



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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Meeting Minutes - Approved ADA TRANSIT SUBCOMMITTEE TO THE TRANSIT AND PARKING COMM

Wednesday, February 13, 2008

5:10 PM

215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Room LL-120 (Madison Municipal Building)

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Present: 5 -

Tim Gruber; Carl D. Durocher; William J. Tangney; Susan M. De Vos and James Cobb

Excused: 2 -

Jeanne M. Tregoning and Mary E. Jacobs

Staff: Crystal Martin, Karen Darcy, Mick Rusch, Ann Schroeder

Guest: Norah Cashin, Dane County Human Services Transportation Manager

Chair DeVos called the meeting to order at 5:11 PM. Introductions were made for the new Metro staff person, Karen Darcy, Paratransit Scheduling Coordinator.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. DuRocher moved approval of the minutes; Mr. Tangney seconded. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

4. [09136](#)

Duplication of Services

- a. Draft Plan Introduction
- b. Care Wisconsin (Formerly Elder Care of Wisconsin)

Attachments: [ADA TS Duplication of Svcs Plan Draft 02 08.pdf](#)

Ms. Martin said in December she presented some ideas to the group, and Dr. Cobb requested that she come back to the Subcommittee with a plan. She passed out an outline of the plan. One issue was trying to prevent multiple vehicles picking up individuals at the same destination at peak times. The plan includes identifying common destinations such as MARC, Pathways 1 and

2 and others. In order to use data-driven decision-making, Metro can check the number of rides to common destinations. The current productivity is 1.8 trips per hour. The goal is 2.2 trips per hour. The ADA allows up to an hour before and an hour after for negotiation time. Ms. Martin doesn't believe we need that much time to avoid duplication of services. Metro will make sure to contact all appropriate support people about when current subscription trips will need to change. This worked well with the Long Term Assignment program. Other stakeholders who need to be involved include the Dane County Quality Assurance Board's Transit Advisory Committee and the Dane County Specialized Transportation Committee. Ms. Martin will meet with them in March and return to this Subcommittee in April with more information, input and goals. Metro now has a point person, Ms. Darcy, to coordinate this program.

Mr. Tangney asked what triggers the end/beginning of a subscription. Ms. Martin used the example of a rider changing jobs. The new trip would have a start date, but no end date. A temporary job, however, could include an end date in the system. At the advent of this program, Metro will be letting customers know that their current subscription will end so that they contact customer service to negotiate trip times for new subscriptions with others passengers who have common destinations.

Alder Gruber asked if this new plan is for everyone or only people on the Long Term Assignment program. Ms. Martin explained that it is only for people going to common destinations. Alder Gruber asked if Metro would also work with the destinations such as sheltered workshops. Ms. Martin said that the negotiated times would accommodate program times, usually a six hour program time per day. They might be earlier or later than current program days. The workshops might not be thrilled about the change, but they will still be able to meet their programs goals with this method.

Dr. Cobb said it's not unusual for riders to have two or three jobs. He wondered if this plan could accommodate that. Ms. Martin said that she believes it can because programs often begin/end at the same or similar times. Dr. Cobb said people might not like that they can't get picked up or dropped off exactly when they want to. However, paratransit is still mass transit, and this program follows that mass transit model. We can accommodate riders as much as we can. These are changes that will be happening in all of our futures because of financial pressures.

Ms. DeVos asked how realistic it is to have an efficiency of 1.8 rides per hour. Ms. Martin said looking at other systems, they separate out their common destination service and run it separately from their demand response system. One point eight rides are in the ballpark of the demand response system. Metro runs all those trips together. So this will be a foray into concentrating for productivity on the group rides.

Dr. Cobb asked what opposition is anticipated from other groups. Ms. Cashin said there are two problems. 1) There are some people for whom transportation to and from residential and programmatic care is a delicate balance and if it doesn't work out well for their caregivers, it turns into a big problem for the consumer. That is a problem that will probably be addressed. 2) For some riders, the transportation is care. That likely will not be addressed.

Ms. Martin explained that Alder Gruber might get calls about these changes. However, this is similar to a fixed route change where someone had been taking an 8:00 AM bus that dropped him off at the perfect time of 8:25 AM. The route change picks him up at 7:45 and drops off "early" at 8:10 AM.

Ms. Cashin said the County has talked for years about paying a premium for getting many consumers dropped off all at the same time. This is a wake up call to address the issue. Alder Gruber asked whether this is mandatory or if riders can opt out. Ms. Martin said that a consumer can opt out by finding alternate transportation, just as that would be the option for someone taking fixed route service when their route changes. Ms. Martin said moving forward, casual rides would get absorbed into this new system as well.

Mr. Tangney said that he used to schedule these rides and the staggered approach serves everyone well. Ms. Martin said this program would be more than slightly staggered. It has drops off at 8:00 and 9:30 AM, and pick ups at 2:00 and 3:30 PM. Mr. Tangney confirmed that Metro is planning to give the workshops plenty of notification. Ms. Martin said she sees an 8:00 AM drop off, then 8:30 AM pick ups for people supported in the community, and then the next pick up for the 9:30 drop off.

Dr. Cobb moved that this subcommittee inform staff that the plan as laid out seems viable. Alder Gruber seconded. Ms. Martin said she would be back to the group in April about this plan. The motion carried.

A staff member from Care Wisconsin was going to attend but was ill. He will be invited to a meeting in the future.

5. [09138](#)

Metro Phone System Updates - Mick Rusch, Metro Marketing Specialist

Attachments: [New Metro Phone System.pdf](#)

Mr. Rusch said Metro is getting a new phone system. He expects the implementation will be transparent. It is an (Internet protocol) IP phone system. Metro Customer Service (CSC) currently has 11 incoming phone lines. The new system will allow more people to avoid busy signals and get pre-recorded information. Other City departments already have this system, so the transition should be very smooth. It should help paratransit calls because there will be easily available information about whether buses are running late or more mundane information. That would leave the CSC Representatives available for scheduling. In the future, Metro might be able to have customers press a number to get Ms. Darcy. One idea was to have a single number for all Metro calls. Then there would be a menu system such as press 1 for CSC, press 2 for paratransit. Calls would go to the same people, but Metro could track statistics for different kinds of calls. If someone cannot physically press a number, there could be another telephone number that would go right into the system without pressing anything. Mr. Tangney suggested that it might be useful to have a "press or say 1" option so many people could be served by pressing or speaking. Someone who could not do either could call the number that would go straight into the system without pressing or saying anything.

Ms. Martin said right now we don't know how many calls are for fixed route or

for paratransit. This will allow us to gather more statistics, the average length of call, the average hold time, etc.

Dr. Cobb said most of his calls are to confirm rides. He would like to do so with the minimum wait time. Metro will first update the phone system and then, in the next year, plan to add an interactive voice response (IVR) system that will integrate with the scheduling program. Mr. Rusch said the new phone system will allow Metro to collect much more data and also record calls so that problems can be resolved later by a supervisor. Ms. DeVos said that she would often call to confirm a ride and find out who the provider was. Mr. Rusch said that would be in the second phase (IVR) of implementation. He also said that wait times should decrease because more fixed route information can be recorded. Ms. Martin said as we get closer to implementing the system and decisions need to be made about options, Mr. Rusch will be invited to another Subcommittee meeting to discuss this further.

Mr. Tangney asked whether it would make sense to have, for example, four different numbers for different types of calls. Mr. DuRocher said it is easier for people to have one single number to remember than a more complicated system of multiple numbers. Using a single number with “press one” choices will still allow Metro to collect statistical data. Historically, Metro had multiple numbers and one type of operator would be sitting idle while others were swamped. It was more efficient to have the calls go to the same operators through the same number. Ms. Martin and Mr. Rusch agreed this is the best for customers because any CSC representative is trained to answer questions for any customers. It’s also easy to have one number in the phone book that people can locate and remember.

6. [09139](#)

Promoting Feedback to Metro - Mick Rusch, Metro Marketing Specialist

Mick Rusch, Metro Marketing Specialist – Ms. DeVos said that Metro can’t improve unless they are told of complaints. Mr. Rusch said the feedback form is on the contact page on the Website. It can be moved. Metro has its email address on all marketing materials that are distributed. Metro gets a lot of emails; this is a popular way for our customers to communicate. Ms. DeVos said she hears from people that they have no idea how to give feedback. Ms. Martin asked if it’s a lack of education or a need for different wording – “How to Complain.” Ms. DeVos’ impression is that consumers have to hunt a little before finding the right place to give feedback. Ms. DeVos wasn’t sure what the solution was. Mr. Rusch said he could brainstorm some ideas. He can bring them to the Subcommittee. Perhaps there could be a banner or something on the homepage.

Mr. Rusch also said that Metro is working on getting Google Transit on the Webpage for trip planning.

Ms. DeVos said she visits various federal Websites where she can write on Adobe forms. That would be very useful for things like the paratransit application. Mr. Rusch said he thinks that is possible. Ms. Martin said an original signature would still be necessary.

Mr. DuRocher said now that contractors are using self-reporting for on-time

service, he wondered if CSC representatives still record a late ride when someone calls in asking about a late ride. Ms. Martin said yes, it's used as a cross-checking measure to check the customer report with the contractor report. They generally match overall.

7. [08705](#)

Reports - Non-Action Items

- a. Transit & Parking Commission
- b. Commission on People with Disabilities
- c. Contracted Service Oversight Subcommittee
- d. Dane County Specialized Transportation Committee
- e. Long Range Metro Transit Planning Ad Hoc Committee
- f. Other Community Meetings
- g. Staff Report - On-going Projects

Attachments: [Para Indicators Dec07.pdf](#)
[Pending List 02.13.08.pdf](#)

a. Transit & Parking Commission – Mr. DuRocher said that there was an incident between a rider and a driver where a rider was using out-dated fare media. Metro posted a flyer advising drivers to accept out-dated fare media for the ride and tell the customer to exchange any other out-dated media at Metro. In the future, the public will be informed when fares change about a sunset date for that media and how to make an exchange. Mr. DuRocher passed around a poster of current media types that drivers have to recognize. There were quite a number.

Two mechanics with knowledge about hybrid buses also attended the meeting to provide information. Currently, Metro has a lot of data on buses regarding fuel efficiency and other statistics. Each bus type has a cost per mile that includes all the costs of keeping the bus on the road. Right now the hybrids are about half the cost of the older Gillig buses from the 1990s. The mechanics and management say these early numbers don't give the full picture yet because the hybrids are still under warranty. They are not accruing any maintenance costs. There is a lot of sentiment to acquire more hybrids because of the ecological value, but Metro does fleet replacement every 15 years (a certain number of buses every five years.) If Metro goes with hybrids, that won't be possible because of the extra expense.

The parking utility is starting a process of replacing single space meters with multi-space meters. Mr. DuRocher had asked that the matter be referred to the Parking Council for People with Disabilities. He has been keeping an eye out for items that need to be referred to ADATS as well.

Ms. DeVos said if there were a smart card that deducted the appropriate fare, drivers would not have to recognize so many different fare media. Mr. Rusch said he didn't believe the fareboxes we currently have are set up for that technology. Mr. DuRocher said it would also have to recognize the type of ride – senior/disabled, UW, etc. The swipe card technology Metro currently uses does provide Metro with a lot of boarding and alighting statistics that are very useful.

Mr. Tangney asked about the hybrid fuel. Mr. DuRocher said the hybrid buses use the same diesel fuel, but some of the time they use battery power. The

transmission is different and more efficient. At low speeds, the diesel goes into idle and the electric motor takes over. Ms. DeVos asked whether hybrids come in smaller vehicles. They do.

b. Commission on People with Disabilities – This meeting was cancelled due to lack of quorum.

c. Contracted Service Oversight Subcommittee – Mr. DuRocher said the Town of Madison has always been a member. They have notified Metro that they can no longer be a partner. If they discontinue being a partner, there will be closed-door service in the Town of Madison. Metro is currently working on this with the Town of Madison. Mr. Tangney asked whether that would mean the buses would not stop on Fish Hatchery Road in the Town of Madison. That is likely as that is the current Metro policy. Mr. Tangney said that the St. Vincent DePaul food pantry would be negatively affected. It would also affect paratransit service in that area.

d. Dane County Specialized Transportation Committee – Ms. Cashin said the federal government has ordered that public transit and human service agencies must coordinate transportation services. In order to receive certain types of funding, there must be a plan that includes the funding sources. So the Dane County Specialized Transportation Committee approved a plan amending their original plan in order to include all of the necessary stakeholders.

The County already has three applicants for different pots of money for the coordination plan. One has offered to implement the plan. Metro and the County are meeting to coordinate the inclusion of applicants in the plan as necessary.

There are regulations governing which types of transportation certain people can access. The County is now involved with the State in reworking some of the regulations to correspond with the coordination efforts. An interdepartmental committee is developing a Wisconsin Model for how coordination should be done.

The Family Care reimbursement rate will likely include the fare rather than the cost of rides. Riders who are now using paratransit as Medicaid rides are already paying more of the cost (about 60%) rather than just the fare. The County is working on another program that would pay the full cost of the ride, so Wisconsin is ahead of the curve. The specialized medical vehicle (SMV) rate is capped by the state. The Common Carrier system is different. It is defined as anything other than ambulance and SMV. So Common Carrier pays the usual and customary rate for transportation. Since there is no real SMV in Dane County (few providers, most not taking new riders), the rate the County uses is Metro's audited cost per ride for the previous year then adjusted for cost trends.

Ms. DeVos wondered how much this would help when funding is lost due to Family Care. Ms. Cashin said this is to put a program in place to prevent losing money to Family Care. Ms. Martin said we really don't know what the outcome will be. As she collects data, she will report back to the Subcommittee.

e. Long Range Metro Transit Planning Ad Hoc Committee – Mr. DuRocher said after months of subcommittees meeting, their information is being consolidated into a final draft report. Ms. DeVos said there are several reasons the date of the final report keeps getting pushed back, including quorum problems. Ms. DeVos said that she and the chair of the Marketing Subcommittee, Amanda White, have very different ideas about what the final recommendations should look like in the report. Ms. DeVos feels that she might have to write a minority report. She felt like the Funding/Cost Management Subcommittee members were all talking more in the same voice regarding their recommendations.

f. Other Community Meetings – There were no other community meetings.

g. Staff Report – On-going Projects (GAS notices on mymetrobus.com) - The County operates a Group Access Service with transportation to group meal sites and shopping. There is now a link for that on the Metro Website so it is easy to refer people.

8. [08706](#) Other Transit Related Announcements - Non-Action Items

Attachments: [MPM 2-1 12 07.pdf](#)
[MPM 2-2 12 07 .pdf](#)
[MPM 2-3 12 07.pdf](#)

There were no other announcements.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DuRocher moved to adjourn; Mr. Tangney seconded. The motion passed by voice vote/other, and the meeting adjourned at 6:52 PM.