

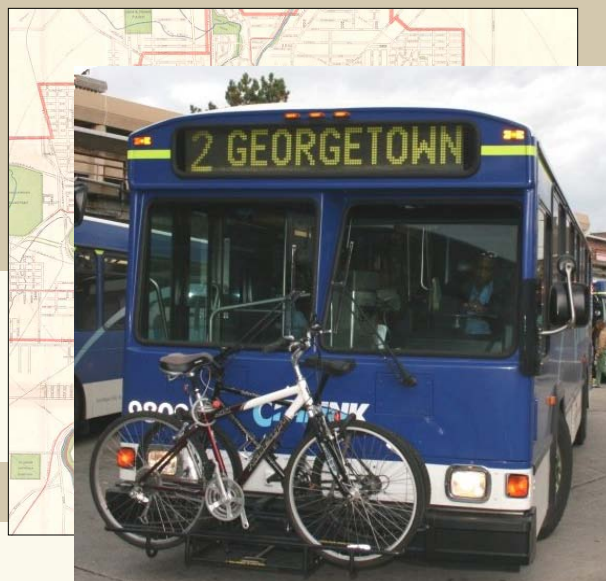
RECONNECTING FORT WAYNE: Transportation

UPASS: Unlimited Transit Pass

Prepared for
City of Fort Wayne, Indiana

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Reconnecting Fort Wayne: Transportation

U-PASS: Unlimited Transit Pass

Reconnecting Fort Wayne: Transportation is a six part report designed to promote sustainable transportation planning in Fort Wayne. The first five reports, published in December of 2007, are innovative approaches or tools for analyzing current conditions and offering more transportation choice and lower household transportation cost. These reports include:

Car Sharing
Housing + Transportation
Streetcars
Transportation Management Associations
UPASS: Unlimited Transit Pass

A sixth report, on transportation funding in Fort Wayne, will be produced in early 2008 to complete the series.

Acknowledgements

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About the Center for Neighborhood Technology

The Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) was founded in 1978 to research, adapt and test new community revitalization strategies relevant to urban communities, especially strategies that harnessed the environmental and economic value of the more efficient use of natural resources. Over the years, CNT has worked to disclose the hidden assets of the Chicagoland economy and urban areas more broadly; demonstrate the multi-bottom line benefits of more resource-efficient policies and practices; and show how the value of what we demonstrated could be captured to benefit communities and their residents inclusively. CNT's work, especially in the areas of energy, transportation, materials conservation and housing preservation, helped fuel a generation of community development institutions and learning, garnering us a reputation as an economic innovator and leader in the field of creative sustainable development.

CNT serves as the umbrella for a number of projects and affiliate organizations, all of which help the organization fulfill its mission: to promote the development of more livable and sustainable urban communities. CNT's transportation work is focused on using transportation assets to serve both the environmental and economic development goals of regions and communities. CNT works to boost demand for clean, efficient and affordable mass transit; increase the supply of traditional and non-traditional mass transit services; disclose the linkages between transportation costs and housing affordability; create model value-capture mechanisms that take advantage of the intersection of efficient transportation networks with community economic development programs; and promote policy initiatives that increase public participation in investment decisions and make more resources available for sustainable investments.

More information about CNT is available at www.cnt.org.

UPASS: Unlimited Transit Pass

The Background

Fort Wayne is fortunate to have a number of universities within its boundaries. But according to college and university administrators, some students find that the expense of getting to school competes with getting an education. The great majority of students at the larger campuses commute from home and use a private vehicle on a daily basis. Although Citilink serves numerous campuses, the general culture of Fort Wayne is a car culture. Few students come to campus by bus, according to education officials interviewed for this report. The expense of relying on private vehicles to get to school has forced students to withdraw temporarily or permanently, a loss for the students, the university and Fort Wayne. In other cases, students stay at school only by competing with other household members for scarce vehicle resources.

One option that offers potential benefits to students and their schools is the UPASS, a transit pass purchased in bulk that offers unlimited use for a specified period of time, usually a school term. UPASSes are sometime referred to as Universal Passes, University Passes, or Unlimited Passes. For the purpose of this report these definitions are all acceptable. Readers should keep in mind that the university/college model is simply the most basic, from which broader options can grow (see “Go-Boulder and the Eco-Pass” box for one example).

The Mechanics

UPASSes are used at schools of virtually any size. The UPASS offered by the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) is used by 42 different schools, ranging from the University of Illinois-Chicago with over 25,000 students to small specialty programs with several hundred students. Chicago students are issued photo ID passes at registration. The passes are standardized so that they are recognizable to CTA drivers irrespective of which school the student attends.

Other systems allow students to simply flash their student ID. No transit card is needed. Some UPASS programs are exclusively for students. Other schools offer the pass to faculty and staff as well. In all UPASS systems reviewed for this report, the university or college pays a fee to the transit agency based on a per-student basis.

The Benefits

UPASS programs often face resistance in the implementation stage. CNT designed and marketed the Chicago UPASS program for the CTA in 1998. In spite of the robust transit system in Chicago, the original goals for the program were very modest – to

Go-Boulder and the Eco-Pass

In Boulder, CO, Go-Boulder coordinates local transit initiatives that interface with the larger (Denver) Regional Transit District (RTD). Go-Boulder offers bulk transit passes called Eco-Passes to employers, with pricing based on factors such as the number of employees and proximity to transit. Eco-Pass holders are eligible for the Guaranteed Ride Home program, should they face an emergency and also can use the larger RTD system.

As of February 2005, 23 neighborhoods in Boulder offered the Neighborhood ECO (NECO) Pass to nearly 4,430 residents, at fees ranging from \$56 to \$128 annually.

In one neighborhood, taxpayers have voted to create a General Improvement District, a taxing district to fund transit passes for every resident.

Go-Boulder also offers a fleet of high-frequency neighborhood circulator buses with names like HOP, SKIP, JUMP and DASH.

This comprehensive approach makes Boulder a leader in offering innovative and sustainable transportation options.

“secure the commitment of one or more colleges and/or universities to initiate a transit pass program . . .” The program started with six schools. Less than ten years later the program has grown to 42 schools, often because of student pressure to add the pass to student fees.

The table below was created to summarize the advantages to the primary and secondary beneficiaries of UPASS, based on results reported at a number of schools.

Table 1: Advantages to Primary and Secondary Beneficiaries of UPASS

University/college	Student Transit User	Transit System
Divert cars from campus	Mobility to school and other destinations	Increased use in off-peak hours
Reduce parking pressure	Less of budget devoted to transportation	New generation of riders, some of whom may continue to use transit
Reduce cost of parking construction	More money to spend on education or housing	More predictable revenue stream
Improved recruiting of international students	Transportation expense can be bundled into financial aid	Can result in service increases as demand grows
A larger pool of high school graduates can apply	Reduce stress and hassle of driving and parking	
The school becomes an environmental leader	Environmental consciousness	
Competitive advantage	Safer travel	
Reduce conflict with residential neighbors over parking	Equalized access irrespective of car ownership	
Prime land near classroom buildings can be put to better uses	Cashless system is easy	
	No need to compete with other family members for access to car	
	Friends can travel together	
Student Driver		City and Region
Less competition for parking or for prime spaces		Air quality improvements
Alternative for bad-weather or repair shop days		Stormwater filtration is not hampered by additional parking and roadway.
Avoid higher fees for construction of new parking		More disposable income that students spend locally
		Other transit riders may see service improvements

University/College Benefits

Schools that make use of the UPASS gain tangible and intangible benefits. The intangibles include increased prestige for “green” practices, better relations with neighboring communities and a competitive advantage for being innovative. The more tangible benefits include a wider and more diverse pool of applicants, relief from administrative headaches over parking pressure, and relief from the expense of providing additional parking. The last factor can be a considerable benefit. Estimates of the cost to build surface parking are in the range of \$5,000 per space. The cost per space to build parking structures is usually cited as a minimum of \$20,000. A study specific to parking savings at UCLA cited a savings of \$25,600 per space in a parking structure (in 1998 dollars).¹ More recently, Western Washington University’s Subcommittee on Transportation, Parking Access and University Parking Structures reported: “Most agree that parking structures at \$20,000 to \$30,000 per space are a heavy burden for parking systems. Organizations choosing to construct parking garages are generally those with no other options.”²

Student Benefits

The benefits to students can’t be overstated. The greatest benefit is financial. Students who need to work to pay tuition and car expenses are in a financially precarious position. The worst case scenario is that a capable student withdraws because s/he can’t carry the financial load. A UPASS is inexpensive and convenient. It offers the option to study while traveling and to travel for pennies per trip. However, students do need to schedule their transit travel differently than when a car is “on demand” at all times.

One of the more interesting and perhaps less intuitive findings uncovered in the course of this research was the value of all students having a transit pass. Under present conditions, Fort Wayne’s small number of transit-using students would be unlikely to suggest a transit trip with others. These kinds of psychological barriers tumble when students know that everyone on campus possesses a UPASS, even if some are infrequent users.

Transit Agency Benefits

Transit systems in many cities have seen significant enough ridership increases to warrant service increases. Citilink’s long range Transportation Development Plan (2004) identified evening service and Sunday service as two options desired by a significant portion of the population. Pittsburgh is one example where Sunday service became feasible when students boosted overall transit ridership.³ A Sunday Cultural Shuttle Bus is now a fixture in Pittsburgh. Milwaukee was able to expand evening service because of large ridership increases after the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee began a UPASS program. According to on-board counts and surveys conducted by the Milwaukee County Transit System “following (the UPASS’s) implementation,” the increase in transit ridership was as high as 45%.⁴

Local Possibilities for a UPASS

A brief series of interviews was conducted to discuss the feasibility of a UPASS system with college administrators, teachers and students. Six individuals were interviewed at three schools (Indiana Tech, Indiana University-Purdue University-Fort Wayne [IPFW] and Ivy Tech). These were generally the larger, but not the only, colleges in Fort Wayne. In addition, four interviews were conducted with major employers like hospitals, the city and the county, some of which may benefit by expanding their employee commute options. The executive director of the Downtown Improvement District was also interviewed. The educational interviewee comments are summarized separately from the employer comments.

Educational Institution Interviews

The most striking characteristic of every interview was the degree of receptivity to the UPASS concept, even while people enumerated significant barriers. The barriers described were geographic, behavioral (existing travel habits), policy (state tax caps) and attitudinal. The geographic barriers included the relatively high proportion of students attending Fort Wayne schools who live well beyond the transit system service area. To a lesser extent, the high proportion of evening and part-time students presents a complicated market that may be a barrier or simply a challenge. None of the schools had data on student travel patterns but all had perceptions that the percentage driving was very high, ranging from “all the evening students” to an estimate of “80-90% but many others are dropped off.”



Indiana Tech

The educators and administrators were quizzed about the cost and availability of parking and parking pressure, if any. At Indiana Tech and Ivy Tech, there is no parking fee. IPFW applies a \$5 per credit parking fee on all students, whether they travel to the campus in a car or not. There are periodic shortages of parking, for special events or at the very beginning of the term at all three schools. Many of the interviewees pointed out that there were steady complaints of a shortage of “choice” spots close to the classroom buildings. IPFW has almost 5000 parking spots for 12,000 full and part-time students. The distance across some lots is quite large. Other campuses are smaller so the distance to parking is less, but even those schools reported competition and complaints about access to premium spots. The president of the IPFW student body defined the “parking problem” differently. He said, “There is no parking problem; there is a walking problem.”

When asked about attitudes toward transit (their own and others’) the school personnel generally spoke of positive experiences using transit in other cities but said that they personally did not use transit in Fort Wayne. They continued to be receptive to possibilities for future options, but stated that only transit captives use the system now. The second choice to driving alone, at least at one school, was to carpool for economic reasons. The greatest barrier to getting more students to use transit was seen as availability. Frequency of service was one problem. Duration of service – lack of evening service – was another problem, particularly for part-time evening students. A shuttle in

the IPFW/Ivy Tech area was seen as an enhancement that might influence student receptivity to transit, since the downtown pulse center is not a destination for many students.

Employer Interviews

Four employers (generally Human Resources professionals) were interviewed. Two were hospital personnel, one was from the city and one from the county. One of the hospitals had too little transit service at its location for an employee pass to be useful. The executive director of the Downtown Improvement District was also interviewed, as a voice for business generally on the issue of transit enhancements. Collectively, this group also expressed a strong receptivity to new commute options, seasoned with practical experience about the barriers to transit use in Fort Wayne.

Parkview Hospital, the city and county all draw most of their employment base from Fort Wayne and Allen County. None of them had data on hand about current employee travel patterns, but felt relatively confident that the number driving was 95-98%. Employers were asked an additional question that had not been asked of the educational personnel: were they aware of or did they take advantage of the option to offer employees a pre-tax opportunity to purchase transit passes? None were aware of it, although all were interested.

Parking is free at Parkview Hospital. City and county employees can park free in surface lots downtown, or pay \$25 per month for a space in the structure next to the City-County Building. Parking was described as “very important to employees.” No significant parking pressure was reported.



Calhoun Street – Downtown Fort Wayne

In terms of attitudes about transit, one respondent mentioned that downtown was no longer the destination it at been during her childhood, when it was “thriving.” The decline of downtown seemed to be closely tied in her mind to a decline in her perception of the transit system. An awareness of an evolving perception of transit was expressed, components of which came from different people: 1) there has been a stigma to using the system; 2) some people have started to take it because of gas prices; 3) the people who take it “say that it’s okay.”

From the employer point of view, offering employees a new commute option needs to “make business sense,” especially if there is to be any cost to the business of providing that option. It needs to be clear what impact a transit pass will have on employee retention, absenteeism, punctuality and loyalty. Information and education was mentioned as being important too, not only for the employees but also for the employers. For instance, one asked what the true cost of employee parking was to the organization and how that could or should be compared to the cost of transit passes.

One additional area of inquiry was covered with the employers. The idea of a Transportation Management Association (TMA) was introduced in very general terms, with a short list of potential

commute options TMA's typically provide, as an example of what could be done by a local TMA. Receptivity to the TMA idea was high. One human resource director said her office had been asked by employees to help organize vanpools and rideshare matching, two commonly-offered TMA services. In addition, some businesses owners and managers understand that having options for employees to reach work means more parking is available for customers, clients and patients.

Examples from Other Cities

Purdue University – West Lafayette, Indiana

CityBus, which serves Lafayette and West Lafayette, Indiana has offered a UPASS for less than a decade. Purdue University contributed between 16% and 19% of the total budget of the transit system, or between \$800,000 and \$1,200,000 per year since 1999. Students and employees are eligible to use the passes. Ivy Tech students and employees at the Lafayette campus also participate in the pass program. The photo identification cards from the two schools are used as the pass.

Indiana University – Bloomington, Indiana

The CampusAccess card serves as a UPASS for Bloomington Transit and for the Campus Bus system. Students may also pay for parking, food, copies, books, golf and other retail and educational needs with the CampusAccess card. Some students from the nearby Bloomington campus of Ivy Tech, may use Campus Bus and Bloomington Transit for free if they do not use a car.

IUPUI-Indianapolis

Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis began offering an unlimited use pass in the fall of 2007. The cost of the pass is \$4 per academic year, according to an IndyGo news release.

IUPUI is paying IndyGo \$100,000 for the 2007-2008 academic year, funded through student fees. Students swipe a bus pass and show a student ID to use the unlimited service.

An Innovative Approach for Fort Wayne

Fort Wayne faces challenges some of the universities above don't face. Purdue University and Indiana University both have large populations of students living on or near campus who may find bus service preferable to private auto use. IUPUI offers an example more like the Fort Wayne schools. IUPUI has almost 30,000 students and housing for less than 1,000, so most students commute, as most do in Fort Wayne. However, the Indianapolis bus system is considerably larger than Citilink and offers more service, including late evening and Sunday service on some lines.

Fort Wayne has assets it can leverage to design a UPASS meeting its unique challenges. First among the assets is municipal leadership committed to sustainability and economic development. Public and private leaders are aware of the high cost of travel for some students and employees and receptive to new ideas. Fort Wayne will need to take an innovative approach to providing students and employees with options other than parking. The state climate of tax and fee caps offers little maneuvering room for alternatives. In addition, the car culture in Fort Wayne and the current level of transit service need to be gradually and simultaneously addressed. One way to accomplish that is to thoroughly understand the market economics of various modes, and especially considering the subsidies to drivers who receive free or discounted parking. Free or cheap parking is a disincentive to use transit. The converse is that pricing parking to reflect actual costs, or something closer to actual costs, frees a great many resources that can be used to encourage multiple modes of travel.

Colleges and university officials report that their institutions devote a large amount of land to parking. Some are landlocked and can't increase parking without building parking structures, which will significantly increase the cost of parking for everyone. The question of whether to increase the student population at a given school is a consideration of educational resources and land (parking) resources, under current conditions.

Some schools, such as Ohio State University, take pains to ensure that students and faculty understand the principles and costs of managing and maintaining parking. The chart that follows includes excerpts from the OSU Transportation and Parking division web site. OSU provides the rationale for their principles in greater detail on the web site.

Figure 1: Ohio State University - Transportation and Parking

<p>Guiding Principles http://tp.osu.edu/PoliciesandProcedures/GuidingPrinciples/index.shtml</p>	<p>Frequently Asked Questions (Selective) http://tp.osu.edu/FactsandFigures/faq.shtml</p>
<p>PRINCIPLE 1: The Ohio State University has an obligation to preserve and enhance campus life for its many internal constituencies and also recognizes the importance of its numerous external publics.</p> <p>PRINCIPLE 2: The University actively promotes and supports the use of multiple transportation modes for trips to and from the campus.</p> <p>PRINCIPLE 3: Transportation & Parking Services must be financially self-sufficient.</p> <p>PRINCIPLE 4: Parking is a limited resource and a vital part of the University infrastructure.</p> <p>PRINCIPLE 5: The University has an obligation to solve its own parking and transportation issues and to avoid transferring them to surrounding neighborhoods.</p> <p>PRINCIPLE 6: Transportation & Parking Services welcomes constructive ideas and suggestions from all members of the campus community.</p> <p>PRINCIPLE 7: Special events are an important part of the University’s fabric and must be supported. However, displacement of typical parking and transportation services must be minimized so that those who bear the most significant financial burden for these services are treated fairly.</p> <p>PRINCIPLE 8: The management of Transportation & Parking Services is the management of scarce and valuable resources and therefore the overall good of the University takes precedence over individual requirements that may be in conflict with primary policies. Successfully accomplishing the goal of reasonable access for all requires cooperation, coordination and compromise.</p>	<p><u>Parking Citations</u></p> <p>How many citations do you issue each year? We issue an average of 80,000 citations each year.</p> <p>How much money do you make on parking citations? Parking citations generates \$1,000,000 in revenue per year, but that does not even cover the cost of the staff who write the citations, provide directions on campus, work traffic crashes, direct traffic during special events and for road closures, etc.)</p> <p><u>Parking Spaces</u></p> <p>Why don’t you build underground garages? The cost per space is more than double that of an above ground garage parking space (\$50,000 per space vs. \$20,000 per space). In addition, the maintenance is higher due to ventilation and sprinkler systems.</p> <p>Do you have any plans for more parking garages? Yes. We will soon start design plans for the Lane Ave. Parking Garage, which is planned for the area near Lane Ave. and Tuttle Park Place. Construction is set to start Spring 2007. Also, plans are in the works to add 400-500 additional parking spaces to the Ohio Union Parking Garage. The construction should coincide with the building of the new Ohio Union.</p> <p><u>Parking Permits</u></p> <p>Why are parking passes so expensive? Transportation & Parking Services at The Ohio State University is a self-supporting entity, relying solely on user fees for all construction, maintenance, and operation of parking facilities and Campus Area Bus Service (CABS). The cost of the parking permits does not begin to cover the cost to provide the parking to our customers. For example, Garage parking costs \$900 per space per year to provide. Our highest fee (faculty “A”) is \$576.00. Central Campus surface lots cost \$300 per space per year to provide. We charge between \$201.00 (students) to \$300.00 (staff) for permits to these areas. West Campus parking costs \$700 per space per year to provide. We charge \$72.00 to students to park in these lots.</p>

Very few organizations in the U.S. considered pricing parking as a commodity in the past. Fort Wayne schools offer free or minimally priced parking, as do many of their counterparts throughout the country. In reality, this is the equivalent of offering lunch at an on-campus restaurant for a whole semester for free or at a small portion of the cost. Marketing experts point out anything given for free, rather than priced at the market rate, or priced to reflect actual cost, is likely to be over-used and potentially wasted.

Demonstration Project – One Academic Year

We recommend a pilot project to be conducted at IPFW on a limited, trial basis, with the option to expand at IPFW and other schools in the future. The program has a one-year and a multi-year component:

- Identify students by zip code who live on or near transit lines, particularly those where carsharing is proposed (carsharing along with a transit pass will increase travel options enough to allow some students to give up a car altogether).
- Underwrite the cost of a specific number of unlimited passes, perhaps 1,000 for \$10 per year in the one-year trial period, with the understanding that the cost per student may rise or fall depending on future design of the program. Rather than investing in new pass media, issue a unique sticker to be applied to student photo ID cards.
- Recoup all or part of the \$10,000 by applying a surcharge for a sticker for premium (close-in) parking lots or spots. A \$1 per day surcharge per slot on 50 parking spots would generate \$5,000 if only used 100 days of the year (or sold for a \$100 flat fee). If the priority parking passes are sold as an optional commodity, outside of the student fees, they should not violate any state tax or fee caps.
- Allocate the transit passes to students most able to take advantage of Citilink service, asking them to pledge to take transit at least half of the time.
- Inform the remainder of the community of the benefits to everyone when even a few remove themselves from competition for parking. Start to inform students of the actual costs of parking, as well as the environmental impacts. Stress that everyone saves if the university can avoid the cost of adding parking.
- Conduct pre- and post-surveys of transit pass holders. Compare results of the post-project survey with Citilink ridership statistics for the relevant lines.

Long-Range Planning – A Sustainable Plan for Fort Wayne Schools

- Analyze present parking costs and future parking needs/costs at IPFW.
- Analyze present parking costs and future parking needs/costs at other schools.
- If land for future parking is scarce or distant, include the increased cost of a parking structure or shuttles from remote surface lots.
- Determine whether existing parking fees, if any, cover the actual cost of land, maintenance, lighting, cleaning and plowing parking lots.
- Investigate the possibility of bundling UPASS costs into financial aid packages, as an alternative to car ownership, allowing students to dispose of car loans in favor of educational loans.
- Calculate the addition of a shuttle for the IPFW/Ivy Tech area into the cost of the pass to determine whether shuttle service around campus and to nearby destinations can be provided economically.

Long-Range Planning – Employer Options

One of the other reports in this series recommends the development of a Transportation

Management Association (TMA), a locally-governed organization that can customize commuter options to meet local needs. TMAs often provide transit promotion and encouragement programs, as well as vanpools, rideshare matching and other services. A TMA could use the experience gained through the university pilot project to evaluate the potential need, pricing and operational parameters for a similar employee pass for major institutions and businesses in Fort Wayne.

Recommendations

We recommend that a demonstration project be conducted with a small number of IPFW students (minimum of 1000). The demonstration project will require a minimal commitment of university and Citilink resources, to test the impact of a UPASS on student travel behavior. The demonstration project will require 4-6 months of preparation and should be conducted for one school year, since it often takes some time for people to try, and then become comfortable with, new systems.

Demonstration Project

1. **Student Commute Research:** IPFW should analyze the home address (commute origin point) of students at IPFW, the city's largest institution of higher learning, to evaluate the size of the potential pool that could use transit to commute to classes.
2. **Implement Demonstration Project:** Consider a demonstration project at one or two colleges and universities for 1,000 to 5,000 students in order to evaluate the UPASS's effectiveness, possibly funded by a premium on highly desirable parking places.

Assessment and Research

3. **UPASS Forum:** Bring the best university pass practitioners from transit agencies around the country to Fort Wayne to share their experience. Evaluate local experience within the national context.

Institutionalizing a UPASS Program

4. **Identify Funding Alternatives:** Explore the feasibility and desirability of potential long-term methods to fund a UPASS program, including
 - a. Incorporating UPASS costs into student aid;
 - b. Redefining student parking fees to include UPASS costs across the entire student body; and
 - c. Other innovative funding approaches.
5. **University Parking Cost Research:** Determine the actual cost of owning and maintaining each university surface parking space. Predict future parking costs for new surface lots or parking structures and determine their per-student cost as a benchmark for evaluating UPASS costs as a possible lower cost option.
6. **Explore Program Management Options:** Determine whether Citilink or a new Transportation Management Association should administer the demonstration and/or the ultimate plan for the universities.
7. **Link UPASS Adoption to Expanded Evening Bus Service or Other Service Increases:** (Sunday service or shuttle service): Explore the feasibility of linking the adoption of the UPASS by an educational institution to a decision by Citilink to provide expanded bus service to the adopting educational institution(s). Extending night service to match the end of the last evening class at night would make the passes much more attractive.
8. **Link UPASS to Car Sharing Membership:** Provide free Car Sharing membership to UPASS users to encourage an auto-free lifestyle.

Endnotes

- 1 Brown, Jeffrey, et al, Unlimited Access, paper presented to the Transit and Universities Conference, June 1998.
- 2 <http://www.acadweb.wvu.edu/senate/Senate/Other%20Univ%20REPORTS/TransPlanInitiative%20Task%20Interm%20Reprt%20Mar%202006.htm>.
- 3 Brown, op. cit.
- 4 Schute, Claude and Jim Marsho. The University of Wisconsin Transit Pass, April 2004. Although no specific date is given for the survey or on-board count, the Milwaukee UPASS had only been in operation for ten years at the time this article was written.

