
TRANSIT AND PARKING COMMISSION COVER SHEET

AGENDA ITEM: F.1.

MEETING DATE: Aug. 14, 2007

ITEM: Ramp Shuttle Analysis - Final

STAFF DISCUSSION OF ITEM:

On January 2, 2007, Madison Metro began operating Route 89 ramp shuttle with Parking Utility financial sponsorship. The service ended June 15, 2007. The purpose was to redistribute parking demand from over-utilized ramps (Campus and GE) to underutilized ramps such as Overture and Capitol Square North. It was not designed to be a downtown get-a-round. We anticipated that price-sensitive parking customers with the opportunity to save up to \$64/month would shift their parking to the less expensive ramps by riding a "free" shuttle back to their intended destination, freeing up space at the more expensive ramps for parkers willing to pay more. In theory, it was a "win-win" with customers getting what they wanted and the Parking Utility breaking even on the operation. To break even, the Parking Utility needed to generate about \$150K to cover the anticipated \$125K annual Metro operating cost, the \$15K in advertising cost and \$10K in Parking Utility staff costs. The financial success of the operation depended on latent demand to fill up the more popular ramps and on price-sensitive customers who would be willing to extend their commute time slightly to accommodate a short bus ride to a less expensive ramp. Bus riders could use either a bus pass or parking entry ticket to ride the shuttle for "free". They did not need to park in our facilities to ride the shuttle. Credits generated from bus passes would be used to reduce the cost to the Parking Utility. Bus ridership was to be another measure of the success of this program. The Madison Metro system-wide ridership average is about 34 riders per hour per route.

There were two target audiences for this service: 1) The commuter who worked near the Capitol Square and came to work between 6:30AM and 8:44AM and returned home between 3:37PM and 5:44PM, who could take the Capitol Ramp shuttle. 2) Students and UW-associated parkers who would normally park in Campus Ramps between 8:55AM and 3:25 PM, who could take the Campus Ramp shuttle to Overture and save \$.40/hour. "Shifters" (parkers that shifted their parking to less expensive ramps to save money) would cost the Utility about \$565/riders per year, and "Newbies" (new parkers that could find space in formerly overcrowded ramps) would improve the financial results by approximately \$1825/year.

Numerous promotional methods were used to advertise the new service:

- News conference with the Mayor/DMI/BID/Ald. Webber, with television coverage by two local stations
- News stories in various publications including Wisconsin State Journal, Isthmus and the Capital Times
- Downtown Madison newsletter
- BID newsletter
- BID website
- PU website
- Metro website
- Metro Map published with Route 89 information on the front cover
- Identified on bus shelter maps
- In Metro's Rider Reader newsletter
- Part of Metro's rider alert
- E-mail to every downtown State and City employee with computer access
- ½-page brochures distributed by DMI/BID to downtown establishments
- 8000 ½-page brochures distributed by ramp personnel to parkers as they exited the ramps
- Full page brochures distributed by MPO staff with other TDM materials
- Weekly Isthmus ¼-page ads alternating between Capitol and Campus routes
- Isthmus Web Banner
- Weekly Badger Herald or Cardinal ads alternating between Capitol and Campus routes
- Sandwich-board type advertisements for viewing when entering all of the parking ramps

The total paid advertising cost during the 5.5-month promotional period was \$11,650. This is more paid advertising than any other single Metro route in the recent memory of Transit employees. It does not include Metro staff hours spent on this project or the cost of the other non-paid promotional material mentioned above.

Parking Utility staff has attempted six on-board surveys to determine user behavior. The surveyor boarded the Capitol route three times in the morning and in the afternoon however no riders boarded and the survey could not be completed.

The surveyor boarded Campus route three times and a single rider was surveyed. She boarded on State Street near Lake using her UW bus pass and exited on State Street near Henry Street. Both drivers reported very little rider activity during the past six months. The best day (58 riders) was during a WIAA sporting event. The same driver reported 16 people in one group boarding at Overture and departing at Lake Street using their parking pass during another event.

Route 89 Ramp Shuttle Ridership Summary

Jan. 2, 2007 – June 15, 2007

	Rides Provided	Parking pass used	Other pass or cash	Campus Route	Capitol Route
MONTH					
JAN	191	8	183	182	9
FEB	200	109	91	162	38
MAR	303	130	173	82	221
APR	347	104	243	272	75
MAY	208	84	124	140	68
JUN 15	67	44	23	36	31
TTL	1316	479	837	874	442
%		36%	64%	66%	34%

Ridership data indicates the following:

- Low service demand – about 1 ride per hour vs 34 rides per hour on the average Metro route
- Service demand not increasing over time to an acceptable level
- The majority of users were not parkers (36%), but were using it as a downtown get-a-round (64%)
- The majority of the users used the Campus route (66%) rather than the capitol route (34%)

MATERIALS PRESENTED WITH ITEM:

- Route Maps

STAFF RECOMMENDATION/RATIONALE:

Ridership data indicates extremely poor rider numbers (about 1 rider per hour) and it was not improving to acceptable levels. **The ramp shuttle pilot program was a failure from bus ridership or customer acceptance perspective.**

In January through May 2006 and 2007, the peak occupancy levels at the parking garages were as follows:

FACILITY	Jan 2006	Jan 2007	Feb 2006	Feb 2007	Mar 2006	Mar 2007	Apr 2006	Apr 2007	May 2006	May 2007
Overture Cashiered	53%	52%	59%	54%	57%	57%	58%	52%	50%	50%
State Street Capitol Cashiered	61%	54%	64%	72%	72%	63%	68%	62%	54%	56%
Government East Cashiered	95%	89%	95%	92%	90%	95%	90%	87%	93%	91%
State Street Campus Cashiered	68%	54%	84%	74%	84%	78%	90%	68%	70%	67%
Capitol Square North Cashiered	72%	58%	74%	59%	66%	58%	69%	56%	65%	57%

Parking rate increase 7/1/06 (except Overture).

There is no indication from these occupancy figures that this service created many shifters or new riders. At Overture Ramp, the occupancy trended downward over the 5-month trial even though the relative price between it and other ramps improved greatly with the price increase in July 2006 at all other ramps. At Government East, occupancy was lower the first two months but rebounded the last part of the trial to close to pre-shuttle numbers. At Campus Ramp, the occupancy fell substantially during the trial months but can't be accounted for by the shuttle ridership figures. Cap Square North and State St. Cap occupancy fell substantially during the trial. Perhaps a few new riders were created but we would need 82 to

break even with a cost of \$150,000. If the riders were actually shifters and not new riders, then we lost additional revenue on top of the project costs.

The ramp shuttle pilot program was a failure from a financial perspective.

The Metro charge to the Parking Utility for the shuttle service for 5.5 months was \$65,371. This figure represents a cost of \$65,868 minus \$467 in unlimited ride pass credits.

Total shuttle costs for 5.5 months (not incl. Metro staff time and Metro advertising) = \$87,021

Total shuttle rides = 1316

Cost per ride = \$66.12

Staff recommends the discontinuance of the ramp shuttle service. It did not redistribute demand from over-utilized facilities to underutilized facilities and it did not break even financially.

PREPARED BY:

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DATE: 8/14/07

