

Freedom Matters

A Weekly Newsletter

Dane County, Wisconsin

Vol. 2, No. 23

Friday, June 7, 2002

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.

Commuter Rail in Dane County The Dizzy Land Express

by Bob Bowman

The problem with Smart Growth? Its ideas are not smart. The stupidest one is commuter rail.

The smart growth onus? How to get the taxpayers of Dane County to buy the insanity of mass transit commuter rail. A train-load of studies exist to prove that commuter rail makes no sense in Dane County (or almost anywhere else for that matter).

The smart growth solution? Dress this fantasy up in the trappings of yet another "study." Give it lofty study goals. Work a little sleight of hand by which to feed selected numbers to a gullible public. Voila! The "Transport 2020 Study Team" and its glib reports.

Thus, after two years, and with hocus-pocus, the T 2020 Study Team, loaded with railophiles, is recommending mass transit commuter rail.

Is Freedom Matters' criticism too harsh? No. It is not harsh enough. Look at the facts.

LPA, the "Local Phony Alternative"

LPA, is government double-speak. It stands for "Local Preferred Alternative." When one looks at the numbers, it amounts to "Local Phony Alternative."

Go to <http://www.transport2020.net>, the T 2020 official web site. Click on Transportation Alternatives Analysis. You will see that the **only alternatives evaluated** by T 2020 (six in Phase 1, five in Phase 2, three in Phase 3) were bus and/or rail systems. **Not evaluated: automobile systems.**

T 2020 held a Public Propaganda Meeting, May 13. Of course, they called it "Information." Their hand-outs set forth their LPA, and said to contact David Trowbridge, City of Madison Planning & Development, ph 267-1148, for more information.

The T 2020 literature cited the number of trips **estimated** for bus and rail alternatives, but did not give it as a percentage of all commuting trips. A phone call to Mr. Trowbridge elicited the reply that under any bus-rail scenario considered by T 2020, **over 95% of commuter trips would be by car.**

Question to Trowbridge: Did T 2020 evaluate alternatives for improving automobile traffic?

Answer: No. The T 2020 team made a "policy decision" that road systems would be too expensive.

The Scam

In other words, T 2020 addresses **less than 5%** of commuter traffic. The **other 95+% is**, by T 2020 policy, not to be part of their solution.

It is the rail portion of T 2020's "LPA" that makes absolutely no sense. T 2020 would waste huge amounts of resources for a miniscule gain in commuter ridership, all for a political agenda that **claims** it will **reduce** wasteful use of resources.

By T 2020's own data, handed out at its May 13 public meeting, commuter rail would spend \$242 million in initial capital costs, and \$3.4 million in additional annual operating expenses, all to provide an additional miniscule of only 0.3 million annual commuter trips, out of 18.8 million annual mass transit commuter trips of all kinds, which in turn are **less than 5% of all commuter trips** in the area covered by the study.

By T 2020's own data, rail costs four times more in initial capital outlay than bus, to add only 1/20th as many commuter trips, a staggering 122 times more for rail. It's 11 times more in operating costs than bus, per commuter trip. This agrees with data from all over the country. Why, in the name of rationality, spend money on rail, when bus service will do the same job at less than one-tenth the cost?

More on the commuter rail insanity next issue.

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

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