

**TRANSIT AND PARKING COMMISSION
COVER SHEET**

AGENDA ITEM Transit - Related Items/Exec. Sec. Report	MEETING DATE May 9, 2006
ITEM TRANSIT TOPICS: 2006 Annual Strategic Plan	
ID Number G.5	Council report back due date: NA
OTHER REFERRALS AND ACTIONS TAKEN TO DATE: NA	
STAFF DISCUSSION OF ITEM: <p>I have amended the 2006 Draft Annual Strategic Plan to incorporate elements of discussion from the Transit Planning Retreat held on Saturday, April 29th. The first attachment is notes from the Retreat. The second attachment is the revised plan – look for items in bold print. Those elements which can be built into Metro activity plans for the year are included in the main body of the Strategic Plan. On the last page of the Plan, see TPC Commission Goals (as shown below). These are elements that necessitate Commission involvement during the course of the year.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>TPC Commission Goals:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Take more control of transit planning in region. (2) Settle the multi-modal governance issue in favor of Metro. (3) Help “Tell the Transit Story”. (4) Help in the effort to seek dedicated funding for transit. (5) Support increased funding for increased frequency of service in the budget process. (6) Assert need for Transit Demand Management in development/re-development processes (and otherwise) and look for opportunities for Transportation Management Associations or cooperative endeavors in the business community to provide support to transit. 	
FISCAL IMPLICATIONS: NA	
MATERIALS PRESENTED WITH ITEM: Attachments – Retreat Notes and 2006 Strategic Annual Plan	
STAFF RECOMMENDATION/RATIONALE: As indicated above.	
PREPARED BY: CSDebo	SIGNED DATE: 5/4/06

Transit Retreat notes (Saturday, April 29, 2006)

I. Political events and trends influencing transit environment

- Transport 2020 Governing System discussions
 - Use existing structure
- Streetcar study: city will do streetcar itself
- Mayor's Task Force – Long-range transit planning initiative
- Discussions concerning establishment of governing structure for M.P.O.
- Discussions concerning re-creation of Regional Planning Commission
- Wisconsin Urban and Rural Transit Association (WURTA)– Working with State Legislature to create enabling legislation to create Regional Transit Authorities w/taxation authority.
- Southeast (Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee) Corridor RTA – study.
- Dane County Business Leaders discussions concerning link with Milwaukee 7
- \$1,000,000 planning grant (Dane County)
 - Cap on local funding
 - Para-transit
- No automatic roll-up for fuel tax – will pit roads vs. transit
- County Executive running for new office
- Referendum – dedicated sales tax?
- Extend transit into smaller communities
- K-12 referenda by MMSD - impact on transit
- High speed rail – Chicago – Minneapolis

II. Technology influencing transit environment

- Hybrid buses (reduction in fuel usage, maintenance needs)
- Rail vehicles (can go off track, on tires when necessary)
- GPS/AVL equipment on buses – information for planning purposes, digital signs, real time info for passengers, annunciation, signal prioritization
- Telecommuting trend:
 - Support industries
 - Impact on transit usage, parking
- Proliferation of hand held devices
 - Need to link to hand held devices
- Wireless potential for transit
 - internet on buses
- More fuel efficiency (may lead to less use of public transit)
- Other types of vehicles for transit than 40 buses
- Other types of service – Blend transit & Paratransit?
- Power wheel chairs
- “Segway” – ambulatory devices
 - Storage on transit vehicles
- Fare box technology
 - passenger counts
 - next generation: proximity cards
- “green buses”
 - costs
 - marketing

III. Demographics influencing transit environment

- Aging population, including increased longevity
 - Added demand on public transit
- Location of poor people
 - Inside and outside of City
- Bigger schools, fewer locations
 - Higher % of lower income in MMSD
- Densification
- In-migration to Dane County
 - large numbers of persons aged 22 to 42 into Dane County
 - Retirees
- Single-family %

IV. Socio-Economic factors influencing transit environment

- Gap between rich & poor
- “Wiping out” of middle class
- End of traditional manufacturing
- Dispersion of jobs
- Types of jobs (diversification in industry types)
- Housing affordability across the region
- Decline in unionization (manufacturing)
- Declining lot size
- In-migration
 - lack of knowledge of Metro services
- Personal transportation costs
- Baby boomers becoming Senior citizens – greater need for transit

IV. Economic factors and trends influencing transit environment

- Legislature proposal to cap municipal expenditures
- normal growth in transit costs
- Gas prices rising
- More focus on “Accountability”
- Performance-based
- More consolidation
- Out-sourcing
- Labor – declining political clout
 - Impact on quality/cost
- Energy efficiency Standards
- Increasing Land Cost
- Increasing building costs
- Housing bubble may burst – impact on economy
- Housing increase downtown & University
- Affluent society – more options
- Recessionary pressure on economy
- University spawns businesses
- Changing University
- Changing face of retail – Midvale – Hilldale

V. Opportunities

- Good news in funding
 - State reimburses communities
- Heightened interest in transit by surrounding communities
- Heightened interest by business sector (companies)
- Expanded core services (Isthmus)
- Extend hours of core service – State Street support
- Other modes (conceded to other groups)
 - “Step To The Plate”
- Interaction of Metro, street cars and trains
- Congestion – dedicated diamond lanes
- Rate increases (Parking)
- Unlimited Ride Pass Agreements – additional contracts
- New revenue source – less reliance on local property tax
- On week ends – losing rides at present
- Wisconsin and Southern RR
- Perimeter – travel times (express overlay)
- Wireless on Buses
- Route deviation (cell phone) Integration of Para-transit & smaller vehicles
- Increasing frequency
- Hand held devices to learn where buses are
- Transfer Point System - strong system to build from
- More transfer points, including informal transfer opportunities

VI. Threats

- Levy limits, constitutional amendments
- Funding sources
 - Dedicated funding needed
- Fuel costs
- Declining public perception of safety
- Behavior issues (schools, youth)
- People who nothing about transit are involved in governance discussions
- Rail ridership impact on metro’s ridership

VII. Internal Scan – plusses and minuses

Facility

- Lacking – limits service Metro can provide

Staff

- Understaffed, but able to do so much more because of technology
- Worry about retention of Personnel - technical staff
- strong L/M

Governance

- BOE, CC, TPC (Who’s in charge?)
- Need a “Transit Authority” – per State audit
- What about multi-modal
- Awareness of cost to maintain services

Fleet & Technology

- Relatively new fleet & technology
- Peak hours – Boardings near capacity
- Off peak – lots of space/equipment
- Number of vehicles - barely adequate
- Paratransit (not necessarily the right vehicle)
- Smaller buses
- Some possibility for fleet diversification
- Acquisition of hybrid buses
- Need more equipment for spare ratio

Maintenance

- Outsourcing engine & transmission work
- Highly skilled and receptive to learning new skills
- Facility lacking in maintenance space

Marketing

- Subsistence budget
- Route structure good
- Need to add funding to increase frequency

VIII Strengths

- Current route structure
- Current fare structure – (unlimited ride pass programs)
- Fare technology
- Good support on CC
- Support of partnering communities/interest of additional communities
- robust Paratransit service
- TPC controls parking
- Focus on/Interest in “transit”
- Commitment to transit by city

IX. Weaknesses

- Annual budget process
- Federal priorities
- Relationship – perception of transit in business community
- Low confidence of Mayor in commission
- No Press Secretary – don’t control the “transit” story

X. Strategic Issues

- 1) We need to take control of the transit story and use network of advocates
- 2) Take more control of transit planning in region
- 3) Seek dedicated funding
- 4) Settle the governance issue in favor of Metro (“steal the gosling”)
- 5) Increase frequency of service
- 6) Assertive usage of TDM, TMA

Metro 2006 Strategic Annual Plan (Updated 5-3-06)

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 better on-time performance.

- Improve service and obtain ridership growth through implementation of West and South-side service changes in Fall of 2006, including 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. 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. 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 in connection with potential service extension to the Marsh/Siggelkow Road area.
- 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 in order to help current transit patrons and prospective transit users among the general public to understand and use the transit system.
- Enhance transfer opportunities at formal and informal transfer points through route design and identification of key informal “transfer opportunity” bus stops.
- Modify bus schedules to reflect real-time performance of buses through review of APC data. Introduce minor schedule modifications to reflect real-time performance and related travel-time improvements 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 and on expansion of “diamond lane” network.
- Improve on-time performance for paratransit services – continuing to use AVL system to track actual travel time patterns and modifying schedules 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. **Tell the “Transit Story” on an on-going basis in the news media, with pro-active involvement to head off negative press. Obtain assistance from transit advocates.**

F. Develop further park and ride lots:

- (1) Introduce ETP Park & Ride lot.
- (2) Explore possibility of other park & ride lots – particularly in the vicinity of Transfer Points, and at Alliant Energy Center.

G. Continue active involvement in land use planning process, including new plats, neighborhood plans, single parcel re-development. **Incorporate TDM/TMA remarks in Metro commentary on development and re-development plans as appropriate.**

H. **Increase frequency of service** Incorporate request for funding higher levels of frequency (as may be identified) in budget requests.

I. 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. **Keep TPC members up-to-date on proceedings and encourage their involvement in governance discussions - to encourage use of Metro in administration of service and involvement of TPC in governance structure.**

J. Continue active involvement with Mayor’s staff et al to study feasibility/plan a streetcar service; and with Transport 2020 Study. **Keep TPC members up-to-date on proceedings and encourage their involvement in governance discussions – to encourage choice of Metro in administration of service and involvement of TPC in governance structure.**

Goal #2: Reduce Costs*

Strategies/Methods:

- 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.
- B. Continue focus on personnel management issues.
- Keep overtime low 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.
 - Explore potential use of bio-diesel fuel/ impact on cost.

Goal #3: Increase Revenues/Sources*

Strategies/Methods:

- (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.
 - Funding, as may exist, for increased security purposes.
- (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).
- (K) Keep abreast of potential for CITGO fare subsidy for low-income persons within context of cost and competitive bidding needs.
- (L) **Seek dedicated funding for transit through legislative action or other available means.**

Goal #4: Increase operational efficiency and effectiveness

Strategies/Methods:

(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.

(C) 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.

(D) 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.

(E) 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.

(F) 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

Strategies/Methods:

- 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.

G. Research additional funding sources for provision of increased security for above-stated projects.

TPC Commission Goals:

- (1) Take more control of transit planning in region.
- (2) Settle the multi-modal governance issue in favor of Metro.
- (3) Help “Tell the Transit Story”.
- (4) Help in the effort to seek dedicated funding for transit.
- (5) Support increased funding for increased frequency of service in the budget process.
- (6) Assert need for Transit Demand Management in development/re-development processes (and otherwise) and look for opportunities for Transportation Management Associations or cooperative endeavors in the business community to provide support to transit.