

Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the

WAUKESHA AREA TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DATE: June 16, 2020

TIME: 1:00 p.m.

PLACE: Virtual and call-in

Members Present

- Kathy Gale.....Executive Director, Eras Senior Network
Chair
- Dan Ertl Director of Community Development, City of Brookfield
- Evonne Johnson..... Transportation Manager, School District of Waukesha
- Maria Pandazi City Planner, City of Waukesha Community Development Department
- Amanda Payne..... Vice President, Public Policy, Waukesha County Business Alliance
- Joe Peterangelo Senior Researcher, Public Policy Forum
- Mary Check Smith.....Manager, Waukesha County Department of Health and Human Services
Aging and Disabilities Resource Center
- Todd Willis..... Economic Development Coordinator, City of Brookfield

Guests and Staff Present

- Fred Abadi..... Director of Public Works, City of Waukesha
- Allison Bussler Director, Waukesha County Public Works
- Rhiannon Cupkie Administration Manager, Waukesha County Public Works
- Brian Engelking..... Transit Director, City of Waukesha Metro
- Ray Grosch Alderman, Village of Pewaukee
- Kevin Muhs Executive Director, SEWRPC
- Christopher Hiebert.....Chief Transportation Engineer, SEWRPC
- Liz CallinTransportation Planner, SEWRPC
- Jennifer Sarnecki Principal Transportation Planner, SEWRPC

ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Gale called the fifth meeting of the Waukesha Area Transit Development Plan Advisory Committee to order at 1:05 p.m. Ms. Gale thanked everyone for participating. Attendance was taken by verbal rollcall.

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 11, 2019, MEETING

Ms. Gale indicated that the Committee is being asked to consider approval of the minutes of the December 11, 2019, meeting. She asked if Committee members had any changes, and upon hearing none, called for a motion. Mr. Ertl made a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting held on December 11, 2019. The motion was seconded by Ms. Payne, and the Advisory Committee unanimously approved the minutes.

Ms. Gale requested an update on transportation services provided by Waukesha Metro Transit, Waukesha County Transit, and the Waukesha County Aging and Disabilities Resource Center (ADRC) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Engelking noted that starting on March 21, 2020, Waukesha Metro initiated a number of measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including a reduced weekday schedule focused on meeting the critical needs of the community, ceasing fare collection to accommodate back door boarding and limit potential driver exposure, and closing the Transit Center to reduce viral spread. Following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Mr. Engelking indicated that ridership per bus is currently limited to 10 passengers on Waukesha Metro Transit.

Mr. Engelking noted that the 900-series Waukesha County Commuter Routes are currently operating, but have reduced service by 25 percent and ridership levels are only about 15 percent of a typical day. The service on Route 79, the Menomonee Falls Flyer, has been suspended since March 20th. Mr. Engelking stated that the Gold Line, operated by the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS), utilized the Saturday schedule between March 20th and April 13th. It is anticipated that commuter routes will not return to typical ridership levels for a long time given that many offices in downtown Milwaukee remain closed and may not open in 2020 based on some estimates.

Mr. Engelking stated that since early April, ridership on Waukesha Metro is trending upward, with ridership levels increasing to 30 percent of a typical weekday in early April and 60 to 90 percent of a typical weekday at the current time. Weekend ridership is also returning to previously observed ridership levels, with ridership levels at approximately 75 percent of usual Sunday levels, and up to 90 percent of typical Saturday levels. As ridership on Waukesha Metro has started returning to similar levels as past years, there have been instances where there are 10 passengers on board and additional passengers are unable to board, requiring Waukesha Metro to dispatch additional drivers to pick-up the extra passengers.

Ms. Check Smith indicated that the ADRC is monitoring the transportation providers and reported that the Muskego Senior Taxi and New Berlin Senior Taxi experienced a significant decrease in requested rides due to the fact that they serve a population that may be disproportionately vulnerable to COVID-19. Ms. Check Smith noted that some taxis are not operating due to a lack of available drivers, some of whom are among a vulnerable population. Even though the Meda-Care Vans provided through the RideLine Program have experienced a reduction in demand, Ms. Check Smith noted that they had observed a slight increase in demand beginning in the week of June 15th. Ms. Check Smith also mentioned that a provider (A Quick Trip) has ceased to operate due to lack of business resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and that Seniors on the Go has provided transportation for individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19. Ms. Check Smith indicated that demand may remain relatively low for specialized transportation through 2020, as senior centers are closed for the remainder of the year.

DISCUSSION OF “SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM THE FOCUSED OUTREACH FOR THE WAUKESHA AREA TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN: 2021-2025”

At the request of Ms. Gale, Ms. Sarnecki reviewed a presentation (available [here](#)) summarizing the memorandum (available [here](#)) documenting input received during the focused outreach meetings. The following questions and comments were raised by the Committee members during Ms. Sarnecki’s presentation of the input received during the outreach efforts:

1. Mr. Ertl asked if the those that attended the meeting organized by the Waukesha County Business Alliance included participants in leadership positions within their organizations. Ms. Payne responded that the invited participants were mostly human resource staff who were selected based on their direct knowledge of hiring challenges due to lack of transportation.

2. Ms. Gale, who attended the Waukesha County Business Alliance meeting, indicated that she observed there were potential opportunities to address some of the workforce transportation issues discussed during the meeting and asked Commission staff to elaborate on those opportunities. Ms. Sarnecki responded that one such opportunity discussed during the meeting included providing travel options for individual employers and noted that Commission staff can assist with developing materials that employers could share as part of their recruiting efforts to promote transportation options for those without access to a reliable vehicle or those who may be interested in alternatives to driving alone. Ms. Payne agreed that there are new businesses in Waukesha County that would benefit from information about travel options and added that she is aware of a number of businesses that are using ride-hailing companies to schedule rides for their employees without access to a vehicle.

3. In relation to a theme referenced on Slide 9, summarizing the non-profit group discussion, Ms. Gale recalled feedback that transit schedules can be difficult to understand and asked if there is an app that could improve legibility. Mr. Engelking responded that Waukesha Metro staff are reviewing time points on the schedules to ensure that they are placed at familiar locations. For example, new timepoint locations have been added at the Waukesha Memorial Hospital and the Goodwill Store on Nike Drive. Mr. Engelking indicated that the City of Waukesha is considering replacing the Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) system for the fixed route bus system in the capital budget. A new AVL system would offer real time information through an app on individuals' smart phones, on a message board located at the Transit Center, and provide on-board bus stop announcement for passengers. Ms. Sarnecki indicated that Commission staff could consider how simplified schedule information could be provided to passengers such that it is more understandable, which may be an outcome of a potential realignment of bus routes. Ms. Gale indicated that providing real-time information would help address feedback received through the survey conducted of the Waukesha Public School District, specifically, assisting with travel planning and real-time arrival information. Mr. Peterangelo noted that the Ride MCTS app provides real-time arrival information and asked if any new AVL system pursued for Waukesha Metro Transit could be combined with the MCTS app. Mr. Muhs responded that the Milwaukee County was awarded Federal funds to explore a regional fare payment though a combined app with Waukesha Metro and Waukesha County Transit and indicated that further discussions would be needed to determine if the systems would be compatible. In response to an inquiry from Ms. Gale regarding how long it might take for Milwaukee County to implement a regional fare collection app, Mr. Muhs noted that it could take two years or less, but emphasized that there could be technical issues to work through during implementation. Mr. Hiebert noted that the funds Milwaukee County was awarded for the fare collection app update were from the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) grant program.

[Secretary's Note: The City of Waukesha's Adopted Community Investment Program 2021-2025 included a project to replace the AVL system in Fiscal Year 2021.]

4. Ms. Gale asked how Commission staff will respond to the feedback from the Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington Board meeting that sought to increase funding for transit. Ms. Sarnecki responded that Commission staff will develop a range of funding scenarios as part of Chapter 5, Transit Service Alternatives, including whether funding stays the same, increases, or decreases. These scenarios will allow the City of Waukesha and Waukesha County to consider potential alternatives to pursue, should funding change over the course of the five-year plan.

CONSIDERATION OF POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVES TO BE STUDIED IN THE NEXT PHASE OF THE WAUKESHA AREA TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

At the request of Ms. Gale, Ms. Sarnecki summarized the list of potential alternatives that could be studied in the next phase of the Waukesha Area Transit Development Plan (available [here](#)).

The following questions and comments were raised by the Advisory Committee members following Ms. Sarnecki's overview of potential alternatives:

1. In reference to the Waukesha Metro Transit alternative to provide on-demand or flexible shuttle services potentially utilizing smaller transit vehicles, Mr. Ertl requested Commission staff to consider the potential cost/benefit ratio for leasing versus owning vehicles. Mr. Ertl noted that leasing may offer cost savings over procuring new capital. Mr. Engelking noted that leasing vehicles could be considered and indicated that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has additional reporting requirements for grantees leasing rolling stock that will need to be reviewed prior to pursuing any leasing options.
2. In reference to the Waukesha County Transit alternative to create a "mobility hub" at Goerke's Corners Park-Ride Lot, Ms. Gale asked if there is adequate space available to provide the needed infrastructure and amenities given the high demand for parking at this location. Mr. Muhs responded that Commission staff will consider how the parking lot could be reconfigured to accommodate the amenities envisioned under this alternative. Ms. Payne noted that the Goerke's Corners Park-Ride Lot location would not be efficient for potential shuttle passengers traveling to the New Berlin Industrial Park. Mr. Muhs indicated that Commission staff intends to consider Brookfield Square Mall and possibly other viable locations for a mobility hub for destinations east of Goerke's Corners Park-Ride Lot. Mr. Ertl expressed support for considering multiple locations for mobility hubs that include different amenities and infrastructure. Mr. Ertl noted that there is a vacant parcel near Brookfield Square Mall that could potentially accommodate a mobility hub. Mr. Ertl added that the City of Brookfield has been working with CBL & Associates LP, the owner of the property, to integrate transit and improve transit-related amenities on and near the Mall property. Ms. Gale asked how the transition from retail to restaurants and entertainment occurring at Brookfield Square Mall and trends toward more online shopping might impact the viability of a potential mobility hub near the mall. Ms. Check Smith indicated that the Waukesha County ADRC previously provided transportation from the Village of Menomonee Falls to Brookfield Square Mall, but observed a reduction in trip requests to shop at Brookfield Square Mall in recent years. Mr. Engelking responded that the most boardings and alightings for Route 1 occur at Brookfield Square Mall. Mr. Ertl noted that retail is still anticipated to be part of the redevelopment of the mall area and that the City of Brookfield is working with CBL to develop the area into a town center with many uses. Mr. Ertl indicated that the current situation makes in-person shopping difficult, but in the long-term, additional retail development is likely to be introduced at Brookfield Square Mall. Ms. Gale mentioned that the Orthopaedic Associates of Wisconsin plans to develop a parcel on the Brookfield Square campus. Mr. Ertl confirmed that construction for the facility is anticipated to begin in 2021 on a parcel south of the mall between the Brookfield Conference Center and the Movie Tavern. Mr. Muhs stated that considering a mobility hub near Brookfield Square Mall makes sense given that the transformation at Brookfield Square Mall includes greater land use density, which is anticipated to generate more ridership and more employees who rely on transit, including those who will require first and last mile transportation solutions to reach their final destination.
3. Mr. Engelking referenced a potential alternative to help address low ridership on Waukesha County Transit's commuter bus routes due to the pandemic, which would include coordinating with the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) to identify potential service efficiencies. This option could include adding a potential stop at State Fair Park on Routes 901, 904, and 905. In addition, there may be opportunities to analyze potential partnerships with Washington County to utilize the Watertown Plank Park-Ride Lot as a transfer point between Route 79, the Menomonee Falls Flyer,

and the Washington County Commuter Express, or options to extend the MCTS Route 79 to the Village of Germantown.

4. In relation to the potential alternative to provide countywide shared-ride taxi service, Ms. Gale asked if it would be available to the general public and require one-day advance reservations. Mr. Muhs responded that the shared-ride taxi service envisioned would operate similar to Ozaukee County and Washington County Shared-Ride Taxi, which require advance scheduling. Mr. Muhs indicated that the potential alternative to provide countywide shared-ride taxi service will consider how a potential new service would interact with existing senior taxi services in Waukesha County. Mr. Grosch asked what local subsidies are provided by Ozaukee County and Washington County to support the shared-ride taxi services. Mr. Muhs responded that for Washington County, fares cover approximately 15 percent of the operating expenses for transit services with the remaining 85 percent of funding provided by Federal, State, and Local dollars. By comparison, fares from the Ozaukee County Commuter Express and Shared-Ride Taxi cover approximately 25 percent of the cost, with the remaining 75 percent of the operation costs covered by Federal, State, and Local funds. Mr. Muhs noted that it is anticipated that a countywide shared-ride taxi service would require a higher local share from Waukesha County. Mr. Grosch asked how many counties in Wisconsin provide Shared-Ride Taxi Service. Mr. Engelking responded that there are many in the state and noted that Ozaukee County Shared-Ride Taxi and Washington County Shared-Ride Taxi have discussed a potential merger of taxi services.

[Secretary's note: Following the Advisory Committee meeting, Ms. Sarnecki emailed a statewide map of transit services (available [here](#)), including the 39 shared-ride taxi systems in Wisconsin.]

5. In reference to the potential alternative for both Waukesha Metro Transit and Waukesha County Transit to leverage faith-based programs to serve transit needs, Ms. Payne indicated that the Waukesha County Business Alliance has explored options to replicate the Joseph Project model. Ms. Payne noted that the job placement activities provided by the Joseph Project, such as employee screening, job coaching, and training, are beyond the scope of a typical transit provider. Ms. Payne offered to share information that the Waukesha County Business Alliance has gathered with Commission staff to assist with developing the potential alternative.

[Secretary's note: On July 20, 2020, Commission staff and Mr. Engelking discussed the faith-based transportation alternative with Ms. Payne, receiving information about operations for the Joseph Project and past discussions with employers in Waukesha County that were interested in expanding the program to other churches. Ms. Payne connected Commission staff to an employer that expressed interest in pursuing a similar model and Commission staff followed up with no reply provided.]

6. In reference to the potential alternative for both Waukesha Metro Transit and Waukesha County Transit to combine paratransit service and the RideLine program, Ms. Check Smith stated that she would be interested in how it might work. Mr. Engelking responded that there are examples of how the services might be combined in the Stevens Point area and the Sheboygan area.

[Secretary's note: On July 30, 2020, Commission staff and Mr. Engelking discussed the potential alternative to combine paratransit services with the RideLine program with Ms. Check Smith and Mr. Glasgow. Mr. Engelking noted that Portage County (where Stevens Point is

located) has been operating combined services for approximately five years, which could serve as an example. It was determined that Commission staff would compare Request for Proposals from the City of Waukesha's paratransit program and the RideLine program. The Transit Development Plan will describe who might manage the service, costs, and feasibility as part of Chapter 5, Transit Service Alternatives.]

7. Ms. Sarnecki noted that Commission staff are developing a bus stop inventory in response to the request from the Advisory Committee to consider pedestrian access to and from bus stops as part of the performance evaluation, and any recommended improvements will be considered as part of the alternatives analysis in the Transit Development Plan. Mr. Ertl indicated that the findings from the bus stop inventory could be included in a general recommendations section, referencing any needed infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks and other bus stop amenities. Mr. Ertl requested that the Town of Brookfield be involved in any future discussions related to transit access and walkability along Bluemound Road. Ms. Pandazi stated that she agreed that additional communities should be involved in discussions related to walkability, including the City of Waukesha, the Village of Waukesha, and the Town of Brookfield. Ms. Pandazi indicated that the City of Waukesha is analyzing pedestrian access and offered to share the findings. Mr. Muhs stated that the bus stop inventory will consider access to and from each bus stop and that Federal funds are available to cover 80 percent of the cost of bus stop and associated pedestrian improvements. Mr. Muhs indicated that the bus stop inventory could inform future pedestrian accessibility studies and guidance and that there have been discussions with the Chairman of the Town of Brookfield regarding transit access and pedestrian accommodations.

[Secretary's note:

After the meeting, Ms. Pandazi shared with Commission staff information related to the City of Waukesha's process of creating a plan to prioritize filling in missing sidewalk sections, including a map of locations that are missing sidewalks.]

DISCUSSION OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE WAUKESHA AREA TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. Muhs indicated that a meeting date has not been set but that Commission staff will start analyzing the alternatives and set a meeting date when information is available to share with the Advisory Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on a motion by Ms. Payne and seconded by Mr. Ertl and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer B. Sarnecki
Recording Secretary