St. Croix Crossing Workshop - A Discussion of Growth, Transit, Pricing and Demand Management: Meeting Summary

December 13, 2004

Preface

This document summarizes the discussions and conclusions of a workshop held on December 13, 2004. In addition, the document includes the recommendations of the Workshop Steering Committee, developed following the conclusion of the workshop. These conclusions can be found in the Proposed Transit Feasibility Action Plan on page 19.

This workshop was recommended during Scoping for the St. Croix River Crossing EIS. Travel demand forecasting determined that transit and Transportation System Management /Travel Demand Management (TSM/TDM) measures alone could not meet the project need, but a viable transit market may be present in the study area.

Overview

Discussions regarding the potential impacts of the proposed St. Croix River Crossing have raised concerns among environmental agencies and advocacy groups. Their concern is that constructing a new St. Croix River Crossing will result in unmanaged growth in the travelshed, possibly leading to the need for further expansion of river crossing capacity in the future. A good transit system is not available at present to manage future travel demand resulting from unanticipated growth. Other demand management strategies have not been established to preserve river crossing capacity and eliminate the need for additional capacity in the future.

The inter-state character of travel within the travelshed further complicates these issues. Transit services or other travel demand strategies must address the legal and administrative requirements of both Minnesota and Wisconsin. The study area is partially outside the Twin Cities' Metropolitan Council[1]'s jurisdiction.

The University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies (CTS) and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) organized this workshop. Participants discussed the topics of growth, transit, pricing and other demand

[1] The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the Twin Cities area. Metro Transit is the Twin Cities regional transit provider.

management strategies related to the St. Croix Crossing. This one-day workshop was held on December 13, 2004, at the Washington County Government Center.

Objectives

The long-term transportation objectives of transportation strategies for the St. Croix valley are:

1. To determine the feasibility of implementing transit, pricing and other demand management strategies. This will help manage the transportation impacts of growth and development in western St. Croix County and eastern Washington County along the St. Croix Riverway Corridor.

2. To identify a range of strategic and tactical activities that will help foster collaborative planning efforts throughout the St. Croix River Corridor between Taylor Falls and Prescott. In particular, activities relating to land use, growth, transportation and environmental protection will be analyzed.

Expected Workshop Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the workshop were as follows:

1. Outline scope of a transit feasibility study to identify potential short-term and long-term opportunities to meet transportation needs in the St. Croix River Corridor.
2. Identify a process and administrative structure that would ensure consideration of feasible transit, pricing and other demand management strategies.
3. Develop recommendations regarding timing and conditions of implementation, either as a part of the project implementation, or as continuing efforts by local, regional and state agencies.

Attendees

Representatives of local governments within the St. Croix River Crossing project area and area transportation agencies participated in the workshop, as did national experts who presented their perspectives on the topics discussed. A list of local representatives is included in at the end of this report. Regional and national experts included the following:

- **Regional Experts**

John Adams, Professor and Chair
University of Minnesota – Department of Geography

John Adams' work investigates how large metropolitan areas evolve economically, socially and physically, including the forces that shape them and consequences for people within them. He was a lead researcher in the CTS-coordinated Transportation and Regional Growth Study, where he co-authored six major research reports.

Lance Neckar, Professor
University of Minnesota – Department of Landscape Architecture

Lance Neckar is a practicing landscape architect, historian and urban designer, as well as a Professor and Associate Dean of the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture. As part of the Urban Design Section of the CTS-coordinated Transportation and Regional Growth Study, he has investigated subdivision design approaches that can reduce or stabilize the number of vehicle miles traveled by residents.

John Kari, Planning Analyst
Metro Council

John Kari serves as Planning Analyst in the Community Development division of the Metropolitan Council. His responsibilities include coordination and facilitation of the Community Development division's outreach efforts and coordination of information and technical assistance activities. He was a key contributor in the development of the *2030 Regional Development Framework*, *Metropolitan Development Guide.*

David Fodroczi, AICP, Planning and Zoning Director
St. Croix County

David Fodroczi has served as the Planning Director of St. Croix County since 1990. During this time, he has overseen the development of the St. Croix County Development Management Plan, which addressed future growth projections for the county and examined alternative scenarios for guiding future growth in the county.

Steve Wilson, Senior Associate
SRF Consulting Group, Inc.

Steve Wilson has more than 20 years of experience in transportation planning, transportation needs analysis, travel forecasting, and transit planning throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area and the State of Minnesota. He prepared travel demand forecasts for the St. Croix River Crossing Project Environmental Impact Statement which identified a possible market for transit in the St. Croix valley.

Ferrol Robinson, Executive Vice President
SRF Consulting Group, Inc.

Ferrol has more than 25 years of experience in transportation planning and engineering, and is known for formulating innovative transportation strategies. Examples of his

project experience include the recent Mn/DOT Statewide Transportation Plan, the Interregional Corridor Study, and Minnesota's Surface Transportation Needs Study. Ferrol has assisted Mn/DOT, the Metropolitan Council and the Humphrey Institute in a variety of pricing studies in Minnesota, including the Toll Lane System Preliminary Feasibility Study, the Statewide Congestion/Road Pricing Study and the Humphrey Institute Value Pricing Study.

- **National Experts**

Randall Crane
University of California - Los Angeles

Randall Crane studies urban environmental and development issues at the UCLA School of Public Policy and Social Research, Department of Urban Planning. Some of these issues involve applied planning problems such as the provision of urban services in poor countries, governance reform, and transportation policy. Others involve more basic research on the cots and benefits of public policies, such as the influence of taxes on urban structure or the measure and meaning of sprawl.

Michael Replogle, Transportation Director
Environmental Defense

Michael Replogle manages Environmental Defense's initiatives to link transportation, land use, and natural resource plans and programs to enhance public health, equity and environmental quality. He is an expert on federal transportation law and policy, transportation impact analysis, and strategies to reduce traffic and pollution through incentives, smart growth, marketing and improved accountability.

Jonathan Gifford, Professor
George Mason University – School of Public Policy

Jonathan Gifford directs and teaches in the Master's Transportation Policy, Operations and Logistics program. His recent book, Flexible Urban Transportation, examines how US urban transportation policy could be more capable of adapting to rapid changes in the economy and society. His work has also focuses on methods of organizing technological cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries through coalitions and consortia.

Gerrit-Jan Knaap, Professor of Urban Studies and Planning, and Director of the National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education
University of Maryland

Gerrit-Jan Knaap's research interests include the economics and politics of land use planning, the efficacy of economic development instruments, and the impacts of environmental policy. He has published widely in academic journals, and he is the co-author or co-editor of several books on land use planning and urban growth.

Workshop Structure

Background information[2] regarding the relationship between land use (development) and transportation (travel demand) was presented as well as existing and anticipated future development plans for the Twin Cities metropolitan area as a whole, and St. Croix County, Wisconsin, in particular. The panel of national experts then responded to the information presented.

These presentations were followed by breakout sessions discussing: A) Regional Land Use, Transportation and Growth Issues, and B) Toolbox of Potential Transit, Pricing and Demand Management Options. Participants in each of the breakout sessions were asked to discuss a set of questions regarding the session topics as well as address administrative concerns regarding implementation of potential strategies. Results of these discussions were presented to the group as a whole, and responses were provided by the expert panel.

Presentation of Background Information

John Adams, Dept. Geography, University of Minnesota
Transportation Regional Growth Perspective

The recent CTS Regional Growth Study identified four trends which challenge travel demand forecasting efforts:

- On the demand side: the number of households and cars per household is rising faster than the general population; we have an enhanced desire to move and therefore generate more activities per household leading to more trips
- On the supply side: we are changing the location of our homes and our jobs frequently, but not necessarily concurrently – home location is no longer closely tied to job location. In previous decades, 80 percent of our activity used to be concentrated in the Twin Cities core; now activities are more geographically dispersed. Recreational travel is becoming a larger share of our daily and weekend trips, leading to complicated trips chains that are difficult to model.
- Our geographic settlement patterns are expanding: The Twin Cities now comprise 18 counties (compared to seven in the 1960s plus four counties in Wisconsin).
- Our present transportation systems are under stress: the interstate highway system was not originally designed for commuting traffic; economic activity patterns are changing and many of our roadways are beyond their anticipated life span.

[2] Copies of the presentations are available upon request.

- Better integrated comprehensive planning is needed for the region; our current piecemeal approach has result in fragmented planning. A variety of modes must be considered in transportation planning.
- Improved pricing systems are needed to reach equitable outcomes: businesses should pay for the infrastructure services they receive and consumers of new houses should pay the full price of services they enjoy.

Prof. Lance Neckar, Dept of Landscape Architecture, University of Minnesota
Sprawl, Ecosprawl and Transit Hydrotopia

- Joint Metropolitan Council/Wisconsin comprehensive planning is needed to promote land use densities in excess of seven units per acre, which is considered to be a transit-supportive density. Where these densities cannot be achieved, paratransit services should be examined to provide connections to larger transit systems (e.g., bus rapid transit).
- Inclusive, mixed use zoning that provides both origins and destinations within walkable distances should be considered. Need to look at water, soils, slopes, protection of vegetation, etc. when developing land use plans and designs.
- "Smart growth" strategies and hydrologically sensitive design reduce vehicle tiles Traveled through mixed uses and transit-oriented design. (The recent Cottage Grove study is an excellent example of this approach.)

John Kari, Metro Council
Twin Cities Regional Growth Trends

- The 19-county area, the 7 Metropolitan counties and the 12 adjacent, has a population of over 3.2 million people, 1.25 million households and 1.8 million jobs.

- Growth in the East Metro (centered on St. Paul and including five of the adjacent counties-Chisago and Goodhue in Minnesota and Pierce, Polk, and St. Croix in Wisconsin) is occurring along three transportation corridors: I-94/Highway 36, I-35E, and Highway 61. Overall in the 19-county region, growth is occurring along the corridor that extends from River Falls/Hudson in the east to St. Cloud in the west.

- In the 19-county area, one-third of the growth is occurring in the east, one-third in the northwest and one-third in the southwest. Minneapolis is now the geographic center of the region, with Saint Paul a smaller center of activity.

- Wisconsin counties are increasing their share of annual residential permits. Part of this expansion into Wisconsin is due to local growth policies and close proximity of communities on the east side of the St. Croix. St. Paul to Hudson is 17 miles while it is 20 miles to Hastings and 25 miles to Forest Lake.

- The 2000 Travel Behavior Inventory shows that trips per household and daily trip are up; persons per household are down; the travel day is spreading out and the peaks are getting bigger and longer.

- St. Croix County's population has doubled in size since 1970. More people are traveling to the metro area. In the 19-county area, except for Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, more than 50 percent of residents work outside the county of origin. As a result, average commute times have increased. Thirteen percent of St. Croix county workers come into Minneapolis/St. Paul; 3,300 arrive each day from the 3 Wisconsin counties into the Minneapolis Central Business District/University of Minnesota/St. Paul Central Business District.

David Fodroczi, St. Croix County
Growth Trends in St. Croix County, Wisconsin

- Current population of St. Croix County is 63,155 - a 12,900 increase since 1990 (26 percent). This level of population growth has exceeded year 2000 projections by 2,500 people, indicating this area is experience as faster rate of growth than anticipated.

- River Falls is the largest community and the only one with a population over 10,000 (including the portion of the city in Pierce County). Hudson and New Richmond are between 5,000 -10,000. The Towns of Hudson and Troy are the only non-urban towns with a population over 3,500. The pattern of population distribution has been in place for the past 30-40 years. Growth has been focused along the I-94 corridor and along TH 64, a secondary corridor. In the context of the Metro area, St. Croix County is similar to other collar counties.

- The 1970s and 1990s were periods of in-migration. The 2030 population projection of 106,026 reflects a relatively low rate of growth, given the size of the county. The greatest change in growth will continue to be in Hudson and the town of Hudson, with a secondary growth tier in Somerset, New Richmond and along the St. Croix River.

- The County recently completed a development management plan that examined a variety of development scenarios and a rigorous public involvement process to arrive at the current land use plan for the County.

Steve Wilson, SRF Consulting Group, Inc.
Lessons learned from the Travel Demand Modeling for the St. Croix River Crossing

The forecasts for the project reflect the previously presented development and commuter trends, resulting in demand of about 50,000 vehicles per day crossing the St. Croix River at Stillwater. The travel demand forecasts used a model that had been reviewed by a nation peer review panel. This panel strongly suggested that transit goals set forth in the scoping 'Alternative A' could not be achieved without a pricing component.

Demand modeling of transit alternatives showed that there is a potential for transit ridership demand by the year 2030:

- Total transit ridership 7,800 per day, with 4,900 crossing the St. Croix River (1,750 at Stillwater)
- If the Stillwater Bridge is priced, transit use increased to 10,325 per day, with 6,950 crossing the St. Croix River (3,275 at Stillwater)
- With value pricing plus growth redistribution, transit ridership decreased to 7,200, with fewer crossing river crossing the St. Croix River (3,925, with 1,750 at Stillwater); this is attributed to growth reductions occurring predominately in areas more likely to use transit (those experiencing worst congestion).

Scenarios attempting to estimate growth redistribution/reduction due to reduced accessibility showed very severe and probably unrealistic reductions, but demand still exceeded the capacity of the existing bridge.

Ferrol Robinson, SRF Consulting Group, Inc.
A Pricing Strategy for the St. Croix Crossing

Pricing (tolling) is possibly the single, most effective strategy for achieving important transportation objectives. Recent experience in the U.S., including San Diego (I-15), Houston (Katy Freeway, I-10) and Orange County, CA (SR 91), provide ample evidence and support for these statements:

- Congestion can be managed effectively by increasing toll rates when demand is high (peak periods) and lowering rates when demand is low.
- Bus service improvements in the I-15 corridor have been financed by toll revenues. Ridership increased by 25 percent between 1999 and 2001.
- Carpool use increased by 13 percent within three months of opening on I-15, with a 40 percent increase in three-or-more passenger carpools on SR-91.

- Travel time savings of 20 minutes reported by users. (Note: reported savings in travel times lower than actual.).

- 78 percent of low-income users support the priced lanes on I-15; a higher percentage of users are female and middle age. Many frequent SR-91 users are low income and many high-income users are infrequent users; low- and high-income drivers use the facility more than medium-income drivers.

- Users rate highly the perceived safety of this priced lane, with no effect on crash rate seen.

Conclusions/Lessons Learned: Pricing tends to shift more people to both transit and car-pools; causes route shifts from congested premium routes to less congested ones; and causes time-of-day shifts from peak periods to shoulders and off-peak periods. Additionally, revenues from pricing projects can be, and have been used to improve transit. Pricing demonstrates how changes in the way the transportation system is managed can significantly influence travel behavior and has resulted in better distribution of peak period demand.

One should avoid pricing all lanes. Increasing traveler options is a key to success. Support by users and non-users increases after implementation. Support among users is higher than among non-users.

Use is based on avoiding congestion and also on reliability and safety. Users are good at making decisions about anticipated congestion and whether to use the priced facilities on a given trip. About one-fifth of subscribers use the priced facility on a given day. Use has continued to increase yearly.

Pricing/Design Considerations for the St. Croix Crossing: In determining if a pricing strategy is feasible for the St. Croix Crossing, a number of factors must be considered, including but not limited to: physical design (lanes(s) to be priced, transition geometrics, location of electronic toll collection and communications equipment, etc.); provision of transit service; carpool occupancy requirement for toll-free use; hours of operation (all day vs. peak periods); types of vehicles allowed; use of variable or dynamic pricing to regulate demand; toll rate determination; level of enforcement and jurisdiction (use of electronic enforcement tools); use of electronic tolling (tags, transponders, readers); transponder acquisition and distribution methods and sites; estimated demand; estimated revenues and costs.

Panel Discussion

Randall Crane

Mr. Crane endorses better regional planning and consideration of pricing to manage the impacts of growth and traffic, but questions the ability to mitigate land use pressures.

Traffic problems have three causes:

1. Level of economic activity. In a way traffic is the price we pay for success.
2. Spatial patterns of where people live and the activities they are involved in. This is becoming less of a factor. Journey-to-work data show that people have a great deal of flexibility on when and how they commute to work.
3. Relative cost of the options: price and value of time affects mode split, time of trip, route and travel per se (i.e., how far, when, what mode).

He also noted that the private sector built the facility in CA (SR-91). Tolls are traditionally used to pay for a road, not to control demand; commute times here are now similar to Los Angeles and San Francisco; and, a strategic approach to eliminating bottlenecks can be implemented.

Michael Replogle

Mr. Replogle highlighted a few pieces of the information presented: He noted that there is a role for tolls. Tolls enable a suite of measures to be put in place including financing capacity expansions; using profits to finance transit, especially for underserved areas, using pricing to manage traffic by spreading the peak over time, which can reduce the need for future roadway capacity. Pricing provides a framework for users who value fast, reliable connections. Tolls as a revenue source can also be used for impact mitigation including purchasing land to provide buffers for noise or pollution hotspots, or for improving water quality by capturing runoffs. Tolls can also provide "mitigation" for those who cannot afford full toll by means of discounted tolls and transit passes for low-income travelers and subsidized demand-responsive transit and para-transit services, including shared ride taxis and vans and innovative ride-matching (such as the NuRide service in the metropolitan Washington, DC, region).

He noted there is a lack of institutional statewide structures to plan for and implement transit, as well as smart growth planning including measures to decrease car use and promote Transit Oriented Development. Planning grants can be used to improve the conversations and planning coordination between local and regional agencies and institutions and across state lines.

He questioned whether Mn/DOT or WisDOT would be the appropriate agency to implement tolling. It might be better to develop a regional authority; a public/private partnership would be appropriate to develop, implement and manage the project with support from DOTs. If community benefit agreements were made part of a project to

ensure enforceable impact mitigation, these could help to develop consensus and win support from many critics of a new bridge, including environmental groups.

Jonathan Gifford

Mr. Gifford noted that it is a good thing that many people are involved in this process. But it does get more complicated. It is appropriate that all potential impacts to communities be discussed. A broad inclusionary, not exclusionary, process is needed.

He suggested that the communities ask an important question: Is the problem that bad and is the quality of life that poor that it necessitates a solution? Observed behavior reflects what people value and we need to pay attention to that. It is not perfect, because it only reflects choices among available alternatives. We do not know whether they would choose an alternative that is not presently available. But removing the alternatives they are currently choosing is unlikely to improve overall quality of life. A good economy and high labor participation rates result in an increase in travel. Is reducing travel a worthwhile goal? The ability to participate in activities is a good thing. Do we want to make people less well off?

He noted that it is difficult to measure holding mobility constant while improving accessibility?

He also noted that we must agree that we have more complex trip chains that are hard to model and manage through traditional TDM options. These complex chains reflect lifestyles and choices we make.

We want to remove structural factors that promote current land use patterns and spread out development. To the extent such development reflects individual preferences, so be it. But to the extent that such development is an artifact of legacy zoning and land use codes, it is questionable. We need to enable walkability.

He commented that the issue of governance is a real problem in this situation with two states and two counties. It is not practical to think that we can redesign them to optimize their structure around land use planning and transit. These are governments that have a basis in constitutions, and cannot be redesigned on the fly to address transient problems. But expanding and building on regional planning organizations to deal with land use and transit in the area would be more effective.

The Stillwater bridge process represents a tremendous opportunity to make something that enhances the world it serves and deals with recreational issues and aesthetics; it can be non-destructive, with impact minimization and remediation (Glenwood Canyon,

Colorado, is an example of such a project). We have to recognize that the dividends of such investments may only come much later (e.g., the Virginia Metro line has resulted in tremendous benefits 40 years later).

Gerrit Knapp

Mr. Knapp observed that the Stillwater Bridge process being followed is not atypical. Sprawl will continue in western Wisconsin whether or not the bridge is built. We need to recognize that the automobile is here to stay, and while we can't build our way out of congestion, you can't "land use" your way out of congestion, either. The issue that we must deal with is managed growth and sprawl, or unmanaged growth and sprawl, and pricing is the best way to manage the transportation systems.

The best growth boundary is an impassable river. Not building the bridge may slow development, but if it does not occur in Wisconsin, it will redistribute itself elsewhere. It is likely that Wisconsin will not want to preserve open space for Minneapolis' residents.

Finally, he noted that communities should be concerned about converting the existing bridge to a pedestrian facility because it may affect the vibrancy of downtown Stillwater, which is a fabulous place.

Group discussion

Question: Having the right to make a trip without having choices other than driving is a problem. It excludes people who do not have cars and takes away their right to mobility choices.

Answer: Building-in options, whether today or in the future, is an important thing, but is not a guaranteed right. There is no constitutional right to transit-oriented development versus highway-oriented development. You cannot ignore the cost-effectiveness aspects. *(Gerrit Knapp)*

County government could value this need and find an opportunity to provide some measure of transit service, especially non-traditional transit. It doesn't benefit anybody to put in a transit system that won't get used. One problem in low-density areas such as this is that low-income households end up subsidizing high income for transit users through property taxes. Put the money where the need is. *(Jonathon Gifford)*

There ought to be a national goal ensuring equal access for all, including those without cars, to jobs and public facilities. We are a long way from it. "Right" is a social/legal compact, but can be decided at a local level. It can come from consensus discussions

around the bridge. Decisions can be enforceable through community benefit and project development agreements with regional authorities, who can be held accountable for delivering performance. *(Michael Replogle)*

Providing transit is a good idea, but what is it going to cost, what level of transit do we provide? What are the subsidies needed? Who pays for it? These are complicated questions and they have to be answered beforehand. *(Randall Crane)*

The question of cost is important. It is possible that transit could just promote sprawl to high-end bedroom communities. Paratransit may be a more flexible component to serve low-income, needy populations (for example, shared ride taxis and real-time ride-matching, using gift certificates for retail establishments – e.g., www.nuride.com). Need to look at rich array of strategies to address low-density, car-dependent areas. Provide an array of services. Examine issue regionally. *(Michael Replogle)*

Question: CTS looked at cost of transportation. Transit for Livable Communities then looked at subsidies for auto travel, which is significantly greater than for transit and for subsidies for parking by employers. Non-auto users do not receive these same benefits. There have been very few investments in fixed-guideway transit, so we do not see related land use changes. If we are looking at tolls, it should be done in the context of other river crossings and how to make it equitable across the region.

Answer: The deck is stacked in the car's favor and agrees that we need to share the cost. This is not an argument for extending subsidies, but rather to eliminate current subsidies. Politically, it has been found that tolls are more palatable when adding capacity. *(Randall Crane)*

Given the politics of pricing, it is difficult to price existing facilities. Facility users think that they have already paid for it through the gas tax, even when roads and driving are in fact subsidized out of general tax revenues. Local and state officials could redirect a greater portion of federal, state, and local highway funding towards transit and other travel choices and press transportation agencies to rely more on tolls and user fees to cover the direct and indirect costs of building, reconstructing, and maintaining roads, financing transit to operate on them, as well as mitigating environmental and community impacts of transportation. *(Michael Replogle)*

Two points: [I'm] not convinced that our development pattern would be different if the transportation cost was priced differently (point-of-use pricing). It's possible or even likely that the currently available array of services reflects public preferences. Second, people will divert to avoid tolls, thus shifting regional traffic to other facilities. If the new bridge is priced, must watch out for traffic diverting to I-94. *(Jonathon Gifford)*

Marginal cost changes based on miles traveled are better than lump-sum payments, such as a vehicle excise tax. Where there is political support for tax-base sharing, it is easier to get political support for mode sharing. *(Gerrit Knapp*)

Ironically, because we drive more, Americans spend twice as high a share of household income on transportation compared to other advanced wealthy countries where there are fewer subsidies for motor vehicle use and the cost to individuals of driving is far higher. This has resulted in different land use patterns, with Americans having far fewer transportation choices. How transportation is priced matters. Pay as you go works better. *(Michael Replogle)*

Breakout Sessions

Session A: Regional Land Use, Transportation and Growth Issues

Key discussion points included the following:

- Key environmental concerns resulting from development in western Wisconsin are potential impacts to water quality in the St. Croix River Valley and wildlife habitat. Land use plans should provide incentives to preserve or improve the quality of these key resources.

- Collaborative planning efforts are needed on a sub-regional basis to effectively address land use concerns. These collaborative efforts must include a clear vision of the development pattern that emerges from current land use plans and development regulations. If warranted, this collaborative effort should recommend revisions to land use plans and/or regulations to achieve agreed-upon goals. Critical resources should be monitored as development occurs.

- Concerns regarding land use planning in western Wisconsin are larger than can be reasonably addressed by the proposed St. Croix River Crossing project. Collaborative efforts to address land use concerns should be dealt separately from the proposed bridge project. Special consideration should be given to water use/ wastewater treatment and water quality concerns, as they are potential additional limitations to growth.

- The benefits resulting from a new river crossing and development in western Wisconsin should be recognized: reduced travel times, improved safety, potentially fewer trips as land uses in Wisconsin diversify, and an increased economic base for communities, for financing infrastructure improvements and for addressing environmental concerns.

- Tolling as a travel demand measure may be politically difficult at a state level.

- Efforts of St. Croix County and local communities to work through public processes to identify community vision regarding future growth, and resulting planning documents, should be recognized.

Recommended actions include the following:

- Establish a consortium or alliance of local planning entities to collaboratively address land use concerns in the St. Croix River Valley. Initially, consortia within each state should be established, working toward inter-state agreements. Public/private coalitions should also be explored.

- An authority to operate transit services in western Wisconsin should be established. The Duluth/Superior agreements should be examined as a possible model to examine. A Wisconsin DOT contract with Metro Transit to provide transit services in western Wisconsin should also be examined for feasibility.

- Collaborative planning efforts may be able to define appropriate "smart growth" strategies for St. Croix Valley communities: protection of environmental resources, land use patterns and densities that promote transit and reduce vehicle trips, and managed growth practices.

- Identify a proposed methodology for monitoring the status of key environmental resources within the St. Croix Valley and collecting data regarding development activity. Watershed measures are of particular interest. (Identify potential models for "smart growth" planning from similar communities.)

Session B: Potential Transit, Pricing and Demand Management Options

Key discussion points included the following:

<u>Pricing</u>

- Need to be clear about purpose for pricing (tolling) – optimize traffic flow (reduce congestion), revenue generation to finance project, lane capacity optimization, provide transit advantages, fund package of mitigation and community benefits.

    - construction funding -- would toll remain in place when bridge paid for?
    - private financing -- a minimum return on investment is needed
    - demand or growth management -- can a "valley-wide" approach be used including the I-94 bridge?
    - transit funding – how much funding is available? What is the demand?

- Tolls are a relatively new idea in this region and people need to be educated on the issue. If tolling used for a community benefits package, it maybe seen differently. Relationship to I-94 Bridge should be clarified.

- Pricing should be a part of a "community benefits agreement" package, in which tolls help achieve these and other benefits all these items and could include

pricing the I-94 bridge (though this may not be politically feasible in the near term).

- If pricing is not implemented initially, implementing pricing at a future time becomes very difficult. The best strategy may to be ensure that tolling infrastructure is in place up front, with maybe only a minimal toll in peaks and free off peak. Get the toll technology in place and let users become familiar with the mechanics. People don't mind incremental change, but do mind significant, sudden change.

- Study must examine political feasibility of the study. Current laws have some restrictions on what can be priced, and what you can do with the revenues. Pricing as a means of constructing the facility would likely be looked on favorably due to insufficient overall funding for transportation.

- Recreational trips often have two or more people in the car; this may be a reason not to exempt carpools from tolls in this corridor. Should explore opportunities for auto-free tourism. Swiss tourism has developed with very little access by car. It might work here, particularly with Somerset concerts, Stillwater Lumberjack Days, and so on.

<u>Transit</u>

- Transit needs to be tailored to needs of this area and done in conjunction with I-94. Make transit attractive: park and rides, TSM/TDM, transit stations, pedestrians and bikes, cost of parking, relationships with employers, event-related demand, recreational trips and opportunities for auto-free tourism should be examined. It is important that implementation and performance criteria for transit be in place from the outset.
- Transit demand appears stronger along the I-94 corridor, but transit could certainly preserve the long-term life of the river crossings. The biggest concern by transit advocates in the very long term is the pressure to build additional river capacity.

- A transit feasibility study should examine transit modes that can be used and phased transit types (paratransit demand – responsive). How can transit be made more attractive? Need to think ahead, designing things even if they are not going to be used immediately, more cost-efficient in the long run.

- We would really want to know how much transit pricing would buy. We would also need to know how much transit can be supported. Minimum densities and minimum service levels are a factor. Metro Transit looks at origin-destinations and whether demand is sufficient for three a.m. and three p.m. trips. Park/ride maybe more practical, people will drive to a point before the congestion, and

then are willing to get on transit. We would need to evaluate the I-94 corridor in conjunction with the TH 36 corridor. Feasibility study needs to get answers to these issues/questions.

- Paratransit/shared taxi service is provided in some St. Croix area communities. Shared-ride taxi and other paratransit can work better than a fixed route service in some cases. It is hard to keep people educated on those options and a challenge to operate successfully. Look at flexible provision of services – demand responsive, taxis and shared rides, like NuRide.
- A challenge is that there are two states, two counties, and a lack of a broad transportation agency with jurisdiction over the region. The Minnesota/Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission was an example of an inter-state group charged with cooperatively addressing river-related issues on both side of the St. Croix River.

Demand Management

- Transportation Management Districts (TMD) could be created on either side of the river. TMDs could be funded by public private partnership, tolls or tax revenues. The study should look at Jonathan Gifford's examples of regional transportation organizations – they often start with projects like this one. Legislation could follow to establish TMDs. Consider TSM/TDM strategy for major employers. Could you get employers to charge even a small amount for parking to reduce car use and make transit more attractive? Provide rider services to enhance the attractiveness of transit, cluster services such as daycare around transit to further reduce trips.

Panel Reaction and Discussion

Jonathan Gifford

Mr. Gifford suggested developing a consortium of interested people and organizations. Good resource materials on institutional mechanisms are available. Tolling can be used to maintain a certain level of demand - tolls do not have to be punitive. He recommended developing a package to help pay for the bridge and community benefits – this may enhance the political feasibility of tolling. The idea is to improve quality of life with amenities such as bike /pedestrian paths and parking areas for recreational vehicles. Tolling of the I-94 Bridge may not be politically feasible.

If waiting for the densities needed to support traditional transit is not practical, you may need to look at non-traditional transit options right now, particularly for transit dependent users. Setting aside of toll revenues for future transit will not happen - money won't wait around.

Look for win-win situations for the states and local communities; however, don't add so many requirements that it would sink the project. As the price tag for a facility goes up, the more important it is to ask what's important for society? Are the elements of mitigation package beneficial or are they not?

Regarding the concept of free parking as a subsidy for single occupant vehicles – I have a hard time seeing it as a subsidy. It is a private business decision based on customer requirements. There is a fine line between what we call subsidy and what is a good business practice. Who do we want to have control?

In summary, funding for construction of the project is up to states. Tolling of this bridge will lead to diversion of traffic and additional travel. It's not essential to put tolls on the bridge to make this a viable project.

Randall Crane

Mr. Crane questioned the ability to separate managing growth in region from the impacts of the bridge. He identified three elements to his definition of smart growth: comprehensive rational planning; best practices for compact development (mixed use, transportation plan management, higher densities); and collaborative planning mechanisms. He recommended increasing collaboration between states and between local governments and public and non-profit sector as well as bringing environmental lawyers directly into the process.

He noted best practices for compact development can conflict - higher densities can mean more travel. He suggested that traffic demand management (is the role to manage growth?) is better placed with the local agencies. However, he noted that if the new bridge will not be congested, it may not make sense to toll it.

Mr. Crane suggested that transportation through Stillwater is essential to vitality of its downtown. Appropriate traffic management strategies and sensitive design of the corridor require broad collaboration. He questioned how much of this discussion is about the bridge and how much is about managing growth?

Michael Replogle

Mr. Replogle disagreed that tolls on new bridge don't make sense – need to get toll in place earlier as it is too hard to do it later. He suggested that tolls may be an appropriate funding source to provide community benefits and/or transit services that may lead to broader support for the river crossing project. Funding for transit is

declining nationwide – we need to find new financing sources for transportation choices and support healthy communities. Money can help you get to yes.

Getting to yes will require everybody finding a way of giving something and getting something. Issues of tolls on this facility merit discussion – there are ways of working out the politics and working with existing user groups.

He further suggested that we need to create a different set of incentives for employers to modify the practice of providing free workplace parking which promotes single occupancy vehicle use and traffic problems. For example, a large office center in car-dependent Eden Prairie, Minnesota, got 1 out of 8 of its employees to switch from driving to carpooling or other means of commuting by offering a $3 a day cash-in-lieu-of-parking incentive.

Gerrit Knaap

Mr. Knapp acknowledged that it may be helpful to separate land use from bridge decision, but one must ensure, from a regional and local perspective, that the land use and transportation investment work well together.

Other Perspectives

Teresa Johnson (Town of St. Joseph, WI) – anticipate great amount of negative reaction to tolling from my community, see this as a major issue.

Barb Thoman (Transit for Livable Communities)- assuming a new bridge, there should be a way to look at this as non-expressway corridor, more like an eastern parkway, rather than an ugly strip mall corridor.

David Fodroczi (St. Croix County) – tolling might be more palatable if also applied to other areas of the region to promote equity across the system.

Ken Buckeye (MnDOT) – DOT policy on tolling is still evolving and will be informed by the MnPASS project underway on I-394.

Matt Hollinshead (Sierra Club) -- Congestion pricing is more efficient, but transit shouldn't be held hostage to tolls.

Next Steps

Workshop participants agreed that a transit feasibility study should be undertaken, as well as establishing a collaborative structure for further discussions on land use management. The knowledge gained, and ideas shared through this workshop will be

shared through a summary report. A videotape of the workshop as well as copies of the electronic presentations will be made available to interested parties.

Proposed Transit Feasibility Study Action Plan

The primary focus of the study should be directed at the transit needs of the river crossings (TH 36, I-94). The following issues should be considered in the development of a scope for further study:

1. Evaluate potential institutional impediments for operation transit services across independent autonomous jurisdictions. Describe models of border states in the US where these impediments have been overcome. Describe what institutional arrangements were put in place. Identify potential options for establishing an authority for transit service in western Wisconsin. Discuss the administrative, legal, financial and political benefits and drawbacks of each option. What might be the role of a public-private transit coalition?

2. Identify a structure for collaborative discussions on transit management, involving the appropriate agencies in Wisconsin and Minnesota, based on an examination of best practices. Identify institutional impediments to effective and comprehensive joint planning and potential strategies to overcome these impediments.

3. In consultation with a study oversight team, identify possible goals and objectives for transit service in western Wisconsin including basic mobility needs, work-related trips within western Wisconsin, work-related trips to the Twin Cities metropolitan area, and non-work trips.

4. Examine the short-, medium and long-term feasibility for transit in the St. Croix Valley given current and future growth expectations. Verify or revise previous projections of 7,800 riders per day as identified in the St. Croix River Crossing scoping process.

5. Describe proven steps that can be taken to improve the attractiveness and demand for transit. For example:
   - park and ride availability
   - bicycle and walk access and facilities
   - promotional free rides, passes and redeemable coupons

- attractive transit stations
- incorporation of ancillary transit-friendly uses, such as daycare services, dry cleaning and grocery stores

6. Evaluate the implementation of non-traditional transit services that are more aligned with current low-density development pattern and diverse origin-destination travel desires. The analysis should include a variety of flexible transit/paratransit services, such as:
   - Shared-ride taxi
   - Car-sharing
   - Demand-responsive
   - Route deviation
   - Fixed route with route deviation
   - Other.

7. Analyze level of transit service in peak and off-peak periods; geographic coverage, estimated demand, estimated capital and operation costs, estimated fares and subsidies.
8. Clearly identify, in each state, how transit is funded for site-specific services at the local, state, and federal levels.

Growth Management

The following measures should be considered:

1. Develop a monitoring process to track environmental changes prior and subsequent to construction of the new bridge. Specifically, track changes in density, level of growth and type of land use changes. Identify similar river crossings n the Metro Area and track similar changes. Use information to respond to environmental concerns through collaborative land use and infrastructure planning.
2. Identify a structure for collaborative discussions on transportation and growth management, involving the appropriate agencies in Wisconsin and Minnesota, based on an examination of best practices. Identify institutional impediments to effective and comprehensive joint planning and potential strategies to overcome these impediments.

Pricing/ Tolling

If pricing/tolling is to receive further discussion the following measures should be considered:

1. Clearly articulate the objectives for pricing in the St. Croix Crossing corridor and the priority of the objectives identified. Potential objectives include:
   - Manage traffic demand, optimize use of lanes, and manage current and /or future congestion.
   - Generate revenues to help finance bridge construction
   - Generate revenues to help fund transit and travel demand management and to help fund mitigation of the impacts of unanticipated growth (i.e. Community Benefits Package).
   - Other
2. Identify optional pricing strategies and describe measures of effectiveness for each:
   - Estimates of demand at various times of the day and toll levels
   - Estimates of revenues for various toll lane configurations.
   - Estimated capital and operating costs.
   - Estimated vehicle-hours, vehicle-miles, speeds and levels of service.
3. Determine the financial feasibility of constructing and operating the toll bridge(s), including timing.
4. Based on estimated revenues and costs, estimate level of funding available for transit improvement and for other elements of a Community Benefits package.
5. Identify performance criteria for when and how much transit would be implemented (e.g. development level threshold, bridge-crossing traffic demand, population/employment growth).
6. Analyze the desirability and feasibility of pricing recreational traffic. This would extend pricing outside of peak periods.
7. Evaluate equity issues associated with tolling Wisconsin travelers versus Minnesota travelers.
8. Consider development impacts of fostering greater growth in shopping and retail destinations on the Wisconsin side.

St. Croix Crossing Workshop Attendees

Local Government Representatives			
1.	David Fodroczi, Planning Director	St Croix County	Attended
2.	Jeff Durkan	St. Croix County Highway Commission	Attended
3.	Rich Loney	St. Croix County Highway Commission	Attended
4.	Joe Lux, Sr. Transportation Planner	Washington County	Attended
5.	Ann Pung-Terwedo, Sr. Planner	Washington County	Attended
6.	Theresa Johnson, Town Board Chair	Town of St Joseph	Attended
7.	Pam Donohoe, Clerk	Village of Somerset	Attended
8.	Bob Barbian, Planning Director	City of New Richmond	Attended
9.	Gloria Troester, Clerk	Village of North Hudson	
10.	Eric Johnson, City Administrator	City of Oak Park Heights	
11.	Mary McComber, City Council Member	City of Oak Park Heights	Attended
Agency Representatives			
12.	Don Kush	West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission	Attended
13.	Connie Kozlak	Metropolitan Council	Attended
14.	Arlene McCarthy Director of Service Development	Metro Transit	Attended
15.	Cheryl Martin	FHWA	Attended
16.	Sarah Koepke	FHWA	Attended
17.	Jeff Abboud	Wis/DOT District 6	Attended
18.	Terry Pederson	Wis/DOT District 6	Attended
19.	Rick Arnebeck	Mn/DOT	Attended
20.	Todd Clarkowski	Mn/DOT	Attended
21.	Bob Vockrodt	Mn/DOT	Attended
22.	Donna Allan	Mn/DOT	
23.	Ken Buckeye	Mn/DOT	Attended
24.	Mike Schadauer	Mn/DOT	Attended
25.	Dmitry Tomasevich	Mn/DOT	Attended
26.	Jennifer Conover	Mn/DOT	Attended
27.	Heather Lott	Mn/DOT	
28.	John Doan	Mn/DOT	
29.	Mike Sobolewske	Mn/DOT	
30.	Kent Barnard	Mn/DOT Metro Office of Communications	
31.	Mary McFarland	Mn/DOT Metro Office of Communications	Attended
32.	Tom Lovejoy	WisDNR	Attended
Non-Governmental Organizations			
33.	Mathews Hollinshead, St. Croix Stakeholder Representative	Sierra Club	Attended
34.	Barb Thoman, Program Director	Transit for Livable Communities	Attended
35.	Bill Berndt, St. Croix Stakeholder Representative	Wisconsin Realtors Association	Attended
36.	Steve Thorne, St. Croix Stakeholder Representative	Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy	Attended
37.	Jim Erkel, Land Use and Transportation Director	Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy	

Speakers and Panelists			
38.	Bob Johns, Director	Center for Transportation Studies	Attended
39.	John Kari, Planning Analyst	Metropolitan Council	Attended
40.	Jonathan Gifford, Professor, Public Management and Policy	George Mason University	Attended
41.	Randall Crane, Professor, Urban Planning,	UCLA	Attended
42.	Michael Replogle	Environmental Defense	Attended
43.	Gerrit Knapp, Professor, Urban Studies and Planning	National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education, University of Maryland	Attended
44.	Lance Neckar, Professor	Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Minnesota	Attended
45.	John Adams, Professor	Department of Geography, University of Minnesota	Attended
46.	Steve Wilson	SRF Consulting Group, Inc.	Attended
47.	Ferrol Robinson	SRF Consulting Group, Inc.	Attended
Consultants			
48.	Beth Bartz	SRF Consulting Group, Inc.	Attended
49.	Brett Danner	SRF Consulting Group, Inc.	Attended
Others			
50.	John Adams	University of Minnesota	Attended
51.	Tom Clarke	Citizen	Attended