

Transport 2020 Finance and Governance Subcommittee

Executive Summary: Findings and Recommendations

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Finance and Governance Subcommittee Charge

The expanded Transport 2020 Finance and Governance Subcommittee was charged with the following:

- Conduct a review of the regional transportation assumptions underlying Transport 2020.
- Develop issues for discussion regarding a regional transit authority (RTA), that will accommodate regional express bus, commuter rail and other public transit services.
- Develop information on potential regional transportation solutions and provide for public discussions around Dane County.

Finance and Governance Subcommittee: DRAFT Recommendations

Regional Transportation System

- The Subcommittee concurs with the following goals established to guide the regional planning process (*Note: Below are a hybrid of the Madison Area MPO Regional Transportation Plan and Transport 2020 goals*):
 - Promote efficient land use and development patterns in Dane County.
 - Provide for the safe, efficient and effective movement of people and goods, and provide and enhance transportation choices.
 - Improve and enhance economic development opportunities, and expand access to jobs.
 - Preserve the character and livability of neighborhoods and residential areas.
 - Enhance the natural and social environment.
 - Develop a cost-effective transportation strategy that maximizes community consensus and institutional support.
- The Subcommittee concurs with, in general, the Transport 2020 recommendation to implement a complete regional public transportation system. Elements of the system may include the following:
 - Establish new commuter rail service, operating in the existing freight railroad corridor. The initial start-up system would operate between Middleton on the west, through downtown Madison, to an eastern terminus in the Town of Burke near the City of Sun Prairie (approximately 16 miles long, 17 stations and multiple park-and-ride opportunities).
 - Maintain and enhance existing Madison Metro bus service.
 - Establish new regional express bus service to numerous Dane County communities. Establish park-and-ride facilities at the termini of the new regional bus services, and possibly at additional locations within the service area. Provide safe and convenient transfer opportunities, to allow for the most effective coverage for the regional transit system.
 - Shared-ride taxi service (and/or feeder bus/van circulator services) should be established (or maintained, where services currently exist), in order to provide all Dane County communities direct access to regional park-and-ride facilities and other transfer locations.

- Elderly and specialized transportation systems should continue to be provided, and expanded as warranted, throughout Dane County.

⇒ (**Note:** *Extensions and expansions of this regional public transportation system could occur over time, as demand warrants, to additional communities in Dane County as well as surrounding counties. Initially, regional bus service (with complementary feeder bus/van service and park-and-ride facilities) should serve communities such as Fitchburg, McFarland, Stoughton, Oregon, Verona, Cottage Grove, DeForest, Waunakee, Cross Plains, Black Earth, Mazomanie, and others (as demand warrants). Short term extensions of the start-up rail system may include the downtown area in the City of Sun Prairie, as well as an extension to the north to the Dane County Regional Airport (the Dane County Regional Airport is anticipated to be the location of a high-speed intercity passenger rail station.)*

Funding Sources

- Seek a mix of funding for the capital costs of the initial start up system in approximately the following percentages: 50% federal, 50% a mix of State of Wisconsin, regional and local sources (to match the federal funds).
- For the regional source of funding, establish an increase in the regional sales tax of 0.5%. The regional sales tax shall apply to sales conducted either in Dane County or within the boundaries of the Madison Area MPO. Establishment of this funding source will require the enactment of legislation by the Wisconsin Legislature. Revenues from this funding source may be shared with other local units of government for their transportation needs.
- Operating costs for the regional public transportation system will be covered by a mix of revenue sources (which could include - but are not limited to – farebox revenues, federal, State, regional and local revenue sources).

Regional Governance Model

- The Transport 2020 regional public transportation system should be implemented and funded by an RTA.
- The geographic area of the RTA should initially be either Dane County or the geographic boundaries of the Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. Provisions should be made for the potential geographic expansion of the RTA to serve additional Dane County communities (and surrounding counties) over time, as demand and interest warrants.
- Members of the RTA should be appointed by mixed appointing authorities, and membership should include a diverse representation of the community. The RTA should include representation from (but not be limited to) the following entities:
 - Dane County
 - City of Madison
 - Other cities in Dane County
 - Villages in Dane County
 - Towns in Dane County
 - University of Wisconsin-Madison
 - Wisconsin Governor
 - Transit system operators (or other transportation service providers)
- Governance and operation of existing public transit services (such as Madison Metro, elderly

and specialized transportation systems, and shared-ride taxi services) may remain in their existing format and continue to receive federal and/or other funding under the new RTA model. Governance and operation of new public transportation services (such as new regional bus or feeder bus/van circulator services) may be operated directly by the RTA or by another operating entity (by contract).

Transport 2020 Public Outreach

- The Transport 2020 Implementation Task Force (and Finance and Governance Subcommittee) will continue to conduct public information sessions at various junctures in the RTA decision-making process. The next series of community discussions, focused on these Finance & Governance Subcommittee findings, have been scheduled for the following:
 1. City of Middleton: Monday, February 23rd, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Middleton City Hall (Council Chambers), 7426 Hubbard Avenue
 2. City of Stoughton: Thursday, February 26th, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Stoughton City Hall (Fire Dept. Training Room), 401 East Main Street
 3. Village of DeForest: Monday, March 2nd, 6:00-8:00 p.m., DeForest Area Community and Senior Center (Community Room), 505 North Main Street
 4. City of Sun Prairie (*Madison Area MPO meeting*): Wednesday, March 4th, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Sun Prairie Library (Community Room), 1350 Linnerud Drive

- A referendum will be conducted once the RTA proposal has advanced to a detailed enough stage to offer voters a clear choice regarding the Transport 2020 recommendations.