



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

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Minutes

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

Wednesday, September 6, 2006

7:30 pm

**Madison Municipal Building, Room LL-110
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
Madison, WI**

-- **ROLL CALL**

Subcommittee Present: Jim Berkenstadt; John DeLamater; Sup. Chuck Erickson; Kristine Euclide; Ken Golden (*alternate*); Jesse Kaysen.

Subcommittee Absent: Joe Olson.

TAC/Staff Present: Jerry Mandli (Dane County Highway and Transportation Department); Bob McDonald (Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization); Diane Paoni (Wisconsin Department of Transportation); Sharon Persich (Madison Metro); Arun Rao (WisDOT); Bill Schaefer (Madison Area MPO); David Trowbridge (Madison Planning and Development; *Transport 2020 Project Manager*); LeAnna Wall (WisDOT, Southwest Region).

Others Present: Fred Bartol (Dane Alliance for Rail Transit); Margaret Bergamini; Mike Cechvala; Susan DeVos (Madison Area Bus Advocates); Steve Hiniker (ITF Member); Lori Kay (ITF Member); Ken Kinney (*HNTB Project Manager*); Chris Kopp (Cambridge Systematics); Sup. Al Matano (ITF Member); Hans Noeldner; Bob Schaefer; Connie White (HNTB); Royce Williams (Pro-Rail).

1. **INTRODUCTIONS**

Transit Operations Subcommittee Co-Chair Chuck Erickson welcomed Subcommittee members to the meeting. Subcommittee members, the general public and members of the consultant team introduced themselves to one another.

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

The Baseline alternative has been completed. HNTB will confirm the final date and version of the

document and send it to David Trowbridge for distribution.

3. **OVERVIEW OF OPERATING PLANS/STRATEGIES (INCL. BUS OPERATIONS)**

Ken Kinney addressed the subcommittee on operating strategies and plans. He stated that the goal of this meeting was to continue to move the project toward implementation and toward the two major deliverables, that being the New Starts report and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Kinney stressed that the FTA will consider how bus will be integrated with rail. A bus system plan will be included in the New Starts application. The study must look at the *total* system, not just bus or rail. To get to the goal requires a project with technical qualifications focusing on the overall transit system as well as public and political support. We need to get to the LPA by winter or spring or we won't be able to submit the New Starts application by the middle of 2007. The FTA wants to see that progress is being made toward the financial plan with the necessary local resources. Letters of support from WisDOT, municipalities, advocacy groups and others are needed to show political support.

The New Starts Evaluation will include a calculation of the transportation system user benefit (TSUB), a cost/benefit evaluation that looks at the travel time savings of the total system. It will also include a 20-year financing plan for the system, which is needed to determine the fiscal and political feasibility. These are the same transit system factors used in current transit system planning in Madison.

The Cost Effectiveness calculation was reviewed. This calculation counts for a large percentage of the FTA's rating system. If a medium rating or better is not determined, then this would be a fatal flaw.

Ken stated that the perceived trip time will be used in the model. This perceived time is longer than the actual time. Walking and waiting time is factored up, travel time is the same as actual and transfer time adds a penalty. For this reason when we get to making changes in the bus and transit system, we should avoid large numbers of transfers and long walks at either end of the trip. Chris Kopp added that the model will help to determine if the loss in travel time due to transfers can be made up elsewhere in the system.

The subcommittee asked whether the model interacts with peak vs. non-peak, weather, and headways. Weather is not taken into account. The confidence in on time performance is higher for rail than buses. Autos are also included in the system analysis.

The Subcommittee began to question the inputs and variables in the model. Kopp noted that the FTA is comparing projects from across the country and so they must use a system. However, the FTA also recognizes that there are many other factors.

The goal of tonight's meeting is to gain concurrence on the potential design criteria and strategies. A bus component will be developed for each build alternative with the intent that each alternative is as competitive as possible and responds to the purpose and need of the project. At the next meeting the group can further focus on the modeling.

Kopp reviewed some potential design criteria and strategies including that the focus would be on the study travel market supporting east-west travel through the Isthmus, improving or maintaining capacity through UW and the Capitol and maintaining system coverage. They also would maximize effectiveness compared to the Baseline alternative by minimizing new transfers, co-locating transfer centers and rail stations, maintaining some direct cross-town service and take advantage of the higher speed of rail service. There will be adjustments to bus routes, but they would work to minimize these.

Kopp then continued with some examples of potential changes to the bus system that could be analyzed by the model.

The subcommittee decided that they should continue modeling this way with considerations made for costs and benefits that would be seen by the users. Metro staff will be involved to help determine ways to reduce costs and identify the factors that could result in costs to users.

3. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Bob Schaefer asked that the public be afforded an honest and open portrayal of the costs and benefits to users. He said he assumes that the project purpose is to minimize congestion, but he understands that that is not the case. He felt that any system needs to improve rail, bus and motor vehicle transportation. He has heard that all that is really needed is a retiming of the traffic signals. He added that the whole system needs to be looked at, not only the beginning phase.

Royce Williams stated that the models don't take into account all of the factors; for example that more people would take rail than a bus. He questioned why the rail would go to the airport when there isn't even very much bus service in that corridor. A proposed shuttle service for the airport was never implemented. The Airport should help fund the system. He also felt that the current buses on campus are not adequate. They need to rework the bus system so there is strong service within the proposed rail corridors.

Hans Noeldner, a Village of Oregon Trustee, questioned how they determine the frequency needed. He felt another consideration must be how the project would result in avoidance of future highway construction. He thought a matrix showing what happens east versus west of the Capitol would be helpful.

Mike Cechvala stated that the analysis is examining different ways to approach the same service. The committee needs to question if this would be the best way to spend this amount of money. Looking at different modes, you may get the same type of direct service and could probably serve more areas for the same price as rail. He is interested in what the TSM alternative will look like. He felt that with the proposed improvements to Mineral Point Road west of the Beltline that this area would serve as a good pilot project for dedicated bus lanes or other type of service.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The Subcommittee adjourned its meeting at 9:15 p.m. The next Transit Operations Subcommittee meeting will be scheduled at a later time.

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 Connie White of HNTB (608/294-5000) to discuss questions, modifications or corrections.