



Transport 2020 study news

APRIL 2007

Locally preferred alternative selection approaches

Over the winter, the Transport 2020 study team analyzed three alternative visions for improving transit in Dane County. Transport 2020 Alternatives 2A, 3 and 5 were analyzed with regard to costs and benefits, including their abilities to enhance economic and community development. The analysis included operations planning, cost estimation, and expert evaluation of potential real estate development in station areas. It also included the opinions of Dane County citizens who have contributed comments to the study.

As a result of the analysis and public comments, the Transport 2020 Implementation Task Force has recommended moving two alternatives forward into more detailed analysis. Alternatives 2A and 3 are likely to have the best combination benefits and costs to provide speedy, high-quality transit service through the most densely developed area of Dane County, linking residents and visitors to jobs, entertainment, shopping and recreation opportunities while slowing increases in traffic congestion and minimizing pressure for road and parking expansion.

Although the Task Force has recommended that Alternative 5 not be studied further at this time due to its high initial capital cost, this does not preclude it or some of its features from being considered in the future. For example, future service extensions could utilize public street rights-of-way if the community recommends doing so.

Details are provided inside this newsletter on the alternatives. Join us at a public information meeting on May 3. See the invitation on this page for details.

YOU'RE INVITED!

To the Transport 2020 public information meeting

DATE: Thursday, May 3, 2007

PLACE: Monona Terrace

TIME: 5 to 8 p.m.
6 p.m. presentation

- View information about Transport 2020 alternatives
- See service scenarios, cost and ridership estimates
- View evaluation of environmental and community impacts
- Let us know your thoughts and opinions about improving transit in Dane County and the greater Madison metropolitan area

Two rail alternatives being considered

Alternatives 2A and 3 both utilize existing rail lines and feature self-propelled passenger cars operating in the rail corridor that extends from Middleton and Shorewood Hills, through the Isthmus, and eastward. Stations are located to serve major residential, employment and entertainment destinations.

Alternative 2A includes 18 stations, while Alternative 3 features 17 stations. In both cases, four outer stations featuring park-and-ride facilities are planned. For both alternatives, vehicles would operate with average speeds of 22 to 25 miles per hour. Neither alternative would operate on Sundays (with the exception of some special events, but normal bus service would still be available).



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Final alternatives under consi

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Alternatives 2A and 3 are undergoing a more detailed analysis to compare their user benefits, estimated ridership, costs and anticipated impacts on the environment, land use and community development.

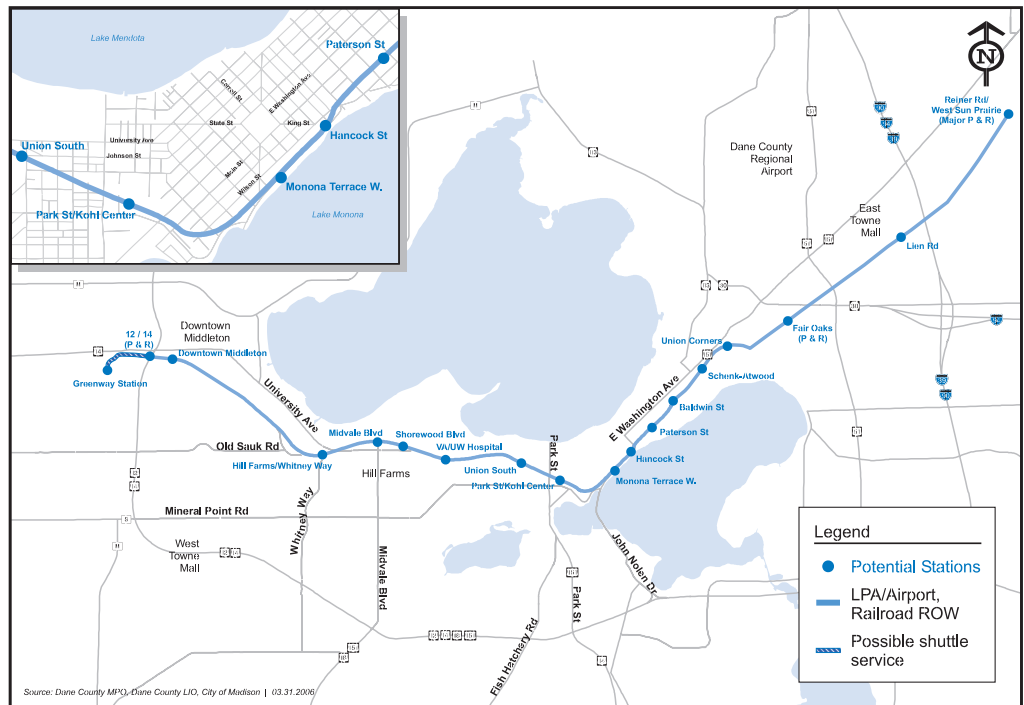
These results will also be compared with a “baseline bus” transit scenario, a low-cost alternative designed to improve transit in Dane County without major capital investment.

The baseline includes establishing a “bus priority corridor” through the center of the Isthmus with traffic signal prioritization, exclusive bus lanes (where practical) and improved transit stops.

Ultimately, one of the alternatives will be selected by the Implementation Task Force as the first piece of a regional system (i.e., as the Locally Preferred Alternative, or LPA).

Stakeholder input is crucial at this point in the study. The study team needs to collect input from residents, commuters and students to ensure that the selected LPA reflects the needs, concerns and priorities of the people it is designed to serve.

Alternative 2a: Middleton via Railroad Right-of-Way



Alternative 2A features a two track alignment from Union Corners to Shorewood Boulevard. In order to provide cost effective and frequent service in Madison's core, trains will operate on two overlapping routes, identified as the east branch and the west branch.

The east branch operates from Reiner Road near Sun Prairie, through downtown Madison, to the UW Hospitals. The branch is 11 miles long and it will take approximately 26 minutes to travel. The west branch runs from Middleton to Union Corners on the East Isthmus. This 10-mile trip will take approximately 27 minutes.

Travel on Alternative 2A would be relatively speedy between stations, as these sample trips show:

- Downtown Middleton to Monona Terrace West: 19 minutes
- Lien Road to VA/UW Hospitals: 22 minutes

During peak travel times, trains would operate every 20 minutes in each direction; this means that in the overlapping segment in the center of the Isthmus – between the UW Hospitals and Union Corners – service is effectively doubled: a vehicle would arrive at each station approximately every 10 minutes in each direction. Trains would run every 40 minutes during non-peak hours, representing 20-minute waits in the center of Madison.

The preliminary cost to construct, operate and maintain Alternative 2A will be presented at the May 3 public meeting. Costs will continue to be refined as operating plans are refined.

Contact information

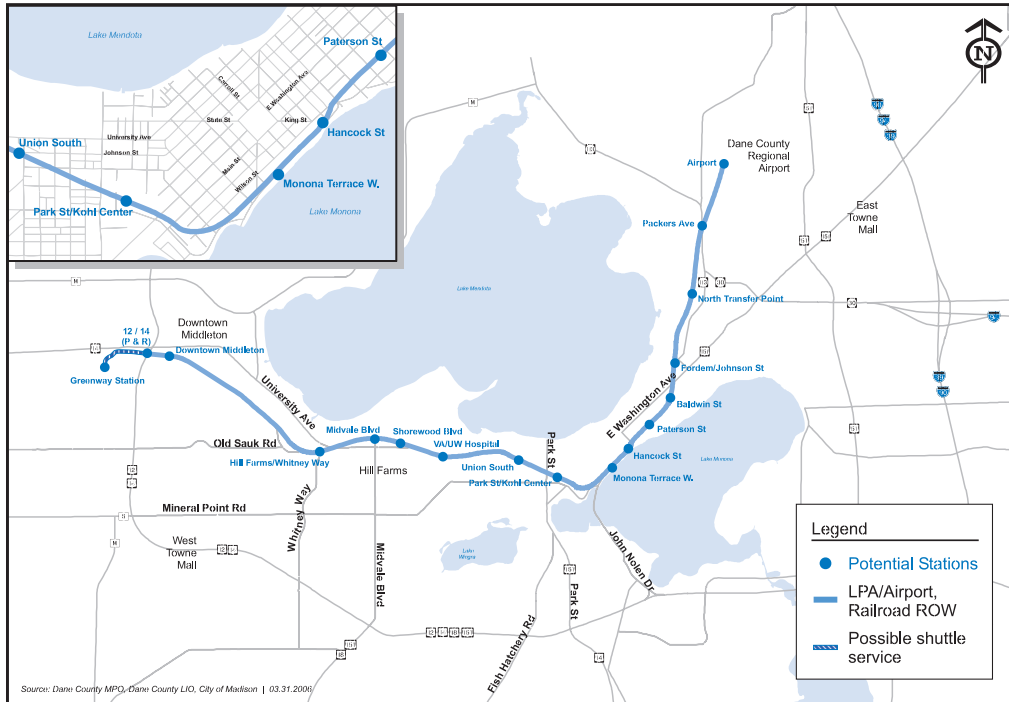
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Consideration; public input needed

Alternative 3: Airport via Railroad Right-of-Way



Metro bus service and Transport 2020

The Transport 2020 LPA will include seamless integration with Metro Transit bus service, with the overarching intent of providing improved service to all transit users (i.e., bus and rail riders). Some current Metro routes will be restructured in order to minimize doubling bus and rail service in any given area, but the bus system footprint will remain nearly unchanged.

Because of concerns expressed by the public about maintaining current levels of bus service, savings derived from reducing duplicative transit service will be shifted to other promising markets. This means that riders will have more options and better transit connections overall. For example, as some rush-hour routes are converted from cross-town service to station feeders, they will now offer mid-day service as well. Furthermore, fares for the Transport 2020 service will be integrated with Metro Transit's fare system, and transfers will be available between trains and buses. Proposals for the realignment of bus routes will be available for review at the May 3 public meeting.

Alternative 3 uses a single track alignment with station passing sidings where opposite direction trains meet. The service would run from end to end on existing freight rail rights-of-way from Middleton through downtown Madison and the East Isthmus, and then diverge northward from Baldwin Street to terminate at the Dane County Airport. Trains could operate every 15 minutes during peak travel periods, and every 30 minutes during off-peak hours. This alternative provides quick and reliable transportation among corridors, regardless of traffic or weather conditions; for example:

- Middleton to the Kohl Center: 16 minutes
- Monona Terrace West to the airport: 14 minutes

Again, preliminary construction, operating and maintenance costs will be available at the public meeting, but costs will continue to be refined throughout alternatives development.

Preliminary characteristics of Transport 2020 build alternatives

Alternative	Total Length	End to End Travel Time	Weekday Trains	Train Frequency
Alternative 2A	16 miles	39 minutes ¹	142 ²	every 20 minutes ³
Alternative 3	12.7 miles	34 minutes	96	every 15 minutes
Alternative 5	16 miles	38 minutes ¹	140 ²	every 20 minutes ³

¹ Does not include transfer time at one of nine central Isthmus stations, up to 10 minutes. ² Sum of trips on both branches. ³ Each branch.

Transit improvements and community development

Through numerous plans completed in the last decade, citizens of Dane County have articulated a vision of their future in which an improved transit system is a catalyst for preserving neighborhood character, maintaining economic viability of the central city and preserving the region's unique environmental assets.

Transport 2020 planners worked with local experts to estimate a rail system's potential effects on regional development. They concluded that rail transit could lead to the creation of an estimated 4,000 new housing units in the vicinity of rail stations. In addition, a train system could spur the development of more than 4 million square feet of office and retail space by 2020,

containing nearly 20,000 jobs within easy walking distance of a train station.

Madison is among the fastest growing metropolitan areas in Wisconsin, and improving transit service here will allow that growth to be accommodated in a manner that maintains Dane County's high quality of life.

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Timeline of study milestones

