

Memorandum

TO: Members of the Legislative Council Special Committee on Regional Transportation Authority

FROM: David Trowbridge, Madison Transport 2020 Project Manager

DATE: September, 30, 2008

RE: Madison/Dane County Transport 2020 Commuter Rail Project

Please see below, a brief summary of the Transport 2020 project and its current status, per your request:

- On June 16, 2008, the City of Madison, Dane County, and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) submitted a formal request to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to initiate preliminary engineering (PE) for the proposed Transport 2020 project. The project team has not been given any indication by FTA when they will act on this request.
- The City, County, and WisDOT comprise an Intergovernmental Partnership responsible for the planning and development of transportation improvements in the Transport 2020 corridor connecting the City of Middleton, the University of Wisconsin campus, downtown Madison, and the area located just west of Sun Prairie.
- The City of Madison has acted as project manager for this phase of study.
- This request has been submitted after extensive coordination with staff at the FTA in Chicago as well as in Washington, DC. Technical methods and assumptions used to prepare the New Starts measures for Transport 2020 are in compliance with FTA's most recent guidance and New Starts reporting instructions.
- The purpose for implementing the Transport 2020 Locally Preferred Alternative is to improve the region's transportation system in anticipation of rapid population growth in Dane County (Dane County continues to grow rapidly, having added more new residents since the 2000 U.S. Census than any other Wisconsin county).
- Service characteristics: The Transport 2020 project consists of light diesel multiple unit (DMU) or hybrid commuter rail vehicles operating in the existing rail corridor running from the Highway 12/14 interchange in Middleton, through the Isthmus, to Reiner Road near Sun Prairie. The project is designed to serve many of metropolitan Madison's major employment, entertainment and shopping

- destinations, and complements the existing bus system. It includes 17 stations along a 16-mile alignment. In order to provide cost effective and frequent service in Madison's core, trains will operate on two overlapping routes, identified as the east branch and the west branch. The east branch operates from Reiner Road near Sun Prairie, through downtown Madison, to the Whitney Way/Hill Farms; the west branch runs from Middleton to Fair Oaks east of the Isthmus.
- The project was selected following an alternatives analysis process culminating in the selection of the Transport 2020 project as the investment that best addresses transportation needs in the railroad corridor. The alternatives analysis process considered numerous public transit system options, included light rail (operating in the street right-of-way), express bus service and bus rapid transit (BRT) service.
 - Rail service in the Transport 2020 corridor has significant support in the region, as evidenced by resolutions of the Dane County Board of Supervisors, City of Madison Common Council, the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (MPO), and the elected bodies of the City of Middleton and the Village of Shorewood Hills. Other support has been expressed by business groups; economic development interests; community leaders; and numerous other agencies and organizations. The project was adopted by the Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization on September 5, 2007.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any additional questions.

Thank you and best regards,

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