

Transport 2020

**Environmental Impact Statement
and New Starts Application**

Request to Initiate Preliminary Engineering

June 2008



Date

Ms. Marisol Simon
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration, Region 5
200 West Adams Street
Suite 320
Chicago, IL 60606

Re: Request to Initiate Preliminary Engineering: Transport 2020

Dear Ms. Simon:

The City of Madison, Dane County, and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) are pleased to submit for your review and approval this request to initiate preliminary engineering (PE) for the proposed Transport 2020 project. The City, County, and WisDOT comprise an Intergovernmental Partnership responsible for the planning and development of transportation improvements in the Transport 2020 corridor connecting the City of Middleton, the University of Wisconsin campus, downtown Madison, and the area located just west of Sun Prairie. The City has acted as project manager for this phase of study.

The purpose for implementing the Transport 2020 Locally Preferred Alternative is to improve the region's transportation system in anticipation of rapid population growth in Dane County. Dane County continues to grow rapidly, having added more new residents since the 2000 U.S. Census than any other Wisconsin county. In fact, Dane County has added twice as many residents as Waukesha County, the county with the second most new residents added since 2000. The Transport 2020 project consists of light diesel multiple unit (DMU) or hybrid commuter rail vehicles operating in the existing rail corridor running from the Highway 12/14 interchange in Middleton, through the Isthmus, to Reiner Road near Sun Prairie. The project is designed to serve many of metropolitan Madison's major employment, entertainment and shopping destinations, and complements the existing bus system. It includes 17 stations along a 16-mile alignment. 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 Whitney Way/Hill Farms; the west branch runs from Middleton to Fair Oaks east of the Isthmus.

This project will provide multimodal transit connections between residential and employment concentrations throughout the Madison region, improve mobility, and enhance transit access for all area residents and workers. It will also promote a desirable development form along the east-west travel corridor and within Dane County communities.

The project was selected following an alternatives analysis process culminating in the selection of the Transport 2020 project as the investment that best addresses transportation needs in the railroad corridor. The higher operating speeds of commuter rail over a separate right-of-way

Ms. Marisol Simon

Date

Page 2

are expected to save travel time for many regional riders, resulting in over 121,500 hours of daily travel time savings. A new regional sales tax is proposed to be used to pay for the non-Federal share of the project, with bonding by Dane County and the potential use of State funds to pay for near-term project development costs prior to implementation of the new sales tax. Rail service in the Transport 2020 corridor has significant support, as evidenced by resolutions of the Dane County Board of Supervisors, City of Madison Common Council, the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (MPO), and the elected bodies of the City of Middleton and the Village of Shorewood Hills. These resolutions demonstrate strong local government support for the expansion of multi-modal public transit in the Madison Metropolitan area, the adoption of state legislation that will enable the formation of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), and the implementation of a half-cent regional sales tax for pay for transportation improvements. Other support has been expressed by business groups; economic development interests; community leaders; and numerous other agencies and organizations. The project was adopted by the Madison metropolitan planning organization on September 5, 2007.

This request is being submitted after extensive coordination with your staff at the FTA in Chicago as well as in Washington, DC. Technical methods and assumptions used to prepare the New Starts measures for Transport 2020 are in compliance with FTA's most recent guidance and New Starts reporting instructions.

The Intergovernmental Partnership is ready to proceed with the design phase of this important project to our region, and we eagerly await the FTA's review and approval for initiation of New Starts preliminary engineering. We appreciate all of the assistance and guidance that FTA's staff - particularly Stewart McKenzie in your office, and Brian Jackson, Nazrul Islam, and Jim Ryan at Headquarters - have provided on the development of this project. Their assistance has been invaluable.

If you have any questions regarding this submittal, or about the Transport 2020 project, please do not hesitate to contact David Trowbridge, Transport 2020 Project Manager and representative of the Intergovernmental Partnership (direct: 608-267-1148).

Sincerely,

Dave Cieslewicz, Mayor
City of Madison

Kathleen Falk, County Executive
Dane County

Frank Busalacchi, Secretary
Wisconsin Department of
Transportation

cc: Marisol Simon, Regional Administrator, Region 5

Enclosure

Previously Submitted Materials

The following materials were previously submitted to the FTA for review, as part of the alternatives analysis phase of work on Transport 2020.

Scoping Report	June 30, 2006
Travel Demand Model Assumptions Memorandum	May 31, 2007
Justification for Annualization Factor	May 31, 2007
Summit Results and Maps (hard and electronic copies)	May 31, 2007/October 2, 2007
Baseline Alternative Definition Memorandum	October 2, 2007
Purpose and Need Statement	October 2, 2007
Alternatives Considered/Evaluation of Alternatives	October 2, 2007
Cost Tables Used in O&M Computation	October 2, 2007/March 18, 2008
Project Management Plan	March 18, 2008

Table of Contents

Letter from City of Madison, Dane County, and Wisconsin Department of Transportation

1.0 Project Background

Making the Case
Project Description Template

2.0 Certification of Technical Methods and Planning Assumptions

Certification of Technical Assumptions Template

3.0 Travel Forecasts

Travel Forecasting Methodology
Summit Reports and Maps
Travel Forecasts Template
Annualization Factor Justification
Screening Process for Bus Alternatives

4.0 Cost Estimating Assumptions

Capital Costing Approach
Standard Cost Categories Worksheet
O&M Costing Approach

5.0 Mobility and Cost Effectiveness

Mobility and Cost Effectiveness

6.0 Transit-Supportive Existing Land Use and Future Patterns

Supplemental Land Use Information Template
Quantitative Land Use Information Template

7.0 Local Financial Commitment

Project Finance Worksheet
Local Financial Commitment Checklist
Project Finance Plan

8.0 Other Factors

Table of Contents (continued)

9.0 Before and After Study Plan

10.0 Project Management Plan

11.0 NEPA Scoping

12.0 Support for Transport 2020