



# City of Madison

## Meeting Minutes - Final

### TRANSIT AND PARKING COMMISSION

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

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Tuesday, July 26, 2005

5:00 PM

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

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If you need an interpreter, materials in alternate formats or other accommodations to access this meeting, please contact the Transportation Department at 608-267-8751 or TDD 608-267-9623. Please do so at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

**Present:** Ald. Kenneth Golden, Ald. Noel T. Radomski, Ald. Jed Sanborn, Carl D. Durocher, Amanda F. White, Chris R. Carlsen, Tim Wong, Sharon L. McCabe, Kevin L. Hoag, Diane L. Paoni and Kenneth M. Streit

#### A. CALL TO ORDER

**Present:** Ald. Kenneth Golden, Ald. Noel T. Radomski, Ald. Jed Sanborn, Carl D. Durocher, Chris R. Carlsen, Kevin L. Hoag and Diane L. Paoni

**Absent:** Tim Wong and Kenneth M. Streit

**Excused:** Amanda F. White and Sharon L. McCabe

*Tim Wong arrived at 5:12 p.m. Ken Streit arrived at 6:10 p.m. (advance notification that he would be late).*

#### B. PUBLIC COMMENT

#### C. NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

C.1 [01595](#) Authorizing the Mayor and the City Clerk to enter into a five-year tire lease for Metro Transit.

**A motion was made by Ald. Golden, seconded by Carlsen, to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER. The motion passed by acclamation**

**Present:** Ald. Kenneth Golden, Ald. Noel T. Radomski, Ald. Jed Sanborn, Carl D. Durocher, Chris R. Carlsen, Kevin L. Hoag and Diane L. Paoni

**Absent:** Tim Wong and Kenneth M. Streit

**Excused:** Amanda F. White and Sharon L. McCabe

**Enactment No:** RES-05-00678

C.2 [01620](#) Authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute an agreement with Madison Area Technical College (MATC) for the provision of free access by MATC students to Metro Transit fixed route and ADA paratransit services, with reimbursement to the transit utility for estimated student trips for the period August 22, 2005 through August 19, 2006.

**A motion was made by Ald. Golden, seconded by Hoag, to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER. The motion passed by acclamation**

**Present:** Ald. Kenneth Golden, Ald. Noel T. Radomski, Ald. Jed Sanborn, Carl D. Durocher, Chris R. Carlsen, Kevin L. Hoag and Diane L. Paoni

**Absent:** Tim Wong and Kenneth M. Streit

**Excused:** Amanda F. White and Sharon L. McCabe

**Enactment No:** RES-05-00679

## **D. OLD BUSINESS**

### **D.1. [01670](#) Cameras on Metro buses**

**A motion was made by Paoni, seconded by Ald. Golden, to Rerefer to the TRANSIT AND PARKING COMMISSION Durocher suggested that this item be referred to a future meeting to allow more time for members to read the summary of public input regarding the proposed fare increase that was handed out at the meeting. The motion passed by acclamation.**

**Motion by Golden/Sanborn to recess from 5:10 until 5:29 p.m. to allow time for members to review the summary of public input, carried unanimously.**

## **E. PUBLIC HEARING -- 5:30 P.M.**

**Present:** Ald. Kenneth Golden, Ald. Noel T. Radomski, Ald. Jed Sanborn, Carl D. Durocher, Chris R. Carlsen, Tim Wong, Kevin L. Hoag, Diane L. Paoni and Kenneth M. Streit

**Excused:** Amanda F. White and Sharon L. McCabe

### **[01671](#) Public hearing concerning a proposed Metro Transit fare increase to take effect on or after August 7, 2005**

Chair Durocher opened the public hearing at 5:30 p.m. He advised the attendees that the fare proposal is just that, a proposal, and it can be modified. Madison cares about transit and wants to continue the current level of service, which is without peer in similar-sized cities. Durocher reminded registrants that they had a five-minute limit and requested them to be succinct especially if they had already provided written comments. He emphasized that this is not a case of the TPC against the riders, and the TPC did not want to raise fares. However, transit costs have gone up especially fuel. The portion of Metro's budget covered by the City and Metro's other partners is about 25%. Metro also receives State and Federal funding, but that has been holding flat. The TPC either has to reduce service or increase revenues.

The TPC then heard from the registrants.

Mary Anderson, 2502 Calypso Road #1 (distributed a written statement as well):

- Opposed a fare increase. She is disgusted with the cost of bus fares.
- Disabled persons and senior citizens should receive a 20-25% discount on the 31-day pass, regardless of whether they use a fixed route or paratransit bus.
- City employees should not be getting a free pass. It's not fair to those who have to pay. State employees don't get a free pass.
- Instead of raising fares or cutting service, why not worry about people who smoke in the bus shelters and at the transfer points. She also didn't appreciate bus drivers smoking when they get to the transfer points.
- Baby strollers on the bus block the aisle and cause problems for people using a wheelchair or walker. The strollers should be folded up. That's what Metro should be worrying about.
- The disabled are on a fixed income, so how are they supposed to pay for an increase?
- Think twice about raising fares.

Michael Barrett, 2137 Sommers Avenue:

- Oppose.
- At the last TPC meeting, he presented information showing that fare increases lead to a decrease in ridership. Catherine Debo said that Metro's revenues increased after each fare increase. However, he believed that after two years overall revenue will be down because it takes time for people to make other transportation choices. This is proven by the fact that 20 months after the last fare increase, Metro is facing a budget crunch.
- He referenced Debo's earlier statement that Metro's contracts with the various institutions have increased ridership and provide much-needed revenue and that raising the rate could discourage continuing the contracts or getting new ones. This statement would seem to confirm that raising rates discourages ridership, yet Metro doesn't want to apply that same law of economics to people who pay the cash fare or buy tickets.
- The aggregate effect of a fare increase will be decreased ridership.
- Metro may be a monopoly but it's not immune from other transportation choices.
- Gas prices are only double what they were when a bus ride was 25¢.
- When looking at Madison's population trend line, transit ridership continues to fall.
- If you pull out the ridership from the UW contract (Route 80) and the Madison School District buses, Metro is only providing 25 revenue rides per hour. The only thing that's saving the bus system is the unlimited ride pass agreements. He

commended Metro for pursuing these deals but they should not stop with major institutions. The same rules that make these contracts work will work with the other fare types. The economic models that apply to institutions also apply to individuals.

- Metro has been in a death spiral for years. Not long after a fare increase, ridership goes down.
- Two years ago, Metro promised that if there was a fare increase, there would not be service cuts. Yet the two most productive lines were cut.
- Keep fares down and ridership up.

Wong referenced Barrett's handout at the last TPC meeting that stated that for every "x" percentage increase in fares, there's a "y" percentage decrease in ridership. He calculated this to show that for every \$1.00 increase in revenue, Metro would actually receive 57¢ and the remaining 43¢ goes to lost ridership. What then happens in the second year after a fare increase? It was Barrett's understanding that the lost ridership starts to accelerate. Barrett commented that if the City is looking for money to cut, the Engineering Division has millions of dollars in its budget for roadways that lead to sprawl.

John Rettig, 344 W. Dayton Street:

- Opposed a fare increase.
- He's appalled by what happened this summer with the new equipment. Metro has a projected \$400,000 deficit in 2005 and \$1.4 million deficit in 2006. To what extent was this caused by the new equipment? The changes haven't done a bit of good.
- Agreed with Mr. Barrett's comments.

Also submitted a written note with the following comments:

- Used transfer cards are creating a litter problem all over the city.
- Late arriving buses often cause the transfer card to die.
- There will never be fewer cars on our streets.
- Overhaul the system.
- Mentioned that the meeting room was difficult to find and it was hard to hear the Chair.

Debra Boushley, 306 N. Brooks Street (also provided a written statement):

- Opposed a fare increase.
- If fares keep going up, she will have to consider moving to another city. She lives on a fixed income (\$600/month) and it's getting too expensive to take the bus.
- If she has to cut transportation from her budget, she will get depressed staying at home.
- She checked bus rates for Oshkosh and Green Bay, and both provide a discounted rate for the disabled.

Ron Cook, 540 W. Olin Avenue:

- Opposed a fare increase.
- He rides the bus all the time and it's his only means of transportation other than walking.
- Felt Metro's service is quite good or excellent.
- He's noticed that the interior bus space available for ads is about 75% vacant, and this seems like a good place for increasing ad revenue. Why isn't this space used?
- Providing free fare rides on Clean Air Action Days seems extraordinary.

- He represents the senior population, and he didn't understand why the unlimited ride pass contracts have a 6-7% fare increase but the senior fare would be about double that.
- Asked for a discount on the monthly pass for seniors and the disabled. It costs more to buy tickets but he can't afford the upfront cost of the monthly pass.
- Many of the bus stop signs don't indicate which routes stop there. He sent a memo to Debo and received a reply that Metro has been replacing the signs over the past several years and will continue working on the project.

Durocher explained that Metro has a contract with an advertising agency and the space is empty because the agency can't find customers who want to advertise there. Debo advised that the ad contract provides Metro with a guaranteed minimum amount of revenue. The ad agency sells what advertising space it can. Mr. Cook suggested that Metro staff take over the job of selling space.

Golden advised that the Clean Air Action Days cost Metro nothing because the City will reimburse Metro. He and the Mayor are working on an agreement with a set cost per day, currently estimated at \$3,200.

Durocher reminded the registrants that this is a proposal and the rates are not set . Golden advised that the rates presented for the public hearing are the absolute maximum for each fare category. The TPC can't approve fares above this but they can go below. Mr. Cook wanted to know why the unlimited ride pass rate increase is the lowest of all the categories. Sanborn replied that if you go back several years, some rates were not increased as much as others. This proposal is an attempt to bring all rates in line.

Durocher acknowledged that the senior/disabled don't get a discount on the monthly pass and perhaps this is worthwhile to check out. Sanborn noted that buying 30 tickets costs significantly less than a monthly pass, but Mr. Cook noted that if he rides every day, a month's supply would be 60 tickets (2/day). This is considerably more than a monthly pass.

Golden provided some background information for the registrants. The budget situation that the TPC is dealing with is somewhat unprecedented in terms of when the TPC is being asked to raise fares. Normally the Mayor would put something in the Executive Budget about Metro's budget and the TPC would know if they needed to generate a certain amount of money. Sometimes the Common Council would add in money and the TPC wouldn't need a fare increase. In order to get an idea of what the Council plans to do as far as Metro's 2006 budget, the three TPC alders sponsored a resolution. It provides some background about Metro's budget hole and the fact that the Mayor asked the TPC to find \$200,000 in 2005 and \$500,000 in 2006. The resolution asks the Board of Estimates and the Council to choose between two options: (1) maintain existing fares and expect the Council to deal with revenue deficiencies in Metro and the City as a whole without the need for service cuts. The Council adopts this option with full knowledge of the property tax increase that would occur; or (2) the Council requests the TPC to arrive at a fare package that results in approximately \$200,000 of increased revenues in 2005 and \$500,000 of increased revenues in 2006.

If the Council adopts option 1, there's no need for a fare increase. Option 2 is the Mayor's directive to the TPC. The BOE met last night and unanimously

recommended option 2 (vote by the Mayor and Alders VanRooy, Verveer, Bruer, Olson, and Benford). The Common Council will act on the resolution at its August 2 meeting. Golden felt that it should not be up to the TPC to make these kinds of budget decisions. He wants the Council to go on record one way or the other. If the Council adopts option 1, the TPC won't raise fares. But if they adopt option 2, the TPC needs to find a way to raise the revenues.

The public hearing then returned to the registrants.

Lori Hobbs, 2718 Union Street:

- Opposed a fare increase.
- She only works part-time and can't afford an increase.
- City employees should not be getting a free pass; if they get a free pass, everyone else should, too. City workers have more money than disabled people have. It's not fair for the employees to get something free.
- Metro needs to address the behavior and filthy language of kids on the bus and at the transfer points. Some bus drivers don't do anything and riders have to put up it.
- Need to consider the disabled.
- Where will all the extra revenue go? Is it for repair of the buses or for gas prices? She would like to know where every dollar goes. Debo explained that Metro has an operating budget of approximately \$40 million. Metro provides twice as much service as other communities of Madison's size. Fares provide about 20% of the entire operating budget that it takes to run the system - wages, benefits, goods, purchase of services, etc. Golden provided Ms. Hobbs with a copy of the Metro financial audit that was discussed at the 7/12/05 TPC meeting.

Craig Myrbo, 534 Dapin Road:

- Opposed a fare increase.
- He has used Metro most of his adult life and he does not drive.
- He agreed with Mr. Barrett's comments.
- Suggested that Metro increase service and reduce fares to make transit more competitive with the convenience of driving. This would probably increase revenues.
- Felt the City and the TPC should look at a whole transportation package: parking, streets, gas, etc. Look at the environmental costs of single occupancy vehicles versus Metro.
- The UW has opted for attempting to reduce the number of cars on campus and offers a free bus pass for all employees.
- He doesn't object to free bus passes but Metro could increase the rate from 82.5¢ to 90-95¢. The UW would not terminate its contract.
- Going from \$39 to \$47 for a 31-day pass, increasing the youth summer pass by \$10, and increasing the cash fare by 25¢ are things that will cause people to stop using the system, and Metro will lose revenue as predicted by Mr. Barrett.
- Increase service so it doesn't take extremely long to get from one end of town to the other during off-peak. It takes two hours of trip time, making it very difficult to use transit for meetings, appointments, etc.
- The fare increases are pushed toward the persons who can least afford to pay
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Durocher commented that the TPC has listened to arguments that increasing fares will decrease ridership. If the TPC does not raise fares, did Mr. Myrbo anticipate an upsurge in riders such that the budget hole would be taken care of?

Mr. Myrbo replied that Metro needs to reduce fares and increase service and advertise that this has been done. It might take a while, but Metro would see an increase in revenues. Further, an increase in Metro ridership would have a positive impact on the environment.

Michael Neuman, 4334 Waite Circle

- Opposed a fare increase.
- He is a long-time resident of Madison and cares about the future of the city and its natural resources.
- He has witnessed the increasing amount of commuter traffic, much of it from surrounding communities. He felt that much of the traffic in Madison is not Madison residents.
- Air quality is tied to the amount of traffic. Madison has had more air quality problems this year than in past years. He is a bicyclist and doesn't like breathing the air on ozone alert days or telling his children they can't engage in strenuous exercise. Madison's air quality is already in trouble and he doesn't want to see it get worse.
- He had hoped that Metro would contribute to a solution to Madison's transportation problems, but instead Metro and the City are seeking to raise bus fares. Metro's projection is that the fare increase will result in 250,000 fewer riders through 2006. This is going in the wrong direction and will result in more cars on the road.
- Make it more affordable to use Metro and promote it.
- Partner with surrounding municipalities that send commuter traffic into Madison every day. He was aware of the new commuter bus service to Verona and felt this has further potential. There are numerous outlying communities that should be able to fill a bus coming into Madison. The additional revenues could support Metro's overall operations. The other communities need to accept responsibility for having an affordable bus system for the whole area.
- The proposed fare increase is inequitable for those who can least afford it, both low and middle income riders.
- Metro sprang this proposed fare increase on the public without enough notice.
- Union officials were not aware of it when negotiating wages and the contracts didn't anticipate this increase in transportation costs.
- A fare increase is a bad policy.
- Should ask DOT for more transit money rather than having it go to roadway projects.
- Buses are five times more fuel efficient than a single occupancy vehicle.
- The fare for surrounding communities needs to be higher than for Madison.

Golden mentioned that Sun Prairie and McFarland are also in discussions with Madison Metro for service. He wondered about Dane County participating in financing mainline transit service. Mr. Neuman felt this has great potential and wondered why it's not being done now. Sprawl is already here and we are seeing the symptoms: filling up the highways and polluting the air. Golden encouraged Mr. Neuman to participate in the Dane County budget process. Metro currently gets very little funding from Dane County other than for paratransit.

Amy Starobin, 837 N. Gammon Road #D

- Opposed a fare increase.
- She was pleased to hear about the resolution that went to the BOE and will now go to the Common Council.
- She has had service cuts in the past and is very wary of more service cuts

since her route is usually the first one cut.

- A fare increase would be very difficult to afford.
- The Common Council should take a role in this.
- Explore the use of alternate fuels.

James Aldrich, 3709 Morning Road #A:

- Opposed a fare increase.
- Over the past 30-40 years, the bus system has been going downhill because people don't want to wait for the bus and they buy a car instead. All the additional cars fill up the streets and cause the buses to be delayed. Ridership goes down and then service is cut.
- Over the last 30 years, the time between buses has gone from 15 minutes to half an hour.
- The city is expanding very rapidly. The transfer point system prolongs the time it takes to get across town. The transfer points also increase Metro's maintenance costs.
- What is happening with ads on the sides of the buses? He has seen buses with no ads, either inside or out. Metro said it would look at advertising to increase revenues but yet it's not being done.
- Every time it comes to where Metro has trouble, it's taken out on the elderly and handicapped and all those who depend on the bus. It's getting to be ridiculous and there needs to be another solution.
- At one time, he could go from one side of Madison to the other in 30-40 minutes but it now takes 1½ hours.

Carlsen advised that Metro has an advertising contract but the company can't find additional businesses that want to advertise. When the economy takes a downturn, many companies first cut their advertising budget. Mr. Aldrich replied that buses in other countries have more ads and Metro needs to find a company that knows how to get more ads.

Dave Carrig, 442 Lily Drive:

- Opposed a fare increase.
- Hoped that a solution can be found because the burden is falling on those who are least able to pay.
- Madison's air is becoming more polluted and moving into a critical stage as far as air quality.
- A cash fare of \$1.75 seems high and he wondered how it compares nationally.
- Madison has pretty good service from the transfer points.
- One solution may be to sacrifice some wages.
- While extending the time between buses may result in some lost ridership, a number of riders may be able to spend more time but they can't spend more money.
- A fare increase will result in lower ridership and would be disastrous.

Chris Conley, 1110 Ruskin Street #7:

- Opposed a fare increase.
- Besides fuel costs or overtime for drivers, why is the fare increase needed? In the general business world, customers see something for paying more money. Is Metro contemplating additional service with the fare increase?
- One area that needs improvement is additional routing to outlying communities like Middleton, Cottage Grove, etc. This would be somewhat of a cash cow.



- Having larger bike racks on the buses would be a good idea to encourage more people to bike to work and then take the bus home.
- Without some sort of tangible benefit from the fare increase, it's just setting up the drivers to take a lot of grief and complaints from the riders.
- He is homeless but is not asking for free rides for the homeless.
- Reiterated that if the price is bumped up, then increase the benefit to riders, such as more bus drivers to prevent drivers from collecting ungodly amounts of overtime.
- Consider asking Metro administration to take a voluntary pay cut for additional vacation time as a way to reduce costs.
- Look at other options and please make sure there's some type of discernible "carrot" for the people who will be paying more.

Marilyn Feil, 3634 Alpine Road, representing the Community Action Coalition, 1717 N. Stoughton Rd.:

- Opposed a fare increase.
- She works at the Joining Forces for Families sites. She works with the homeless and those who are in danger of becoming homeless. JFFF receives funding to buy Metro tickets for their clients. Clients use the bus to look for housing or for work.
- They only get a limited amount of funding and probably won't get more in 2006. If there's a fare increase, it means they will provide fewer rides.
- She has many clients who don't have another source of income to buy bus tickets.
- There's a lot of pent-up demand for the bus tickets. Transportation is very important and allows the clients to look for employment or housing.
- If fares go up, there will be fewer rides provided.
- Dane County provides funding for tickets at the JFFF sites. Staff get the tickets at the beginning of the month and they're usually gone by the 10th or 15th of the month.
- Raising fares will make it even more difficult for their clients.
- She realizes that Metro has a budget problem and that cutting service is not good. She didn't have a solution but it's very hard to for those on a limited income to afford an increase.

Golden commented that one of the issues that has been particularly vexing is how to best structure the fares so that the least impact is on low income people. His initial idea was to raise the cash fare a lot but not the monthly pass and then provide (outside of Metro) some funding for agencies to distribute monthly passes. But speakers at previous meetings stated that many low income people can't get enough money together for a monthly pass and they would be hurt by a cash fare increase. If fares have to be increased, what is the structure that would minimize the effect on the low income population? Ms. Feil did not have an answer. The clients she works with use cash if they can't get a ticket. They cannot afford a monthly pass. Golden wondered about a program where the City would assist various social agencies in trying to distribute a free monthly pass the first month so the client would have a month without transportation costs and could save for the next month's pass. He wondered if Ms. Feil's agency could utilize something like that. Ms. Feil stated that some people would be able to use this, such as those just starting a job, but she worried about concentrating all assistance in the monthly pass. Golden realized that the ticket option needs to remain as well. In response to a question by Wong, Debo advised that social agencies still receive ticket books instead of the swipe cards.

Debby Lynn Aldrich, 3709 Morning Road #A

- She did not want to see service cuts.
- She urged Metro to seek additional revenues from advertising, including ads on the sides and backs of the buses (everything but the windows). Also have ads at the transfer points and shelters. Perhaps Metro needs to contract with an advertising agency that is more aggressive. More has to be done with ads to help the budget shortfall.
- Metro will continue to have fare increases because it will continue to have budget problems.

David Hobbs, 2718 Union Street:

- Opposed a fare increase.
- He is a low income rider.
- Some of his medical appointments are on the far east side, and he would like more bus service in this area.
- He cannot afford a monthly pass if it goes up to \$47.

Linda Hoskins, 11 Waunona Woods Court #2, representing the NAACP Madison branch as well as herself:

- Opposed a fare increase.
- How will low income people get around if the bus fare is increased? Most depend on free tickets from various social service agencies.
- People coming out of prison need to meet with their probation/parole agent or to look for work but they don't have any money.
- The whole bus system needs to be reconstructed using common sense. It takes too long to get through the city using the bus.
- The Mayor and his staff should take a pay cut if the City needs more money.
- Have someone look into grant programs to bring in more money to help low income people.
- People need to use the bus for appointments, to look for housing, etc. and she didn't want to see any more of a burden placed on low income people.
- Increasing ridership would help Metro.

Michael Jacob, 410 Russell Street, representing Progressive Dane, 1202 Williamson Street:

- Opposed a fare increase.
- Much like Metro riders who have been told about facing a fare increase or reduced service, the TPC has two choices before making a decision: (1) take the easy route and sit through the testimony, skim through the emails about the unfair fare proposal, take at face value Metro's claim that there's no other option, and above the increase. (2) Do the work that is essential, reject the increase, demand that the Mayor and Metro come back with another proposal, get enhanced revenues, encourage the Common Council to recognize the benefits of transit as it sets budget priorities, and respond to the riders that there's a new way of doing business in Madison.
- Taking the easy route places a high burden on the riders.
- The resolution considered by the BOE last night should have had a third option and he will work to have it added before the resolution comes to the Common Council, an option that doesn't leave it to a false dichotomy. Present an option where Metro would cover one-half or two-thirds of the shortfall and the Council would agree to cover the rest.
- No one knows what the budget will be. There is a chance to leave some

doors open and for the TPC to do something more fair than what's been presented.

- Favored idea of trying to put some benefits back for social service agencies.
- Limit the impact on low income riders. The answer has to come from Metro.

The TPC needs information as to which fare increase affects the most riders and focus on minimizing that increase. It's the job of Metro to give out that information.

- The overwhelming input tonight is to limit the impact on the low income population.

Golden asked whether Mr. Jacob had a specific fare proposal. Metro is facing a \$ 1.4 million deficit and the City is covering almost two-thirds of that. What is his preferred option to cover the \$500,000 gap? Mr. Jacob indicated that he couldn't answer that until Metro made available the information requested previously re: revenues and ridership loss by fare type. The information given to the TPC shows the total revenue/ridership loss impact but not the loss associated with each type of fare increase. Mr. Jacob emphasized that the TPC needs to know which fare(s) the low income riders use the most. He also commented that when he was handing out flyers regarding the fare proposal, the monthly riders were the most upset. As far as the BOE's action on the resolution, Mr. Jacob disagreed with having only two options, there's a third option that lies in the middle.

Golden pointed out that given the tax levy limit in the recently adopted State budget, Madison is facing \$3 million in cuts citywide. Raising the property tax to help Metro is no longer an option. If the TPC adopts a proposal that does not raise \$500,000, what service cuts would Mr. Jacob support? Mr. Jacob replied that is something he would have to think about and would answer at the Common Council meeting. The State has given Madison an awful budget picture, and Metro is being trotted out in front for cuts. Golden asked whether Mr. Jacob thought it worthwhile to look at assisting low income riders with their transportation needs. Mr. Jacob stated it should be looked at but he felt this was jumping to the next step. He wanted to get better information before making systemic changes. The TPC should be looking at ways to offset the impact on low income riders. Golden remarked that even if the TPC doesn't raise fares, there's an unmet transportation need for low income people. Mr. Jacob noted that the program Golden is proposing would be outside of Metro's budget, which is all the more reason to have this discussion as part of an overall City budget debate. Golden stated he will pursue the idea of some type of transit assistance for low income people regardless of the decision on the fare proposal.

Wong wanted to know where the \$500,000 would come from if not a fare increase. It sounds like the City will have to come up with a new way of thinking about funding transportation. Why is most of the subsidy put into autos? He suggested consideration of ideas like a congestion tax for vehicles entering the downtown. Wong calculated that with a \$40 million operating budget, it would cost about \$200 per person in Madison to provide free transit. Mr. Jacob remarked that creative thinking is essential but it only seems happens when there's a crisis. If the decision is made to increase fares, it will buy another year before the next crisis and the creative discussion will never happen. That's another reason why the TPC should reject the fare increase. Instead, listen to the people today and then work on creative ideas to bring to the Common Council in the fall. If the budget hole is patched with a fare increase, the creative discussion won't happen and the bad cycle will continue.

Sanborn remarked that the assumption is that over time rates will be increased and he wondered what a reasonable benchmark is for the amount of increase: inflation, a set percentage, or something else. Mr. Jacob responded that at most it should be no more than the growth in income of riders and those who hope to become riders. Metro should not have a fare increase above what people can keep up with. Metro helps the vitality and economy of the city and is a benefit. We should think about how the City as a whole can help chip in to continue such a system. You need to look at the riders and their ability to pay and make sure that you're not pricing them out every year. Mr. Jacob clarified that he meant the growth in income among riders, not growth in income of the City as a whole. Sanborn noted that over a period of time, this benchmark might be lower than the increase in Metro's costs, and the City's subsidy would need to get bigger and bigger while the amount paid by riders would be smaller and smaller. Isn't it reasonable to maintain the percentage of costs that the riders pay? Mr. Jacob felt you need to look at what the rider pays as a percentage of what they are able to pay from their income and then stay close to that. Many people are stretched financially, partly because of transportation costs. Riders will never keep up with the cost of providing the service. If you try fund transit by putting it on the back of the fare payer, you will lose more riders because they can't afford to pay. Metro needs to be recognized as a public good that should be publicly funded.

Lisa Subeck, 818 S. Gammon Road #4:

- Opposed a fare increase.
- She was not happy with the increase in the cash fare and the other fares that would hit the low income riders the most.
- Most of her clients in the transitional housing program don't make more than \$7.00 an hour. At the present cash fare, a client spends 5% of their income just getting to/from work, and this doesn't include trips on the weekend or to run errands. The proposed increase in the cash fare will push this to over 6% of their income. For someone making \$1,000 a month, an additional 1% is a big difference in their budget.
- She supported Golden's idea of an assistance program for low income riders.
- Metro's budget needs to be considered in the context of the City budget and not looked at in a vacuum. Metro is a City service and is a benefit to the City.
- She was very concerned that the unlimited ride pass rate only goes up 7% while the cash fare goes up 17% and the monthly pass goes up 20%. She supported a discounted rate for the ride pass agreements but the rate increase should be more in line with the other increases, which would then allow Metro to have a smaller increase (or none) in the cash fare. It seems like the proposal is robbing from the poor to pay the rich. It hurts those who can't afford to pay more for a better deal.
- She strongly urged the TPC to look at the unlimited ride pass rate as a first option. The UW doesn't have the parking available so they need to negotiate with Metro. Raise this rate and have smaller increases for the other fare types.
- The cash fare and the monthly pass seem to be the extremes.
- There are other ways to increase revenues. Try to increase advertising revenues including wrapped buses and vending at the transfer points to offset the revenues needed from a fare increase.
- She realized that the fares have to be increased but Metro is a public service; the Fire Dept. and the Police Dept. don't have to charge a fee.
- Transportation needs to be looked at as a whole, don't look at roads, parking and Metro separately.

Golden noted that if the Common Council adopts the BOE recommendation, the TPC needs to come up with \$500,000 in 2006. Ms. Subeck hoped that didn't happen and felt there are other places in the City budget to take the money from; for instance, Engineering has over \$7.4 million in road expansion. Golden asked if she had a recommendation for a fare proposal, and Ms. Subeck suggested that the cash fare and monthly pass have the smallest increase with higher increases in other fares particularly the unlimited ride pass. Wong asked about the ticket rate. Ms. Subeck indicated she singled out the cash fare because that's what most of her clients use. She felt the best way to offset the cash fare and monthly pass is to increase the unlimited ride pass and to look at the entire City budget. Wong referenced Ms. Subeck's comment about Engineering's budget and asked if she had other suggestions to avoid a fare increase. She remarked that perhaps the Parking Utility budget could be looked at, and there are probably other things in the budget that could be cut. Metro needs to be addressed in the context of the entire City budget, not in a vacuum as it's being done now.

Charles Litweiler, 5 Lukken Court

- Was not entirely opposed to a fare increase.
- He has been a bus rider for 30 years and now receives a free pass as a UW employee.
- Suggested that a fund be established where holders of an unlimited ride pass could make a contribution toward the cost of the pass.
- As a means of increasing ridership, streets with three lanes should have one lane designated as Bus Only during rush hour. The City needs to try things like this to get more people on the bus.

Sanborn noted that a number of speakers have suggested increasing the unlimited ride pass rate, and he wondered whether there's enough support at the UW to continue provide this benefit if the City tries to drive a hard bargain. Mr. Litweiler was not sure how many UW employees ride simply because of the free pass. Debo advised that the UW receives 23,000 passes for its employees. While not all are used, Metro has seen tremendous growth in the number of UW employees who take advantage of the pass. She clarified that Metro is reimbursed on a per trip basis, not on the number of passes provided. Wong asked how many passes are provided for UW students. Margaret Bergamini, representing the Associated Students of Madison, stated that during the fall semester an average of 25,000-27,000 passes are picked up out of a total student population of approximately 42,000. For the spring/summer semester, they generally hand out about 23,000 student passes.

Radomski referenced Mr. Litweiler's suggestion for a "surcharge" or something similar for unlimited ride pass riders who have the ability to pay. He wondered if Mr. Litweiler or others, such as Mr. Jacob, would be willing to approach the UW Transportation Committee about implementing something like this. Mr. Litweiler was not sure.

Susan Nossal, 138 W. Gorham Street:

- Opposed a fare increase.
- Madison needs a vibrant transportation system as part of a suite of solutions addressing climate change and global warming.
- Need to move in a direction so that more people use the bus, but a fare increase would move in the opposite direction.
- She appreciated the free unlimited ride pass when she worked at the UW and

would be willing to make a voluntary contribution; others may be willing to do so, too.

- Would like to see more institutions have unlimited ride pass agreements since it would increase bus ridership.
- She referenced the Boulder, CO bus system, which has quite a few smaller buses that run very frequently. If a rider is on a main route they can catch a bus within 15 minutes, and the buses are timed for transfers. There is also a regional system connecting to Denver and other cities, and she suggested consideration of that kind of expansion in Madison.

Wong asked whether the small buses run only in the downtown or all over. Ms. Nossal replied both and that their coverage seems to increase every year or two. This allows the larger buses to be used less frequently. Ms. Nossal indicated that Boulder transit ridership had increased with the implementation of the smaller buses. Paoni believed that Ms. Nossal was referring to Boulder's "Hop, Skip and Jump" transit program. This grew out of a strategic planning process to deal with the crisis of having to cut transit service. City officials talked to people about what improvements they wanted to see in the bus system and what kind of money it would take and the options.

Mark Shahan, 607 Piper Drive:

- Opposed a fare increase.
- He identified himself as the Chair of the Pedestrian/Bicycle/Motor Vehicle Commission but was representing himself.
- He urged the TPC to reconsider the magnitude of some of the increases, especially for the tickets, and to look at other options.
- The UW unlimited ride pass has worked even better than anticipated and has increased ridership. Consider getting higher revenue from that, have the UW pay its fair share. There are different ways the UW can handle that. The unlimited ride pass agreement benefits the UW and the City.
- Look at other services that might be offered that could be very productive in having people choose the bus.
- He referenced the bus shuttles used on UW football Saturdays and suggested shuttles also be used for big events at the Overture Center, Kohl Center and Monona Terrace Convention Center. Sometimes all three venues have an event on the same night, and shuttles would be a good alternative to dealing with the parking problem. Current bus service may end before some events get out, so if the shuttles had special hours they might attract more riders.
- Urged the TPC to consider ways to encourage more people to ride the bus rather than cutting service or raising fares.
- He relayed the experience in St. Louis where fare increases and service cuts almost destroyed the transit system.
- Madison needs transit ridership that increases with the growth in population; this is a necessity if Madison wants to support a trolley or light rail system.

Wong noted that the TPC has been directed to come up with \$500,000 in revenue. Since the fare increase proposal includes an anticipated ridership loss, he calculated that the net revenue increase would be \$285,000. He asked if Mr. Shahan had any suggestions for other cuts in City services to offset the need for a fare increase. Mr. Shahan suggested looking at the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to see if some roadway projects could be delayed. Metro's budget needs to be considered in the context of the entire City budget so that these kinds of considerations can be explored. He wanted to encourage

people to use transit and alternate modes of transportation and not promote auto use. If Madison wants to keep the downtown livable, it needs to shift priorities from roadways and encourage other modes of transportation. Radomski asked who has responsibility for finalizing the TPC. Golden explained that the TIP is produced by the Metropolitan Planning Organization. The TIP allocates federal funds for all types of transportation projects, including transit. In order to qualify for Federal funding, a project must be included in the approved TIP. The 16 or 17 municipalities in the MPO area submit projects for consideration. If the MPO rejects a project, it cannot receive federal funds. For the City of Madison, most of the federal funding for the next five years is going to the East Washington Avenue project.

Golden commented that there are two programs overseen by the Ped/Bike/Motor Vehicle Commission that he sees as very valuable, the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) and crossing guards. Instead of the all-or-nothing approach to the crossing guard program taken by the Police Department as the City tries to cut \$3 million from its budget, what about giving the task to the PBMVC. Golden recalled that it costs about \$7,000/year to operate flashing lights at East High School and about \$6,000/year for a crossing guard. What about raising the warrants for assigning a crossing guard and cutting the NTMP. Mr. Shahan stated he would prefer to first look at other programs. The PBMVC has asked for information as to where the dollars go for certain programs. They have looked at some crossing guards that don't meet the warrants, and spending money for that is not productive. He would like to protect the NTMP since it's very productive. Mr. Shahan suggested looking at the traffic signal priority list for cuts. The cost of two signals would fund the entire NTMP for a year. Perhaps some signals could be delayed. Developers or other municipalities could perhaps pay for the signals. Mr. Shahan reiterated that if the PBMVC had to look at cuts in the Traffic Engineering budget, he would recommend first looking at traffic signals.

Carlsen expressed surprise that a flashing yellow light at a school costs more than a crossing guard. Mr. Shahan indicated that the cost of the light may have come down a little since new lights are more efficient. But lights/signals are very expensive, which is why he suggested looking at the traffic signal budget for cuts. Debo commented that flashing lights, signals and crossing guards are important at school sites. Many peds are bus riders, and the lights provide an element of safety. Mr. Shahan remarked that traffic signals don't always improve safety, for example, the accident rate at the McKee-Raymond intersection went up after the signal was installed. It costs approximately \$100,000 per signal, so the signal program needs to be looked at in tough budget times.

Lucy Taylor, 84 N. Lakewood Gardens Lane:

- Opposed a fare increase.
- She has lived in Madison since 1970.
- As a student at the UW, she served on many communities, which sometimes was not easy since she is disabled.
- She relies on paratransit. She wondered how many of the TPC members rely on the transit system, either mainline or paratransit. How many of the Common Council members are dependent on public transportation?
- The disabled and seniors want to be independent.
- She preferred no peak hour rate on paratransit.
- Some paratransit vehicles only have one passenger.

- She liked the idea of a smaller bus for main line service.

There were no more registered speakers.

Golden commented that he drafted the resolution for the BOE and the Common Council because the TPC is required to do something without knowing the overall City budget. The resolution asks the Council to advise the TPC on Metro's budget. At the BOE meeting last night, five alders voted to advise the TPC to raise fares. The Council will act on the resolution next Tuesday. If the Council adopts the same option, then elected officials will be on record that the TPC must find the additional revenues.

Motion by Golden//Sanborn that the names, addresses and any written comments of those who registered but did not wish to speak be entered in the minutes, and this motion includes a suspension of the TPC Rules if that's necessary; motion carried with Wong and Hoag voting no.

The following registrants all opposed a fare increase but did not wish to speak:

Larry Jensen, 1618 Jenifer Street  
Nancy Johnson, 1029 Spaight Street  
Jay Kloss, 430 Cantwell Court #C  
Harry Richardson, 18 Sherman Terrace #4  
Marsha Rummell, 1618 Jenifer Street  
Julie Spears, 2681 Milwaukee Street  
John Wagnitz, 165 Ohio Avenue

Barbara Smith, 31 Sherman Terrace #3: "I would like to see the City consider more thoroughly alternatives to raising the bus fares."

Erik Breilid, 424 N. Paterson Street #2: "I oppose the bus fair (sic) increases. We in Madison have had years of fair (sic) increases coupled with bus service cuts, and it's outrageous! If you increase the fares, the poor will suffer and the ridership will go down. This is no way to run a bus company."

Suzan Stodder, 3210 Bluff #2: "I get free monthly passes as a benefit of where I work so the fare increase does not affect me. However, every day I see workers on the bus who will be hurt by the fare increase. I would like you to consider keeping the monthly pass at \$36. I believe a day after day (monthly pass) rider deserves a consideration that they clearly need to take the bus. An infrequent rider (daily fare) probably would be less affected by a 25¢ increase. Thank you."

Katherine Wenban, 1029 Spaight Street #C5: "If the City took over the service from Metro, wouldn't it be possible to take money from some other area of the budget? Quality of life in Madison should include affordable public transport, more so than subsidizing the Overture Center, Monona Terrace, etc. and TIF for developers. Auto traffic is horrid now and would get worse."

[See also the compilation of public input received at Metro, attachments to legislative file ID 01671]

Durocher closed the public hearing at 8:20 p.m.



- F. [01677](#) Discussion and possible action re: fare structure change

Golden requested that staff provide two things: (1) the income characteristics of riders from the most recent onboard survey or any other useful information to inform that discussion; (2) since many of the speakers asked about raising the unlimited ride pass rate, is it possible to contact the UW with respect to potential rate increases in both the employee and the student contracts when the current contracts expire. Also, would the UW have any interest in establishing a voluntary program to permit UW staff to contribute a portion of the pass cost. Just ask whether this is feasible, it would not be a commitment.

Wong asked if it's possible to get information on how much additional revenue would be generated for each one cent increase in the fare. Debo noted that fares are raised by a minimum of 5¢, and staff have shown this information with each option. All the fares are inter-related. Wong clarified that he was looking for information such as "if the UW unlimited ride pass rate is raised 5¢, it would generate "x" amount of revenue." Debo stated that the unlimited ride pass rate is different. All the other rates are inter-related, which causes shifting if one fare is too high in relation to the others. Debo pointed out that the TPC already has information showing the estimated revenue generated by a 5¢ increase in the unlimited ride pass rate. Sanborn noted that the 5¢ increase is included with other fare increases, it is not shown in isolation. Debo stated they could show what a 5¢ increase would do as far as revenue.

Sanborn suggested using Draft 6 as a base, with perhaps showing different amounts for the unlimited ride pass going as high as the average fare of 94¢. The TPC needs to recognize, however, that it will be August 2006 before a higher rate can be implemented for most of the agreements. Streit noted that the lock-in of the unlimited ride pass rate might be a good reason to suggest a two-year budget projection. That way, the TPC would be able to see the revenue impact of the unlimited ride pass rate in 2007 and get a better perspective on an equitable increase for the other fares. Sanborn emphasized that the TPC needs to see a projection of actual revenues, so this needs to address the fact that most agreements won't be renegotiated until August 2006. Debo confirmed that this is taken into consideration in the options.

Hoag suggested the TPC clarify the information it needs for the next meeting. People are becoming more concerned that a fare increase that impacts the cash fare is a form of regressive taxation and puts more of the burden on the poorest of the community. In light of some of the discussion, he would like to see another draft with a reduced cash fare and increase some of the other fares. Metro might be able to break even on ridership while helping some of the poorest riders. In fact, he would like to reduce the cash fare significantly and see whether Metro could still generate enough revenue. Debo stated she will run a few scenarios on that. Hoag remarked that several speakers cited documentation that a fare increase will lead to a budget deficit in the long run. He hasn't heard anything to counter that, so what makes Madison think it will get additional revenues from a fare increase? He needs more data. Debo reminded members that she went through the financial audit information at the last meeting, which showed that Metro has seen a ridership increase after every fare increase, although there are other factors and it's difficult to isolate the fare increase. But Metro has not seen any reduction in ridership. In the fare options presented to the TPC, the projected additional revenues and ridership loss are a formulaic calculation. The projected revenues are actually conservative because they reflect a projected ridership loss that Metro has not seen in the past. Metro has

seen a revenue increase after each fare increase in recent years, and it saw a big revenue increase after the 2004 fare increase. The formula is based on transit industry experience.

Wong wanted to see a breakdown by ridership type. For example, if the unlimited ride pass rate go up, that ridership will not be impacted so you need to factor out those riders. He wanted to know things like what was the effect of the 2004 fare increase on ticket users, a comparison of 2003 ticket users to 2004. Debo stated they do not have data that would show that. As more unlimited ride pass agreements come on board, an increasing number of riders who use to use cash/tickets/monthly pass are now covered by the agreements. Wong asked if there was a new unlimited ride pass agreement implemented in January 2004. There must be some way to determine what happens with riders when there's a fare increase. Debo advised that the new fare collection equipment will do a better job of tracking than in the past, but as of now she doesn't have the data that Wong is requesting. The unlimited ride pass contracts produce more and more ridership. St. Marys Hospital and City of Madison employees were added in 2005, and staff factored out that ridership in the fare options presented to the TPC staff. Staff did not factor out the unlimited ride pass agreements when projecting revenues from the 2004 fare increase, so they forecast higher revenues than what Metro received.

Paoni asked for information showing the unlimited ride pass agreements, when each one was implemented, when each one comes due, the estimated number of riders covered by each one, and the total revenue for each contract. She wanted to get a basic perspective of how much revenue comes from the agreements.

Referencing the cash fare, Sanborn asked if it's easier to have the information on the effects of raising the cash fare based on the amount of cash fares paid. Debo replied no because the bus drivers have had to double up on the keys used to record the type of fare so Metro doesn't have that type of breakdown. But if the cash fare is disproportionately higher than the discount fares, there is a massive loss of revenue from cash fares. The cash fare and discount fares have to be related to generate maximum revenues, otherwise you're just chasing riders from one fare type to the next. Following up Hoag's comment about the assertions by several speakers, Sanborn indicated that the TPC has been told that the revenue curve starts to go down after rates are raised. If we raise rates and lose revenue, it means we're at the peak or already past the peak in which case lowering rates would earn more revenue. Debo stated that has not held true in the transit industry in general nor in Madison in particular. When you have goods or services that pay for themselves through the costing mechanism, you can produce more for less cost per item. But transit is a subsidized service and doesn't pay for itself. Sanborn asked if the TPC's goal was to maximize revenues, regardless of riders, would the proposed fares be higher or lower than what is now before the TPC. Debo advised that the objective has been to maximize revenues and minimize the potential ridership loss. The models brought forward can generate more revenues without a major impact on ridership.

Wong wanted to add to the list of information to be presented for the next meeting. The TPC has heard that the unlimited ride pass rate seems too low compared to every other fare. Yet he is being led to believe that 82.5¢ is the average fare, even though cash is \$1.50, tickets are \$1.10, etc. Can staff explain how they calculate the average fare for the unlimited ride pass agreements?

Debo advised that staff have not said they use an average fare in determining the unlimited ride pass rate. They looked at discounts as they relate to other discounts in the system for adults. The rate is not an average fare.

## **G. ADJOURNMENT**

Upon a motion by Golden/Carlsen, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. with Wong voting no.