

CITY OF SHEBOYGAN

REQUEST FOR TRANSIT COMMISSION CONSIDERATION

ITEM DESCRIPTION: 5. Review & Update on Shoreline Metro Transportation Development Program for 2021-2025

REPORT PREPARED BY: Derek Muench, Director of Transit & Parking

REPORT DATE: 9/12/23

MEETING DATE: 9/19/23

FISCAL SUMMARY:

Budget Line Item: N/A
Budget Summary: N/A
Budgeted Expenditure: N/A
Budgeted Revenue: N/A

STATUTORY REFERENCE:

Wisconsin Statutes: N/A
Municipal Code: N/A

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

The Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission prepared a Transit Development Program (TDP) for the Sheboygan Parking and Transit Utility. The study area for the TDP included the Cities of Sheboygan and Sheboygan Falls and the Village of Kohler, all within the Sheboygan Urbanized Area in Wisconsin.

The TDP addressed several issues. The primary purpose of the TDP was to determine short-term future needs for public transportation services, and the best transit system configuration that should be provided to meet these needs. Throughout the planning process, the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission staff worked closely with the Sheboygan Parking and Transit Utility (Shoreline Metro) staff and the TDP Review Committee to develop the Sheboygan TDP.

As part of the transit planning process, the TDP Review Committee developed the following mission statement for public transportation services in the Sheboygan area:

To provide customers with professional and accessible transportation solutions that are affordable, efficient, reliable, safe and courteous.

Specific goals, objectives and performance standards were developed which support this mission statement, and provide a means of evaluating how well service is being provided in the Shoreline Metro service area.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Shoreline Metro worked with Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission to complete the latest version of the TDP during difficult and uncertain times (coronavirus pandemic).

The following is a summary and update on the Implementation Strategy (page 167) contained in the Program:

2020

- Elimination of transfers and tokens
 - Completed in 2020 as a result of the pandemic and safety concerns
- Implementation of 6-pack Day Passes for \$15
 - Completed in 2020.
- Implementation of Premium Services for Metro Connection
 - Implemented in 2020 as a way to fill “underutilized” times throughout the day.
 - Premium trips are a low percentage of rides but customers appreciate the ability to make last minute trips for medical, pharmacy, groceries, etc.

2021

- Continue to apply for CDBG funding
 - Completed; annual application.
- Adjust service hours to 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekdays and 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays (departures at the top and bottom of the hour)
 - Not Completed; Current schedule was deemed appropriate as it aligns best with school start and end times; schedule was adjusted to 5:15 a.m. to 8:15 p.m. to better serve customers getting to work; Saturday schedule remains reduced from COVID-19 pandemic (new normal schedule).
- Increase fares in accordance with Table 10.2
 - Cash fare remains at \$1.75 (no proposed changes to other fares).
- Decrease ADA Fare to align with County Program Fare
 - Completed in 2021 (cash fare for both programs is now \$3.00).

- Replace four (4) paratransit vehicles
 - Bus project was postponed due to funding issues with grants; vehicles were purchased in 2022 (2) and 2023 (4) using CARES Act funding by the City (no County-owned vehicles purchased); purchases brought 100 percent of vehicles within useful life.
- Implement improvements at the Administrative and Maintenance Facility
 - New roof and deck were completed in 2020/2021 using 5339 funding and CARES Act; repainting of facility was completed in 2021 using CARES Act funding.
- Implement marketing recommendations
 - See note at end of summary
- Conduct boarding and alighting survey
 - Boarding and alighting surveys can now be completed using UniteGPS, Shoreline Metro's GPS partner (traditionally were conducted by individuals physically riding each route)
- Begin employment transportation study
 - Sheboygan County with the assistance of Bay-Lake RPC is conducting a county-wide study that will include employment transportation needs in the rural areas of the county.
 - Town of Sheboygan has expressed interest (and voted in consecutive years); no service has been approved to date.

2022

- Continue to apply for CDBG funding
 - Completed; annual application.
- Replace one (1) paratransit vehicle
 - Completed in 2022/2023 as part of project listed in 2021.
- Replace up to twelve (12) fixed-route buses through CMAQ, 5339 and Volkswagen Mitigation Program.
 - Completed in 2022; 5 buses purchased through CMAQ, 4 buses purchased through Volkswagen Mitigation and one bus through 5339.
- Continue to implement marketing recommendations
 - Ongoing
- Conduct passenger opinion survey
 - Not completed; a needs survey for Town of Sheboygan service was conducted in 2022 (over 80 responses).

2023

- Continue to apply for CDBG funding
 - Completed; annual application.
- Replace one (1) paratransit vehicle
 - Completed in 2022/2023 as part of project listed in 2021.
- Continue to implement marketing recommendations
 - Ongoing
- Conduct "mid-course review" of the TDP
 - Completed during this Transit Commission meeting (Sept 2023)
- Conduct boarding and alighting survey
 - Boarding and alighting surveys can now be completed using UniteGPS, Shoreline Metro's GPS partner (traditionally were conducted by individuals physically riding each route)

2024

- Continue to apply for CDBG funding
 - To be completed; annual application.
- Replace one (1) paratransit vehicle
 - Project to be deferred to 2025 based on needs (4 vehicles scheduled in Capital Improvement Program for 2024-2028).
- Continue to implement marketing recommendations
 - Ongoing
- Conduct passenger opinion survey
 - To be completed;
- Begin work on a TDP update
 - To be completed;

2025

- Continue to apply for CDBG funding
 - To be completed; annual application.
- Continue to implement marketing recommendations
 - Ongoing
- Conduct boarding and alighting survey
 - Boarding and alighting surveys can now be completed using UniteGPS, Shoreline Metro's GPS partner (traditionally were conducted by individuals physically riding each route)
- Complete updated TDP
 - To be completed;

Marketing Recommendations

Since COVID-19, marketing and branding has been a very important part of Shoreline Metro's "bounce-back" plan – rebuilding ridership and support for public transit services. Since 2020/2021, Shoreline Metro has been active with marketing and branding. Ridership in 2019 was at a 20-year high at nearly 700,000 fixed route trips. By 2020, ridership had hit a 25+ year low. In years 2021 and 2022, ridership bounced back significantly but still below the 2019 ridership count.

Several items within the TDP marketing recommendations have been met while others remained unimplemented (due to limited availability of resources and post-pandemic challenges).

The following marketing strategies have been implemented by Shoreline Metro since 2020:

- Maintain highly engaged social media site for Shoreline Metro for sharing information, promoting services, and interacting with customers.
 - Paid promotional/sponsored ads on Facebook (recommended in plan);
 - Targeted ads (geographic region);
- New Shoreline Metro website layout in 2022; cleaner, more professional layout; more information and easier to access; translatable.
 - Digital forms for:
 - Paratransit application
 - Complaints
 - Contact Us
 - Bus Buddy
- Radio ads on WHBL and the Point (annually);
 - Targeted ads for students/general ridership/employment
- Radio ads on Lake98.1 (part of a trade agreement for bus advertising on 450);
- Print ads in Beacon and Sun (banners);
- Professional ads on social media using PosterMyWall software subscription;
- Redesigned brochures for Metro Connection (using PMW software);
- New redesigned Metro Connection logo;
- Implemented GPS Bus Tracking services (custom message ribbon);
- Implemented HotSpot Mobile Payments for purchasing fares on smartphone (recommended in plan);
- Consistent branding on all Shoreline Metro buses (same fleet) and Metro Connection buses.
- New Trolley signs promoting new route (and new route guide);

- New features in fixed-route buses (USB charging, 3-point securement) promoted on social media;
- Promotion of services/features internally in buses;
- Purchase promotional items for customers and employees;
- Participate in events that promote Shoreline Metro (non-motorized event at Uptown Parklet as example);
- Tripper routes incorporated into GPS (promo for SASD students to use Tripper service);
- Promotion of SASD Student Pass program;
- Custom promotional messages on bus PR sign boards (recommended in plan);

ACTION REQUESTED:

No action required on this item. For information only.

ATTACHMENTS:

- I. 2021-2025 Transportation Development Program for Shoreline Metro