

Freedom Matters

A Weekly Newsletter

Dane County, Wisconsin

Vol. 3, No. 12

Friday, March 21, 2003

We are a free people in a republic, under a constitution which limits the powers of government to those necessary to secure the unalienable rights of each person to their life, liberty and property. Yet, when a legislature is in session, no one's life, liberty or property is safe. It's the curse of a democracy. That's why we have a republic instead. *Freedom Matters* dedicates itself to the fight to restore our republic. Most of the press and courts fail to do so. They've forgotten that freedom matters.

Transport 2020: It Fails All The Transport 2020 Final Report August 2002

by Bob Bowman

The Madison Isthmus sits between a large expansion of the city to the east, and one to the west. In a word, Madison is shaped like a dumbbell. Is it any wonder if it acts like one?

Failure 1: Transport 2020 Fails the Truth

Transport 2020 fails its most elementary duty. It fails to acknowledge that Madison, in 2003, DOES NOT HAVE A TRAFFIC PROBLEM. The study period for Transport 2020 is 1990 - 2020. Nearly half way through it, **Madison has no traffic problem**. When will it have a traffic problem? By 2020? No. Transport 2020 has the duty to tell the truth on this.

"But," says Dave Trowbridge, Transport 2020 staffer. He goes on to claim Madison **will have** a traffic problem beyond 2020. So why did Transport 2020 not project farther out? Trowbridge's answer: **the Feds won't let us**. [Comments to the county board Strategic Growth Committee, May 8, 2003.]

That testimony makes Transport 2020's purpose plain. It was set up **purely to get federal money** for commuter rail. From the get-go, it was designed to be an ADVOCACY group for commuter rail. So why did it claim to study alternatives?

Moreover, by not studying beyond 2020, Transport 2020 avoided revealing that **as far as we can see into the future**, Madison will have no need for commuter rail. Why? Because Madison **can develop in ways that avoid that need**.

Failure 2: Transport 2020 Fails the Commuters

Another unforgivable flaw of Transport 2020's Report is its **abuse** of commuters. It dismisses helping 97.7% of the traffic, i.e., car traffic. Instead, it proposes only to **hamper** that 97.7%.

Is it federal policy to **abuse** 97.7% of the commuters? Well, Transport 2020's **deliberate policy** is to do so. Transport 2020 says it is based on the Dane County Regional Planning Commission's Vision 2020 plan. That document **explicitly** sets as a **goal** the **hampering** of car traffic in Madison.

Because of such politics, a majority of Dane County municipalities **rejected Vision 2020**, and later **terminated** the Dane County Regional Planning Commission. Politically, in Dane County, **RPC and its Vision 2020 are dead**.

Why would Vision 2020 and Transport 2020 **deliberately** hamper car traffic? The reason was clear in Vision 2020. It was conceived as a way to **force commuters** to use mass transit. As such, it and its proponents deserve to be rejected.

Failure 3: Transport 2020 Fails the Environment

Transport 2020 fails to cite that even if commuter rail is built here, it will not save money on car traffic needs, because 98% of the traffic will **still be by car**. Commuter rail takes so few cars off the road, it makes no sense to build. The responsible decision, environmentally: **rely on bus for mass transit**.

Failure 4: Transport 2020 Fails the Land Use Test

Transport 2020 claims a link between land use and traffic, but addresses land use only superficially. A major key to Madison traffic is the isthmus, which is a bottleneck between the east and west enlargements of the city. Transport 2020 fails to address that there are two kinds of traffic in the isthmus: (1) **to traffic**, and (2) **through traffic**.

Yet, only by addressing those two kinds of traffic in the isthmus can **any** transportation plan be rational. That's because the solutions to the two kinds of traffic are quite different.

The "to traffic" results from three major land use attractions in the isthmus. It is the seat of **state** government, **county** government, and **city** government. After 9-11, 2001, we know that it is an error to put too many critical services in one locale.

Isthmus "to traffic." Much of this can be **eliminated** by moving **out of the isthmus** most city and county departments that serve people. That will lessen the vulnerability of having all those governmental units in one place, and is far cheaper in all ways than building costly and inefficient commuter rail.

Isthmus "through traffic." One way to reduce this is to build a north beltline, which is projected to remove 10,000 daily car trips from the isthmus. *Why is that not in Transport 2020?* It's not, because officials behind Transport 2020 **oppose use** of cars; i.e., they are **prejudiced** against increasing roadway capacity and any proposal that would do so. *That irrational and hidden prejudice motivates and discredits Transport 2020's Report.*

The adding of two lanes of car traffic through the isthmus would add more commuter capacity than building a double track rail system there. With sensible land use planning for the isthmus, those two car lanes could be added, and more cheaply than the building of rail lines for empty commuter trains.

Failure 5: Transport 2020 Fails the Vision Test

Rail backers don't tell you their vision. Falk backs commuter rail to force Madison to densify, til it's as dense as Portland, OR. Meanwhile, Portland, controlled by its Metro board, aims to be as dense as Los Angeles. Yet, Madison with its comfortable sprawl was rated nationally as the #1 area in which to live, while dense LA is pointed to as the example of the pits. Go figure.

Moral: Madison voters better wake up! Rail is meant to take Madison on a **costly** ride to LA's hellish **density**. That's the unspoken **vision** behind commuter rail.

Readers' Bulletin Board. e-mail us your comments. Include your name, for publication by *Freedom Matters*

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