Metro until after a decision is made on an RTA, since if an RTA is established, Metro may become part of a bigger branding effort.

Members agree that efforts to portray the positive experience of riding the bus and the sense of community experienced while sharing the ride should be important elements of Metro’s marketing future.

Conclusion

The Committee wishes to thank the Transit and Parking Commission, Mayor Cieslewicz and the Common Council for seeing the need for a long term Metro planning effort and convening this body. We also wish to thank Metro staff for the many hours they put in preparing for, attending, and following up on our meetings. Our discussions, while often involved and sometimes contentious, have been interesting, and we hope, productive. Reflecting back on the process, we can say with confidence that the Metro system is strong and represents an important asset to the City. However, there is incredible opportunity to improve the system, and a clear need to address specific community and rider concerns. This report attempts to provide the City with guidance on how to strengthen the Metro system so it can provide an even higher level of service and become a first class transit system that provides excellent service to the entire Madison area.
Re: Consideration of Resolution TPB No. 17, Authorizing an Amendment to the 2008 MPO Budget for Staff to Conduct Reviews of Transportation Demand Management Plans Provided to the City of Madison

**Staff Comments on Item:**

The MPO is currently providing assistance to the City of Madison’s Parking Utility in developing marketing materials and incentives for parkers to make more efficient use of city ramps and to use alternate modes of travel at an estimated cost of $31,000 with half ($15,500) for labor and half ($15,500) for marketing materials.

Madison’s Parking Utility also wants assistance from MPO staff in the review of TDM plans provided to the City. This activity is authorized under the approved 2008 Unified Planning Work Program, Work Element 2811: Rideshare/TDM Project.

Additional funding from the City of Madison’s Parking Utility will be needed to conduct the review of TDM plans provided to the City. The Parking Utility has identified $19,000 of additional revenues to be provided to the MPO to conduct the review of TDM plans. The total cost of staff services for all the activities associated with this work element is estimated at $50,000 for 2008.

**Materials Presented on Item:**

Resolution TPB No. 17

**Staff Recommendation/Rationale:**

Staff recommends approval.
Resolution TPB No. 17

Authorizing an Amendment to the 2008 MPO Budget
for Staff to Conduct Reviews of Transportation Demand Management Plans
Provided to the City of Madison

WHEREAS, the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Madison Metropolitan Area with responsibilities to perform metropolitan transportation planning and programming activities; and

WHEREAS, the MPO provides close coordination of Transportation Demand Management (TDM)/Rideshare programming with the UW-Madison, State of Wisconsin, Dane County, and the City of Madison; and

WHEREAS, the MPO is currently providing assistance to the City of Madison’s Parking Utility in developing marketing materials and incentives for parkers to make more efficient use of city ramps and to use alternate modes of travel at an estimated cost of $31,000 with half ($15,500) for labor and half ($15,500) for marketing materials; and

WHEREAS, Madison’s Parking Utility also wants assistance from MPO staff in the review of TDM plans provided to the City; and

WHEREAS, this activity is authorized under the approved 2008 Unified Planning Work Program, Work Element 2811: Rideshare/TDM Project; and

WHEREAS, additional funding from the City of Madison’s Parking Utility will be needed to conduct the review of TDM plans provided to the City; and

WHEREAS, the Parking Utility has identified $19,000 of additional revenues to be provided to the MPO to conduct the review of TDM plans;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (TPB) authorizes amending its 2008 budget to allow MPO staff to conduct reviews of TDM plans provided to the City of Madison and that the City of Madison will reimburse staff services for an additional amount of $19,000 for a total amount not to exceed $50,000 in 2008.

Date Adopted

Al Matano, Chair
Madison Area Transportation Planning Board
**Re:**

Consideration of Letter of Comment to WisDOT Regarding Proposed Hoepker Road/USH 51 Intersection Improvements

**Staff Comments on Item:**

WisDOT is requesting the Board to provide preliminary comments on the effects of the project, including an assessment of how the project relates to the agency’s area of expertise. The comments are being requested prior to the release of an Environmental Report and the holding of a public information meeting. The preliminary comments are to be included into the information presented at the public information meeting to be held this fall. Comments are due by August 9, 2008. The Board can make final comments on the project following the release of the Environmental Report and reviewing comments made at the public information meeting.

**Materials Presented on Item:**

1. WisDOT’s Letter of Request for Madison Area TPB Comment (July 10, 2008)
2. Draft Letter of Comment

**Staff Recommendation/Rationale:**

Staff recommends approval of draft letter of comment
July 10, 2008

Robert McDonald
Transportation Planning Manager
Madison Area Transportation Planning Board
121 S. Pinckney Street, Suite 400
Madison, WI 53703

Reference: Request for Madison Area Transportation Planning Board Comment
Project I.D. 5411-00-03
Hoepker Road/USH 51 Intersection Improvement Project
City of Madison
Dane County, Wisconsin

Dear Mr. McDonald:

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) proposes to construct needed improvements to the Hoepker Road/USH 51 (Stoughton Road) intersection; a project location map is attached. The purpose of this letter is to request the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board’s written comments about the proposed improvements. Conceptual layouts of the proposed intersection improvement alternatives are attached.

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve the safety of the intersection. The existing intersection has a high incidence of crashes with injuries or fatalities. Excluding vehicle/deer crashes, the existing 2-way stop controlled intersection had a crash rate of 1.25 between the years of 2003-2006. A crash rate of 1.5 indicates a potential safety improvement may be warranted. Twenty-four of the crashes resulted in injury (62% of total crashes), and two were fatal. Industrial and commercial development is platted directly east of the intersection with additional developments further to the east. With traffic in the area increasing at a rate of 7% per year additional safety issues are anticipated in the near future. Intersection improvements are necessary to provide adequate vehicle storage and enhance roadway operations.

Businesses are located in both quadrants west of the intersection but impacts will not require relocation. Based on preliminary conceptual layouts of each intersection alternative, it is likely that right-of-way acquisition of less than one acre will be required. Adjacent land use in the southwest quadrant is quarry and the northeast quadrant is farmland. The northeast quadrant will eventually be developed into commercial or industrial use. Other quadrants are currently commercial or will become commercial and industrial use.

As the area develops, bicycle lanes will be constructed on Hoepker Road and a multi-use path is planned for the east side of USH 51. The existing 2-way stop will not provide adequate control to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic. A separate multi-use path will be provided around the intersection. The approaches on Hoepker Road will accommodate bicycle lanes.

We are requesting that the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board provide comment on the potential effects of the project, including an assessment of how the project relates to the agency’s area of expertise.
Upon completion of your review of the project, please forward your written comments to me. A Public Information Meeting (PIM) for the project will be held this fall; an invitation for the PIM will be sent to you. The Environmental Report for the project is scheduled for draft submittal in August. We would like to incorporate your agency's preliminary comments into the Environmental Report. Therefore, we ask that you submit your written comments by August 9, 2008. Please contact me should you have questions or require additional information.

My contact information is:
Bill Strobel P.E.
WisDOT SW Region--Madison
2101 Wright Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53704
Phone: (608) 242-8009
E-mail: william.strobel@dot.state.wi.us

KL Engineering is a consulting firm working with WisDOT on this project. Should I be unavailable and you have questions, you can also contact Gerry Schmitt, with KL Engineering. His phone is 608-663-1218, and his e-mail is gschmitt@klengineering.com.

Sincerely,

Gerry Schmitt
KL Engineering Project Manager

for Bill Strobel P.E.
WisDOT Project Manager

Enclosures as stated

cc: Bill Strobel, WisDOT SW Region Project Manager (project file)
    Jennifer Grimes, WisDOT SW Region Environmental Coordinator
    KL Engineering, Inc. project file
July 15, 2008

Bill Strobel P.E.
Project Manager
WisDOT SW Region-Madison Office
2101 Wright Street
Madison, WI 53704

Re: Request for Madison Area Transportation Planning Board Comment
Project ID 5411-00-03
Hoepker Road/USH 51 Intersection Improvement Project
City of Madison
Dane County, Wisconsin

Dear Mr. Strobel:

Your letter of July 10, 2008, requests the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board provide preliminary comments on the effects of the proposed Hoepker Road/USH 51 intersection improvement project, including an assessment of how the project relates to the agency’s area of expertise.

In terms of expertise, the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Madison Urban Area. As the MPO, it is the policy body responsible for cooperative, comprehensive regional transportation planning and decision making for the Madison Metropolitan Planning Area. Primary responsibilities include preparing and maintaining a long-range, multi-modal Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the metropolitan area, and preparing a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to provide for transportation investments to meet metropolitan transportation needs. Federal regulations require the TIP to include all regionally significant projects to be funded with Federal funds as well as all regionally significant projects to be funded with non-Federal funds. Projects contained in the TIP must be consistent with the approved Regional Transportation Plan.

The Policy Board has reviewed the materials sent with your letter and would note that the project is consistent with a key policy objective of the Regional Transportation Plan 2030 (page 3 of the Summary and page 133 of the Plan) to maintain and reconstruct existing roadways and bridges in a manner that promotes safety, increases efficiency, and minimizes lifetime costs. The project will correct a serious safety problem and is identified in the 2008-2012 TIP (page 34) as a safety project to be constructed in 2010 with Federal Safety Funds.

The Board would like to add that Hoepker Road is an important East-West travel corridor connecting three neighborhoods together to USH 51. The three neighborhoods are the Westside Neighborhood in the City of Sun Prairie and the Pumpkin Hollow and Hanson Road Neighborhoods in the City of Madison. While Hoepker Road is functionally classed
as an urban collector today, its importance will increase to the status of a minor arterial as these three neighborhoods continue to grow. A segment of Hoepker Road east of American Parkway is currently programmed in 2009 to be reconstructed to four lanes by the City of Madison and the City of Sun Prairie using local funds.

Because of the early stages of development of this project, the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board may wish to make additional comments on this project following the release of the draft Environmental Report and completion of the public information meeting.

If you have any questions concerning the Board’s preliminary comments, please do not hesitate to contact Transportation Planning Manager, Robert McDonald, at rmcdonald@cityofmadison.com or 266-4518.

Sincerely,

Al Matano
MPO Chair

cc: Jennifer Grimes, WisDOT SW Region Environmental Coordinator
KL Engineering, Inc.