



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, August 24, 2009

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

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Also present: Jeanne Brunette-Tregoning

Staff: Ann Schroeder, Ann Gullickson, Crystal Martin

Guest: Norah Cashin

Present: 4 - Chris Schmidt; William J. Tangney; Susan M. De Vos and Mary E. Jacobs
Absent: 1 - Michael A. Huckaby
Excused: 1 - Ida W. Nathan

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Tangney moved approval; Alder Schmidt seconded. The motion carried by voice vote/other.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

4. NEW BUSINESS

5. [15730](#) Agency Fares

Attachments: [ADA Paratransit Agency Fares 08 24 09.pdf](#)

Ms. Martin said we have been talking about the implications of Family Care and how our arrangement currently works with the County. Metro establishes a cost per ride reimbursed by the County for trips that are funded by Medicaid. We benefit from this as it funds our service by more than just the fare, which is far less than the cost of the ride. We have also started other similar agreements with Care Wisconsin for medical rides where we have been able to

negotiate the cost per trip. The Governor approved a Medicaid brokerage/manager for the State of Wisconsin for similar trips. We don't know if we will have the same relationship with the broker that we have had with the County, but we'd like to codify what we've been doing.

Ms. De Vos said it looks like Metro wants to charge an agency more for the cost of a ride than an individual would pay. She would like to know more about that because an agency would not willingly pay more. Ms. Gullickson said there is language in the ADA paratransit regulations talking about fares – you can't charge more than twice the regular fare unless it is an agency trip. That language was to prevent agencies from shedding trips onto transit agencies those trips they had previously paid for from their budgets. Metro has been successful in building a relationship with Dane County that has had funding follow rides rather than just have clients pay the fare. As we see Family Care replacing MA Waiver funding, this could be a tool for us. It won't necessarily be easy to convince the agencies to pay this rate, but having it in the fare tariff will give it some weight. Ms. De Vos asked what the role of this Subcommittee is in relationship to setting an agency fare. Ms. Gullickson said Metro wanted feedback on the recommendation that the fare tariff be amended with an agency rate, different than the \$2 fare, to be added. Currently we have no agency fare established in Madison. It could help negotiations with agencies if this board has established a set policy formally adopted by the TPC.

Mr. Tangney said there is a cooperative agreement with Care Wisconsin where we each pick up some of each other's riders to save money on each side. Ms. Martin said there is some coordination of rides. Sometimes it is for efficiency and sometimes it works for capacity. Metro has a similar agreement with Dane County.

Ms. Martin went over the discussion points in the handout. Two years ago the federal government issued new charter regulations. That's the reason Metro is not doing things like the Bucky Bus Shuttle anymore. There were included a list of exceptions for ADA paratransit services provided to human service agencies, counties, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and veterans programs that in some instances these entities purchase transportation services. In the past there had been questions about agency fares. Ms. Cashin asked if designees of state or local governments were included in the list of entities that could be charged agency trip rates. Ms. Martin said she would check on that. Agency trips are not for agencies that don't have a mandate to provide transportation services such as the Salvation Army but for entities responsible for arranging or providing and paying for transportation services as a benefit of entitlement.

This year, the cost per trip is \$30.59. We are able to get to a cost per trip from our annual audit information. We adjust that 2% or 3% for costs the following year. We're not making a profit and should only cover Metro's costs. Metro's staff proposal suggested codifying what we're doing so when a new agency comes along and wants to know why they should enter such an arrangement, we can say this has been established in our fare tariff for entities identified as agencies as allowed by the ADA.

Ms. Cashin said two things would be happening with Medicaid transportation:

1. Family Care will be coming, probably in 2012. The managed care organization (MCO) for Dane County has not been designated yet. Family Care works on a capitated rate, so that agency will be looking to save money. If they can buy tickets for \$3, that's a good deal for them. That means the local taxpayers have to subsidize the other \$30. One assumes the Family Care agency will be a player in the local care environment and have relationships and negotiate fairly. However, the state passed the transportation management system (brokerage).
2. Medicaid Brokerage is coming in 2010 or maybe 2011. This works by the State giving management of transportation services to a single private entity as opposed to each county. The amount for transportation per month per person is limited or capped. There is enormous pressure for the brokerage to just buy the \$3 tickets. Everywhere this brokerage system has been implemented, there has been a great shedding of rides onto transit agencies. If this is set up and in the tariff, there is something to work with. Ms. Cashin cautioned using language that exempts small local "do-gooder" agencies because the brokerage could think of itself that way.

Ms. Brunette-Tregoning suggested having the City Attorney look at the language. Ms. Gullickson agreed and also noted that we are in a bit of a schedule crunch. Because this is a change to the fare tariff, it will need to go to public hearing through the TPC. Ms. Gullickson said in order to have something in place by January, which is what we'd like to do since the brokerage is already planned, we'd like to introduce this to TPC, which is much less familiar with this issue than ADATS. It's probably going to take two meetings for them to understand and talk about this. We don't know exactly what the definition of agency is going to be. We'd like to get help from the City Attorney's office and Ms. Cashin in defining that. But we'd like to get it introduced to TPC and continue keeping ADATS in the loop, but it would be helpful to get the blessing to move it on to the TPC.

Ms. De Vos moved that ADATS refer to the TPC a request for inclusion of an "agency fare" in the Metro Transit fare Tariff, which is allowed but has not been used. "Agency" should be defined in a technical way so that qualifying entities can be contracted with for the allocated cost of a Metro Paratransit ride. Seconded by Mr. Tangney.

It was pointed out that there was never an agency fare in the fare tariff. Ms. De Vos said her understanding is that an agency fare exists in the ADA but it is something Metro hasn't used previously in the fare tariff.

Mr. Tangney wondered when agencies were notified that they are considered agencies and have to pay this price. Ms. Martin said Metro will hold a public hearing and invite the involved parties. Mr. Tangney was concerned whether charging agencies this price would cause them to not be able to provide care to their clients and information about where they could get help. Ms. Cashin said some of the senior coalitions might need information, and she and Ms. Martin could go talk to them. It won't be an issue for most agencies, except community based residential facilities because of the way they buy tickets. Ms. Martin and Ms. Cashin can educate agencies. Transportation costs will be much more important to agencies in the future because currently that is not included in the cost of their services.

Ms. Jacobs made a friendly amendment to clarify that the agency fare exists in the ADA but has never been in the Metro Transit Fare Tariff. Mr. Tangney seconded.

Mr. Tangney was concerned about the disruption this would cause in peoples' lives. Ms. De Vos said this is being done by the state, not Metro. Ms. Gullickson said if Metro has a \$2.8 million budget decrease due to this change, transit services, including ADA paratransit services, will be devastated as well. Mr. Tangney said he hopes agencies can be given the greatest advance notice possible. Ms. Martin said nobody likes to adjust their budget after it has been approved. But Metro has been presenting the information that this is coming. It is not a quick process because there needs to be a resolution with the Common Council and City Attorney's office. Mr. Tangney wondered what date this change would likely take place. Ms. Martin said we are looking to continue the relationships that we currently have. If it is brought to Metro's attention that there are new entities to contact, these services will be introduced to the new entities and budgeted and planned for over time.

The original motion carried by voice vote/other.

6. [15731](#) Metro Customer Service - Scott Mau

Mr. Mau was not present. He will be invited to the next meeting.

7. OLD BUSINESS

- [15732](#) Metro Transit Management Performance Audit - 2009
Paratransit Recommendations

Attachments: [Management Performance Audit WisDOT 2008.pdf](#)

Ms. Martin said we have a large audit document but there are five specific recommendations for paratransit service.

- Resurrect on street supervision – This has already commenced. Supervisors are checking on boardings and alightings for paratransit rides and making their presence known.
- Greater documentation of customer calls as part of the eligibility process. We feel we are already doing this. Ms. Brunette-Tregoning wondered if this was what we reviewed last time about calling people in for a personal interview to determine eligibility. Ms. Martin said we are looking at how to update our eligibility process. Over the next 5 years, we will be discussing this point as it develops.
- Put the universal handicap icon for better visibility on Website – We are in the process of doing that to easily identify accessible features on our Website.
- Track the outcome of registered customer complaints. We do have a database with all of our feedback and following up that way. The auditors recommended that we do some additional follow up. We'll be reviewing that.
- Provide travel training for ADA paratransit eligible individuals for trips where they could use fixed route. This is under review.

Ms. De Vos saw other recommendations. Metro currently fills paratransit driver positions with the most senior fixed route driver who applies. Paratransit service requires special skills and that should be taken into consideration when filling these positions. Ms. De Vos said that the audit in general should pay more attention to disability issues, not just paratransit service but fixed route also has a lot of facilities for passengers with disabilities. That is part of the evaluation for fixed route and paratransit service. It was Ms. De Vos' opinion that the auditor should talk to ADATS members and not just TPC members. It should be stipulated that they consult with disability experts and not just TPC to get an idea of what Metro Transit is doing. The audit is making a big step forward by recommending more feedback from drivers, but it is still leaving out the fact that customers can give recommendations. There needs to be some mechanism for customer feedback into the audit. Although the audit is good in many ways, it's lacking in that it keeps customers with disabilities in a little category off to the side instead of being a general part of Metro's business. There needs to be more discussion, evaluation of planning, and customer service regarding customers with disabilities.

Mr. Tangney brought up the clearing of snow. Snow needs to be cleared in order for clients to be able to access transit service. Also, when a driver is working with a client on packed snow and ice, it's just dangerous. So having those areas open is imperative. Mr. Tangney wondered if it would be helpful for him to talk to the TPC about the importance of clearing walkways, curb cuts and bus stops of snow. Alder Schmidt said that he could certainly speak to that but wasn't sure what leverage the TPC has. There is a rule that the property owner adjacent to a bus stop is responsible for clearing the stop, but he thinks they have 24 hours to do it. The Streets Department is responsible for bus stops. Sidewalks are up to the property owners. The challenge is the balance of clearing the streets versus clearing the bus stops. During the heavy snows last winter, Metro hired private contractors. That was hundreds of thousands of dollars not in Metro's budget, and it don't have money for it next year. Metro has 2000 bus stops, and clearing them can take a while. Snow is an element of bus service in this climate. Ms. De Vos said this is a topic for another time, but it could be a private responsibility like curb cuts. It is the purview of the Pedestrian/Bicycle/Motor Vehicle Commission, and staff from Streets and Traffic Engineering are responsible for that. Alder Schmidt said people can be educated that they can complain to the appropriate agency. This can be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

9. [15145](#)

Rainy Day Wish List

Ms. De Vos said Metro has an expert in information systems and maybe he could make suggestions of things that could be of value to people with visual impairments. Transferring buses, for example, is a common reason why people with visual impairments use paratransit instead of fixed route service. Maybe there are things Metro could install. Ms. Martin said she saw a presentation about a program using the same technology as Google Transit. A person programs the route into a cell phone, which gives a cue when nearing the appropriate stop so the person knows when to pull the cord and exit the bus. We'll add this to the rainy day list.

10. [10785](#)

Reports

- a. Transit & Parking Commission
- b. Commission on People with Disabilities
- c. Contracted Service Oversight Subcommittee
- d. Dane County Specialized Transportation Committee
- e. Other Community Meetings

a. **Transit & Parking Commission** – This was an organizational meeting. The parking report showed a little dip in revenue. Metro year to date performance indicators were a mixed bag. They didn't talk much about the impact of fare increase. There was a slight dip compared to projected revenue and ridership, but ridership is still high. Ridership showed a slight decrease relative to last year for May and June but last year was also remarkably high during those months of high gas prices. All the routes that had the dip were commuter routes. It's too soon to say that the fare increase has had any effect on ridership, especially since the gas prices are down. There is an increase to how many hybrids Metro will purchase using stimulus money. Also, part of the stimulus money can and will be used toward the 2010 operations budget. Alder Schmidt said he is concerned about temporary increases to operations money due to stimulus funds that won't be there next year. There was a closed session about MATC and Edgewood passes.

b. **Commission on People with Disabilities** – Mr. Tangney said he was reappointed to this Subcommittee and liaison to the Parking Council for People with Disabilities. They are setting up long range goals and trying to focus on several things simultaneously. Chris Felton, their long time sign language interpreter who never missed a meeting, has been replaced by a video interpreting service. Ms. Martin said the City will soon provide training regarding interpreters and assistive listening devices for meetings. CPD is going to be talking about the closing of the Badger Bus Terminal. Ms. De Vos said she is going to testify that it is impossible to use a lift on a snowy or icy sidewalk and to pick up or drop off people on the curbside is untenable. If they can do so at bus stops and bus stops are accessible that is fine. But as far as she knows, Metro stops cannot be used by private companies. Ms. Gullickson said they are regulated on State Street, but she doesn't know about other locations. Ms. Martin said there is a parking regulation for bus stops.

c. **Contracted Service Oversight Subcommittee** – No meeting since our last meeting.

d. **Dane County Specialized Transportation Committee** – Ms. Martin said they are working on the budget. The rest of the meeting was information from Ms. Cashin about Medicaid brokerage, information about the progress of mobility managers and a preview of a travel training program they want to set up with the Dane County Time Bank.

e. **Other Community Meetings** – Ms. Martin said Metro sent out an email about Quasi-Judicial training available to ADATS members. If you are interested, it might be handy to attend that for support of Paratransit Eligibility Board functions.

11. [08706](#)

Other Transit Related Announcements

Ms. Brunette-Tregoning said it was very informative to go to the recent Committee Staff Training about things like open meetings law and Roberts Rules of Order.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Alder Schmidt moved to adjourn; Ms. De Vos seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.