

Minutes of the Sixth Meeting

THE WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Date: January 8, 2014
Time: 9:30 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 249
Washington County Highway Department
900 Lang Street
West Bend, WI

Advisory Committee Members Present

Daniel R. Goetz..... Supervisor, Washington County Board
Chairperson, Washington County Board of Supervisors Transportation Committee
Mike Hermann Director of Parks and Recreation, City of Hartford
Operator, Hartford City Taxi
Steve Johnson..... President, Specialized Transportation Services, Inc.
Daniel Ludwig Director of Public Works, Village of Germantown
Operator, Washington County Shared-Ride Taxi
Linda Olson..... Director, Aging and Disability Resource Center of Washington County
Mark Piotrowicz..... City Planner/Operations Manager,
West Bend Department of Community Development
Daniel W. Stoffel Supervisor, Washington County Board
Commissioner, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Thomas Wondra..... Highway Commissioner, Washington County Highway Department

Guests Present

Dave Rank..... Reporter, West Bend Daily News
Karen Schmiechen Urban Planning Analyst, Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Joseph Steier, III Transit Manager, Washington County Highway Department
Michelle Wagner Consultant,
Washington County Highway Department & Aging and Disability Resource Center of Washington

Staff Present

Ann Dee Allen Senior Public Involvement and Outreach Specialist, SEWRPC
Eric D. Lynde..... Principal Planner, SEWRPC
Laurie B. Miller Planner, SEWRPC
Kevin J. Muhs Senior Planner, SEWRPC

ROLL CALL

Mr. Stoffel called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. He indicated that roll call would be taken through the circulation of a meeting sign-in sheet.

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 16, 2013, MEETING

Mr. Stoffel indicated that the first item on the agenda was the consideration and approval of the minutes for the previous meeting of the Advisory Committee held on October 16, 2013. Mr. Wondra made a motion to approve the previous meeting's minutes. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion, and the Advisory Committee unanimously approved the minutes.

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF REVISED DRAFT CHAPTER V, "TRANSIT SERVICE ALTERNATIVES FOR THE WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM", OF SEWRPC COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PLANNING REPORT NO. 317, "WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PLAN"

Mr. Stoffel drew the Advisory Committee's attention to the next order of business, reviewing of Chapter V, "Transit Service Alternatives for the Washington County Transit System", of the SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 317, "*Washington County Transit System Development Plan*", which had been distributed to the Advisory Committee. He asked Commission staff to review the revised chapter with the Committee. Mr. Muhs explained to the Committee that Chapter V was revised based on the comments provided during the previous Advisory Committee meeting on October 16, 2013. Mr. Muhs clarified that the ridership projections contain a "ramp-up" period that would occur during the first six to 12 months of service. Mr. Muhs continued by noting that the ridership data found in the revised Chapter V reflects the recently updated U.S. Census Bureau "journey to work" data. Mr. Muhs also noted that the revised changes reflect the new Washington County Commuter Express (WCCE) 2014 schedule. Mr. Muhs emphasized that the alternatives found in Chapter V are not recommendations and that any recommendations will be provided in the future Chapter VI.

During the discussion of the revised Chapter V, the following questions and comments were raised:

1. During the discussion of the alternative which would eliminate the Medical Center Route or eliminate the lowest performing runs for both the Medical Center Route and the Downtown Route, Ms. Olson stated that, if the County eliminated some of the runs on the WCCE Medical Center Route, the County would need to consider the costs associated with shifting patients that need to get to their appointments at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VA) and other medical facilities to other transportation services. Ms. Olson also remarked that this would put additional burden on the medical transportation services in the county. Mr. Steier reminded the committee that if this alternative is pursued, that the committee should also consider the impact on the remaining WCCE runs. He noted that the existing schedule is carefully designed, and that eliminating runs may cause the service to become less efficient or force changes in the existing schedule.

Ms. Olson asked if SEWRPC considered the continual population growth in the County when determining the ridership projections for the WCCE Medical Center Route. Mr. Muhs responded that the Commission took a conservative approach to developing the projections and had not included the potential effect of population growth in the ridership projections. Mr. Stoffel stated that any effect that the Zoo interchange reconstruction might have on ridership was also not considered as part of the ridership estimates for the Medical Center route for the WCCE.

2. Mr. Muhs noted that University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee (UWM) and General Mitchell International Airport (GMIA) provided some information to help with the ridership projections for the alternatives serving those destinations, but that UWM could not precisely determine how

many students commute to UWM from Washington County because many of the students may live near campus and report their parents' home as a mailing address. Mr. Muhs also stated that UWM may be interested in working with the County on marketing the WCCE as a commuting option to students, regardless of whether the alternative is pursued.

Mr. Wondra asked if the schedule is based on the 2014 WCCE schedule. Mr. Muhs indicated that it was and that Table 5-4 was updated to reflect the new schedule. Mr. Goetz stated that parking is a big problem around the UWM campus and that routes need to match up with the class schedule. Mr. Muhs concurred with Mr. Goetz and confirmed that the schedule was based on the UWM class schedule, but noted that the WCCE schedule would be unable to meet the needs of students attending classes at night.

Mr. Goetz stated that Lamers Co. is currently running a route from Wausau to Fond Du Lac to GMIA and is considering serving the Richfield Park and Ride Lot. He then suggested that the County could coordinate any new service to GMIA with this private service. Mr. Stoffel asked if the cost reflected in Chapter V indicated that the route was an addition to the Downtown Route or a separate route linking Washington to the airport. Mr. Muhs explained that the cost found in Chapter V was the amount of local funding required to create a dedicated route and he also noted that the County could apply for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds to defray much of the operating costs for the first three years of the new route.

3. Regarding the creation of a service to Kohl's corporate offices, Mr. Wondra asked if the Commission had any employee data indicating the number of employees commuting from Washington County. Mr. Muhs indicated that the Commission does have that information and that he would share that data with Mr. Wondra.
4. Mr. Muhs stated that the information shown in Table 5-8 had been updated. Ms. Schmiechen stated that a new shopping mall will be opening near W. Burleigh Street and U.S.H. 45 which will increase the need to travel into that area. Mr. Stoffel asked if Table 5-8 only includes employees. Mr. Muhs responded that the table only includes employees and does not include potential shoppers or those traveling for medical appointments.
5. In regards to providing service between West Bend and Fond du Lac, Mr. Stoffel asked Mr. Muhs to remind him why the service was using USH 45 and not USH 41. Mr. Muhs responded that USH 45 provided a more direct route to the bus transfer zone used by the City of Fond Du Lac Transit System.
6. Ms. Olson stated that she did not feel the service to GMIA and the service linking West Bend and the City of Fond Du Lac should be pursued. Ms. Olson continued by stating that the GMIA route was too expensive to serve and that the West Bend/Fond Du Lac service needed to show more demand outside the needs of serving a private school at the expense of not serving the needs of more local areas within Washington County.
7. During the discussion of the fare increase alternative for the Shared Ride Taxi Service, Mr. Stoffel asked Mr. Muhs to clarify that they would indeed see loss of ridership if the service increased fares. Mr. Muhs confirmed that a ridership decrease is projected under the alternative.

Ms. Olson stated that seniors and people with disabilities needed to be considered, not just cost savings. Ms. Olson continued by stating that fare increase may prevent seniors and the people with disabilities from being able to afford the service. Mr. Steier stated that they could consider providing service only to the seniors and people with disabilities, but doing that would impact the

service's State and Federal funding. Mr. Johnson suggested that the County only increase the fare for students and adults and asked Mr. Muhs if the alternative costs were based on average fare increases. Mr. Muhs confirmed that the alternative was based on an average fare increase for all fare types, but that the County could limit fare increases to certain fare categories to achieve the same average fare increase. Mr. Piotrowicz stated that many seniors do not have an alternative to the shared-ride service and that this could deeply impact those with low income, seniors and people with disabilities with minimal tax benefit to the County. Mr. Steier added that this fare structure could also cause Title VI issues and environmental justice issues.

Mr. Johnson noted that costs may be reduced once the contract comes up for bid at the end of 2015. Mr. Stoffel asked if the current contracts contain a modifier for fuel costs. Mr. Wondra responded that the contracts are not specifically tied to fuel costs.

8. In regards to merging the Municipal and County shared-ride taxi services, Mr. Piotrowicz stated that an increase in the level of service in other communities across the County should only be considered if the communities could demonstrate need.
9. Regarding the revisions to the secondary taxi depot alternative, Mr. Stoffel asked Mr. Muhs if the cost estimates in Chapter V included capital costs. Mr. Muhs stated that the costs did not include the capital costs.

Mr. Goetz asked for the Advisory Committee to hold a public meeting in the Germantown Area and stated that the riders want a quicker response to their requests for service. Mr. Muhs stated that Commission staff would hold a meeting in that area if that is what the Committee requests. Mr. Piotrowicz noted that there was less demand for the Shared-Ride Taxi in Germantown and Richfield as that area has higher value homes and less density than West Bend and Hartford. Mr. Stoffel concurred with Mr. Piotrowicz and added that all requests for service in Germantown are currently being fulfilled. Mr. Muhs stated that Commission staff could explore the addition of a demand-response service in Germantown to meet the demand for quicker response times as part of a separate study if requested by the Village of Germantown. Mr. Goetz stated that residents of Germantown should have a chance to give their opinion about such a service.

10. Mr. Muhs stated that extending the weekend service hours of the Shared-Ride Taxi service would result in an increase of approximately 20 riders per weekend. Mr. Stoffel asked how the weekend ridership numbers were determined. Mr. Muhs answered by stating that the Commission used the number of Tavern League of Wisconsin Safe Rides in Manitowoc County service as a model and combined that with the amount of travel on the roads in the County during the potential additional hours of service to calculate the estimate of additional rides.

Mr. Stoffel sought approval of the revised draft Chapter V. A motion for tentative approval of Chapter V was made by Mr. Hermann, seconded by Ms. Olson, and approved unanimously by the Advisory Committee.

DISCUSSION OF THE PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS FOR THE WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Mr. Muhs stated that Commission staff would be sending out a draft of the newsletter describing the alternatives to the Advisory Committee prior to sending a final version to members of the public. Mr. Wondra suggested that three public information meetings be held in the Village of Germantown, City of Hartford and City of West Bend for the public to receive information about the service alternatives being considered by the Advisory Committee, and to provide comment on which alternatives they prefer. Other

Advisory Committee members agreed and Mr. Muhs stated that the Advisory Committee would be provided with a record of public comments following the three public information meetings. He noted that after considering these comments, the Advisory Committee could determine which service alternatives to include in the recommended transit service plan. Mr. Stoffel suggested scheduling the next Advisory Committee meeting after the public meetings were completed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Advisory Committee, a motion to adjourn the meeting was sought by Mr. Stoffel, made by Ms. Olson, seconded by Mr. Wondra, and approved unanimously by the Advisory Committee at 10:44 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Muhs
Deputy Recording Secretary

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