



# Public Hearing Feedback

*Received via email and feedback database*

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## **Topics:**

Free fares: 3

Cash fares: 10

Smartcards: 1

Other comments: 6

**Total: 20**

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## **Free Fares**

1. Instead of forcing riders to pay in ridiculous and confusing non-cash ways, why not just let people on the bus for FREE? The cost of this could be funded by having fewer cars riding around ruining our roads (so take some of the DOT budget that keeps widening and making obscenely big roads in Madison, and re-allocate it to free bus service. As ridership goes up, car usage will go down... and the need for wider, constantly maintained roads and more police on them will go down, too.) Electronic payment only will reduce ridership and burden the poor with more crap. Not what we need.
2. In regards to upgrading the payment system for metro transit. I'm in favor of removing all fares to encourage use of public transit. If the city wants people to visit and go to local businesses wouldn't it be worth it to take them there for free. As a business why would I want my customers to pay to see me?
3. First, I am concerned that much of the initial informational discussion and hearings are going to occur during the summer months, as fare collection policies and technology choices will heavily impact riders from the UW community, many of whom may be out of town or unable to participate in the summer.

It seems to me that the process would best be served by performing additional outreach in the early Fall, after UW's summer recess, and by deferring significant discussion with the TPPB/TC until after the campus community has had a sufficient opportunity to participate.

While the scope of the study Metro will be presenting includes discussion of fare free transit ("FFT"), what I have seen so far from Metro staff is rather cursory and inadequate exploration of FFT feasibility.



While I understand that current funding circumstances would seem to make FFT a near impossibility, I still think there is significant value in a detailed study of fare-free options so that Metro, city leaders, and citizens can understand what factors would be necessary to make FFT work if funding situations changed to make it a more feasible option. I am also concerned that the study language may focus heavily on negative impacts (such as dealing with "incidents" from homeless riders, or potential jumps in ridership exceeding capacity) while underplaying equity and accessibility benefits. I would like to see Metro give FFT a fair hearing without a presumptive dismissal.

I understand though that the main focus of this hearing and subsequent debate will likely be around what kind of fare technology Metro will adopt...

In regard to the options I have heard Metro staff reference on previous occasions, I have been confused by the distinction presented between a "proof-of-payment" fare system versus a "smart card" system. In my experience, these are not two different, but rather often complementary concepts.

For example, I'm aware of several systems (Toronto TTC bus, Netherlands nationwide "OV-Chipkaart," and Twin Cities Metro Transit Light Rail) where a tap card transaction is used as the proof-of-payment medium, particularly for rear-door bus boarding and other unsupervised boarding scenarios.

It would be helpful if Metro's report language was clearer about what type of farebox/TVM, fare media, and enforcement model would be in use for each option presented... some comparative examples of real-world systems from other cities might help people understand the options better.

Out of the options that I'm aware are under consideration, I think a reloadable "tap" smart card-based system--perhaps supplemented with a mobile payment option--would be preferable and matches the state-of-the-art used in many other metro areas. However, I am deeply concerned about the prospect of completely eliminating cash fares. I know Metro staff are already aware of the significant equity concerns that come with eliminating cash fares for local routes.

But beyond questions of equity, there are other "user friendliness" concerns when it comes to eliminating cash options. Cashless fare systems can be particularly hostile to new riders trying transit for the first time, occasional riders who may not be up to speed on the latest policies, and for visitors who are unfamiliar with the local system. This is a particularly acute problem in service areas where obvious vending points for fare media are not ubiquitous and easily identified-- which will likely be the case for much of the Madison Metro service area outside the BRT corridor. Even in cities with extensive rail networks--where stations double as fare vending locations--like Chicago, I often see a diverse cross-section of riders needing to use cash fare for various reasons. My own experience encountering some of the challenges of cashless transit



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systems in other cities has made me convinced that eliminating cash fare options for local routes in Madison would be a huge mistake.

## Keep Cash Fares

1. Re: 7/21 public meeting: I think that adding new, digital payment methods for collecting bus fares is a great idea, as many people no longer carry cash. However, I would strongly recommend AGAINST eliminating cash fares entirely, as this would make it more difficult for homeless and insecurely housed people, who deserve access to bus services just as much as any other citizen.
2. I just read of your intention to possibly phase out cash on buses. I understand why cash would be a pain, but as a seldom bus user I really do not want you to do this. I now think of the bus as a possibility for transportation, but if you make it more complicated, I will just rule it out completely. Make the bus more accessible, not less.
3. I do not have a smart phone. I pay only in cash.
4. Please do not eliminate cash. In watching others board and pay, it's clear many will not have anything but cash - the fare technology list only acknowledges those who are more wealthy and have access to technology. Many in Madison do not. Without the cash option, Madison will be discriminating against those without technology access. We should have learned that through COVID and recognize those who couldn't access options because of the lack of technology. For example, many could not (and did not) sign up for COVID tests or vaccinations because of the lack of access experienced by many people in our community. Thank you for protecting those less fortunate in our community who need the metro by continuing cash and for considering this response.
5. Not accepting cash could be a very substantial barrier for many people, and would remove bussing as a backup plan for many more. I commute by bike most of the year, but I always keep a fare's worth of quarters in my backpack in case of emergency. Many less privileged people do not have credit or debit cards, and are more likely to need bus access than most. If cash fares will not be accepted, there will need to be more places throughout the city where people can convert cash into acceptable fare options, and those places will need to be easily accessible for people with limited means of transportation.
6. If you take away cash – what about those of us who just want to ride uptown with a grandchild – what if at the station your Kiosks is broken or just not working? I do not have a smart phone...
7. I am a senior who works three days a week because I need the income. Money is tight and it is easier to pay as I go. If you make me buy a pass rather than cash, it just makes it even more difficult for me to be a bus rider.



8. I think in the best interest of the Elder people that you will keep the passes available to obtain them at Metcalfs at Hilldale, and using cash as some of us do not have mobile phones.
9. I'm 100% against dropping cash payments for bus fares! I use cash as my only form of payment when buying things (including my bus rides). I don't have cards, I don't have a cell phone or "smart" phone for that type of payment. I'm not tech-savvy and don't want to be forced to do tech-savvy stuff just to ride a bus! Plus, it's just plain wrong to make US currency an unacceptable form of payment. It should always be accepted, everywhere.
10. Also humbly suggest to please do not eliminate the payment of cash on the bus.

### **Smartcards/ mobile ticketeting**

1. I would suggest that Madison Metro adopt a fare collection system similar to Chicago, using touch cards and smartphone apps. It would be nice to get a Madison Metro touch card from a grocery store and be able to reload it using a smartphone app. It would also be helpful to have a reload station at a downtown location near the Capitol and near the campus. A lot of young people tend to not carry cash, so we need an options to use debit cards or smartphone apps.

### **Other Comments/Suggestions:**

1. As to changing fare-payment systems, be sure the change happens far enough in the future that there will be adequate time to use already purchased fare cards.
2. Have a smartcard that is able to tell/show how many rides or cash are left on the card.
3. Putting those machines at transfer points, I'm afraid will get damaged by people then will have to keep replacing them at one time we used have soda machines people destroyed those.
4. Keep the senior/disabled fares in place when switching to new fare system
5. Please at the very least keep the current Sales Outlets, so those financially handicapped can get bus passes and basic items we need.
6. I'm writing from Chicago, where the CTA uses the Ventra card system. Is Metrobus planning to use Ventra? On the plus side, it's good to have a card & app that you can store and add value to. However, the card & app readers on the busses have to be kept clean or the cards won't be recognized. I've ridden Metrobus, and prefer the system you have as more reliable.