

City of Milwaukie Transportation System Plan Update
Transit Working Group - Meeting #4
June 20, 2007 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Public Safety Building, Community Meeting Room, 3200 SE Harrison Street

Public Attendees:

David Aschenbrenner
Kathy Buss
Ben Horner-Johnson
Linda Hunter
Dolly Macken-Hambright
Pam Shea
Ed Zumwalt

Staff and Consultant Attendees

Kenny Asher, City of Milwaukie
Jeanne Garst, City of Milwaukie
Kalin Schmoldt, JLA
Young Park, TriMet
Alan Snook, DKS Associates

Materials Distributed:

Agenda
Meeting #3 Summary
Updated “WNI” Tally Sheet
Transit Working Group Goals
1997 Policy Direction on Transit
Adopted Policies on Transit

Meeting Summary

Welcome and Introductions

Kenny Asher noted that this would be the last working group meeting. He said that the purpose of the meeting would be to separate out the best ideas from the 31 items on the “What Needs Improving?” (WNI) tally sheet. He noted that there would be an exit survey that the group members should use to provide feedback on how meaningful the working group has been.

Kenny noted that they were in the report-out phase of the project and requested a volunteer to represent the Transit Working Group at the Advisory Group’s meeting on Wednesday, June 27, at 4:30 at the Masonic Lodge. Kathy Buss said she would attend for the group.

Kenny said that Young Park had done some research on transit opportunities within the area and would be presenting his findings to the group.

Kenny passed around a new map showing transit-disadvantaged areas. Alan Snook explained that the new map addressed off-peak service and may still change before it is made public. Kenny encouraged comments on the map but noted that the chapter is not ready for an all-out review.

Transit Connections; Tri-Met Overview

Young gave a brief presentation on what TriMet looks at when adding new services. He noted basic considerations of whether the roadway designs will accommodate transit and whether the service can meet standards of time, distance, quality, and safety. He noted two documents that provide design standards, including: the “Planning and Design for Transit Handbook” and “TriMet Design criteria.” Young described characteristics of the TriMet fleet, noting characteristics of their 660 vehicles.

Alan asked about the use of hybrid buses. Young said that they have tried hybrids but the savings in fuel don’t make up for the increased cost—nearly double that of a regular diesel bus. Young did note that all of the buses now use diesel filtration and that the technology is improving.

Young described how potential routes are affected by elements such as bus weight, minimum turning radii, acceleration, and maximum negotiable grades. He showed several diagrams that described turning requirements and noted several situations where buses had to rely on encroaching on other lanes in order to negotiate tight turns.

Young noted that he had reviewed some of the options within Milwaukie that could serve as future transit routes. He said that many of the roads were less than desirable for transit operations because they were often narrow, lacked sidewalks, or involved blind corners. Young acknowledged the need to balance transit facilities with other modes. He also noted the need for investing in long lasting and higher tolerance roadway improvements that will be able to withstand multiple trips by heavy busses. Kenny noted that the city will need to work with TriMet and make sure that the higher demands on transit routes are reflected within the Street

Surface Maintenance Fund. He said that they would have to see whether TriMet would be willing to help cover the additional roadway costs.

Young added that street connectivity, safe access for pedestrians, and appropriate densities are also important in considering where to place transit routes.

A working group member asked about the potential use of Wood Ave or Home Street. Young said that they were currently too narrow, but might be a possibility if overhauled in the future. The member asked about the intersection of 42nd Ave and Railroad Ave. Young said it was a possibility if the intersection is redone.

Kenny asked the group whether they could propose a route for a new westbound bus. A member suggested using 37th Ave to Monroe Street, then to Oak or Harrison. The member suggested a caveat that would depend upon how Railroad Ave is rebuilt, though a better route might be to access downtown via 37th Ave. A member objected saying that people from the transit-challenged neighborhood would like to use the bus to reach Safeway but live on the southern part of the poorly served area. The member noted that getting to King Rd was more of a challenge than getting to Railroad Ave. The member suggested that a redesign of Railroad Ave should consider the connection to Safeway. Kenny summarized the group's conversation: Railroad Ave should be redesigned for transit with a connection downtown and with 42nd as another possible street to be made over. A member noted that 42nd has drainage problems. A member noted that ridership would fall off if people were required to transfer in order to reach Safeway from downtown. Alan summarized the suggested route: Railroad Ave to 42nd Street, to Harrison Street, to downtown.

A member expressed concern about the intersection of 37th and Railroad Ave as a quiet zone. Kenny explained that quiet zones are areas where they would be enhancing railroad safety and concurrently enacting measures that would keep trains from sounding their horns. He said that the City Council would be discussing the issue in late July or early August. A member said that city staff would be giving a presentation to the Hector-Campbell neighborhood on quiet zones on July 2nd.

Reviewing the Tally

Kenny said that he had reviewed the city's policy direction on transit and noted which of the WNI list items support which transit policies (denoted by numbers in the right-hand column.) He noted that most involved increasing service frequency. He encouraged the group members to highlight their top priorities, keeping in mind that the needs will be competing with each other for funding.

Linda clarified that #19 should refer to Bus 70 not Bus 20.

Action Plan Items (Top Priorities) and Master Plan Items (Next Priorities)

The group noted their top priorities (indicated below in black) and next priorities (indicated in grey.) The first digit indicates the number of “top” priority votes, while the second number indicates the number of “next to top” priority votes.

| | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. 1/0 | 8. 4/3 | 15. 3/4 | 22. 2/1 | 29. 2/3 |
| 2. 2/1 | 9. 4/2 | 16. 2/2 | 23. 2/3 | 30. 3/1 |
| 3. 3/4 | 10. 3/2 | 17. 3/1 | 24. 1/3 | 31. 4/1 |
| 4. 4/2 | 11. 4/1 | 18. 2/1 | 25. 2/2 | |
| 5. 5/3 | 12. 6/2 | 19. 0/2 | 26. 1/3 | |
| 6. 6/1 | 13. 2/2 | 20. 2/3 | 27. 0/3 | |
| 7. 4/2 | 14. 2/2 | 21. 4/1 | 28. 2/3 | |

The group had the following comments:

- A member noted that the redevelopment of Railroad Ave was an important caveat for many of the rankings.
- Monroe St. should be removed from item #5.
- #12 should say Hector Campbell *and* Linwood are disadvantaged.
- #5 and #12 are similar and could be merged.
- #31 could be combined with the transit-disadvantaged section.

Kenny asked whether there were any objections to moving the policy related issues ahead, as they wouldn't be competing for funding like capital projects. There were no objections.

- #4 should be a policy issue and should involve a safety plan coordinated with the Milwaukie Police Department that indicates how the police are involved in transit safety.
- A member asked to see more fare inspectors, noting that they would need real authority or else they risk getting hurt. Kenny noted that the TSP would need to restrict itself to what can actually be leveraged but suggested further discussion of policing on vehicles in conjunction with fare inspection.
- A member asked for a policy regarding park and rides adjacent to the Milwaukie city limits such that any such properties are annexed by city so that city emergency services can respond to situations efficiently instead of through the county.
- Kenny noted the challenges to operators and users caused by a lack of sidewalks and suggested a policy that would require sidewalks for side streets leading to shelters and transit stops. He asked whether the group should consider the portion of trips between homes and transit. A member noted that the issue falls under pedestrian and street design and was not appropriate for this group. The member noted that some neighborhoods want to remain sidewalk-free and might have other options for accessing transit. Kenny noted that the pedestrian and street design group might not be specifically considering routes to transit. A member noted that people may not even use sidewalks if they were put in, and another said it would be difficult to judge where access routes to transit actually exist. Kenny suggested that the Advisory Committee take up the issue as a way to address the complete transit experience, noting that pedestrian connections on local streets to transit

stops need to be noted and made convenient and safe to encourage ridership. A member suggested reevaluating what the term “safety” means in the context of different areas, and suggested that different types of street connections have different safety guidelines. Another member said that providing access to transit isn’t the issue so much as the specific reference to “sidewalks,” which may be inappropriate in some areas.

- A member suggested combining #2 and #8 regarding improving headways.
- A member suggested combining #6 and #19.
- A member suggested combining the frequent service elements of #17, #18, and #19. Kenny asked Young whether it would be better to keep the requests separate or whether they could be consolidated. Young said they could be consolidated.
- Use “move” instead of “terminate” on #19.

Kenny recommended grouping the service enhancement recommendations and including them all. He suggested calling out the important capital and service enhancements separately as discussed.

- A member recommended linking #13 and #28 regarding future changes to transit stops.
- New language regarding improved safety on #7. A member noted that the Harmony/Linwood stop on the south side of Harmony could be safer. Kenny suggested that the stop be included under need #4. The member requested that the stop be specifically added by name.
- A Member noted that the bus 29 service has become infrequent and scheduled to the point of being unusable by many people. The member noted that the bus seems to stop at times that are inconvenient for people leaving work and asked about ways to make the line more usable. Young said that he had informed the bus schedule writers about the issue.
- Another member supported the concern regarding the bus 29 service. The member said that they want to see local service continue even as light rail comes in, and reiterated the need for policy that would maintain local service. Kenny noted that policy issue #25 already asks that savings be reinvested locally, but asked whether that requirement was adequate and whether they should be more specific on how reinvestment should be allocated. A member noted that the term “underserved” could be problematic, as the 29 might not qualify. Alan suggested that headway times could define “underserved.” A member asked how it would be possible to ensure that TriMet honors its promises to reinvest in the community and not dump local services. Kenny said that Milwaukie would need to enact clear policy language laying out demands to TriMet. Young noted some examples of services that were added on the Westside after light rail went in. He noted that despite the feeder-oriented services, demand just didn’t exist and ridership per service hour is what determines routes and investment. Young suggested a policy that would restrict headway service to a maximum of 30 minutes within Milwaukie. A member suggested amending item #8 to read that “On *no* route should headways be greater than 30 minutes.”
- A member asked about peak travel time considerations and adding services at certain times of the day. He noted that the existing schedule for bus 29 is so rigid that it fails to

serve a variety of needs—and particularly those of commuters coming from downtown Portland. Young said that while he couldn't speak for the people in charge of scheduling, TriMet does have policies regarding adding service at peak times and that they have looked at connectivity options for the #29. Alan noted that a policy of no headways greater than 30 minutes would also apply to new service. A member noted that there should be built-in flexibility to allow communication between Milwaukie residents and TriMet. Young noted that there are given estimates regarding the impact of light rail on existing bus service.

- Kenny suggested that the issue of reallocating resources will need to be addressed later on. A member suggested a policy that would create a transit users group that would be composed of transit riders and would serve in an advisory capacity on issues such as the reallocation of transit resources. The member suggested that the group should be an ongoing committee that could address matters such as the bus 29 frequency issues or sidewalk access to transit stops. Another member suggested that the group could be a subcommittee of the Public Safety Advisory Committee or that whoever is responsible for coordinating transit with the city—possibly Kenny—should have a corresponding advisory board. TriMet was suggested as a possible member. Kenny asked Young to send a copy of TriMet's policy regarding notices for schedule changes that should be noted in the TSP update.

Summing Up

Kenny reviewed the goals and work of the Transit Working Group. He recommended that the group stay involved with the transit recommendations to the TSP and noted that although some of the capital projects will drop out, hopefully the policy material will be protected.

Kenny said that he was pleased with the focus on local service. He thanked Young, Phil, and TriMet for their service to the committee. He thanked everyone for hanging on. Kenny noted that the transit chapter will be in first or second draft form within three weeks or so, and the committee will be emailed when it is available on the website. He encouraged the group to attend the meetings of the Advisory Committee.

A member asked whether there was a firm policy on protecting the transit investment by the city budget committee. Kenny noted that the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) does go through the committee each year; and David noted that it doesn't hurt to ask, as they're trying to make changes to how the CIP is generated. The member suggested a line-item for transit costs. Kenny reminded the group that many of the improvements wouldn't be paid for by the City, and would be funded by either developers or TriMet.

Adjournment