



EAST CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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*An Economic Development District and Metropolitan Planning Organization
Serving the East Central Wisconsin Region for over 30 years*

MEETING NOTICE

FOX CITIES AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY (RTA) STUDY COMMITTEE – WORKING COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, July 10th, 2006
TIME: 1:30 p.m.
PLACE: Menasha Public Library
440 First Street, Menasha
Company E Room (Lower Level)

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Election of a Chair and Vice Chair
3. Approval of the summary of proceedings from May 15th, 2006
4. Data Review
 - a. Urbanized Area/MPO
 - b. Valley Transit Fixed Routes
 - c. Paratransit Service Area
 - d. Low Income/Minority Populations
 - e. Land Use Characteristics
 - f. Long Range Plan Demographic Data/Projections
 - g. Valley Transit Funding Sources
 - h. Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois RTA Legislation Summaries
 - i. Taxing Mechanisms
5. Next Step and Meeting Date
6. Adjourn

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Fox Cities Area Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Study Committee – Working Committee
East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Menasha Public Library
Monday, May 15th, 2006

Committee Members Present:

Jerry Tate..... Outagamie County
Susan KappellValley Transit
Mike Marsden Town of Grand Chute
John Fink.....Winnebago County
Jill Gretzinger..... Easter Seals/ Fox Valley Advocacy Coalition
Dick Kendall..... Valley Transit Commissioner
Kathy GroatFox Cities Housing Coalition
Rod ClarkWisDOT
Greg Keil City of Menasha
Chuck KampValley Transit
Jason KakatschECWRPC
Melissa Kraemer BadtkeECWRPC

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Kakatsch and Mr. Kamp welcomed the committee to the meeting and began introductions.

2. Approval of the summary of proceedings from the March 22, 2006 meeting

Mr. Kakatsch asked the committee to review the summary of proceedings from the March 22, 2006 meeting. Mr. Kamp noted that under the Next Steps section of the summary of proceedings, it states that "Mr. Fowle stated that a small subcommittee could look into a few of the concerns brought up by the committee and they would report the results back to the larger committee." Mr. Kamp asked the working committee if results should be brought back to the larger committee or recommendations. The working committee agreed that recommendations were to be brought back to the larger committee and not results. With no other concerns, Mr. Kakatsch asked for a motion to approve the summary of proceedings from the meeting on March 22, 2006 with the necessary change. Mr. Fink made a motion to approve the summary of proceedings and Ms. Gretzinger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Kakatsch stated that he would make the necessary change.

3. Role of the Working Committee

Mr. Kamp stated that the role of the larger committee was noted in the minutes. Mr. Kamp affirmed that the role of the working committee is to work through the questions and the answers, develop some alternatives, and develop recommendations that would be brought back to the larger Regional Transit Authority Committee. Mr. Kakatsch acknowledged that the larger committee developed a smaller task force to examine the RTA concept and related information to develop recommendations to propose to the larger group. Mr. Kamp asked if the role of the committee was clear and all members agreed. However, Ms. Gretzinger asked if this working committee would just be looking at the Fox Cities region or potentially become involved in a statewide initiative. Mr. Kamp stated that the focus is the Fox Cities region and explained the reason that WisDOT is

Wisconsin, transportation taxes are obtained through gas taxes and registration fees, while local revenue is generated through property taxes. There will be a need for additional revenue sources in the future.

Mr. Kamp asked the committee if there were any questions. Mr. Kamp stated that if an RTA is something that we would like to pursue that it was Mr. Clark's suggestion that we not wait until 2013 to look into a RTA. Mr. Clark stated that Madison and Milwaukee are treated differently. They don't receive federal operating assistance. At the state level, they only receive what the legislator gives them, and this varies from year to year. Currently there is no growth at the federal and only 1%-2% from state aid and their costs are going up 4%-8% per year. The local share is a significant burden on the local tax payers and Madison and Milwaukee's issues are going to come earlier than 6 years, probably going to become more of an issue in 4 years. The Milwaukee and Madison transit systems can only raise fares so high before they undercut their mission. The Appleton Urbanized Area is not there yet.

Mr. Kendall questioned where does one go to find out what other municipalities and transit systems do to seek out other revenue sources? Do you plug that into a search engine on the internet? Do you have to make phone calls? Or are there publications? Mr. Kendall stated that if there was a metropolitan area with X thousands of people, what other creative methods are there for getting additional revenue sources and what are other similar sized locations doing? Where do you go to find that information? Mr. Clark stated that there have been a number of studies done at the state and regional level. RPCs have done studies to look at potential sources and how much they would raise in local revenues in a given area, whether that would be through a gas tax add-on or sales tax add-on, etc. If you are interested in pursuing that, Mr. Kakatsch confirmed that he would be able to look at some of those studies and create a list of potential revenues sources. Then this committee could examine the amount of revenue that could be raised from each of those sources. Mr. Kamp stated that he knew of two organizations that do those kinds of studies: Transportation Cooperative Research Board (TCRB) and the American Public Transit Association. Mr. Kamp stated that over half the local funding for transit systems across the country come either from property or sales taxes. Some variations of the sales tax include car rental fees or wheel taxes. Mr. Kakatsch stated that the Federal Transit Administration also has quite a bit of data. Mr. Kamp stated that on agenda item number five, Mr. Kamp and Mr. Kakatsch will be asking the committee what other information will be needed by the committee to formulate alternatives and form a recommendation.

Mr. Tate stated that Outagamie County's share for Valley Transit services of \$500,000 is a funding mechanism where the County participates in paratransit and they receive federal and state aid. Outagamie County participates in Valley Transit because they are getting more federal and state aids than they are putting into the program. If the federal and state aids are reduced dramatically, it may not make economic sense for them to participate, and they may decide not to participate. Mr. Kamp noted that several years ago, Winnebago County experienced the same thing and there is language in the Winnebago County contract that they stay at \$119,000. Mr. Kamp stated that if this scenario would arise with Outagamie County, a solution similar to the Winnebago County solution could be worked out.

Mr. Kakatsch asked Mr. Clark for an update on RTA discussions at the State level. Mr. Clark stated that there are several communities that are seriously examining RTA issues. Two examples are the Kenosha-Milwaukee-Racine Area and Dane County. These two areas are being driven by the consideration of building new rail transit operations, in

5. What information does this working committee need to make specific proposals/recommendations to the larger committee?

Mr. Kamp asked the committee what information is needed from WisDOT, Valley Transit, and ECWRPC for this working committee to make future recommendations to the larger RTA committee. Mr. Marsden asked to see how Valley Transit is currently funded. He would like to see a break down of how much of Valley Transit is funded by federal, state, local, etc. Mr. Marsden would also like to see an area map which shows the entire area that Valley Transit serves.

Ms. Groat asked if East Central and Valley Transit could look at different RTAs across the country and if they could also look at different financing mechanisms and who makes up the governing board. Ms. Groat would also like information on how these RTAs made up their governing boards. Mr. Kamp noted that he has already gathered information on RTAs from surrounding states including Michigan, Illinois, and Iowa. Mr. Kendall asked if East Central and Valley Transit could find examples of RTAs that went from a smaller transit authority to a regional transit authority. Mr. Kamp stated that Valley Transit had a study group that went to Michigan to study other RTAs and looked at different areas with different populations that have formed RTAs. Mr. Kamp stated that he will contact RTAs within Illinois and Iowa and have them send him a summary of the steps that they took to become a RTA.

Mr. Marsden asked if forming an RTA will require State legislation. Mr. Kamp stated that it would. Mr. Clark stated that all RTAs have enabling legislation and how they were created locally. Mr. Marsden asked Valley Transit and East Central to look into how the RTAs around the surrounding States generate revenue for the RTA. What is their primary revenue stream?

Ms. Groat stated that in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, articles noted that problem with public transit. In those articles it was addressed to possibly have a dollar amount added on to the vehicle registration. Ms. Groat asked if Mr. Clark knew where that came from. Mr. Clark stated that the only local revenue sources that are available are half percent sales tax and the wheel tax. There is a small increment that local municipalities can charge. Mr. Marsden stated that the wheel tax excludes all large trucks. Mr. Clark stated that it does not tax all of the users that use the highways. Ms. Gretzinger stated that it would however tax automobile users. Mr. Clark agreed that would most likely occur. Mr. Clark also noted that it would be hard to justify as a user fee.

Ms. Groat asked if there are areas that use the Visitors Bureau and Convention Center monies in some of these other areas. Mr. Marsden stated that there Visitors Bureau and Convention Center does not have any money available. Mr. Clark stated that there are three local revenue options available that can be created. Local stadium districts were created for a one time tax to provide additional income for Lambeau Field and Miller Park. There is also the Resort Area Tax which includes the Wisconsin Dells and Door County; this is similar to the room tax. Mr. Marsden stated that room taxes support the tourism efforts in the Valley, but they do not have the revenue option and do not produce enough revenue to support an RTA.

Mr. Keil noted that the Village of North Fond du Lac was thinking of forming a transportation utility a few years ago and asked if that had any bearing on an RTA. Mr. Clark explained that a transportation utility would still require a revenue source. It would change the way the stuff was treated under municipality compliance laws. You would still

6. Define a meeting schedule/timeline

Mr. Kakatsch and Mr. Kamp stated they would provide the committee with the necessary information which was discussed. Mr. Kamp noted that 4-6 weeks would be when the next meeting could occur. Mr. Marsden stated he would like to see the meeting held in two months. Mr. Kendall asked how soon the information could be available. Mr. Kendall stated that if we can get the information in 6 weeks, let's keep this schedule on target. Mr. Kamp asked if we could pencil in a date for the next meeting, such as early July. Mr. Kamp asked if Monday, July 10th at 1:30 p.m. at the Menasha Public Library would accommodate everyone. Mr. Kamp stated that if not all of the information is ready; the meeting will be pushed back. The subcommittee stated that they would like to see the meeting place moved around the transit service area over time.

7. Other Business

Mr. Kakatsch asked the committee if there was any other business. There was no other business.

8. Adjourn

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.