



Meeting Summary

TRANSPORT 2020: IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE (ITF) TRANSIT OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Thursday, April 29, 2004
4:45 pm
Madison Municipal Building, Room 260
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
Madison, WI

-- ROLL CALL

Subcommittee Present: Jim Berkenstadt; John DeLamater (5:20); Supv. Chuck Erickson (5:10); Kristine Euclide; Ald. Ken Golden (*alternate*); Jesse Kaysen; Rod Clark (*for Rose Phetteplace*).

Subcommittee Absent: None.

TAC/Staff Present: Catherine Debo (Madison Metro); Rob Kennedy (Dane County Executive's Office); Jerry Mandli (Dane County Highway and Transportation Dept.); Mike Rewey (WisDOT-District 1); Bill Schaefer (Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization); David Trowbridge (Madison Planning and Development; *Project Administrator for Transport 2020*).

Others Present: Fred Bartol (Dane Alliance for Rail Transit); Sandy Beaupre (ITF Member); Ken Kinney (HNTB Corporation); Bob Schaefer; Tony Smick (Citizens for PRT); Forrest Van Schwartz (Global Transportation Consultancy); Will Warlick (EINPC); Ald. Robbie Webber.

1. REVIEW OF AGENDA

Transport 2020 Co-Chair Ken Golden welcomed Transit Operations Subcommittee members to the first meeting. Subcommittee members and technical staff then introduced themselves. There were no suggested modifications to the meeting agenda.

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public wishing to speak on future agenda items.

3. ELECTION OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR

Kristine Euclide nominated Jim Berkenstadt to serve as Chair, but he declined. Mike Rewey nominated Supv. Chuck Erickson and Jesse Kaysen to serve as Co-Chairs of the Transit Operations Subcommittee. The Subcommittee unanimously elected Erickson and Kaysen to serve as Co-Chairs.

4. OVERVIEW OF TRANSPORT 2020 PROCESS AND START-UP SYSTEM

David Trowbridge summarized the previous Transport 2020 alternatives analysis process and described how the Start-Up System came to be recommended. He distributed the goals and objectives that guided the process and said that the Implementation Task Force may wish to review these as starting point for defining new possible alternatives. Trowbridge added that a review of transit system alternatives is a required component of the upcoming PE/NEPA study, and that one of the primary work products of the Transit Operations Subcommittee (and the full ITF) will be a range of transit options to be reviewed in that study.

Trowbridge said that some transit alternatives that were rejected in the previous study may be revisited because certain conditions have changed - such as costs, shared use of the railroad corridor, land use/redevelopment changes, etc. Ken Golden agreed and noted that the Park Street corridor and redevelopment plans in that area have changed, in part due to the annexation agreement with the Town of Madison.

Trowbridge asked that the public registrants be allowed to speak before the Subcommittee engaged in discussion. The first registrant was Fred Bartol, representing Dane Alliance for Rail Transit. Mr. Bartol asked the Subcommittee not to dismiss the notion of a bifurcated system – with different rail modes working together. He said that it may be better to implement commuter rail and streetcars – initially in limited geographic areas - and allow each to serve its particular travel market very well, rather than trying to use one mode to achieve all travel and land use objectives. He said that it may seem more expensive at first, but could be the best option in the long term.

The second registrant was Bob Schaefer. Mr. Schaefer said that the benefits to overall travel should be considered, including the impacts transit has on automobile traffic. He said that there may be better transit options out there and that the Subcommittee should consider all impacts and costs before deciding on the best system to move forward. He felt that current transit modes may be obsolete, particularly for Madison.

David Trowbridge reminded Subcommittee members that the Start-Up System, which includes commuter rail between Middleton and East Towne (with express bus components), is the transit system alternative that was endorsed by the County Board, Common Council and MPO. Rob Kennedy noted that Transport 2020 needs to be careful not to stray too far from the FTA process as it reviews other alternatives in the future.

Mike Rewey stated that one of the goals WisDOT-District 1 has for the Transport 2020 process is to find ways to allow the isthmus of Madison to thrive (in terms of residential and commercial development activity) and to minimize the amount of automobile traffic entering the area. He also said that the Subcommittee should look at ways to utilize transportation corridors as efficiently as possible, including the railroad corridors.

Catherine Debo asked that one of the goals should be modified to include specific consideration of the needs of the elderly and disabled. She also stressed the importance of revisiting bus rapid transit (BRT) options in the NEPA process, as these systems are highly favored by FTA (particularly for small urban areas like Madison). Debo also said that BRT systems can have positive land use benefits (similar to rail systems) and that the previous Transport 2020 study prematurely rejected this notion.

Kristine Euclide said that she would like to see a summary of the basic Transport 2020 recommendations and a description of what has changed since then. She also said that she would like to see a summary of the FTA guidelines on the NEPA process and a description of how Transport 2020 will move forward within that process. Rob Kennedy said that it was possible to provide these summaries.

5. REVIEW, DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHARGE/MISSION

David Trowbridge summarized the Subcommittee Charge/Mission and said that he would like to be very clear on the outcomes and work products of the Subcommittee. Ald. Ken Golden said that he would also like a clear idea of what the Subcommittee's work products will be. He said that he would like to have a list of specific questions to be answered by the PE/NEPA process and that these needed to be included in the RFP, when it is developed.

Jesse Kaysen said that the transit system alternatives need to be at a certain level of detail, in order to make sense from a functional standpoint. David Trowbridge agreed, cautioned that the PE/NEPA process should be the forum for detailed review of alternatives and that every concern need not be addressed as the range of transit options is developed (for later review). He said that the process could become bogged down if the Subcommittee starts to micro-define the transit systems to be evaluated. Bill Schaefer pointed out that the linkages of rail, etc. to the Madison Metro bus system need to be fully understood, and that a certain amount of detail will be needed for that. Jesse Kaysen said that transfers among transit modes should also be fully understood, as the public generally do not like to make a number of transfers as part of a transit trip.

Kristine Euclide said that the work of the Subcommittee should be an outgrowth of the previous Transport 2020 study, and that the Subcommittee should start with the previous goals and objectives. She said that these could be modified over time. She also asked for a timeline of activities for the Subcommittee's work, and how that fits into the overall Task Force's activities.

Jim Berkenstadt suggested organizing the Charge/Mission into manageable work items, so that particular meetings can address them efficiently, given the lack of meeting time and the significant amount of work on the Subcommittee Charge/Mission. Ken Golden agreed and said that a "task flowchart" would be useful for understanding how the Subcommittee work fits into the NEPA process. He agreed that the Subcommittee's work should feed the development of the RFP for the PE/NEPA study.

After continuing their discussion, the Subcommittee members then agreed upon the following points:

- Changes in conditions, technology, and other assumptions that provide grounds for modifications of Transport 2020's recommendations.
- Openness to streetcars and BRT in light of new technological developments and revised assumptions.
- Need to balance and prioritize goals such as mobility, efficient land use, and better use of an available transportation corridor.
- Need to be clear about the specific products of the committee's work, including:
 - A range of conceptual alternatives to be included in an RFP to guide consultant work and which would be narrowed to one or two alternatives for PE work.
 - Specific technical, legal, and other questions that need to be answered by consultants to allow for the evaluation of alternatives in the NEPA process
- Need to include consideration of transfer penalties and reconfiguration of the local bus system.
- Need to generate a "task flow chart," timeline, and description of questions and decision points to be taken by the subcommittee to fulfill its charge.

The Subcommittee agreed that the Charge/Mission was adequate for the time being, and agreed that it may be augmented as the group moves forward with its work.

6. OVERVIEW OF NEXT STEPS FOR TRANSIT OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

The only registrant on this agenda item was Bob Schaefer. Mr. Schaefer urged the Subcommittee to evaluate the impacts of all options looked at in the previous Transport 2020 study. He said that data exists and that this should be revisited. He also said that the rail corridor may not be the best place for transit and that it should not be selected just because it seems inexpensive. He said that impacts on auto traffic, particularly at rail crossings, needed to be looked at very carefully. Bob Schaefer also said that the bus options may be much more cost effective.

The Subcommittee then scheduled its next meeting for:

- Monday, June 21st, 4:45 p.m., Room 260 Madison Municipal Building

Jesse Kaysen also asked Subcommittee members to come to the next meeting with a preferred day/time so that a standing meeting could be scheduled.

7. ITEMS BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS AND OTHER MEMBERS

Catherine Debo said that it may be useful to look at a map of key redevelopment areas in the City and use that to help guide the location of a transit system.

There were no other items by the Co-Chairs or the other Subcommittee members.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The Transit Operations Subcommittee adjourned its meeting at 6:05 p.m.