

Department of Public Works

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February 9, 2012

TO: Deborah Ganaway, Chairman
Transit and Parking Commission

FROM: Al Stanek
Transit and Parking System Manager

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT - CITY OF RACINE TRANSIT UTILITY

After assuming responsibility for planning and administrative oversight of the Belle Urban System (BUS) almost exactly one year ago it is my honor to present the following brief report of activity for 2011.

The number one measure of the success or failure of any public service is its acceptance and utilization by the public it serves. With that in mind the primary metric that this brief report will concentrate on is ridership. Fiscal performance (revenue) can also be addressed quantitatively but other progress areas will be discussed from a qualitative perspective.

Additional performance measures will be identified in the companion 2012 Transit Utility Goals Report.

2011 BUS RIDERSHIP – Fixed Route

Mass Transit Ridership is reported in two ways.

“Revenue Ridership” is reported more as a fiscal reporting tool than as a service consumption tool. It includes only those rides for which a fare (cash or pre-paid) was recorded.

“Total Ridership” is reported as a planning and service delivery tool. “Total Ridership” includes those rides provided through transfers and to those age 5 and under accompanied by an adult.

“Total Ridership” tells us how many seats we need to have on a given route or in a given time period as opposed to “Revenue Ridership” tells us how financially productive a route or service period is.

“Revenue Ridership” has been established as the standard for reporting in the State of Wisconsin and is the figure most commonly reported to the general public. In 2011 a total of 1,217,034 fixed route “revenue” passenger trips were provided. This compares with 1,122,539 fixed route revenue trips in 2010 for an increase of 94,495 rides or an 8.4% increase over the previous year.

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The "Total Ridership" figure increased even more primarily because of a new eight week Holiday Season promotion that featured free rides on Saturdays to encourage local shopping. The promotion generated \$40,000 of revenue from a third party.

In 2011 a total of 1,539,880 fixed route "total" passenger trips were provided. This compares with 1,409,150 fixed route "total" passenger trips in 2010 for an increase of 130,730 or a 9.3% increase over the previous year.

From a capacity planning perspective the total ridership of 1,539,880 divided by the 87,999 hours of revenue service generates an average passenger per hour figure of 17.5.

2011 DART PARATRANSIT RIDERSHIP

In 2011 a total of 31,474 special demand-response transit trips for the disabled were provided. This compares with 30,213 trips in 2010 for an increase of 1,261 rides or an increase of 4.2% over the previous year. This personalized type of transit service results in a much lower average passenger per hour figure of 2.5.

2011 BUS PASSENGER REVENUE – Fixed Route

Revenue collected from passengers in 2011 (not including the \$40,000 "free ride" revenue) totaled \$1,301,354 compared to \$1,283,197 collected in 2010. This represents an increase of direct revenue from passengers of \$18,683 or an increase of 1.5% over the previous year.

If the \$40,000 of third-party sponsored Saturday revenue were included in that figure the increase would have been \$58,683 or an increase of 4.6%

The disparity between ridership increase as a percentage and revenue as a percentage is common to the transit industry. Occasional riders, for example, quickly realize that a 30 day unlimited ride pass at \$50 is more economical than 30 days of paying \$3 for two one-way trips each day at the 2011 rates. This regular customer reward generates more riding but less revenue per ride.

2011 DART PARATRANSIT REVENUE

Revenue collected from paratransit riders in 2011 totaled \$170,763. This compares with \$231,453 of paratransit revenue generated in 2010. The decrease of \$60,690, a decrease of 26.2% from the previous year, is a concern and is being thoroughly investigated.

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One potential explanation for the decrease of DART revenue could be changes in revenue generated by a large social service agency that paid \$17.50 per ride as opposed to the 2011 \$2.50 cost per ride for the general public. We have met with the agency and are attempting to conduct a desk audit of ridership, revenue and rate structure comparisons between 2010 and 2011. We have increased security measures involving the handling of all funds and intend to report on the results of the investigation when completed.

OTHER AREAS OF PROGRESS IN 2011

- Security cameras were installed in the general offices and cash handling room and cash handling procedures were revised.
- Payment of state gasoline taxes to fuel our gas powered BUS paratransit and supervisory vehicles was discontinued and we were able to get a rebate of some previously paid taxes.
- Five new Gillig clean air buses were delivered and introduced into service.
- Three additional Gillig clean air buses were ordered and are scheduled for delivery in August 2012.
- Fourteen additional Gillig clean air buses have been ordered and scheduled for delivery as early as February of next year.
- Trolley fares were successfully raised to \$1 from \$.25 without a reduction in ridership.
- LED light fixtures were installed in the bus storage facility and other federally funded capital activity was completed in 2011 and/or scheduled for 2012.
- The BUS General Manager position vacated by John Myers was advertised nationally and filled by a well qualified internal candidate.
- The resulting BUS supervisory vacancy produced by the domino effect of an internal promotion is scheduled to be filled this month.
- Size restricted advertising on the outside of buses continues to generate greater revenue. All available space is currently contracted for and the BUS share of revenues increased from \$14,625 in 2010 to \$44,375 in 2012.
- A very aggressive joint SE WI marketing campaign funded at 80% by federal CMAQ funds was conducted in 2011 and is at least partially responsible for increased ridership.
- A cooperative marketing effort with the local radio station has increased both ridership and revenue.
- A new BUS website was developed and later revised to reflect schedule changes.
- Efforts at improving relationships with our partner communities of Mount Pleasant, Caledonia, Sturtevant and Yorkville were initiated.
- Relationships with major stakeholders like Racine County and Racine Unified School District (RUSD) have received greater attention. A new contractual relationship with RUSD has been agreed to.
- Efforts to improve BUS budget tracking and operations reporting procedures have been initiated and weekly meetings between staff and the finance department and BUS staff have been institutionalized.
- Major service cuts and fare increases were implemented as the result of cutbacks in state funding.
- Work on a major route revision plan in anticipation of further state and federal cuts was initiated in mid 2011 for implementation as early as mid 2012. The effort is designed to eliminate costly and unproductive lay-over times at the ends of some routes.
- A comprehensive WisDOT funded "Performance Audit" by a professional transit evaluation firm took place in 2011 with a final report due in 2012.