

MINUTES OF THE EIGHTEENTH MEETING

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

DATE: May 5, 2008
TIME: 9:00 a.m.
PLACE: Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Commissioner’s Conference Room
W239 N1812 Rockwood Drive
Waukesha, WI
(Teleconference Meeting)

Board Members

Karl Ostby, Chairman Kenosha County Representative
Len Brandrup City of Kenosha Representative
David Eberle Racine County Representative
Sharon Robinson City of Milwaukee Representative
Julia Taylor Governor’s Representative from City of Milwaukee
George A. Torres Milwaukee County Representative

Board Members Excused

Joseph “Jody” Karls City of Racine Representative

Staff Members

Philip C. Evenson Executive Director, SEWRPC
Kenneth R. Yunker Deputy Director, SEWRPC
Albert A. Beck Principal Planner, SEWRPC

Consultant Team (Transit Advocacy and Communications)

James Madlom
Lori Richards

Guests

Karen Schmiechen Planner, Wisconsin Department of
Transportation, Southeast Region
Kerry Thomas Communications Director, Transit Now
Barbara Ulichny (representing Robert Mariano) Roundy’s Supermarkets

ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Ostby called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Roll call was taken, and the presence of a quorum was confirmed. Mr. Evenson noted that Mr. Karls had asked to be excused owing to a business commitment. As the meeting was being conducted through a teleconference call, the individuals present in the Commission offices, along with those who had dialed-in, identified themselves to the Board members.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There were no changes identified by Board members to the meeting agenda.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 7, 2008, MEETING

A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Ms. Taylor, seconded by Ms. Robinson, and carried unanimously by the Board.

CONSIDERATION OF RTA SCHEDULE

Chairman Ostby drew the Board's attention to the proposed schedule of work activities for the RTA prepared by the consultant team (see Attachment 1). He indicated that he believed the timeline of the schedule was probably optimistic by about one or two months. He asked the Commission staff when it expected to complete the draft of the RTA report to the Governor and State Legislature. Mr. Evenson stated that the draft report should be ready for review by individual Board members by late May or early June.

Ms. Robinson asked if the Commission staff intended to meet with the RTA appointing authorities to obtain their feedback on the draft report prior to its release to the Board. Mr. Madlom and Ms. Richards indicated that was the approach proposed by the consultant team. Mr. Evenson suggested that staff first review the draft report with Chairman Ostby and let him decide who else should be briefed on the draft report. Chairman Ostby agreed with the approach proposed by Mr. Evenson.

Mr. Evenson suggested that the Board schedule one more Board meeting before the draft report is released. Noting that a quorum of the Board would not be available on the next regular meeting date of May 19, 2008, he suggested scheduling the next meeting for May 28, 2008. He stated that the Board could invite Mr. Robert Henken of the Public Policy Forum to discuss the recent Forum report on public transit in Milwaukee County.

CONSIDERATION OF COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT EFFORT

Chairman Ostby referred the Board to the document prepared by the consultant team presenting a proposed plan for conducting outreach efforts for the RTA report to the Governor and State Legislature (see Attachment 2). Board members discussed the outreach plan, making the following comments and raising several questions:

1. Chairman Ostby stated that he was not ready to go beyond the first two activities identified in the proposal, the surveys of local community leaders and the initial outreach for the release of the RTA report. Mr. Torres stated that he had concerns with any outreach activities that could be considered as lobbying, noting that in the past, the use of RTA funds for lobbying State legislators was an issue in the media and of concern to the Milwaukee County Executive. He stated that the business community needed to play a larger role, particularly in conducting outreach activities. He asked whose role it was to brief the local officials on the findings and recommendations of the RTA report and suggested that perhaps the Regional Planning Commission staff should be conducting those outreach activities. Mr. Evenson stated that Commission staff will be available to assist with outreach efforts, but will look to Chairman Ostby to identify who should be briefed on the report.

2. Ms. Ulichny stated that she believed the business community would be willing to help with financing RTA outreach efforts. She noted that the recent rule prohibiting RTA lobbying efforts applies to interaction with State legislators and the Governor, but would not apply to briefing local officials. Mr. Brandrup agreed with Ms. Ulichny, stating that it was critical to properly brief local officials on the findings and recommendations in the RTA report. Chairman Ostby stated that his intent was to have the RTA stay away from activities that could be construed as lobbying by the public, and that he agreed with Mr. Torres that it was appropriate for the business community to have a greater role in outreach activities.
3. The Board discussed how best to obtain the comments of individual members and the appointing authorities on the draft RTA report. It was determined that the Commission staff would meet with individual Board members to discuss the draft report after Chairman Ostby is comfortable with it, after which the Chairman and Commission staff would meet with the appointing authorities to go over the report.
4. Mr. Torres noted that other groups had begun weighing in on addressing public transit problems in the RTA counties including the Public Policy Forum, the Milwaukee Metropolitan Association of Commerce, and the Greater Milwaukee Committee. He asked if the proposed consultant team activities included reaching out to those organizations. Ms. Richards indicated that the consultant team would coordinate with them as part of the outreach effort. Ms. Taylor stated that the RTA should be able to come together with these groups as they all want the same result. Ms. Ulichny suggested that Board members keep the Commission staff informed on the positions and activities of other groups as they pertain to addressing public transit issues and other RTA business.
5. Mr. Brandrup stated that it was important for the RTA to avoid becoming involved in the discussions by Milwaukee County and the City of Milwaukee on how to use the \$91.5 million in Federal funds that have been allocated for major transit improvements in Milwaukee County. He stated that proposed uses for those funds would not provide for a long-term solution to the transit funding crisis, and the comments of public officials on these funds have only served to obscure the need for a permanent funding solution for public transit.
6. Chairman Ostby indicated that the Board should consider approving only the first two work activities identified in the consultant team proposal. Mr. Brandrup made a motion to authorize Chairman Ostby to execute contracts for the proposed surveys of local community leaders and the initial outreach activities for the RTA report at his discretion. The motion was seconded by Mr. Eberle and carried unanimously by the Board. Chairman Ostby suggested that the timeline for these activities be extended to allow for obtaining feedback from the Board and the appointing authorities on the draft RTA report.

CONSIDERATION OF NEXT MEETING DATE

The Board agreed to schedule its next meeting for 1:30 p.m. on May 28, 2008, with the tentative agenda to include a presentation on the recent report of the Public Policy Forum, an update on the RTA financial status, and further discussion concerning the release of the RTA report.

Ms. Robinson noted that the Urban Economic Development Association (UEDA) of Wisconsin would be holding its annual conference on June 25, 2008, and the conference will focus on public transit and jobs. She suggested having the RTA included in the program to present its findings and recommendations.

Chairman Ostby requested that Mueller Communications work with Ms. Robinson and the UEDA to see if the RTA could present information at the conference.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m. on a motion by Mr. Torres, seconded by Mr. Brandrup, and carried unanimously by the Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth R. Yunker
Recording Secretary

RTA Recommended Outreach Timeline

Year

Month

Event

2008

April

Local government elections

- Meet with elected candidates to secure support/endorsements

May

Begin opinion leader surveys to secure input and “buy-in” for RTA report and incorporate into report, and ask supporters to pass resolutions of support to send to the governor, lawmakers

SEWRPC to produce first draft of RTA report; RTA to review at May meeting

June

Continue Opinion Leader surveys to secure input and “buy-in” for RTA report, and ask supporters to pass resolutions of support to send to the governor, lawmakers

Meeting with key government leaders

- Governor Doyle
- Secretary Michael Morgan
- Secretary Frank Busalacchi

Make any necessary adjustments to report

Develop and launch Public Service Announcement (PSA) campaign to raise awareness of an imminent transit crisis and proposed solutions to the problem

Develop and execute direct mail effort to inform registered voters about the imminent transit crisis and outline action items from the RTA report

July

Finalize report and review with key business/opinion leaders and the Big 6

Public rollout of RTA report

- Place stories in Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha daily papers
- Conduct editorial board meetings
- Collect public feedback
- Place opinion editorials and letters to the editor
- Hold Town Hall meetings to secure public input and feedback on RTA report recommendations

Ensure any RTA budget requests are submitted to key Cabinet Secretaries and the Governor

PSA campaign continues

August

Fall election campaigns begin

State budget finalized by Governor

Continue outreach to create awareness of RTA's key recommendations to address transit challenges: business coalition outreach, speaking engagements, ongoing proactive media relations

PSA campaign continues

September

Work with the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute (WPRI) to publicly release its transit study

Continue outreach to create awareness of RTA's key recommendations to address transit challenges: business coalition outreach, speaking engagements, ongoing proactive media relations

PSA campaign continues

Develop and execute direct mail effort to inform registered voters about the imminent transit crisis and outline action items from the RTA report

October

Work with the Public Policy Forum to schedule a lunch program focused on meeting the region's transit needs and driving economic development

Continue outreach to create awareness of RTA's key recommendations to address transit challenges: business coalition outreach, speaking engagements, ongoing proactive media relations

PSA campaign continues

November

Submit official report to the Governor, along with feedback the report has received from community, business and civic leaders

Develop and execute direct mail effort to inform registered voters about the imminent transit crisis and outline action items from the RTA report

Fall elections

Budget reviewed and finalized by state agencies

December

Develop and execute direct mail effort to inform registered voters about the imminent transit crisis and outline action items from the RTA report

2009

January

New legislature sworn in

New leadership elected

February

State budget finalized by Governor and submitted to Legislature



Southeastern Wisconsin

Regional Transit Authority

TRANSIT REPORT TO GOVERNOR DOYLE

BUY-IN AND ROLL-OUT PLAN

Situation:

To ensure the successful roll-out of its transit report due to Governor Doyle in November 2008, we recommend the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) engage in proactive outreach to community, business and elected leaders prior to publication of the report, to be sure the RTA is in touch and responsive to issues that are resonating in the community.

By proactively reaching out to the community and seeking input about what topics should be analyzed in the report, and what the desired outcome should be, the RTA can ensure the support of some community partners, and work to roll the report out having already built some community consensus around its conclusions. In addition, we've included recommendations to build long-term support for the RTA and its recommendations within the three county region.

As the RTA has already experienced, the outcome of the report will likely not be supported or endorsed by all community stakeholders. However, having key groups of supporters on board with the report prior to its release will help drive positive coverage in the media and support from key elected officials and help build general consensus behind it.

Recommended "buy-in" approach:

To achieve buy-in, we recommend a series of short community phone interviews, where key members of the community will be surveyed about a standard set of key issues, such as: (*questions to be further developed and approved by RTA*)

- What are the biggest challenges facing your organization/membership (rank in priority order):
 - Crime
 - Health care costs
 - Availability of workforce
 - Reliable transit
 - Economic recession
- On a scale of 1-10, how important is transportation and access to the future of your organization?
- On a scale of 1-10, how are your needs (or that of your members/employees) being met by the current transit system?
- What changes, if any, would improve current transit offerings to better serve the needs of your members/employees?
- What do you believe to be the role of transit in our community (rank in priority order):

- Giving people the freedom to move freely about the region
- Creating greater access to jobs and schools
- Joining the region together
- Creating economic development
- Increasing tourism
- Would you support efforts to develop one regional transit system in Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha counties?
- Do you support the extension of commuter rail from Kenosha to Milwaukee?
- Do you feel a dedicated funding source should be identified to support bus transit, commuter rail or both?
- Would you be willing to reiterate this support to the Governor and Legislature in the form of a letter or resolution passed by your organization?

These surveys will be executed by phone with a diverse group of business and community leaders that have been briefed within the previous year on the RTA and its work to find a dedicated funding source for transit. This group might include:

Kenosha	
Todd Battle	Kenosha Area Business Association
	Kenosha Realtors
	Kenosha Senior Citizens group
	Kenosha Urban League
	Carthage College
Successor to Jack Keating	UW Parkside
Ray Forgianni	Kenosha Common Markets
Ed Emma	Jockey International
Jerry Franke	WisPark
	Abbot Laboratories
Kevin Sell	Daimler Chrysler
Successor to Dave Rayburn	Modine
	Kenosha West Rotary
Milwaukee	
Curt Harris	African American Chamber of Commerce
Shelly Jurewicz	FuelMilwaukee
	Greater Milwaukee Board of Realtors
Maria Cameron	Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Robert Miranda	Community Activist /Spanish Journal
Terrance Ray	Community Brainstorming
Chris Boston	MICAH

Ralph Holloman	Milwaukee Urban League
Jeri Ann Hamilton	NAACP Milwaukee
Ricardo Diaz	United Community Center
	MATC
Bob Greenstreet	UW-Milwaukee
Phil Neuenfeldt	AFL-CIO
Earl Buford	Big Step
Sheila Cochran	Milwaukee County Labor Council
Kent Velde	Milwaukee Art Museum
Rob Henken	Public Policy Forum
Jeff Joerres	Manpower
Tim Sullivan	Bucyrus International
John Shiely	Briggs and Stratton
Ed Zore	Northwestern Mutual
Tim Sheehy	MMAC
Gale Klappa	We Energies
Jill Morin	Kahler Slater
David Fantle	Visit Milwaukee
Racine	
	Burlington Chamber of Commerce
Gordy Kacala	Racine Economic Development Corp
Roger Caron	RAMAC
	Young Professionals of Racine
Domenick Martinelli	Neighborhood Services of SE Wisconsin
Raquel Freeman	Racine Interfaith Coalition
Yolanda Santos Adams	Racine Urban League
Tom White	Racine/Kenosha Community Action Agency
	Gateway Technical College
	Racine County Labor Council
Jean Jacobson	Former Racine County Exec
Steen Sanderhoff	Lehman USA
Mike Batten	Twin Disc
Jane Hutterly	SC Johnson

The surveys would then be analyzed and compiled into a report outlining key common messages and desires from the different groups of stakeholders in Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha. Based upon this feedback, the RTA can shape its recommendations to meet the needs of the community, and achieve community buy-in of the report before it is released to the public.

Budget: \$30,000

Timeline: May – July 2008

Recommended “roll-out” approach:

We recommend the RTA roll-out its report in the following steps, to keep all key parties informed of the report, and to maximize positive media coverage of the report roll-out.

- Schedule individual meetings with the Big 6 and key business leaders 3-5 days prior to the report’s release to brief individuals on the report’s content.

- Orchestrate three separate newspaper stories regarding the report in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Racine Journal Times and Kenosha News to appear on the same day (i.e., Sunday, June 1).
 - Designated reporters will get the embargoed report prior to the public release, and will be allowed to contact designated business and community leaders from that city/county to develop a story.
 - RTA Chairman, an RTA local representative, local community representative and local business representative will conduct an editorial board meeting immediately prior to the public release and request editorial endorsement of the report the same day the report is published.
 - Key collateral documents (fact sheets, key findings) and an online feedback mechanism will be created to accompany the report and made available to the public online.
 - Town hall meetings will be scheduled and executed in each City and County following the public rollout of the report, giving the public the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the report.
 - Letters-to-the-Editor and Opinion Editorial templates will be developed and distributed to business and civic supporters for endorsement after the report is released.

Budget: \$25,000

Timeline: June 1-July 31

Long-term “roll-out” approach:

Build upon the momentum and media attention created with the report to the Governor to create greater awareness of the transit crisis in Southeastern Wisconsin, cultivate additional business supporters for the effort and help drive a legislative solution for transit.

- Use the report as the platform to create additional awareness about the RTA and transit in the region.

- Schedule speaking engagements with local chambers of commerce, rotary groups and economic development groups.
- Follow up with leadership of these groups individually to survey their opinions on the report and general transit ideas and ask them to join the business coalition efforts. Our goal would be to add 50 business advocates from the region to the active coalition, which will work to support the RTA's recommendations and get them included in the 2009-2011 state budget, which begins to take shape mid-2008.
- Continue to work with policy groups studying the transit issue, including the Public Policy Forum and Wisconsin Policy Research Institute.
- Distribute the report to key lawmakers.
- Place an Opinion Editorial outlining the report and recommendations in statewide business publications, including:
 - The Business Journal
 - Small Business Times
 - Capital Region Business Journal
 - Marketplace Magazine
 - Corporate Report Wisconsin

Budget: \$73,000

Timeline: Aug. 1-Dec. 31, 2008

- Execute direct mail efforts to registered voters in the three-county area, to inform politically active residents about the impending transit crisis, and outline efforts they can undertake to help implement the RTA's recommendations.

Budget: approx. \$50,000 per mailing

Timeline: quarterly, beginning in June

- Develop and implement Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to keep transit top-of-mind with key audiences. Ads would inform the public about the impending transit crisis and outline efforts they can undertake to help implement the RTA's recommendations. Media outlets would include:
 - Public television
 - Bus advertising
 - Business publications
 - Labor publications
 - Minority/community publications

Budget: approx. \$200,000

Timeline: June-December 31, 2008

SEWRPC Doc # 136910