SA 0910-066: Resolution Recommending the City of La Crosse Initiate the Creation of a Campus Transit Circulator

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SPONSOR(s): Missy Ruplinger, Environmental Council, Kara Zweig, Chelsea Haase, Eric Schmidt

WHEREAS; the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse students pay a segregated fee to utilize the La Crosse’s MTU bus system with their student ID cards; and,

WHEREAS; UW-L students through their current U-Pass contract with MTU receive additional service on Route 5 to the mall, and a high-frequency Safe Ride bus circulator route to downtown on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights during the school year; and,

WHEREAS; students and administration have demonstrated a need for more environmental sustainability initiatives for the campus and city; and,

WHEREAS; students from the Western Technical College have transportation needs to the Science and Health Center and the downtown Market Square Parking ramp while UW-L students have transportation needs to their off-campus housing and the downtown area; and,

WHEREAS; the UW-L Student Survey which was reported in the La Crosse Market Segment Plan stated that 55.2% of students would use the bus system more if it ran more frequently; and,

WHEREAS; the UW-L Student Survey also indicated that 34.3% of students had to park their car three or more blocks away from campus due to a large amount of students who drive their cars to campus and nearby parking spots are not available for these students; and,
WHEREAS; the UW-L administration is currently exploring the feasibility of building a parking structure on campus which has the potential to substantially increase the cost of parking permits; and,

WHEREAS; a bus circulator has the potential to decrease demand for parking during a time of university growth; and,

WHEREAS; the proposed transit circulator would connect up to the Market Square Parking ramp and the new bus transfer center downtown, providing access to extra parking spaces and the opportunity to transfer to the city-wide MTU system; and,

WHEREAS; Bob Bourne, a city consultant with national experience in transit systems for university communities hired from the Ames, Iowa area, suggests that the city create a new route in the form of a campus circulator to increase bus frequency around the college campuses; and,

WHEREAS; the new route created by the campus circulator would have a 15 minute frequency between the WTC and UW-L campuses as well as the downtown area; and,

WHEREAS; an additional bus will be added to Route 4 increasing the frequency on this route to every 15 minutes between UW-L and downtown; and,

WHEREAS; by staggering the two routes they would together create service between UW-L, WTC, and downtown La Crosse that has a 7-8 minute frequency; and,

WHEREAS; the state and federal governments would provide 53% of the funding for the operating expenses of the campus circulator, meaning that the city and campuses would only need to provide 47% of the costs of operations; and,

WHEREAS; three financial plans have been identified in the financial plan created by Bob Bourne; and,

WHEREAS; any students enrolled at UW-L or WTC will have the opportunity to use the campus circulator free of charge; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED; the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse would like to recognize the Western Technical College as an equal partner in this campus circulator; and,
THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; the Student Senate supports the creation of a campus circulator by adopting the enrollment base or equal shares plan between UW-L and WTC; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; the Student Senate approves the negotiation of a mutually beneficial three-party agreement between the City of La Crosse Municipal Transit Utility, Western Technical College and UW-La Crosse for the implementation of a transit circulator in the Fall of 2011, including acquisition of three transit busses; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; the Student Senate supports the merging of this agreement with the U-Pass contract at the next available opportunity, and have it continue to be reviewed annually by Student Association and UW-L administration.