



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

Monday, March 22, 2010

5:10 PM 215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Room 303 (Madison
Municipal Building)

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Also present: Mary Jacobs

Excused: Jeanne Brunette-Tregoning, Ida Nathan

Staff: Mary Mielke, Steve Ward, Ann Gullickson, Crystal Martin, Ann Schroeder

Vice Chair Bill Tangney called the meeting to order at 5:13 PM.

Present: 5 -

Chris Schmidt; William J. Tangney; Susan M. De Vos; Carl D. DuRocher
and Kenneth M. Streit

Absent: 1 -

Michael A. Huckaby

2. APPROVE THE MINUTES

Mr. DuRocher moved approval of the minutes; Streit seconded. Ms. De Vos pointed out a grammatical error, and Mr. Tangney had pointed out a clarification and a typographical error. The motion carried with Alder Schmidt abstaining.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

4. [17791](#)

Metro Transit Operator Training Requirements

- a. Mary Mielke, Metro Transit General Operations Supervisor
- b. Jim Killerlain, Metro Transit Operator, Training Instructor

Attachments: [Metro Operator Training 03 10.pdf](#)

Mary Mielke and Steve Ward, Training Instructor (rather than Jim Killerlain) were in attendance. Ms. Mielke referred everyone to the document from their packets about what is provided in the mainline training. The material is just a quick overview of what Metro provides for our new operators going from

part-time to full-time work and what training they receive regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Once there is classroom training, the trainers take students out in the bus to sit in a wheelchair, get picked up by a bus, and taken on a ride while in the wheelchair. They also spend a day on the road with a paratransit driver. Mainline drivers only drive paratransit service in an emergency situation; however, Metro likes them to learn to drive the small buses, learn about the ramps, etc. Metro has additional training for drivers who go from mainline to paratransit service on a permanent basis. Metro is working on improving that training and making it more extensive.

Ms. De Vos asked if Metro gets feedback from drivers about their experience; for example, what they find helpful, what they think needs to be improved, and what their personal experience has been. Mr. Ward said, "yes." He has done mainline and a little bit of paratransit driving. He has given feedback about what would be helpful to add to training. All trainers met with the manufacturer of the newest buses and are giving feedback about things that could be re-positioned in the bus to make maneuvering around easier and more efficient. They are working with the maintenance unit right now to get some of those things fixed. Ms. De Vos said the question was motivated because some drivers seem very knowledgeable and some seem to know nothing. She wondered if there is an avenue for drivers to share knowledge. Mr. Ward said that sometimes comes down to the personality of each driver. Ms. Gullickson said we do training in the summer for fixed route drivers and that gives a chance for drivers to talk and exchange information. Part of that training is about the ADA. Ms. Gullickson said they get so much more information from each other about how to deal with situations that come up than they do from her. Mr. Tangney said there was a lot of that kind of exchange at Karl Schulte's "Locally Sponsored Sensitivity Training" for contractors.

Ms. Gullickson said this is really an opportunity for Ms. Mielke and Mr. Ward to get advice about what should be incorporated into training both from people who use fixed route and those who use paratransit. What are we doing well and what could we be doing better? Ms. De Vos said it is hard to know how often is often enough to re-train drivers. She sees things like a driver passing a stop and then realizing someone was there and stopping. But if the person is visually impaired, he wouldn't know to run the half block up to the bus. That's the kind of sensitivity you can't train somebody to think about. But there has to be a way to remind people to think about it more than once every two years. Another experience she had on a bus was a driver refusing to put the straps on the back of her chair because that's how her chair needs to be tied down. The driver thought that was risky because the straps might move, so he refused to take her on the bus because she was a safety risk. She just waited for the next bus because you can't ask somebody to have the personality to be flexible. She thinks he was doing what he thought he was supposed to do, but he might have misunderstood the instruction. Ms. Gullickson said that is the perfect type of situation where we need feedback so we can do some education. Ms. De Vos said she did provide that feedback to Metro. Mr. Tangney said no one knows more about how the wheelchair works than the person who uses it.

Mr. DuRocher asked if it is the policy on mainline that the rider doesn't have to have the wheelchair tied down. Metro policy is that we attempt to tie down all

wheelchairs, but we still provide the ride. The ADA states that the agency is not allowed to deny the trip. Mr. Streit said, from a legal standpoint, it would be difficult to prove the driver offered/tried to tie down. Metro has cameras on fixed route buses. Ms. Martin said we are looking forward to getting cameras on paratransit buses, too.

Ms. De Vos said occasionally a driver will park the bus to use the restroom or buy some chips. Her wheelchair is tied down and the bus ramp is not down. If someone should cause a disruption or a fire should break out, she has no escape. It would take a lot of time to release the chair and put down the ramp just to run into the store, but she is extremely nervous when that happens. In another situation, the bus stop was snowed in, so she asked the driver to let her off half a block away at a cleared driveway. The driver said he'd lose his job if he did that. He was failing to accommodate her. That is a matter of training. Accommodating the passenger should be a standard part of the driver's training.

Mr. DuRocher said, as a trainer, it's hard because you're dealing with different personalities. He had an experience this past winter when he was riding the bus and the person he was riding with pushed the stop request, and the driver passed the stop. Mr. DuRocher told the driver the stop request was for him. The driver said, "I know where you live. There is too much snow at the bus stop, so I will drop you off at your driveway." Ms. De Vos said there are some people who go way beyond what you would expect, and some people don't seem to know basic things.

Ms. De Vos said a number of years ago, she went to a meeting of mentally challenged people at "People First," and a number of people said they took taxis because the bus drivers are rude. Maybe the drivers said something, and the people didn't understand the context. If the drivers were impatient, maybe the riders felt disrespected.

Mr. Tangney said he would be concerned about other people on the bus, too, in the event of an accident if someone's wheelchair is not tied down. It would become a flying object. It's a difficult situation, but maybe that could be used as an encouragement to get people to allow the straps to be used. In the event of an accident, that becomes a safety issue. Similar to Ms. De Vos' situation of having her wheelchair tied down in the bus and not being able to get out when the driver is gone -- when advocating for a similar situation -- Mr. Tangney was told that if people with disabilities are going to live in the community, for example, ride the bus, they have to take a certain number of risks. Ms. De Vos said one driver did seem to follow a procedure of untying her wheelchair and putting down the ramp, saying she would be gone X number of minutes, and if there was a problem to leave the bus. Metro staff agreed that was just an exceptionally conscientious driver. Ms. De Vos said she doesn't expect the driver to untie her wheelchair each time and let down the ramp because it's time consuming, but she does feel nervous in that situation. Mr. DuRocher pointed out that other riders complain to Metro about drivers taking necessary breaks. So it's hard to give feedback to trainers.

Ms. Jacobs said her experience is mostly with paratransit drivers. She understands that the drivers have a manifest with information about the rider and location. She feels like drivers don't read that. If it's the usual driver, they

know the ropes. Then if there is a temporary driver, things go awry. For example, if the person needs door-to-door service and the driver doesn't read that on the manifest, that is a problem. Her experience is that Badger Cab will honk or just expect the person to come out, and that doesn't always happen if the person needs door-to-door service. Another thing that has come up is a driver arriving 20 minutes early and expecting the rider to be ready; and if s/he isn't ready, the driver will leave. Ms. Martin said our policy is to wait five minutes after the scheduled time. Some drivers misunderstand that the 20-minute window means they can expect the passenger to be ready 20 minutes early or leave. Sometimes the driver will arrive early; and if that passenger is not ready, go pick up someone else and come back. If they communicate that, then it's fine. Ms. Jacobs doesn't know how you get around that – you have drivers filling in and drivers taking vacation. Ms. Mielke said we can really emphasize this in our mainline training because those might be the people filling in. We can also emphasize that in the training manual. We have a sample manifest in the manual. Ms. Jacobs said the drivers really need to pay attention to those manifests. Ms. Martin said the Metro Plus drivers have mobile data terminals, and drivers have to scroll down quite a bit to get the additional comments. So if they see a ride and think they know what it is, they may not read those additional comments. We hope to resolve that issue somewhat with different equipment. Ms. Jacobs gave an example of telling the driver to pick up at the Main Street entrance of a location, and the passenger waited for an hour because the driver was at another entrance. Mr. DuRocher emphasized that is a problem. Drivers go to the wrong entrance or no load him because they go to the MLK side when he had a ride scheduled for the Doty Street side of the Madison Municipal Building.

Mr. Tangney wondered if there could be a couple of "plus" signs or some indication at the end of the last word of the ride listing on the mobile data terminal to let drivers know there is more information they need to look at. Ms. Martin said in order to get changes to the display, you have to determine what parts of the programs are talking to each other. It is TransitMaster, Siemens, and Trapeze that work together to give us the resulting manifest on the mobile data terminals. It is an information technology issue. We need the people at those companies to work to resolve the issue for us.

Mr. Streit wondered if there were some slides or visuals that could be used during training to show the top 20 pickups/destinations of paratransit users to illustrate that even though these places sound so much alike, they are really across the street or have multiple entrances, etc. Staff thought that would be something that would be easy and helpful to do for training; and it could include common destinations, as well as, apartment buildings that have a high degree of accessibility. Common destinations can be written in the regular training manual, but training can also focus on that when a fixed route driver transfers into the paratransit unit.

Ms. Gullickson said this information is very timely. We don't usually have a lot of turnover in the paratransit unit. However, we have some very senior drivers who will be aging out of the work group. So this is a time when we want to get information from those folks and put it more formally into training materials when we had been relying on those senior people to provide it in training.

Mr. Tangney said that it's scary for some people when drivers drive too fast

and take corners too sharply. He also wanted to know if, when the paratransit "students" have the wheelchair ride experience, they do this on different equipment and get the feel for different lifts. That's a good experience. At Union, the trainees got a bad ride first. Does Metro do this? Mr. Ward said we try to give them the best ride possible. We're trying to transition them from transporting children, which they like to do as efficiently as possible, to slowing it down saying you have people who want to have a calm ride, reading their paper, drinking their coffee. We're trying to get them to slow down and ease on and off the gas. Mr. Tangney said we made sure people were safe, but left a strap off so someone would move if you stop too fast, and hit a pothole and railroad tracks too fast, slammed on the brakes, and took a corner too fast. So the driver begins to understand how bad it can be to be totally dependent on someone else's skills. Having this experience really gets the message through. So many people having had the bad ride and the good ride say, wow, you can really tell the difference. Mr. Ward said when someone is done riding, we show them how much the straps have moved and loosened. We show this to the person who was sitting in the chair and also the person who strapped it down. Or, we'll move the chair back and forth or leave the brake off, too.

Mr. Tangney said maybe a map could be put on the other side of a page of common destinations. There are routes that are best to take when going to a concert at the Alliant Center or concerts, etc. Maybe those drop-off points could be numbered. Maybe there could be dotted lines showing the way in and out of destinations.

The group wondered, after drivers are finished with their training and they've been on the road for a while, if there is follow up with them. Ms. Mielke said we started that with our part-timers a few months ago and found it very helpful; we're going to incorporate that with our full-timers, as well. Even if there are some things we might not be able to do anything about, we give our drivers checklists. It's not necessarily policies, but helpful tips and coaching so they can be successful. So feedback from this group will definitely be available to the drivers.

Ms. Martin said we are still working on materials. If you think of other things, please let us know. In the future, we can have the trainers back. We do have a number of paratransit drivers retiring in the upcoming year.

5. [17518](#)

Long-Term Assignmnet - Update

Ms. Martin said that there had been a protest to this bid process. The protest is complete and has been answered. Badger Bus was recommended for the award. Abby Vans came in second. Badger Cab came in third, and they filed the appeal. You might have seen the article in the paper; it included some misrepresentations. Metro is continuing with its recommendation. Metro staff met with the Mayor's office to answer questions. Metro staff answered questions at the Board of Estimates, and they approved the resolution. Staff will also give a presentation at the Transit and Parking Commission (TPC). We have executed a 3-month extension with Badger Bus, so we can continue service. We have very deliberately reviewed our process.

Ms. De Vos said that perhaps someone should send a letter to the editor of the

Wisconsin State Journal to correct misrepresentations. Ms. Martin said we've done an extensive review of everything that went into preparing for the Request for Proposals (RFP), and the Mayor's office will follow up with the journalist. They have to decide if they want to run another story. Metro is here to answer questions about the story in the paper. The article said price was only 3.4% of the score. That was a misrepresentation. Price was 20% of the score, and there were additional factors dealing with cost that came to another 10%. The 3.4% was Badger Cab's assertion.

Ms. Martin said we also reviewed our RFP process, which included discussion with ADA TS, information from partners, meeting with the city risk manager about insurance, city purchasing reviewing the scoring sheet, and also a customer survey of riders who use LTA. You'll remember that the survey was shared with this committee. Staff also met with current service providers to talk about any contracting issues. This included preparation for general service which is coming up for proposals this summer. We also met with several potential service providers to talk about how Metro services are performed and reported. We feel we have been diligent. There might be other city contracts for purchasing goods rather than services where you can weight price more heavily. But for paratransit service, it's important that service be consistent and meets paratransit's mandate.

Mr. Streit asked whether the person from Badger Cab continues to perceive that price is only weighted at 3.4% or if they understand now. Ms. Martin said their opinion appears not to have changed. Mr. Tangney asked if they used a different math. Mr. Streit said he just wanted to know; because if there was a gentle way of educating the protestor, they might understand. It's worth pursuing to see who they might listen to. Mr. Streit said his suggestion is to consider having someone, possibly from the University, who can understand this issue and have a good quote for the media. In order for it to be newsworthy, it has to be a new story. Someone who can tell the reporter the situation and explain it to the general taxpayer is a good way to educate people. Metro should respond. Ms. De Vos said since a series of really damaging articles came out, Metro should fight back.

6. [17792](#)

Reports

- a. Transit & Parking Commission
- b. Commission on People with Disabilities
- c. Dane County Specialized Transportation Committee
- d. Transportation Planning Board (MPO)
- e. Other Community Meetings
- f. Report from the Chai
- g. Staff Report
- h. Paratransit Performance Indicators

Attachments: [Para Indicators Jan10.pdf](#)

a. Transit & Parking Commission – Mr. Streit said there was nothing particularly relevant to this group. One item that came up was the parking hang-tags and the article in the Isthmus. That was Bill Knobeloch giving an update. There were a couple of contracts that we do for RSVP and accessible

transit that were approved.

b. Commission on People with Disabilities – Mr. Tangney said they had mention of the article in the Isthmus by Joe Tarr. They were trying to get someone in the media to do something about disabled parking fraud. The police department was represented by the supervisor of parking enforcement. She is also in charge of disabled parking enforcement. Since the last meeting, they also put forth a resolution that three commissions could sponsor their own resolutions to the Common Council. It went through some committees, and it was not passed 11 to 9 at the Council.

c. Dane County Specialized Transportation Committee – They are putting RSVP out to bid, which they haven't done in about a decade. Ms. Martin gave an update on year-to-date numbers for Metro. They also did the §53.10 grant process, and "Care Wisconsin" did a presentation about their services. Bill Schaefer was there to give an update about the MPO and some specialized transportation planning regarding the regional transit authority (RTA).

d. Transportation Planning Board (MPO) – Alder Schmidt said there was discussion about intercity high-speed rail station locations, but they didn't get into much depth. We don't know exactly what the parameters the federal railway administration is going to use. Those guidelines should come soon. They're getting their consultants together in the next few months. There was also a little discussion of an interim intercity bus station. The city is leading the effort to replace Bob McDonald. Brad Murphy is leading the selection process. Mr. DuRocher asked if the preferred local option for the high-speed rail station has less weight than the federal preference. Alder Schmidt said there is a lot of confusion about it right now. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is reserving the right to make the decision; but he thinks if the city weighed in strongly, that would have an influence. It's all kind of early in the process. Very few people at the City level are supporting an airport location. It might make sense to bring it closer to downtown.

e. Other Community Meetings – Ms. De Vos said the RTA had its first meeting and they pretty much agreed that there would be a referendum before they do anything. That was a major criticism that they wouldn't really do that. Their vote tried to say that they will do that.

f. Report from the Chair – No report from the Chair in her absence (excused).

g. Staff Report – No staff report.

h. Paratransit Performance Indicators – Ms. Martin said there is not a lot to say the first month of the year. There is no trend. There were no really nasty weeks of snow. Things are just getting started. We just started our recertification process. We haven't seen a change yet in the certification numbers. We're at status quo. For on-time performance, especially under Metro directly operated service, we've been struggling because the statistics don't reflect reality. Drivers are not pushing buttons when they are supposed to in order to record on-time performance, and it skews the numbers. We think we have solved that problem. Mr. DuRocher said Badger Bus and Badger Cab have the exact same number of trips provided listed for ambulatory rides. Ms. Martin thanked him for pointing that out because if it is wrong; it could affect

the data throughout the year. She will check on that.

7. [08706](#) Other Transit Related Announcements

Mr. DuRocher said we don't know a lot about what's in the health-care bill, but there is the Community Choice Act that got folded into the bill. It's a way to start removing the Medicaid bias from institutional living to community living and allowing monies to be used for residential care that now requires a waiver. It could have some implications for paratransit service. This will make it easier for people to live in a community setting compared to an institutional setting. Ms. Martin said she got a message that there could be a significant impact on non-emergency medical transportation due to the health care bill.

8. **ADJOURN**

Ms. Jacobs moved adjournment; Mr. DuRocher seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:37 PM.