



City of Madison

Meeting Minutes - Final

TRANSIT AND PARKING COMMISSION

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
www.cityofmadison.com

Tuesday, December 12, 2006

5:00 PM

215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Room 260 (Madison Municipal Building)
(After 6 pm, use Doty St. entrance.)

PLEASE NOTE: Items are reported in Agenda order.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Durocher called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

Present: Kenneth Golden, Noel T. Radomski, Jed Sanborn, Carl D. Durocher, Amanda F. White, Diane L. Paoni, Tim Wong, Sharon L. McCabe, Kevin L. Hoag and Duane F. Hinz

Excused: Kenneth M. Streit

McCabe arrived at 5:03PM, Wong arrived at 5:05PM, Radomski arrived at 5:24PM, and Hinz arrived at 5:30PM.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES -- 11/9/06 Meeting

White, seconded by Golden, made a motion to approve the 11/9/06 Minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT - None.

D. TRANSIT AND PARKING REPORTS

D.1. [05161](#) Parking: October 2006 Revenue Report, Key Statistics and November 2006 Activity Report

Easland briefly answered questions about the report. Golden noted that once again, the numbers for Buckeye were not very impressive - info that should be reported to the Common Council or BOE, to consider Government East before Buckeye as they prioritize capital outlays.

Golden, seconded by McCabe, made a motion to accept the report. The motion passed unanimously.

After Agenda Item D.1., Durocher asked that the meeting proceed to Agenda Item F.2, to accommodate registrants for that item.

After Agenda Item F.2. concluded, the meeting proceeded back to Agenda Item D. 2., which was followed by Agenda Item F.1., F.3. and the remainder of the Agenda.

D.2. [05166](#) Metro YTD Performance Indicator Reports Oct 06 - ag12.12.06

[Note: Sharon McCabe left the meeting at 6:30PM, after Agenda Items D.1 and F. 2. were completed.]

Kamp highlighted the following items in the Metro reports:

- Road calls in Oct. '06 vs. Oct. '05: While non-mechanical road calls (i.e., foreign objects in fare box) had increased, maintenance road calls had been flat.
- Accidents YTD: 146 in first part of '05, and 192 in '06. A priority for Kamp, Transit Insurance Company would be doing a safety audit and training re: accident reporting and documentation; both should help to reveal patterns. With some accidents caused by (driver) medical issues, Metro would be looking at transit systems that require medical examination of safety-sensitive employees.
- With two months of ridership data available, Sept. '06 ridership was down by 5%, but Oct. '06 was up by 8% (compared to 2005). Averaging the two months (of varying lengths), ridership increased by 1.5% overall.
- Ranking Route Productivity with the most productive route at the top, Route #80-UW was highest and #74-Middleton was lowest (though higher than the route with the lowest productivity a year ago).
- Middleton routes collectively showed an increase of 8% productivity.
- Overall, productivity was up 4.8% and ridership was up 5% over 2005.

Looking at Paratransit information, Kamp pointed out the following:

- No-shows are down; controls have improved and more of the cancellations have been done correctly; reducing the number of no-shows lowers costs and improves efficiency.
- Paratransit ridership went down this year compared to '05; but '05 was an unusually high year, and new software could be tracking ridership more accurately than a year ago.
- Even though ridership went down, number of clients had gone up; more people riding but making fewer trips on average.
- On track for 252,000 (total) rides in 2006; more like the years prior to 2005.

Kamp answered questions about certain routes (particularly #8 and #27), in light of recent route changes. He said that it usually takes a minimum of two years to accurately assess the impact of new programs; but added that routes would be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Durocher noted that ADATS has been watching the decline in paratransit ridership; which some have attributed to a migration to main line buses (as seen by increased lift usage). But others have suggested that the primary cause is a substantial reduction in supportive employment in the County, resulting in smaller numbers of paratransit riders going to and from work.

Golden moved, seconded by White, to accept the report. The motion passed unanimously.

E. OLD BUSINESS - None.

F. NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

A Roll Call is reported here to show that McCabe left the meeting prior to the vote on Agenda Item F.1. and F.3. (and the remaining agenda items).

Present: Kenneth Golden, Noel T. Radomski, Jed Sanborn, Carl D. Durocher, Amanda F. White, Diane L. Paoni, Tim Wong, Kevin L. Hoag and Duane F. Hinz

Excused: Sharon L. McCabe and Kenneth M. Streit

- F.1. [04760](#) Accepting sponsorship of Miller Brewing Company for the provision of free expanded transit service on New Year's Eve, and authorizing the Mayor and Clerk to sign an agreement with Miller Brewing Company, which may contain an indemnification clause.

A motion was made by Radomski, seconded by Golden, to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER

Members noted that the City subsidized a large part of the New Year's Eve free ride program along with Miller; and that the 10K contribution from Miller, while substantial, now covered only a portion of the total cost of the service. Members hoped that next year, the TPC would have an earlier and separate discussion about the purpose, scope and cost of the program itself, as well as the amount donated by Miller. The motion passed by the following vote:

Excused: McCabe and Streit
Aye: Golden, Radomski, Sanborn, White, Wong, Hoag and Hinz
No: Paoni
Non Voting: Durocher

At the conclusion of Agenda Item F.1., the meeting proceeded to Item F.3.

- F.2. Update on Metro/Madison Environmental Group pilot initiative to offer unlimited ride passes to smaller businesses in the Madison area

Durocher invited registrants to speak and take questions from the members.

Jeanne Hoffman of the Mayor's Office, provided some background about the initiative -- a key component of the Mayor's economic plan.

- **In preliminary discussions with Metro, it was proposed that a third party act as an umbrella group to arrange contracts with smaller businesses (employers with less than 1,000 employees), and to hold the contracts between the businesses and Metro.**
- **Other groups - Progressive Dane, DMI, the Chamber of Commerce and the Madison Environmental Group - were involved in the discussion.**
- **Hoffman emphasized that the Mayor would like this to be a win-win situation - increasing ridership and revenues, benefiting both the environment and businesses in the City, and possibly lessening the demand for parking in areas where it's at a premium.**

Hoffman responded to questions and concerns.

- **She didn't think the City could afford to provide free bus service to those who wouldn't have access to passes, unless the City received outside grants to do so, which could be discussed as a separate issue.**
- **She viewed this program primarily as a way to reach a sector of the community who don't currently have access to passes, especially those who don't now ride buses, with the goal of increasing ridership.**
- **She agreed that transportation demand management (TDM) needed to part of the discussion, especially as a means to attract businesses with a variety of modal needs, and felt that this program would be a significant and positive part of a TDM plan.**

[NOTE: Radomski arrived at this point in the meeting, at 5:24PM.]

Members expressed support for the proposal as a way to promote new ridership among people who may now drive cars, based on data showing that people who get passes ride the bus more. It was noted that the Madison Environmental Group (MEG) would act as an administrator rather than a negotiator for the program; and that MEG had experience with TDM concepts. Members suggested looking at various business areas inside/outside of the City and different types of organizations (beyond small businesses) when developing the program.

[NOTE: Hinz arrived at this point in the meeting, at 5:30PM.]

Hoffman pointed out that unlimited ride passes represented a huge benefit to employees. She also said that a key requirement of the plan would be to make passes available to all employees at a company/organization, in order to promote new ridership, which in turn would increase revenues (as opposed to providing passes only to existing riders, thereby supplanting full fares with 88¢ fares and creating no additional benefits -- environmental, etc.) She concluded by saying that the TPC and other key groups would be closely involved in the development of the program.

Satya Rhodes Conway, a member of Progressive Dane Economic Issues Task Force, then spoke before the group. As a UW pass holder and based on increased ridership through that pass program, Rhodes Conway enthusiastically supported the proposal, which would create benefits all the way around: to employees, to employers, and to Metro.

- The initial concept for the program came out of the Task Force as part of a list of things that could help small employers, and was then brought to the Mayor's office.
- Extending this benefit to smaller employers - not just small businesses, but non-profits as well - would be tremendously important. Her group had worked with DMI and the Chamber, and had approached United Way and Community Shares to explore their interest.
- She felt that the plan should include the downtown, but that it should also include areas where there has been strong service; and from this, to look at ways to leverage more service to areas that need it.
- While maintaining "the big vision", the first step would be to assemble a pool of employers, to see if the idea would work.

As a new appointee to the Metro Long-Range Transit Planning group, she said she would take the ideas she had heard at this meeting to that group, keeping in mind that the ultimate goal is to build the Metro system.

Responding to members, Rhodes-Conway said other cities with programs like this had been really successful, especially when marketed properly at their start. Employers in those cities appreciated being able to offer this benefit to their employees. She emphasized that it worked best as part of a bigger package, and thought it was important to have someone whose job it was to put the program materials together to make them understandable to employers, to do outreach, and to build the program.

In subsequent discussion, Rhodes-Conway and members talked about several issues:

- Administrative costs for initial marketing vs. maintenance;
 - Employee co-pays vs. unlimited ride passes and how they affect employer participation rates;
 - Price points and employer participation;
 - Marketing ideas (i.e., possible tax breaks for employers), and TDM strategies.
- Rhodes-Conway concluded her remarks by saying that she and her group had been working with various representatives of Metro throughout the planning process.

Alder Robbie Webber spoke next in support of the proposal. She had been working on this issue with Mayor's office (through Progressive Dane and the Economic Development Task Force), and made the following points:

- The program should be an option for employers of all sizes (i.e., not just for employers of 50 or more).
- Comparing the program to health insurance, pooling would benefit small employers by lowering their costs.
- Downtown employers struggle with parking issues and retaining employees; this program would offer them another transportation option.
- Unlimited ride pass programs give people a chance to try out riding the bus and to ride as often as they want, and could ultimately change their long-term transportation habits.
- If an employer provides a pass, individuals don't have to make the financial decision involved in buying their own pass: "Will I use it enough to justify the cost?"

Responding to comments from members, Webber remarked:

- The same benefit should be offered to small employers as to large; that while she didn't necessarily support the idea of co-pays, if they were to become part of this pass program, then all employers with pass programs should be required to participate in a co-pay system.
- The proposed program would require employers to make passes available to all their employees, not just to those already riding the bus.
- Although the idea was focused on employers in the central city, it really didn't have geographic boundaries.

She re-emphasized the importance of allowing really small employers to join the pool, providing a benefit to both employers and employees.

Wong expressed concern about requiring people to pay co-pays, and felt that co-pays would increase administrative costs and could adversely affect participation.

Sonya Newenhouse, of the Madison Environmental Group, responded to a question about administrative costs related to pooled contracts.

- Because pass programs are not negotiated and benefits are the same, the costs of managing a contract, signing a large vs. a small employer, would probably be equal.
- However, once employers are signed on, individual passes would need to be tracked as (often temporary) employees come and go; and the larger the organization, the more record keeping.
- The other administrative issue would be distribution: to keep costs down, passes would probably be made available once a month at a certain time or place, rather than mailing them.

Newenhouse concluded her comments by saying that the MEG is under contract

with the Dane County Clean Air Coalition, to educate organizations about Transportation Demand Management, and would be doing big-picture marketing.

Kamp then updated members on Metro's work with MEG in developing the proposal. The concept sounded good both for Metro (with increased ridership and revenues) and for the community. He noted a couple of issues that need to be worked out:

- The methodology for the cost of rides (which differed from Metro's other formulas), and how to keep the 88¢ ride.
- The surveys to track new vs. current riders.

Through ongoing meetings with MEG, Kamp hoped to bring a proposal for a pilot program to the January meeting of the TPC, with a goal of implementing the program in the 1st quarter of 2007.

Responding to a question, Newenhouse said that the pool of employers would be viewed like one large "employer" charged the same price for each pass, so that Company A would pay the same amount per year per employee as Company B, regardless of size. She said MEG would use estimates to determine the cost of the program for 2007; but once the pilot was completed, actual data would be available to determine the price for 2008.

While recognizing that this would be a pilot and the goal was to treat all employers equitably, members wondered how employers of various sizes would feel about uniform pricing - especially as it might relate to their percentage of ridership. They were interested to see what the data would show about the relationship of employer size and ridership.

Addressing a suggestion that the program incorporate a means to provide free/reduced passes to low- or no-income riders, Kamp and Newenhouse said that by tapping into small employers, the program could also benefit lower paid workers.

Related to this, some members felt that a pilot program should not go beyond the structure and scope currently proposed, and would do better with a narrower focus. Members observed that, potentially, employers within a pool could have different types of work forces, and geographical and modal differences; and suggested that the pilot might be more successful if it was confined to a more homogeneous market and a geographical area with higher employment density. While mainly supportive of the proposal, members were very interested to see how the concept and methodology would be developed further, how potential employers would receive it, and how the pilot would perform.

Because the discussion was strictly informational, no action was taken on this agenda item.

The meeting moved back to Agenda Item D.2.

- F.3. Update on surveying passengers on certain specification issues related to the next bus procurement

Kamp said that Metro hoped to bring a resolution to the TPC in January for a multi-year procurement. Staff had been discussing such specification issues as the advantages of low-floor buses (which use a ramp rather than a lift) vs. high-floor buses (which offer more maneuverability for people standing); and had been surveying employees and customers through the Rider Alert about these issues.

G. REPORTS OF OTHER COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES/ADHOC GROUPS (for information only)

Wong, seconded by Golden, made a motion to accept all the reports G.1. through G.6. The motion passed unanimously.

- G.1. ADA Transit Subcommittee (October meeting minutes attached)
- G.2. Contracted Services Oversight Subcommittee (no November meeting)
- G.3. Parking Council for People with Disabilities (October meeting minutes attached)
- G.4. Long-Range Transportation Planning Commission (November meeting minutes attached)
- G.5. State Street Design Project Oversight Committee
- G.6. Joint Southeast Campus Area Committee

H. GENERAL DISCUSSION ITEMS

- H.1. General announcements by Chair - None.
- H.2. Commission member items for future agendas - None.

ADJOURNMENT

By motion of White/Hoag, the meeting adjourned at 7:03PM.