



**MINUTES
TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT COMMISSION
THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2015**

Transportation and Transit Commission Members Present: Kim Lobdell, Jason Gonzales, Rich Tate, Michael Gernetzke, Dick Collins, and Troy Klein.

Members Absent: Tony McGrath – excused

Others Present: Ahnaray Bizjak – Transportation Project Engineer

1. **Call to Order** – The meeting of the TTC was called to order by the committee chairperson Kim Lobdell at 6:33 p.m. Lobdell introduced the new alderperson representative, Jason Gonzales, to the commission.
2. **Public Appearances – Non Agenda Items** – None
3. **Approval of January 21, 2015 Minutes** – Motion by Michael Gernetzke, second by Rich Tate, to **approve** the January 21 minutes. *Motion passed.*
4. **Report of the Transportation Project Engineer** – Ahna Bizjak reported that she is working on an update to the transit service agreement that exists between Madison and Fitchburg. Final edits are being incorporated and Bizjak expects this to be finalized and referred out in the near future. The contract will be standard language for all contracting partners and has been updated to reflect changes such as contingency reserve contributions, deadhead time, and allocating additional revenue to contracting partners.

Bizjak also reported on the Lacy Road Reconstruction project which extends from the Community Center east to S. Syene Road. She commented that the project includes 50% federal funding through the STP-Urban program. From that perspective, Bizjak commented that the project will need to consider the needs of bicycles and pedestrians. She commented that a kick-off meeting is being planned for the end of June and that this commission will be involved with reviewing the recommended typical section for the roadway.

5. Review and Discuss Route 59 modification to use Sprocket and Spoke Drive

Bizjak provided background and an overview of the Route 59 modifications that are being included in the Metro Transit service modifications. In August 2014, Route 59 was modified to extend service along Seminole Highway and Crescent Road with the goal of improving the directness of service between the Belmar/Allied Drive and the Orchard Pointe retail area. It also extended service to encompass the eastern portion of the Belmar neighborhood. At present, the route utilizes a stretch of Verona Road between Williamsburg Way and McKee Road. However, the design of route was intended to allow future operation on Sprocket and Spoke Drive once both street were completed and open to traffic.

Since the implementation of the Route 59 changes, staff has received complaints and concerns from a resident living on Crescent Road related to the placement of a bus stop and the idling of the bus near their homes. The stop on Crescent Road (near Sentinel Pass) was established as a time point for the route; creating a potential for idling to occur when the bus is ahead of schedule. In response to those concerns, staff is recommending the time point to be moved to a bus stop located on Marketplace Drive.

The recommended August 2015 changes include shifting the time point and re-routing the bus onto Sprocket and Spoke Drive, as opposed to Verona Road. This shift allows the bus to provide service through the Arrowhead area and incorporates a stop on McKee Road at the Spoke Drive intersection. This stop provides direct service to the businesses located along McKee Road including the AMC movie theater.

Lobdell commented that she agrees with moving the time point to the commercial area in the Fitchburg Business Park. She also agrees with the modification to move the route off of Verona Road and using Sprocket and Spoke Drive instead.

Michael Gernetzke asked if the bus stop would be placed on Spoke Drive as opposed to McKee Road. Bizjak commented that there is already a stop on McKee Road at this location, for Route 75, and expects that Route 59 would utilize the same stop. Gernetzke recommended considering a stop location on Spoke Drive to minimize disruption of traffic on McKee Road.

Gernetzke asked why the route continues to serve the Marketplace loop since it is such a low-use area. Bizjak responded that it does provide service to a retail area and allows the provision of a time point away from the residential area.

Troy Klein commented that he supports the time point at Marketplace because the bus becomes somewhat of a billboard while it is idling.

Motion by Troy Klein, second by Dick Collins, to recommend approval of the B2 modification option for Route 59 which shifts the time point to Marketplace and modifies the route to use Sprocket and Spoke Drive instead of Verona Road. *Motion passed.*

6. Review and Discuss Implementation Report for Intra-City Transit Study

Bizjak provided a brief overview of the Implementation Report as prepared by SRF Consulting. The report evaluates a full range of transit service scenarios going from fixed route service, to flexible fixed route service to shared-ride taxi service. The outcome of the analysis validates that any of the options could be implemented in Fitchburg and would be utilized because of the gap in transit service compared with the unserved demand.

The report suggests 3 service scenarios that “float to the top” as the best options to consider for implementation:

1. Shared-Ride Taxi, Private Contractor, Intracity
2. Flexible Bus, Private Contractor, Intracity
3. Fixed Route, Metro, Regional

To decide between these options; it comes down to what is the goal of the City for improved transit service. Is it to increase regional connectivity? Is it to improve service within the city? Once those decisions are made, it will inform the transit service option to consider for implementation. Bizjak stated that at this point, staff is not doing any further evaluation or

analysis on these options. She commented that the City is looking for input from commissions and boards with recommendations on next steps or preferences.

Gernetzke, Lobdell, and Rich Tate support starting small and building ridership to support the fixed route service.

Lobdell supports better east-west connectivity and is in favor of the flexible bus – intracity option. She doesn't feel the cost for fixed route service is justified at this time and feels that the shared ride taxi isn't visible enough to attract ridership. With the flexible bus, private contractor option, the City can be in control of the service and can issue their own RFP to tailor the service to meet their needs. She feels that shared ride taxi will not be used as much; rather would engage mostly those who rely on transit service (elderly, disable, youth, etc) and not be used much by choice riders.

Rich Tate does not like the shared-ride taxi option for similar reasons. He feels that it wouldn't be visible enough to attract a strong ridership.

Bizjak commented that she likes the concept of flexible fixed route service; but is concerned that establishing a route in Fitchburg will be challenging. She commented that the lack of street connectivity is an issue that may make the flexible fixed route option a challenge. With isolated neighborhoods, it will be difficult to get the coverage that we want.

Lobdell commented that the flexible fixed route service could be coordinated with Metro service to address those isolated neighborhoods.

Bizjak commented that another concern related to starting small and building the ridership (to justify the more costly options) is that you may run into opposition from the riders because of the change in structure. If residents are used to a shared-ride taxi service, which provides curb-to-curb service, they may not support a change to flexible fixed route because it means they have to walk further for the service and follow the schedule for the route.

Gernetzke asked if there was a certain gap that was determined to be an underserved area or population. Bizjak responded that SRF based the demand for transit service on the MPO model that uses mode split to establish what the bottom line expectation is for ridership in Fitchburg based on that mode split. They did not evaluate a specific under-represented area or population within the City. Gernetzke commented that he feels it is best to take an area that is underserved and raise it to a standard, as opposed to taking areas that are already at the standard and elevating that.

Lobdell asked if the City submitted a letter of intent (LOI) to WisDOT. Bizjak responded that the City has not submitted this letter. Lobdell supports submitting the LOI since it doesn't commit the city to funding transit service, but gets the City in the pool for funding to be available for transit service.

Jason Gonzales and all commission members felt that it would be good to have a resolution for council to authorize staff to submit the letter of intent so they are aware of the initiative and in the loop on that process. Bizjak will check with Tony Roach, City Administrator, to understand the review/approval process that should be followed for submitting a letter of intent to WisDOT for future transit service funding.

7. Announcements

- a.** Next meeting will be a joint meeting of the Board of Public Works and TTC scheduled for Monday, May 18, 2015. The meeting will include a presentation of the McKee Road – Phase 2 corridor study. This date does not work for several TTC members. Bizjak will follow up with an email to consider alternate dates.
- b.** Next regularly scheduled TTC meeting will be Thursday, June 11, 2015

8. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.