

MINUTES OF THE THIRTEENTH MEETING

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

DATE: March 1, 2006
TIME: 9:30 a.m.
PLACE: Meeting Room A
Zoofari Conference Center
9715 W. Bluemound Road
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Committee Members Present

Frederick J. Patrie, Chairman..... Director of Public Works, Kenosha County
Sandra K. Beaupre Director, Bureau of Planning,
Division of Transportation Investment Management,
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
John M. Bennett City Engineer, City of Franklin
Larry H. Bruss..... Regional Pollutant and Mobile Source Section Chief,
(Representing Kevin Kessler) Bureau of Air Management,
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Newton Ellens Environmental Protection Specialist,
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Gary M. Evans Manager, Highway Engineering Division
(Representing Allison M. Bussler) Department of Public Works, Waukesha County
Paul A. Feller Director of Public Works, City of Waukesha
Thomas M. Grisa Director of Public Works, City of Brookfield
Dewayne J. Johnson..... Director, Southeast Region,
(Representing Donna L. Brown) Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Richard M. Jones Commissioner of Public Works, City of Racine
William A. Kappel Director of Public Works, City of Wauwatosa
Glenn M. Lampark..... Director of Public Works, Racine County
Michael M. Lemens Director of Engineering, City of Kenosha
Jeffrey J. Mantes Commissioner of Public Works, City of Milwaukee
Dwight E. McComb Planning and Program Development Engineer,
Federal Highway Administration,
U.S. Dept. of Transportation
Gloria L. McCutcheon Southeast Regional Director,
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Larry Moore Community Partnership Coordinator,
City of Milwaukee Housing Authority
Jeffrey S. Polenske City Engineer, City of Milwaukee
George A. Torres Director of Transportation and Public Works,
Department of Public Works, Milwaukee County
Sandra Rusch Walton..... Director, Injury and Violence,
Prevention Program, City of Milwaukee Health Department
Kenneth J. Warren Managing Director,
Milwaukee County Transit System

Staff Members and Guests Present

Robert E. BeglingerChief Transportation Engineer, SEWRPC
Daniel A. Boehm Manager of Research and Planning,
Milwaukee County Transit System
Douglas F. Dalton Urban Planning Manager,
Division of Transportation Investment Management,
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Philip C. Evenson..... Executive Director, SEWRPC
Mary HeuerCASH
David M. Jolicoeur..... Senior Engineer, SEWRPC
Karyn Rotker..... Staff Attorney, ACLU
James RowenCitizen
Ronald J. Rutkowski Transportation Planning Director,
Department of Public Works, Milwaukee County
Larry SandlerReporter, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
Gretchen Schuldt.....CASH
Albert StanekChief, Intercity Planning, Bureau of Planning,
Division of Transportation Investment Management,
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Aileen I. SwitzerProgram Administration Supervisor, Southeast Region
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Michael Vebber..... Deputy Director,
Milwaukee County Transit System
Rosemary WehnesOrganizer, John Muir Chapter, Sierra Club
Kenneth R. Yunker Deputy Director, SEWRPC

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Patrie welcomed all of those in attendance and indicated that roll call would be accomplished through a sign-in roster circulated by Commission staff.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 8, 2006, MEETING

Chairman Patrie asked if there were any questions or comments on the minutes of the Advisory Committee's twelfth meeting held on February 8, 2006. There being no questions or comments, a motion to approve the minutes as written was made by Mr. Kappel, seconded by Mr. Feller, and carried unanimously by the Committee.

CONTINUATION OF DISCUSSION LEADING TO A PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDED REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLAN FOR THE DESIGN YEAR 2035

Chairman Patrie noted that the Committee had been working towards recommending a preliminary plan which would be taken to public hearing, and at the last meeting was considering a TSM Plus Highway plan alternative. He then asked Mr. Yunker to review the TSM Plus Highway plan alternative and to identify what issues remain to be addressed by the Committee. Mr. Yunker's reviewed the work of the Committee to date and indicated there were three issues that the Committee should consider before proceeding to consider the TSM Plus Highway plan alternative as the preliminary recommended plan:

Implementation of Public Transit Recommendations

Mr. Yunker indicated that the Commission staff has received comments that the regional transportation plan recommend that all transit improvements be implemented prior to implementation of arterial street and highway system capacity expansion proposed in the plan. The following discussion took place regarding this issue:

1. Mr. Yunker noted that this proposal presents some problems. He stated that most capacity expansion is considered when reconstructing an arterial street or highway at the end of its useful life – including the regional freeway system. He added that this provides a one time opportunity to study and determine if design and safety improvements and additional capacity should be provided along that arterial street or highway as part of the reconstruction project at a marginal increase in reconstruction cost. He added that the recommended arterial street and highway improvements address the residual congestion which would remain even with a near doubling of transit service as recommended in the preliminary plan – including complete commuter rail and bus guideway/light rail systems – and with improvements to bicycle and pedestrian, travel demand management, and transportation systems management elements of the preliminary plan. Lastly, he noted that a proposal such as this pits one element of the plan against the others and conveys that they are in competition, when improvements and implementation with respect to all elements of the plan are needed to provide a comprehensive, multi-modal, balanced, high-quality transportation system in southeastern Wisconsin.
2. Mr. Mantes stated that the City of Milwaukee generally agrees with the Commission staff position on this issue. However, he noted that the level of transit service currently operated is less than the level of transit service provided in recent years. He asked about a timeline for implementation of the transit element of the plan. Mr. Yunker responded that between the years 1995 and 2000 transit service in the Region had increased by about 25 percent – from 65,000 to 81,000 vehicle-miles of service – but following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the downturn in the economy, transit service in the Region has declined to about 69,000 vehicle-miles of service in 2005. Comparatively, Mr. Yunker noted that about 16 percent of the total planned increase in off-street bicycle and pedestrian paths had been implemented, and about 17 percent of the planned arterial street and highway improvements and expansion projects had been implemented. He stated that up until the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the downturn in the economy, the implementation of the public transit improvements was substantially ahead of the implementation of the other elements of the plan. Mr. Yunker added that finding a dedicated funding source for public transit would be important to implementing the public transit element of the plan and that the recently created Regional Transit Authority (RTA) for Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine Counties would be examining sources of dedicated transit funding. Mr. Yunker noted that the timeline for implementing the plan proposes a steady average annual 2.5 percent increase for transit plan implementation.
3. Mr. Grisa stated that the plan was very specific, detailed, and aggressive with respect to expansion of public transit. He stated that it was technically sound and appropriate to recommend that all elements of the plan be implemented, without prioritizing which element is to be implemented first.
4. Mr. Bruss noted that the regional transportation plan by law is advisory and asked about the implications of recommending that the transit element of the plan be implemented prior to implementation of the arterial street and highway element of the plan. Mr. Yunker responded that one implication could be that no arterial street and highway improvement or expansion projects would be included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for southeastern Wisconsin until the entire transit element of the plan is implemented. Mr. Evenson noted that the TIP is the

only connection the Commission has between transportation planning and project implementation. He added that theoretically, the TIP could be a tool to hinder implementation of planned projects, but not a tool to encourage or mandate implementation of other planned projects. Mr. Evenson stated that a recommendation such as the one suggested may further divide the transit and highway advocate communities when those advocate communities should be focused on coalition building to ensure that all elements of the plan are implemented.

5. Mr. Warren noted that as much as he would like to agree with the suggestion to implement all transit improvements first, he cannot due to its lack of technical merit. He then expressed his concerns about the implications of not implementing the public transit element of the plan, noting the reductions in service over the last five years. He added that if an arterial street or highway is not improved or expanded, automobile drivers would still get to their destination, but perhaps arrive a few minutes later. If public transit is not improved, the public transit riders may not be able to get to their destination at all. Mr. Warren added that the new Regional Transit Authority (RTA) needs to propose a dedicated source of local funding, and it was important as well for the State to return to its role as a partner in the funding of public transit improvements. He stated that he believed the public transit element was sound, and a lack of political will hinders the implementation of the public transit element of the plan. With respect to the State returning to being a partner in the funding of public transit improvements, Mr. Yunker noted that the State had historically funded 40 to 45 percent of transit operating costs, and had increased funding to address inflation in the cost of providing public transit, and to provide for transit improvement and expansion. He added that State transit funding to the Milwaukee County Transit System increased by 29 percent from the years 1995 to 2000, and by 70 percent for all other transit systems in the Region, but only five percent between the years 2000 and 2005 for the Milwaukee County Transit System and by 12 percent for all other transit systems in the Region. Mr. Yunker noted that the 2003-2005 State budget provided no funding increase for public transit Statewide and that an annual four to five percent increase may be essential to address rising costs, including inflation and real increases in fuel costs, and to support system improvement and expansion.
6. Mr. Moore asked about the impact an improved public transit system in the Region has on traffic congestion. Mr. Yunker responded that during plan development, the Commission staff first examined the impact that the public transit element – including complete commuter rail and bus guideway/light rail systems – and that improved bicycle and pedestrian, travel demand management, and transportation systems management elements would have on average weekday traffic and traffic congestion. He stated that arterial street and highway system improvement and expansion projects were then considered to address the residual congestion which would remain even with the planned public transit improvements and the other elements of the plan. He noted that a plan alternative which achieved better land use development, expansion of public transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and transportation systems and travel demand management systems, but did not include arterial street and highway improvements may be expected to only marginally reduce a projected doubling of congestion by the year 2035.
7. Mr. Lampark asked about the role of the recently created RTA, and its role in the implementation of the public transit element of the plan. Mr. Yunker responded that the RTA is currently considering local dedicated funding sources for public transit. Mr. Patrie noted that he had attended the first meeting of the RTA and that they will be looking for groups such as this Committee to provide support regarding the need for local dedicated funding.
8. Mr. Bennett stated his opposition to the suggestion to recommend implementation of the public transit element of the plan prior to implementation of the arterial street and highway element of the plan. He added that local units of government compete Statewide for highway funds and to

not go after them may be a mistake. Mr. Mantes responded that transportation funds Statewide do have a limit, and public transit may not receive an appropriate share of those funds. He noted that there are many locations throughout the Region where residents do not have access to a personal automobile and are dependent upon public transit. Mr. Evenson stated that funds available for public transit are being “left on the table” – specifically noting that Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds are available for public transit in southeastern Wisconsin but are not always aggressively sought for public transit projects in southeastern Wisconsin owing to a lack of a dedicated source of local funds for transit.

9. Mr. Grisa noted that requiring improvements to the public transit system to be implemented first would prohibit the implementation of planned road improvements in rural and suburban areas of the Region as those areas may not currently be served and may not be planned to be served by public transit. Mr. Torres added that there is a risk relating to implementing all public transit improvements first. He concurred with previous statements that public transit needs a dedicated local funding source.
10. Mr. Polenske agreed that the implementation of the recommended arterial street and highway improvements needed to proceed simultaneously with implementation of the other elements of the plan. He added that at the same time, there is concern regarding funding being available to implement the public transit recommendations. He stated that the plan should emphasize the need to implement each element of the transportation system.
11. Mr. Patrie asked if there was consensus regarding support of the RTA and local dedicated public transit funding. Mr. Grisa moved to direct the Commission staff prepare draft text indicating support for dedicated transit funding and the RTA. Mr. Jones seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

[Secretary’s Note: The text is included in the discussion of the transit element of the final recommended plan.]

12. Mr. Yunker suggested that the text also address the need for the State to return to providing public transit funding adequate to address inflation in transit service costs and to provide for service improvement and expansion. Mr. Jones asked what the ramifications of requesting this of the State would have on General Transportation Aids (GTA). Mr. Evenson noted that this would be a State policy decision, adding that State transportation funds allocated to GTA in Wisconsin are substantially greater than those allocated to public transit.
13. Mr. Warren moved to have the Commission staff prepare draft text for inclusion in the report requesting the State to return to its role as a partner in the funding of the preservation, improvement, and expansion of public transit in Wisconsin. Mr. Torres seconded the motion with an amendment which would indicate that the State do this without compromising other local transportation funding. Mr. Warren accepted the proposed amendment. Mr. Johnson asked if the Committee had enough information to make an educated decision on this matter, specifically with respect to the amount of funding the State provides relative to public transit and to GTA. Mr. Warren asked the Commission staff to try to present this information to the Advisory Committee and withdrew his motion.

[Secretary’s Note: The Commission staff has included text regarding the State’s role in funding public transit in the public transit element of the final plan.]

Recommendation Regarding the Widening of 19 Miles of Freeway in the City of Milwaukee

Mr. Yunker indicated that the second item to be addressed by the Committee was its recommendation with respect the widening to provide additional traffic lanes on 19 miles of freeway in the City of Milwaukee – IH 94 between the Zoo Interchange and the Marquette Interchange, and IH 43 between the Mitchell Interchange and Silver Spring Drive. He added that these 19 miles of freeway are likely to be the most controversial portion of the plan. He noted that the Advisory Committee had begun discussing this issue at their last meeting. The following discussion took place regarding this matter:

1. Mr. Grisa noted that with respect to Attachment A to the February 8, 2006, minutes that the table conveys the votes of the Regional Freeway Reconstruction Study Advisory Committee relevant to these nineteen miles, but it does not convey how the final plan was formed, which he said this Committee should understand. He noted that the Commission staff position during the regional freeway study, after taking the preliminary recommended freeway reconstruction plan to public hearing, was that these 19 miles of freeway widening not be included in the final plan, but rather be addressed as an alternative as the Wisconsin Department of Transportation conducts preliminary engineering and environmental assessments attendant to the reconstruction of these 19 miles of freeway, and that should the final recommendation from the preliminary engineering and environmental assessment include the widening of some or all of these 19 miles of freeway from six to eight traffic lanes, the regional transportation plan would be amended by the Commission at that time. He further stated that the Advisory Committee to the regional freeway system reconstruction study on a split vote rejected the staff recommendation and recommended the inclusion of these 19 miles in the final plan.
2. Mr. Lampark stated that from a technical standpoint, these 19 miles should be treated the same as the other planned widenings on the regional freeway system and moved to include the planned widening of these 19 miles of freeway in the City of Milwaukee in the preliminary recommended plan. Mr. Evans seconded the motion.
3. Mr. Mantes noted that there is a resurgence of development and growth in the City of Milwaukee, and questioned whether the widened freeways may hinder this development. He stated that these 19 miles would be the most expensive to implement and that the City supported during the regional freeway study, and continues to support, the Commission staff recommendation to not include these 19 miles in the plan and that they be studied as an alternative during preliminary engineering.
4. Mr. Lampark asked if these 19 miles of freeway were any different from any other planned freeway widening in terms of the alternatives which would be examined during preliminary engineering. Mr. Yunker responded that no planned arterial street or highway improvement proceeds directly from the regional transportation plan to construction. He stated that each segment of the regional freeway system as it is reconstructed will undergo preliminary engineering and environmental studies which will examine a number of alternatives including a no-build alternative, alternatives which include rebuilding the freeway segment to modern design standards, and alternatives which include the provision of additional traffic lanes and alternatives which do not include additional lanes. Mr. Yunker added that there will also be some alternatives which as well consider a compromise to meet certain design standards. He further stated that with respect to the range of alternatives considered during preliminary engineering and environmental study that each segment of the freeway system will be treated the same, and if those studies conclude something other than what is recommended in the regional transportation plan, then the plan will be amended at that time. Mr. Evenson noted that the Commission staff recommendation was intended to find a middle ground, recognizing that no matter what the

regional plan recommends, the WisDOT will be required to examine an entire range of alternatives.

5. Ms. McCutcheon noted that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources voted against these 19 miles during the conduct of the regional freeway system reconstruction study and intended to be consistent with that position and would therefore be voting against them again today. She distributed a letter noting the Department's position.

[Secretary's Note: The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' letter is included with these minutes as attachment A.]

6. Mr. Grisa suggested that the planned widening of these 19 miles should be included in the preliminary recommended plan, so that residents whose homes may be purchased for freeway reconstruction are not surprised should the lanes be proposed to be constructed in the future. Mr. Yunker reiterated that at the systems planning level, the Commission staff has only prepared an estimate of the number of homes which may be impacted, and cannot identify specific properties which may be impacted. He added that the Commission staff recommendation during the regional freeway reconstruction study was an attempt to reach a compromise on this very difficult matter.
7. Mr. Johnson stated that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation respected everyone's comments with respect to the 19 miles of freeway widening in the City of Milwaukee. He added that at this time decisions are not being made with respect to what will actually be constructed, and that the Department's position at this time was to recommend inclusion of the 19 miles in the preliminary recommended plan. He stated that the Department had prepared a letter noting their position.

[Secretary's Note: The Wisconsin Department of Transportation letter is included with these minutes as attachment B.]

8. Mr. Kappel noted that the City of Milwaukee had in the past opposed the expansion and asked the City representatives to restate those reasons. Mr. Mantes responded that City arterial routes which parallel the freeway currently have capacity to carry more traffic. He stated that more extreme freeway congestion could be tolerated on the 19 miles of freeway, and any traffic diverting from the freeways to parallel routes could be tolerated. He added that these 19 miles were unique, being located in an older urban environment.
9. Mr. Moore noted that in frequent conversations with the constituents of the City of Milwaukee, the perception is that the freeway system is congested only during the a.m. and p.m. peak periods.
10. Mr. Bennett suggested this Committee stay focused on technical merit. He stated that the plan should consider compromises, but only where necessary based upon technical analysis. Mr. Jones added that while Committee members have been appointed by local elected officials, the Committee should consider decisions based on what would be expected to benefit the entire Region.
11. Mr. Bruss indicated the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' concern that widening freeways and reducing freeway travel times would induce travel which would lead to increases in motor vehicle emissions and worsen air quality in southeastern Wisconsin. Mr. Yunker responded that the Commission's travel simulation models do include the implications of induced travel – route change, trip length, and mode choice – and that they are included in the estimates of

motor vehicle emissions prepared by the Commission staff. He added that projected future traveltimes were generally about the same as current traveltimes.

12. Ms. Walton noted that the 19 miles of freeways in the City of Milwaukee are unique as they are located in a very urban area and may have a large number of impacts on the built environment. She stated that there had to be a better way to approach this issue and that the perception is that if the widening is shown on the plan that it is a done deal and that is the only alternative considered during preliminary engineering. Mr. Patrie responded that the current plan recommends eight lanes on IH 94 in Kenosha County and that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation is currently conducting preliminary engineering studies on that segment right now and that no decision has been made yet on whether or not to construct with additional lanes. Mr. Evenson stated that the key may be the perception – noting that in the City of Milwaukee the perception seems to be that it is a done deal and that the freeways will be widened when in fact that is no the case.
13. Mr. Jones suggested amending the motion on the floor to direct the Commission staff to prepare draft text to be included on the planned functional improvement maps indicating that no plan recommendation proceeds directly to implementation and that alternatives would be considered during preliminary engineering, and that a final decision as to whether and how a project will proceed to implementation will be made at the conclusion of preliminary engineering. Messrs. Lampark and Evans accepted the amendment.

[Secretary's Note: The Commission staff has included the following text on each of the seven county maps which show the functional arterial street and highway improvements in the preliminary recommended year 2035 regional transportation plan:

“Each proposed arterial street and highway improvement and expansion, and, as well, preservation project, would need to undergo preliminary engineering and environmental studies by the responsible State, county, or municipal government prior to implementation. The preliminary engineering and environmental studies will consider alternatives and impacts, and final decisions as to whether and how a plan and project will proceed to implementation will be made by the responsible State, county, or municipal government (State for state highways, county for county highways, and municipal for municipal arterial streets) at the conclusion of preliminary engineering.”

The following text has also been added to the Milwaukee County map:

“The 127 miles of freeway widening proposed in the plan, and in particular the 19 miles of widening in the City of Milwaukee (IH 94 between the Zoo and Marquette Interchanges and IH 43 between the Mitchell and Silver Spring interchanges), will undergo preliminary engineering and environmental impact statement preparation by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. During preliminary engineering, alternatives will be considered, including rebuild as-is, various options of rebuild to modern design standards, compromises to rebuilding to modern design standards, rebuilding with additional lanes, and rebuilding with the existing number of lanes. Only at the conclusion of preliminary engineering would a determination be made as to how the freeway would be reconstructed.”]

There being no further discussion on the widening of 19 miles of freeways in the City of Milwaukee, Mr. Patrie noted that the Committee had a motion on the floor to include the 19 miles of widening in the preliminary plan with text indicating that alternatives will be considered during preliminary engineering. The motion passed by a vote of 18 ayes and 3 nays with Ms. McCutcheon, Mr. Bruss, and Mr. Ellens voting no.

Consideration of Additional Sections of Appendix E – Consideration of Possible New Freeway Segment Connecting IH 43 and USH 45 in Northern Milwaukee County/Southern Ozaukee County and Consideration of Possible New Freeway Segment Connecting IH 94 in Kenosha County with IH 94 in Waukesha County

Mr. Yunker indicated that the third item the Committee needed to address was the additional new possible freeway segments that Committee members had asked Commission staff to evaluate. He noted that the Commission staff had completed that evaluation and the text documenting that evaluation had been transmitted to the Committee prior to the meeting. There was no discussion of this topic and Mr. Grisa moved to approve the Commission staff recommendation not to further consider these possible new freeway segments. Mr. Feller seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Yunker noted that the Commission staff would solicit public comment on the TSM Plus Highway plan alternative as the preliminary recommended plan in April 2006, and provide that comment to this Committee at its next meeting, most likely in early May 2006. The thirteenth meeting of the Advisory Committee on Regional Transportation Planning was adjourned at 11:10 a.m. on a motion by Mr. Lemens, seconded by Mr. Mantes, and carried unanimously by the Committee.

[Secretary's Note: Subsequent to the meeting, Chairman Patrie provided to the Commission staff a copy of a joint statement issued by the American Civil Liberties Union, the Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin, Citizens Allied for Sane Highways, the Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing council, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – Milwaukee which had been provided to him. A copy of that joint statement and the Commission staff response is included with these minutes as Attachment C.]

Signed

Kenneth R. Yunker
Recording Secretary



State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Jim Doyle, Governor
Scott Hassett, Secretary
Gloria L. McCutcheon, Regional Director

Southeast Region Headquarters
2300 N. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53212-0436
FAX 414-263-8606
Telephone 414-263-8500
TTY Access via relay - 711

March 1, 2006

File Ref: 1600

Mr. Philip C. Evenson, Executive Director
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
W239 N1812 Rockwood Drive
P.O. Box 1607
Waukesha, WI 53187-1607

Dear Mr. Evenson:

In April 2003, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources submitted a position statement and letter on the *Regional Freeway System Reconstruction Study for Southeastern Wisconsin*. The position statement and letter stated that the Department's public policy role on the Southeastern Wisconsin Freeway Senior Advisory Committee was to protect the environment while enhancing the state's economy and maintaining a high quality of life. We supported the regional perspective of a roadway within the general footprint of the existing freeway system. We gave qualified support for reconstructing the regional freeway system to modern design standards and to expanded capacity on 108 miles. We did not support the full 127 miles of freeway expansion because it would result in increased adverse environmental impacts beyond the updated design and safety improvements.

The Department could support capacity expansion beyond updated design standards and safety improvements provided any expansion would minimize impacts to environmental corridors and recreational facilities, right-of-way requirements, and neighborhoods and alleviate extreme congestion. The Department supports the following transportation planning guidelines:

- Highway capacity expansion alternatives should maximize safety and design elements consistent with regional land use and transit plans.
- Highway capacity expansion should conform to regional air quality standards.
- Highway expansion alternatives should support a centralized in-fill development pattern to minimize environmental impacts.
- Local and neighborhood considerations should be factored in when evaluating alternatives.
- Consideration of highway capacity improvement and expansion should be the last measure in addressing traffic congestion.

Our vision for sound land use and transportation planning is to minimize any adverse environmental impacts, consider long-term consequences, be suitable for the location, maximize existing infrastructure, support a centralized development pattern, consider community costs and public input, and enhance the community and regional character. We are pleased to be part of the planning process and remain ready to participate in any future dialogue.

Sincerely,


Gloria McCutcheon, P.E.
Regional Director

cc: Dewayne Johnson, Southeast District-DOT
Al Shea- AD/5
Kevin Kessler- AM/7

John Melby- SER
Mike Thompson- SER



Division of Transportation
System Development
Southeast Regional Office
141 N.W. Barstow Street
P.O. Box 798
Waukesha, WI 53187-0798

Attachment B

Jim Doyle, Governor
Frank J. Busalacchi, Secretary
Internet: www.dot.wisconsin.gov

Telephone: (262) 548-5903
Facsimile (FAX): (262) 548-5662
E-Mail: waukesha.dtd@dot.state.wi.us

February 28, 2006

Phil Evenson, Director
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
W239 N1812 Rockwood Drive
P.O. Box 1607
Waukesha, WI 53188

Dear Mr. Evenson,

As a voting member of the Technical Advisory Committee responsible for the update of the *Regional Transportation System Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin: 2035* the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) will vote against acceptance of the portion of Appendix E recommending removal of the 19-miles of recommended capacity expansion identified in Milwaukee County.

As was discussed at the February 2006 meeting, SEWRPC's long-range plan offers a fundamental basis and analysis of transportation needs forecasted over the next 30 years. As such, the plan represents a technically informed and responsible recommendation for future regional needs. The plan is therefore a recommendation, not a foregone conclusion of future decisions. As needs are reviewed and projects scheduled, the Department, in conjunction with its stakeholders will move forward to deliver the most appropriate improvement to address transportation needs for the region and the state. Removal of the 19-miles as a recommended future need within the region would result in an incomplete long-range view of transportation for the southeast region.

We look forward to working with SEWRPC and our regional stakeholders to best meet our transportation needs. If you have any questions, please contact Donna Brown, Systems Planning Manager at 262/548-8713.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dewayne Johnson".

Dewayne Johnson, PE
Director, SE Region

Joint Statement by the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin, the Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin, Citizens Allied for Sane Highways, the Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – Milwaukee

February 2006

We feel compelled to express our concerns about the inadequacy of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's analysis of the impacts on low income and minority residents of transportation alternatives SEWRPC is preparing to recommend for the region.

The commission's Regional Transportation Planning Advisory Committee recently approved the impact analysis.

Unfortunately, SEWRPC's negligence in preparing this part of its Regional Transportation Plan could have long-term, negative affects on Milwaukee. The analysis ignores important issues that should have been considered and given great weight in the resulting report.

SEWRPC officials were well aware of these issues. Representatives from the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin, the Black Health Coalition, Citizens Allied for Sane Highways, the Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – Milwaukee Chapter have been meeting with SEWRPC officials for several months partly to discuss ways the MPO can improve its methodology in measuring community impacts and partly to discuss ways SEWRPC can improve its public outreach efforts.

We requested, among other things, that SEWRPC incorporate detailed demographic data on low income and minority households in its impact analyses of all aspects of the transportation plan. We specifically requested SEWRPC address whether and how low income and minority communities would benefit from particular projects (to consider, for example, not just whether or not such communities are located near a freeway, but whether these communities will benefit from highway projects when disproportionate numbers of their members do not have cars). As part of this analysis we requested that the plan consider the impacts of doing "Transit First" – i.e., implementing the transit recommendations before finalizing highway-widening plans. In addition, we requested that SEWRPC consider such issues as land use, housing and employment patterns of low income and minority families, as those issues clearly relate to transportation needs.

We also requested that SEWRPC examine whether communities already experiencing high rates of asthma and other air quality-related illnesses would experience a

disproportionate burden of environmental impacts from the proposed transportation projects simply because their “base burden” already is so great.

SEWRPC did none of the meaningful analysis we repeatedly requested. Its analysis does not even define the specific potential impacts it is reviewing.

In addition, despite repeated assurances by SEWRPC officials that the agency was sincere in its desire to improve both methodology and community outreach, none of the groups involved in the meetings with SEWRPC was notified that the draft impact analysis was complete or that it was being forwarded to the Regional Transportation Planning Advisory Committee.

SEWRPC’s behavior is somewhat less than we would expect if the agency were meeting with us in good faith.

We believe that SEWRPC’s actions and its analysis are unacceptable.

The agency’s draft analysis is posted at
http://www.sewrpc.org/regionalplans/pdfs/reg_tran_sys_plan/pr-49_draft_appendix_c.pdf

March 29, 2006

Mr. Lee Holloway, Chairman
Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Milwaukee County Courthouse
919 North Ninth Street, Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dear Mr. Holloway:

This will respond to your letter of March 8, 2006, forwarding to the Commission staff for review and comment a statement submitted to you by the Citizens Allied for Sane Highways (CASH), on behalf of it and several other organizations. The statement expresses concerns about the adequacy of the Commission's Federally required analyses of the impacts on low-income and minority residents attendant to updated alternative transportation plans now being taken to public hearing. Before commenting on the points raised in the statement submitted to you, we would like to make the following general observations concerning this matter:

1. The Commission will strive to do all it can with the resources that it has available to comply with the letter and the spirit of the "environmental justice" requirements set forth in Federal law attendant to transportation planning. Moreover, we will try to comply with the spirit of those requirements in other Commission regional planning efforts as well. The essence of the Federal "environmental justice" requirements is that "high and adverse" effects of transportation system development proposals, should such effects be found to disproportionately impact low-income and minority populations, be avoided, minimized, and/or mitigated. In other words, while there may be adverse impacts attendant to transportation system development proposals, the transportation agency concerned has a responsibility to document, using the best available data, whether or not such adverse impacts fall significantly more upon low-income and minority groups than upon those members of the public who are not in those groups. In addition, low-income and minority populations are to receive the benefits of the transportation system, and to be given opportunities to participate in the planning process.
2. Commission regional plans are done at what is called the "systems" level of planning. As such, analyses of impacts of all kinds are necessarily general in nature and represent the best estimates of impacts that would actually be incurred should transportation proposals be implemented through project design and construction. No one should expect Commission impact analyses on system plans to be at the depth and level of precision found in project-level planning, engineering design, and environmental impact statement preparation.
3. The Commission's planning processes are continuous in nature. While at present we are busily engaged in completing and readying for Commission adoption an updated regional transportation system plan, that plan must be periodically reviewed, reaffirmed, and updated and extended to new design years. Thus, the plans and analyses prepared should be viewed as iterative in nature, with each iteration improving upon the last. We might note in this respect that the "environmental

justice” document recently released by the Commission staff as part of the public hearing process on an updated and extended regional transportation system plan remains a draft at this writing, with the intent that comments made by CASH representatives and others will result in modifications to the draft before it is provided to the Regional Planning Commission for its consideration. A copy of this draft is enclosed as Exhibit A.

4. In a recent meeting with CASH and representatives of other groups, we agreed to find a way to institutionalize the involvement of minority and low-income individuals in the Commission planning processes. One possible vehicle is the creation by the Commission of an Advisory Committee charged with helping to ensure that “environmental justice” and related analyses conducted by the Commission are appropriate and adequate and that documents attendant thereto are complete. This Committee would be populated with members of low-income and minority groups.

The following comments specifically respond to the points raised in the statement submitted to you:

1. **We request... that SEWRPC incorporate detailed demographic data on low-income and minority households in its impact analyses of all aspects of the transportation plan.**

The data being used in the Commission’s present analysis that focuses on the Federal “environmental justice” requirements are set forth on Maps C1 through C6 and Tables C1 through C3 in the document attached as Exhibit A. It is the same data used in prior Commission work since 2000, including the regional freeway study. These data are taken from the U.S. Census of Population and Housing conducted in 2000, and represent the most detailed data available for this purpose. These data are believed to be adequate for preparing the Federally required “environmental justice” analysis in conjunction with the forthcoming updated and extended regional transportation system plan.

2. **We specifically request SEWRPC address whether and how low-income and minority communities would benefit from particular projects (to consider, for example, not just whether or not such communities are located near a freeway, but whether these communities will benefit from highway projects when disproportionate numbers of their members do not have cars).**

As noted above, the Federal “environmental justice” requirements pertain particularly to “high and adverse” effects of development proposals. The Commission also analyzes the benefits of highway and transit recommendations included in proposed regional plans with respect to low-income and minority populations. The transit benefits attendant to the preliminary plan recommendation that would nearly double transit services in the Region over the next thirty years are graphically shown in Maps 1 and 2 of the enclosed Newsletter and Maps C28 through C36 of Exhibit A. Rapid and express transit service in particular is proposed to serve low-income and minority populations and most of the Region’s major economic activity (job) centers and many of the other scattered locations of jobs as well. Clearly, many positive benefits would accrue to low-income and minority group individuals if these transit proposals are implemented. While it is true that low-income and minority group members are disproportionately represented in that subset of the regional population that is without access to private motor vehicles, it is also true that about 70 percent of such individuals do have access to private motor vehicles and would significantly benefit from improved highway transportation facilities, including the provision of additional freeway lanes on the most congested segments of the regional freeway system

3. **We requested that the plan consider the impacts of doing “Transit First” – i.e., implementing the transit recommendations before finalizing highway-widening plans.**

One of the alternative regional transportation plans now being taken to public hearing is called the TSM plan, where the letters TSM stand for “transportation system management.” In effect, this plan could be subtitled a “transit first” plan since this alternative does not include freeway or surface arterial highway-widening or expansion, but recommends doubling transit service. Those who would advocate devoting available transportation funds to first expand transit facilities and services should focus their support on this plan alternative. The Commission’s Technical Advisory Committee on this matter did not select the TSM plan as its preference for a new regional transportation plan. The preliminary recommended plan does propose this doubling of transit service, but also recommends street and highway capacity expansion to address congestion which would not be relieved by transit expansion.

4. **We requested that SEWRPC consider such issues as land use, housing and employment patterns of low-income and minority families, as those issues clearly relate to transportation needs.**

The Commission is cognizant of development patterns of low-income and minority families as the material included in Exhibit A graphically demonstrates. The transit plan being readied for adoption is intended to help low-income and minority individuals gain access to jobs and other activities and opportunities throughout the Region. Moreover, the focus is broad in nature, seeking to improve accessibility of those individuals not just to entry level jobs, but to all types of jobs.

5. **We also requested that SEWRPC examine whether communities already experiencing high rates of asthma and other air quality-related illnesses would experience a disproportionate burden of environmental impacts from the proposed transportation projects simply because their “base burden” already is so great.**

Within the context of regional transportation planning, the Commission is able to deal only with transportation related air pollutant emissions. As shown in Table 7, page 19 of the Newsletter, harmful emissions of both volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides -- the precursors of ozone -- from transportation sources are expected to continue to dramatically decline over the next thirty years. Thus, the transportation sector under any alternative plan being considered, will significantly contribute to the lessening of adverse impacts in terms of ozone pollution. Indeed, by the year 2035, these harmful pollutants from transportation sources, even with increasing traffic, may be expected to be reduced by about 73 percent from current emission levels with respect to volatile organic compound pollutants, and be reduced by about 88 percent with respect to nitrogen oxide pollutants.

Mr. Lee Holloway
March 29, 2006
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We trust that the foregoing adequately responds to your request. As noted above, we will continue to strive to reach the broadest possible agreement on the make-up of not only the forthcoming new regional transportation plan, but successive plans as well. Should you have any further questions, please contact us.

Sincerely,

Philip C. Evenson
Executive Director

PCE/lw
#116738 v1 - HollowayCASHResp

Enclosures

cc: Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Citizens Allied for Sane Highways
American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin
Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin
Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council
National Association for the Advancement
of Colored People-Milwaukee
Dwight E. McComb, Planning and Program Development Engineer
Federal Highway Administration

Mr. Dwight E. McComb
Planning and Program Development Engineer
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
567 D'Onofrio Drive, Suite 100
Madison, WI 53719

Dr. Patricia McManus
Executive Director
Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin
2801 West Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53208

Ms. Karen L. Rotker
Poverty, Race & Civil Liberties
Project Attorney
American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin
207 East Buffalo Street, Suite 325
Milwaukee, WI 53202-5774

Ms. Kori A. Schneider, Program Manager
Community and Economic Development Program
Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council
600 East Mason Street, Suite 200
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Mr. Henry Hamilton
Economic Development Chairperson
National Association for the Advancement
of Colored People – Milwaukee
2745 North Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Suite 203
Milwaukee, WI 53212

Ms. Gretchen Schuldt, Co-Chair
Citizens Allied for Sane Highways
P. O. Box 080215
Milwaukee, WI 53208