



**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/TECHNICAL ADVISORY
COMMITTEE (TAC)**

Wednesday, February 21, 2007

5:30 pm

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

-- **ROLL CALL**

Subcommittee Present: John DeLamater; Kristine Euclide; Sup. Ken Golden (*alternate*); Jesse Kaysen; LeAnna Wall (*for Joe Olson*).

Subcommittee Absent: Jim Berkenstadt (*notified*); Sup. Chuck Erickson (*notified*).

TAC/Staff Present: Rod Clark (Wisconsin Department of Transportation); Chuck Kamp (General Manager, Madison Metro); Bob McDonald (Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization); Arun Rao (WisDOT); David Trowbridge (Madison Planning and Development; *Transport 2020 Project Manager*).

Others Present: Fred Bartol (Dane Alliance for Rail Transit); Margaret Bergamini (Associated Students of Madison); Steve Hiniker (ITF Member); Ken Kinney (*HNTB Project Manager*); Caron Kloser (HNTB); Al Matano (ITF Member); Bob Moore (HNTB); Bob Schaefer; Royce Williams (Pro-Rail); Bruce Wilson (Madison Area Bus Advocates).

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Transit Operations Subcommittee Co-Chair Jesse Kaysen welcomed Subcommittee members to the meeting. Committee member and meeting attendee introductions were made.

2. ENGINEERING UPDATE

Ken Kinney introduced the update saying that the presentation will focus on updates to the engineering task. Bob Moore reviewed station elements and costs that will be updated as a result of an engineering workshop held on February 20. Bob summarized that urban station elements would include facilities

such as bike racks, ticket vending, communications, lighting, benches and a shelter. LeAnna Wall asked if trains would have bike accommodations. Bob replied they would, but those are design issues that will be addressed much later in the project development phase. Steve Hiniker asked about the platform heights, if they would be ADA compliant. Bob responded that the final rule on ADA compliance for platforms is not final. Ken Golden asked that the station design give consideration to allowing for vendor space and advertising, wanting assurance that this can be done since these are revenue-generating facilities for the transit system. Bob responded that the station design could allow for that to be done. LeAnna Wall asked how riders cross from one platform to another. Riders would need to cross at existing public crossings; stations with two platforms are near public roads.

Bob reviewed park and ride station elements, which include facilities for parking, auto drop off and bus/taxi access, and stormwater management. Providing adequate parking and auto/bus access is important to increase ridership. Steve Hiniker asked if station costs take into consideration the different station sizes. Bob responded that costs are based on a unit cost for stations; costs for parking, for example, are estimated separately.

Ken Golden noted for the record that the existing park and ride lot on the south side of Madison generates revenue from bus companies using the lot for access. Park and ride lots are opportunities to pair up with intercity bus service and create a positive revenue opportunity.

Christine Euclid asked if the team considered integrating the stations with local attractions, such as shopping malls, which could make transit more attractive than just a stand alone station. Dave Trowbridge noted that some stations are located that way, such as Union South and Hill Farms. While current opportunities are limited along an existing freight corridor, there may be future opportunities with ongoing development.

Another member asked whether grants were available for stormwater management at the park and ride lots; but opportunities may be limited for this as the life of some stormwater management measures is unresolved.

Members and the project team discussed the level of station amenities to include at this stage of project development. The group acknowledged enhanced stations can enhance revenue opportunities and encourage station oriented development. At this stage, the stations are fairly utilitarian to minimize project costs and avoid impacts outside of the rail right-of-way. This will keep the project competitive in the New Starts review process. Station oriented development requires transit to be in place first.

The park and ride lots will need to be sized based on the outcome of the ridership model. Right-of-way needs at park and ride lots would be determined once lot size is known.

At the proposed Midvale station, the group discussed the potential for redevelopment at the DOR building and pedestrian access from the north. Design details will evolve as preliminary engineering progresses, but it is worth mentioning that the station design must take into consideration the need for good wayfinding to the station.

At the Union South station, and through the UW campus, the design must accommodate a new bike path along the north side of the existing track. There is significant redevelopment potential at this station. A committee member asked how existing sidings are handled with the project. Bob Moore responded that the policy is to accommodate sidings unless, through further coordination with the railroad, there is an advantage to moving the siding.

The Union Corners station is on a curve and presents difficulties with access to, and visibility of the station platform. The train would be super-elevated on the curve, resulting in a “cocked” car when passengers board or alight.

A committee member asked if all new track would be needed. Bob Moore responded that the project would rebuild existing track and add new track.

At the Reiner Road station, a layover facility is proposed; it must accommodate a crew facility parking and space for layover activities. The project team will need to review this site with WSOR and confirm the site is feasible for construction (e.g. no wetlands present).

The group discussed the need to reserve right of way for station areas and park and ride lots. The neighborhood planning process is the most appropriate vehicle to begin reserving land for transit purposes, but it was emphasized that the ITF must first endorse a preferred alternative before such actions can occur at the neighborhood planning level.

Under Alternative 3, more parking may be required at the North Transfer Point station.

The group discussed the level of specificity for capital costs. Bob responded that there are 10 major line items, so the costing is not extremely detailed at this point. The costs also assume that the vehicles could be either FRA compliant or non-compliant. Amenities at stations and on vehicles are not significant cost items at this point in the planning process – this is usually absorbed in the contingency. However, the project sponsors can mention potential amenities in the public review process.

There was further discussion of comparing characteristics of the alternatives, which are each slightly different. There is little significant difference between Alternatives 2A and 3, even with slightly different operating plans.

A committee member asked if there were significant noise differences between vehicle type. DMUs are noisier than LRVs, but less noisy than freight trains.

Regarding Alternative 5, Bob McDonald inquired if diesel vehicles should be considered instead to reduce costs in a corridor that is seeing population growth. Ken noted that the vehicles they are considering could run either on electric or diesel, but noted the city had made a decision not to operate diesel street running vehicles.

Ken Kinney said that the focus must continue to be on an LPA that will be successful in the FTA evaluation process. It is expected that the 2020 LPA will score well on land use criteria and financing criteria. The problem area will be in cost effectiveness. Ken Kinney recommended that the committee agree to stop further work on Alternative 5 in the Phase I segment of the 2020 study because of the higher cost of the alternative. The decision would not preclude the alternative from future consideration and could remain in the transit system plan. The selected LPA technology could be either street running or run in rail corridors. LeAnna Wall reminded the team that the LPA cannot preclude the operation of high speed passenger rail in the future and the project must address the temporal issue if the selected technology is not FRA-compliant.

Ken Golden made a motion to stop further work on Alternative 5 in Phase I of the 2020 study, but that documentation reflects the study team has looked at the Alternative but found that it was too costly at this time to continue further evaluation. John DeLamater seconded the motion. Kristine Euclide offered a friendly amendment to emphasize a more positive message, essentially stating that “alternatives 2a and

3 appear to be the most cost-effective options at this time, and that those alternatives should be evaluated in more detail and possibly advanced as components of the New Starts Application”. The subcommittee approved the motion.

3. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Bob Schaefer presented public comments:

1. It is important that the investment that is made in the transit corridor will last more than 5 to 10 years. We don't want to shave back the investment so much that we have to come back a short time later to invest more funds in the corridor.
2. Will a single track accommodate the highest level of service and not require a second track?
3. It is wrong to take an expanded bus system off the table.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.