

Minutes of the Seventh Meeting

THE WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Date: July 2, 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 W. Stoffel, Chair Supervisor, Washington County Board
Commissioner, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
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.
Washington County Shared Ride Taxi
Daniel Ludwig Director of Public Works, Village of Germantown
Operator, Washington County Shared-Ride Taxi
Amy Maurer..... Program Specialist, Froedtert/St. Joseph’s Hospital
(Representing Andrew Dresang)
Mark Piotrowicz..... City Planner/Operations Manager,
West Bend Department of Community Development
Steve Schmeling..... Manager, West Bend Vehicle Maintenance Department
Joshua Schoemann County Administrator, Washington County
Gregory Steeno Operations Supervisor, GoRiteway Transportation Group
(Representing R.J. Bast) Operator, Washington County Commuter Express
Thomas H. Wenzel..... Vice President, Tavern League of Washington County
Thomas Wondra..... Highway Commissioner, Washington County Highway Department

Guests Present

Dave Rank..... Reporter, West Bend Daily News
Frank Furdek Program and Planning Analyst, Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Joseph Steier, III Transit Manager, Washington County Highway Department
Joy Tadelski Manager, Specialized Transport Services, Inc.
Kerry Thomas Executive Director, MetroGo!

Staff Present

Joseph M. Delmagori..... Senior Planner, SEWRPC
Laurie B. Miller Planner, SEWRPC
Kevin J. Muhs Principal Planner, SEWRPC
Kenneth R. Yunker Executive Director, 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 JANUARY 8, 2014, 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 January 8, 2014. Mr. Johnson made a motion to approve the January 8, 2014 meeting minutes. Mr. Piotrowicz seconded the motion and the Advisory Committee unanimously approved the minutes.

CONSIDERATION OF “*RECORD OF PUBLIC COMMENTS: WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PLAN: 2015-2019*”

At the request of Mr. Stoffel, Mr. Muhs reviewed the “Record of Public Comments: Washington County Transit System Development Plan: 2015-2019,” which documents comments received on transit service improvement alternatives as part of the Washington County Transit Development Plan (TDP).

After the review of the document, Mr. Stoffel opened the floor to comments from the committee members:

1. Mr. Goetz questioned why no phone comments were included in the document and said he knew of two calls made to Commission staff. Mr. Muhs said he was not aware of any calls made to staff. Mr. Yunker said he would check with staff to verify if any calls were received.

[Secretary’s Note: Following the meeting, staff reviewed records of comments received regarding the Washington County Transit Development Plan, and were unable to find any record of comments submitted via telephone.]

2. Mr. Stoffel said he was pleased to see that the three public meetings were well attended. Mr. Muhs agreed and said over 60 people attended the meetings.

DISCUSSION OF EXHIBIT A, CONTAINING ADDITIONAL ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPED BASED ON PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

Mr. Stoffel introduced the next agenda item and Mr. Muhs referred the committee members to Exhibit A, which was part of the agenda packet. Mr. Muhs said staff prepared this document based on two comments from members of the public that suggested a stop on the Downtown Route at Schlitz Park and a stop on the Medical Center Route at Summit Place.

1. In response to Mr. Wondra, Mr. Muhs said he believed Ozaukee County and Waukesha County were working on serving Schlitz Park, but asked Ms. Thomas to explain what she knew about any service. Ms. Thomas introduced herself to the committee and said she was part of the study that surveyed the employees at Schlitz Park. She briefly explained that the survey had questions regarding where employees live, shift start/end times, and shift flexibility. She said Schlitz Park is currently served by the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) but not by any commuter service. She said Ozaukee and Waukesha counties are reviewing the survey information and are investigating the opportunity to serve Schlitz Park.

2. Mr. Schoemann asked about current capacity on the Downtown Route. Mr. Steier said the morning routes have plenty of capacity and the afternoon routes are near capacity. He said each bus can hold 55 people. Mr. Muhs stated people are not allowed to stand on these buses. Mr. Stoffel stated that this means people would have to wait for the next run if the first bus is full. Mr. Yunker said staff could look into the cost of adding an additional run to the Downtown Route if necessary.
3. Responding to Mr. Wondra, Mr. Yunker confirmed that there is access to I-94 at 70th Street and this interchange has not been closed by the nearby freeway construction project.
4. Responding to Mr. Stoffel, Mr. Muhs said there are two existing bus stops serving the VA Hospital, one at the hospital itself and another at the intersection of N. 54th St. and W. National Ave.

DISCUSSION OF ALTERNATIVES TO INCLUDE IN CHAPTER VI, “RECOMMENDED TRANSIT SERVICE PLAN”, OF SEWRPC COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PLANNING REPORT NO. 317, “WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PLAN”

Mr. Stoffel stated the next item would be a discussion of the alternatives to include in Chapter VI, “Recommended Transit Service Plan”, of the SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 317, “*Washington County Transit System Development Plan*”. He said he would like to conduct a straw poll with the committee members to reach consensus on which alternatives staff should work on further for inclusion in Chapter VI and which alternatives could be dropped because they were not being considered for implementation.

Mr. Muhs directed the Committee to Exhibit B, “Preliminary Draft Recommended Alternatives for Washington County Transit Development Plan: 2015-2019” (see Attachment 1 to these minutes) and explained that the alternatives have been summarized and organized into three major categories: alternatives that would be recommended under three different funding scenarios, alternatives for further consideration, and alternatives not recommended for inclusion in the plan.

1. Mr. Goetz reiterated that he would still like the telephone comments to be recognized and to be part of the conversation. Mr. Yunker verified that staff will check into who received those comments and will note those comments in the minutes for this meeting so that the Committee can review the comments at its next meeting.
2. Mr. Goetz said the Committee has not seen an alternative that works for Germantown and Richfield. He said these areas pay more in taxes but are receiving less service. Mr. Yunker suggested that the Committee allow staff to review the alternatives first because they might address this concern.

Mr. Muhs reviewed the alternatives that would be recommended under three different funding scenarios, which include a Reduced Funding Scenario, a No Significant Change in Funding Scenario, and an Additional Funding Scenario. For the Reduced Funding Scenario, the Committee reached consensus on the following:

1. Fares would be increased if Washington County needs to reduce funding for either the Commuter Express or Shared-Ride Taxi. In addition, if fare increases are not adequate enough to cover the needed reduction in County funding, eliminating low ridership runs on both routes would be considered rather than eliminating the Medical Center Route entirely.

Under the No Significant Change in Funding Scenario, several alternatives were identified assuming County funding remains stable for 2015-2019. The Committee discussed the following:

1. The Downtown Route would be extended to provide service to Schlitz Park. There was consensus among the Committee to include this alternative.
2. During the discussion of providing service to Summit Place by modifying the Medical Center Route, Mr. Wondra stated it will be important to see how this alternative would affect bus turnaround times. There was consensus among the Committee to include this alternative.
3. An additional evening run would be provided on the Medical Center Route by combining the Medical Center and Downtown Routes. Mr. Wondra expressed concern that this change would upset downtown riders because they would be on the bus longer which could lead to lost ridership. Mr. Schoemann believed it would be necessary to survey existing riders about this change before any combination of routes was implemented. Based on Mr. Yunker's suggestion, there was consensus among the Committee that this alternative would not be dropped, but it would be moved to the alternatives for further consideration section of the chapter.
4. During the discussion of adding additional vehicles to the WCCE to ensure demand for seats does not exceed capacity, Mr. Wondra noted that adding additional vehicles would have a significant impact on funding for the system and recommended this alternative be moved to the Additional Funding Scenario. Mr. Stoffel asked if there was agreement from the Committee to make this change. There was consensus among the Committee to move this alternative to the Additional Funding Scenario.
5. In regards to the alternative to coordinate with the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) to allow free or reduced-fare transfers between services and to coordinate fare card technologies that are compatible with the MCTS M-card smartcard system, Mr. Wondra asked if MCTS coordinates with Ozaukee and Waukesha county bus services. Mr. Muhs said they do and he briefly explained the transfer rates between the systems. There was consensus among the Committee to include this alternative.

Under the Additional Funding Scenario, three alternatives were identified if additional County funding would become available. The Committee discussed the following:

1. A shuttle would be provided connecting the City of Hartford and the Village of Slinger to the Richfield Park and Ride. The shuttle would have a timed transfer to existing WCCE services to attract more ridership and better serve residents. There was consensus among the Committee to include this alternative.
2. A reverse commute service would be provided on W. Fond du Lac Avenue to the Germantown Industrial Park and the City of West Bend. The service would have transfers to all MCTS routes that cross W. Fond du Lac Avenue to reduce passenger travel times, and would connect to the shuttle connecting the City of Hartford and Village of Slinger to the Richfield Park and Ride lot. Responding to Mr. Stoffel, Mr. Muhs said the WCCE would have to revise its schedule to meet the arrival time of the new reverse commute route. Mr. Wenzel said there would be interest in this reverse commute service because the City of Hartford has three of the largest companies in Washington County, and they are seeking additional employees. Mr. Wondra recommended that staff make it clear in the chapter that for this alternative to be effective, it would require having the City of Hartford and Village of Slinger shuttle in place. Responding to an inquiry from Mr. Goetz, Mr. Yunker said there are instances where public transit has partnered with companies to

fund transit but it is not a recommended practice because the funding from the companies does not often last for a long time. Responding to Mr. Piotrowicz's comment about evaluating reverse commute services, Mr. Yunker said as the Commission staff studies the reverse commute service to West Bend, staff will also look into implementing reverse commute elsewhere in the county and will cost out the options at that time. Mr. Schoemann stated that he believed the Committee had an obligation to develop a plan that includes a reverse commute service. There was consensus among the Committee to include this alternative.

3. The weekend service hours for the Shared-Ride Taxi would be refined and extended to 2:30 a.m. as a service for those who are unable to drive home safely from restaurants and bars. Mr. Wondra said he was fine with extending hours but reminded the Committee that service would actually end at 3 a.m. because service does not officially end until the drivers have parked their vehicles at the garage. Mr. Yunker reminded the Committee that this alternative suggests a higher fare rate after 10 p.m. for those riders without disabilities. Mr. Stoffel and Mr. Goetz agreed with this suggestion. Mr. Wenzel said he was in favor of extended hours because the clientele using this service often stays out until 2:30 a.m. He explained there is new service available called Lyft which uses a smartphone application that allows someone to request a ride from another member of the public. He hopes that this kind of on-call technology can be implemented in Washington County. Mr. Yunker said current shared-ride taxi services are subsidized to keep costs down but he didn't believe new services like Lyft were subsidized in other areas. There was consensus among the Committee to include this alternative.

Mr. Muhs explained that the Alternatives for Further Consideration category includes alternatives that the County could consider at a later time because they would require both significant additional funding and further analysis to determine their viability. The Committee discussed the following:

1. Adding a stop on the Medical Center Route at Mayfair Mall would require surveying employers for information on demand and shift times. Both Mr. Wondra and Mr. Schoemann recommended that this alternative not be studied further, stating that the County previously served Mayfair Mall before and the service was unsuccessful. There was consensus among the Committee to move this alternative to the not recommended list.
2. The Downtown Route could provide service to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) campus if service is not provided to Schlitz Park. The County might consider discussing funding assistance with UWM should the WCCE service be extended to the campus, as the university is already doing something similar with MCTS. Mr. Yunker explained that the agreement between MCTS and UWM centers around a student pass. Mr. Wondra stated he did not think this was feasible because the WCCE would not be able to maintain turnaround times and therefore existing service levels. He said riders can already transfer from the Downtown Route to MCTS to get to the campus. Responding to an inquiry from Mr. Stoffel, Mr. Yunker said Ozaukee County Express does not serve UWM. Mr. Stoffel suggested that if new service to Schlitz Park does not happen then the County could look into providing service to UWM. There was consensus among the Committee to include this alternative.
3. Many public comments were submitted indicating strong support for a higher level of shared-ride taxi service countywide, and particularly in the Germantown area. The currently estimated costs for providing improved service in some or all of the County would need further analysis and refinement before implementation. Mr. Muhs referenced an email from Linda Olsen, Director of the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Washington County, who noted that providing county-wide demand response service would require a significant expansion of the County's Shared-Ride Taxi fleet. Mr. Goetz said he would like to see demand response service in

Germantown and Richfield. Mr. Wondra said he would like to see what counties have demand response taxi service for the purposes of comparison and guidance. Mr. Schoemann said that given the cost, this alternative would not be feasible. Mr. Hermann said that the equity issue alone would make any area-specific demand response service difficult to implement, and that countywide service would be the only fair alternative. There was consensus among the Committee to move this alternative to the not recommended list.

4. The Washington County and Ozaukee County taxi services could be merged together to reduce overhead costs and provide more mobility for the residents of each county. This alternative would require determining a method of equitably distributing the cost of services between the counties. Mr. Yunker said a more detailed look at cost sharing was necessary because riders may make longer trips, which could increase the cost of providing the shared-ride taxi service. Mr. Wondra stated there could also be more deadhead times for the taxi service. In response to Mr. Piotrowicz, Mr. Yunker confirmed that Ozaukee County is part of the Milwaukee Urbanized Area and is eligible to receive federal funding for transit services. With no further discussion, Mr. Stoffel recommended that this alternative remain for further consideration. There was consensus among the Committee to include this alternative.

For the list of alternatives not recommended for the Washington County Transit Development Plan, Mr. Yunker noted that Commission staff would include a short discussion with each alternative that would describe why these alternatives were not recommended. Mr. Muhs then briefly went through the list of alternatives not recommended for inclusion in the plan.

1. Due to public comment, the elimination of the Medical Route would not be recommended. Mr. Wondra clarified that eliminating some runs on this route would still be an option.
2. Service would not be provided to General Mitchell International Airport due to steep costs and very little support from public comments.
3. Low ridership would make the WCCE service from the City of West Bend to the City of Fond du Lac infeasible.
4. Service would not be provided to Kohl's Corporate offices. Mr. Stoffel said without a subsidy from Kohl's, the WCCE should not be serving just one employer.
5. Adding a stop to the Medical Center Route at the Park Place Office Complex was not recommended due to a lack of accommodations and accessibility for pedestrians that may limit ridership.
6. The Secondary Taxi Depot in or near the Village of Germantown would not provide the demand-response service that some residents of that area are requesting.

Mr. Yunker reminded the Committee that the Mayfair Mall alternative and the county-wide, demand-response Shared Ride Taxi service alternative would be added to this list based on the Committee's earlier discussion.

NEXT MEETING OF THE WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. Stoffel asked Commission staff about when to hold the next Committee meeting. Mr. Muhs said he would likely need about two months to complete the analysis of the alternatives and revise the transit

development plan chapters. The Committee agreed to schedule their next meeting for Wednesday, September 3, 2014 at 9:30 a.m. in Conference Room 249 at the Washington County Highway Department in West Bend.

[Secretary's Note: Following the meeting, the Committee agreed to reschedule their next meeting to Wednesday, October 8, 2014 with no change to the time and location of the meeting.]

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 Mr. Wondra, seconded by Mr. Schoemann, and approved unanimously by the Advisory Committee at 11:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth R. Yunker
Recording Secretary

KRY/KJM/JMD
9/28/2014
#219219v2