

Vikki Kratz

Sent: Tuesday, November 25, 2008 9:45 AM

To: mabaaa@yahoogleroups.com

Subject: [mabaaa] Letter from Mayor to TPC

I got this off another list serve:

Dear TPC Member,

While a fare increase is never an easy or popular thing, I believe the fare increase I proposed and the Council approved makes sense both because of the financial reality we're facing, and the long-term health of the Metro system. It is because of my belief in the importance of mass transit that I've advocated for this fare increase.

As you are well aware, there's been no political gain for me in proposing a fare increase. I've done so because I sincerely believe that it is the best course for Metro and for our community. As you consider your course of action now, the responsibility and political ramifications of this policy decision are still mine.

If the fare increase were not implemented, we would have to drastically cut service in order to fill the resulting \$682,000 budget gap. According to Metro, this is what that scenario would look like:

- * No service on major holidays
- * Reduction in Sunday service from 16 to 8 hours
- * Loss of 12,000 hours of service
- * Elimination of 5 new employees
- * Elimination of the new marketing position

I know many of you opposed the fare increase initially. But, now that it has been approved by both myself and the Council, I think we can agree that the alternative is simply unpalatable for the Metro system, for its future and for our riders.

We haven't had a cash fare increase since 2000, and we haven't had any fare increase since 2005. But since 2000, Metro fuel costs have gone up 230%. Inflation has gone up 30%. The cash fare increase just gets us to where general inflation would have taken us between 2000 and 2009.

But even more importantly, I believe the future of the Metro system is at stake. The fare increase allows us to improve Metro in several ways and to build its financial security into the future.

By increasing fares we can make the following improvements in our bus system:

- * Add \$150,000 in service expansions on routes determined by the Transit & Parking Commission.
- * Double the amount of money available for the Transit for Jobs program, which provides free fares for low-income riders. This will allow us to

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serve more people even with the higher fares. The current program can serve about 850 people a month. The doubled program can serve 1,450 even with the fare increase.

* Provide more security at transfer points. While the Madison Police Department maintains a regular presence at the transfer stations, some additional security is needed to help ensure safety during certain times at the transfer stations. A plan for security improvements will be developed by a work group consisting of staff from the Mayor's Office, Madison Police Department, Metro Transit, and the Madison Metropolitan School District.

* Increase marketing to attract more riders and establish a program that would let small businesses buy discounted bus passes for their employees just as large employers can right now.

* Allow Metro to start rebuilding its cash reserves, which have been wiped out by high fuel prices. These reserves will help cushion its budget against future fuel price fluctuations and help us keep fares at the new levels for longer than we could have without a cash balance.

If the TPC rejects the fare increase, we're left struggling to make ends meet through drastic service cuts. But if you approve it, we're able to improve Metro service in several ways, as well as build its financial security into the future. I hope you'll join me and the Council in supporting it.

Sincerely,

Dave Cieslewicz

Mayor Dave Cieslewicz
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Room 403
Madison, WI 53703
608.266.4611
mayor@cityofmadison.com