

PROPOSED SERVICE PLAN DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION SUMMER 2008

Service plans are prepared annually in order to address operating issues and customer needs. In recent years, service plans have focused on reducing service and operating costs: numerous frequency and span reductions in 2002; elimination of Routes 10 and 11 in 2004; and in 2006 the elimination of Route 8.

The current proposals focus on improving on-time performance and capacity of service that have declined because of recent service reductions. Reasons for declines in these key areas are because of...

- Too much emphasis in recent years on getting the most out of route schedules in order to reduce costs;
- Increasing ridership volumes and bus overloads in the major core corridors;
- Fewer seats and less standing room on new buses because of the low floor and raised rear deck;
- Slower boarding related to automated farebox requirements; and
- Ever increasing traffic congestion.

To address schedule and overload issues, a comprehensive approach is being proposed that will involve route realignments in peripheral and core areas, and the addition of some new service hours. The plan would resolve the worst of current schedule problems and reduce the time that extra buses are needed in service. However, the plan does not fully address capacity issues because it does not add new buses or increase frequency of service.

THE ROUTE 6 PROBLEM

The route having the most serious schedule adherence problems, Route 6, is the longest and one of the highest ridership routes in the system. While route length and passenger volumes have contributed to the problem, the severity can be traced to a cost-savings change made several years ago that moved the City View loop from Route 30 to Route 6 without an increase in cycle time or number of buses on the route. To fix the problem, this change needs to be reversed.

The proposed plan will have Route 6 ending at East Towne. To fill the resulting service gap to East Springs Drive and City View, Route 36 would be created. Another new Route 26 would be created that includes expansion of midday service to the American Center at no additional cost. Route 20 would also be removed from East Springs and

shortened at MATC, creating additional time that would be used to improve service to the airport.

SCHEDULE ISSUES AND OVERLOADS ON CORE SERVICES

The number of extra buses needed to handle overloads has grown, as has the span of time in which they remain in service, caused in part by three successive service reductions that have lowered service levels in the core corridors since the transfer system was implemented in 1998 (Table 1)

Table 1
Change in the Number of Daily Bus Trips
Operating in Isthmus Corridors, 1998-2008

| Core Segment | Daily Bus Trips | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------|-------|----------|---------|
| | Aug '98 | Aug '07 | Net | Proposed | New Net |
| <i>Monroe Street</i> | | | | | |
| Inbound | 79 | 67 | -12 | 67 | -12 |
| Outbound | 79 | 64 | -15 | 64 | -15 |
| <i>Gorham/Ingersoll</i> | | | | | |
| Inbound | 120 | 97 | -23 | 103 | -17 |
| Outbound (Johnson) | 117 | 99 | -18 | 101 | -16 |
| <i>East Washington/Ingersoll</i> | | | | | |
| Inbound | 95 | 98 | 3 | 115 | 20 |
| Outbound | 95 | 99 | 4 | 123 | 28 |
| <i>Jenifer/Ingersoll</i> | | | | | |
| Inbound | 106 | 81 | -25 | 94 | -12 |
| Outbound | 107 | 81 | -26 | 97 | -10 |
| <i>Johnson, University/Park St.</i> | | | | | |
| Inbound | 493 | 397 | -96 | 406 | -87 |
| Outbound | 493 | 376 | -117 | 396 | -97 |
| Net | 1,784 | 1,459 | (325) | 1,566 | (218) |

Also contributing to overloads has been the growth in ridership to the campus by over 1.6 million trips since 2000, the result of UW Student and Employee unlimited ride pass programs. These trips have peaking characteristics that have expanded the typical rush hour travel, starting at about 8:30 a.m. and going later into the morning. This has increased the span that extra buses added to handle these loads are on the road.

The solution being proposed would refocus service in the isthmus during peak and midday offpeak times. Staff proposes bringing back the highly popular Route 10 and 11-style services that bypass the Square and connect the east isthmus and campus. Changes are proposed to Routes 9, 37, 38, and companion routes 44 and 48 to help

balance loads and improve capacity in these corridors. While extra buses to handle overloads will still be needed, savings will be realized in the span these buses operate.

Overall, these changes will restore about 100 of the over 300 trips that have been eliminated since 1998.

PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS

Changes are proposed to Routes 14, 15, 34 and 39, the latter of which currently exhibit among the lowest productivity in the system at about 14 passengers per hour (2007). Routes 14 and 15, while performing at a high level, would benefit from a realignment on the east and west sides to achieve multiple goals including service area expansion, more direct inbound service on the far west side, targeting of higher density development, and improved bus phasing on Sheboygan Avenue. Changes in 14 and 15 also enable a reorientation that will improve productivity of Routes 34 and 39 by reducing frequency to unproductive commercial areas on the southeast side and adding service to the most productive generator on the east side, the MATC/Truax campus. The benefits of this change would extend to South Madison residents, who would have expanded opportunities for travel to MATC.

OTHER CHANGES TO IMPROVE SCHEDULE ADHERENCE

Minor adjustments that eliminate problematic turning movements to help speed up service will affect routes 13, 18, 28, and 44.

TOWN OF MADISON REDUCTIONS

The Town of Madison has requested Metro to reduce their transit subsidy. If major service reductions are needed, Metro has proposed to revise Route 13 by eliminating the portion of the route south of Olin Avenue.

RIDERSHIP IMPACTS

The plan is expected to attract new riders because of service expansion in new peripheral areas and improvement of core services. Overall system productivity may initially decline with the addition of more service hours. Through better load balancing, overloads will decline and some shifting of ridership will occur on certain routes.

ADDITIONAL HOURS OF SERVICE

The plan represents an overall increase in service hours. The current estimate, which is still undergoing refinement, increases daily service hours from 1,151 to approximately 1,184. This number may go down when schedules are finalized.

**Table 2
Additional Service Hours**

| Proposed Service Plan | Daily Hours | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | Current | Proposed | Total |
| Route 6 & Related Changes | | | |
| Routes 6, 67, 26, 36 | 143.1 | 160.2 | |
| Routes 17,20,21,22,24,30,32 | 123.5 | 114.07 | |
| Core Services | | | |
| Routes 10,14,15,33,37,38, | 183.5 | 198.9 | |
| Routes 44,48 | 19.3 | 27.2 | |
| Productivity Improvements | | | |
| Routes 34, 39 | 10.9 | 11.5 | |
| Schedule Adjustments | | | |
| Route 13 | 24.4 | 23.5 | |
| Route 18 | 37.1 | 36.8 | |
| Route 40 | 17.3 | 16.3 | |
| Routes 56 and 57 | 34.3 | 34.5 | |
| TOTAL | 593.4 | 622.97 | 29.57 |