

FARE-FREE TRANSIT* FEASIBILITY STUDY (Dane County 2015RES-095)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1) Why now? Why not wait for the FY16 county budget process?

The sooner the feasibility study is carried out, the sooner the findings can be brought to bear on the forthcoming public participation processes for relevant major projects soon to get underway. Those include the federally/locally funded City of Madison/Madison Transportation Planning Board countywide scenario planning process for the Bus Rapid Transit / Transit-Oriented Development design study. Findings will also be needed for any follow-up to the county's Air Pollution Inventory. Also, certain transit-related organizations are interested in ways that the county transportation budget can be used to expand public transit, while making it more equitable.

2) Why not instead request that the City of Madison fund this study?

The proposed feasibility study would look at all options for the entire county, not just the current Metro service area. Also, several cities and villages outside of Madison are reportedly interested in providing public transit. Last, the City is already making a major investment in a related effort, scenario planning, which will benefit the entire county.

3) There already are not enough Metro buses to serve current riders. If we make transit free, won't that increase riders?

Fare free transit almost certainly will increase ridership demand ... and that's a good thing! The feasibility study will provide options for accommodating this growth, including reallocation or diversification of funding. E.g., transit can provide savings from costs avoided by reducing the need for adding road capacity. Importantly, the broader ridership that comes with the fare-free approach usually leads to greater community support for public transit, more similar to that for roads.

4) Can we make just some parts of the system fare-free?

Yes, and the feasibility study will explore that option, along with the possibility of making the entire transit system fare-free.

5) Are we duplicating/wasting efforts that MPO is already doing?

No, this study will inform or complement MPOs efforts, as well as those of other entities involved in transportation and land use planning.

6) How was the \$50,000 cost established?

Municipal staff prepared an RFB for a feasibility study of a downtown/campus fare-free zone. During the summer 2012, the municipal staffer tasked with developing that RFB estimated that doing a similar study for the entire county would cost up to \$50,000. (NOTE: The RFB for the downtown/campus zone study has not as yet been let.)

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Implementation and Outcomes of Fare-Free Transit Systems (2012)

Transit Cooperative Research Program (Sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration)

http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_syn_101.pdf

How Free Transit Works in the United States (2013)

<http://www.citylab.com/commute/2013/03/how-free-transit-works-united-states/4887/>

Free Public Transport

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_public_transport

*a.k.a. No-Fare Transit, Zero-fare Transit, or Free Public Transport