

# Public Hearing Feedback Summary

## Fare Tariff Updates

Wednesday, March 13, 2024 6:00 pm

Most initial comments received regarding the fare tariff updates were questions on how the new fare system will work. For example:

- How do I get a smartcard?
- How will unlimited ride pass programs like the UW Employee Pass work?
- Will you still offer the Commute Card Program?
- Can I still purchase a 10-ride card?

Comments this past week (3/7 – 3/13) involved:

- Ability to purchase reduced fares at BRT station vending machines.
- Can I still purchase a 10-ride card?
- Contactless credit cards
- Concerns about changing the system while we're implementing other service changes at the same time.

### **(3/7/24 – 3/13/24 at 10a):**

I read with great interest the background information on the new fare media. Overall, Metro has indicated the changes pass the fare equity analysis and that no fares will increase. A careful reading of the materials indicates both of these conclusions are lies.

The BRT fare vending machine will not allow youth, low income, senior or people with disabilities to reload their smart cards at the discounted rates. Nor will they be allowed to purchase at the vending machines single ride or day passes on the discounted rate like they can on buses now when showing a valid ID. This eliminates the use of the BRT vending machines for these populations. This is a disparate impact that the fare equity analysis indicates is against the law and FTA regulation.

This discriminatory behavior on Metro and your part is a choice. There are simple well known inexpensive work arounds that Metro's documentation fails to address. I have used transit fare vending machines throughout the country for more than a decade. Smart cards specific to the

discounted fare categories are provided to verified riders (for free) so the vending machine can recognize their eligibility & allow them to purchase the discounted fare at the vending machine.

The second issue is about indicating the change in fare technology does not result in a fare change. The public notice references "no fare change"; the materials use the words "no fare increase". According to the meeting materials, both are incorrect. I'm pretty sure there's more than one law or regulation about being honest about what the hearing is about in the public notice.

As you can see from reading the fare equity analysis, some categories of people are getting a deep discount, some a modest discount and some none at all with the fare capping. Knowing that, some folks might want to comment on those differences. So this is very much a fare change and needs to be indicated truthfully in the public hearing notice and consistently throughout the materials.

And, back to the decision to make the BRT vending machine incapable of providing these very discounted fares described in the equity analysis even though so many brands of transit vending machines throughout the country have figured out how. Nowhere in the equity analysis does it indicate these discounted fares will be unavailable, by Metro's choice, at the vending machines. Betting a clear eyed reading of FTA's circular would tell you not to leave that out.

Finally, the BRT vending machine information fails to discuss the way in which the machines themselves & physical access to them will meet ADA requirements. FTA expects you to do that.

Anticipating staff response I'd like to point out it doesn't really matter discounted tickets are still available online. Those fares are not available with proper ID everywhere else the standard fare is available.

Please do not approve the installation of the BRT vending machines until all fare discount categories are available. Put Metro on the spot to come up with an implementable solution before your meeting next month. Partly because its the right thing to do; partly because every transit agency but Metro seems to have figured out how simple and cheap it is to do so.

##

Why not make buses broadly and immediately useful to all tourists and residents on demand through using their credit cards? This practice is becoming widespread in larger cities in the US and Canada and increases use of public transportation by not requiring purchases of special passes or cards.

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Was there a system considered that does not involve the use of specific smart cards? Many major cities now offer the use of tap-to-pay debit/credit cards and digital wallets directly on the fare readers on the bus. Having this in Madison would not only increase ease but put Madison on par with current technology, instead of implementing a system already a generation behind. Why was the decision made to go with this solution?

Secondly, there are currently 10-ride passes available for a 25 cent discount. The news article announcing the hearing stated that no fare increases would result from these proposals, but there was no mention of how this discount would be accessible in the new format. This should be considered a significant fare increase and stated as such for the many adults who use the 10-ride passes.

Unfortunately, I am not able to attend the hearing during the time it occurs, but I look forward to a response on the above items.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Given the fairly universal citizen and user disapproval of the yet unfinished new transit system, your timing on a rate increase is premature and in my view, ill-conceived. In marketing a new product to consumers, 1

a corporation or small biz would likely offer a reduced price or a 2fer to get consumers to try the product. Maybe reconsider? You are already underwater with the public on this and you are penalizing those who have to use transit.

##

I am complaining about your new fare schedule. So there is no Senior/Disabled 10 ride card available? I am not spending \$17.25 on an adult 10 card ride. And I am not purchasing a 31 day pass for senior disabled at \$28. I do not want to ride Madison Metro at all; I am trying to use the bus system as little as possible and spend as little money. I hate your new bus system. It is a bus system that takes you nowhere.

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I am opposed to the fare hike, you have imposed a new bus system on us and we users did not ask for it and should not have to pay for a system which is not working as promised or based on future development. Do not hike the fares until you get the bugs worked out and have an on time fully developed system.

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**Feedback (2/1/24 – 3/7/24):**

I read about the upgrade to tap fare cards & readers installed at front and back doors of busses and BRT. **\*\*BRAVO!\*\*** Thank you!

Feedback, if I may: Install the reader boxes at a height that is ADA-compliant and make the reactive area strong, long, and located near peoples bodies, not just hands. (It looks really high in the newspaper picture. Not legal, not in line with your own efficiency goals, a logistical hassle for you in a number of ways.)

Are you looking at international systems as well as domestic as you develop ours?, check out Soeul for example, and others. Fare boxes are at hip level. People carry their fare cards in their pockets or handbags. They can *\*quickly\** tap the reader with their hip/butt/back pocket or handbag. The pass stays inside. The reader has to be strong and a long enough strip that it can be located for short and tall people, wheel chairs, canes, etc. You see the benefits. Fast. Cards

don't get lost. No slow fumbling in bags, etc. The accessibility issues is plain enough. Be sure you're in compliance.

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I am very excited to see the new fare system in action. More out of curiosity, how was Masabi selected? If I understand correctly, Masabi is the vendor powering Los Angeles', NYC's, and a few other big cities' public transit payment systems. I am sure I and other Apple users would love to hear if we will be able to add the new cards to digital wallets — and potentially even use Express Mode to board.

I am also a huge fan of going account-based / capped. This solves for one of the big concerns I have heard where you might have to take the bus to multiple stops and pay for boarding every time. The rolling two-hour window is also a great addition. It will incentivize more use of the metro system, which I think is a great thing if the goal is to increase ridership.

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You say fares aren't increasing. But currently because I but a 10 ride card. Each trip is less than \$2 even if I only ride once a day or every few days. The new system seems to penalize you if you don't take multiple rides a day/month. I LOVE the idea of a reusable/refillable card but really hope you'll consider prioritizing some bulk purchase deals and not exclusively frequent ridership.

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I think the proposed changes are excellent. My household has trouble taking the bus because we usually don't have cash available. Both the smart card and the half price fare would be very helpful to us.

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Ensure that smart pass equipment is accessible for wheelchair users. All the fare boxes installed since 1980 are too high for wheelchair users.

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