



Bus User Safety at Southridge



For Immediate Release

Contact: Sup. Patricia Jursik, 278-4231

NEGOTIATIONS WITH SOUTHRIDGE TO IMPROVE SAFETY AT BUS STOP FAILS

Supervisor Patricia Jursik Criticizes Southridge Management for treatment of elderly, disabled and all transit users in failing to reach a fair agreement to provide safe bus stops at Southridge Mall

After a long summer of meetings between Southridge Management and the County to improve safety and access at the Southridge Mall, the agreement broke down over the Southridge demand for payment of “tolls”. Having previously delayed a County ordinance creating a disorderly conduct penalty for any person interfering with bus users, on indication from management at Southridge that they were interested in finding a solution to this safety concern for bus users at the mall, the County and Southridge nearly found common ground on improved bus stops. But Southridge insisted on a yearly payment even though the county was willing to pay for the costs related to the improvements of the bus stop.

The County Board does not want to initiate a practice of paying tolls to access public places such as shopping malls or sporting venues for bus access. As a result of this impasse, Jursik reintroduced the earlier County ordinance which was on layover status pending a compromise.

The ordinance would create a \$250 disorderly conduct citation to any person interfering with transit users. The proposal was passed by a 6-1 vote by the Transportation, Public Works and Transit Committee on Wednesday and now moves to the full County Board for consideration.

Southridge management, Simon Property Group, of Indianapolis, moved regular bus stops at the mall entrance on Nov. 1 of last year, requiring disabled people to walk 1,000 ft. from the replacement bus stop to the mall entrance. Because Southridge management still allows paratransit vehicles to stop near the mall entrance, they have claimed the disabled have access.

The ordinance states that disorderly conduct includes interfering with the operation of any Milwaukee County transit bus, including pickup or discharge of passengers, on any roadway or parking lot held out for use of the general public for parking or vehicular travel or on any roadway or parking lot made available to delivery vehicles of more than 20,000 pounds maximum gross weight.

The resolution further states that any person violating the provision of this section of the County code shall, for each offense, forfeit a penalty not to exceed \$250 and those in default of payments shall be imprisoned in the county jail or the House of Correction for a period not to exceed ninety 90 days at the discretion of the court.

“We have finally had to resort to this measure in order to get Southridge to listen to our concerns and address them in a reasonable manner,” Jursik said. “We have negotiated in good faith for the past year, but Southridge has not. We now need to move forward with a measure that will force them to reach a reasonable solution and get them to rethink their obstinate position”.

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Organizations

Independence First
Disability Rights Wisconsin
Hunger Task Force
Milwaukee Transit
Riders Union
Amalgamated Transit
Union Local 998
Milwaukee County
Commission on Aging
Milwaukee County
Commission for Persons
with Disabilities
Milwaukee County Aging
& Disability Resource
Center Governing Board
Goodwill Industries of
Southeastern Wisconsin
Jewish Community Relations
Council of the Milwaukee
Jewish Federation.

Individuals

Don Natzke
Chris Abele
Barbara Beckert
Bill Sell

Milwaukee County
Supervisors
Patricia Jursik
Anthony Staskunas
Willie Johnson, Jr.
Steve F. Taylor
David Cullen
Michael Mayo, Sr.
John F. Weishan, Jr.
Theodore Lipscomb, Sr.
Mark Borkowski
Jim "Luigi" Schmitt
Gerry Broderick
Marina Dimitrijevic
David F. Bowen
Jason Haas

Deanna Alexander
Peggy Rond West

8th District Supervisor • 901 N 9th Street, RM 201 • Milwaukee, WI 53233

Phone: (414) 278-4231 • Fax: (414) 223-1380 • patricia.jursik@milwaukeecountywi.gov • www.county.milwaukee.gov/Jursik