



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

For additional project information: [www.transport2020.net](http://www.transport2020.net)

## Minutes

### TRANSPORT 2020: IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE (ITF) TRANSIT OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

**Wednesday, July 12, 2006**

**4:30 pm**

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

#### -- **ROLL CALL**

Subcommittee Present: John DeLamater; Sup. Chuck Erickson; Kristine Euclide; Ken Golden (*alternate*); Jesse Kaysen; Sup. Al Matano; Sup. Scott McDonell (*alternate*).

Subcommittee Absent: Rose Phetteplace.

TAC/Staff Present: Russ Anderson (Wisconsin DNR); Ann Gullickson (Madison Metro); Rob Kennedy (UW-Madison); Bob McDonald (Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization); Bill Schaefer (Madison Area MPO); Tim Sobota (Madison Metro); David Trowbridge (Madison Planning and Development; *Transport 2020 Project Manager*); LeAnna Wall (WisDOT, Southwest Region).

Others Present: Margaret Bergamini; Mike Cechvala; Susan DeVos; Michael Eidlin (David Evans Associates); Ken Kinney (*HNTB Project Manager*); David Nelson (Edwards and Kelcey); Bob Schaefer; Dick Wagner (ITF Member); Connie White (HNTB).

#### **1. INTRODUCTIONS**

Transit Operations Subcommittee Co-Chair Jesse Kaysen welcomed Subcommittee members to the meeting. Subcommittee members introduced each other to members of the consultant team.

#### **2. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF BASELINE BUS ALTERNATIVE**

Ken Kinney opened the meeting reviewing the meeting agenda. The Baseline alternative has not changed except that shelters will not be heated. Instead, they will be lighted.

### 3. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF PRELIMINARY RAIL STATION LOCATIONS

Maps of the alternative routes showed that Alternative 2a has been amended at the terminus on the east end; it has been extended to a more satisfactory location for a park and ride lot at Reiner Road. The neighborhood plan for that area should be verified. Consider renaming it to Sun Prairie West. Sun Prairie should be encouraged to apply appropriate land use decisions to support a transit station.

Kinney pointed out that with the current plan there are good park and ride sites now on both the east and west termini.

The stations that are labeled on the maps with question marks will need to be considered more from a cost, ridership and land use development standpoint. For example, the City View location would be determined later on as development occurs. Currently it is too remote to be considered a good location for Phase 1. The Stoughton Avenue station site has no place to put parking. Paterson could be good later on as redevelopment happens. The Monona Terrace station has been nudged further west to bring it out from under Monona Terrace, which was agreed would be unattractive to riders. The Kohl Center site is moved closer to Park to coordinate better with the existing and planned land use and development pattern.

It was requested that HNTB look closer at a Fair Oaks station in the Town of Blooming Grove.

There was discussion about how to reserve station sites and reserve the land uses around the station sites for TOD. First, it needs to be established whether a site is physically feasible. The Land Use policies are definitely a part of the study. The Plan Commissions would review the land uses around stations locations. The possibility of applying an overlay district was discussed as well as coordination with other communities to convince them of the need to create such overlay districts. Michael Eidlin suggested another means could be an “interim protection ordinance”.

Tim Sobota of Metro asked about the Lien Rd./Zeier Rd. site since it had open land and an established bus route to access it. It was relocated further north due to difficulties with wetlands, and proximity to other land uses.

Kristine Euclide stated that the participating communities need to be involved as soon as possible to implement moratoriums/overlay districts.

Kinney was asked to identify the critical station locations for the first phase and add in a station location at Fair Oaks, move the station location from Whitney Way to the Hill Farms site, and show another site at the State Records Center (former DOR). Discussion was held regarding the need to reconvene the ad hoc group to determine the final station locations. No action was taken to do so however.

Kinney proceeded to discuss potential station locations in Middleton, including downtown within the Parmenter Street area, Greenway Station and an additional site at the US 12/US 14 interchange. This 12/14 site is ideal for a park and ride given its proximity to the interchange. Access is excellent and the site is open land at this time. There was discussion about how to reserve this site. It is located in a TID. Coordination with the City needs to take place. The Greenway station site is less than ideal; however, Mike Eidlin suggested that a shuttle from the 12/14 site to here would function well. Others felt that this site, with the number of office buildings, would still be a good destination station site. Downtown Middleton has a number of sites that are appropriate for redevelopment including underutilized sites and

surface parking lots. Middleton has a comprehensive plan policy to discourage low-density development within a ¼ mile (5-minute walk) of rail stations and bus stops.

#### **4. OVERVIEW OF OPERATING STRATEGIES AND PLANS**

David Nelson of Edwards and Kelcey then came forward to present the operations planning approach. The philosophy is that this is really an “urban passenger rail service”. This would be a more appropriate term than “commuter rail”. The basic principles include fast, frequent service, all day with 10-20 minute frequency during the peak times and 15 to 30 minute frequency in the off peak hours. The speed would be 20-30 mph with priority give to the rail. Right-of-way/track would be shared with freight trains. There would be 16-20 hours of daily service.

He presented some examples of train service in other places such as Ottawa, Pittsburgh, Camden, NJ and Philadelphia.

The three remaining alternatives would be reviewed in detail. If there is enough demand you may want to have more bus service, but it can be refined as demand pans out.

Alternative 2a – LPA Railroad Right-of-Way, and 5 - LPA with Street-running Elements could both run with overlapping service with a west branch and an east branch. Overlapping stations could include the Medical Center on the west, Park Street, Monona Terrace West, Hancock, Paterson, Baldwin, Schenk and Union Corners on the east. David Trowbridge suggested that they might go a little further west.

David Nelson then presented some vehicle technology options including Diesel Multiple Units (DMUs), electric light rail transit or streetcars or hybrid equipment. He recommended that Alternatives 2a and 3 could use fully FRA compliant DMUs or noncompliant self powered rail cars (SPRC) and that Alternative 5’s street-running section could use the electric light rail transit or streetcars or the hybrid equipment. There was much discussion about the specifications of the various vehicles. Concerns included that the street cars should be able to meet the turning radius necessary on the city streets and that the hybrid was emerging technology (only 12 in existence) and so not well tested.

#### **5. OVERVIEW OF ENGINEERING ISSUES**

Mike Eidlin (David Evans Associates) then presented the engineering considerations that need to be made for the project. The first issue he described was system design. A basic system assumes single track and one train set. From there, an enhanced system would add passing sidings, a double track in the core (this would work between the Medical Center and Union Corners) and lastly, full double track from end to end.

Mike stressed the difference between shared freight/transit track and shared right-of-way and the impact this would have on the selection of FRA compliant or non-compliant vehicles. Other vehicle considerations will be station configuration and track geometry, such as the turning radii and compatibility with streets as discussed earlier.

The system-wide issues include

- electrification for the street-running option;
- the signal system and how it affects the grade crossing protection and noise. He recognized that train noise is an issue in Madison referring to the local whistle ban controversy;
- communications between stations and trains, etc.;
- fare collection strategies;

- operations facility (where and how large, which would be a function of the fleet size now and in the future), and
- central control.

Railroad issues include the need for temporal separation if tracks were to be shared, and the need to build new tracks if shared right of way is chosen. Compliant vs. Non-compliant vehicles would affect the need for temporal separation or new track. The right-of-way dimension, conflicts with freight operations, condition of the current infrastructure, grade crossing and quiet zone, platform configurations (high vs. low) and FRA jurisdiction issues also must be considered. If it is on shared track, the FRA will be involved. If in shared right-of-way, the FRA will become involved at the grade crossings.

Issues with the street-running vehicles will include the track geometry, such as grades and curves. Bob McDonald offered that Whitney Way would be the only area with grade issues. A decision must be made between center running and side running, and the station configuration, whether it is a center platform, which would be appropriate at Whitney Way, a side platform, which would be appropriate downtown or offset side platforms.

In relation to the discussion of these details, Kristine Euclide offered an example where the project was described as three phases at the beginning with the intent to make it a regional system in the end. The first phase was a pure regional station with all types of transit. Then the future phases expanded on that.

Traffic issues must also be considered including choosing whether transit will preempt traffic, have priority over traffic, or not.

Finally, a decision needs to be made whether to go electrified or non-electrified. There has been a choice made downtown to be electrified.

Other issues are also of great importance including integration with bike and pedestrians. You will need to analyze how it will perform within the community and how to present it to FTA.

The interface with existing transit operations, say transit enhancements or dedicated shuttles, needs to be developed, as does the interface with Streetcar. The Streetcar Study must be integrated with Transport 2020 both for the sake of planning as well as for presentation to the FTA. The FTA will likely require it.

Leanna Wall from the WisDOT region office asked about the issue of integrating this study with the MWRRI. Mike Eidlin stated that to be compatible with a separate passenger rail system, such as an intercity Amtrak train between Milwaukee and Madison, you would want to have a compliant vehicle if sharing the same track. Typically, Amtrak trains have priority over freight. This is a consideration in the vehicle decision if truly interested in Amtrak service. Operational conflicts would also need to be avoided.

Kinney reported that the study team is holding a coordination meeting with Wisconsin & Southern on July 13. They will be discussing the rights and responsibilities between the parties, current WSOR plans, and current and future freight operations. They will be asked to share with the study team any appropriate resources such as maps and charts. They will discuss potential conflicts within the right-of-way.

Next steps for the project including finalizing the loose ends on the station locations as discussed earlier, and developing operating plans. The study team will come back with options and recommendations on engineering and grade crossings and give an update on the coordination efforts with the streetcar study.

Ken Golden stated that a stop between the North Transfer Point and the Airport merits consideration and may provide access to low income neighborhoods. Land development opportunities would be a question. It could be around the International Lane development area. There is also a long run between Whitney Way/Hill Farms station and downtown Middleton.

## 6. ADJOURNMENT

The Transit Operations Subcommittee adjourned its meeting at 6:15 p.m. The next Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 6, 6:30 p.m., Room 300 Madison Municipal Building. The Transit and Parking Commission will be invited to participate.

The next full ITF Committee meeting is scheduled for September 28 at 5:00 p.m. in Room 300.

***These minutes represent the writer's interpretation of discussion and resolution of key points. Please contact Caron Kloser of HNTB (414/359-2300) to discuss questions, modifications or corrections.***