

Minutes of the Thirty-first Meeting of the

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE**

DATE: May 6, 2014  
TIME: 4:30 p.m.  
PLACE: Independence*First*  
540 S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Members Present

Adelene Greene..... Director of Workforce Development, Kenosha County  
Chair  
Tyrone Dumas..... Administrative Assistant and Educational Consultant, Growing Power  
Ella Dunbar..... Program Services Manager, Social Development Commission, Milwaukee  
Nancy Holmlund..... Past President, Racine Interfaith Coalition  
Jedd Lapid..... Regional Chief Development Officer,  
American Red Cross of Eastern Wisconsin  
Theresa Schuerman..... Walworth County Bilingual Migrant Worker Outreach  
Willie Wade..... Alderman, City of Milwaukee  
Wallace White..... Principal/CEO, W2EXCEL, LLC

Guests and Staff Present

Stephen P. Adams..... Public Involvement and Outreach Manager, SEWRPC  
Ann Dee Allen..... Senior Public Involvement and Outreach Specialist, SEWRPC  
Dennis Grzezinski..... Attorney, Law Office of D.M. Grzezinski  
Christopher T. Hiebert..... Chief Transportation Engineer, SEWRPC  
Gary K. Korb..... Public Involvement and Outreach Specialist, SEWRPC  
Benjamin R. McKay..... Principal Planner, SEWRPC  
Kevin Muhs..... Senior Transportation Planner, SEWRPC  
Jeanette Marrero..... Environmental Engineer, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Kate Madison..... Policy Analyst, UW-Milwaukee Center for Economic Development  
Brian Peters..... Housing Policy Advocate, Independence*First*  
Karyn Rotker..... ACLU of Wisconsin  
David A. Schilling..... Chief Land Use Planner, SEWRPC  
Maureen Squire..... Executive Director, Interfaith Caregivers of Ozaukee County

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Greene called the meeting of the Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) to order at 4:30 p.m., welcoming those in attendance.

## **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 4, 2014**

Ms. Greene noted that not enough Task Force members were present at this time to constitute a quorum, although additional members are expected to attend. She suggested that this agenda item be moved to later in the meeting when a quorum of Task Force members may be present for approval of the minutes.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Greene asked if there were any public comments on the agenda or other Task Force business. The following comments were made:

1. Ms. Rotker distributed 15 copies of the cover page and pages 576, 588, and 592 of Planning Report No. 49, *A Regional Transportation System Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin: 2035* with seven text blocks highlighted (see Attachment 1). She noted that if the year 2035 regional transportation system plan is not implemented, it will hurt low-income and minority populations, and referenced the highlighted sections of the Plan. These sections indicate that 1) a significant proportion of minority and low-income populations are dependent on public transit; 2) transit service recommendations should be directed to serving these populations; 3) these populations need to be connected to jobs through public transit; 4) transit service should be expanded to accomplish this; 5) the transit element of the plan would provide a substantial increase in transit service; 6) the plan needs to balance transportation needs; and 7) plan implementation needs to be assured during economic downturns, as minority and low-income populations are dependent on public transit. She said that in her opinion, since 2006, implementation of the plan by State and local government has had a discriminatory effect on minority and low-income populations and that this needs to be acknowledged. She also noted that two memorandums had been forwarded to the EJTF and Commission staff which were prepared by Dr. Alex Karner and provide recommendations for analysis of the impacts of regional transportation plans on minority and low-income populations. (See Attachment 2.)
2. Mr. Yunker responded that the implementation to date of the 2035 Regional Transportation System Plan has been documented, and this documentation particularly notes the lack of implementation of recommended transit service expansion. Regarding analyses to be conducted of the impacts on minority and low-income populations of the regional transportation plan to be developed under VISION 2050, he noted that at the July 30, 2013, meeting of the Environmental Justice Task Force, staff reviewed in depth the evaluation of the impacts of the Year 2035 regional transportation plan on minority and low-income populations that was conducted in 2006, and asked EJTF members to suggest additional analyses that SEWRPC should conduct during VISION 2050. Mr. Yunker stated that staff had reviewed Dr. Karner's suggestions and would include them in VISION 2050 analyses.
3. Ms. Holmlund noted that the Obama administration has made equity in project review a priority. She noted the light rail line from downtown Minneapolis to the airport as an example. It would have bypassed the communities where people of color need services, and the Obama administration required stops in these communities.
4. Mr. White stated that equity is the foundation of economic justice. He commended SEWRPC's willingness to review and incorporate Dr. Karner's suggestions into the VISION 2050 process. Mr. Yunker noted that the EJTF will be working closely with Commission staff during VISION

2050. He noted one of the analyses suggested by Dr. Karner would examine the accessibility of minority and low-income populations to jobs, shopping, and medical facilities. He indicated such an analysis was conducted by Commission staff during the preparation of the year 2035 regional transportation plan in 2006. He stated that the EJTF would be involved in VISION 2050 analyses to define what is the level of accessibility to be considered, for example, 15, 20, 30, or 45 minutes travel time by transit to a hospital.

#### **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 4, 2014**

Ms. Greene noted that a quorum of Task Force members was now present and asked for a motion to approve the March 4, 2014, minutes. Mr. Lapid moved and Nancy Holmlund seconded approval of the Environmental Justice Task Force meeting minutes of March 4, 2014. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **UPDATE ON THE MAJOR UPDATE AND REEVALUATION OF THE REGIONAL LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PLANS AND EXTENSION OF DESIGN YEAR FROM 2035 TO 2050**

##### **Discussion of the draft outline of sketch land use and transportation scenarios for VISION 2050**

Ms. Greene asked Mr. Muhs to summarize the *Draft Outline of Sketch VISION 2050 Land Use and Transportation Development Scenarios* and related handout provided to the Task Force at the meeting and by email (see Attachment 3). Mr. Muhs noted that the sketch scenarios will allow comparisons and show trade-offs between different land use and transportation development patterns and allow the public to provide feedback. The feedback will lead to development and evaluation of more detailed alternative land use and transportation plans as well as a final recommended plan. Mr. Muhs noted that the suggestions made by Dr. Karner will be included in the alternative plan phase. He noted that greater levels of detail incorporated into the alternative plans will allow for more detailed evaluation. The following comments and discussion points were made during the review:

1. Mr. Yunker noted that Scenario A is a trend scenario and will maintain the jobs/housing imbalance in certain areas of the Region and will not include implementation of many of the affordable housing recommendations from the regional housing plan compared to other scenarios. Mr. White stated that improvements in transit and land use should be incorporated in the scenarios. Mr. Yunker noted that Scenarios B, C, D, and C+D will address affordable housing and transportation issues.
2. Mr. Muhs stated that SEWRPC is addressing equity in the scenarios and will make this more evident. He explained Scenario B and noted that it will assume implementation of recommendations in the Year 2035 Regional Housing Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin. It will focus on infill development, redevelopment, and new development adjacent to existing urban centers. Scenario B also will provide significant improvement and expansion of bus service across the Region, bicycle improvements as arterials are reconstructed, and additional highway capacity as needed to address residual traffic congestion that may not be alleviated by transit, bicycle, or other measures.
3. Mr. White asked if reverse commutes will be addressed in Scenario B. Mr. Yunker responded that Scenario B will significantly expand public transit from what the Region has now to include more frequent service, longer hours, and more areas served by public transit in both directions between Milwaukee County and other counties. Scenario B will extend service to outlying areas to serve

first, second, and third shift workers travelling in both the traditional and reverse commutes and improve frequency of service. Mr. Yunker responded that Scenario B will include transit recommendations similar to those in the Year 2035 Regional Transportation System Plan. He added that Scenarios C, D, and C+D will also include bus rapid transit, light rail, and/or commuter rail, and include transit-oriented land use development as well.

4. Mr. White asked if the findings of the Public Policy Forum transit study will be incorporated in the scenarios. Mr. Yunker responded that the transit recommendations in Scenarios B, C, D, and C+D propose substantially more transit service than the proposals in the Public Policy Forum study.
5. Mr. Muhs stated that Scenario C includes compact development concentrated around transit stations and a greater balance between jobs and housing is expected. Scenario C will include a system of light rail and bus rapid transit (BRT) lines beyond the significant increase in transit service discussed in Scenario B, in addition to higher levels of bicycle accommodations.
6. Ms. Dunbar asked if Scenario C will address concerns related to commuters needing to walk long distances from transit stops to jobs in industrial parks. Mr. Muhs responded that shuttle loop service could be implemented and shuttle service could be timed to meet guideway transit stop times. Ms. Dunbar asked what would happen if a company did not want that type of service and cited the example in which Southridge Mall moved a bus stop farther from the mall. Mr. Muhs responded that the transit provider could negotiate with the landowner but that the service could not be forced upon a private property owner. Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission will provide guidance to local governments with regard to this issue. Mr. Wade asked for more information about the Southridge Mall. Ms. Dunbar responded that the Mall moved the bus stop so that it required a longer walk to the Mall entrance. Mr. Wade noted that the stop has been in the same location for decades and questioned the rationale for Southridge's decision.
7. Mr. White noted that St. Louis has a comprehensive transit system that extends through communities where minorities live, connecting the university area, East St. Louis, and the airport. He added that St. Louis discussed the pros and cons of its transit system before developing it. He stated that, considering the transit system in St. Louis, the Commission needs to address the impact on the low-income and minority communities for both transit and bicycles.
8. Mr. Muhs introduced Scenario D and stated that it will add commuter rail to Scenario B and concentrate development around commuter rail stations.
9. Mr. Muhs introduced Scenario C+D and stated that it will include a complete transit system with both light rail/BRT and commuter rail lines. New development would be concentrated along these transit lines, particularly at the stations.

#### **Discussion of draft list of possible criteria for comparison of VISION 2050 scenarios**

Ms. Greene asked Mr. Muhs to review the *Draft List of Criteria for Comparing Sketch VISION 2050 Land Use and Transportation Scenarios* provided to the committee at the meeting and by email (see Attachment 4). The following comments and discussion points were made during the review:

1. Mr. Dumas said that in references to farmland the Commission needs to look at the implications of urban agriculture and aquaponics. He noted that Growing Power uses vacant land to grow

food. He added that Milwaukee has an issue of food deserts where some neighborhoods do not have access to food and Growing Power is addressing this issue. He asked whether the Commission can include farmland in cities in VISION 2050. Mr. Yunker responded that SEWRPC staff will work with Mr. Dumas and Mr. Will Allen on addressing the issue of urban farming in VISION 2050. He asked Mr. Dumas whether Growing Power has satellite farms. Mr. Dumas responded that Growing Power has farms in many places, including Chicago. He stated that people from all over the world come to learn about urban farming from Growing Power. Mr. Wade noted that Growing Power is a leader in urban agriculture. He stated that community gardens are being developed on open lots. He stated that it is important to include urban farming in the VISION 2050 plan. Mr. Wallace added that urban farming is also a land use issue.

2. Mr. Dumas asked if the Commission has a scenario that addresses climate change. He noted that some farms in Northern Wisconsin were still thawing out from the harsh winter and had experienced eight feet of frozen ground. He noted climate change might affect the freeze-thaw cycle and the cost of maintaining infrastructure and roads. Mr. Yunker responded that the Commission will attempt to look at the implications of climate change in the scenarios and alternative plans, and try to consider which scenario and alternative plan might adapt better to climate change. Mr. Wallace questioned whether there may be differences in costs related to climate change for minority and low-income populations compared to non-Hispanic white populations.
3. Mr. Dumas responded that the heavy snowfall in the winter of 2013-2014 hindered transit riders. Many bus stops were snowed in and the buses had to change their approaches to the stops, creating complications for Milwaukee residents. Mr. Wade responded that it is the City of Milwaukee's responsibility to clear bus stops of snow within two to three days of snowfalls. He noted that the city went over budget due to the heavy costs of snow removal and added that the budget balances out from year to year. Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission will attempt to consider how well alternative plans perform under climate change, and also higher fuel prices. He noted that this will probably be done at the alternative plan level. Ms. Holmlund added that it is important to understand the financial implications of climate change.

## **DISCUSSION OF THE REVIEW AND UPDATE TO THE YEAR 2035 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Ms. Greene asked Mr. Yunker to move to Agenda item 5, discussion of SEWRPC Memorandum Report 215: *Review and Update to the Year 2035 Regional Transportation Plan* and accompanying PowerPoint, which was distributed to members at the meeting and posted on the SEWRPC website (<http://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPCFiles/EnvironmentalJustice/Files/ReviewUpdate2035TransPlan-presentation-00217752.pdf>). Mr. Yunker reviewed the PowerPoint and noted that the plan is reviewed every four years and was last reviewed in 2010. He stated that VISION 2050 is scheduled to be completed in 2015 and will replace the year 2035 plan. The following comments and discussion points were made during the review:

1. Ms. Schuerman asked whether SEWRPC plans to discuss implementation of the regional plan with elected officials. Mr. Yunker responded that the Commission will hold a public meeting on May 22, 2014, at the O'Donnell Park Pavilion in Milwaukee, it has issued a newsletter about the

review and update, and it has posted a public comment box on the website for the comment period.

2. Ms. Holmlund noted that she listened to a radio report which ranked Wisconsin high on the number of bicycle paths. Mr. Wade noted that he would be surprised if Wisconsin had a larger than average number of bicyclists because it experiences harsh winter weather. Mr. Dumas stated that Wisconsin may have a high ranking due to its elaborate system of local and state parks and bike paths in the parks. Mr. Yunker responded that the Region has a 203-mile system of off-street bike paths and the plan recommends extending the system to 586 miles. Mr. Wallace noted the off-street conversion of former railroad rights-of-way to bike paths.
3. Mr. Dumas stated that expenditures for public art and freeway aesthetic elements were required by state and local legislation in the past but recently have been cut from funding. He suggested that funding for public art be included in the final plan recommendations. Mr. Yunker responded that public art can be raised as a discussion topic during the planning process.
4. Mr. Peters noted that the sign language interpreter planned to leave at 6:00 p.m. and asked if he could make a public comment. Ms. Greene responded that he could make a comment at this time. Mr. Peters stated that in regard to the Southridge Mall situation, Southridge received public funds through Tax Incremental Financing (TIF). He suggested that certain requirements be attached to public funding and that recipients that do not meet the requirements not receive, or be given lower priority for TIF or other public funds. This approach might ensure that the Southridge Mall bus stop situation would not be repeated. He added that the 2011 American Community Survey focused on accessibility. He said he read the survey and could not attest to its quality, but that SEWRPC might want to review the data with regard to accessibility and housing in the Region. Mr. Yunker responded that the Commission will review the data in regard to the VISION 2050 plan.
5. Mr. Dumas noted that the quality of the roadway resurfacing is an issue; roadways did not perform well over the winter. He noted the catastrophic failure of two bridges in the U.S., including Interstate 35W in Minnesota, where the collapse caused that state to spend more than it would have if the bridge had been repaired properly.
6. Mr. Yunker summarized the review of funding available to implement the 2035 plan and stated that under Federal regulations the plan can only include funding revenues which exist or can reasonably be considered to be available in the future. He added that the Commission also must consider restrictions and limitations on the use of current funding revenues for example, limitations on use of funds for capital funding rather than operating funding and restrictions of funding for specific travel modes. He noted the major changes which have occurred in funding, including the elimination of state motor fuel tax indexing and the elimination of regional transit authorities (RTAs), and the lack of current consideration of additional RTAs. He stated that as a result it is likely that public transit will not be improved or expanded and reconstruction of the freeway system will not be completed by 2035. Mr. Yunker noted that a 2035 fiscally constrained plan was developed to demonstrate what cannot be accomplished with existing funds and revenues that are reasonably expected to be available and the existing restrictions on the use of those funds. Mr. Dumas noted the additional costs that may be incurred with emergency repairs and facility replacement. Mr. Yunker stated that SEWRPC will develop a discussion of the implications of not implementing the plan.

7. Mr. Wade stated that at the April 23, 2014, meeting of the SEWRPC Advisory Committees on Regional Land Use Planning and Regional Transportation System Planning, City of Milwaukee Ald. Robert J. Bauman noted that the City of Milwaukee does not support the alternatives currently being considered by WisDOT which would rebuild the freeway to modern design standards and add an additional traffic lane in each direction. Mr. Yunker responded that Department of Transportation representatives will attend the next meeting of the Advisory Committees to discuss this issue. Ms. Holmlund stated that the City of Milwaukee suggested that IH 94 be rebuilt-as-is and the funding for design improvements and additional lanes be used to reconstruct other freeway segments. Mr. Wade noted that City neighborhoods will experience environmental impacts in terms of air pollutant emissions and noise related to the freeway and these neighborhoods are the most densely populated area in the State. He questioned the logic of the design and capacity improvements if the City of Milwaukee prefers rebuilding-as-is and having the funding used for other projects. Mr. White questioned whether the expansion of IH 43 between Silver Spring Drive and STH 60 will increase congestion on IH 43 as it approaches downtown Milwaukee.
8. Mr. Yunker summarized maps in the PowerPoint which compare the location of existing transit service to those areas which exceed regional averages for minority populations and families in poverty. He noted that under the fiscally constrained plan, public transit will principally serve areas with concentrations of minority and low-income populations but will not extend service to job centers outside Milwaukee County. He stated that findings regarding the deficiencies of existing transit funding will be taken into consideration in the VISION 2050 plan, which can be expected to recommend legislation for regional transit authorities and local dedicated transit funding sources and increased State transit funding.
9. Mr. White asked about the findings and recommendations of the State's Transportation Finance and Policy Commission. Mr. Yunker responded that the findings of the State Transportation Finance and Policy Commission were consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Regional Planning Commission's 2035 Plan update. He stated that the Transportation Finance and Policy Commission recommended that the 10 percent cut in State transit funding from the 2011-2013 State budget be restored, that State transit funding be further increased to account for the years over the last decade when State funding did not keep up with inflation, and that legislation for dedicated local transit funding and regional transit authorities should be approved.
10. Ms. Holmlund noted the WisDOT "Transportation Moves Wisconsin" (<http://www.wisconsin.gov/about/tmw/docs/tmw-presentation.pdf>) listening sessions. She noted that the meetings provide an opportunity for Wisconsin residents to provide testimony about why transit is important to them. She stated that WisDOT Secretary Mark Gottlieb realizes the importance of public transit but the public and State Legislature need to be convinced.

#### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

Ms. Greene stated that the Task Force has not yet scheduled the next meeting date. Mr. Yunker noted that the Commission will survey Task Force members about proposed meeting dates.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Schuerman noted that the Commission has a job posting for a public involvement and outreach specialist. Mr. Yunker responded that current Public Involvement and Outreach Specialist Ann Dee Allen will be moving to a different position at SEWRPC and asked that people spread the word about the open position.

#### **FURTHER PUBLIC COMMENTS**

1. Ms. Rotker stated that the 2035 plan update should provide more information about the discriminatory effects of a reduction in public transit funding on people of color, particularly with regard to access to jobs. She stated that the current level of service is unacceptable and discriminatory. Ms. Rotker noted that Dr. Karner raised questions regarding an analysis that was performed in 2006 for the 2035 plan with respect to the location of freeways relative to minority and low-income populations. Mr. Yunker responded that this was one of three analyses conducted by the Commission with respect to the location of freeways relative to minority and low-income populations. He stated that staff will review Dr. Karner's comments and the analysis may be revised or deleted for VISION 2050. He stated that SEWRPC will include a link to *Appendix H, Evaluation of the Impacts of the Recommended Year 2035 Regional Transportation System Plan on Minority and Low-Income Populations in Southeastern Wisconsin*, in the meeting minutes ([http://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPCFiles/Publications/pr/pr-049\\_regional\\_transportation\\_system\\_plan\\_for\\_se\\_wi\\_2035.pdf#page=559](http://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPCFiles/Publications/pr/pr-049_regional_transportation_system_plan_for_se_wi_2035.pdf#page=559)).
2. Jeanette Marrero introduced herself as an Environmental Engineer with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). She stated that the EPA is currently conducting public outreach with partners such as local congregations in an effort to reach people with concerns about the environment; there may be opportunities for similar outreach work with the Task Force in the future.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Greene thanked those in attendance and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Dumas moved and Mr. Wade seconded the motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Dee Allen  
Recording Secretary

\* \* \*