



City of Madison

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

Monday, January 30, 2012

5:15 PM 15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, Room LL-130 (Madison
Municipal Building)

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Present: 7 -

Kenneth M. Streit; Jeanne M. Tregoning; Susan M. De Vos; Mary E. Jacobs; Ida W. Nathan; Michael A. Huckaby and Carl D. DuRocher

Excused: 1 -

Bridget R. Maniaci

1. PROPER MEETING NOTIFICATION

The meeting was properly noticed.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. DuRocher moved approval; Mr. Huckaby seconded. Mr. DuRocher pointed out a typo on page 5. The motion passed.

3. PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Mr. DuRocher said Mr. Tangney is going to be a member of this body again. He asked that out of respect for Mr. Tangney's past and future membership, Mr. Tangney be allowed to participate tonight except when there is a vote.

4. DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

There were no disclosures or recusals.

5. [25164](#)

Metro Transit Maintenance Manager, Jeff Butler

- a. Inventory of Accessible Features on Fixed Route Buses
- b. Metro Paratransit Bus Specifications for Next Vehicle Purchase

Attachments: [Accessibility Features for Mainline BusesR.pdf](#)

Introductions were made. Mr. Butler is the new Transit Maintenance Manager. He's been in vehicle maintenance for the past 28 years at Ford, the Madison Fire Department, and now Metro Transit. He has been in management for 14 of the 28 years, so he has a vast knowledge of vehicle repair and people. Metro is in the process of writing a procurement document for fixed route and paratransit coaches. Metro will purchase 8 paratransit coaches this year and 8 next year. The purchase for fixed route coaches will be over the next 5 years.

Mr. Butler wanted to report on some of the features of mainline and paratransit vehicles.

- Loading system – Metro is changing to all fold-out ramps rather than lifts that go up and down. These are ADA compliant on fixed route buses. Paratransit buses will now be low floor and will also have fold-out ramps.
- All fixed route buses have the capability to kneel. He saw it noted that there was a desire to have buses kneel when it is below 15 degrees. If a rider asks, drivers will always kneel the bus. However, the air system could freeze the bus in the kneeling position and then the bus is stuck and people have to wait for a replacement bus to arrive.
- Wheelchair restraints will be the telescopic type with a dual lock. These are state of the art. There is nothing newer.
- Priority seating signs for front seats to alert people to give these seats to seniors and people with disabilities.
- Audio/visual signal systems – There is a touchpad on the bottom of the flip up seats and pull cords for customer to signal a stop request. The touch pads underneath the seating produce a unique sound to let the driver know there is a wheelchair user who needs to get off.
- Passenger assist grab rails – There are two 14" rails on the wheel wells on each side of bus and also at wheelchair areas.
- RCA nonslip rubber flooring
- LED lighting – brighter than other lighting

Ms. De Vos said she and a former committee member developed a list of accessible features they'd like to see on mainline buses. Apparently Mr. Butler had not seen it yet; she'd like to send it to him.

Ms. Nathan said the vans have slippery seats and nothing to hold you in so you are at the mercy of gravity. She hopes those are the ones that are getting retired. She wonders whether there will be forward facing seats or side facing seats. Side facing seats have no armrests and no straps. Mr. DuRocher wanted to remind people that Mr. Butler is responsible for city owned vehicles. Riding paratransit could also mean riding contractor vehicles; Mr. Butler would have no control over that.

Ms. De Vos' list was handed out. Mr. Butler addressed each point.

#1 – Functioning alert system for wheelchair stops – Ms. De Vos said she has used the touchpad and has been told that it wasn't obvious to drivers that the signal was for a wheelchair user. She said she has been in one of the new buses that the touchpad rang twice. Mr. Butler said the new buses will all have that double ring audible sound. The older ones don't have that.

#2 – Mixture of forward facing and side facing seats – One of the reason we use perimeter seating is so that we can fit more strollers, wheelchairs and people on the bus. There's a lot going on up front. Mr. Butler said we could look into having some front facing seats toward the back.

#3 – More than two seats with flip up capability – The side facing seats and the first row of front facing seats also flip up. Ms. De Vos said she was not aware of that.

#4 – Strap hangers adequate for people who are 4 ½ feet tall – Mr. Butler said we're looking into this right now. We've found some; that is something that has been brought to our attention.

#5 – Sufficiently long tie-down straps – All straps we have are ADA compliant. They don't make longer straps. Ms. De Vos said there are a few in 890 and 900 coaches she gets in and she has to wheel back more for the driver to get the hook on. Ms. Martin said they could be mounted too far back which will make them too short.

#6 – Adequate bars/rails – Ms. De Vos said some buses don't have grab bars in the front or only horizontal over the wheel wells. Mr. Butler said those are older buses that don't have vertical bars in them.

#7 – Non-slippery floors – All new buses will have RCA flooring in them. Slippery floors shouldn't be a problem anymore. The grooves are deeper, so the water runs off the top of the grooves. It's less slick than the older style.

#8 – Farebox visible for wheelchair users – Mr. Butler said he went out to Gillig and looked at the entrance to buses being built today. Our entrance has about a foot more room. Ms. De Vos said she can't always see where to put her pass because the bar is right in her line of vision over the farebox. Ms. Gullickson asked if that was typical on most of the buses. Ms. De Vos said not all buses, but she noticed it on multiple buses. It would be fine if it were an inch lower. Ms. Gullickson said we'd take a look at that.

#9 – Kneeling capability below 15 – 20 degrees – Mr. Butler said he touched on this earlier. We can kneel the bus. We don't want to do it because we don't want a disabled bus so that passengers have to wait for a replacement. But if someone asked, we won't refuse.

There were additional points on the document:

#1 – Buses should be cleaned nightly with non-toxic substances – We haven't used toxic pesticides for about 8 years now. We use pheromone traps that are not harmful to animals or humans. That's an old issue. Mainline buses are cleaned nightly.

#2 – Windows blocked by bus wraps seem to make some riders ill – One reason we went to wrapping buses is because of the revenue it generates. In the budget times we're in, we get a fair amount of money from this. Mr. Streit said that is more an issue for the Transit and Parking Commission (TPC). Mr. Huckaby said the audible announcements got complaints that someone got headaches. There has to be some give and take.

#3 – In addition to the Madison box test, people with various disabilities should test buses – Mr. Butler explained what the box test is. The area of entry on our buses is about a foot wider than most buses in the industry right now. Our buses are some of the most user friendly.

Ms. Gullickson wanted to ask more about this one. Testing the buses once they get back here is too late. We need to put requirements in the request for proposals (RFP) now. If there are specific things that you think are not being addressed now, this is the time to note what those items might be. Mr. Butler needs to know in the next month or two what specific items we can tell the manufacturer about.

Ms. De Vos said the limitation is that Ms. Bond has a service animal and she herself uses a wheelchair. We can't know all the challenges for other people. Unfortunately she doesn't know who else to talk to about that. But we should try to make some outreach that way. She doesn't know what to suggest. Ms. Nathan said she has a walker; Mr. Huckaby has a dog. This committee is fairly representative.

Ms. Nathan asked if there are any standing poles or if you have to hold on to backs of seats. Mr. Butler said there are poles, grab straps or you can hold onto the seats.

Mr. Tangney noticed that some of the tie-down straps are very long and not tying down, they are tipping back to front. He thinks you would want something coming up at approximately 45 degree angle from the floor. He could see the tie-downs allowing the wheelchair to go forward and backward during an accident.

Mr. Streit thought it would be a good idea to send the Gillig website to Ms. Martin to share with ADATS. Then people could see the different design elements the company has for accessibility features.

Mr. DuRocher said regarding Mr. Tangney's comments on the bus tie-downs, so much of that has to do with the frame construction of the wheelchair being tied down. He wishes he had a solution. That's a hard problem. Also, a consideration for paratransit buses might be a rear end access door. That would provide for boarding and unloading people in environments that are difficult from the side door – for example, one way streets.

Ms. De Vos had a question about the length of the paratransit buses. She questioned whether it was necessary to have such a large vehicle. Mr. Butler said we went with the larger vehicle because there is more room to move around. Starcrafts have a sloped floor. Vehicles today have flat floors. So the low floor buses are the bus of the future. He doesn't know if rear door access is available on the low floor buses. We have some low floor buses with ramps

that come out the front. Ms. De Vos said part of the question about how long the bus is had to do with fuel consumption. That's why she raised that. She imagines the ratio of fuel consumption per mile is significant enough to think about.

6. [25165](#)

Attaining Meeting Quorum

- a. Discussion of Item
- b. Discussion of Potential Remedies
 - i. Consideration of Alternates for Subcommittee Membership
 - ii. Recruiting Additional Participants/ Members
 - iii. Revise Schedule to Meet Quarterly
 - iv. Suggested Remedies to Discuss at Future Meetings

Ms. Martin said a number of times in the last year we've had to check to make sure we'd get quorum. We want to notify people not to come if it looks like we're not going to attain quorum. It's on the agenda to have an opportunity to discuss the issue. Many members have served dutifully for quite a long time on this subcommittee. We appreciate members' willingness to continue serving. It might be time to interest some young people who can learn how we've developed our policies, knowledge of the ADA, etc. She thought members might like the opportunity to discuss things other committees have done to deal with quorum or be more effective.

Mr. Tangney said if you have a higher membership, you have a higher quorum. If we have alternates, is that a qualifying way to meet quorum? Quorum is half plus one. Mr. DuRocher said he doesn't know that quorum is a problem that warrants restructuring of the ordinance. Related to that, we don't have an alder that seems to be able to fit in these meetings. Alder Maniaci has an on-going conflict. Maybe we could talk to her and the Mayor's office. This committee should have regular presence from the Common Council. That would be one way to add to quorum.

Ms. Jacobs said she tends to agree that we don't need any restructuring at this point. There will be times we don't have quorum, but we hope those will be few and far between. Mr. Tangney said it's nice to have quarterly meetings, but so many things happen. He has suggested some other groups go to every two months, but it has always stayed monthly. Mr. DuRocher said he doesn't see any reason to go to less frequent meetings. We always have sufficient meeting items. We'd have to go to longer meetings. If there are no items, we can just cancel the meeting. We end up having 10 or 11 meetings per year. Ms. Brunette-Tregoning said quarterly appealed to her at first. But monthly meetings are important because we really do use the time. She liked the idea of having the list of priorities for the meeting. We could go back to having that at meetings.

Ms. Jacobs said we seem to be in agreement to continue to meet monthly. She feels confident we'll have quorum more often than not. Mr. DuRocher said there was a time that getting the perspective of someone who could qualify as senior citizen was not always met. We should keep in mind when we see younger people (under 30) who might be interested in this committee and find out how this aspect of transit works, we can talk to them about being able to

contribute. We need more people to apply. Ms. Brunette-Tregoning said when it was mentioned about having younger people on this committee, she thought we could go over the list of riders and look at their bios and see if they want to participate. There was a suggestion to perhaps get a student from the University and sit in for their school year and take information back to their classes.

Ms. Nathan asked whether we might reposition the day of the week that we meet. Mondays are often a conflict for her. Perhaps we could consider Tuesday. Mr. DuRocher said once a year we do talk about what is the best meeting time. We generally do that in June. Experience shows that switching a meeting night is often really difficult because you have to find another night that is good for everybody.

Ms. Jacobs said we could also take it upon ourselves to invite a younger person we think might be interested and do some mentoring with that person. Then we have some say who we think might be a good person for the committee. Mr. Tangney said like someone from Independent Living or Community Living Alliance who has some tie to what we do.

7. [25166](#)

Reports

- a. Transit & Parking Commission
- b. Commission on People with Disabilities
- c. Dane County Specialized Transportation Commission
- d. Other Community Meetings
- e. Performance Indicators
- f. Report from the Chair
- g. Staff Report

Attachments: [Para Indicators Oct11.pdf](#)
[Para Indicators Nov11.pdf](#)

a. Transit & Parking Commission – Mr. Streit said there hasn't been anything lately for this committee.

b. Commission on People with Disabilities – Mr. Tangney said he didn't think there was anything particular to report for this committee. The focus has been changing fines for disabled parking law breakers. One member expressed concern about seatbelts in Badger Bus vehicles that did not work. He'd like to discuss that at a future meeting.

c. Dane County Specialized Transportation Commission – Mr. DuRocher said there is more money in gas taxes/registration fees than anticipated in the budget. So Senator Jessica King has a bill she is going to sponsor to make sure that money gets allocated into the state transit fund. \$32 million is available. If anyone has contact with their state representatives, let them know that this is coming up.

d. Other Community Meetings – There were no other community meetings to report.

e. Performance Indicators – Ms. Martin said the November indicators continue the trend for the year. The December numbers are more exciting because it's for the whole year. After peeking ahead, it looks like the trend for the year will be sustained. Ridership was down .8% for paratransit in 2011. That's not a whole percent but ridership is not growing at an average of 3% like previous years. Fixed route ridership for 2011 will top out over 14 million, a record.

The no show rate is still at 2.2%. That is up a little from the same time last year but still well below 3%, and that's our goal. November was the month Metro started sending out no show postcards. Subsequent months will show if there are changes due to that. DDS trips (MA waiver) are down from previous years. There is some organized training going on to move people onto fixed route. This has also been a year with a number of behavior issues and customers no longer riding the bus for a period because their behaviors were putting other people at risk. Ms. Martin has spoken with Doug Hunt at Dane County. Some people are having trouble with the economy and not finding jobs. But some people are finding multiple jobs and taking more trips.

The number of door to door trips is down. Leave attended trips are up. The distribution among the contractors for the amount of work they're doing is comparable to previous years. The number of late service reports is due to the transition to a new contractor. Metro on-time performance numbers are up due to better button pushing by drivers. We've had some retirements of people who were used to using the paper method. We're training the new people from the start to push the button on the MDT for pick up time.

Fewer than half of all signed up customers use the system. They often sign up as a backup when their other ride system fails.

Ms. Gullickson said we've been watching our ridership all year on the fixed route side. We were shooting for going over 14 million in ridership, which would be higher than any time since private ownership in 1970. We don't have good records from before then. We provided our 14 millionth ride on December 7th in the morning. By the end of the month, we had almost 15 million rides. That is really nice growth. The Common Council and Mayor have respected the need and use of transit and not made any cuts. Mr. DuRocher said that is particularly notable in that we got cuts from the local share in state funding. The City has been prioritizing public transportation to maximize ridership. Wausau, in contrast to Madison, because of what the state has done, has cut their mainline bus service in half. It is even more notable what is happening here given what is happening on the state level.

f. Report from the Chair – There was no report from the chair.

g. Staff Report – Ms. Martin reported she has been in the office half time in January and trying to stay caught up. She expects to be back full time in February. She apologizes for any late responses. Also, we've had a number of retirements in paratransit unit in the past year. We've got new drivers who are out on the road. Be sure to introduce yourselves.

We've also had a number of departures in customer service. We've got new people on board there, and we also have a new dispatcher who is being

trained. We hope to bring him by soon to meet the subcommittee. We have new drivers, new dispatchers and new customer service representatives (CSRs), so it's "getting to know you time." It does take time to develop folks so they are familiar with all the locations in town, dispatch procedures, etc. so it's going to be a learning year.

Ms. Brunette-Tregoning asked how many applied for the paratransit driver positions and how many got interviewed. In other words, are we getting the top of the crop? Ms. Martin said it's an internal recruitment, so it's all fixed route drivers going into the paratransit unit. Three are on the road now; one more next week. Ms. Gullickson said 15 or 18 people were interested in the positions. We offer to union members first. Only if we don't get enough applicants do we go outside.

Ms. Nathan said she enjoys having the CSRs say their names. She knows this has been going on a while. Some people swallow their name and she has to ask them to repeat. But she'd like to emphasize what a good feeling it is to have a name even during a short interaction.

Mr. DuRocher asked if the 15 to 18 applicants were narrowed down on merit or just on seniority. Ms. Gullickson said it was seniority based. We've had discussion with the union over the years about having paratransit driver positions be more open and competitive because it's a very different function than a fixed route driver. We've made some strides but not as far as we'd like to go. We've made a change that might sound small, but it's big to us. Paratransit driver positions get offered first to drivers rather than company-wide. Some folks have moved from maintenance to paratransit driver successfully, but that is another skill set removed from what you need for a paratransit driver. Now we are able to offer the positions first to mainline drivers.

Mr. DuRocher said given the transition from mainline into paratransit, he's curious about training. He had a recent experience with someone off the extra board or a new driver, so he wonders about the training issues. Perhaps that could be a future agenda item. Ms. Brunette-Tregoning said she was surprised it was seniority based because personalities are so important. She wondered if there is a probation period. Ms. Gullickson said yes.

Mr. Tangney said he is glad to be back on this committee. His experience in transit for 8 ½ years was precious. Ms. Martin was his boss for two years at Union Cab. He truly hopes he can use his past in service of this committee. His past experience has more relevance to this committee than any other he serves on. He will focus on safety training of drivers. Ms. Jacobs said we're glad to have you back on the committee.

Ms. Brunette-Tregoning said she and her husband had an unexpected trip to South Carolina due to a family emergency. She'd like to start a list of other transit agencies that we can keep so people who have to travel know where to start in order to get service reciprocity. She got good service when Metro faxed her information to the agency in South Carolina.

Mr. Huckaby said there are still a couple of drivers with Abby Vans who haven't gotten the information about car seats for kids. It does seem to have calmed

down somewhat overall. The other thing he wants to bring up is that one way we might be able to lower the no load number is if customer cell phone numbers were listed on the manifest or information given to drivers (voluntarily). If there is confusion which entrance of a building a pick up is on, the driver can call the person and ask where they are. Or if the driver knows he/she is going to be late, they could call ahead and warn the person so they aren't standing outside waiting for a long time. He's talked to drivers and riders about this, and everybody agreed that for those who wish to provide their cell number, it would be expeditious to do so.

Ms. Nathan said the paratransit service in New York City asks for your cell phone when you make your reservation. It works very well for pick up areas, but they seldom follow through when they're late. You have to call base and get them to contact the driver. Mr. DuRocher said he would not want to make that universal – many people don't have cell phones, can't manipulate a phone or verbalize. Then the driver might call, get no response and leave. Doing it on a voluntary basis is good. For a rider who would like that reassurance when booking a ride there is a comment line. If you ask the CSR to put a cell phone in the comment line, it could be done by request.

8. [08706](#) Other Transit Related Announcements

There were no other transit related announcements.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DuRocher moved to adjourn. Ms. De Vos seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM.