



---

## WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

---

### REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Room 412 East, State Capitol  
Madison, Wisconsin

October 9, 2008  
10:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

[The following is a summary of the October 9, 2008 meeting of the Special Committee on Regional Transportation Authority. The file copy of this summary has appended to it a copy of each document prepared for or submitted to the committee during the meeting. A digital recording of the meeting is available on our Web site at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc>.]

---

#### Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Ott called the meeting to order. The roll was called and it was determined that a quorum was present. The minutes from the August and September meetings of the committee were approved.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Rep. Al Ott, Chair; Sen. Judy Robson, Vice Chair; Reps. Jeff Stone, Barbara Toles and Robin Vos; Sen. John Lehman; and Public Members Larry Arft, Len Brandrup, Gary Becker, Gerald Derr, Brett Geboy, Dick Granchalek, Anita Gulotta-Connelly, Tim Hanna, Richard Johnson, Chuck Kamp, Scott McDonell, Delora Newton, Brian Ohm, Fritz Ruf, Dick Wagner, and Tom Walker.

COUNCIL STAFF PRESENT: Scott Grosz and Larry Konopacki, Staff Attorneys.

APPEARANCES: John Koskinen, Division Administrator/Chief Economist, Division of Research and Policy, and Paul Ziegler, Team Leader, Sales and Property Tax Policy Team, Department of Revenue (DOR); and Scott Bernstein, President, Center for Neighborhood Technology.

#### Presentations by Invited Speakers

[Note: PowerPoint presentations and other documents referred to by the speakers are posted on the committee's Internet site.]

**John Koskinen, Division Administrator/Chief Economist, Division of Research and Policy and Paul Ziegler, Team Leader, Sales and Property Tax Policy Team, DOR.**

Mr. Koskinen and Mr. Zeigler presented information to the committee on local tax options including property tax and tax incremental finance, sales tax, local income tax, and stadium taxes. They described the general guiding principles in crafting tax policy, explained current and historical local taxes in Wisconsin, and some of the pros and cons of certain types of taxes. During their presentation, Mr. Koskinen and Mr. Zeigler responded to questions from committee members regarding a variety of issues such as the extent of current sales tax data collection by DOR, the ability of DOR to implement sales tax on a small geographical area, and the administrative changes necessary to change tax collection methods.

**Scott Bernstein, President, Center for Neighborhood Technology**

Mr. Bernstein spoke about the economic benefits of transit, including transit oriented development, attracting business, the effect of transit on a household budget, the impact of transit on public transportation budgets, and the need for transportation costs to be factored into real estate credit analysis. Mr. Bernstein provided interesting insights into how transportation costs can impact the exposure of people to economic downturns like the one the country is currently facing. His presentation compared economic factors between different regions within the state and cities in other states. During his presentation, Mr. Bernstein responded to questions from members of the committee.

**Discussion of Committee Assignment**

Prior to the presentation by Mr. Bernstein, Chair Ott asked the three committee members who work for area chambers of commerce to provide their comments on the economic benefit of transit in their areas.

Following the presentations by the invited speakers, the committee reviewed Memo No. 1 and WLC: 0063/P1 to allow staff to clarify any questions that members had about the provisions contained in the draft legislation. Chair Ott also invited members to point out areas of concern about the bill that they would like to discuss at the next committee meeting. Issues identified included provisions related to the role of counties, the geographical scope of regional transportation authorities, population thresholds, feasibility studies, tax rate uniformity, and referendum requirements. Members also were asked to provide a summary of the issues that they would like addressed by the committee at the next meeting to staff by October 23, 2008.

**Other Business**

The committee discussed whether to visit the Milwaukee County Transit System to learn about challenges that system is facing. Instead, the committee agreed to hear from a speaker about these issues.

### **Plans for Future Meetings**

The next meeting of the Special Committee will be *Thursday, November 13, 2008, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 412 East, State Capitol, Madison.* A tentative additional meeting date is December 11, 2008.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

LAK:ksm