



**Preliminary Engineering/NEPA Analysis
for the
Dane County/Greater Madison Metropolitan Area**

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Minutes

TRANSPORT 2020 IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE (ITF) MEETING

Thursday, May 24, 2007

4:45 p.m.

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

-- ROLL CALL

ITF Members Present: Sandy Beaupre; Jim Berkenstadt; Michael Blaska; John DeLamater; Sup. Chuck Erickson; Kristine Euclide; Steve Hiniker; Lori Kay (*for LaMarr Billups*); Sup. Al Matano; Joe Olson; Sup. Scott McDonell; Dick Wagner.

ITF Members Absent: Jesse Kaysen (*notified*); Chris Klein; (*notified*).

TAC/Staff Present: Russ Anderson (Wisconsin DNR); Rod Clark (Wisconsin Department of Transportation); Rob Kennedy (UW-Madison); Jerry Mandli (Dane County Highway and Transportation Department); Bill Schaefer (Madison Area MPO); David Trowbridge (Madison Planning and Development; *Transport 2020 Project Manager*); LeAnna Wall (Wisconsin DOT).

Others Present: Fred Bartol (Dane Alliance for Rail Transit); Betty Chewning; Matthew DeFour (Wisconsin State Journal); Ken Kinney (HNTB); Ken Lucht (Wisconsin and Southern Railroad); Keith Plasterer (6813 Winston Drive); Mary Rathbun (The Capital Times); Tony Smick; Julia Suprock (HNTB); Bruce Wilson (Madison Bus Advocates).

1. REVIEW OF AGENDA

Sup. Scott McDonell welcomed Transport 2020 Implementation Task Force members to the meeting. There were no suggested changes to the agenda.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MAY 10, 2007 TASK FORCE MEETING

The Minutes for the 5-10-07 Transport 2020 Implementation Task Force meeting were unanimously approved, as submitted on a motion by Steve Hiniker/Lori Kay.

3. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR ALTERNATIVES 2A AND 3 (INCLUDING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM USER BENEFIT); POSSIBLE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION / ACTION ON LOCALLY-PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (LPA)

Ken Kinney began the presentation by reviewing the evaluation criteria that has been used in comparing the 6 initial build alternatives. Kinney commented that this presentation was the second part of the presentation that he made at the May 10th ITF meeting, and that Kimon Proussaloglou (Cambridge Systematics) would present and explain the refined ridership numbers.

Proussaloglou reviewed the market area that was evaluated when determining ridership, and noted that it covers a large percent of the area's residential population and employment centers. He then provided an overview of the FTA's sketch tool for forecasting ridership, how the Madison model for ridership forecasting was developed, and what the results were for the Madison ridership model. Proussaloglou noted that the results fall within the FTA's acceptable range.

Proussaloglou then reviewed the FTA's recent decision to include "perceived" rail advantages into ridership forecasting and modeling. This allows forecasters to quantify the quality of service for rail travel time, rail headways, and the attractiveness of rail, and include that in the ridership model.

Steve Hiniker asked Proussaloglou to review how rail attractiveness is factored into the modeling and forecasting process. Proussaloglou explained that it is a way of quantifying the "unexplained" in the model into a constant.

Proussaloglou described the 15-point system for rail attractiveness (accumulated through guideway characteristics, span of good service, and passenger amenity measurements) that proposed projects were eligible to accumulate. He then presented how these measurements increased the number of riders forecasted for both Alternative 2a and 3.

ITF members questioned whether the use of the points system was objective when determining the rail attractiveness figure. Proussaloglou responded that in order not to show any bias, each alternative had 10 points added for the rail attractiveness factor. This amount was decided on by the project team.

John DeLamater asked whether the FTA would let the project team know during the meeting in Washington, D.C. on May 31st whether the selected alternative would get all 15 points. Kinney responded that an explanation will be provided to the FTA detailing how the 10-point figure was determined. The reaction of the FTA to this figure and methodology will then provide guidance for the inclusion of a final rail attractiveness figure in the final New Starts application. Trowbridge commented that Transport 2020 needs to display technical forecasting capability, which is why the project team has taken extra time on this portion of the application preparation. Kinney emphasized that both alternatives have good ridership numbers, so the FTA will be scrutinizing the forecasting models closely.

Proussaloglou then presented the formula used to determine cost effectiveness of both alternatives and the transportation system user benefits (TSUB) for each alternative. He explained that the FTA prefers the TSUB number to be no more than \$29; with that standard, Alternative 2A, at \$31, is much closer than Alternative 3, at \$38.

An ITF member commented that one of the area's strengths is the regional bus system, and that the bus system should be taken into account when projecting ridership.

An ITF member asked why the FTA prefers the TSUB number to be \$29. Kinney responded that it is the standard that FTA has chosen, so any alternative that is chosen should be as close to that number as possible.

An ITF member asked whether New Starts applications from large cities with existing rail transit systems would receive preference by the FTA. Kinney responded that it is always less expensive to extend an existing line rather than construct a new one; this is a topic that will be discussed with the FTA on the 31st.

An ITF member commented that there are a numbers of ratings criteria, so the Task Force should not be too focused on costs. Kinney responded that the alternatives will score well in a number of areas, including land use, but that the TSUB will need to closer to the \$29 figure for a successful application.

An ITF member questioned how the TSUB number could be reduced. Proussaloglou explained that the project team could review the system planning process and determine whether there are any areas in which there could be a better balance between costs and benefits.

An ITF member asked if there is any flexibility in the \$29 TSUB figure. Kinney responded that the project team has reviewed the methodology for arriving at the TSUB numbers for the alternatives and that Transport 2020 can work together to further reduce the number.

Jim Berkenstadt asked if it is possible to reduce the TSUB number for Alternative 3. Kinney responded that it would be very difficult.

ITF members wondered whether it would be useful in this meeting to discuss specifics of reducing the TSUB figures. Trowbridge and Kinney responded that we need to balance service and amenity reductions so that the ridership forecasts don't go down; this would not be a fruitful discussion to have at this meeting. An ITF member questioned whether there could be costs reductions at stations. Kinney commented that there were already cuts made, and that further cuts could result in the loss of rail attractiveness points.

ITF members questioned whether Alternative 3 would be infeasible if the TSUB could not be reduced. Kinney re-iterated that it would be difficult to reduce Alternative 3's TSUB number to get close to the FTA guideline of \$29.

Scott McDonell provided a summary of his meeting with Mayor Joe Chase of Sun Prairie and his staff. Mayor Chase was comfortable with the idea that an extension of Alternative 2a into downtown Sun Prairie was infeasible at this point because it would unfavorably skew cost and ridership numbers.

Kinney reiterated that Alternative 2a is the best option to take forward into the next stage of the process.

There was a motion by Al Matano/Lori Kay to recommend Alternative 2a as the LPA.

Dick Wagner commented that economic development opportunities and current land use patterns indicate that Alternative 2a is the best choice.

Another ITF member favored Alternative 2a even before hearing supporting data. This ITF member believes that Alternative 3 is also a good option, but that 2a is a better first phase for any future rail system expansions. An extension to the airport may be possible in the next phase, but it may be wise to wait until further decisions are made about the proposed high-speed rail line.

An ITF member asked if the ability of either alternative to alleviate regional traffic congestion is factored in when calculating the rail attractiveness points. Kinney responded that this is not accounted for in the numbers, but will be mentioned in the discussions with the FTA.

Al Matano commented that Alternative 2a would not be selected by default, but because it is a good option. Alternative 2a is analogous to Washington, D.C.'s Metro system. Rail transit systems generate density, and Alternative 2a can eventually be extended into Sun Prairie.

Jim Berkenstadt stated that it appeared that the Task Force was leaning towards Alternative 2a, but that Alternative 3 would better serve the north side of the city, which has traditionally had high rates of transit ridership, and would provide better multi-modal connectivity. The member believes that the ridership numbers for the alternatives are assumptions and that residents of Sun Prairie would be reluctant to switch from their cars to rail transit.

Another ITF member commented that Sun Prairie is growing quickly, especially within its lower- and middle-classes, and that the UW campus is also continuing to develop. Because the main arterials between these locations and downtown Madison cannot be expanded, the ITF must determine another way to add capacity. The bread and butter of a rail transit system is daily commuters, not air travelers. An extension of Alternative 2a to the airport could be undertaken in the future. This member looks forward to living in Madison and being able to make a car-free lifestyle choice.

A voice vote was taken to select Alternative 2a as the LPA. It passed with one dissent (Jim Berkenstadt).

4. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE RESPONSE TO MADISON MAYOR DAVE CIESLEWICZ'S MEMORANDUM RE: REGIONAL TRANSIT ISSUES

Copies of Mayor Cieslewicz's May 8 memorandum to Madison's Common Council regarding regional transit issues were distributed to ITF members and meeting attendees. A response to this memorandum, drafted by Dane County Supervisor Scott McDonell, was also circulated for review.

At this time, ITF members will review Sup. McDonell's response and discuss at the next ITF meeting.

An ITF member asked why Sup. McDonell's response was directed to the members of the Common Council. McDonell responded that the Mayor's memorandum is addressed to the Common Council.

Discussion of McDonell's response was moved to the June ITF agenda.

5. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Bruce Wilson from the Madison Area Bus Advocates spoke in support of the RTA concept and read a letter of support from Susan DeVos. He commented that support of a bus rapid transit system does not mean a lack of support for a rail transit system. His organization looks forward to working towards a multi-modal system.

6. UPDATE: TRANSPORT 2020 PROJECT TIMELINE/NEXT STEPS

David Trowbridge noted that the following Transport 2020 meeting is currently scheduled:

FTA Headquarters Briefing

- Thursday, May 31, 9:00 a.m. (EST), FTA, Washington, D.C.

Trowbridge commented that the ITF members traveling to Washington, D.C. for the meeting will report on the FTA meeting proceedings to the full ITF at the June meeting.

7. INFORMATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS BY TASK FORCE MEMBERS

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

8. ADJOURNMENT

The Committee adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

These minutes represent the writer's interpretation of discussion and resolution of key points. Please contact Julia Suprock of HNTB (312/798-0276) to discuss questions, modifications or corrections.