

H. 6:00 PM - PUBLIC HEARING: To hear public comment on certain proposed fare changes to go into effect in Fall 2016.

42829 Metro: Public hearing on proposed targeted fare changes - TPC 05.11.16

Poulson called the hearing to order at 6:00 PM. Metro's Customer Service Manager Mick Rusch and Finance Manager Wayne Block joined Kamp to discuss the proposed fare changes.

- Survey data was used to comply with local and federal requirements on equity considerations.
- The fare proposal was reviewed according to the recently implemented Fare Equity Policy. (Please see the PowerPoint attached to Leg. File 42829.) The wording of the Policy was taken from other transit agencies.
- The lowest % increase among non-equity fares was for the Youth 10-Ride card = 12%. Therefore, equity sensitive fares could not increase by more than 17% (+5%). The highest increase among equity sensitive fares was 16.4%, within these parameters.
- The adopted Operating budget required Metro to utilize ~\$1M in its Contingency Fund to balance its budget in 2016. In order not to continue this practice, and to offset \$500K of \$1M, Metro proposed the fare increase.
- The fare increase would help pay for some of the supplemental requests included in the Operating budget: the route changes, two additional bus cleaners, the lease for the Middleton bus garage, and a change in insurance coverage that raised the cost substantially.
- With a fare increase taking effect in Fall, these costs impacted the 2016 budget by \$500K. In 2017, these costs would be covered by the fare increase.

Members and staff discussed the proposal and related issues.

- (Kamp) Re: Family Care changes in Dane County: Following a presentation by Dane County staff, a staff study group was formed. The \$3.8M/yr in federal Medicaid Waiver funding that the County passed through to Metro may be diverted to other causes by 2017-18. Staff would develop recommendations to bring to the TPC.
- (Golden) The pass-through \$ paid for 58% of paratransit trips and the City paid for 42%. The City was currently paying the State share of the Medicaid costs. While the anticipated changes would be a hit, the City would be paying for less service, which could result in a windfall of \$3M for Metro. He wondered why then a \$500K/yr fare increase was needed at this point.
- (Kamp) It was too soon to tell if this would be the outcome. There were counties where the paratransit trips did not follow the money, and the transit systems were required to provide those services to individuals eligible for paratransit service. It could turn out that those trips wouldn't be diverted to other providers, and the funding wouldn't come to Metro, which would result in just the opposite, where Metro was hit with a multi-million dollar extra expense. It wasn't clear yet, which was why staff was studying the situation.
- (Golden) Crystal Martin was involved in placing a provision in regulations that would insulate paratransit systems statewide from any kind of service agency diversion, to use Metro to provide the services they were providing. They didn't have enough info now, and he was not trying to make decisions/recommendations. But he wanted it on the record that there was as much chance of a windfall as there was of an additional expense. He hoped the staff report would be timely enough to be part of their decision-making.
- (Golden) The methodology didn't seem fair if it didn't take into account the

number of years between fare increases. (Ex: Youth 10-Ride at 12% was last increased in 2009. 12% divided by 7 years = 1.7%.)

- (Kamp) The Policy addressed the % in the year the fare increase was made. Changes to this might be brought back in the future.
- (Kovich) The lowest % increase of a non-equity sensitive fare would seem to be zero. If we were choosing to not increase certain fares, then that was a comparative point.
- (Kamp) To cover the \$9M costs for Paratransit, some funding came from MA Waiver and some came from the City. Potentially a regulation could be used to avoid having the costs of those trips shifted to Metro, the Agency Fare. Metro had found it challenging to enforce agencies to use an Agency Fare, if individuals came in one at a time, or if they came in in groups to avoid the agency fare. It would be hard to guarantee that Metro wouldn't incur that cost.
- (Kamp) Re: Metro's obligation to provide Paratransit: Under ADA, a certification process assessed an individual's ability to ride the bus for some or all of their trips. If the person qualified for Paratransit for some or all of their trips, whether MA Waiver eligible or not, they were eligible to use the community's ADA Paratransit services. Their preliminary conclusion was that there would be individuals still riding even though they had at one time been MA Waiver-eligible clients.

Poulson called registrants to the table.

1) Robert Lewin, W. Washington Avenue, 53703, spoke in opposition to the fare increases: A downtown resident with many routes at his disposal, he owned a car but used a 10-Ride pass to ride the bus a lot. He hoped the Commission would find ways not to increase rates. Ridership was vital to the city, and any time the price went up, it impacted the ability of somebody to ride the bus. Increases made bus use less attractive.

2) Melanie Foxcroft, Lakeland Avenue, 53704, spoke in opposition to the fare increases: Between the last fare increase in 2009 and now, inflation had risen 11%. The cumulative rate of increase for many of the fare categories far exceeded that. The cumulative rates of increases made between 03.01.09 and the proposed increase on 09.01.16 ranged from 16.7% to 33.3% to 45.8%. (See % Increase chart prepared by Yvonne Schwinge, attached.) Meanwhile private developers were receiving millions in public money for parking, which undermined the demand for more non-auto infrastructure. Perhaps developers should pay development fees for locating downtown; and parkers should pay for themselves. Transportation equity was important, since many people rode the bus. Was it more equitable to raise bus fares or to charge parkers the market rate downtown? Perhaps Metro could tap into its large Contingency Fund. Or the benefit of low fuel costs could be passed on to consumers. Regarding equity, how many in Owl Creek would be able to afford to ride the bus if their fares were increased?

3) Yvonne Schwinge, S. Franklin Street, 53703, spoke in opposition to the fare increases, esp. to the 31-day pass: Past fare increases should be considered when deciding the %, not just the current fare. Using data received from Metro, she developed a chart showing the cumulative rates of increases from rates in effect on 03.01.09 forward. (See her complete statement and % Increase chart attached.) The increase to the equity sensitive 31-day pass was not in line with the other fare types. Data gathered from the on-board survey did not include weekend ridership, but it was being used to inform decisions about passes

used on weekends. If an increase were made to the 31-day pass, additional weekend service should be added.

4) Nancy (no last name/address) wrote comments in opposition to the fare increases, read by Poulson: How did you figure the raises? The 31-day \$9 not fair. I want to know complete rationale.

5) Thea Bach, Danbury Street, 53711, member of Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood Council, spoke in opposition to the fare increases, esp. to the 31-day pass: The Dunn's Marsh-Allied Drive neighborhood had nothing they could get to on foot: No doctor/dentist, dry cleaner, grocery store. A transit-dependent rider with a modest income, she had to take the bus to go everywhere, and planned her life around the Route 18. She took three buses to get to Central Colony where she worked. She left at Noon, and got home at 11 PM. With no side vision, she planned her life around Metro. The current \$58 for the pass was already a burden for her. The rate increase would be taking grocery money from one of her neighbors. For the poor and disabled people in her neighborhood, the bus was everybody's car. She asked that the 31-day pass not be increased. It would hurt her.

6) Tim Wong, Jackson Street, 53704, former TPC member, spoke in opposition to the fare increases: Interestingly, he was removed from the TPC by a previous mayor, after he opposed the last increase. Fare increases were always a bad idea. Studies showed they led to lower ridership. Along with "captive" riders, Madison had many "choice" riders, who be lost if fares were raised. Why an increase when ridership was up, gas prices were low, and more people were driving? The City subsidized motor vehicles/driving, and needed to support transit, to create some balance. Run buses later at night. With 11% inflation since 2009, the proposed fares would be above inflation.

7) Lori Hobbs, Union Street, 53704, spoke in opposition to the increases, esp. to the 31-day Senior/Disabled pass: A long-time rider, she felt that some seniors and disabled couldn't afford the pass. If increases were made, service should run on weekends and later into the night; riders couldn't get to their destinations when buses quit early. She objected to violations of the stroller policy; often seniors/disabled like herself were forced to stand. She also objected to smoking/drinking at bus stops.

8) An unidentified person wrote comments in opposition to the fare increases, read by Poulson: Fare increase of almost \$10 for Adult 31-day pass was excessive. Clean buses were important but a \$5 increase would be adequate.

9) David Hobbs, Union Street, 53704, spoke in opposition to the increase to the 31-day Senior/Disabled pass: He used the pass to go everywhere. More night and weekend service was needed, along with service to such places as the Plaza movie theater and the Humane Society.

10) John Newman, Algoma Street, 53704, spoke in opposition to the increase to the 31-day pass: He wondered why the non-equity fares were increased by 12%, but the equity sensitive fares were increased by 16%. It would seem that equity sensitive fares should be increased at a lower rate, because people depended on them. After his car broke down, he began to ride the bus everyday to work. Even with his car being fixed, he would be interested in

continuing to ride the bus, but with the ~\$10 increase to his pass, he probably wouldn't. Weekend service wasn't getting more convenient with the increase.

11) Michael Goodman, Maple Wood Lane, 53704, spoke in opposition to the fare increases, esp. to the 31-day Senior/Disabled pass: Why were passes being increased, and not the Cash fares? He didn't get a pension, and as a Senior, any increase would be significant financially. Also, these increases came against a backdrop of declining quality of service, such as drivers taking the wrong route, missed stops, bus design (space dedicated to wheelchairs, limited bus straps).

Poulson closed the public hearing and noted that the TPC would probably take action on the fares at its June 8th meeting.

- Related to Schwinge's chart, members asked staff for fare increase data since 2000, with annualized %'s, to see how fast/slow fares had changed.
- Golden asked for the following info related to MA Waiver trips: 1) % of all Paratransit rides that were Waiver rides; 2) the raw number of Waiver rides/year; 3) the average cost being used for a Waiver ride (the actual cost being billed); 4) the amount of federal dollars being reimbursed per ride and for the Waiver total; and 5) Madison's share per Waiver ride and Waiver total for just the Waiver rides.
- Kovich reiterated: When looking at equity sensitive fares and thinking about the lowest % of increase, they needed to consider that fares with no increase were the lowest.

Kamp invited members to send (Wayne Block or Anne Benishek-Clark) any scenarios they might have, to look at their impact on revenues.

I. INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

- I.1. 42846 Metro: Update about lease at 2422 Pennsylvania Avenue - TPC 05.11.16

Kamp noted that Metro was housing 200 buses at a facility designed for 160. The Long-Range Facilities Committee had identified the Pennsylvania site for the Building and Grounds unit, which would move in 1-2 months, freeing up some space at the existing Ingersoll garage.

- I.2. Metro: Update on TIGER grant application - TPC 05.11.16

Kamp submitted their second effort to secure a TIGER grant that was due 4/29.

- They were continuing to look at the Nakoosa site for a satellite bus garage for 50-70 buses, depending on the number of 40-ft. or 60-ft. articulated buses.
- Staff had worked with Vandewalle to make their points more effectively on some of the equity and economic development limitations they had because they couldn't expand during peak hours.
- They were requesting \$17.5M in federal funding, and hoped to hear by Fall.
- A link of the whole report was sent out, and members were encouraged to call if they had questions.

- J. REPORTS OF OTHER COMMITTEES - for information only; no action required.
(Most recent meeting minutes electronically attached, if available)