

STAFF RESPONSE AND RECOMMENDATIONS MAY 8, 2007 PUBLIC HEARING

The service changes presented at the May 8th public hearing are primarily expansion proposals in Fitchburg and Middleton, and a service reduction/reallocation plan for the UW campus. Minor changes are proposed within the City of Madison to efficiently integrate the service expansion into the Metro system and improve on-time performance.

While a few hearing comments specifically addressed the proposed service changes, most were unrelated. Following the hearing, the Commission identified three issues for further discussion: 1) Jamestown proposal to eliminate Route 19; 2) a need for Route 17 on weekends; and 3) restoring Routes 10 and 11.

Below is the staff response to Commission questions about the Jamestown proposal. The City of Fitchburg held its public hearing on the proposed changes in Jamestown and other areas on May 30, 2007. Most comments at that meeting were supportive and the Fitchburg Transportation Commission voted to approve the proposed changes. The Fitchburg Common Council will act on the proposals at its June 12, 2007 meeting.

Routes 10, 11 and 17 would require additional funds that are not currently in the budget. Staff recommends exploration of funding opportunities in future budget cycles.

Staff Response: Route 19/52 Service in Jamestown

In 2001, the City of Fitchburg requested Metro staff to reduce its transit budget. At the time, service to Jamestown was provided by Route 59, the old Jamestown Express, which was a limited-stop route from Jamestown via Midvale to University Avenue and the Square paid 100 percent by Fitchburg. Route 59 was replaced with an extension of Route 19, a change that was a moderately successful and cost-effective response to complete loss of service in that area.

New Route 52 has, in the view of Metro and Fitchburg staff, significant advantages over the current service structure. First, Fitchburg is proposing that the area be served throughout the day. Second, coordinating service through the West Transfer Point significantly improves trip options for residents of Jamestown, who will have access to employment opportunities at the new Super Target and to other areas from the West Transfer Point.

On the negative side, service is lost on Anton Drive, creating walk distances of .28 miles for residents of two buildings in the 3 Fountains Apartment complex, though most residents would see walking distances of .2 miles or less. Ridership along Anton Drive averages 13 daily boardings and 9 alightings. While the plan would also have removed Route 19 from Chalet Gardens Apartments, the Fitchburg Transportation Commission has endorsed an extension of Route 19 pending approval by the City. Ridership at Chalet Gardens averages 5 daily boardings and 4 alightings.

Travel times to and from the Capitol Square from Jamestown currently average about 45 minutes on Route 19. Travel time on Route 52 will be about the same if not faster through the West Transfer Point, although passengers will have to transfer from Route 52 to other routes. From Jamestown to the West Transfer Point is about 12 minutes, with connections to the Capitol Square adding 25 to 32 minutes (depending on the route chosen), plus a few minutes transfer time. Additionally, a direct transfer to Route 11 would bring patrons directly onto the UW campus during peak periods.

Middleton Public Meeting

The City of Middleton held a public meeting on May 29, 1997. Most commentary was in the form of questions about the new schedules. A proposal for Saturday service was also presented and discussed. The proposals go to the Middleton City Council on June 4th.

Eagle Heights Community Meeting

UW and Metro staff presented campus changes that would affect headways in Eagle Heights. The large audience was accepting of the rationale for the changes, which include ridership-based frequency reductions in Eagle Heights during offpeak times to help reduce costs. Most of the discussion focused on ways to speed up service to and through campus.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the proposed service changes on the UW campus and the service expansion proposals in Middleton and Fitchburg.

The expansion proposals in Middleton and Fitchburg are interdependent and include related changes within the City of Madison (Route 1, 19, 44/48, 73). Final routes and schedules will depend on approval of the necessary funding levels by Middleton and Fitchburg.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK DATABASE COMMENTS

Route 14

General question about changes to schedule.

Route 15

General question about change to schedule.

Gap in service at Old Sauk and Gammon (*this relates to changes made in August 2006*).

Request for fast service from Junction Road to UW.

Fitchburg Proposals

Needs service to Williamsburg/Jamestown area. (*will have service throughout the day and evening, and travel time will remain the same*).

Middleton Proposals

Appreciates Route 71

Supports Middleton Transfer Center

More inbound express service

Restore service to West Towne along Gammon Rd.

Against more transferring among Middleton routes

Need park and ride lot in Middleton Industrial Park with 15-minute commuter service, hourly midday service

Proposed Route 70 leaves a 45-minute gap with Route 15 along University Ave. (2 comments)

Campus Proposals

Against elimination of Route 53 (8 comments)

Request for later service on Route 80

Request to attend a public meeting in Eagle Heights (*Staff attended this meeting and presented rationale for offpeak frequency reductions. The response was overall positive*).

Against removing Route 80 bus stop at Union South (2 comments)

Supports removing Route 80 bus stop at Union South

Concerned about 40 minute service in Eagle Heights starting at 6 p.m. during recess schedule