



City of Madison
Meeting Minutes - Draft
LONG RANGE METRO TRANSIT
PLANNING AD HOC COMMITTEE

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
www.cityofmadison.com

Monday, October 22, 2007

4:00 PM Madison Public Library, 201 W Mifflin St, Room #202

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Chair Opitz called the meeting to order at 4:13 PM.

Present: 9 - Durocher, White, Poulson, De Vos, Opitz, Heifetz, Wilberg, Clarke and Lunsway

Absent: 2 - Sanborn and Thomas

Excused: 1 - Rhodes Conway

2. PROPER MEETING NOTIFICATION

The meeting was properly noticed.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - 7.23.07

Heifetz moved to accept the minutes as written; DeVos seconded. DeVos pointed out that in item seven, the word acclamation was misspelled. That correction will be made. The motion passed.

5. 08230 Review Public Meeting Feedback

This item was discussed. Opitz described the different feedback documents. He suggested going through the feedback to then assign any follow up to subcommittees.

Gary Poulson was introduced. He is the newest member of this Committee. He is a member of the Transit and Parking Commission and a former Alder. He is a regular Metro rider.

Wilberg said the combined System Improvement/Increasing Ridership Subcommittee met and read out loud and tallied all the feedback into categories. They now have a sense of how many people commented on each feedback area. It is clear from the public comment that there is an issue with frequency and express service. White similar rankings for marketing feedback. The combined System Improvement/Increasing Ridership Subcommittee will discuss rankings at their next meeting and then come back to the full committee with recommendations. Clarke asked if the subcommittee members noticed anything that will help Metro's long-term financial stability. Wilberg said no, and that's why we have to balance public recommendations with committee and staff recommendations. White said better technology, greater frequency, and express service are the three things that will increase ridership. She saw those comments over and over. People want ease of use. Wilberg said simple things like putting routes on both sides of the sign can be easily and inexpensively done, and that would enhance ridership and boost revenue.

DeVos thinks people really were asking for more research and information about things. People want better information and want to be able to have informed policy decisions. An important role of this committee would be to promote the idea that research is needed and that it can help. Opitz asked for a clarifying example. DeVos said the idea of using hybrid buses rather than diesel is one example. We don't have the information to say which is the better bus for the future, so there needs to be research. Another issue is using small buses. There are plenty of good reasons for using big buses and also good reasons for using small buses sometimes. DeVos didn't think the issue has been settled, and felt it was something that needed more research. Kamp said the Cost Management Subcommittee had looked at the issue of small buses and larger buses. So as the Cost Management and Funding Subcommittees work through the public comments, it might be good to have subcommittees report back how often those comments were expressed and then weigh in on whether they have looked at those issues enough. They can recommend further study or say they feel it has been looked at enough. Each subcommittee can weigh in on where they recommend more research. DeVos felt that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) should be underwriting a research institute that would be doing the kind of research that Metro needs. As far as DeVos knows, WisDOT doesn't have a research arm like that. It seems like something the City should have available to utilize, but it's probably not something the City can help underwrite.

Opitz said those are things that can be taken up if the Cost Management and Funding Subcommittees combine. DeVos said cost management is a local issue compared to funding. Kamp said both look at a whole host of issues. Clarke said that when analyzing the feedback, it is good to see which topics come up most frequently. The Committee should be cautious because this is not a scientific survey. The Committee can use it to see if the public feels there are issues we

need to look at that haven't yet been considered. But the feedback shouldn't be treated as things the public thinks should be done. Kamp said also filter the feedback and see if the comments have been addressed or need to be further addressed. Poulson asked if the feedback period is over. We will still accept feedback, but the public meetings and the bulk of feedback has been received.

White highlighted some interesting feedback about co-marketing with other agencies and events. The Ride Guide being hard to use is the comment that came up the most, but keep in mind there weren't that many comments. There are some things that can be done fairly easily. Clarke said that's a way to think about the final report. Key recommendations will be about long-term financial stability. The Committee can also have a section on easily implemented recommendations based on public feedback to indicate they've been listening. Wilberg supported that. Opitz said subcommittees could look toward short, mid-range and long-term recommendations. A combined Cost Management/Funding Subcommittee will do a similar ranking to what Marketing and System Improvement/Increasing Ridership have done. All subcommittees can report back recommendations at the next meeting.

The group asked what other things they should be thinking about as they look forward to the final report. Clarke said the group is not going to resolve the issues in the time frame that has been given. However, the Committee can say they have identified that, for example, a more varied fleet would be a possible positive for the future. Metro is currently working toward that with a pilot of hybrids. The report can say what is happening. Metro is experimenting with demand/response and will implement that if it's successful. Here are some things that have been implemented and thank the public for the feedback. Here are some things that are being done as a pilot. Here are some longer-range things that are being pursued, like a Regional Transit Authority (RTA). Kamp said that would be helpful from a staff perspective. Lunsway said that this Committee is going to be making recommendations, not necessarily things that will get done. So the committee could recommend bringing in a consulting firm, even though there are funding issues.

DuRocher wanted to be careful of going on record that this committee is recommending consulting when we can use public feedback and expertise of the group. Lunsway said that this group doesn't have enough time to focus on the issues the way a consultant would. There is a lot of research to be done. DeVos suggested a research institute rather than a consultant. She wanted to have an on-going, existing research institute perform targeted research.

Clarke said it would be helpful to list the amount of funding needed for various areas to become financially stable. Then analyze how much various projects, such as working with American Family, helped with the budget. Do that kind of analysis for various areas and find out what kind of funding it would take to make a more sustainable system. DeVos said that's what the Funding Subcommittee should have been doing. Heifetz said that begs a definition of what is sustainable.

Kamp said one of the top funding issues for Metro is that state funding has gone from 42% to where it's falling in different amounts for different system tiers across the state. Overall it has fallen to about 35% of the budget. Seven percentage points are in the millions of dollars. Some of the solutions this Committee has

talked about would help, but they do not address the majority of that serious funding drop. It comes back to the RTA. State and Federal funding sources are sending a message that funding will not increase. For Metro to make up for fuel increases, state funding decreases, and other funding issues, the RTA is one way to make service sustainable and to also address the major issues of more core service, frequency, express, and expansion in the periphery. That will require an RTA. That is the pillar that will keep public transportation strong in Madison, in Wisconsin and federally. Various members agreed. DeVos said there are many parallels to transit and the University. The RTA is going so far, but transit can go farther than that. Opitz said some of that is out of Committee control. DeVos said it's not out of Committee control to recommend that state funding should not diminish, and RTA is only one way to do that.

6. COMBINING AND SCHEDULING SUBCOMMITTEES

It had been suggested that subcommittees be combined to have three rather than five subcommittees – Marketing, Cost Management/Funding, and System Improvement/Increasing Ridership. DeVos said she didn't like the idea of combining Funding and Cost Management subcommittees. Opitz said if they did not combine, the subcommittees would meet separately discussing similar topics. DeVos reminded the Committee that Funding was originally two different issues that were combined together into the Funding Subcommittee. She felt strongly that funding is not the same as cost management. DeVos said funding is also not the same thing as issues facing the Contracted Oversight Subcommittee (CSOS), and those combined meetings took up half a year of Funding Subcommittee meetings. DeVos wondered unless funding is the focus of a subcommittee, how can they make funding-based recommendations? Why are subcommittees being combined? Kamp said at recent meetings where there wasn't quorum, combining subcommittees was on the agenda. Because the meetings had to be cancelled, it was not discussed. As the Funding Subcommittee began to look at issues, it came up that contracts were out of date and funding formulas and allocation formulas were out of date. Those things were fully discussed at Funding Subcommittee, and there was some logic that if Metro was going to change how they allocate revenue and expenses, maintain a contingency reserve, which would affect all partners, they should bring those groups together on a working basis. DeVos said she thinks combining those two groups was a misuse of the committee.

DuRocher said it wasn't inherent in the committee to have a subcommittee structure. That was a decision made by the group early on that the way to make progress was to break up the work and get it done in subcommittees. As things developed, it was clear that System Improvements and Increasing Ridership groups were talking about some of the same things. It was in the interest of getting some work done to combine those to get to the ultimate goal of making recommendations. Opitz added that all the subcommittee meetings have been publicly noticed. The process has been working. The group now has to figure out the best way to go forward.

Poulson said that all the meetings are open to any subcommittee member. It makes sense to combine some of the similar topics in the subcommittees in order to get the work done in a timely fashion. White said she could see DeVos's concern that Funding and Cost Management are distinct groups. But there are also a limited number of people on the committee. In the interest of time it would be helpful to prioritize the charges of that group combined. If they find there are too many varied issues, they could split into separate subcommittees again.

Clarked moved to recommend creation of three subcommittees out of the five original; Wilberg seconded. Lunsway said the group should make a distinction between funding and cost management perhaps by having separate issue listings on the agenda for combined meetings. He felt there was still a lot of work to be done. There needs to be more information about what is happening nationally. There are consulting firms that can do things a committee cannot do. Lunsway still had unanswered questions about funding. He felt it was okay to combine the subcommittees as long as both topics are kept on the table.

Opitz said the effort with CSOS/Funding combined meetings was successful. DeVos said but as a Funding Subcommittee she didn't feel she needed to be

there. Heifetz said he initially felt that way but then learned a lot. There is a need to focus on short and long term funding and cost issues. DeVos said cost management is not a focus on long range local, regional, state and federal funding. Heifetz felt it was just a difference on the definition of funding.

A vote was taken and the motion carried. DeVos voted no.

This list of the next subcommittee meeting dates will be sent to all Committee members.

7. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

08231 Funding

This Report was Receive and Place On File

08232 Cost Management

This Report was Receive and Place On File

08233 System Improvement

This Report was Receive and Place On File

08236 Increasing Ridership

This Report was Receive and Place On File

08237 Marketing

This Report was Receive and Place On File

8. ADJOURNMENT

Clarke moved adjournment. Lunsway seconded. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 5:27 PM.