



Madison Metro Transit System

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Report: Status of 2001-2005 Strategic Annual Plans and Accomplishments

In 2001, Metro Transit staff held a retreat to develop, with the assistance of Madison's Organizational Development and Training Unit staff, the elements (goals/strategies) of a Strategic Annual Plan. For each of the past four years, the Metro Transit General Manager, with the assistance of key staff committees, has prepared the annual elements of a Strategic Annual Plan for TPC review and adoption. Key elements of those plans and related accomplishments follow - to serve as an aid to TPC (particularly to new TPC members) for their consideration in adopting form and content for 2006 plan elements.

Goals for each year's Strategic Annual Plan have been consistent:

- Increase Ridership
- Reduce Costs
- Increase Revenues/Sources
- Increase Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Increase Security/Improve Security Preparedness (Separately identified in 2004)

As a subset of each goal, a number of strategies were identified in each plan and then pursued. This is not a incomplete summary of staff activities during the year – for the sake of space and time limitations. Source of info is Metro Transit Annual Reports (provided each year to TPC and Common Council).

Goal #1: Increase Ridership

Each year since 2001, passenger ridership has increased. From 2000 – 2005, ridership increased by 12+% (1.24 million annual trips). Ridership in 2005 is the highest it has been in 20 years. Fixed-route trips will exceed 11.3 million, combined fixed route and paratransit trips will exceed 11.5 million. A recent survey indicates that about one-third (32%) of Madison residents ride Metro Transit or have a family member who rides Metro in a typical month.

Strategies:

(1) Improve service through strategic redistribution of service hours¹ and/or new funding sources².

- **2001:** Extended weekend service to the Southdale area of the Town, and along E. Washington Avenue in the City – through scheduling efficiencies.
- **2002:** Modified Route 6 service – making cross-town travel-time improvements, extending weekend service to East Towne Mall, and providing improved service to MATC; improved Route 8 service; and expanded Saturday service on Route 4 – all through service efficiencies. Introduced service to Route 53 with UW funding and introduced new service to The American Center with American Center funding.
- **2003:** Developed plans for a major route restructure on the East side – implemented on Jan. 20, 2004 – see details below.
- **2004:**
 - **East-side route restructure implemented:** Extended service to Richmond Hill, State Motor Vehicle licensing facility, Covance Labs, the new Dean Clinic, and a new industrial area in Middleton; expanded service span for commuter routes 14, 15, and 38; provided direct off-peak service between UW campus and ETP; provided faster/more direct service between ETP and NTP and faster/more direct service to the Airport; expanded service to the World Dairy Center; and for the first time (through introduction of the “offset pulse” at ETP) was able to provide weekday service on 7 minute headways during peak hours and 15 minute headways off-peak in the Jenifer and Johnson Street corridors of the Isthmus – without added cost.
 - Began West and South-side service planning in Madison and Middleton for introduction in the fall of 2006; designed service to Verona for intro in 2005; held service discussions with

¹ Note: this particular strategy supports three goals: Increase Ridership, Reduce Costs, and Increase Service Efficiency and Effectiveness.

² This strategy supports two goals: Increase Ridership, Increase Revenues/Sources.

Sun Prairie; planned ETP Park & Ride lot.

- **2005:**
 - Expanded service to The American Center - with American Center funding; introduced new service to Verona (the first new municipal partner to Metro in 30 years) with funding from Verona and a Reverse-Commute grant;
 - Continued service planning for West and South-side route restructure for intro the fall of 2006; secured approval for a NW Transfer Point in Middleton (funded by Middleton)– in connection with West-side plans for 2006.
 - Held service discussions, developed surveys for service expansion to Sun Prairie, Oregon/ Stoughton, and Cross Plains.
 - Developed service cut proposals for TPC in order to meet 2006 budget needs. Common Council provided funding to maintain present service levels in 2006, making cuts unnecessary.
- (2) **Introduce Unlimited Ride Pass and other ridership incentives.** Metro's most successful marketing initiative in building ridership in the past five years has been expansion in application of Unlimited Ride Pass programs from student use to employee use. Unlimited Ride Pass programs are fully funded by institutions. An alternative ridership incentive – the Commuter Choice program is based on federal tax incentives, and allows companies to offer employees pre-tax savings through payroll deduction for employee purchase of fare media. Metro has worked with the State government and 28 other employers in marketing the Commuter Choice program to employees.
 - **2001:** Commuter Choice program expanded to include 28 small employers.
 - **2002:** Negotiated Metro's first Unlimited Ride Pass Program for employees of UW and UW Hospital. Worked with State government on introduction of Commuter Choice program to state employees in the Madison area.
 - **2003:** Renegotiated substantial improvements in student Unlimited Ride Pass Agreements with UW, MATC, and Edgewood College, bringing substantial increase in revenues to Metro.
 - **2004:** Negotiated Unlimited Ride Pass Programs for employees of St. Marys and City of Madison.
 - **2005:** Introduced two new Unlimited Ride Pass Programs – St. Marys Hospital and the City of Madison, and secured extension of those pilot programs for 2006. Held initial discussions with Meriter Hospital on possible intro of program there. Worked closely with Epic on development of service to Verona campus and promotion among employees. Worked extensively with UW on their Master Plan.
- (3) **Improve passenger amenities/aids**
 - **2001:** Provided grants to Neighborhood Associations for passenger shelters and benches.
 - **2002:** Outfitted all Metro shelters with maps and schedules (a first for Metro), replaced 1/3 bus stop signs with newly designed sign; incorporated "How to use the system" info in Ride Guides, achieved 100% accessibility of buses used in fixed route services; introduced a telephone translation service for use by Metro Reception and Customer Service in communicating with Metro customers in many languages; issued a second round of grants to Neighborhood Associations for passenger shelters and benches; introduced "mymetrobus.com" website and test marketed a Trip Planner among city employees; planned acquisition of property near the North Transfer Point for use as a Park&Ride.
 - **2003:** Extended North Transfer Point (NTP) capital lease, acquired adjacent property by long-term capital lease, and completed plans for construction of NTP Park&Ride lot; expanded website info and introduced sale of fare media via the Internet; used closed-captioned TV ads for hearing impaired; translated print media and radio ads into Spanish; introduced a "rider trainer" program for the Hmong population; placed graffiti-film covered glass in all of Metro's 135 passenger shelters – solving the glass etching problem and making a dramatic improvement in the appearance of shelters.
 - **2004:** Teamed up with Fannie Mae mortgage lenders and other area businesses to offer "smart commute" mortgage incentives to people who purchase homes near bus routes; held training sessions for people with disabilities through the Wisconsin Academy of Graduate Service Dogs (WAGS); opened new North Transfer Point Park&Ride Lot - within weeks lot filled to capacity. In the Fall of 2004, started testing of Internal Voice Annunciators on three transit routes for sight-impaired passengers; introduced Trip Planner to the general public.

- **2005:** Introduced real-time schedule info on digital signs at all Transfer Points and at MATC; Expanded automatic Internal Annunciation to all routes; began testing automatic External Annunciation at bus stops on 3 routes in the spring and expanded to all routes in December; prepared an RFP for advertising shelters; introduced “Paratransit to Main Line” Training Program for senior citizens; negotiated an agreement with Swiss Colony for implementation of the East Transfer Point Park&Ride; held discussions with UW concerning potential for joint effort for park&ride at WTP; worked with Middleton to obtain approval for a NW Transfer Point in Middleton.; worked with the City on expanding the number of sites with boarding pads, shelters, and benches through development requirements, including: Northport Commons, Family Center on Fordem Ave., Home Savings on E. Washington Ave., US Bank on Univ. Ave., Monroe Commons, Hilldale Phase I, Troy Gardens housing, on Miller project, UW residence hall on Dayton St., Avalon Village redevelopment, Church project on Flad Ave., Kennedy Point on Winnebago, West Towne Way, and Hilldale Phase II.

(4) Target marketing efforts (as well as UW/MATC campuses each year):

- **2002:** “Train the trainer” program to encourage passenger migration from paratransit to fixed-route service; free access for personal care attendants to fixed route service when assisting their disabled clientele.
- **2003:** Spanish-language ads, “rider-trainer” program for Hmong population.
- **2004:** Direct Marketing for potential patrons at Dean Clinic, Copps-Shopko, the Airport, West and East-Towne Malls (in connection with service changes).
- **2005:** Target marketing to Epic employees, City of Verona residents, The American Center employees, City of Madison employees, and St. Marys Hospital employees – in connection with service changes; and Network 222/Madison Environmental Group.

Goal #2: Reduce Costs

- **2001:** Established a Monthly Performance Indicator Report for TPC and ADAPPOS for overview of key indicators related to cost, system productivity, etc.; Obtained a contract from Village of Shorewood to reimburse Metro for paratransit service to Village residents; Hired a Paratransit Program Manager to provide close oversight of ADA paratransit services and related service contracts – with a view to improving service delivery as well as seeking cost savings.
- **2002:** Obtained and implemented agreement with VanGalder Bus to obtain their funding assistance in maintaining the Dutch Mill Parking Lot; began the paratransit “Train theTrainer” program to encourage passenger migration from paratransit to fixed-route transit services; decreased overtime by 23%; made major strides in preventative maintenance program to reduce road calls 23.6%; negotiated a new labor agreement allowing Mgmt to contract out major mechanical work when beneficial to maintenance workload or budget.
- **2003:** Negotiated significant improvements in 2003 and 2004 for labor agreements extending through 2007! – expanding use of part-timers, incorporating a longer probationary period for new hires, eliminating workers comp supplementary insurance; eliminating duplicative family health insurance coverage; tying wages to health insurance benefits – setting important precedents for the City; further reduced overtime by 30.9%.
- **2004:** Continued significant progress in reducing overtime; continued significant progress reducing Workers Comp: reduction of 37.9% in days away from work for WC from 2002 - 2004, reduction of 57.1% in W.C. wages from 2001 – 2004; reduction of 52% in number of W.C. cases from 2002 – 2004.
- **2005:** Planned significant service efficiencies in West and South-side service changes planned for implementation in fall of 2006; included purchase of hybrid buses in 2006 Capital Budget - which will reduce operating expenses (including fuel costs); monitored absenteeism closely; introduced pilot program RFP to stimulate more service provider competition and efficiency in provision of paratransit service. Developed service plan to cut services in 2006, if necessary, to balance the budget. (Common Council provided funding to maintain current service levels).

Goal #3: Increase Revenue/Sources

- **2002:** Obtained The American Center funding for new service; Negotiated Metro's first Unlimited Ride Pass Program for employees of UW and UW hospital; Worked with State in their Commuter Choice program for employees – leading to growth in passenger revenues; Obtained funding agreement from Van Galder for maintenance of Dutch Mill Park&Ride.
- **2003:** Negotiated significantly improved Unlimited Ride Pass Agreements for students with UW, MATC, and Edgewood College – for more passenger revenues.
- **2004:** Introduced a fare structure change in Jan.'04 generating \$381,000 in increased passenger revenue in 2004 and more for future years.
- **2005:** Added Verona as a service partner (Note: each service partner shares Metro overhead expenses). Obtained two-year Reverse-Commute grant for Verona service; updated fare structure to generate more revenue for 2006 and beyond; incorporated paid advertising on back side of transfer stock; obtained vending machine contract for Transfer Points; participated (and continue to participate) in State of Wisconsin Transportation (Coordination) Initiative to seek Medicaid funding for fixed-route ridership; negotiated a three-year extension agreement with Van Galder to help fund maintenance at the Dutch Mill Park&Ride.

Goal #4: Increase Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness

- **2001:** Established two key staff committees – Senior Management Team (which meets weekly to review and improve administrative and operational systems) and Service Development Committee (which meets weekly to guide service planning throughout the year); promoted a planning staff person to become Metro's IS/ITS Coordinator to oversee its extensive computer hard and software programs and to develop plans for and implement an ambitious ITS program for Metro; Hired a Paratransit Program Manager for oversight of ADA paratransit program services; established a computerized "customer feedback" database program for use in planning and for responding to customer issues; established a monthly Performance Indicator Report for TPC and ADAPPOS review.
- **2002:** simplified the fare structure (combining two E-Z rider student semester passes); obtained funding and approvals for purchase of ITS equipment; introduced Metro's first re-training program for drivers – focused on customer service and security issues; established the Contracted Services Oversight Committee to involve Metro's contract partners in planning and policy discussions.
- **2003:** Metro received an excellent State DOT "Performance Audit" comparing Metro very favorably with both "population" and "service level" peers for productivity, operational efficiency and effectiveness; Siemens and Motorola ITS contracts were approved. Significant increase in involvement by Metro in City land use planning; expansion of use of part-timers and other labor contract improvements; improved feedback data program; improved database programs for inventories, posting depreciation, compiling revenue and ridership data; streamlined payroll reporting and financial reporting; created an "Info-Tech" staff team to oversee implementation of new ITS software programs; made facility improvements to expand the training room and create two new offices within the existing facility.
- **2004:** Installed Siemens ITS equipment on buses. Using real-time visual monitors, Dispatchers were able to swiftly correct road problems and help drivers w/on-time performance.
- **2005:** Use of Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL/GPS) data for travel-time and on-time performance and for computerized tracking for paratransit and transit buses. Metro's Master Plan and Schematic Design were completed for its facility – addressing significant facility shortfalls impeding operational efficiency; modified Operations/Dispatch space to accommodate staffing and equipment associated with installation of ITS. Re-organized Operations Staff to assign full-time responsibility for training to a specific Operations Supervisor and to centralize full-time responsibility for follow-up on customer complaints, monitoring of incident reports and accidents, and keeping in close touch with MMSD and the police regarding school/student incidents - to one specific Operations Supervisor. Implemented new farebox collection system (with magnetic passes) in July; Used ITS data in reporting to NTD (replacing labor-intensive survey data); and began maintenance monitoring of on-the-road AVL data concerning status of engines and fluids.

Goal #5: Increase Security/Improve Security Preparedness

(Note: Staff has long worked with Dane County in City/County Security/Emergency planning exercises –this is true of each of the following years).

- **2002:** A re-training program for drivers (Metro's first) was introduced focused on customer relations and security issues (dealing with difficult customers).
- **2003:** Hosted Security Tabletop Exercise for Metro Staff, MPD, and MFD – with federal grant assistance.

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- **2004:** Installed Siemens ITS equipment, including various security devices allowing drivers to alert Dispatch et al of problems on-board buses.
- **2005:** Developed Behavior Policy with banning component; obtained permission from TPC to go out to bid for camera equipment for STP and buses; addressed long-term security issues for facility in Master Plan/Schematic Design. Staff worked with Dane County Dept. of Emergency Mgmt on the development of an Emergency Support Function Plan for Transportation. One Ops Supervisor was designated as Security and Emergency Response “Point of Contact” for routine daily behavior problems on buses as well as emergency purposes. This Supervisor reports to the Operations Manager on a daily basis on security issues, is the direct liaison with bus operators and dispatchers on security issues, and is the primary contact with public safety and emergency response agencies. A draft of a full security/safety plan is in this month’s TPC packet for review. An approved Plan will accompany the contract resolution to Common Council for purchase of cameras for STP and buses.