

DRAFT

City of Middletown, CT
Economic Development Committee
Parking Study Transit Sub Committee
Draft Minutes from the February 25, 2008 meeting

Members Present: I. Greenberg, D. Bauer, J. Alexander, T. Cheeseman, M. Kalita-Leary

Also Present: J. Saines, B. Emory T. Hibbard, T. Chase, C. Johnson, J. Elmore, R. Kearney, C. Duncan

A Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:30 AM.

B Public Session: none

C Minutes: none

D Communications: none

E Old Business:

F New Business:

Kalita-Leary discussed research on bike racks.

Cheeseman discussed the Hartford Star Shuttle a 2.5 mile loop 25 minutes per loop with a 10-15 min wait headway. The shuttle receives \$500,000 in funding from DOT and operates to 7 pm weekdays, 3-11 pm Sat. Regular ridership: 200-225 people per day while Event ridership: 1000 people per day.

MAT is due to turn his fleet over in 2010 and buy new buses with a trolley design replica bus. Cheeseman began at MAT in 1988. The 1988 trolley shuttle ran for 9 months and the fare was 50 cents which was too short of a time, there was no needs assessment. The authentic style trolley had wood slat seats and no air-conditioning. Ridership dropped off and MAT used the trolley for special events until private companies complained that the trolley was taking away business. MAT asked for \$15,000 from the Common Council at that point and didn't get it.

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Cheeseman stated New Haven has 4 electric trolleys which had a planned life of 12 years but the batteries only lasted 7 years. One trolley battery cost \$77,000 and a trolley uses 7 batteries. Cheeseman noted the high cost and maintenance issues of hybrid bus technology along with a shortage of technicians at \$32-34/hour

Discussion of the effects on gasoline at \$4/gal.

Bike routes: Cheeseman stated there were 653 uses of bike carriers on the MAT buses in 2007. Discussion of rack design and placement. Discussion of bike path infrastructure.

MAT receives a 67% State of Connecticut subsidy, 13% fares & 20% City of Middletown subsidy. Hartford and other large cities receive a 100% state subsidy. MAT had offered Wesleyan students a \$10 pass for unlimited usage.

Discussion of multi modal planning and making the city a place to live and work to reduce dependence on cars.

Cheeseman stated transit competes with money for mental health and nursing homes and other transit priorities. When AARP has joined in some initiatives the co-sponsors rose from 13 to 63. They have to latch onto a legislator who will champion this. Their slogan is: "6 years is too long to wait for a ride"

Johnson presented a plan to put rail on Washington Street suggesting the city take back the Main Street portion of Route 66 like in Mass where signs say "State highway ends/begins.

Discussion of remote and employee parking lots with shuttle.

Cheeseman noted that the usage of federal funds must comply with federal rules and cannot favor just one group.

Discussion of bike access downtown. Warner presented a map showing population density and proposed bike paths.

Greenberg noted parking is an employer issue of where their employees park.

The committee agreed to concentrate research on the following: shuttle, bike infrastructure.

Discussion by Harbor Improvement regarding development of boat mooring at the North Cove with access through the park tunnel.

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Discussion of bike racks, bike lanes and paths to other parts of the city for recreation and commuting.

Bauer discussed what it would take to stimulate the process to result in rail tracks in the street. Smart growth and promoting the city as a destination, classic and mature. Cheeseman noted the trolley could be trackless in the near term. Cheeseman noted the federal funds are for capital costs not free transit.

Bauer asked that Warner construct a bike path build out projection. Discussion of bike racks, signs, new logo and swipe technology. Discussion about bikes as a way to bypass traffic to get downtown in an easier and cheaper way.

G Other

H Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 2:20 PM.