



La Crosse Area Planning Committee

Metropolitan Planning Organization

Serving the La Crosse/La Crescent Urbanized Area

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Minutes of Committee on Transit and Active Transportation Meeting, January 11, 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the CTAT held on Thursday, January 11, 2018 at 3:00 pm in room 1107 of the La Crosse County Administrative Center, 212 6th St N, La Crosse, WI.

Members Present: Leroy Brown, Carolyn Dvorak, Ginny Loehr, Stephanie Averbek (by phone), Kurt Wayne (by phone), Susan Lundsten, Sandy Sechrest, Cathy Van Maren, Peter Fletcher, Bob Fisher, Jackie Eastwood. **Excused:** Rick Diermeier, Lewis Kuhlman, Francis Schelfhout, Jim Longhurst. **Others Present:** Jim Krueger, Mikka Nyarko, Laura Olson, Jack Zabrowski.

1) Approval of minutes of the September 14, 2017 CTAT Meeting:

Peter Fletcher motioned to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2017 meeting; Cathy Van Maren seconded. All other voting members were in favor.

2) LAPC Vision Zero Resolution:

Jackie Eastwood stated that for a first step to pursuing Vision Zero in the region the LAPC as the regional transportation planning organization should encourage regional support through an LAPC resolution of support. Because the LAPC is an advisory organization, the resolution is tailored to what the LAPC can do for Vision Zero. The resolution accepts the core principles of Vision Zero, and commits the LAPC to prioritize safety in its projects, planning, and programming and to providing planning and technical assistance for Vision Zero activities. She asked if anyone thought there should be any changes to the wording before the committee voted to recommend the resolution to the Policy Board. Laura Olson asked what “systems-level changes” were to which Ms. Eastwood responded that those changes would involve constructing our roads in a manner that encourages safe behavior and self-enforcement. The current practice is to educate.

Peter Fletcher motioned to recommend to the LAPC Policy Board that the Vision Zero resolution be approved as presented; Cathy Van Maren seconded. All other voting members were in favor.

3) MTU Transit Goals Discussion:

Jackie Eastwood stated that the purpose of this discussion is that she and Jim Krueger from MTU were invited to speak to the Sustainable La Crosse Commission in February to discuss policies that the Commission could enact in 2018 that would help reach transit goals. Because the CTAT is comprised of transit and bike/ped interests, she proceeded to explain how the LAPC assesses MTU and lays out recommendations in its transit development plan. The TDP does not explicitly lay out goals like “increase ridership,” but they can be inferred. She stated that the City and the LAPC do have goals to reduce single-occupancy vehicles, congestion, and parking demand and that the LAPC and MTU have goals and objectives for various performance measures.

Cathy Van Maren stated that the Commission is looking at transit to reduce the City’s carbon footprint and that the City needs a policy to support its goals.

Ms. Eastwood went on to explain that MTU performs very well for a small transit system that serves a rather low-density area with a very captive transit-dependent ridership, but expanding services to gain ridership, especially more “choice” riders would take significant investment and MTU would need a consistent and sustainable local funding source such as the capital budget and/or a regional transit authority. MTU is struggling with replacing Jim Krueger added that MTU needs to be a good steward of the federal and state money that they get.

Ms. Eastwood presented some “low-hanging fruit” that would improve customer service and the rider experience that could draw some new riders to use transit. Discussion revolved around automatic vehicle location (AVL), promoting MTU, offering various-length pass and ride purchase options, rider training, pay-to-park, seamlessness in transferring

from one transit system to another, employer work-pass programs. Bob Fisher suggested that the City could require neighborhood associations examine transit as a condition to receiving community block grant money.

Ms. Eastwood concluded the discussion by stating that she and Mr. Krueger will recommend to the Sustainable La Crosse Commission that they improve the current service by improving customer service and the rider experience as discussed.

4) SMRT Bus Update:

Peter Fletcher stated that the SMRT service has been operating for five years now, with 2017 being the first year there was a decline in ridership. This has been the trend for most transit systems and is likely due to the low cost of gas. Unlike MTU, the SMRT ridership consists mainly of choice riders going to work or a medical appointment. The Counties have been trying to steer some of their medical trips to the SMRT service. The SMRT service between Tomah and La Crosse has been operating for four months and began as a pilot that was 100% funded by La Crosse County. The service has received federal and state funding for 2018 at about 56% of operations. The service currently offers two round trips—one in the AM and one in the PM. They are waiting on two new buses so they can add a midday service that might improve the low ridership. They have also been adding stops, with one coordinated with a Jefferson Lines stop in Sparta.

5) TAP Projects Update:

Jackie Eastwood stated that the CTAT will be prioritizing TAP projects at its March meeting. We currently have three projects being submitted by La Crosse County and two projects by the City of La Crosse. To a question posed by Ginny Loehr regarding an opportunity to present the projects prior to the ranking, Ms. Eastwood responded that this has been the process in the past and that we will allow for a 5-10 minute presentation for each project. The March agenda will outline the format.

6) Updates and information items:

Cathy Van Maren informed the committee of some presentations that the City of La Crosse and that WisDOT will be giving to some of the neighborhood associations regarding treatments to Jackson St.

Jackie Eastwood announced the LAPC annual meeting for next Wednesday and invited everyone to come to the Two Beagles Brewpub on 2nd Ave (STH 35) in Onalaska.

7) Future agenda items:

Carolyn Dvorak inquired as to when the CTAT will take up the regional bicycle route discussion again. Jackie Eastwood responded that that discussion will take place in May.

8) Other business; Adjourn; Next meeting to be announced:

Leroy Brown motioned to adjourn at 4:30 pm; Susan Lundsten seconded. All voting members were in favor.