



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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Meeting Minutes - Draft LONG RANGE METRO TRANSIT PLANNING AD HOC COMMITTEE

Monday, March 3, 2008

5:00 PM 15 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Room LL-130 (Madison
Municipal Building)

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Opitz called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM. Introductions were made for new member Alder Clausius who represents District 17.

Guest: Royce Williams

Staff: Chuck Kamp, Mick Rusch, Ann Schroeder

Present: 10 -

Carl D. Durocher; Amanda F. White; Gary Poulson; Susan M. De Vos;
Joseph R. Clausius; Mark M. Opitz; Michael G. Heifetz; Edward G. Clarke;
Lance L. Lunsway and Satya V. Rhodes Conway

Absent: 2 -

Jed Sanborn and Ida Thomas

Excused: 1 -

Richard W. Wilberg

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Poulson moved to approve the minutes as written; DuRocher seconded. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Royce Williams was concerned about the wording in the regional transit authority (RTA) recommendation. He felt it needed to be changed so that when there is an RTA and a metropolitan planning organization (MPO), the minimum RTA area should be the MPO area. Then if other contiguous areas want to participate, that's fine as well. He wanted to see more explicit wording to ensure that the MPO area is the minimum. He also recommended a committee with representatives from the MPO, the county and the city to figure out what an RTA should look like. Other than city and county resolutions, the only RTA work is behind the scenes. It should be more a discussion in the community.

He also recommended the use of more electronic signs. He would like to see the capability for multi-line signs. The single line is all right for some lower activity areas. He would like an electronic sign at the memorial union. Multi-line is better for places that have multiple routes.

He would like on demand heaters in the bus shelters like Minnesota has. New shelters are even worse than the old ones when trying to stay warm. One advantage of the new shelters is lighted schedules, but he would like to have on demand heaters as well.

He thought it was interesting to note there is a recommendation to set up a 501(c)(3) group – Friends of Metro. Such a group already exists. He is not sure what that recommendation is for.

4. 09150 Subcommittee Final Recommendations
- a. Ridership/System Improvement
 - b. Funding/Cost Management
 - c. Marketing

Attachments: [Final Recommendations Ridership.System priority paragraphs 2.25.08.pdf](#)
[Ridership.system priority table 3.pdf](#)
[Ad Hoc Fund Cost Final recommendations 2.1.08.pdf](#)
[Marketing Subcommittee Final Recommendations 2.13.08.pdf](#)

Marketing – DeVos brought up some counter recommendations for the Marketing Subcommittee, including a spreadsheet she had created where she tried to compare subcommittee recommendations to her own. She said she obviously favors hers to those of the subcommittee, which were not approved unanimously. White said they were approved three members to one. DeVos said the one attended all the meetings while some others did not. One big difference in the two sets of recommendations is the total amount they cost. The DeVos recommendations were a total of \$500,000. The group had recommended increasing the marketing budget by that amount. It made sense to make recommendations that would be in the ballpark of that rather than half again as much.

Rhodes-Conway said she appreciated the detail that the Marketing Subcommittee went into. However, she wouldn't want to make decisions about recommendations being included in the final report based on budget since that is not being done for the other subcommittee recommendations. DeVos said she would want to do that because it is a constant in her mind that a wrapped bus brings in X amount of money and she compares that to whether she would want each recommendation or would she rather be able to see through the bus windows without a wrap. Rhodes-Conway reminded the group that at the beginning of their work, it was agreed recommendations weren't going to be cut because they were too expensive. The group had agreed to deal with that by prioritizing. DeVos said she did not remember that. Opitz said that was in the mission statement/charge. Rhodes-Conway said we can't assume any increase in funding is going to come from wrapped buses. DeVos said that one of the recommendations that she doesn't agree with is to say that wrapped buses should be a way to increase funding. White said in the original draft of the recommendations, the Marketing Subcommittee more strongly recommended full

wraps. After hearing DeVos's concerns, they went more general and said we supported advertising – which could be corporate sponsorship, partial wraps, full wraps, etc. It would be part of market research to understand feedback on wrapped buses and take that into consideration.

Poulson said as a member of the Marketing Subcommittee he never tied wrapped buses to the recommendations. The Subcommittee said the revenue had to be 1% in advertising. Maybe there are alternatives other than wraps. Opitz said the Funding Subcommittee didn't specifically endorse wrapped buses either.

White suggested changing the last sentence of the third paragraph under "Support of Advertising to Fill Funding Gap" to "...the LRMPAC further supports advertising opportunities" without adding specific examples. Lunsway said he could go either way with that sentence. It does say "in addition to further research into public perception" so there's going to be feedback. There are going to be people who don't like each of the types of advertising opportunities. The committee is also asking for a comparison of partial and full wraps. Whether people like it or not, Metro has to generate money to get some of these recommendations done. There was no motion for a change, so that sentence will stay the same.

DeVos also disagreed with the recommendations for direct mail marketing, the promotional budget, advertising, rebranding, the ride the bus to work free day promotion and the 501(c)(3) group Friends of Metro.

White said the idea with promotions and direct mail is that there is also a return on that which is not seen in the cost. It will hopefully increase ridership. That is why a pilot was recommended for direct mail and ride the bus to work. Those could be ways to test generating more revenue. As with all marketing there is a cost and then a return.

DeVos felt the unlimited ride pass agreement for small businesses was snuck in because it was not something that the Marketing Subcommittee had discussed. She didn't think it was something they could recommend now. DuRocher said it is perfectly fine to insert language now with the full committee present.

DeVos said later there is a recommendation to expand unlimited ride pass programs to various groups. She didn't see a reason to single out small businesses. She objected to inserting that at the last minute. Rhodes-Conway moved to take that language and drop it into the system/ridership recommendations instead of under marketing. Poulson seconded. Rhodes-Conway added that the argument for specifying small employers is that Metro is already working on this. It has had some setbacks, so she'd like to specifically have that as a recommendation. She also agreed that it should be expanded to other groups too, but would like special focus on small employers.

Lunsway said that recommendation is also in funding/cost management. Instead of getting specific to unlimited ride pass programs, he suggested calling it something like employee pass program. Every year the University struggles with keeping their pass program unlimited. If a small business wants to have a pass program that is only valid 7 AM to 5 PM Monday through Friday, he wouldn't want it to appear that is something the committee is not interested in recommending.

Opitz said he doesn't see these subcommittees retaining their structure in the final report. Rhodes-Conway said the pass recommendation is in three different places at the moment, so maybe the final report could just state it once. Maybe the relevant thing is for the full committee to agree whether the concept belongs in the final report, and then perhaps leave it to Rhodes-Conway to put it in the appropriate place in the text. The subcommittee categories might not survive in the final draft.

Rhodes-Conway amended her motion to say that the committee would retain the recommendation in the final report as Lunsway stated (not necessarily unlimited passes) and let Rhodes-Conway put it where it makes sense. Poulson agreed as the seconder. DuRocher fully supports the idea that discussion of expansion of the ride pass is included in the report as well as Lunsway's change of verbiage and Rhodes-Conway's discretion in placement. He suggested the term targeted pass programs. The motion carried.

DeVos wanted to keep recommendations to add up to the suggested increase of \$500,000 and not to \$750,000. Clarke said the committee is saying Metro needs to increase the marketing budget. It should be made clear whether the money should come from somewhere or whether Metro should reallocate funds. The general feeling was that Metro should raise additional funds. There wasn't a full discussion. It was sort of up to Metro as to how they would get that money. Poulson said we agreed the budget was too low and needed to be increased. We never discussed how it would be increased to \$500,000. The average marketing budget for peer systems is about 1.2% of the overall system budget. Metro's marketing budget is only .4% of the overall budget. It is within the realm of possibility that Metro would reallocate money to get to the \$500,000. It wasn't fully discussed. It is Metro's job to figure out how to get there.

Rhodes-Conway asked if the subcommittee is willing to recommend an increase in the marketing budget at the expense of service. The committee could specify that or be silent on it. Kamp said from staff perspective dealing with the need for a stable local funding source is the most important thing. However, staff recommendation is to not have the \$500,000 come at the expense of anything else, including staffing or service. DeVos said that is confusing because customer service training is a recommendation, and that is service and part of the \$500,000. Kamp said the training is something that is high on the list to provide even before an RTA. DuRocher is concerned by citing the specific number of \$500,000 because in a tough year the \$300,000 some additional that would equal a \$500,000 budget would buy a lot of fuel, etc. DeVos agreed. Lunsway said the committee should recommend a goal of getting near the peer budgets. It doesn't mean next year it has to be \$500,000. It's a good goal to have. Good estimates; good goals. The group doesn't have to dictate specific prices for each item. Heifetz said we are a long-range committee, so he is comfortable with the language as written.

DuRocher moved that the committee recommend that Metro increase its marketing budget to \$500,000, but not at the expense of service. Seconded by Rhodes-Conway. The motion carried.

DeVos doesn't agree with direct mail as a marketing strategy. There are lots of things that are more important than sending out postcards to residences. DeVos

feels Metro would be wrapping buses to pay for this. White said that direct mail is an extremely efficient and often very successful way to market. You can test the success of direct mail with promotional codes etc. Metro has done some but not a lot of this. A pilot would be a good idea. It is not just throwing post cards out there, but doing it in a very focused way. Doing a mailing around underutilized routes to target a specific area to test increasing ridership. The subcommittee, other than DeVos, felt that was a good marketing strategy. One reason they put estimates with each item was to justify why they recommended the \$500,000. Rusch said these were just estimates. The final report will say these are estimates and goals, not a budget. DeVos moved to eliminate the direct mail recommendation. There was no second. The motion died for lack of a second.

DeVos said there are two parts to customer service training. There was discussion of both increasing training and increasing the hours in which customer service would be available. She did not think it was appropriate to separate those but to put those them together and estimate \$15,000 instead of \$5000. The idea was to provide more resources for customer service. Increasing customer service hours isn't listed with an estimated price. Rhodes-Conway suggested putting a \$10,000 price tag on the increased hours. She could go either way – move customer service training and combine it with increased hours or just add an estimate. If committee trusts Rhodes-Conway, she will duly note the \$10,000 recommendation and look at whether those sections should be combined.

Clarke wants to think a little about the final subcommittee reports. These three documents have ten or more major recommendations in each to equal at least thirty total recommendations. He wanted the group to think of a way to prioritize or collapse these recommendations and say all are important, but there are the top X number that in our view have the greatest probability of increasing the long range financial stability of Metro. This will help the media and others focus. Most of the group agreed. Rhodes-Conway would like to see recommendations cut two ways – by short, med, and long term and also by priority. Increasing ridership/systems improvement already did that with their recommendations.

White said re-branding Metro was something that was mentioned by Julie Maryott-Walsh, the former Transit Marketing and Customer Service Manager, and the subcommittee put it in the recommendations. There was not a lot of discussion. White believes that Metro needs to really enforce and possibly change their brand identity. It's such a critical part of marketing. They could go all out and spend \$300,000 with a new logo, painting all the buses with that, etc. There is no price associated with this recommendation. Metro needs to decide the scope. Metro could spend \$40,000 to have a brand professional consult but not change the logo. Metro needs to move away from having a governmental agency image and focus on people. Why does someone want to ride the bus – you can knit on the bus, you meet cool people, it saves money. When somebody thinks Metro, what is the image that comes to mind? Right now maybe it's not as positive as it needs to be.

DuRocher said one part of the discussion of full wraps is what it does to Metro's branding. It might even detract from Metro having branding as a marketing device because with the fully wrapped buses, we can be losing Metro having a brand. Branding is something we're already deeply involved in with the wrap discussion. He suggested keeping the recommendation in the final report as a

way of saying this committee knows it is important, and we'll get back to it when the Transit and Parking Commission (TPC) discusses fully wrapped buses. Lunsway said in one way we're been working on re-branding, i.e. Metro vs. Madison Metro, community. The only hesitation is that if Metro re-brands and then a regional transit authority (RTA) comes along, they would have to re-brand again. Poulson this could be important but it can't be done halfway. If you go full steam, it's expensive. He's concerned about that. Rusch said Metro hasn't been able to do any branding because of the marketing budget, but Metro does understand White's ideas, so maybe have the recommendation without a price estimate. Kamp suggested adding the language "consider" rebranding Metro. Rhodes-Conway said it is worth putting this in a long term category and show that the committee understands that it would change with an RTA. Rusch said working toward a community brand of some sort could be a goal.

DeVos said there is an item about proactively approaching the media. This would be better under outreach. However, she had a problem with what she believes has occurred in the last few months. She thinks there has been disinformation. Using a University pass, going to WestTowne currently means DeVos has to transfer. So it takes four rides for her to make a round trip from home or work to WestTowne because of how Metro counts. She doesn't know if a transfer is considered a separate trip. If so, how can Metro compare ride numbers from 2000 to 2006 because the same trip would be counted twice as much in 2006 as in 2000 when it didn't require a transfer. Is the number really greater in 2006 than 2000? You can't say there is a legitimate increase if you are comparing two different things.

Kamp said whether a transfer happens with a transfer or an unlimited ride pass, it is counted as unlinked ridership. It is the same definition in 2000 and 2006 by Federal Transit Authority (FTA) guidelines. When reporting to the TPC, Metro reports ridership, transfers and total ridership, which includes transfers. DeVos said now there is a route change because her trip requires a transfer to finish a ride. She asked if Metro could legitimately compare 2000 rides to 2006 when now some routes require a transfer. Kamp believes it is legitimate. As the area grows and transfer points are put in, that means more transfers and impacts ridership. In some cities you have two transit systems, both are rides but on different systems. Metro follows FTA guidelines. It's audited and included in the National Transit Database. Metro sends staff for training on these issues. Rhodes-Conway suggested the group defer this discussion because it was not on the agenda. DeVos felt it was appropriate to the agenda within the discussion about proactively approaching the media. Rhodes-Conway believed it was a discussion that should happen at the TPC. DuRocher said DeVos made a good point. It's hard to count which are unlimited ride pass transfers or new rides. To assume the data has some reliability, the blurring of the data works both ways. Maybe some routes used to be two rides and now are one. DeVos disagreed. Rhodes-Conway said it is a legitimate discussion for the TPC but not this group.

As to the idea that there is already a sort of Friends of Metro group, Rhodes-Conway said she assumed people are referring to Madison Area Bus Advocates. However, that group doesn't do fund raising or liaising with the business community. DeVos doesn't think this should be a recommendation. White said the Marketing Subcommittee made this recommendation because DeVos wanted an ombudsman. Metro can't lobby. If there were such a group, they could have a lobbyist. DeVos said lobbyist isn't same as ombudsman. There

was disagreement about whether this was a recommendation of the subcommittee.

DeVos moved that this recommendation for a Friends of Metro group be removed. Poulson seconded. Lunsway said we've talked about needing help with legislators. Why not be general and recommend finding the best way to do this. Rhodes-Conway said she was hearing different things. An ombudsman is someone within the organization that people – employees, riders – can go to. That's something other than someone advocating externally. Those are two different things. Externally could be a "Friends of" group – 501(c)(3) or otherwise. Another way to have external advocacy is to recommend that the Mayor's office include Metro issues to the state and federal governments as part of their lobbying activities. A third thing Rhodes-Conway was hearing is the need for an external fundraising function similar to the Madison Parks Foundation and Friends of Public Libraries that would specifically help fundraise for the system.

DeVos said when she used "ombudsman" she didn't mean internal to Metro but someone who could inform other agencies in the city of Metro's position. For example clearing bus stops of snow is prioritized lower than roads, parking lots, etc. by the Streets Department. She suggests Metro have someone who could advocate for them with other city agencies. That's an ombudsman, not a lobbyist, just someone who could give Metro's position regarding issues to the other city agencies. Kamp said the function of working through the city process on bus stops is part of his own job. Fundraising would be helpful to Metro. Business advisory groups educating the community about RTA, forming business partnerships, etc. for all sorts of reasons are important aspects.

DuRocher said what troubles him about this recommendation is that this is outside the category of what Metro staff would do but more in keeping with what a community based organization would do. DuRocher moved to strike the language of this recommendation and replace it with language saying that the committee recommends that Metro be receptive to working with community based private or non-profit organizations. Rhodes-Conway offered a substitute motion to re-write the section to include five things:

- 1) internal ombudsman
- 2) external advocacy
- 3) external fundraising
- 4) external recommendations to the General Manager
- 5) business advisory group

DuRocher would support this as long as it didn't require a new position. White said there was an original recommendation to have a business advisory committee. However, the City Attorney said that is not something a committee could set up. She didn't want the business liaison piece to get lost. Lunsway said no matter what language is used, somewhere in the report there needs to be something about a liaison to other city agencies regarding things like snow removal. Rhodes-Conway said as far as business liaison, there are multiple areas in the recommendations that talk about the business community, so she can pull those together and talk about business being advocates for the system. This motion passed. Opitz pointed out that the whole committee will see the language again when the report is written.

Funding/Cost Management – DeVos said she thought it was a good idea to have a

committee that would include the city, the county and the MPO to better flesh out what an RTA and the boundaries might be. Williams said he was being specific that the MPO should be the minimum boundaries. Funding Committee members agreed that would be fine to recommend.

Ridership/System Improvement – Rhodes-Conway said she would include on demand heaters with bus and bus stop amenities. She would add language on the angel system to the partner with business section from the public input where that was submitted.

Kamp said one staff top ten is information technology (IT). There needs to be a careful review of the IT staff Metro would need to get the IT recommendations done.

DeVos said in the Marketing Committee there was a recommendation of adding information at bus stops. Julie Maryott-Walsh had distinguished between shelters and other bus stops. White said she could put that language back in since it was on an original list. A ridership/system improvement recommendation does say schedules at more bus stops. There is also language in bus stop amenities. White will send Rhodes-Conway any additional language she has.

5. **09152** Final Report Process
 - a. writing draft final report (Alder Rhodes-Conway)
 - b. public feedback
 - b. approval of final report

6. **09151** Public Meetings Locations and Dates
 - a. North Side
 - b. East Side
 - c. Transit and Parking Commission

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

The group lost quorum at 6:39 PM and the meeting adjourned.