

Metro 2006 Strategic Annual Plan (DRAFT: 01/03/06)

Goal #1: **Increase Ridership** (Measure of goal: number of trips compared to previous reporting periods, combination of new riders & more use by present riders).

strategies/methods:

A. Improve service through strategic redistribution of service hours and/or new funding sources, improved phasing, reduced travel-time, and on-time performance.

- Improve service and obtain ridership growth through implementation of West and South-side service changes in Fall of 2006, including introduction of NW Transfer Point in Middleton and connecting route service between STP and ETP. This route re-structure will be the major annual effort in identifying opportunities for reduction of duplication, re-allocation of resources from under-utilized routes to more productive services and as the means of anticipating budget needs for 2007. In the lead-up to implementation, a variety of tools will be used to identify those opportunities – including surveys, Automatic Passenger Counter (APC) data, Genfare farebox data, customer feedback, listening sessions and public hearing. Extensive information will be provided to passengers about proposed service changes and known issues will be identified for TPC review and discussion.
- Conduct further service planning discussions with Sun Prairie, Oregon/Stoughton, Cross Plains and other communities indicating an interest in service. Pursue discussions with McFarland (if they are interested) in connection with potential service extension to the Marsh/Siggelkow Road area (Habitat for Humanity).
- Continue efforts to improve “phasing of service” (timing relationship among routes) along main transit corridors.
- Simplify schedules where possible, including more limited use of “vias” or clearer identification through re-numbering or lettering.
- Implement travel-time improvements through scheduling and interlining (utilizing APC and GFI data) as each Ride Guide is produced;
- Work with TE on potential application(s) of signal prioritization at selected locations in the transit system’s service area.
- Improve on-time performance for Fixed-route and paratransit services – continuing to use AVL system to track actual travel time patterns and modifying schedules route-by-route as data becomes available; Track on-time performance for paratransit contractors through info required of contractors previously negotiated in 1/01/06 contracts.

B. Expand use of Unlimited Ride Pass and other ridership incentives

- Continue to pursue opportunities for expanded ridership through implementation of Unlimited Ride Pass Agreements, Commuter Choice programs, and other employer incentives to induce increases in ridership;

C. Improve passenger amenities/aids

- Acquire additional digital signs (w/real-time schedule info) for appropriate locations.
- Introduce real-time schedule info to Metro Website for use by passengers with PCs or hand-held devices.
- Pursue bids for obtaining attractive, back-lit shelters with advertising as a means of obtaining additional passenger shelters and revenues.
- Continue bus stop sign replacement program - with focus on west and south, in connection with service changes.
- For FY07 capital budget consider the possibility of a pilot project to test introduction of heating elements in shelter(s) at one or more Transfer Points.
- Continue to work with the City on expanding the number of sites with boarding pads, shelters, and benches - piggy-backing on the City’s sidewalk replacement program and incorporating requirements in development plans.

D. Target marketing efforts in connection with service improvements, in addition to normal UW/MATC campus efforts.

(Note: 2006 Marketing Plan will provide further detail)

- Target promotions to service expansion areas.
- Use various tools to obtain input on planned service changes, including residential surveys, employer surveys, neighborhood listening sessions, focused passenger surveys, driver surveys, APC and GFI data – as appropriate.
- Promote commuter choice and unlimited ride pass programs at employer sites.
- Maintain and improve mymetrobus.com website for visitors to website, work with DMI/Chamber for mailings to conventions, etc.
- Conduct a survey of ADA paratransit clients to assess level of satisfaction and glean insight into possible means of inducing use of fixed-route transit (rather than paratransit) service.

E. Develop further park and ride lots:

- (1) Introduce ETP Park & Ride lot.
- (2) Explore possibility of having park & ride lots in vicinity of WTP, STP, and Alliant Energy Center.

F. Continue active involvement in land use planning process, including new plats, neighborhood plans, single parcel re-development.

G. Continue active participation in Transport 2020#2 study process concerning alternative mode discussions with Board and at Tech Committee levels. Keep TPC aware of discussions/sentiment expressed at Transport 2020 meetings and sub-committee meetings about regionalizing the transit system.

G. Continue active involvement with Mayor's staff et al to study feasibility/plan a streetcar service; and with Transport 2020 Study.

Goal #2: Reduce Costs*

Strategies:

A. Develop and implement plans for redistribution of services for service efficiencies.

- Implement West and South-side service changes in Fall of 2006, following public input. Use this plan as the major means of identifying opportunities for reduction of duplication, re-allocation of resources from under-utilized routes to more productive services, and to meet budget needs for FY07. Utilize a variety of tools: surveys, Automatic Passenger Counters, GFI data, and other methods to develop service changes proposals. Keep in mind needs of populations of low income, disabled, students and those households that either by necessity or choice have no automobile available to them.

B. Continue focus on personnel management issues

- Reduce overtime through scheduling routines, assignment of extra sections, and continuous hiring program;
- Reduce workers compensation time loss through supervisory involvement in monitoring driver off/work/light duty status.
- Monitor absenteeism closely.
- Work to maintain positive employee morale.

C. Identify and implement efficiencies in paratransit services

- Go out to bid for In-Person Functional Assessments for paratransit applicants.
- Monitor Pilot Program and determine whether it should continue.
- Work with County to obtain maximum Medicaid or other funding (as applicable) for paratransit trips, and with the Statewide Study group for application of Medicaid funding for fixed route services.
- Maintain templates for paratransit subscription services for increased efficiency in scheduling, and increase the number of templates to the extent possible.
- Work to boost productivity as measured by rides/hour.

D. Miscellaneous:

- Explore whether the joint purchase of diesel fuel with other City Departments is advantageous to Metro.
- Utilize MG&E grant to offset fuel costs related to introduction of low sulfur fuel.

Goal #3: Increase Revenues/Sources*

Strategies:

(A) Increase number of contracting partners.

(B) Pursue new grant funding where opportunities arise in TEA-LU, including:

- Expanded use of Reverse Commute funds to new service communities, as may be applicable.
- Potential funding through New Freedoms Initiative;
- Additional capital funds through routine expansion of diamond lanes.

(C) Seek new advertising revenue possibilities, including advertising in shelters.

(D) Review Fare Structure for potential changes in Special Event and other fares.

(E) Look for opportunities to partner with more special event service providers.

(F) Work with TDM programs to enhance ridership/passenger revenue.

(G) Pursue donations of passenger amenities.

(H) Pursue Medicaid funding for eligible fixed-route patron ridership.

(I) Pursue Medicaid funding for eligible paratransit trips (beyond MA Waiver Program).

(J) Keep abreast of proposed WURTA legislation concerning Regional Transit Authority legislation (including funding mechanism).

Note: * Alternatively combine Goals#2 and 3 as: "Bring Level of Service and Financial Resources into Alignment", then use sub-sections for costs and revenues.

Goal #4: Increase operational efficiency and effectiveness

Strategies:

(A) Facility improvements:

- Work towards implementation of the Facility Master Plan, identify funding sources, etc.
- Install additional signage at Facility to provide clear directions for vendors, customers, and employees.
- Rehabilitate North and South Transfer Points.
- Move existing shelters to new locations to accommodate advertising shelters, as applicable.

(B) Fleet improvements:

- Continue updating current mainline fleet with acquisition of 16 forty-foot Gillig low floor buses (current contract).
- Go out to bid to replace 16 paratransit vehicles.
- Develop specs and go out to bid for hybrid-electric buses.
- As engine warranties expire, develop a comprehensive engine preventive maintenance program to prevent turbo-engine failures, and for in-chassis rebuilds.

(B). Staff Assignments/Concentration areas:

- Concentrate on development of Training Manual for bus operators.
- Train all employees on APM 3-5.
- Continue re-training program for bus operators – goal 33% of drivers. Concentrate on good customer relations and security/safety in training and re-training programs. Evaluate effectiveness of training program elements on a regular basis.
- Concentrate on timely and effective follow-up on service complaints, including application of discipline.

(C) Pursue staffing improvements in Budget plans for FY07 as identified in updated Five Year Staffing Plan, with emphasis on staffing support for advanced ITS programs.

(D) Create efficiencies in billing, budgeting, and financial forecasting:

- Introduce a new accounts receivable system that will allow more efficient tracking and allocation of invoices;
- Pursue implementation of a new budgeting program that will provide fiscal forecasting and planning tools.

(E) ITS program:

- (1) Continue working with Siemens (contract extension and budget amendment may be necessary for some items) to include additional elements of program, including:
 - software and hardware links for Siemens/GFI to obtain passenger boarding data to the bus stop level;
 - single point of driver log-in on buses for all ITS/AVL features
 - modification of destination sign program to allow automated changing of sign messages synchronized with external announcement messaging;
 - trouble-shooting the Siemens “Webwatch” feature to allow real-time bus location data to be accessed via an Internet connection;
 - explore additional methods for delivering real-time schedule info to the public.
- (2) Develop and document helpful queries for staff use in gathering requested ridership and revenue data quickly from APC and GFI data.
- (3) Monitor APC vehicle assignment for compliance with data collection program set-up; re-wire APCs where necessary, re-deploy APCs as desired.
- (4) Monitor functioning of Unlimited Ride Pass de-programming function for voided passes.
- (5) Monitor passenger loads for routes – looking for patterns of overloads or under-utilization.
- (6) Monitor data being downloaded by paratransit contractors via the Internet (effective 01/01/06); and expand type of data as feasible.
- (7) Utilize ITS data in Contract Negotiations and Billings for Unlimited Ride Pass contracts and in reporting data to NTD.
- (8) Modify Dispatch Office procedures as necessary to accommodate the introduction of automated dispatching software (Trapeze Ops) and additional AVL system applications (Siemens).

(G) Alternative Fuels:

- Continue use of ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel
- Go out to bid for Hybrid Diesel-Electric buses.

Goal #5: Increase Security/Improve Security Preparedness

A. Secure approval for Security/Safety Plan.

B. Work with Dane County Department of Emergency Management in the development and implementation of an Emergency Support Function (Plan) for Transportation.

- C. Work with Police Dept. and MMSD to address youth conduct on the buses, at the transfer points, and in the vicinity of bus stops.
- D. Provide ongoing training to Supervisors and Operators to teach operators skills and techniques for maintaining a safe environment on the bus.
- E. Utilize security cameras at STP and on-board buses to best advantage for security in those areas.
- F. Schedule special MPD training for Metro Ops Supervisors on defusing altercations and dealing with violent people.