



Madison Area Bus Advocates

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September 26, 2008

'Green' Mayor's Budget Increases Road Allotment Substantially While Raising The Bus Fare

Metro Transit's 2009 budget assumes a 25c hike to the basic bus fare (from \$1.50 to \$1.75) while the Mayor says he wants a 50c hike. ANY fare increase in a time of growing oil shortages is counterproductive. A budget supporting **balanced transportation** would emphasize good bicycle ways, pedestrian paths, and fast, frequent, convenient, comfortable, safe, and low cost transit, not just streets.

The Mayor is proposing a 65% increase in road spending in 2009. In 2008, Madison allocated \$41.1 **million** for major street work. The 2009 Executive Capital Budget allocates \$68.4 **million** for roads, borrowing over \$29 million of that. In 2008, \$21.6 **million** went to debt service. In the future, debt service on these road expansions will cost even more. In an era of household cutbacks in driving, and a citywide increases in transit use, we believe that the mayor's road expansion priorities are wrong

Madison is paying for suburbanization inside and outside the city. Madison-funded work on E. Washington subsidizes Sun Prairie and other points east. Expanding Northport Dr. subsidizes points north. Work on University Ave. subsidizes Middleton and other points west. And so on. No wonder Money Magazine recently found Middleton, not Madison, the best place to live. Its justification was that residents could enjoy what Madison had to offer without paying for it.

What if Madison put more of its resources into promoting sustainable and quality life for people who lived in Madison itself? Then, Madison's Parks, Libraries, Police, Fire, and yes, Metro Transit could all be better endowed. Why should residents balk at spending \$30 million for a new library downtown but not balk at spending \$41.1 million or \$68.4 million on roads?

Any upgrade to avenues should include the establishment of a designated transit lane and a maximum of two other lanes each way. For a fraction of the estimated cost of all the budgeted road work, good transit could again be concentrated in transit-riding neighborhoods while Express and Rapid Transit buses could make transit travel time competitive with that of the automobile. Fair share contributions outside Madison could extend transit beyond city limits.

The City of Madison may not have direct jurisdiction over the parking facilities of the County, State or School District (MMSD), but it could do more to encourage people to bicycle or use transit. It could encourage the State, County, MMSD, and other entities to charge more for parking while making a transit pass part of the employment package. Madison's Transit and Parking Commission could perform true citizen oversight of operational expenses. Madison has a valuable transit system that deserves support and enhancement.