

# **DRAFT**

## **PLAN FOR TRANSIT (01/21/11 Draft for Discussion Only)**

### **Introduction**

The Dane County Regional Transit Authority, hereinafter RTA, presents this plan for transit services so voters in a referendum may know the vision for a comprehensive regional transit system for the urbanized area of Dane County. The RTA, as defined by law, does not include the entire county but only the urbanizing area. Any sales tax used to support transit services would apply only to the urbanizing area of the county as defined by the boundaries of the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The RTA is committed to proceed with the implementation of a regional transit plan only after a majority of voters within the RTA boundaries approve a referendum for a regional transit program funded with a sales tax. (*See map at end of document*)

The plan is designed to provide a clear depiction of the near term priorities of the RTA for a regional system. The plan was developed with significant input from the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board which is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Madison Urban Area. The MPO distributes Federal Urban funds used for major road improvements for the urbanized area. The area of the MPO is the same as the RTA. The plan has had significant input from Madison Metro, the City of Madison transit operator which also serves the Cities of Fitchburg, Middleton, and Verona, plus the Village of Shorewood Hills and the Town of Madison. The RTA has also met with transit commission and public officials in the region. In addition, the public has provided input at RTA meetings throughout the region.

The plan is not a detailed description of specific new routes with a list of bus stops and route maps but a description of the general scope of services which would comprise a regional system. Proposed services are given a range of costs. It is acknowledged, that the addition of services needs to be financially constrained by the revenues generated. This is further discussed in the economic analysis section. Additional planning and community discussions are required to develop a detailed level of planning for route information and specific service hours and the evaluation tools for new service. This document envisions going forward with the detailed level of planning as the next stage of development.

The plan here presented envisions phases of development for transit services as the region grows. The description of services contained in a first phase of this plan is for expansion of bus and shared ride taxi service with the availability of such services enhanced by park and ride lots and modernization of the transit system. Elderly and disabled transit services would also be expanded. While implementation of commuter rail service is not included in this phase of transit expansion, the planning and evaluation of potential high-capacity transit alternatives in the region (including commuter rail and/or bus rapid transit options) for consideration in future transit expansion plans, is anticipated to continue.

This plan is divided into the four major components: The Need for Transit, The Scope of Transit Services, The Economic Analysis and Benefits, and The Process.

## **I The Need for Regional Transit - Current and Future**

Dane County is growing. Trending data show that from 2000 to 2030 Dane County can expect its population to grow by another 150,000 people. New jobs and new residents mean additional traffic and potentially longer commute times and lost productivity due to traffic congestion. A well planned and integrated transportation system can help manage traffic congestion and reduce time wasted in traffic. While new roads are an important component of meeting the new demand, we must focus on a transportation system that helps to reduce congestion and meets the varied needs of residents and employers.

Although it is possible to increase some roadway capacity, Dane County's unique geographical feature, the isthmus, limits roadway expansion, and requires unique solutions. The region continues to place major civic public facilities on the isthmus-Monona Terrace, Overture Center for the Arts, City-County building, Alliant Energy Center, Kohl Center, and the UW-Madison campus that includes the new Wisconsin Institutes for Discovery and Union South-not to mention the three existing major hospitals. These destinations put severe strain on the roadway system that is at carrying capacity at many locations.

Therefore, to connect the region for commuters, visitors and residents, a carefully planned transportation system that incorporates transit options that are well integrated into the existing roadway system will help reduce time wasted in traffic while increasing mobility and access for all residents of our region. A comprehensive Plan for Regional Transit is vital for the County's future.

### **A. Reasons for Regional Transit Improvements**

- **Increase transit choices and accessibility options for people moving around and through the region for work, services, entertainment, shopping.** Present baseline bus services at peak times have a hard time maintaining schedules as ridership surges cause more time for loading so that passengers miss connections and their accessibility is decreased due to system constraints.
- **Better connections for workers/jobs and the region's many communities through a coordinated and expanded transit system.** For example: of EPIC's 4000 workers located on the western edge of Verona, only 15% reside in the Verona zip code, 75% reside in Madison and 10% in other areas of the region. While highways carry much of the load the EPIC sponsored bus service to Verona has experienced dramatic increases as workers located along transit lines. Bus service from Verona is now only to the west transfer point. An express service to campus and downtown would better serve commuters going both ways in the region.
- **Relieving growing traffic congestion especially in geographically constrained or "pinch point" areas such as the downtown isthmus or the Beltline and Verona Road Interchange.** The UW Madison campus is a regional pinch point. On any given day the university has from 60,000 to 70,000 people on campus but less than 15,000 parking spaces. Plans call for no overall increase in spaces though some will move to structured ramps. Land on campus is valuable for academic and research facilities with the

university bringing in \$1 billion annually in research dollars. The campus has a successful Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program that relies heavily on transit or the area would be overwhelmed.

- **Promote compact, walkable and more urban communities with efficient infrastructure for needed connections.** Many communities in the region have transit orientated development as part of their growth strategies. Such developments include Middleton Hills in the city of Middleton and Cannery Square in the City of Sun Prairie and many developments in the City of Madison. These compact developments put less pressure on municipal services.
- **Preserve agricultural lands, open spaces and sensitive natural resource areas by building and supporting urban development.** The county and its farmers have participated in the state's farmland preservation program for decades with success so that 200,000 acres of quality productive farmland remain in Dane County, an amount equal to the total acreage of Jefferson County. This permits local Farmers' Markets to flourish and enhances the food options for regional consumers.
- **Create a transit system that allows autos, buses, bikes, trains and pedestrians to function compatibly within a system that provides the connections.** A future transit system will not only be truly regional but also modern. Madison Metro is experimenting with WiFi buses and "soon to come" Wave & Pay cards will be available. A more modern and customer friendly system will not only attract more commuters but will increase the number of choice riders. Commuter runs would greatly benefit from the ability to be connected. New and expanded Park and Ride lots would permit drivers to avoid the congested areas of the region and high parking costs and still shop and run errands as part of their overall trips. The region's existing park and ride lots are well used and informal lots also exist.
- **Greater connectivity throughout the region that will lead to better regional collaboration.** Presently transit systems are operated parochially. For example, Madison Metro does not stop or open its door when going through Monona to other parts of Madison due to the municipal property tax base of the present system. A regional system would have open doors. Likewise some municipal shared ride taxi services do not extend services to nearby town residents.
- **Reduce air emissions in the region.** Dane County has teetered on the brink of becoming a non-attainment area for air quality. In 2008 the Madison area failed to meet the EPA air quality standards with unacceptable levels of fine particulate matter which creates health problems related to asthma, lung disease and heart problems and can lead to premature deaths. In Southeast Wisconsin, which has a non-attainment status, there are requirements for annual vehicle inspections by individual car owners and fleet operators and higher priced reformulated gasoline required. New business opportunities are limited in southeast Wisconsin because of its ozone non-attainment status, causing potential employers to move their operations outside of the region. Transit, especially with a commitment to hybrid and clean fuel vehicles, will allow cleaner air as we grow.

## **B. Examples of Transit demand**

In discussions by the RTA with various communities' transit commissions and municipal bodies specific items of the demand for new transit services have been identified. Some are discussed briefly below:

- The City of Sun Prairie has had interest expressed in potential riders of their shared ride taxi service from surrounding towns for this presently municipal-based service. Additionally, there is now a shuttle service to East Towne operated by Sun Prairie which connects to the Metro Bus System and a demand is believed to exist for express bus service direct to major isthmus destinations at commute times.
- The City of Monona has a major new health facility locating on the Broadway corridor which will have a regional draw for which a regionally integrated transit system could provide important service. Other investments are also occurring on this corridor.
- The City of Fitchburg transit commission requested a mini-transit hub to provide cross connection between transit routes that now serve the east and west sides of Fitchburg.
- The Village of Shorewood Hills sees new denser commercial development along the University Avenue corridor side of the village benefiting from improved transit services.
- The City of Madison in building out new peripheral development adopted neighborhood plans for growth that envisioned transit routes in the platted road networks and located more dense multi-family development along the routes but has not established service. Many of those neighborhoods are now being built out and would benefit from service.
- The Village of Waunakee and the Town of Westport have undertaken a recent joint survey of residents which showed a desire for commuter service into the core of the isthmus. 31% indicated that they would consider using transit services into Madison's core. Expressions have been made that employers considering locating in the village industrial park ask about transit services for workers.
- An earlier survey in the recent decade showed Stoughton and Oregon area residents had an interest in express service to major urban destinations.
- Demand exists from households without an automobile. Data from 2007 showed that 6.6% of all Dane County households do not have an automobile and must look to other transportation alternatives. In the urban core of the region the need is greater. For Madison, the number is higher with 10.9% of households not having an auto. Much of the region's assisted housing for the poor is located along transit. Some 17% of Madison Metro's ridership comes from those with household incomes below \$10,000.
- An aging population will increase demand for both Elderly/Disabled and regular transit services. The dimension of this trend is shown in the numbers. In Wisconsin in 1950 only 8% of the households were headed by someone over 65 years. In 2030 the projection is 21% of the households will be headed by someone over 65.

Because transit service is well provided to some part of the region, Madison Metro has a high proportion of riders who choose to ride buses despite the apparent fact they could be driving a

car.. Some 28% of Metro riders come from households with incomes over \$50,000 and 6% have household incomes over \$100,000. Expansion of service will likely increase riders. A continuation of "Business as Usual" scenario means the region would continue to see increased traffic and traffic related delays. "Business as Usual" could also have a significant negative impact on the region's economy. Improved transit offers a way of allowing Dane County to avoid slipping into non-attainment status for ozone and for non-particulate matter. "Business as usual" also ignores the increased demands for transit that come from a rapidly expanding elderly population and from a younger workforce that prefers transit to the hassles of driving.

## **II Scope of Regional Transit Services**

The goal of the **Plan for Transit** is to lay out the framework for an interconnected transportation network that focuses on improving the transit system on a regional level. The plan must be dynamic, and have the ability to adapt to changes in demographics and changes in development patterns that occur over time.

The transit system of Dane County's future must be fully integrated into other modes of transportation, making a seamless connection for users whether they enter or exit the transit system on foot, by bicycle, from an automobile or as an airline passenger. The transit system must be cost effective and convenient for all users. We envision the transit system improving its service to passengers who rely completely on transit for accessibility as well as those who choose transit for various reasons.

Building such a system will take time and improvements will need to be phased in. This Plan for Transit is broken into phases of development. **Phase 1** will focus on the immediate improvements needed for the system that would be operational or studies undertaken within the first three years of adopting the plan by approval of a referendum.

The RTA envisions a first phase that would expand transit services based on the current system of transit providers. These include Madison Metro, Monona lift, Sun Prairie Shared Ride Taxi Service, Stoughton Shared Ride Taxi Service and Elderly Disabled Providers. The expansion would convert a municipal based system to a regional functionality. To implement Phase 1 concepts expressed in this plan for transit as a general plan, more detailed effort will be undertaken with communities on their land-use planning, transportation planning and transit needs and preferences will be studied.

Future phases should continue to expand present transit services as needs are reviewed, For example, more express bus services, plus more communities operating shared ride taxi services, and more transit systems modernization. The area's adopted Regional Transportation Plan (prepared by the Madison Area Transportation Planning Agency, the federally approved MPO) calls for the region to study high capacity transit options like Bus Rapid Transit and Commuter Rail. As the Regional Transit Authority, the RTA will cooperate with the MPO in the study and analysis of future transit choices. The RTA would go back to the voters for another referendum before exceeding the sales tax levy previously authorized

## **Phase 1 Components:**

Note: The RTA would not be a system operator. The RTA envisions that the services provided under this plan would be provided by a number of existing service providers throughout the region.

### **Expanded Local and Express Bus Service in the Dane County Regional Transit Authority Service Area.**

Bus service is currently the primary form of transit within the region and will continue as the predominate form into the foreseeable future. Current service serves Madison residents fairly well with limited services in neighboring communities.

- **Regional Express Bus Service**  
**Annual Cost: \$2,500,000 to \$3,000,000**

Phase 1 improvements would begin to address these shortcomings by providing new express bus service between Madison and seven neighboring communities: Sun Prairie, Cottage Grove, Waunakee, Westport, Verona, McFarland and Stoughton as well as express bus service from the airport to downtown Madison. Service would consist of peak hour service with up to four buses between Madison and each community, depending on demand. At least four communities would be served within the first year of funding and all seven communities would be served by the end of the second year of funding.

- **Expanded Bus Service Between Madison and Adjacent Communities**  
**Annual Cost: \$1,500,000 to \$2,000,000**

Service between Madison, its peripheral neighborhoods and its immediate neighbors would be improved during Phase 1. Service between Madison and Monona, Middleton and Fitchburg would be expanded, allowing commuters in these communities better transit choices. New service would include half hour headway during peak periods and hourly service throughout the day. This service would begin in the second year of funding.

- **Improved Bus Service Within Current Metro Service Territory**  
**Annual Cost: \$2,500,000 to \$3,000,000**

Madison Metro has several service deficiencies as a result of costs of service rising more rapidly than revenues. As a result, many commuters find themselves missing connections or experiencing inconveniences through delays and sub-optimal routes. Improvements in the core service area would benefit all riders by providing better connections and transfers.

Improvements would consist of increasing bus frequencies on three core routes (2, 4 and 6) with 15 minute headways until 6:30 p.m.

Restored service from previous reductions includes increasing frequency of service on route 4, upgrading route 7 to route 3 on weekends and holidays and improving routes 16 and 18 so there will be significantly better coordination with arrivals at transfer points to facilitate transfers. This service would be implemented within the first year of funding.

- **Network of Strategically Located Park & Ride Lots**  
**Annual Cost: \$750,000-\$1,000,000**

There are currently five Park & Ride lots within the RTA area including three within the City of Madison. The RTA will build additional one or two during the first phase and add others as the system grows—up to fifteen locations have been identified as future locations.

*Existing lots:*

- 167-stall North Transfer Point and
- 10-stall North Town Center
- 227-stall Dutch Mill site
- Verona
- Middleton

*\*It should be noted that there are also numerous locations around the metro area where suburban drivers park near bus stops and utilize transit to reach their destination. Within Dane County, the State also operates seven peripheral park-and-ride lots that are not connected to the transit network. These facilitate primarily informal reverse-commuting and car pooling.*

The RTA will coordinate with WisDOT, the UW, MATC, and major employers on siting, developing, and operating the future Park & Ride lots along major travel corridors near the edge of the metro area (ideally in conjunction with mixed use development) and at locations suited to better serve future potential passenger rail or BRT routes in addition to improving / expanding operations at existing Park & Ride sites. Planned or potential locations include:

- Highway 14 corridor near the Beltline in Middleton
- Near the Middleton Springs Shopping Center in Middleton
- Mineral Point Road west of the Beltline (in the vicinity of Pleasant View Road or Junction Road)
- Near the West Transfer Point and South Transfer Points
- Along the Fish Hatchery Road and Highway 14 corridors in Fitchburg
- Along Highway 51 in McFarland and Stoughton
- Cottage Grove Road near Grandview Commons
- Interstate 94 at Highway N (north of Cottage Grove)
- In the vicinity of Highways 19 and 151 in Sun Prairie
- Near the I-39/90/94 interchange with Highway 19 in Deforest
- Along Highway 113 near Waunakee.

To maximize utilization of the parking lots and transit system, it is necessary to link the transit and parking policies of the University of Wisconsin and other major employers and agencies.

- **Expanded Metro Para-Transit Service Annual Cost: 500,000 - \$750,000**
- Metro provides Para-Transit service on a demand responsive, advance reservation basis for persons who are unable to use Metro's regular fixed-route service. Persons must be certified as eligible to receive the service in accordance with guidelines established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Service is provided within three-quarters of a mile on each side of regular routes, excluding commuter routes, and is provided during the same hours that the fixed-routes operate. The service is provided door-to-door or curb-to-curb, depending upon the passenger's needs. Metro provides directly operated service on weekdays, but contracts with private providers for weeknight and weekend service and other service that it does not have the capacity to handle.

The City of Monona contracts with a private provider for service, called Monona Lift, which is designed for the elderly and persons with disabilities, but is also available to the general public. The service is a point deviation system with scheduled stops at fixed checkpoints along a general route. Buses deviate up to three-quarters of a mile from the general route between the checkpoints to pick up/drop off elderly and disabled passengers with an advance reservation.

The Federal Transit Administration does not require ADA Para-Transit services to be provided in conjunction with certain types of fixed-route services, including commuter service. Nevertheless, it is Metro's longstanding practice to maintain a fairly comprehensive Para-Transit service area.

Metro Transit is currently systematically evaluating the costs associated with increasing elderly and disabled transportation services. Over time, the RTA will assess whether to expand the service area to, for example, one mile of fixed route service.

- **Specialized Transportation Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Annual Cost: \$100,000**

Dane County contracts with private providers for provision of several routed group trip and demand-responsive services for the elderly, persons with physical or developmental disabilities, and low-income persons. Services include: Scheduled rides to adults over age 60 and persons with disabilities to community/senior centers, nutrition sites, grocery/general shopping and selected social activities; Routed group service to provide rides to persons with developmental or mental health disabilities to specified vocational centers and work places; and, Individual rides for the elderly throughout the county when other options are not available. Rides are provided using volunteer drivers in private automobiles. Medical trips are the first priority for the program.

- **Modernize the Transit System Annual Cost: \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000**

There are many aspects to modernizing the Metro system. New technologies can make riding the system much more convenient as well as better for the environment. Examples of system improvements include: smart farecards, single farecard for inter-community transit rides, smartphone notification of arriving buses, Wifi on buses and Hybrid buses



that are more fuel efficient and emit lower levels of pollutants. It will take time to phase in these new technologies so that these improvements will be ongoing.

- **Improved Shared Ride Taxi Service**

**Annual Cost: \$100,000\***

*\*based on data provided by the MPO. This would permit an additional 3-4 communities*

Shared-ride taxi service is a form of door-to-door, demand-responsive transit (i.e., no set routes or schedules) similar to the familiar taxicab service. The difference is that with shared-ride service, passengers with different origins and/or destinations may be transported simultaneously. Shared-ride taxi systems operate with scheduled service hours and days of operation. Requests for service may be made upon demand or up to 24 hours in advance. Subscription trips are accepted, but are purposely limited to ensure on-demand service.

Shared-ride taxi service is the best way to provide transit service in outlying, lower-density areas that have not been designed for efficient transit service and where there is ample free parking. Currently, the Cities of Marshall, Sun Prairie and Stoughton contract with private providers for this service, although Marshall is not located within the RTA service area.

In Phase 1, this demand-responsive service will be offered to areas (communities and neighborhoods) currently lacking fixed-route transit service, at least into the early evening hours. Some communities, such as Verona, are already studying how the shared-ride taxi model could be used as a feeder service to a commuter bus route. Interest has been expressed in the Waunakee/Westport area. This service would be implemented in the first year of funding.

- **Intermodal Transit Center**

**Cost: TBD**

There is no central facility where transfer between transit modes can be made conveniently. Inter-city buses no longer have a facility that shelters riders in inclement weather and where inter-city bus passengers can conveniently access intra-city buses. Currently, inter-city buses park (and sometimes double park) on Langdon street, or use stops far from the city center, creating great inconveniences for passengers.

A detailed study will be conducted to determine the best location of a facility where inter-city bus riders can be sheltered from inclement weather, have easy access to the local bus system and potential passenger rail or BRT routes, accommodate taxis and provide safe storage for bicycles. The study will include an analysis of potential private partners in the construction of the facility to minimize the cost to the public. It is envisioned that an Intermodal Transit Center would be constructed in Phase 2 of the Plan for Transit.

- **Bus Stop Amenities**

**Annual Cost: \$200,000 to \$300,000**

The experience of riding the bus is critical to retaining existing riders and attracting new ones. Safety and comfort should be baseline expectations for all buses and stops. In Phase 1, Metro would increase safety, access, and convenience at various bus stops by

investing in such things as: sidewalks and concrete pads, benches and/or shelters at major stops. (This could be done in partnership with nearby business and neighborhoods. A typical shelter costs \$5,000,) trash containers at more bus stops, schedule information and destination signs, secure bike parking, “bike center” facilities such as lockers, and bike-sharing stations. (This would facilitate opportunities for riders to mode shift from bus to bike or vice versa.) These improvements would be phased in throughout Phase 1.

- **Future Transit Services: Planning and Evaluation of High-Capacity Regional Transit Options**

**Cost: T.B.D. (Use of federal/state funds are anticipated)**

In order to support and expand upon the work of the RTA and its partners, a region-wide public transportation, land use and economic development system plan is proposed. It is anticipated that this regional planning and development process will include numerous elements, including (but not limited to) planning/evaluation of commuter rail and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) facilities and services. A public outreach and participation plan will be a major component of this planning process, and will include extensive outreach to affected interest groups (i.e., business groups, local elected officials, focus groups and advisory committees). In addition, a detailed economic impact evaluation of the recommended transit system plan will be conducted. This evaluation will specifically address numerous important community impacts - including employment, land use/development, traffic congestion, regional connectivity and impacts on the environment (e.g., air quality, water quality, farmland preservation, etc.). These recommended future RTA planning activities will be conducted in close coordination with the planning activities of the numerous planning entities in the region – including the Madison Area MPO, Capital Area RPC, and the comprehensive planning activities of Dane County local units of government.

- **Planning and Administrative Services**

**Cost: \$250,000 to \$450,000**

This would cover administrative services to the RTA board, planning expenses and day to day operations of the RTA. The cost includes all overhead, including offices and supplies.

### **III Economic Analysis and Benefits**

#### **Revenue Estimates (annualized):**

Dane County currently imposes ½ cent sales tax county-wide. Based on the last two years of data this generates \$40 mil annually. Using an analysis based on the voter files of the Dane County Clerk's office, some 85% of the Dane County voters are located in the RTA area. While no data exists on sales within the RTA area using the voter file as an approximation, a maximum of \$34 mil might be used as an estimate of revenue, but caution based on the unknown would suggest a range of perhaps \$30–\$34 mil should be used. If ¼ of a cent were imposed for RTA purposes the range of estimates would be \$15-17 million.

Recap:

½ cent	\$30 - \$34 mil
¼ cent	\$15 - \$17 mil

#### **Costs estimates (annualized):**

At this time, costs are expressed in a low to moderate range. As more detailed planning and analysis and community planning and discussions take place, we will have more precise choices.

	Low	Moderate
Regional express bus service:	\$2,500,000	\$3,000,000
Expanded service adjacent communities:	\$1,500,000	\$2,000,000
Improved Metro area services:	\$2,500,000	\$3,000,000
Park & Ride lots:	\$ 750,000	\$1,000,000
Improved elderly and disabled:		
1) expansion of bus system federally required	\$ 500,000	\$750,000
2) Others (TBD)	\$100,000	\$100,000
Improved shared taxi –ride/more communities:	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
1) This would permit an additional 3-4 communities		
Modernize the system:	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000
Wi-Fi, Wave & Pay, hybrid fleet		
Facility cost for expanded system:	\$ 400,000	\$ 400,000
Intermodal Transit Center	TBD	TBD
Bus Stop Amenities	\$ 200,000	\$ 300,000
Administrative services and Planning	\$ 250,000	\$ 450,000
<b>Subtotals</b>	<b>\$9,700,000</b>	<b>\$13,000,000</b>

## Property Tax Offset Potential

The present system where the local share of transit costs comes from the municipal property tax has balkanized the provision of services. The property tax component supports both regular transit services and transit services to the elderly and disabled. The aggregate cost average of the last several years is \$10.6 million for both types of services of which 1.5 million is for elderly and disabled transit.

The RTA believes that all Elderly and Disabled Transit Services should be viewed as regional and removed from the local property tax and be supported by a regional tax. Community preference of the elderly and disabled should not be dictated within the region by the local property tax transit contribution.

Other regular transit services can be viewed as a combination of regional transit and local service. More analysis needs to occur before a decision is made but a split of 80/20 for regional/local property tax cost and therefore an offset may be appropriate. One method may be to establish a base level of services for a regional standard with service beyond the regional standard locally supported. This is one of the areas where more planning will occur.

The following list shows the present communities supporting transit services through the property tax or local contribution and the amounts, again over a several year average.

City of Madison	9,200,000
City of Fitchburg	385,000
City of Middleton	342,759
City of Verona	100,000
City of Sun Prairie	83,000
City of Monona	41,700
City of Stoughton	28,000
Village of Shorewood Hills	10,000
Town of Madison	95,000
County of Dane	300,000
Total	10,585,459

## Evaluation of Services

As new services are considered, the RTA will establish design guidelines and performance standards measures for how effective services are. Currently the regions use data on ridership, schedule adherence, safety, security and financial effectiveness in reviewing transit service. The RTA will implement review standards (such as these) to be applied.

## Peer Communities

In devising its phasing plans the RTA benefited from the work of THRIVE in reviewing peer communities. This showed that some communities used bus expansion and other chose combined bus and rail expansions. The peer community data also showed that that growing regions with successful transit systems relied on a regional revenue source and in most cases this was a regional sales tax. Some peer communities studied by Thrive's work within municipalities such as Columbus, Ohio and Columbia, South Carolina rely solely on expanded bus systems comparable to this Phase I Plan. Several of the Thrive studied peer communities including Austin, Texas and Columbus, Ohio uses a regional sales tax as a major component of transit funding. Regional sales tax is used for transit in many regional transit systems in the country.

## IV THE PROCESS

- **Public Participation**

From its very first public meeting of March 4, 2010 the Dane County Regional Transit Authority has encouraged public comment on its role and assignment and no meeting has passed without the public offering comments.

The RTA guaranteed public participation in its work by adopting at its first meeting a resolution that it would not impose the statutorily permitted sales tax without a positive vote in a referendum by the voters of the RTA.

The RTA has rotated its meeting locations throughout the RTA geographic area to encourage citizens from around the region to be able to attend and comment. To date meetings have been held in the following communities.

- The City of Madison
- The City of Middleton
- The City of Fitchburg
- The City of Monona
- The City of Sun Prairie
- The City of Verona
- The Village of Waunakee
- The Village of Shorewood Hills
- The Village of McFarland (scheduled)
- The Town of Westport

At meetings around the region local communities have presented information on comprehensive plans, land use plans, and transit plans. The RTA board members have been addressed or met with representatives of current transit operators and providers including Madison Metro which has other community partners, the Monona Lift, the Sun Prairie shared ride taxi system, and specialists in Elderly and Handicapped transit services. Transit Commissions have been consulted in Fitchburg, Sun Prairie, Monona, and Madison. Results from the Waunakee/Westport transit survey have been presented.

A web site (DaneCountyRTA.org) has been established which posts agendas and minutes of the RTA in addition to these being posted with the Dane County Clerk. Draft principles approved by the RTA for the transit plan have been posted. Links are provided to other sources of transit planning and information including the Madison Area MPO and Transport 2020.

- **Advisory Group**

The RTA has formed an Advisory group of citizens to broaden participation in transit planning. The group includes additional municipal officials, members of several local transit commissions in the area, major employers and labor, business and environmental groups, and citizens. The Advisory Committee is expected to provide comments on draft documents and assist the planning process.

- **Ongoing Review of Planning**

The RTA members have acknowledged the need for ongoing and more detailed planning beyond a plan for transit for voter consideration at a referendum. The Madison Area MPO does transit planning as part of the overall transportation planning for the area. The RTA does not seek to duplicate that work but rather build on it. The several transit operators and area municipal governments also do more detailed transit plans and the RTA will benefit from their efforts, again avoiding duplication.

- **Local Government Input**

Once a draft plan for transit is prepared for consideration at a referendum, local governments within the RTA area and in Dane County outside the RTA will be provided copies. The plan will be shared with the Madison Area MPO, which does comprehensive transportation planning including highways and other modes. Comments will be welcomed.

- **Public Hearing**

The RTA will hold a public hearing on the Draft Plan for Transit to be considered at a referendum. All are welcome to attend and voice concerns, comments, support or opposition.

- **Outreach and Education**

Upon approval of a plan for transit services in the RTA area the RTA members will communicate the plan to the press, public bodies and citizens. RTA members appointed by specific jurisdictions will, as part of their ongoing relationships, present the plan to the appointing authorities. The plan for transit services will be on the RTA website. Again, copies of the approved plan will be provided to local governments. Speaking engagements and media opportunities will be sought and welcomed.

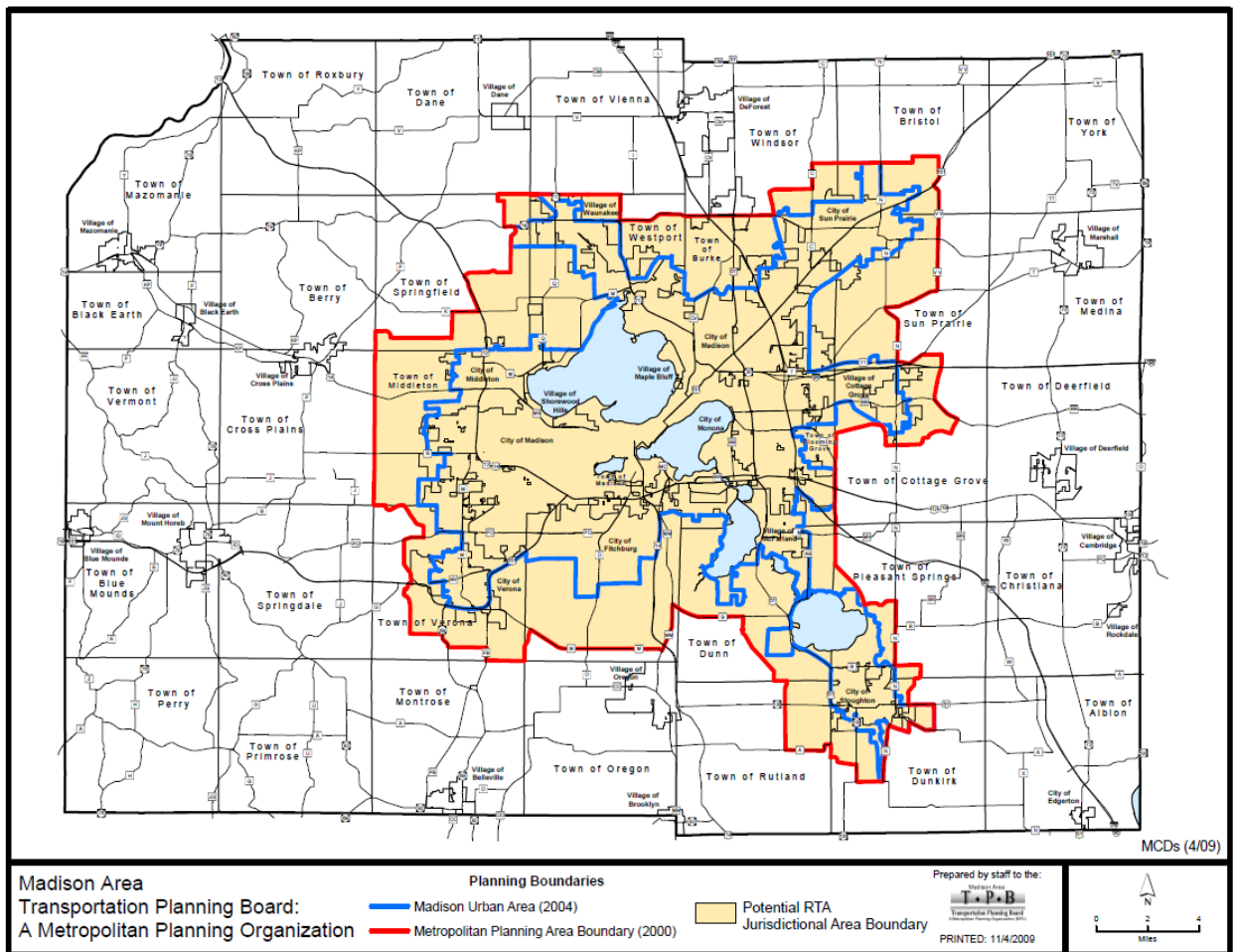
- **Referendum**

The RTA will seek support for the plan of transit services at a referendum of RTA voters at a regularly scheduled election. Upon passage of a plan and referendum more detailed steps included community discussions will occur in a broader planning implementation stage before precise transit options are undertaken.

## APPENDICES

The relevant planning documents that contain references to, recommendations for, or serve as the basis for the RTA's recommended Plan for transit items include:

- Regional Transportation Plan 2030: Madison Metropolitan Area and Dane County (Madison Area MPO, 2006)
- Final Report of the City of Madison Long-Range Metro Transit Planning Ad-Hoc Committee (June 2008)
- City of Madison Comprehensive Plan (City of Madison Planning Division, 2005)
- - Draft Transit Development Plan for the Madison Urban Area, 2009-2013 (Madison Area MPO and Metro Transit, 2009)
- - Metro Transit On-Board Survey of Passengers (2008)
- - Transport 2020 Environment Impact Statement and New Starts Application (2008)
- - 2004-2008 Transit Development Program (TDP) for the Madison Urban Area (August 2004)
- Community-wide survey by Village of Waunakee



## DANE COUNTY RTA BOUNDARY (Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary, 2000)