

2010 Strategic Plan

Madison Area Bus Advocates

Summary

The **Mission** of Madison Area Bus Advocates is to engage in research, education, partnership, and advocacy with the goals of increasing bus ridership, expanding bus service, and improving the bus system as an efficient, clean, convenient, and affordable means of travel in the greater Madison area. We insist on social justice and aim to empower transit riders. In the short term, we focus on:

1. Guiding a Regional Transportation Authority in the Madison urbanized area to initially prioritize the improvement and expansion of our current transit system, the bus;
2. Establishing a multi-modal terminal in Madison that provides for convenient downtown inter- and intra-city transit;
3. Influencing the development of the next 5-year Transit Development Plan;
4. Developing coordinated, market-based policies toward roads, bicycle paths, pedestrian ways, transit, and parking;
5. Encouraging transit-oriented research and education.

Main Body

A Regional Transit Authority In July 2009, the State enabled the creation of a Regional Transit Authority in the Madison urbanized area called the Dane County RTA but did not provide it with any money or staff. If approved by referendum, the RTA can provide dedicated funding for transit, and the RTA's first task will be to design a transit plan that will be voted up or down. At the time of this writing, it is too early to know what the RTA board will propose, but MABA wants the bus system to be prioritized, and that plans include the establishment of rapid bus lines that compete time-wise with travel by automobile.

Initially improving and expanding the existing bus system is the most fiscally- socially- and environmentally-sound course of action but is contrary to the recommendations of the long-standing regional transportation plan called Transport 2020 that would initially prioritize the establishment of a limited commuter rail line, directly and indirectly at the expense of the current bus system.

Establishing a Multi-Modal Terminal in Madison Madison needs a multi-modal transit terminal downtown for inter-city and local transit. At present, none exists. At this writing, no one is taking responsibility for having a transit terminal for inter-city travel to Wisconsin's capital city -- not the city itself, not the county, not the state of Wisconsin. MABA considers having a terminal to be under the purview of a Regional Transit Authority, and should be one of the RTA's first concerns.

Influencing the Next Transit Development Plan The Transportation Planning Board is in the process of updating its 5-year Transit Development Plan. Currently, Metro is planning to eliminate bus stops and radically re-direct routes more out of concern for time than for rider convenience. Madison Area Bus Advocates aims to influence plan formation to better reflect the interests of consumers.

Coordinated, Market-based Policies Toward Roads, Bicycle Paths, Pedestrian Ways, Transit, and Parking Roads and parking structures are expensive. Madison's land is valuable. Walking and bicycling cost little while promoting personal and social health. Parking lots within Madison are

administered by the county and the state in addition to the city. In the last 5 decades, Madison's urban planning and zoning have not reflected an appraisal of the cost of road building and maintenance, the real estate value of land used for parking, or the comparative cost of different transportation modes. It should. There needs to be better coordination between the true costs of car parking, sidewalks, bicycle paths and public policies. MABA is convinced that transit development would be more widely embraced as fiscally sound if various transportation modes were assessed in unbiased monetary terms.

Transit-Oriented Research and Education MABA aims to foster better connections between our need for more transportation research and education on the one hand and the University of Wisconsin's academic talent and educational mission on the other. Madison is home to the internationally-renown flagship campus of the University; the UW-Madison campus and hospital have an award-winning Transportation Demand Management plan called "Commuter Solutions"; UW-Madison students purchase unlimited-ride bus passes as part of their student fees; and a top University administrator is on the board of the newly-formed Dane County Regional Transit Authority. However, more in-depth expertise in the area of public transportation at UW-Madison would be desirable, whether centered in engineering, business, environmental studies, human ecology, urban and regional planning, public administration, or some other academic field.