

Minutes of the Fifth Meeting

THE WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Date: October 16, 2013
Time: 9:30 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 249
Washington County Highway Department
900 Lang Street
West Bend, WI

Advisory Committee Members Present

Lisa Alves (alternate to Mike Hermann)..... Manager, Hartford City Taxi
R.J. Bast Director of Operations, GoRiteway Transportation Group
Operator, Washington County Commuter Express
John Bloor.....Executive Director, The Threshold, Inc.
Daniel R. Goetz..... Supervisor, Washington County Board
Chairperson, Washington County Board of Supervisors Transportation Committee
Brydie HillExecutive Director, Interfaith Caregivers of Washington County
Steve Johnson.....President, Specialized Transportation Services, Inc.
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
Steve Schmeling..... Manager, City of West Bend Vehicle Maintenance Department
Joshua Schoemann Administrator, Village of Richfield
Daniel W. Stoffel Supervisor, Washington County Board
Commissioner, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
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
Karen SchmiechenUrban Planning Analyst, Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Joseph Steier, III Transit Manager, Washington County Highway Department
Joy L. TarkowskiManager, Washington County Shared-Ride Taxi,
Specialized Transportation Services, Inc.
Herbert J. TenniesChairman, Washington County Board
Michelle WagnerConsultant,
Washington County Highway Department & Aging and Disability Resource Center of Washington

Staff Present

Kenneth R. Yunker Executive Director, SEWRPC
Ann Dee AllenSenior Public Involvement and Outreach Specialist, SEWRPC
C Terrence Anderson Planner, SEWRPC
Eric D. Lynde.....Principle Planner, SEWRPC
Kevin J. MuhsSenior 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 JULY 24, 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 July 24th, 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 PRELIMINARY 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, consideration 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 chapter with the Committee. Mr. Yunker explained to the Committee that Chapter V is based on the information presented during the previous Advisory Committee meeting on July 24th, 2013, but includes more detail and a few new analyses. Mr. Muhs explained that this chapter discusses potential service alternatives for Washington County to consider implementing as part of the Washington County Transit System, in an effort to improve services for County residents and increase accessibility to a number of locations in counties adjacent to Washington County. Mr. Muhs continued that the presented alternatives also seek to improve the performance of the Washington County Transit System in response to the performance evaluation completed in Chapter IV of this report, and in response to comments and ideas received from the Advisory Committee for this planning effort. Mr. Muhs noted that this chapter includes alternatives for both fixed-route bus and shared-ride taxi service.

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

1. Mr. Stoffel asked what assumptions were made in calculating estimates of future ridership on the Washington County Commuter Express (WCCE). Mr. Muhs indicated that the ridership estimates for the "No Changes" service alternative are based on the decreased ridership in 2013 on the WCCE, an expectation of slight ridership growth each year, and a reduction in ridership due to the fare increases in 2016 and 2019 that are assumed as part of the ridership estimates. Mr. Wondra noted that he thinks the drop in ridership is a delayed response to the 2012 fare increase.
2. Ms. Schmeichen asked whether the construction work on the Zoo Interchange is considered as part of the ridership estimates for the Medical Center route for the WCCE. Mr. Muhs responded that ridership is expected to increase on the existing Medical Center route due to construction, but that this expectation is not included in the ridership estimates shown in Chapter V. Mr. Yunker noted that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has traditionally provided financial assistance for improved/expanded transit services during major interstate reconstruction projects, typically by providing funding to operate additional transit service. Mr. Wondra noted that he is in talks with WisDOT about offering reduced fares for riders of the WCCE during reconstruction of the Zoo Interchange.

3. Mr. Yunker noted that Commission staff were waiting for information from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) and General Mitchell International Airport to assist in calculating ridership estimates for WCCE services to those destinations, and that the County funding indicated in Tables 5-3 and 5-5 would only decrease once the fare revenue from the expected ridership was included in each table.
4. During the discussion of extending WCCE service to UWM's main campus, Mr. Stoffel asked if any students currently commuting from Washington County were utilizing the Ozaukee County Express bus service to access UWM. Mr. Muhs indicated that recent transit passenger surveys didn't show that any individuals were making that trip.
5. Regarding the creation of a service to General Mitchell International Airport (GMIA), Mr. Yunker noted that the GMIA Amtrak station is heavily used, but less than two percent of those Amtrak passengers use it to connect to GMIA.

Mr. Goetz noted that Lamers Connect provides an intercity bus that stops at the airport once a day and could provide service to the airport for Washington County residents if Lamers Connect were to stop at the Richfield Park and Ride lot. Mr. Yunker indicated that additional text would be added to the chapter to reflect this possibility.

6. While discussing potential service to Kohl's Department Store's Corporate Headquarters in Menomonee Falls, Mr. Stoffel asked how many trips it would take to create a service that would be useful to potential passengers. Mr. Muhs responded that the cost estimates shown in Chapter V for this alternative assume there will be two southbound trips in the morning and three northbound trips in the evening, but that he will be discussing work schedules with Kohl's to determine what may be most effective. Mr. Muhs noted that it is important to provide enough service in the evening to account for workers staying later than normal work hours, and that the chapter will be revised as needed following discussions with Kohl's.

Ms. Schmeichen stated that given that Kohl's has limited capacity in their existing on-site parking facilities, they may be interested in working with the County on a potential transit service.

Mr. Bast remarked that the service may be easier to provide as part of an existing route once the Kohl's facility moves to its new location, closer to USH 45.

Mr. Steier noted that any service to Kohl's must provide access to more destinations, or it would be considered a charter and therefore ineligible for Federal funding. Mr. Muhs responded that the potential service would also serve the businesses near the Kohl's offices.

7. In regards to a possible new service to Mayfair Mall, Mr. Stoffel inquired as to what type of ridership is anticipated to use the service. Mr. Muhs responded that he anticipates the ridership to be primarily employees of the Mall's tenants and nearby office buildings, rather than shoppers. Ms. Wagner suggested that a survey could help refine the ridership projections, but that Mayfair Mall was previously served by the WCCE and only two riders used the Mall's stop each day. Mr. Yunker noted that Commission staff would discuss this alternative with County staff, particularly with respect to expected ridership, with any necessary revisions noted in a revised draft of the chapter.

Mr. Stoffel noted that any additional travel time required on the Medical Center Route to provide service to Mayfair Mall would cause the service schedule to be adjusted, with each run leaving the Paradise Park & Ride Lot earlier.

8. While discussing the potential direct service connecting Hartford and Slinger to downtown Milwaukee, Mr. Goetz asked if there will be an impact on the Lannon Rd. Park and Ride lot. Mr. Muhs noted that the Lannon Park and Ride is not expected to be affected by this service, as it is expected that any existing WCCE riders that would use the new service currently park in the Richfield Park and Ride lot. Mr. Yunker indicated that a slight increase in demand for spaces in the Lannon Rd. Park and Ride lot could be expected if this potential service is implemented, due to the increased service frequency at the Lannon Park and Ride lot. He indicated that a discussion of that possibility will be added to the text of the chapter.

Ms. Wagner suggested that if a direct service were to operate between Hartford and Milwaukee, it could serve the Richfield Park and Ride lot, and the existing WCCE services from West Bend could serve the newly-built Jackson Park and Ride lot.

Mr. Wondra inquired as to how ridership was projected for this alternative. Mr. Muhs explained that ridership numbers were estimated by comparing the number of West Bend area residents working in downtown Milwaukee to the number of Hartford area residents working in downtown Milwaukee.

9. Regarding the alternative that proposes providing a shuttle to link Hartford to the existing WCCE routes at the Richfield Park and Ride lot, Mr. Stoffel asked how the County would need to respond if a WCCE vehicle is at capacity and someone from a shuttle tries to board the WCCE vehicle. Mr. Muhs responded that this is an issue that will need to be addressed by the County, to ensure that every individual in a shuttle is able to board a motorcoach vehicle at the Richfield Park and Ride lot.
10. During the discussion of the potential reverse commute service alternatives, Mr. Yunker asked why the alternative for service via W. Fond du Lac Ave. had projected average County funding of \$85,300 if the potential service would be interlined with the existing WCCE Downtown Route. Mr. Muhs responded that two runs would need to start in downtown Milwaukee, as the first morning run of the existing WCCE Downtown Route would arrive at the Germantown Industrial Park (on its return trip) too late to provide the timing required. Mr. Yunker noted that the proposed interlining will be explained in more detail in the revised text.
11. In regards to providing service between West Bend and Fond du Lac, Mr. Wondra noted that it might not be possible to use CMAQ funds to start the service. Mr. Yunker indicated that because part of the potential service to Fond du Lac would travel outside existing or historic air quality nonattainment areas, the service would likely not be eligible.

Mr. Stoffel noted that most of the destinations proposed as part of the potential service to Fond du Lac are on the east side of the city, so it may make more sense for the service to travel on USH 45. Mr. Muhs responded that it may be desirable to connect with the Fond du Lac Transit Station as intended on the current route, which could make traveling on USH 41 the quicker route.

Mr. Wondra noted that it would be a good idea to reach out to Marian College and other educational institutions in Fond du Lac to gauge potential ridership numbers.

Mr. Schoeman inquired as to whether it would make sense to consider connecting Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC) in West Bend to MPTC in Fond du Lac. Mr. Muhs indicated that the County could consider that as part of this service, as the proposed route travels past MPTC's West Bend campus.

Mr. Yunker noted that funds being used in Washington County come from funds designated for the Milwaukee Urbanized Area, so a service to Fond du Lac could require exploring potential funding implications as it does not serve the Milwaukee Urbanized Area.

In response to a question by Mr. Bast, Mr. Muhs indicated that the service would be required to use vehicles accessible to people with disabilities.

Mr. Stoffel asked if the service is proposed to run during the summer, while the educational institutions it serves would not be in session. Mr. Muhs indicated that the existing cost estimate for the service in Chapter V assumes that the service will run year-round, but that would not be necessary.

[Secretary's Note: Following the meeting, St. Mary's Springs Academy and Winnebago Lutheran Academy indicated to County staff that it was unlikely that many students from their schools would ride the potential service. In response to this information, changes were made to the alternative, and these changes are shown in the revised chapter.]

12. During the discussion of the potential merger of the Washington County Shared-Ride Taxi with the West Bend Taxi and the Hartford City Taxi, Mr. Stoffel asked whether the budget assumes any contributions from local governments. Mr. Muhs indicated that it did not. Mr. Stoffel noted that many areas of the County may request the same level of service as West Bend and Hartford, and not just those areas identified as possibilities in Chapter V. Mr. Muhs indicated that the assumption that certain municipalities in the County may justify a higher level of service and not others is based on the standards in Chapter III which encourage shared-ride taxi service to provide a response time of 45 minutes or less in urban areas, and therefore the municipalities listed in Chapter V represent the more urban parts of the County. Mr. Yunker noted that it could be added to the chapter that other municipalities may request a higher level of service.

Mr. Stoffel and Ms. Hill requested that the cost of a higher level of service within each village be added to the Chapter.

Mr. Johnson asked why projected revenue vehicle miles are higher under the "Reduced Level of Service" alternative than under the "Existing Level of Service" alternative. Mr. Muhs indicated that was an error and Table 5-17 will be revised.

13. While discussing the potential merger of the Ozaukee County and Washington County shared-ride taxi services, Ms. Olson noted that persons with disabilities will make up a high percentage of the ridership and as a result, it may cost more to provide this service. Mr. Muhs noted that the chapter assumed the same ratio of persons with disabilities as the current service. Mr. Stoffel inquired if Table 5-18 included any administrative cost savings as a result of merging the Ozaukee County and Washington County shared-ride taxi services. Mr. Muhs responded that only operating cost are shown, but that there may be administrative efficiencies as a result of the merger.

14. Commenting on the alternative that proposes extending the County Shared-Ride Taxi's service hours, Ms. Olson indicated that she didn't believe that there would be significant demand from medical centers for the later service hours. Mr. Stoffel expressed concerns that late night passengers may be unruly, and that the County would need to consider that if it moved forward with this alternative.

[Secretary's Note: Following the meeting, additional feedback was received from Advisory Committee members regarding this service alternative. Per their requests, changes were made to the text of the chapter.]

15. Mr. Stoffel requested that additional alternatives be added to the chapter that would keep the level of County operating assistance flat. Mr. Yunker indicated that Commission staff would revise the chapter to include alternatives that would not rely on additional County funding greater than the amount provided in 2012.
16. Ms. Hill encouraged Commission staff to consider possible changes in technology or fares, such as an online reservation system for the Shared-Ride Taxi or a monthly pass for the Commuter Express. Mr. Yunker indicated that Commission staff would discuss possible changes with County staff and revise the chapter as needed.
17. Mr. Johnson asked when the recommendations that result from this plan would go into effect. Mr. Yunker noted that any recommendations that are published in the plan are advisory to the County and other units of government, and that any elements of the plan that the County chooses to pursue would occur as part of the budget process for 2015, at the earliest. He also indicated that because the County transit services are operated by a private operator under contract with the County, some service changes might need to wait until the contract is rebid for 2016.

Noting that the chapter would be revised as directed by the Advisory Committee, Mr. Stoffel sought tentative approval of Chapter V. A motion for tentative approval of Chapter V was made by Mr. Goetz, seconded by Ms. Olson, and approved unanimously by the Advisory Committee.

[Secretary's Note: A revised draft of Chapter V, with revisions to the text and tables highlighted, will be distributed to Advisory Committee members prior to the sixth Advisory Committee meeting.]

NEXT MEETING OF THE WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. Yunker stated that Commission staff would provide the minutes of the meeting, which would include the revisions to Chapter V requested by the committee, and preliminary drafts of the public materials to be used at a series of public meetings in early 2014 for the Committee's consideration at its next 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. Gundrum, seconded by Mr. Piotrowicz, and approved unanimously by the Advisory Committee at 10:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth R. Yunker
Recording Secretary

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