



Meeting Summary

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

Monday, August 23, 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; Ald. Ken Golden (*alternate*); Supv. Scott McDonell (*alternate*); Rose Phetteplace.

Subcommittee Absent: Jesse Kaysen (*notified*).

TAC/Staff Present: Rod Clark (Wisconsin Department of Transportation-Bureau of Transit and Local Roads); Doug Dalton (WisDOT-Bureau of Planning); Catherine Debo (Madison Metro); Rob Kennedy (UW-Madison); Jerry Mandli (Dane County Highway and Transportation Dept.); Bob McDonald (Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization); Diane Paoni (WisDOT-Urban Planning); Bob Pike (Madison Area MPO); David Trowbridge (Madison Planning and Development; *Project Administrator for Transport 2020*); Todd Violante (Dane County Planning and Development).

Others Present: Fred Bartol (Dane Alliance for Rail Transit); Sandy Beaupre (ITF Member); Kathleen Falk (Dane County Executive); Lori Kay (ITF Member); Al Matano (Dane County Supervisor, District 11); Andy Olsen (Dane County Supervisor, District 17); Bob Schaefer; Dick Wagner (ITF Member).

1. REVIEW OF AGENDA

Transit Operations Subcommittee Co-Chair Chuck Erickson welcomed Subcommittee members to the meeting. There were no modifications to the meeting agenda.

2. APPROVAL OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY (JUNE

21, 2004)

The Summary of the June 21, 2004 meeting of the Transit Operations Subcommittee was unanimously approved, as submitted on a motion by Ald. Ken Golden/John DeLamater.

3. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

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

4. PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION OF PROPOSAL FOR PHASE I RAIL CORRIDOR PROJECT

Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk thanked the Subcommittee for the opportunity to present a conceptual rail proposal. She said that her primary goal is to respect the Transport 2020 process and to offer a concept that is consistent with that. She added that she is hopeful that state and federal funds can be used for this project and she asked that the full Implementation Task Force consider this proposal at its next meeting. She thanked several people for input on this proposal, including Supv. Scott McDonell, Fitchburg Mayor Tom Clauder, Michael Blaska, Dick Wagner and George Nelson. She said that she would like to earn Transport 2020's support for this concept.

Falk also said that this proposal is a regional system that builds on transportation investments that have been made in the past. She said that the proposal takes advantage of new hybrid rail vehicle technologies that allow vehicles to operate in the railroad corridor and in the street. She said that she hopes to work further with Mayor Cieslewicz, and added that this proposal has a strong regional aspect to it.

Supv. Scott McDonell then presented some slides that provided an overview of the proposal. He said that the system would operate in the rail corridor from Greenway Center in Middleton and operate in the street once it reaches downtown, serving the key business district there and the East Rail Corridor. McDonell also said that there would be a spur line to the Alliant Energy Center. He said that the capital costs of the proposal were projected to be \$52.8 million.

(Note: A copy of Supv. McDonell's slides can be obtained by request)

John DeLamater asked how many rail vehicles would be needed. McDonell said that three 2-car sets should probably suffice, but it would depend on the desired frequency of the service. He said that each vehicle can carry approximately 100 people. Ald. Ken Golden stressed the importance of park-and-ride facilities service the system, particularly at the periphery.

At this time, members of the public wished to speak about the Dane County proposal. Fred Bartol said that he felt this proposal warranted moving forward, noting that it recognized the limitations of the rail corridor but also takes advantage of its benefits in places. He felt that this starter system is long enough to provide good connectivity, but he has some questions about the vehicle technology. Bartol said that the estimated cost of around \$50 million makes the project much more do-able than the larger system.

Bob Schaefer said that he has several questions about the proposal. He said that Transport 2020 should not look at cheap starter systems, or it will not be viable. He said that he has questions about the ridership and hoped that projections could be provided for that. Schaefer also said that he has concerns about the high cost of the system, particularly when all of the future extensions are considered. Finally, he pointed out that traffic congestion would not improve with this system, and would likely increase – depending on how frequently the trains would be operating.

Bob McDonald asked what type of parking facility would be used at the periphery. Scott McDonell said that a surface lot could be used initially, near Middleton and also at the Alliant Center.

Ald. Ken Golden asked that this proposal be sent to City Traffic Engineering. He said that there are numerous traffic choke points and areas where parking would be affected (such as on Main Street and

Wilson Street), and he hoped to involve Traffic Engineering in fleshing out some of these details. Golden said that on-street parking is very important to the downtown, for many reasons. Supv. Scott McDonell said that this proposal is really only a concept at this point, and he expected the streets being used to change as this moves forward. He agreed that lesser traveled streets may be the best locations for an in-street rail system.

Kristine Euclide said that she liked the idea of using a hybrid vehicle to provide good service to Middleton and the downtown area. However, she asked for clarification of what the next steps in the process would be. She said that it is important to keep the process moving forward. Ken Golden said that the Management Team should meet soon to discuss this.

Jim Berkenstadt asked what types of funding were proposed to be used for this proposal. Scott McDonell said that this had not yet been fully worked out, but that federal funds would be sought. Berkenstadt pointed out that the system would need ongoing funding - for maintenance and operation - and that some sort of sales tax might be a possibility. McDonell said that the Finance and Governance Subcommittee will be exploring those types of funding options.

Rose Phetteplace had some questions about the cost of the system, noting that \$52 million for 12 miles is significantly less than the Milwaukee Connector's estimated cost of \$12-18 million per mile. She said that the details of how the costs were arrived at for this proposal would need to be reviewed.

Bob McDonald said that, if federal funds are to be sought, it will be very important for any proposal to be generally consistent with the Locally-Preferred Alternative (LPA), which is a purely rail-corridor based system running from Middleton to East Towne. David Trowbridge agreed, noting that he has been talking with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) officials about this issue. He said that the review process needs to be very careful not to deviate too far from the official LPA, as other potential corridors are re-considered.

Ald. Ken Golden/Rob Kennedy then submitted a motion:

“to approve forwarding the Dane County proposal to the Implementation Task Force for their review and consideration, to share the proposal with City Traffic Engineering and Planning Unit for their information, to schedule a meeting of the Transport 2020 Management Team as soon as possible (and notice all affected staff and agencies of this meeting), and that the purpose of the Management Team will be to discuss a process for determining which transit system alternatives move forward to the NEPA evaluation process (to be evaluated against the Locally-Preferred Alternative, per FTA/NEPA regulations).”

5. NEXT STEPS FOR TRANSIT OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

The Subcommittee scheduled its next meeting for:

- Monday, October 25th, 4:45 p.m., Room LL-110 Madison Municipal Building

Bob Schaefer had one minute of public speaking time remaining and wished to make a comment. He stressed the importance of looking at the complete 4-line transit system, when considering the costs and benefits of the system.

6. INFORMATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS BY CO-CHAIRS AND SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

Co-Chair Chuck Erickson and John DeLamater distributed some articles for the Subcommittee's information. Erickson's article focused on the Minneapolis light rail system, and possible future extensions. DeLamater's article pertained to the San Francisco streetcar system, and how some lines have significantly exceeded ridership expectations.

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

7. ADJOURNMENT

The Transit Operations Subcommittee adjourned its meeting at 6:00 p.m.