



Minutes

TRANSPORT 2020 IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE (ITF) MEETING #6

Monday, September 27, 2004

6:30 pm

Madison Municipal Building, Room 300
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
Madison, WI

-- ROLL CALL

ITF Members Present: LaMarr Billups; John DeLamater; Supv. Chuck Erickson; Barbara Feeney (*for Rose Phetteplace*); Jesse Kaysen; Supv. Scott McDonell; Randy Romanski; Dick Wagner.

ITF Members Absent: Sandy Beaupre; Jim Berkenstadt (*notified*); Michael Blaska (*notified*); Kristine Euclide (*notified*); Ald. Ken Golden (*notified*); George Nelson (*notified*); Ald. Warren Onken (*notified*).

TAC/Staff Present: Russell Anderson (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources); Rob Kennedy (UW-Madison); Elizabeth Kluesner (Dane County Executive's Office); Jerry Mandli (Dane County Highway and Transportation Department); Bill Schaefer (Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization); 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); Kathleen Falk (Dane County Executive); Willa Kowalski; Ken Lucht (Wisconsin and Southern Railroad); Al Matano (Dane County Supervisor, District 11); Bill Novak (The Capital Times); Andy Olsen (Dane County Supervisor, District 17); Bob Schaefer; Judy Siegfried; Bryant Walker Smith (Strand Associates); Brandon Taylor (Strand Associates); Charles Thimmesch; Royce Williams.

1. REVIEW OF AGENDA

Supv. Scott McDonell welcomed Transport 2020 Implementation Task Force members to Meeting #6. There were no suggested modifications to the meeting agenda.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM ITF MEETING #5 (JULY 26, 2004)

The Minutes for Meeting #5 of the Transport 2020 Implementation Task Force were unanimously approved, as submitted on a motion by Jesse Kaysen/John DeLamater.

3. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Bob Schaefer handed out some materials pertaining to the earlier Transport 2020 study. Schaefer said that he was frustrated with the fact that his concerns are not being addressed by the Task Force. He felt that the facts were not being adequately considered, and that the more popular summary was being used (which is not very technical). He said that bus and rail modes do not have much difference in ridership, and that they are a very small portion of all trips taken (auto trips are the vast majority). He also felt that rail transit hurts auto mobility and increases traffic congestion. Schaefer also said that the added cost for the rail system (about \$60 million more) did not bring any transportation benefit. He said that any transit system should be done right, and not just the least expensive option.

Willa Kowalski said that she is participating in a 1-year program (Leadership Greater Madison) to help with a community project related to transportation. She said that she needed some help in determining if some citizens could commit 50-60 hours of time to the Transport 2020 project between now and June 2005. She said that there may be some barriers to implementing transit projects and hoped that these issues could be addressed by her group (such as how transportation projects are subsidized and how transportation systems affect our community). Scott McDonell said that the Task Force would get back to her.

Royce Williams said that he hoped the Finance and Governance Subcommittee would be more active, noting that this is a very important issue. He said that suburban communities need to participate in any system that is implemented, noting that there are 150,000 people in the urban area outside of Madison. He said that new boundaries may need to be considered for implementing the transportation system.

There were no other registrants for public comment.

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

Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk thanked the Task Force 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, noting that the process for coming to regional consensus is very important. Falk said that the next step is critical in evaluating all of the alternative approaches, as is required by federal law.

Falk said that she and Supv. McDonell are proposing 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 also felt that this proposal is financially feasible. She felt that this proposal, using an initial east-west orientation, is consistent with the Transport 2020 Locally-Preferred Alternative (LPA) and with the ideas being put forward by Mayor Cieslewicz. She also said that this proposal also has a strong regional aspect to it.

Falk also asked that the Task Force work expeditiously so that our region can be poised to start the NEPA process when the federal transportation bill is enacted into law. She hoped that her proposal could be evaluated as part of the NEPA process, noting that it has a broad base of support at this time.

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 cost of the proposal is projected to be \$52.8 million.

McDonnell said that one of the best aspects of this proposal is the fact that it will utilize new rail technology that will allow the railcars to operate in-street as well as in the railroad corridor. He said that this proposal takes advantage of street running trolleys and longer-distance regional commuter rail. He added that it is expected to serve commuter and special events ridership markets. McDonnell also pointed out that land use/urban redevelopment benefits of the proposal would be significant.

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

LaMarr Billups asked if annual operating costs had been projected. McDonnell said that they had not, noting that the desired level of service (and labor costs) would determine that. Kathleen Falk said that there could be efficiencies gained by integrating the bus transit service with the rail service.

Barbara Feeney asked why the street-running rail is so much more expensive. McDonnell said that using overhead electric catenaries and constructing track into the street drive up the cost.

Randy Romanski asked how Portland's system is financed. McDonnell said a combination of funds are used. John DeLamater noted that Charlie Hales (former City of Portland Commissioner) would be visiting Madison in late October and that he could provide detailed insights into Portland's rail financing.

Jesse Kaysen asked how hybrid systems have worked in the U.S. McDonnell said that he is still developing some examples, noting that European hybrid systems are much more prevalent.

Randy Romanski asked about the capacity of rail vehicles and what the subsidies would be. McDonnell said that this would need to be done as the proposal is fleshed out. County Executive Kathleen Falk said that, at this time, this community needs to develop a range of alternatives to be evaluated in the NEPA process. She said that this level of detail will certainly be developed, but not yet at this time. She said that the decision at this time was whether or not this type of hybrid proposal is worthy of moving to NEPA, along with other alternatives.

A member of the public, Fred Bartol (Dane Alliance for Rail Transit), wished to speak on this agenda item. Bartol applauded the County's efforts to move forward. He said that a two technology system might be worthy of consideration in the NEPA process, using streetcars and commuter rail vehicles. Bartol said that a hybrid technology may be useful, but that there are trade-offs for this proposal as well. He said that the right tool should be used for the right job, and that a two vehicle system may be the best. He hoped that that this option would move forward to NEPA, in addition to the other proposals.

Dick Wagner said that it is very important to have a service that allows for regional movement, particularly for the workforce. He said that any number of rail technologies could do that, but that the service needs to be designed to serve that market well. LaMarr Billups agreed with Wagner. He said that the UW is the largest employer in the area, with 16,000 employees. He said that UW employees need to get to work, but also need to circulate around the downtown area to conduct their business. He hoped that these needs are part of the discussion when vehicle technologies are discussed.

Dick Wagner asked how alternatives moving to NEPA would be selected. David Trowbridge said that there is an adopted Locally-Preferred Alternative – commuter rail operating between Middleton and East Towne, but that other vehicle technologies are encouraged to be evaluated as part of NEPA. Such alternatives, he said, would include a range of bus and rail modes – such as the proposal presented this evening. He said that it is largely up to the ITF to decide which east-west transit alternatives should move forward and be compared against the LPA.

Randy Romanski asked about the timing of the evaluation. Trowbridge responded that funding is need to start NEPA, and that federal funding has been requested to match the 50% WisDOT commitment. Scott McDonnell said that, after the election, the federal funding process can really pick up steam. He said that the ITF should work quickly to be ready to move forward, in the event that the funds become available.

5. TASK FORCE DISCUSSION OF PROCESS TO IDENTIFY TRANSIT SYSTEM ALTERNATIVES TO ADVANCE TO NEPA

Scott McDonnell said that alternatives need to be developed for inclusion in the NEPA process. Dick Wagner said that there needs to be a timetable developed to sort this out, in order to be ready to move if the federal funds become available. Wagner felt that January may be a good time to be ready, given federal politics. Wagner/Billups submitted a motion to ask the Management Team to meet and develop a timeline. The motion carried unanimously.

John DeLamater asked if the LPA was being replaced by other alternatives. David Trowbridge said that this was not being done, and that the NEPA evaluation allows the community to revisit various alternatives, since costs, land use conditions, community goals, etc. may change over time. He said that, given the length of time needed to implement these projects (especially at initial start-up), it is prudent to continually evaluate your decisions, as there are many trade-offs among the options.

Barbara Feeney suggested that the Transit Operations Subcommittee meet to develop criteria for deciding which transit system alternatives move to NEPA. The Task Force agreed.

6. WISCONSIN AND SOUTHERN RAILROAD (WSOR) COMMUTER RAIL PILOT PROJECT: UPDATE ON STAFF REVIEW OF WSOR PROPOSAL

Ken Lucht (WSOR) said that he wished to comment on the review of the WSOR's recent proposal to operate commuter rail service on the west side of Madison. He felt that the service levels should not be reduced significantly, as many businesses operate hours past the normal work day. He also said that diesel fuel would not be saved with service reduction, given that rail vehicles need to idle at all times (particularly during cold weather months). Lucht also said that he looked forward to continue working with the Task Force on future rail initiatives. Dick Wagner thanked WSOR for their efforts in developing the proposal.

David Trowbridge reminded Task Force members that Transport 2020 agency staff were asked to meet and review the WSOR proposal. He said that staff were also asked to try to find ways to reduce the costs of the proposal, by reducing the level of service or cutting back on some of the infrastructure improvements. He recalled that the Task Force rationale was that a more scaled-down service (with less upgrades to infrastructure) could be sufficient for the initial start-up of service and that more extensive infrastructure upgrades (and increases in service) may be more appropriate at some point in the future. He thanked WSOR for their work on the proposal, noting that the initial concepts for service level, etc. were requested by the City of Madison and Dane County.

Trowbridge said that WisDOT's Bureau of Railroads and Harbors commented on the proposal and the letter is included in the ITF packet. He said that the review was generally favorable, noting that the cost estimates were credible, although the extent of some infrastructure improvements could be scaled back in some areas (depending on the community's desires).

Trowbridge also reported that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) does not typically look favorably upon a community making a large (e.g., \$40 million) early investment in service and infrastructure to be used as a later local share. He said that FTA's use of that practice is limited to projects that have most approvals in place and need to start spending funds on real estate or rail vehicles, because sometimes these types of expenditures are complex and take a great deal of time. He said that the WSOR proposal and the stage Transport 2020 is in do not really come under that category, but that they would entertain a formal request. Trowbridge said that the November Task Force meeting would wrap up the staff review of the WSOR proposal.

7. UPDATE OF PLANNED VISIT FROM PORTLAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS

John DeLamater reported that Charlie Hales would be visiting Madison October 25-27 and planned to share his experience with transit and land use issues in Portland. He said that Transport 2020 Task Force members would be invited to participate in a number of the functions, particularly the 10/27 breakfast

meeting at 7:30 am, at the Madison Club.

8. IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE AND SUBCOMMITTEE SCHEDULE/NEXT STEPS

David Trowbridge noted the next Transport 2020 Implementation Task Force and other Transport 2020 meetings:

- **Management Team**
- Friday, October 8th, 12:00 noon, Room LL-110 Madison Municipal Building
- **Transit Operations Subcommittee**
- Monday, October 25th, 4:45 p.m., Room 260 Madison Municipal Building
- **Implementation Task Force**
- Monday, November 29th, 6:30 p.m., Room 260 Madison Municipal Building

Dick Wagner said that he would work to schedule a Finance and Governance Subcommittee meeting prior to the November 29th ITF meeting.

9. INFORMATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS BY TASK FORCE MEMBERS

There were no announcements or information provided by Task Force members.

10. ADJOURNMENT

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