

Minutes of the Sixth Meeting

OZAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DATE: November 14, 2017
TIME: 10:00 a.m.
PLACE: Auditorium
Ozaukee County Administration Center
121 W. Main Street
Port Washington, WI 53704

Members Present

Kathy Geracie County Board Supervisor/Chair Public Works Committee, Ozaukee County
Chair
Jon Edgren Public Works Director, Ozaukee County
Amber Koehler.....Manager, Ozaukee County Shared-Ride Taxi Services
Michelle Pike Director, Aging and Disability Resource Center of Ozaukee County
Jennifer Rothstein Vice Chair, Ozaukee Board of Supervisors/SEWRPC Commissioner
Kathleen Schilling..... Executive Director, Ozaukee Economic Development
Carol Schneider..... Chief Executive Officer, Seek Staffing
Jeff Sponcia..... Manager of Planning, Milwaukee County Transit System
Maureen Squire Executive Director Interfaith Caregivers
Randy Tetzlaff Director Planning and Development, City of Port Washington
Kim Tollefson Director of Community Development, City of Mequon
Jason Wittek..... Policy and Budget Analyst, Ozaukee County
Jessica Wolff..... Director of Planning and Development, Village of Grafton

Guests and Staff Present

Joshua W. Depies..... Senior Transportation Engineer, SEWRPC
Jason Dzwinel County Administrator, Ozaukee County
Andrew Levy Urban and Regional Planning Supervisor,
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Kevin J. Muhs Deputy Director, SEWRPC
Jennifer B. Sarnecki..... Principal Transportation Planner, SEWRPC

ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chairwoman Geracie called the meeting of the Ozaukee County Transit Development Plan Advisory Committee to order at 10:00 a.m. Attendance was taken by circulating a sign-in sheet. She then asked the Committee members, guests, and staff to introduce themselves.

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JULY 25, 2017, MEETING

Chairwoman Geracie indicated that the second item on the agenda was the consideration and approval of the minutes for the previous meeting of the Advisory Committee held on July 25, 2017. Ms. Schilling made

a motion to approve the July 25, 2017, meeting minutes. Mr. Sponcia seconded the motion and the Advisory Committee unanimously approved the minutes.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF CHAPTER V, “TRANSIT SERVICE ALTERNATIVES FOR THE OZAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM,” OF SEWRPC COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE REPORT NO. 331, “OZAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN”

Mr. Muhs reviewed the sections of the preliminary draft of Chapter V with the Committee members and referenced the corresponding tables, figures, and maps that related to specific sections of the chapter, which organized alternatives into three categories: (1) employment-related transit services targeting Ozaukee County businesses; (2) fixed-route service alternatives for the Ozaukee County Express; and (2) Shared-Ride Taxi Service alternatives for the Ozaukee County Transit System. He explained that Chapter V summarizes the potential service alternatives to the existing Ozaukee County Transit System that have been developed with feedback received from the Advisory Committee members, Ozaukee County businesses, and the public over the past year. Mr. Muhs further explained that ridership projections shown in the Chapter V tables are conservative estimates as ridership projections are difficult to estimate, particularly in areas where there is no existing fixed-route transit service.

He stated that if no new matters arise following the review of Chapter V, the alternatives would then be presented to Ozaukee County businesses and Commission staff would hold public information meetings. He indicated that Commission staff would then provide the draft recommended plan chapter to the Committee. Mr. Muhs noted that Commission staff may shift the five-year outlook for the Ozaukee County Transit Development Plan from 2018-2022 to 2019-2023 in the recommended plan chapter to provide a more realistic schedule for potential implementation. Upon approval of the draft recommended plan chapter, Commission staff will publish the full plan document in early 2018.

During the review of Chapter V, “Transit Service Alternatives for the Ozaukee County Transit System,” Committee members had the following questions or comments regarding the employment-related transit services targeting Ozaukee County businesses:

1. While discussing the potential fixed-flexible routes, Mr. Wittek asked why the routes go further into Milwaukee County than the three Shared-Ride Taxi transfer points. Mr. Muhs responded that the potential fixed-flexible routes are proposed to extend further into Milwaukee County in order to increase the service area to potential riders. He explained that the routes are designed to connect with Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) services at transfer points that are served by multiple MCTS routes, making the route more attractive for riders. Mr. Sponcia noted that the ridership on some of the routes serving the existing Shared-Ride Taxi transfer points, particularly Route 276 and the northern leg of Route 63 has been inadequate and that MCTS is considering eliminating one or both of these routes due to budget constraints. Ms. Rothstein asked if serving these struggling MCTS routes with smaller buses would be more efficient. Mr. Sponcia responded that MCTS only operates 40-foot buses; however, he explained that these routes could be served by smaller buses if operated by a contractor. Mr. Muhs added that while the Commission proposes shuttle buses to serve the fixed-flexible routes, adding smaller buses to the MCTS fleet would not be more efficient than MCTS’ current practice of using larger buses on all routes because the largest cost to operating any bus is the driver. He further explained that the money saved by using less fuel on smaller buses would be offset by the additional equipment and technicians required for MCTS to maintain a second fleet of buses.
2. In regards to the proposed flexible or fixed-route shuttle alternative, Mr. Wittek inquired why the alternative did not include shuttles connecting the Ozaukee County Express. Mr. Muhs indicated there was low interest from the Advisory Committee and attendees at the business-focused meeting

in providing shuttles connecting to the Ozaukee County Express. He further stated that the Ozaukee County Express only serves one or two neighborhoods in Milwaukee County and provides no service to northwest Milwaukee where a larger portion of the population is likely to be looking for entry level jobs. He added that each additional transfer would deter a rider from taking transit and therefore north-south shuttle routes that connect more directly to north and northwest side neighborhoods are more likely to attract ridership. Mr. Muhs noted that Commission staff included the flexible or fixed shuttle routes based on feedback from businesses. However, this alternative is generally not recommended for employment trips because route deviations add time to the trip, which impacts employees' schedules.

3. Regarding the alternative that proposes on-demand services with a Transportation Network Company (TNC), Mr. Muhs indicated that partnering with on-demand transportation companies such as Uber and Lyft is a potential option if Ozaukee County businesses are interested and willing to contribute to the operating costs. Mr. Muhs noted that a partnership with a TNC may not be a permanent solution because the service could be expensive to provide over the long-term. Mr. Wittek commented that Ozaukee County's per trip level of assistance is comparable to the per trip subsidies noted in the two examples of partnerships with Lyft in Centennial, Colorado and Uber in Pinellas County, Florida. Ms. Rothstein expressed concern that the cost for using Uber or Lyft through an on-demand partnership would be too expensive for an employee making \$11 or \$12 an hour, unless the fare was significantly subsidized by the County or employers. She explained employers will struggle to retain employees whose transportation costs are such a high proportion of their wage. She asked at what wage someone could sustainably purchase, operate, and maintain a car. Mr. Muhs responded that determining a livable wage, including the cost of car ownership, is dependent on a number of factors, such as number of children, housing costs, and other factors, but that the livable wage in Southeastern Wisconsin is about \$15 or \$16 per hour. Ms. Rothstein stated that in order to better retain employees, Ozaukee County businesses should be notified of the livable wage.
4. Responding to an inquiry from Mr. Sponcia, Mr. Muhs stated that limited service from Lyft and Uber is available in Ozaukee County. He added that Commission staff reached out to Lyft and that the company would meet with the involved parties in Ozaukee County to determine the appropriate service levels should be further explored.
5. In regards to the alternative to expand MCTS Routes 276, 12, and 68 to serve key employment destinations, Mr. Muhs noted that a potential extension of Route 276 into Ozaukee County may no longer be possible given the recent MCTS budget. Mr. Sponcia indicated that extending Route 12 into Ozaukee County would provide service to a large population as it travels through the north side of Milwaukee and terminates in Downtown Milwaukee. Responding to an inquiry from Mr. Wittek, Mr. Sponcia stated that MCTS is open to working with Ozaukee County to serve the Mequon business park due to its close proximity to the Milwaukee-Ozaukee County line. Mr. Sponcia expressed concern that extending Route 12 into Ozaukee County without funding for the additional buses needed to maintain the existing service frequency in Milwaukee County would likely result in a loss of ridership. Mr. Muhs agreed that it would be challenging to extend Route 12 into Ozaukee County without the additional buses. Mr. Sponcia added that MCTS could extend Route 12 into Ozaukee County during peak hours to serve the employers in the Mequon business park, as described in Chapter V. Chairwoman Geracie indicated that the Advisory Committee will seek feedback on the Route 12 extension alternative from area businesses to determine route times and frequencies. Ms. Rothstein suggested that the Advisory Committee seek additional feedback from residents in northern Milwaukee County as these residents are more transit dependent and would be the biggest beneficiary of the extension of Route 12. In response to a question from Ms. Rothstein, Chairwoman Geracie stated the Advisory Committee could work with businesses to help

increase attendance at the public meetings, as it may be difficult for some residents, particularly in northern Milwaukee County, to attend meetings.

6. Regarding the alternative that discusses expanding the marketing of transit options, Ms. Schneider inquired if private entities can apply for funding through the FTA Section 5310 Program for Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities. Mr. Muhs responded that private non-profit entities can apply for the Section 5310 Program funds, but not for-profit companies.
7. Ms. Wolff indicated that the marketing alternative should include text referencing social media options. Mr. Muhs agreed and stated Commission staff will add that to the chapter.
8. Ms. Schneider expressed interest in establishing a Mobility Manager position for Ozaukee County Transit and offered to cover the 20 percent required to obtain the funds through the FTA Section 5310 Program. Mr. Wittek added that the Mobility Manager position should be given well-defined tasks and duties and a competitive salary to avoid frequent turnover at the position. Mr. Muhs noted that the mobility manager could lead outreach to businesses and agreed that the position should be offered a competitive salary in line with Waukesha County, where they experience less turnover in the position than in other counties in the region.

During the review of the fixed-route service alternatives for the Ozaukee County Express, Advisory Committee members had the following questions or comments:

9. During the discussion of potential fare increases for the Ozaukee County Express, Mr. Wittek noted that the Ozaukee County Express fare is somewhat dependent on the operating contract negotiated with MCTS. Mr. Muhs noted that based on this information, the County may not be able to implement the proposed fare increases in 2018 and 2022.
10. Responding to an inquiry from Mr. Wittek, Mr. Muhs stated that it would be difficult to implement bus-on-shoulder within the 5-year planning period of the Ozaukee Transit Development Plan but the process to implement the alternative could begin within the planning horizon for the Plan. He added that in order to proceed with bus-on-shoulder operations, WisDOT will need to be involved.
11. Responding to an inquiry from Ms. Schilling related to the timing of improvements on IH 43, Mr. Levy stated that there is no time table set for the reconstruction of IH 43 from Silver Spring to STH 60 since it is not enumerated by the State Legislature. Mr. Muhs indicated that there may be opportunities to restripe lanes or add pavement to strengthen the shoulder, if required, as part of future maintenance projects on IH 43. Mr. Muhs added that the Commission will begin a Region-wide bus-on-shoulder study in 2018 that will further explore these opportunities. Chairwoman Geracie recommended waiting for the Commission to complete the bus-on-shoulder study before pursuing this alternative.
12. In response to an inquiry from Ms. Rothstein, Mr. Muhs indicated that bus-on-shoulder could be implemented in areas with adequate shoulder width. In addition, training both bus drivers and motorists would help ensure safe navigation of the bus-on-shoulder corridor.
13. Responding to an inquiry from Chairwoman Geracie, Mr. Muhs noted that the traffic congestion experienced in Southeastern Wisconsin is not as extreme as traffic congestion in other metropolitan areas that have implemented bus-on-shoulder; therefore, the travel time savings would not be as significant. He explained that the biggest benefit to implementing bus-on-shoulder along IH 43 would be the travel time reliability, specifically, during periods of significant congestion beyond the recurring congestion experienced during an average weekday. He added that with bus-on-

shoulder implementation, the on-time performance percentage experienced by the Ozaukee County Express would improve. Mr. Wittek commented that improving the on-time performance percentage for the Ozaukee County Express would increase ridership numbers. He stated that people will not ride the bus if it runs late.

14. Responding to an inquiry from Ms. Rothstein, Mr. Muhs was unsure if employers are lenient to employees who are late to work due to the bus schedule. He added that the Ozaukee County Shared-Ride Taxi will take responsibility and notify employers if they are at fault for late drop-offs.
15. In regards to a question from Mr. Sponcia related to the alternative to provide increased service and frequency on the Ozaukee County Express, Mr. Muhs clarified that the operating assistance levels shown in the tables of Chapter V are the additional costs to the County associated with implementing the alternative.
16. In response to an inquiry from Ms. Schilling regarding the decrease in ridership estimated under the reduced service alternative, Mr. Muhs indicated that ridership is projected to decrease by approximately 1,300 passengers.

During the review of the Shared-Ride Taxi alternatives for the Ozaukee County Transit System, Advisory Committee members had the following questions or comments:

17. In response to an inquiry from Ms. Schneider regarding the estimated passengers per vehicle hour in 2018 and 2022 under the “no-change” alternative, Mr. Muhs stated the numbers are the same in both years based on the assumption that the average number of passengers occupying a vehicle per service hour is not expected to change in the future based on current trends.
18. Referring to the potential merger of the Washington and Ozaukee Shared-Ride Taxi systems, Mr. Muhs indicated that the merger may not result in cost savings but it would improve the efficiency of the Shared-Ride Taxi.

With no further discussion, Ms. Schilling made a motion to approve Chapter V, “Transit Service Alternatives for the Ozaukee County Transit System,” of SEWRPC Community Assistance Report No. 331, “*Ozaukee County Transit Development Plan.*” The motion was seconded by Ms. Wolff and carried unanimously by the Advisory Committee.

DISCUSSION OF NEXT MEETING OF THE OZAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Chairwoman Geracie indicated that the next step will be to present the alternatives presented in Chapter V to Ozaukee County businesses that expressed interest in being part of future discussions. Mr. Muhs added that the Commission will host three public meetings, including two in Ozaukee County and one in Milwaukee County, where Commission staff will coordinate with Employ Milwaukee and the Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington Workforce Development Board to help target potential participants.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on a motion by Ms. Pike, seconded by Ms. Schneider, and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Muhs
Recording Secretary

KJM/CTH/JBS/JWD
#239779-2
3/9/2018