Transport 2020

**Preliminary Engineering/NEPA Analysis for the Dane County/Greater Madison Metropolitan Area**

# Meeting Summary

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

**Monday, June 21, 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; Supv. Chuck Erickson; Kristine Euclide; Jesse Kaysen; Supv. Scott McDonell (*alternate*); Rod Clark (*for Rose Phetteplace*).

Subcommittee Absent: None.

TAC/Staff Present: Doug Dalton (Wisconsin Department of Transportation-Urban Planning); Catherine Debo (Madison Metro); John Etzler (Madison Metro); Dave Eveland (Madison Metro); Barbara Feeney (WisDOT-District 1); Rob Kennedy (UW-Madison); Elizabeth Kluesner (Dane County Executive's Office); Jerry Mandli (Dane County Highway and Transportation Dept.); Crystal Martin (Madison Metro); Julie Maryott-Walsh (Madison Metro); Bob McDonald (Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization); Sharon Persich (Madison Metro); Bill Schaefer (Madison Area MPO); Tim Sobota (Madison Metro); David Trowbridge (Madison Planning and Development; *Project Administrator for Transport 2020*).

Others Present: Fred Bartol (Dane Alliance for Rail Transit); Carousel Bayrd; Daniel Boehm (Milwaukee County Transit System); Dave Cieslewicz (Mayor, City of Madison); Brian Dranzik (MCTS); Linda Horvath; Bob Schaefer; Susan Schmitz (Downtown Madison Inc.); Judy Siegfried; Tony Smick (Citizens for PRT); Will Warlick (EINPC); Dick Wagner (ITF Member).

**1. REVIEW OF AGENDA**

Transit Operations Subcommittee Co-Chair Jesse Kaysen welcomed Subcommittee members to the meeting. David Trowbridge suggested moving the discussion of the Transport 2020 Task Flowchart up to item #4 on the agenda and the Subcommittee agreed to that. There were no other modifications to the meeting agenda.

## 2. APPROVAL OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY (*APRIL 29, 2004*)

The Summary of the April 29, 2004 meeting of the Transit Operations Subcommittee was unanimously approved, as submitted on a motion by Supv. Scott McDonell/Rob Kennedy.

## 3. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

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

## 4. OVERVIEW OF *DRAFT* TRANSPORT 2020 TASK FLOWCHART

David Trowbridge summarized a four-page document that showed work tasks for the Transport 2020 Implementation Task Force and Subcommittees. He said that the next few months of work would lead to the development of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the PE/NEPA study.

Trowbridge said that it is possible that work could begin on this study by Spring of 2005, if funding is secured. He pointed out that 50% of the PE/NEPA project cost ($2 million of the estimated total cost of $4 million) is committed by WisDOT. He said that the remainder is being requested as a federal earmark as part of the reauthorization of the federal TEA-21 transportation funding legislation. Supv. Scott McDonell asked that federal funding cycles be monitored, so that Transport 2020 can be considered for funding at various stages of the process.

## 5. REVIEW OF RECENT TRIP TO PORTLAND, OR AND POTENTIAL STREETCAR OPTIONS

Mayor Dave Cieslewicz presented some slides that summarized what he and others had seen recently during a trip to Portland. Mayor Cieslewicz said that the purpose of the trip was to observe how Portland used modern streetcars to help revitalize some struggling parts of its downtown, such as an abandoned warehouse district and railroad yard. He said that about $1.4 billion in redevelopment value had been added to the Pearl District in 10 years, and part of this can be attributed to the location of the streetcar in that area.

*(Note: A copy of Mayor Cieslewicz's slides can be obtained by request)*

Mayor Cieslewicz then showed numerous slides that illustrated how the streetcar operated, how electric catenaries were arranged, how street traffic was affected by the streetcars, construction of new track and infrastructure, etc. Kristine Euclide asked how the service was funded. Mayor Cieslewicz said that it costs about $2.7 million annually to operate the streetcar service, at about 14 minute headways throughout the day (basically 5:30 a.m. to midnight, with slightly less service on weekends). He added that the funding comes from a mixture of sources, including parking revenues, modest amounts of advertising and Tri-Met (the regional transit operator). He said that most of the line operates in a free fare zone, so fares are not a big contributor to the operation.

Bob McDonald asked how much the initial line cost. Cieslewicz said that the capital cost to build the 2.5-mile (double track) line cost about $56 million in 2001. He said that lesser traveled streets were chosen for the service and that the impact on traffic operations was minimal. He also said that extensions of the initial line are now being constructed.

Mayor Cieslewicz concluded by noting that officials from Portland would be visiting Madison in the Fall to offer opinions on how a streetcar might operate here. He also asked Transport 2020 participants to keep an open mind on modern streetcar technology and hoped to return to a future meeting to discuss a more detailed proposal (for evaluation as part of the PE/NEPA analysis).

## 6. PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION OF CITY OF MILWAUKEE'S DOWNTOWN CONNECTOR STUDY

Daniel Boehm and Brian Dranzik (Milwaukee County Transit System) presented some slides that summarized the Milwaukee Connector Study.

*(Note: A copy of the MCTS slide presentation can be obtained by request)*

Dan Boehm said that this alternatives analysis considered various transit systems that operated in the downtown area of Milwaukee, including low-cost bus options and a guided street tram. He added that the study recommended moving forward with a guided street tram, which is basically a rubber-tired vehicle. The street tram looks quite a bit like a modern streetcar, is powered by overhead electric wires, is guided by a single steel rail embedded into the street, but has the flexibility to leave the single rail and operate on-street (using diesel power). Brian Dranzik said that the vehicle can carry between 140-200 passengers, has a 30-year life and can travel up to 50 mph.

Brian Dranzik pointed out that the street tram is projected to cost about $18-20 million per mile, and that the total project cost is about $300 million. He said that $91 million in federal funds have been earmarked for some sort of rail project in the Milwaukee area, but that it is not certain that the Milwaukee Connector will use this. A DVD video was then played, showing how the guided street tram operates (the video was taken from an existing operation in Nancy, France).

Supv. Chuck Erickson asked if the operation had any traffic accident problems. Dranzik replied that there may have been, but they were minor and happened off the main guidance system. Supv. Scott McDonell asked if the tram operates without the electric power in places. Dranzik said that the Milwaukee proposal does not use electric in some places, especially over bridges (which often operate as drawbridges). Boehm added that the ability to operate off of the electric catenaries offers a great deal of flexibility, such as for detours, maintenance, incidents, areas too costly to install the full infrastructure, etc.

Co-Chair Jesse Kaysen said that before the Subcommittee gets into too much discussion, she would like to give the public a chance to make comments.

The only registrant was Bob Schaefer. In terms of the modern streetcar presentation by Mayor Cieslewicz, Mr. Schaefer recalled Milwaukee's streetcars of the 1930's and noted that they had many problems – particularly with winter conditions. He said that ruts were created in the street and that ice on the steel rail caused problems. Bob Schaefer said that the overhead wires create challenges for fire department personnel and that the streetcar slows auto traffic. He said that he prefers a diesel-based mode of transit to the more expensive electrically-powered transit.

Kristine Euclide asked of sharing a lane with traffic would affect the transit schedule, and ridership. Brian Dranzik said that is shouldn't be the case. He said that about 1,200 buses would be moved out of the corridor and that traffic could be improved (parking would also be removed in some places). Dan Boehm added that the street tram would not stop as frequently as a local bus, utilizing perhaps a ¼ - ½ mile spacing of tram stops. He said that the service would be very frequent – operating on a 5- or 10-minute headway, depending on the time of day. He added that, during peak periods, about 24-25 vehicles (of the total fleet of 31) would be in operation (operating at an average speed of 15-20 mph, including stops). Boehm said that ridership was projected to be 40,000 per day.

Rob Kennedy asked about the status of the $91 million federal funds. Dan Boehm said that the Milwaukee Connector is competing for those funds with the Milwaukee-Racine-Kenosha commuter rail project, but that nothing has been agreed to yet. He said that an agreement between the Mayor of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County Executive and the Governor needs to be reached to finalize which project gets those funds.

Catherine Debo asked how these trams would operate in winter weather. Brian Dranzik replied that this was an important consideration in the analysis and decision to recommend the street tram. He said that a vehicle manufactured by Civis was rejected because it uses and optical eye for vehicle guidance, and snow/ice would affect its operation.

Kristine Euclide asked if any of these street trams were operating in the United States. Dan Boehm said that only 2 of these systems are in operation, both in France. Jesse Kaysen asked if it was possible to obtain federal funds for these vehicles with the "buy American" requirement. Brian Dranzik said that it is possible to obtain these vehicles if a foreign company has a manufacturing facility in the U.S. He added that Bombardier, a Canadian company, is in a good position to do this.

The Subcommittee thanked Mr. Boehm and Mr. Dranzik for the presentation. David Trowbridge said that the guided street tram technology could be considered as an alternative in the next phase of Transport 2020 – the PE/NEPA study. He said that the Subcommittee (and full ITF) should consider this at a future meeting.

## 7. NEXT STEPS FOR TRANSIT OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

The Subcommittee scheduled its next meeting for:

**- Monday, August 23rd, 4:45 p.m., Room 260 Madison Municipal Building**

## 8. ITEMS BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS AND OTHER MEMBERS

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

## 9. ADJOURNMENT

The Transit Operations Subcommittee adjourned its meeting at 6:20 p.m.