

Minutes of Sixth Meeting

**MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT
PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

DATE: October 11, 2010

TIME: 1:30 p.m.

PLACE: Milwaukee County Transit System
Administration Facility
First Floor Conference Room
1942 N. 17th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53205

Committee Members Present

Peter W. Beitzel Vice President, International Trade,
Transportation, and Business Development, Metropolitan
Milwaukee Association of Commerce
Daniel A. Boehm Director of Administration,
(representing Anita Gulotta-Connelly) Milwaukee County Transit System
Rodney A. Clark Director, Bureau of Transit and Local Roads,
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Gary Portenier Program Planning Coordinator,
Milwaukee County Department on Aging
Peggy Schulz Citizen Member
Nancy Senn Transportation Planning Manager, Milwaukee County
Department of Transportation and Public Works
Alan Simonis President, Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 998

Staff Present

Kenneth R. Yunker Executive Director, Southeastern Wisconsin
Regional Planning Commission
Lamar Amos-Sikora Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 998
Albert A. Beck Principal Planner, Southeastern Wisconsin
Regional Planning Commission
Monique Currie Program Manager, Bureau of Transit, Local Roads,
Railroads & Harbors, Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Sonia Dubielzig Senior Planner, Southeastern Wisconsin
Regional Planning Commission
Mark McComb Schedule and Planning Division,
Milwaukee County Transit System
Fran Musci Schedule and Planning Division,
Milwaukee County Transit System
Kerry Thomas Executive Director, Transit NOW
Thomas V. Winter Manager of Planning,
Milwaukee County Transit System

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Yunker called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. He introduced himself and asked those present to introduce themselves. He indicated that roll call would be taken through the circulation of a sign-in sheet.

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 19, 2008 MEETING

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Simonis and seconded by Mr. Boehm. The motion to approve the minutes was carried unanimously by the Committee.

REVIEW OF SEWRPC DOCUMENT, “*RECORD OF PUBLIC COMMENTS, MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PLAN, VOLUME 2: ALTERNATIVE IMPROVEMENT PLANS--COMMENTS RECEIVED JANUARY 9 THROUGH MARCH 16, 2009*”

Mr. Yunker introduced the record of public comments from the second set of public informational meetings held in January 2009 on the alternative transit service improvement plans. He explained that the document contains a summary of all the comments received, as well as a copy of every comment submitted via letter, e-mail, the Commission website for the transit system development plan, and comment forms completed at public informational meetings. Comments were also provided orally to a court reporter at the public informational meetings. The document also included copies of attendance records at the public informational meetings, newspaper articles and editorials concerning the Milwaukee County Transit System Development Plan, documentation of the methods used to announce the four public informational meetings, and informational materials distributed at those meetings. He indicated the document was being provided to the Committee as a factual summary for the public meetings and the comments generated by them and that responses to the comments received had been included in the first section of Chapter VII. He stated that no action was needed on the document by the Committee.

Mr. Yunker explained that following the January 2009 public informational meetings, the completion of the Milwaukee County Transit System Development Plan was postponed while the Commission staff worked with Milwaukee County staff and other groups on State legislation authorizing a permanent source of dedicated funding for public transit in Southeastern Wisconsin. However, dedicated funding failed to be approved during preparation of the 2009-2011 State budget, or during the regular spring 2010 session of the Wisconsin Legislature. He noted that the plan has been prepared identifying a desirable program of transit system improvement and expansion over the next five years, and it has been concluded that dedicated funding for the Milwaukee County Transit System will be essential to implementing the plan. In the absence of dedicated funding, it has been concluded that continued service reductions and fare increases beyond the rate of inflation will be necessary.

Mr. Boehm noted that when the committee reviewed the report, they would see information on, and comments related to, the Fondy-National Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project that was being advanced for Federal funding by Milwaukee County. He explained that Milwaukee County had requested that the Commission partner with the County and use the public informational meetings for both the transit plan and the proposed Milwaukee County BRT project, thereby meeting public participation requirements for both. He noted that Milwaukee County and transit system staff distributed materials and answered questions on the BRT project at the meetings. Mr. Yunker stated that it was an efficient way of soliciting comments on both issues at the same time.

REVIEW OF PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF CHAPTER VII, “RECOMMENDED TRANSIT SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PLAN”, OF SEWRPC COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PLANNING REPORT NO. 279, “MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PLAN”

Mr. Yunker stated that Chapter VII presented the recommended plan of transit improvements for the Milwaukee County Transit System. He noted that a summary presentation on the recommended plan had been distributed along with Chapter VII and led the Committee through a review of the presentation before discussing the chapter, asking for comments and questions from the Committee as he went through the documents. During the review of the presentation and the chapter, the following questions were raised and comments made by Committee members:

1. Mr. Yunker stated that the first part of the chapter described the public informational meetings and other outreach efforts that were undertaken for the alternative transit service improvement plans in early 2009, and summarized the significant comments received on the alternatives and the staff responses. Referring to the text on page three, Ms. Schulz indicated she was concerned that the total number of comments received (159) and the number expressing support for the transit system in general (20) might be interpreted as indicating there was only limited interest in the transit system and minimize the importance of the transit development plan. Mr. Yunker responded that the text would be revised to more clearly indicate that the numbers reflected comments received only during the public comment period in early 2009.

[Secretary’s Note: The fourth sentence in the last paragraph on page 2 was revised to include the phrase “159 comments were submitted during the three-month public comment period from late January through mid March 2009...”]

2. Referring to the text on page 11 which indicated there would be a 22 percent expansion in service under the recommended plan, Mr. Clark asked if staff had compared the systemwide service level under the plan with the service levels for previous years. Mr. Beck responded that with the recommended improvements, service would be restored to about the year 2000 level. Mr. Yunker indicated this information would be added to the text on page 11.

[Secretary’s Note: The following text was added at the end of the third sentence in the second full paragraph on page 11: “and would restore service levels to about 1 percent under those for the year 2000.”]

3. Referring to the text on page 16 discussing the potential to upgrade express bus service to BRT service in the future, Mr. Clark stated that the express bus services could benefit from some of the enhancements proposed for BRT service including signal prioritization, reserved lanes, channelization, and special signage. He suggested that the text should identify these for the express bus as well. He also questioned if Milwaukee County would be responsible for paying the costs associated with signal enhancements, intersection improvements, and other actions as the City of Milwaukee or the State have traditionally funded such costs. He noted that State staff may be hindered somewhat in the assistance it can provide in these areas as he believed that the State Facilities Development Manual needed to be updated in the areas dealing with transit-oriented highway design. Mr. Yunker stated that the costs would likely be distributed among the City, County, and State, and that staff would look into this.

[Secretary’s Note: The following sentence was added after the last sentence in the second paragraph on page 16: “The costs associated with improvements to the arterial streets system may

be expected to be shared among the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, and the State.”]

4. Mr. Portenier noted that the discussion of the forecasts of ridership and costs for the recommended service improvements at the end of the chapter was for the all of the recommended improvements. He noted that public officials may want to implement only some of the improvements and asked if the ridership and costs could be identified for each improvement. In response, Mr. Yunker stated that the vehicle hours of service for each recommended improvement had been identified in Table 7-1 on page 12a of the chapter, and that vehicle hours was a good indicator of how the costs of the plan could be distributed among the proposed improvements.
5. Referring to the discussion of the need for dedicated funding on pages 20 and 21, Mr. Amos-Sikora asked what service improvements and expansion could be accomplished within the existing transit funding available to Milwaukee County. Mr. Yunker stated that with existing funding the recommended service improvements and expansion would not occur, and service reductions would continue to be necessary. Mr. Amos-Sikora then asked if it would be possible with the proposed 0.5 percent sales tax to expand service to levels which existed prior to the year 2000. Mr. Yunker noted that the plan concluded that a 0.5 percent sales tax would be sufficient to implement the plan and restore service levels approximately to those which existed in the year 2000. Mr. Boehm stated that the recommended plan provides the County with a list of possible service improvements and if the identified sales tax rate generates too little funding, the County can choose not to implement parts of the plan. Mr. Boehm noted the funding assumptions identified in Table 7-2.
6. Ms Schultz asked whether the plan should identify priorities for implementing the recommended service improvements. Mr. Yunker suggested that priorities should be determined by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors. He stated that going beyond the broad framework of the plan’s recommendations could impede plan endorsement and implementation.
7. Ms Currie and Ms. Thomas asked questions on the Federal transit funds shown in the tables in Appendix E. Mr. Beck stated that the fluctuating levels of Federal funds shown in Table E-1 reflected the use of the County’s limited allocation of Federal formula funds in some years for the purchase of buses for fleet replacement and expansion which reduced the amount of Federal funds that could be put toward maintenance costs. He also stated that the 198 buses to be purchased with Federal funds as shown in Table E-2 included the buses which the County purchased or has on order in 2009 and 2010.

There being no further discussion, a motion to approve the preliminary draft of Chapter VII as amended was made by Mr. Beitzel, seconded by Mr. Boehm, and carried unanimously by the Committee.

REVIEW OF PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF CHAPTER VIII, “SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS”, OF SEWRPC COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PLANNING REPORT NO. 279, “MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PLAN”

A copy of Chapter VIII, “Summary and Conclusions,” of the study report was distributed to all Committee members present at the meeting. Mr. Yunker stated that the chapter was largely a compilation of the summary sections from Chapters II through VII of the report and the two study newsletters and did

not present any new material. He indicated that staff would contact each Committee member via email to obtain their comments on, and approval of, the chapter.

NEXT STEPS

Mr. Yunker stated that a draft of the minutes for the current meeting would be sent to committee members with approval obtained either through return of a postcard or via email. He also noted that staff would email each member a draft of a summary brochure for the study for their review and comment. He indicated that no more Committee meetings should be necessary and the work of the Committee on preparing the Country transit system development plan was essentially finished. Publication of the final report was expected to be completed before the end of the year after which it would be distributed to Committee members and to County officials. He thanked the Committee members for their time and effort in participating in the study.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Albert A. Beck
Acting Secretary