



Minutes

TRANSPORT 2020 IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE (ITF) MEETING #4

Monday, May 24, 2004

6:30 pm

Madison Municipal Building, Room 260
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
Madison, WI

-- ROLL CALL

ITF Members Present: Sandy Beaupre; Jim Berkenstadt; Kristine Euclide; Lori Kay (*for LaMarr Billups*); Supv. Michael Blaska; Supv. Chuck Erickson; Ald. Ken Golden; Jesse Kaysen; George Nelson; Ald. Warren Onken (7:15); Randy Romanski.

ITF Members Absent: John DeLamater; Supv. Scott McDonell (*notified*); Rose Phetteplace (*notified*); Dick Wagner (*notified*).

TAC/Staff Present: Rod Clark (Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transit and Local Roads); Catherine Debo (Madison Metro); Jeanne Hoffman (Madison Mayor's Office); Rob Kennedy (Dane County Executive's Office); Jerry Mandli (Dane County Public Works, Highway and Transportation Department); Bob McDonald (Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization); Bill Schaefer (Madison Area MPO); Mike Rewey (WisDOT-District 1); David Trowbridge (Madison Planning and Development; *Project Administrator for Transport 2020*).

Others Present: Fred Bartol (Dane Alliance for Rail Transit); Jim Cowart (WSOR); David Gundersen; Ken Lucht (Wisconsin and Southern Railroad); Ben Meighan (WSOR); Mark Nordling (WSOR); Connie Palmer Smalley; Bryant Walker Smith (Strand Associates); Will Warlick (East Isthmus Neighborhood Planning Council); Royce Williams.

1. REVIEW OF AGENDA

Ald. Ken Golden welcomed Transport 2020 Implementation Task Force members to Meeting #4. There were no suggested modifications to the meeting agenda.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM ITF MEETING #3 (MARCH 22, 2004)

The Minutes for Meeting #3 of the Transport 2020 Implementation Task Force were unanimously approved, as submitted on a motion by Jesse Kaysen/Supv. Michael Blaska.

3. MANAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE: PUBLIC COMMENT PROCEDURES

David Trowbridge reported that the Transport 2020 Management Team met in April to refine the public comment rules and procedures, to be used for Implementation Task Force and Subcommittee meetings. He said that registrants would be allowed to speak on a maximum of two agenda items. He also said that there would be a maximum of three minutes speaking time allowed for each agenda item, with a maximum of five minutes total speaking time. As an example, Trowbridge said that if one individual spoke for three minutes on one agenda item, he/she would only be allowed two minutes on any subsequent agenda item.

4. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no registrants for public comment.

5. UPDATE OF SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

- FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE SUBCOMMITTEE
- TRANSIT OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Ald. Ken Golden suggested, with no opposition, that this agenda item be taken up while the presentation materials were being readied.

David Trowbridge reported that the Finance and Governance Subcommittee met April 26th and established a list of work items for staff to get started on. He said that the Co-Chairs of the Subcommittee are Supv. Michael Blaska and Dick Wagner. At its next meeting, Trowbridge said that the Subcommittee will be reviewing all sources of transit funding, as a start to developing a funding strategy for the implementation of the project. The Finance and Governance Subcommittee also asked staff to review a range of transit governance options to be fleshed out for review in the coming months.

Trowbridge said that the Transit Operations Subcommittee met April 29th. He said that the Co-Chairs of the Subcommittee are Supv. Chuck Erickson and Jesse Kaysen. That Subcommittee agreed that one of its primary outputs would be a range of transit system options to be reviewed in the NEPA process. The Transport 2020 Start-Up System, he said, was officially designated as the Locally-Preferred Alternative, but that another options could be considered within the context of that. He also said that he would be developing a "task flowchart" to show what actions need to be taken by the subcommittees and what work needs to be done in the next few months.

Trowbridge said that the minutes of both subcommittees would be included in all Task Force packets, as a regular course of action.

6. WISCONSIN AND SOUTHERN RAILROAD (WSOR) COMMUTER RAIL PILOT PROJECT: PRESENTATION OF SERVICE PROPOSAL BY WSOR OFFICIALS

Ken Lucht, Mark Nordling and Jim Cowart (all of WSOR) presented some slides that summarized a proposal to operate a pilot commuter rail service on the west side of Madison (including Middleton).

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

Mr. Lucht summarized the proposed operation, noting that trains would operate between Greenway Station in Middleton and the Monona Terrace area (in both directions), departing every 30 minutes

during the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. weekdays. He said that three sets of 3-car trains would be required for the service and that diesel-multiple unit (DMU) trains would be used.

Mark Nordling summarized some of the capital costs that would be needed, including the trains, track upgrades, grade crossing protection (at streets), station/boarding areas, a maintenance facility and fencing. He also summarized some of the operating costs, including the need for 13 train drivers, administration, fuel, vehicle maintenance, and track and signal maintenance/inspection.

Lucht said that the capital costs of the service are estimated to be between about \$23-45 million, depending on the level of expenditure desired for certain elements. He added that the operating costs were estimated to be about \$5.2 million (per year). Lucht stated that the cost estimates for the service were preliminary and could be reduced substantially, but that the WSOR had been asked to err on the side of conservatism (i.e., accounting for all possible costs). For example, he said that station costs and train vehicle costs could be reduced quite a bit. Lucht then said that WSOR officials would be happy to answer questions from the Task Force.

Rob Kennedy asked if the upgrades to Class 4 track were necessary, given the low speeds. Mark Nordling said that it was not as much about speeds as the level of ride comfort for passengers. Kennedy also asked about the costs for moving the WSOR offices and whether or not there were other options, such as putting the maintenance facility at Greenway Station. Nordling said that it was possible but that the best location for a vehicle maintenance facility is at Johnson Street Yards. Nordling added that any of these items could be discussed further.

Kristine Euclide asked about the capital costs – i.e., who would make the expenditures and who would own the infrastructure and facilities. Ken Lucht replied that a new company and management structure would be established to implement the service. David Trowbridge said that the reason for looking at an early service proposal was to see if non-federal funds could be used to start some limited service, but that the details of the funding have not yet discussed. He said that this would be the next step, if the Task Force feels this to be a worthy idea for further consideration.

George Nelson said that, based on the rough estimates, he determined the annualized capital and operating costs to be about \$9 million per year. He asked if ridership on the service had been projected, so that a “cost per trip” estimate could be developed. Trowbridge said that, based on an annual ridership estimate of about 700,000, the cost per trip would be about \$13 (which does not account for any contribution from fares). George Nelson felt that these are not unreasonably high figures, given the costs of other transportation infrastructure, such as roadways. In addition, Nelson said that there isn’t any room for roadway infrastructure in many parts of the City. Nelson felt that these costs need to be placed into a long-term context. Ald. Ken Golden agreed, noting the very high costs of structured auto parking facilities.

Ald. Ken Golden asked about the capacity of the train vehicles. Lucht replied that each train set could carry about 160 vehicles. Golden also asked about the vehicle spare ratio. Jim Cowart agreed that this may be high at this first phase, but that extensions for service could more efficiently be made. Cowart also said that a higher service frequency, such as 20 minutes, could be implemented as well.

Lori Kay asked about the size of the maintenance facility. Ken Lucht said that the proposal includes a ball park estimate based on other places and that this should be refined further. Mark Nordling said that the equipment needed inside the maintenance facility is fairly well known, but that the actual size of the building could be reviewed.

Rob Kennedy asked if 2-car sets could be considered. Mark Nordling said that the operating costs would be about the same, but that some capital savings could be realized (although vehicle capacity would be 2/3 less).

Jesse Kaysen asked about governance options and what benefit there would be to not designating the new company a railroad. Mark Nordling replied that railroads are a unique employment environment. He said that railroad workers are not covered by standard U.S. workers compensation laws and have their own system (which cost a great deal more). He also said that railroad workers are not covered by Social Security and have their own federal retirement program, also more expensive. Nordling said that

the costs estimates assume that the proposed system is a railroad.

Jim Berkenstadt asked about the Ottawa commuter rail system and what aspects of that drew comparisons to possibilities here. David Trowbridge said that the population of Ottawa (urban area) is about 700,000. Ken Lucht added that they operate a similar DMU-based technology, of about 6 miles, 5 stations (almost identical to the Madison west side proposal). Lucht also said that they serve government and university markets - again similar to what is being proposed here.

George Nelson asked how the improvements to trackage, etc. would improve WSOR's operations. Jim Cowart said that it does not help the WSOR because the freight operations are generally built around 25 mph speeds. In addition, he said that the WSOR operates only one train per day on the west side and that night service would be a potential change. Rob Kennedy said that whistle blowing could be negated with the grade crossing improvements, which would be a benefit to the community.

Jesse Kaysen asked about Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) rules and whether or not shared use of rail corridors by light and heavy vehicles could be considered in the same timeframe. Rob Kennedy said that waivers have been granted in some cases, but that more work needs to be done in this area. Kaysen asked if DMU vehicles would be cheaper if they did not need to be FRA-compliant. Ken Lucht said that there would not be significant cost savings.

Ald. Ken Golden said that there needs to be some staff evaluation of the proposal and that this should be reported back to the Task Force at some time in the future. He added that it will be important to know how a proposal like this would affect the official federal funding process for the Transport 2020 Start-Up System (and later phases of the project). David Trowbridge said that he would work with other agencies to put together a staff team to review the proposal. Rob Kennedy said that an approach should be brought back to the Management Team for reviewing this proposal. Golden agreed and asked that this be reported back at the next Task Force meeting.

7. IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE AND SUBCOMMITTEE SCHEDULE/NEXT STEPS

David Trowbridge noted the next three Transport 2020 meetings:

- **Transit Operations Subcommittee**
- Monday, June 21st, 4:45 p.m., Room 260 Madison Municipal Building
- **Finance and Governance Subcommittee**
- Monday, June 28th, 6:30 p.m., Courtroom 2E City-County Building
- **Implementation Task Force**
- Monday, July 26th, 6:30 p.m., Room 260 Madison Municipal Building

David Trowbridge said that he would also be scheduling a meeting of the Transport 2020 Management Team in the next week or so.

8. ITEMS BY TASK FORCE MEMBERS

George Nelson wished to thank the WSOR for their work in putting this proposal together and said that it has been helpful in thinking about the tangible aspects of commuter rail.

There were no other items by Task Force members.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The Committee adjourned its meeting at 8:05 p.m.