



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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Meeting Minutes - Approved ADA TRANSIT SUBCOMMITTEE TO THE TRANSIT AND PARKING COMM

Monday, March 19, 2012

5:15 PM 115 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, Room LL-130 (Madison
Municipal Bldg)

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Staff: Crystal Martin, Ann Schroeder, Drew Beck, Ann Gullickson, Ron Ploessl

Chair Jacobs called the meeting to order at 5:28 PM.

- Present:** 5 -
Kenneth M. Streit; William J. Tangney; Jeanne M. Tregoning; Mary E. Jacobs and Carl D. DuRocher
- Absent:** 2 -
Bridget R. Maniaci and Michael A. Huckaby
- Excused:** 1 -
Susan M. De Vos

1. PROPER MEETING NOTIFICATION

1. Proper Meeting Notification – The meeting was properly noticed.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Streit moved approval of the minutes; Mr. Tangney seconded. The motion carried by voice vote/other.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public appearances.

4. DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

There were no disclosures or recusals.

5. [25651](#) Benches at Bus Stops, Drew Beck, Metro Transit Planning & Scheduling Manager
- Identifying Bus Stops with Benches on Ride Guide Maps
 - Identifying Which Bus Stops Should Have Benches

Mr. Beck said we don't have a good survey of all our bus stops and what amenities are available at each stop, including benches. We have a pretty good idea of where the shelters are, but we'd like to get a survey done about the other information. Mr. DuRocher asked how any cleaning, maintenance, and repairs are done if it isn't known where benches are. Is it complaint driven? Mr. Beck said when it comes to benches, that is likely the case. Or sometimes a driver notices a problem. Ms. Gullickson said there isn't routine maintenance or cleaning that needs to be done for benches. But there is for shelters. Mr. Beck said this is something we don't have a lot of information about at this point.

Ms. Gullickson said benches are standard throughout the community at bus stops that don't have shelters. She pointed out that Ms. De Vos is the member who really advocated to have this item on the agenda. She feels benches are really a good amenity for passengers even more so than shelters. This is especially true for people who have limited mobility. It can limit one's ability to use fixed route if someone can't stand for a long time and there isn't a bench to sit down on to wait. Ms. Jacobs added that it would be important to have it noted on the Ride Guide which stops have benches. That could make the difference of which stop someone would use if they have a choice. Mr. Beck said he talked to marketing about that. The maps in the Ride Guide aren't to scale, so that could be difficult. It might be that we'd have a separate document that could be linked to the Ride Guide. Mr. Streit said the best place to do it is the list of bus stop departures. There are about 2100 bus stops around the system. That list can be helpful because it has exact departure and arrival times compared to having to extrapolate between time points. Mr. Beck said each location is a link on the website. There is nothing to say we couldn't have an icon associated with each stop to show if it has a bench. Mr. Tangney said it could also show whether there is a shelter. Ms. Brunette-Tregoning asked if shelters have benches. Mr. Beck said many of them do. It can sometimes be difficult to fit a bench in if there isn't enough space for it on the pad and still leave room in the shelter for people to move around.

Mr. Tangney asked if the shelters are just to keep out of the wind or if they are more substantial. Mr. Beck said the size of the shelter is often driven by how many passengers use that stop. In some high use areas, there is not space for a shelter. Most of our shelters were placed in the late '70s or early '80s, so placement is based on the service at that time. We are looking at whether it would be helpful to move some of those now based on current service. We also most often have shelters on the inbound stops because people are waiting for the bus as opposed to getting off the bus and going right home from outbound stops.

Mr. Tangney said he would prefer wooden seats rather than metal so the bench isn't as cold. Also, he wishes there were a way to have a "skirt" at the bottom of the shelter so there isn't such a draft coming in from underneath. Mr. Streit said that has been a discussion numerous times, but cleaning/snow removal is the main reason the skirt part is lifted.

Mr. Streit said Ms. De Vos is the driving force on this issue. Ms. Gullickson

said it could be an item on the agenda again. We have learned at Metro that we'd like to have a list of where benches are. Mr. Beck wouldn't necessarily need to come back to another meeting, but we could have this item on the agenda to get suggestions and feedback. Mr. Streit said perhaps Mr. Beck could figure out if using the bus stop departures is a good way to mark benches/shelters for customers. Perhaps student volunteers could take a survey of benches. Mr. Beck said we had a couple of false starts with summer interns. They'd go out for a few days, and they'd come back and they'd only done a few hundred stops. It's a daunting task, but we could think of a way to do it efficiently. Mr. Tangney asked if it was something a bus driver could do. Mr. Beck said he didn't think that would be possible. Mr. Streit said that probably wouldn't be allowed by safety rules. Mr. Beck said perhaps if we can see stops by bus cameras, that would be a way. Ms. Gullickson said twice we have hired interns to do a bus stop inventory and neither time was it successful. Perhaps we can have drivers who are on light duty take an inventory. We have not yet come up with an efficient way. Mr. Tangney asked if the interns could just ride the bus and look. Ms. Gullickson said we have a list of things we want noted and we want a picture. Mr. Beck said the bus cameras might be the answer.

6. [25652](#)

New Paratransit PM Dispatcher - Ron Ploessl

Mr. Ploessl has been with Metro for 14 years. He drove for just under 4 years before being promoted to fixed route supervisor. Then after Phil Johnson retired, he moved over to paratransit. It's quite a learning experience, but he enjoys the people and the good team he's working with. He likes his hours - 10 AM to 6 PM. Late calls after 6 PM are handled by mainline supervisors.

After introductions, Mr. Tangney asked Mr. Ploessl about his job. Mr. Ploessl said the dispatchers work with Metro drivers as well as providers scheduling rides, helping solve problems, getting numbers, cancelling and adding on rides. He also does customer service work such as getting feedback to the providers and working Metro Customer Service to schedule rides.

Mr. Tangney asked about the value of perhaps having a cell phone number of customers available for when a passenger is at a certain door and might get no loaded because the driver doesn't know which door. Ms. Martin said contact information for all of our riders is available when we pull up their ride information. Also the ride information we send over to the contractors includes home or destination phone numbers. At our last ADATS meeting, Mike Huckaby asked about cell phone numbers. Mr. DuRocher said when you call to schedule a ride, you can give a number to be put in the comment line. But our expectation at Metro is that customers are going to be ready to go, waiting inside the vestibule rather than inside their apartment. Some providers can communicate over a cell phone, but we don't require contractors or our own drivers to have that capability. It's not reasonable to have the dispatcher make calls to individual customers. We usually use those numbers for incidents. The numbers aren't always updated. We've been working with Dane County to update contact information for many years.

Mr. Tangney said he's talking about a situation where someone is where they

are supposed to be but the driver can't find them because they don't know the area. Suppose it's late at night and the customer is going to be no loaded. Ms. Martin said we have an after hours cell phone number at Metro. If the person missed their ride, they can call that, and it is our obligation to go pick them up and get them home. That is a result of the work of this committee. It is published in our newsletter. It doesn't get used a lot, but it is available. Mr. Tangney said he was not aware of that.

His other concern is that when someone is a no show and is a regular customer, does someone call 911. He called 911 for more than one person who did not show for a ride, and one had been on the floor for some days. He wants to know if there are back up numbers if the customer doesn't answer their own phone and if there is no contact made, whether Metro calls 911 as part of a standard operating procedure. This is only for people who have "like clockwork" lives.

Ms. Brunette-Tregoning asked how many regular riders we have at the same time every week. Ms. Martin said a lot of people who have routine schedules are in supported employment. We need to know who their emergency contact is and their agency. When we do recertification every three years, we ask for emergency contacts, agencies and contact numbers. But we only get the information if people send it back. Mr. Tangney felt every three years isn't very often. Ms. Martin said it's about as often as we can manage it. We streamlined the process when we went to just getting updated information and didn't require a new application every three years.

There is a three hour overlap between AM and PM dispatchers to find out what is going on for the day. Mr. Ploessl does feedback and sends information to contractors. Then in the afternoon, he does ride scheduling while dispatching. He multi-tasks to take care of cancellations and no shows and works on rides for the next day to fit in rides around standing rides. He creates schedules toward the end of his day, sends the schedules to contractors, works on issues that have come up for our drivers, and makes route sheets for our drivers. He is also doing ride-alongs with our drivers to check their performance on the job.

Mr. DuRocher asked if paratransit supervisors respond to customer feedback, how does the dispatcher become aware that there is something that needs to be responded to since riders don't have access to the dispatcher directly. Mr. Ploessl said Customer Service sends the feedback to the proper unit. Mr. DuRocher asked given all the things paratransit supervisors have to do, how many dispatchers are there? Mr. Ploessl said there are two dispatchers and then Karen Darcy for scheduling the standing rides.

Mr. DuRocher said regarding Mr. Tangney's suggestion about calling 911 for some no shows, he is uncomfortable making Madison Metro responsible for recognizing home emergencies. At the first level, it would be a roommate or someone else in the person's life to recognize this. Mr. Tangney said he was only talking about people living alone. Mr. DuRocher said there would be a lot of information needed about a person to decide if a 911 call was necessary. Mr. DuRocher said he didn't want to dismiss these situations lightly, but he is very reluctant to move forward with making it a policy because if he was no loaded, he doesn't know that he'd want 911 to come break down the door. Mr.

Tangney said if it's someone we know who is very regular and on time, but they are not there that day, and we can't get in touch with them, then it makes sense to check out the situation. Mr. DuRocher said if we do recertification more often than every three years, people might ignore the paperwork and get denied service. Ms. Martin said sometimes letters come back because the person is deceased or the letter is otherwise undeliverable, then we try to follow up. If we can't contact the person, they are marked inactive. If the item is delivered but not returned, they still get service.

Ms. Brunette-Tregoning asked what happens on weekends with only two supervisors. Mr. Ploessl said the two regular dispatchers are M – F and evenings and weekends, mainline supervisors take over and do what needs to be done such as cancellations. There isn't usually a lot to do. On the weekend there is a regular fixed route person who does Sunday rides. Ms. Darcy does a lot of work for Monday on the previous Fridays. Mr. Ploessl does Saturday rides. Customer service is open on the weekend.

Ms. Brunette-Tregoning said she'd like the emergency cell number. It is 444-7011. Mr. DuRocher also said if you call the regular customer service number and listen to the full recording, that number is on it. Ms. Brunette-Tregoning wanted to mention that spring break is coming up and there are people at the natatorium who need to have attendants. Maybe there could be a notice at Metro. Ms. Martin said sometimes, like at Lapham Pool, there is an attendant during spring break, so we can't assume anything about people's schedules. We've made it very clear to facilities that they need to call in cancellations by a person's name because there might be people who are on staff who go in even on holidays or during inclement weather.

Mr. DuRocher said the real crux of it is who is ultimately responsible for canceling and scheduling. Someone at a residential facility might say Metro should know to cancel a ride to a closed facility. But the person who scheduled a standing ride is the one responsible to cancel that ride. Metro is doing a fantastic job of providing rides scheduled. They can't know when a person isn't supposed to go. Mr. DuRocher remembers the early days when someone would call trying to get him to cancel a ride based on bad weather. We've come a long way since then.

7. [25653](#)

Reports

- a. Transit & Parking Commission
- b. Commission on People with Disabilities
- c. Dane County Specialized Transportation Commission
- d. Other Community Meetings
- e. Performance Indicators
- f. Report from the Chair
- g. Staff Report

Attachments: [Para Indicators Dec11.pdf](#)
[Para Indicators Jan12.pdf](#)
[Pending List 02 09 12.pdf](#)
[ADATS roster.pdf](#)

- a. Transit & Parking Commission – Mr. Streit was no longer present to give a report.
- b. Commission on People with Disabilities – Mr. Tangney said there was nothing to report.
- c. Dane County Specialized Transportation Commission – Mr. DuRocher said there is a meeting Thursday this week.
- d. Other Community Meetings – There were no other community meetings reported.
- e. Performance Indicators – Ms. Martin said in 2011 paratransit ridership went down by almost 1%. That is bucking the trend of increasing ridership. Some decrease can be attributed to the statewide brokerage and rides being provided by LogisitCare that used to be provided by Metro. We had usually done 3,000 or 4, 000 of those rides per year.

Cancellations are up a bit – 15.9% for 2011 compared to 15% previous years. No shows remain steady. The number of clients provided service is down almost 50 people. Ms. Martin is not sure what contributes to that. The number of DDS trips was down a little, but subscription trips were up a little. Leave attended trips were up. Door to door trips were down. Percentage of rides provided among contractors remained steady.

We try to stay under 4.0 for complaints per 1000 trips. Abby Vans had a bit of a hard transition with the brokerage but a pretty successful year overall. On-time performance for Metro still has a button pushing problem for Metro drivers; that accounts for 87% on-time performance. We were more on-time than that. We hope we can train newer drivers on button pushing since they aren't used to recording time on the manifest instead.

We have more customers current with us even though well less than half of the people signed up for service actually take trips. An interesting number for January is the no show percentage. Last year in January it was 2.0%. This year it is 1.5%. Currently we're still counting no shows in this report the same way (not trips cancelled late within the 60 minute window) so you can see the difference in our no show rate since we've been applying our new notification procedure. We're hoping to do a presentation in July or August about how that policy is going so far. We've been doing a soft roll out. No shows are down quite a bit. People are getting their no show postcards and calling, being very responsive about it. We sent out 10 warning letters and issued two one-day suspensions for January. We're not suspending people at any greater rate than under the previous policy. That indicates that people are changing their behaviors accordingly.

Mr. DuRocher said one of the things he noticed is that the common image of paratransit service is that it is accessible transportation for people who use wheelchairs. But only approximately 1/3 of the total trips were non-ambulatory. The other thing worth monitoring is Badger Bus is doing between 1/3 and 1/2 of all paratransit rides. That is a shift. He is glad as Metro's percentage dwindles that there is never any discussion to get rid of direct service. He hopes there never is. Ms. Martin said remember that Badger bus

has two contracts – regular and long-term assignment. Mr. Ploessl said Badger Bus also provides service on weekends as well.

f. Report from the Chair – There was no report from the chair.

g. Staff Report – Ms. Martin said Ida Nathan, whose term is up this March, said as much as she enjoys this subcommittee, she has conflicts so she will not be re-applying for another term. The Mayor's office asked if we had any recommendations, so if you know anyone who would be interested, pass along their names, have them fill out a statement of interests form or give Ms. Martin a call to learn more about it. Mr. DuRocher said we should mention something about ADATS in the next ParatransAction newsletter. Ms. Martin said yes; the next one will be in August. Ms. Brunette-Tregoning said send out letters to some associations/agencies such as Access to Independence. We could use the perspective of a hearing impaired person.

Ms. Martin said in the "Just Ask Us" column of the newspaper, someone asked whether any car with disabled plates/hangtag can park in spots marked "van accessible area"? She asked Mr. Tangney. Mr. Tangney said that signage is a little strange. It means that someone with a right side ramp van can park to the left and have space to let out their ramp, but anyone who has a disabled parking tag can use that space. That space has an 8 foot clearance because the ramp takes up 4 feet of the space and the other 4 feet is necessary for a full size wheelchair.

Ms. Martin gave an update on the Medicaid transportation brokerage. In the beginning, six counties in southeast Wisconsin, including Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha, were not included in the brokerage. However, an RFP is being issued soon, and once that is awarded, that part of the state will be included in statewide brokerage.

Inspections of vehicles used as specialized medical vehicles (SMV) used to be done by the State Patrol. As part of becoming a certified provider for SMV service, they had their vehicles inspected once a year. The State Patrol will stop doing SMV inspections immediately because Logisticare has its own inspection process. Unfortunately, that affects Metro, too. This is not an issue that affects just us; it affects other transit utilities across the state. We have been in touch with John Alley at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation about this issue and how to bridge that gap. Mr. DuRocher expressed dismay at the thought of providers doing their own inspection.

There are three meetings coming up for the Transportation Policy and Finance Commission – former Mayor Dave is a member of the Commission.

Milwaukee – March 22
Appleton – April 26
Eau Claire – May 31

There is a website available. Let Ms. Martin know if you are interested, and she'll send you the information.

Ms. Martin went to Washington, DC last week. Transit General Manager Chuck Kamp showed her an editorial in the New York Times that was republished in

Passenger Transport, a transit trade journal. From 1995 to 2010, the US population grew by 16%. Vehicle miles travelled over that same time span increased 8% to 24%. During those 15 years, there was a 31% increase in transit trips. Metro's ridership over the same period of time increased 44%. We're beating the national average.

Mr. Tangney wondered if that represented more senior people riding transit. Ms. Martin said people are retiring to the city. Also young people are plugged into a variety of technology devices that can make transit easy to use.

8. [08706](#) Other Transit Related Announcements

There were no other transit related announcements.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:54 PM.