



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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Meeting Minutes - Amended TRANSIT AND PARKING COMMISSION

**PLEASE NOTE: This meeting can be viewed in a live webcast of Madison City Channel at
www.madisoncitychannel.com.**

Tuesday, July 13, 2010

5:00 PM

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

Please note: The Minutes have been amended to reflect that at the start of Deb Brennum's statement in Agenda Item G., Poulson turned the Chair over to White and excused himself from the meeting for a few moments.

Please note also: Items are reported in Agenda order.

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM.

Present: 9 -

Gary L. Poulson; Susan M. Schmitz; Kenneth M. Streit; Margaret Bergamini; Chris Schmidt; Jed Sanborn; David E. Tolmie; Amanda F. White and Duane F. Hinz

Absent: 1 -

Brian L. Solomon

Please note: Sanborn arrived at 5:13 PM, during Agenda Item E.1., the Parking Report. Also, there is one vacancy on the Commission.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Streit, seconded by Tolmie, to Approve the Minutes of the June 8, 2010 meeting. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

C.1. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Poulson asked for nominations. Streit/Schmitz nominated Poulson for Chair and White for Vice-Chair. Poulson asked three times if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, Hinz/Schmidt made a motion to close nominations and hold the election. Poulson was elected Chair and White was elected Vice-Chair by voice vote/other.

C.2. Appointments to other committees, as needed (inc. Taxi Appeals Committee)

Poulson asked for volunteers to serve on the three-member Taxi Appeals subcommittee, which was needed to hear a current appeal. Schmidt agreed to fill the alder position, and Streit and Bergamini (Chair appointee) agreed to fill the remaining two member slots.

- C.3. [19167](#) Proposed addition to TPC Rules and Procedures: Section II (L) - Bonds - TPC 07.13.10

With no objection from members, Poulson deferred this item to the August meeting.

D. PUBLIC APPEARANCES

On behalf of Parking Utility employees, Parking Cashier Tim Birkley, 105 Dorn Drive, Waunakee, WI 53597, expressed opposition to the proposal by Parking management to replace Parking cashiers with automated equipment; and requested an item be placed on a future agenda to allow Parking cashiers to present their concerns and to elaborate on the services they provided. To support this request, Birkley cited the following:

- Cashiers were dedicated and loyal employees, who provided an historically valuable service to Madisonians and guests.
- Eliminating cashiers and relying on current technology would hinder the Utility's ability to meet its objectives as stated in the Mayor's 2010 Madison Measures: i.e., to provide excellent customer service to paid onstreet and garage parkers; and to provide safe, clean, reasonably priced, and easy-to-use facilities.
- Ensuring safety for parkers and their property was best accomplished by presence of a cashier at a fixed location.
- Customers knew where to find help; cashiers could respond quickly to them and other situations.
- The presence of cashiers helped minimize property and facility damage, and deterred crime.
- Equipment failures as seen currently fell short of the Utility's stated objectives; they caused delays and prevented parkers from exiting: the credit card system, the pay-on-foot kiosks and the credit-card-only exits regularly failed; entrance tickets were frequently unreadable and could only be processed by a cashier. In these instances, parkers were not be able to exit without the help of a cashier, who also ensured that fees were collected.
- With hundreds of years of combined experience, cashiers served as ambassadors for the city, and helped with a myriad of citizen and visitor needs, making Madison a wonderful place to live, work and visit.

Registrant Cathy Capser, 2114 Red Arrow Trail, Madison 53713, described some situations she had recently observed on Metro buses and at transfer points that she found troubling, and asked that Madison Metro address the following: Provide clean buses, and clean, unobstructed and well-lit transfer points; establish a good security program and complete installation of security cameras at all transfer points; train drivers in customer service, to better respond to those with mobility problems, and to clean up trash and remove safety hazards; communicate better with the MPD liaison.

E. TRANSIT AND PARKING MONTHLY REPORTS

- E.1. [19166](#) Parking: April 2010 YTD Revenue-Expense, Occupancy and June Activity Reports, & Video Surveillance Policy - TPC 07.13.10

Parking Operations Manager Bill Knobloch highlighted the following items:

- Borings had been ordered for Gov East to find out soil and water conditions for the new parking garage.
- Staff hoped for member feedback on the Parking reports to learn what was

useful.

- Metric was about to install a "fix" for the multi-space meters; they would not be put into service until they worked perfectly .
- After digging was started at the State Street Cap ramp, it was found that concrete remediation there would cost \$60K more than originally thought, indicative of what might be expected at the other (aging) ramps.

After hearing how much time was spent preparing the Parking reports, White asked members to think about what needs to be included in these reports, to consider whether quarterly reports would be more useful in showing trends.

Knobeloch responded to questions about the multi-space meters as follows:

- The machines worked fine, except for the first swipe of a card. The first swipe produced the message, "Card read fail error". After this the machine "woke up", and every card swipe thereafter worked.
- Though the vendor thought customers could get past this and the machines could be put into service, staff intended to wait until this was fixed.
- They were likely to work in extreme cold.
- Metric had not yet been paid anything; once in service, the machines were covered by a one-year maintenance contract and a performance bond (the entire amount of the contract in phases).
- The six other vendors who responded to RFP were not affordable; rates would have had to go too high to pay for the machines.
- Philadelphia had ordered 1,100 and installed 800 pay-and-display machines from Metric with the same card reader, but with a different operating system. With its order of 100, Madison would have the biggest operation of Metric (AURA) pay-by-space machines.
- The machines in the garages were ZEAG (which now used only ZEAG software) and ranged in age from fairly new to 10 years old.

Knobeloch reported on the status of Gov East, as follows:

- DOA had been selected for the site of the train station, and more detailed planning now would begin.
- Plans for the new Gov East placed it underground between MMB and the Great Dane, going down as far as necessary for the desired number of stalls, demolishing the loading dock attached to MMB; and starting at the back wall of MMB, open cut to the half way point under Pinckney Street, then demolishing the current Gov East at a cost of \$950K. The open cut would then continue to the wall of the Great Dane and Marcus building.
- This would create a very efficient, large rectangular parcel, which, with seven bays, could accommodate about 300 vehicles per layer.
- The Parking Utility needed 600 spaces (vs. 511 at GE now); a hotel could need 150 stalls during the day, and at night, would lease an additional 150 from Parking, which would suit Parking's demand cycle well.
- A public market and the train station would also need stalls, but at this point, it wasn't clear who would be paying for these.
- With the cost estimated at \$27K/stall and with the possible number of stalls ranging from 1,200 to 1,400 , the total cost would be between \$32 to 40 million.
- The Parking Utility had the reserves and the bonding capability to pay for around 600 to 800 stalls (at \$27K/stall), but couldn't for any more than that.
- The 300 spaces/layer was a maximum, which didn't take into account space needed for maintenance areas or an at-grade bridge under Pinckney Street to accommodate heavy loads.

E.2. [19144](#)

Metro YTD Performance Indicator Reports - TPC 07.13.10

Metro Transit General Manager Chuck Kamp responded to questions about the monthly reports, as follows:

- Regarding the lower ridership numbers among Campus circulators, a couple of drivers had been identified who weren't properly reporting riders. The numbers were now likely to moderate over the rest of year.
- Metro met once every other month with the Mayor, Madison Schools and Capt. Balles of the MPD to discuss security issues, which had been very helpful in identifying security strategies at Metro.
- This group had developed the strategy to tie in security cameras at the South Transfer Point directly to the South Madison Police Station.
- The South TP was chosen first for this arrangement because it had a higher incidence of problems than others, and a line of sight could be established quickly (from a technological standpoint), from the transfer point to the police station.
- For the remaining three transfer points, Metro had planned to piggyback with the City on a fiber-optic connection in a request for stimulus funding, but this was not awarded to the City.
- Metro was now looking at other technologies; the other transfer points did not have a line of sight to the police station; Metro expected to have a connection for the other three transfer points within the next several months.

F. NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

F.1. [19032](#)

Repealing and recreating Sec. 11.06(7)(e) of the Madison General Ordinances to permit drivers of public passenger vehicles to charge estimated fares in advance for rides.

Traffic Engineering Transportation Operations Analyst Keith Pollock said that under the present ordinance, taxi companies could opt to have their drivers collect estimated pre-paid fares from all riders between the hours of 9 PM and 5 AM; currently no company was taking advantage of this provision. The new proposal would allow individual drivers to ask for pre-paid fares from different individuals under certain circumstances as listed in the resolution. At the end of the ride, any amount over the actual cost would be returned to the passenger.

A sponsor of the resolution, 20th District Alder Thuy Pham-Remmele made the following comments in support of the proposal:

- The current ordinance had been on the books for quite a while.
- Taxi drivers were being ripped off; when passengers didn't pay and drivers contacted the police, they were told they would have to file a report -- nearly impossible to do when in the middle of nowhere with other passengers to serve.
- Drivers approached the Alder and asked for help to improve the situation.
- Cab drivers were small businesses trying to carve out a living.
- They provided a basic service, esp. to areas where Metro didn't reach during certain hours; the proposal would help to ensure that this population was not deprived.
- The proposal was prepared in the hope that service to every area of the city could be improved, and cab drivers would be able to make an honest living.

Bergamini clarified with Pollock that the main differences between the current

ordinance and the proposal was that the proposal would allow pre-paid fares 24 hours/day under the specific circumstances outlined, and the cab companies wouldn't have to ask for pre-payment from every single passenger (during a specified time). Pollock said that currently drivers usually filed a crime report if passengers "ran"; police were called if the driver were in some danger. When asked why pre-paid fares had not been allowed initially, Pollock said there were some concerns about discrimination, esp. when individual drivers had the discretion to require a pre-pay. Rightly or wrongly, a passenger could think a driver's request for pre-pay was based on the neighborhood s/he was going to or her/his ethnicity. Rates were the same, pre-paid or not. Streit wondered if (similar to police traffic stops) reporting pre-pays to a dispatcher and keeping a database of same, might allay concerns about discrimination. Pollock thought that might be tough logistically. A few other cities allowed pre-pays.

Registrant John McNamera of Union Cab, 430 Cantwell Court, 53703, spoke in favor of the proposal. The issue had grown over the past couple years. Because police resources had thinned with the growth of the city, people were looking for ways to be preventive about crime. One suggestion was to treat the issue of non-payment like gas stations or hotels did, through pre-payment. Because the current ordinance didn't really allow this, taxi companies were asked for suggestions to change the ordinance. After talking to drivers, the companies came up with the list of eight conditions for pre-payment (as shown in the proposal). In his 16 years as a driver McNamera had had only two runners (a drunk and a kid); both in the afternoon, outside the current 9PM-5AM parameter. Though not an epidemic, one or two runners really ate into a cabbie's income for a day. The current ordinance didn't address red-lining, and it required companies to make a rather long-term commitment to universal pre-pay even if it didn't work. He liked the new language because it focused on the passenger behavior, not on characteristics or areas of the city.

When asked, McNamera didn't think it would be a problem for drivers to call their dispatcher when they requested pre-pay. Tracking the demographic data was not something they did right now. Passengers might not like to be questioned by drivers to gather this info; could have a chilling effect on passengers, maybe making them feel like someone was trying to discriminate. McNamera said that companies presently kept quite a bit of data. When they heard from Traffic Engineering about a complaint, they responded quickly. He felt that between taxi company management and two strong regulatory bodies, the EOC and the TPC, any issues that might come up under the new rules would be addressed quickly and appropriately.

Registered neither in support/opposition, Registrant Rick Nesvacil of Madison Taxi, 1403 Gilson Street, 53715, researched other cities who allowed pre-paid fares, which included Des Moines, Iowa, with a similar population, and Milwaukee. While some other cities don't have anything on the books, drivers could request pre-pay. The trend seemed to be towards alerting a dispatcher when this happened, and keeping a log.

Registrant Tom Royston of Badger Cab, 5238 Esker Drive, 53704, spoke in favor of the proposal. He pointed out that cab drivers didn't earn an hourly wage. If a driver spent 45 minutes for a \$20 fare that wasn't paid, he made nothing and he would have to account for the mileage. So it really hurt drivers

to lose a fare, esp. if they leased their vehicles (like Badger drivers). Also, it wasn't only "runners"; some folks just refused to pay or were too intoxicated to do so. The police used to respond, but now (due to lack of manpower) they didn't, unless the driver was in imminent danger. Royston mentioned a recent incident, in which the police instructed a driver to take an intoxicated man from Langdon to St. Mary's. Once there, the man refused to pay and got up and ran. St. Mary's Security caught the guy, who was arrested for disorderly conduct, but not for defrauding the driver, who was never paid. The driver lost both his fare and an hour's time. The problem had escalated over time, and the current ordinance enacted in the early 1990's didn't cover all the situations now faced by drivers.

Registrant Rosemary Lee, 111 W. Wilson, 53703, spoke in favor of the proposal. She depended on cabs, and supported the change esp. if it kept taxi companies in business. Not paying a fare that was due, was stealing from a small business person and was not acceptable. Riders were responsible for their own actions. She thought it awful that police would put a rider in a cab and not make sure the rider paid the fare. She thought drivers could keep their own log, rather than calling dispatchers, whose phone lines were often busy. Lee wanted to make things expeditious for drivers, who were small business people serving all kinds of patrons in all kinds of weather and traffic. She thought the ordinance should have been changed a long time ago.

Registrant Christina Ballard, 1624 Fordem Avenue, 53704, spoke in favor of the proposal. She felt the issue had been discussed for quite a while, and should now move forward. Having been a cab driver for 14 years in three states, she had never seen a city so reluctant to support workers who provided such a vital service for visitors and residents. She was personally offended by the insinuation that drivers might discriminate or overcharge. It didn't make financial sense for drivers to discriminate; an empty cab meant a driver wasn't making money. Drivers were not allowed by ordinance to refuse service to anyone, even if riders were repeated runners. Given this, the City should support the proposal to ensure drivers get paid. When asked, Ballard said that unpaid fares were more costly for drivers who leased than drivers paid on commission; but, all drivers lost money and valuable time. Drivers could lose as much as a quarter of what they might make in a shift. Also, if riders thought they could run and not pay their fares, they were more likely to "step it up", creating dangerous situations and putting drivers at risk.

Registrant Jason Glomp, 1624 Fordem Avenue, 53704, spoke in favor of the proposal. He had driven cab in Madison for 10 years. He described a one-week period when he had two runners: one a ride to Stoughton and one for which police refused to write a ticket. These two rides had cost him \$70 in fares, amounting to 20% of his income for that week. Regarding discrimination, drivers were not in the business to turn down fares or harm their customers; and it was silly to think drivers would use the new ordinance to discriminate.

[PLEASE NOTE: At 6:00 PM, Poulson turned to Agenda Item G., the public hearing. At the conclusion of the hearing, the group returned to this item to complete it, and then took up the remainder of the items in agenda order.]

A motion was made by Bergamini, seconded by Hinz, to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER . The motion passed by voice vote/other.

F.2. [19145](#)

Metro 2009 Audit Report - Jodi Dobson of Baker Tilly Virchow Krause

Referring to the Audit Overview and Highlights, Jodi Dobson of Baker Tilly made the following remarks about Metro's 2009 Audit:

- Along with the City's overall report, a separate financial statement was prepared for Metro that provided more detailed info.
- Re: the single (compliance) audit to test grants, they had no findings/concerns.
- Management's Discussion & Analysis provided a plain English overview of what happened during the year, trends, and where Metro stood vs. a year ago.
- The Auditors' opinion on pgs 1-2 reported that in all material respects, the statements fairly presented the position of Metro's finances; pages 38-39 discussed compliance and control testing, for which they had no findings/concerns.
- With the Commission ultimately responsible for Metro finances and for implementation of controls/processes over financial functions, the Management Letter outlined the auditor's responsibility to report certain items to the TPC, to wit: The auditor had no disagreements with management, no new accounting pronouncements, and nothing unusual to report.
- The 10% increase in fare revenues helped out the finances.
- The 2.5% increase in operating cost was typical of yearly increases in compensation, materials/supplies and purchased services; one surprise was fuel costs, which did not increase nearly as much as in 2008.
- The 3% increase in operating subsidies was right in line with the increase in operating costs.
- Metro was able to increase its reserves, which would help Metro absorb any sudden rises in fuel prices or other unexpected costs, without passing it directly on to participating communities in one year.
- The \$805K in new debt was how the City financed the local share of capital improvements.
- \$11.3 million of capital assets were added, mostly buses purchased with grant funds.
- Though Metro had good documentation of daily, weekly, monthly procedures, the audit recommended better documentation of year-end procedures to help prepare for the audit, and to help with future transitions inc. to the new ERP system.
- In response to public discussion about overtime, additional payroll testing was done for a couple of drivers, which recomputed the payroll and looked at how time was allocated; they didn't find anything concerning; pay was in accordance with the contract and rules.
- Overall, there were no deficiencies and no single audit findings to report.

Bergamini was confused by Dobson's remarks about the Commission's responsibility for Metro's financial transactions. She noted that the TPC did not have the power to submit budgets, approve budget changes or approve bonding; these functions were done by BOE. The budget was recommended by management, and was discussed with the TPC, whose role was really advisory; they were not the decision-makers. In view of these comments, Dobson suggested that perhaps there was a joint role, in which the TPC reviewed monthly information about the status of operations and oversaw policies. As such, the auditor would want to report to the Commission any concerns about policies and any new developments; and as an advisory group, the Commission's recommendations rolled up to higher levels where decisions

were made. Dobson said her focus was that while management handled day-to-day operations, ultimately they were under the direction of the governing bodies overseeing them. Bergamini said that over the past year issues about the role of the TPC had arisen related to setting fares and influencing budgets/amendments. Bergamini said she was curious Dobson's language because it suggested a very high level of responsibility that the Commission couldn't exercise if it wanted to.

Responding to questions, Dobson said that she didn't think Baker Tilly had ever been asked to recommend a level for the reserves that Metro should attain. But if there was interest, they could look at other transit systems. Given the different sources of funding and operating aids among different transit systems, she thought they'd find a huge variance. Reserves played a different role in systems with one municipality vs. those like Metro with multiple partners. Kamp thanked Wayne Block and the financial staff for their help with the audit.

F.3. [19148](#)

Metro: Overtime Report, June 2010 - TPC 07.13.10

Registrant Rosemary Lee, 111 W. Wilson, 53703, expressed her dismay at the fuss being made over the overtime at Metro. Drivers worked hard and their job was not easy: They put up with riders, traffic and inclement weather, working under less than ideal conditions much of the time. If they chose to sacrifice their family and leisure time to work overtime, and as long as it was not deemed unsafe, what was the fuss about a few drivers making \$100K? Lee thought perhaps some other City folks with desk jobs simply resented that drivers were able make more money than they did. All City departments needed to watch their scheduling and overtime, but dealing with the Teamsters wasn't easy. Lee urged everyone not to blame the drivers for being ambitious enough to work overtime when operators were needed to run buses around the city.

Kamp said that Metro would periodically bring an Overtime Report to the group. The charts showed that Metro tracked OT since the late 1990's, and compared this to guaranteed time. Drivers were guaranteed 40 hours/week. Hiring enough drivers to minimize OT involved a balancing act: If OT went low enough, then guarantee time started going up (i.e., drivers were paid guarantee time without working). In future reports, Metro hoped to provide more info re: the different categories of absenteeism. Kamp noted how FMLA had changed dramatically over the past five years, and how Metro had started using some tools for reducing AWOP. Also, tardiness and "late-outs" had dropped by 15%. These changes had contributed to a 30% reduction YTD in driver OT. Schmidt/Streit made a motion to receive the report. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

F.4. [18738](#)

Authorizing the Transit General Manager to file an application for a Public Transit Capital Grant with U.S Department of Transportation and authorizing the Mayor and the City Clerk to execute the associated grant agreement with USDOT and the associated 13 (c) agreement with Teamsters Local No. 695.

Because Items F.4., F.5. and F.6., were all grant resolutions, Poulson suggested that action be taken on all three items together. Kamp said these were routine grants based on urban formula and fixed guideway funding, and recommended approval. A motion was made by Streit, seconded by Hinz, to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER . The motion passed by voice vote/other.

- F.5. [18739](#) Authorizing the Transit General Manager to file an application for a Section 5309 Formula Public Transit Capital Grant with the U.S. Department of Transportation and authorizing the Mayor and the City Clerk to execute the associated grant agreement with USDOT and the associated 13 (c) agreement with Teamsters Local No. 695.

A motion was made by Streit, seconded by Hinz, to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

- F.6. [18947](#) Authorizing the Transit General Manager to file an application for a Section 5307, public transit capital, capital maintenance and capital planning grant with U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and authorizing the Mayor and the City Clerk to execute the associated grant agreement with USDOT and the associated 13(c) agreement with Teamsters Local No. 695.

A motion was made by Streit, seconded by Hinz, to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

- G. **6:00 PM - PUBLIC HEARING: To hear public comment on proposed change to enforcement of Madison Metro's current Stroller Policy**

[19150](#)

Madison Metro's proposal for Stroller Policy enforcement, customer survey and feedback- TPC 07.13.10

Kamp said that Metro's Customer Service and Safety Committee had tried over the past year to address the issue of the stroller policy, which was both a customer service and safety issue. Though a tough issue, Metro was coming forward with a proposal that addressed things from a safety standpoint. Metro had received 200+ comments and surveys and had held meetings with drivers including those with the best customer service recognition about the stroller policy. Rather than asking for action immediately, Metro would come back to the Commission in a few months for a recommendation regarding enforcement of the policy. During that time, Metro would work with community centers, non-profits and others to more fully develop community awareness and an implementation plan related to strollers and grocery carts that could fit and be stowed correctly on the bus.

The CS & Safety Committee had looked at the recommendations of Metro's insurance company, Transit Mutual Insurance Company of Wisconsin, which insured 20 transit systems around Wisconsin. TMICW had a strong, two-fold recommendation: No large, bulk items like strollers, grocery carts and luggage should be left in the aisle; and children should be removed from the stroller.

Metro staff then showed a 3-minute video from their website (linked to U-Tube), which outlined the policy and its goals, and discussed proper stowage of strollers and other large carry-ons . [To view the video, use this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHorfD9sM8U&feature=channel>.]

Then a short video of a recent bus accident in Oshkosh was shown. [To view the video, use this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Xj3xAKIbm8>.] Kamp said the video demonstrated why the insurance company felt that a child should be held by an adult, to shield them from more serious injuries. Kamp concluded by saying Metro was faced with the difficult challenge of balancing both customer service and safety with regard to this issue. Poulson then

invited hearing registrants to the table.

Carl Durocher, 1441 Williamson Street, 53703, registered neither in support/opposition. He noted the 20th anniversary of ADA and the strides made in Madison re: accessibility on mainline buses and paratransit service. He discussed federal and local definitions for "standard" wheelchairs, which set a precedent for size and dimensions of what was allowed and worked on a bus. Durocher supported a policy that gave drivers discretion depending on available space. A too-restrictive policy could have unintended consequences. He liked the plan to take time to prepare people for implementation. Social service agencies that worked with families and vendors could look at options for smaller, collapsible strollers more suitable for transit use. Durocher noted among the charts of survey responses that 100% of respondents in wheelchairs had experienced a conflict with strollers/other large items in the securement area and had been obstructed in the aisles.

Royce Williams, 2437 Fox Avenue, 53711, spoke in opposition to strict policy enforcement. A senior who rode the bus frequently often to link up with intercity buses, Williams was appalled that the policy and the new train station were unveiled at the same time. If a person had the wrong piece of luggage or a bus was too crowded, an intercity traveler might not be able to board the bus and could miss their link-up. With hundreds of train passengers and expanded air service, Metro needed to address this issue. He thought driver flexibility and discretion was important. Being a grandfather, he thought it would be ridiculous for parents to have to unload both their children and sometimes their groceries, esp. if a bus had enough space to accommodate. People needed to be flexible. Perhaps future buses could have more fold-up seats.

Laurie Wermter, 847 Williamson #9, 53703, supported folding up strollers. While sensitive to young, transit-dependent families, as a daily bus rider, she had often seen healthy/mobile parents block 5-6 seats near the front of the bus with large strollers, preventing riders with mobility problems or frail elderly from using the reserved seats there. The disabled/elderly had to move further back into the bus to find an open seat, made more difficult by not being able to reach the overhead hand-holds. She had rarely seen a parent with stroller open up one of the empty seats around them to offer to those physically challenged. Wertmer agreed that flexibility was needed. Many people didn't know that front seats could be put up to place the stroller and unblock the aisle; drivers could help with this. A civility campaign was needed. She hoped that the buses would have a place where train travelers could put their luggage, and where transit-dependent grocery shoppers could put their full carts.

Please note: At 6:25 PM, at this point in the meeting, Schmitz excused herself from the meeting, and was not present when action on New Business Items was taken later in the meeting.

Kari Ehrhardt, 4817 Sheboygan Avenue #206, 53705, spoke in opposition. Ehrhardt had relied solely on Metro Transit since coming to Madison four years ago, and sometimes needed to bring aboard a grocery cart or luggage, and wondered if she would be allowed to continue to do this. More importantly, as a shelter worker at Salvation Army, she knew well the impact of this proposal on low-income passengers with children who needed to board the bus with strollers, and had the following concerns and suggestions:

- Parents with more than one child would have a nearly impossible time trying to fold a stroller while still maintaining control of their children.
- The policy mandated fold-up strollers only, which would require some families to purchase one; for those needing double strollers, a cost of \$300+ would be a bigger challenge.
- Both these factors could make it impractical or impossible to ride the bus, causing social isolation and exacerbating mental health conditions among low-income families who counted on Metro Transit.
- The front area of the bus should be made available to all people in the community with mobility needs, inc. disabled, elderly, as well as those with strollers, grocery carts or luggage; and if disabled/elderly boarded and needed this space, then the others (with carry-ons) should be required to move back (the policy adopted by Ottawa after a similar public discussion).
- The needs of all in the community could be met if passengers did the right thing and cooperated, without resorting to an unduly harsh policy that would deter certain members of the community from riding the bus.

Agreeing that space was in short supply and should be shared, Bergamini asked how the issue could be resolved in a practical way vs. rule-making way. Ehrhardt thought perhaps a public subsidy or vouchers for proper foldable strollers would help defray costs.

Cathy Casper, 2114 Red Arrow Trail, 53713, registered in support. She felt that the biggest barrier to enforcement were drivers, who didn't put seats up/down and didn't make sure the front seats were available to elderly/disabled. She was on a bus where a woman absolutely refused to move her stroller from the aisle, and though other riders couldn't get past, the driver refused to enforce the rules. The police didn't help with enforcement either. She felt that large items should be allowed on buses, but not block the aisles. She was concerned about the elderly poor who used grocery carts on the buses to get to food pantries. Casper thought wheelchairs and walkers should have top priority for the front seats; and strollers should be parked out of the aisle. If there wasn't enough room, maybe supervisors could give rides to people with strollers, esp. in bad weather. Along with drivers being flexible, perhaps space on buses could be made more flexible, with more fold-up seats.

Nataliya Akulenko, 1459 E. Main #209, 53703, registered in opposition. She used buses exclusively and liked public transportation. She felt enforcement of the policy would be unfair to people like her, a mother with a toddler and baby, who used the buses to go grocery shopping or to appointments. How could this parent fold up a stroller and hold two young children and bags? Many such riders took buses because they needed to. Good for the environment, these riders should be encouraged to use buses vs. cars. Akulenko herself tried to fold up her stroller, but sometimes she didn't when her child was sleeping (to avoid disturbing other riders with a cranky child). Discretion and courtesy were needed. Unfolded strollers should not be prohibited. Also, trying to move a folded stroller and carry children and bags when a bus was moving was dangerous. Folded strollers did easily not fit between seats. Front seats could be folded up to make room for strollers. She grew up in bus systems where parents with children were given priority along with disabled and elderly. Many parents like her tried to take as little space as possible.

Rosemary Lee, 111 W. Wilson, 53703, registered in support. A stroller and baggage policy "with teeth" was urgently needed. Drivers were not the sole

problem; more often, riders were. She had had a very bad experience with this issue: Upon boarding the bus, she encountered two large strollers, one on each side. With six inches left in the middle, she had had to walk step-by-step sideways. She feared children in strollers could get hurt if people fell on them. Current practices represented a safety hazard. If other cities could enforce a (folded) stroller policy, Madison could. All the drivers must be required to enforce it. With more important things to do, police shouldn't be called.

Lori DeGayner, 540 W. Olin Avenue #228, 53715, registered in support. DeGayner had noticed a decline in the way people responded to bus drivers. Bus drivers seemed afraid of some passengers, who sometimes got belligerent. Recently, a passenger with a stroller wanted an elderly person with a walker and an arm brace to get up and move. The driver handled the situation well. The person folded up her stroller and moved back, but she complained about it loudly, essentially harassing the elderly woman. DeGayner had seen 10 seats taken up with strollers and bags. DeGayner was worried about babies in arms and lurching buses, which could kill a kid. She had seen buses take off before people with mobility problems could sit down, often because riders in the front wouldn't let them sit down. This practice was very dangerous and needed to stop; safety was more important than schedules. Also she knew of a woman with cancer and gait problems who often had to ask young folks up front to move. Rarely did drivers intervene, probably because they were afraid of the kids, who sometimes were verbally abusive or threatened violence. Harassment needed to stop; perhaps "bouncers" were needed to make people behave, so drivers could be allowed to drive. She had used buses to move, and hoped large items would continue to be allowed when space was available.

Tom Earley, 1625 Madison, 5371, registered in opposition. For 22 years, Earley had ridden the bus every week with eight day care children. He liked the bus system and thought highly of the bus drivers; they knew the kids' names, and after being asked once, they lowered the bus and waited for everyone to get seated before moving on. A rider just had to talk to the drivers. He used one umbrella stroller for a smaller child (under 2), because he wanted her down low and really couldn't hold her while tending the other seven children. He and his kids moved whenever a disabled/elderly person needed space; they came before his kids. If a bus was too crowded, he and the kids would wait for the next bus. Earley wanted drivers to be given flexibility; people could work things out. This was not such a big issue; but it would be if the rules were enforced, and he and his kids couldn't ride the bus downtown anymore. Some of his grown kids still used the bus. He thought the current system worked.

Please note: At this point, Poulson turned the Chair over to White before Deb Brennum began her statement, and excused himself from the hearing for a few moments. He assumed the Chair again at the start of Julie Allen's statement.

Deb Brennum, 3609 Sargent Street, 53714, registered in opposition. As a Metro driver, Brennum was in support of her passengers. She thought it a great challenge for a mother with two children and groceries to bring everything on the bus without the stroller; and likewise for the driver to have to wait until things were disassembled and everyone got situated. Brennum thought everyone needed to be flexible; it couldn't all come down to the drivers as some thought. Drivers were in a really challenging position. It needed to be up to the driver's discretion to step in and help out with situations also. In her 12 years, she hadn't encountered many problems; except for one instance, when

she asked riders to adjust, they did. Riders laden with children and packages were also disabled in a way. Everyone – drivers, passengers and children – needed to work together. Flexibility was called for. She had driven both full and empty buses, and a blanket statement that all stroller should be folded up wasn't always necessary, esp. when a bus was mostly empty. Busy routes and tight schedules already created time constraints, which would be worsened if drivers had to wait for strollers and children to get situated. Brennum wondered whether a mother holding a child in each arm was really safer than leaving them in a stroller; she thought this should be reviewed. When asked, Brennum said that helping passengers didn't violate work rules; unlike herself, some drivers were just more leery of doing so. She also reported that in her experience, most riders looked out for each other and worked together; there were only a few rare individuals who didn't.

Julie Allen, 314 S. Owen Drive, 53705, registered in opposition. A committed bus rider who had used buses all her life in various places, Allen worked at the UW and had four children, whom she took by bus to/from day care. As previously suggested, flexibility was central to the issue. She was shocked when the stroller policy was posted on the buses last year, and thought Metro's video misrepresented the situation. As a parent with a stroller, she had never harassed anyone about a seat. She used the smallest possible strollers; when needed, an umbrella for her 3-year old, and a slightly bigger stroller for her 5-month old, who couldn't sit up. In certain situations, it was impossible to easily fold a stroller and stow it away. Allen also didn't think it was safer to take her children out their strollers; they were better off restrained than lurching around. A friend with one-year old twin boys and no other means of transportation simply could not fold up her stroller and hold onto both children, much less hold onto to anything else. It didn't make sense to universally apply the policy to so many different situations. She thought the policy regressive and should be moving in the direction of European buses, which were designed with special spaces for strollers; or a space could be designated for strollers, which could be relinquished to wheelchairs. This would be safer for everyone. While strollers in the aisle were a hazard, it was a nightmare for parents to try juggle their strollers and kids esp. in bad weather, and didn't serve anyone's interests. Allen felt that parents could be educated about the best strollers to use, and how to travel lightly; other riders could be educated about the challenges faced by parents; and drivers could be more helpful as well. Allen felt the situation was much less malicious than represented; some parents were understandably desperate. She didn't think refusing service to parents with strollers was a good solution; what would those without other transportation do, esp. in the winter? Allen thought Madisonians of good will could come up with a solution that didn't penalize people with children who wanted to ride the bus. She hated to think riders would stop using the bus and start using cars because of a blanket enforcement policy. When asked, Allen wasn't sure that designating a maximum stroller size would be as helpful as educating people about the best choices.

Debby Lynn Aldrich, 3707 Morning Road #A, 53704, registered in opposition. Her husband used a fold-up grocery cart. He worked hard to keep it out of the way and accommodate others. Aldrich was concerned about a policy where they would always be required to fold up their cart and take everything out of it. She felt that people needed to be considerate when using a space on the bus. Her husband had a weight restriction, and needed to put their groceries in

the cart. He also used the cart like a walker. Aldrich recommended being practical: Sometimes it wasn't necessary to take everything out of the cart; a space for the cart could be found instead. Current practice shouldn't change just because some people weren't considerate. She asked that people consider riders who had to use the bus with a cart. Aldrich also thought drivers should report every time they had to turn down a wheelchair because the spots were full, to determine how often this was happening. Wheelchairs should be given first priority. She saw the issue from both sides, as a person in a wheelchair and as rider who needed to use a cart. She thought agencies could help guide parents who used the bus to opt for suitable fold-up strollers, that could be easily folded when necessary.

Joni Groskrautz, 415 North Lawn, 53704, commented as follows: A long-time bus rider, she remembered when her son was little and she was asked to fold up his stroller. Recently, she experienced two riders with strollers who acted like they had priority over all other fare-paying riders, even though they didn't have to pay fares for their children. She was actually told to get up and move by one young man with a double-wide stroller.

Angela Bennett, 2610 Myrtle Street, 53704, registered in opposition, and submitted the following written comments: As a bus rider, I have not observed difficulties. I like the flexible use of wheelchair securement space for: 1st priority, those in wheelchairs, elderly and disabled; 2nd priority, those with strollers and grocery carts that do not block the aisle. I would suggest flexibility esp. during off-peak hours when useable space is available. I am concerned that selective enforcement of the policy may give rise to race-based complaints, since many of those I've seen using Metro space with (designated for) wheelchairs are people of color.

Allison Grant, 1325 Drake Street #2, 53715, registered neither in support/opposition. Having a 20-month old child and appreciating the difficulty of trying to fold up a stroller, she also understood concerns about strollers that blocked the aisles esp. on crowded buses. While it would be ideal for everyone to use an umbrella stroller, sometimes this wasn't possible. Grant wanted everyone to treat parents with children with respect, just like disabled deserved respect. It took parents more time to board and get settled into seats with their kids. Drivers could wait until everyone was seated before moving, and could help with the strollers. If strollers could easily be folded, that would be good; but if they were loaded with other things, then it wouldn't be so easy. Sometimes, there was no room on crowded buses for folded or unfolded strollers. Grant wasn't sure what the solution was.

Poulson concluded the hearing by saying that Metro would consider all the testimony and feedback, and come back to the Commission in a few months with recommendations re: implementation of the policy. The meeting then returned to Agenda Item F.1.

**H. REPORTS OF OTHER COMMITTEES - for information only
(Most recent meeting minutes attached, if available)**

[07828](#)

ADA Transit Subcommittee
Contracted Service Oversight Subcommittee
Parking Council for People with Disabilities
Long-Range Transportation Planning Commission

State Street Design Project Oversight Committee
Joint Southeast Campus Area Committee
Ad Hoc Committee to Develop Parking Strategic Plan
Low Income Bus Pass Program Committee
Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (MPO)

No action was needed on these items.

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

**I.1. General announcements by Chair (Verbal announcements, for information only) -
None.**

I.2. Commission member items for future agendas

**Poulson thought the Commission should delve into the automation situation at
the Parking Utility at a future meeting.**

ADJOURNMENT

**A motion was made by Hinz, seconded by White, to Adjourn at 7:35 PM. The
motion passed by voice vote/other.**