

2015 Strategic Plan Madison Area Bus Advocates

Madison Area Bus Advocates envisions a sustainable, fiscally-sound, improved, and expanded public transit system throughout the Greater Madison Area that has frequent service on key routes, affordable fares, improved passenger amenities, accommodates 2nd and 3rd shift workers, and is regional in nature. It aims to empower transit riders and friends, and insists on social justice.

While at first glance, having a modern regional transit system would seem to involve massive new expenditures at a time when austerity measures are in vogue, enhancing the use and appeal of public transportation actually saves both the community and the individual money while providing for good, local, long-term jobs, including dependable access to job training, job interviews and offered employment. In the short term, we focus on:

1. The development of a region-wide transit system in Dane County that respects the existing bus system;
2. The establishment of a multi-modal terminal in Madison that provides for seamless and convenient connections between inter- and intra-city travel;
3. Advocating for the elimination of a minimum parking requirement in new development or neighborhood upgrades so parking and housing are unbundled and people can choose how they want to spend their money on transportation and housing;
4. Promoting the development of coordinated and cost-effective policies toward streets, bicycle lanes, pedestrian ways, transit, and parking, sometimes referred to as Transportation Demand Management strategies;
5. Fostering a coordinated system of local and streamlined rapid buses that adheres to a grid design and has naturally-occurring transfer points.

Main Body

A Region-wide Transit System in Dane County Madison has grown from a self-contained metropolis to a central city in an urbanized area with over 27 different local units of government. Typical of urban/suburban growth throughout the United States, the result has been a central city with an old and limited public transportation system surrounded by suburbs with no regular public transit at all. There is a clear need for a modern transportation system that services the entire county. Since there will be no State enabled Regional Transport Authority (RTA) in the Madison Area in the near future, focus must turn to local governments including Dane County, the City of Madison, and surrounding Cities, Towns and Villages. Dane County in particular needs its own Department of Transportation comprised of more than Public Works and specialized transportation services.

Planning concepts supported by MABA include direct routing, frequent service, preferential treatment for buses in mixed traffic, fully dedicated lanes for buses where feasible, and mainline as well as specialized transportation services. A bus system in turn should be only one component of a more comprehensive transportation system that includes convenient connections to local shuttles, van-pools, shared-ride taxis, bicycle lanes and pedestrian ways. Additionally, a regional transportation system still needs the technical and financial support of the State, something fiscally reasonable given that a comprehensive regional transit system helps avoid regional highway network costs to the State while providing for good, local, long-

term jobs, including dependable access to job training, job interviews and offered employment. We expect Citizen Participation to be fully integrated into the regional transit planning process.

Establishing a Multi-Modal Terminal in Madison Madison needs a multi-modal terminal for the seamless connection of inter-city travel and local transit. Madison used to have separate intercity rail and bus terminals, but the City approved redevelopment of the sites, most recently in 2009. Currently, no terminal of any kind exists in Wisconsin's capital city. The ideal terminal would handle both rail and bus; if separate they would be close to each other. The ideal terminal would also be a vibrant public place with such amenities as cafés, restaurants, shops, libraries and day care centers. Ideally, a terminal is the joint responsibility of the city, the county, and the state or, when it exists, of a regional transport authority.

Advocating for the elimination of a minimum parking requirement In an effort to reduce on-street parking, the City of Madison's newly revised zoning code stipulates that all new developments outside a special area downtown provide at least one parking space per residential unit whether that space is used or not. Paying for that stall can be expensive, especially if it is built underground. A household that does not own a car does not need a stall and should not have to pay for one. If paying for a parking stall were optional instead of required, someone could choose to spend more money on housing, less on transportation and less overall. Eliminating the minimum parking requirement could make housing in Madison more affordable throughout the city.

Promoting the Development of Coordinated and Cost-Effective Policies Toward Streets, Bicycle Lanes, Pedestrian Ways, Transit, and Parking An important way to move toward a more balanced, multimodal transportation system is to adopt reasonable strategies for reducing the current over-use of Single Occupancy Vehicles while providing cost savings to travelers (sometimes known as Transportation Demand Management strategies). Such strategies have been in existence for decades. It is a win-win proposition for employers and others to consider such travel options as biking, walking, transit, and ride-sharing; such strategies as universal transit passes, telework, flexible work schedules, "smart parking," road pricing and road space allocation (bike lanes, transit-only lanes). Parking policies can include maximizing space use with GPS, parking cash-out programs, and allocating priority parking to carpools, vanpools, and short-term parkers.

Fostering a coordinated system of local and streamlined rapid buses with naturally-occurring transfer points. The Madison Area has become too large to be served adequately by only one type of bus. We need local AND express or rapid buses. Local buses should go in one direction rather than meander, stop frequently enough to serve many needs, and use naturally-occurring transfer points that accompany a grid rather than concentric system. Rapid buses should go on major corridors and stop infrequently to speed travel. Main roads can have frequent service with shuttles at their ends carrying riders to/from less-used origins or destinations.