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RECORD OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

REGIONAL FREEWAY SYSTEM RECONSTRUCTION STUDY FOR SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN

volume three

SEPTEMBER 1, 2002-MARCH 12, 2003

March 2003

Prepared by the
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
P.O. Box 1607
W239 N1812 Rockwood Drive
Waukesha, WI 53187-1607

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This report presents the public comment received on the Regional Freeway Reconstruction Study and preliminary recommended freeway system reconstruction plan from September 1, 2002 to March 12, 2003. Previous reports, “Record of Public Comments: Regional Freeway System Reconstruction Study for Southeastern Wisconsin: Volume I, February 1 – August 31, 2001” and “Record of Public Comments: Regional Freeway System Reconstruction Study for Southeastern Wisconsin Volume II, September 1, 2001 – August 31, 2002,” presented the public comment received on the study from the initiation of the study in February 2001 through August 31, 2002, including during the formal public comment period from March 21, 2002 to June 14, 2002.

This report presents in a series of appendices for the time period of September 1, 2002 through March 12, 2003:

- Formal actions taken on the preliminary plan by County Boards of Supervisors (Appendix A).
- Written comments received on the preliminary plan and study (Appendix B).
- Newspaper articles and editorials concerning the preliminary plan and freeway system reconstruction study (Appendix C).
- Listing of groups which the Commission staff has met with regarding the freeway system reconstruction study and preliminary plan (Appendix D).

COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS

Between September 1, 2002 and March 12, 2003, the two County Boards within the Region that had not previously taken action, acted to fully approve, or approve portions of, the preliminary recommended regional freeway system reconstruction plan:

- Kenosha County: Through County Board Resolution 46 dated September 17, 2002, by voice vote, the County Board of Supervisors acted to fully support the preliminary recommended plan.

- Milwaukee County: Through County Board Resolution 02-275 dated February 20, 2003, by a vote of 17 ayes to 8 nays, the County Board of Supervisors acted to support the preliminary recommendation to rebuild the freeway system to modern design standards. By a vote of 13 ayes to 12 nays, the County Board of Supervisors opposed the rebuilding with additional lanes of 19 miles of freeway within the City of Milwaukee and the City of Glendale, including the widening to eight lanes of IH 43 from the Mitchell Interchange to Silver Spring Drive and of IH 94 from the Marquette Interchange to the Zoo Interchange. The Milwaukee County Executive vetoed the County Board Resolution expressing his support for the entire preliminary plan coupled with a request that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation design engineers find ways to limit impacts of freeway capacity expansion on surrounding neighborhoods. The County Board failed to override the veto on a vote of 16 to 9.
Appendix A

RESOLUTIONS OF COUNTY BOARDS OF SUPERVISORS REGARDING THE PRELIMINARY FREEWAY SYSTEM RECONSTRUCTION PLAN
WHEREAS, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) is engaged in a major study, being undertaken at the request of the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, to develop a plan and program to be used to guide the efforts of the Department over the next 30 years as the deteriorating regional freeway system serving Southeastern Wisconsin is rebuilt; and

WHEREAS, an Advisory Committee created by SEWRPC, including representation from Kenosha County, has been engaged in studying the regional freeway system, in considering alternative ways in which that freeway system may be reconstructed, and in preparing a preliminary recommended regional freeway system reconstruction plan; and

WHEREAS, the regional freeway system carries on an average weekday over one-third of the daily travel in Southeastern Wisconsin and, accordingly, represents the single most important subsystem of facilities in the regional transportation system; and

WHEREAS, the SEWRPC Advisory Committee is seeking review of, and comment on, its preliminary recommendations in a wide variety of ways, including public informational meetings and hearings; and

WHEREAS, the reconstruction of the regional freeway system in Southeastern Wisconsin will represent a major public works program over the next several decades; and

WHEREAS, the course of action that is being charted through the current freeway study will lead to a reconstructed regional freeway system that will have to serve the Region, the State, and the Nation for the next 50 to 60 years; and

WHEREAS, the SEWRPC Advisory Committee is seeking specific reaction to the preliminary plan from the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors before developing a final plan that is intended to be formally adopted by each of the seven county boards in Southeastern Wisconsin and by the SEWRPC, all in an effort to demonstrate that
a substantial consensus exists in the Region as to how the Department should approach reconstruction of the regional freeway system; and

WHEREAS, the preliminary plan released by the SEWRPC Advisory Committee recommends that the freeway system be reconstructed to accomplish the following two major objectives:

1. To ensure that as the regional freeway system is reconstructed, every effort is made to meet up-to-date design standards and to thereby achieve certain safety improvements, including relocating left-hand on- and off-ramps to the right-hand sides of the freeways, eliminating lane drops at major freeway interchanges, improving driver sight lines and reducing sharp freeway curves, and providing full inside and outside shoulders for safety and refuge.

2. To provide additional capacity on 127 miles of freeways, or less than one-half of the 270-mile regional freeway system, in order to avoid a substantial increase in freeway system traffic congestion and the attendant inefficiencies, time delays, and safety and reliability problems that such increased congestion would bring; and

WHEREAS, the SEWRPC Advisory Committee desires formal County Board reaction on the preliminary plan as soon as possible so that that Committee can meet its charge and report its final recommendations to the SEWRPC in early fall 2002.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED:

FIRST: That the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors hereby expresses its full support for the preliminary recommended regional freeway system plan as put forth by the SEWRPC Advisory Committee and encourages that Committee to include in its final set of recommendations all of the elements of freeway system improvement that were included in the preliminary recommended plan.

SECOND: That the County Clerk transmit a certified copy of the resolution to the SEWRPC.

Respectfully submitted

Highways and Parks Committee

Dennis Elverman, Chairman

Darrel Haen, Vice-Chairman

Irv Larsen, Secretary

Doug Noble

Robert Pitts
(Item 8) From Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) relative to the preliminary plan for reconstruction of the regional freeway system, by recommending adoption of the following:

A RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) is engaged in a major study, being undertaken at the request of the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), to develop a plan and program to be used to guide the efforts of the Department over the next 30 years as the deteriorating regional freeway system serving Southeastern Wisconsin is rebuilt; and

WHEREAS, an Advisory Committee created by SEWRPC, including representation from Milwaukee County, has been engaged in studying the regional freeway system, in considering alternative ways in which that freeway system may be reconstructed, and in preparing a preliminary recommended regional freeway system reconstruction plan; and

WHEREAS, the SEWRPC Advisory Committee is seeking review of and comment on its preliminary recommendation in a wide variety of ways, including public informational meetings and hearings; and

WHEREAS, the reconstruction of the regional freeway system in Southeastern Wisconsin will represent a major public works program over the next several decades; and

WHEREAS, the course of action that is being charted through the current freeway study will lead to a reconstructed regional freeway system that will have to serve the region, the State and the Nation for the next 50 to 60 years; and

WHEREAS, the SEWRPC Advisory Committee is seeking specific reaction to the preliminary plan from the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors before developing a final plan that is intended to be formally adopted by each of the seven county boards in Southeastern Wisconsin and by the SEWRPC, all in an effort to demonstrate that a substantial consensus exists in the Region as to how the Department should approach reconstruction of the regional freeway system; and

WHEREAS, the preliminary plan released by the SEWRPC Advisory Committee recommends that the freeway system be reconstructed to accomplish the following two major objectives:
1. To ensure that as the regional freeway system is reconstructed, every effort is
made to meet up-to-date design standards and to thereby achieve certain safety
improvements, including relocating left-hand on and off-ramps to the right-hand
side of the freeways, eliminating lane drops at major freeway interchanges,
Improving driver sight lines and reducing sharp freeway curves, and providing
full inside and outside shoulders for safety and refuge.

2. To provide additional capacity on 127 miles of freeways, or less than one-half of
the 270 mile regional freeway system, in order to avoid a substantial increase in
freeway system traffic congestion and the attendant inefficiencies, time delays
and safety and reliability problems that such increased congestion would bring;
and

WHEREAS, the SEWRPC Advisory Committee desires formal County Board reaction
on the preliminary plan as soon as possible so that the Advisory Committee can meet its
charge and report its final recommendations to the SEWRPC; and

WHEREAS, the Transportation, Public Works and Transit Committee, at a special
meeting on February 18, 2003, considered the plan and voted 6-0 to recommend approval
of certain recommendations summarized as follows:

- continue planning to address the need for improvements to address design flaws
in the system;
- continue planning to construct additional lanes on 108 miles of the system to
address capacity concerns, including segments of the freeway system in
Milwaukee County which are outside the City of Milwaukee;
- no widening beyond six lanes should occur on that segment of I-43 from Bender
Rd. to Brown Deer Rd.;
- no sound barriers should be placed on the freeway without the prior consent of
abutting municipalities;
- the WisDOT should adhere to certain conditions and undertake certain actions
as delineated later in this resolution as the plan moves forward; and

WHEREAS, the Committee made no recommendation by reason of a tie vote (3-3)
on a motion to support that portion of the preliminary draft plan which calls on the
WisDOT to evaluate the feasibility of constructing additional lanes on 19 miles of the
freeway system in Milwaukee County within the City of Milwaukee and the City of
Glendale, including I-43 from the Mitchell Interchange to Silver Spring Drive (from 6 to 8
lanes) and I-94 from the Marquette Interchange to the Zoo Interchange (from 6 to 8 lanes);
now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, at the County Board Meeting of February 20, 2003, on a motion
by Supervisor Weishan, the County Board voted 15-10 to oppose that portion of the
preliminary draft plan which calls on the WISDOT to evaluate the feasibility of constructing
additional lanes on 19 miles of the freeway system in Milwaukee County within the City of
Milwaukee and the City of Glendale, including I-43 from the Mitchell Interchange to Silver
Spring Drive (from 6 to 8 lanes) and I-94 from the Marquette Interchange to the Zoo
Interchange (from 6 to 8 lanes); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors does
hereby express its support for the preliminary recommended regional freeway system
reconstruction plan which calls for the WisDOT to evaluate and address to the extent
practicable the design and safety flaws in the current system, ultimately making those
improvements needed to address such flaws in preliminary engineering and environmental
studies in a reasonably cost-effective way which takes into account neighborhood impacts;
and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
further expresses its support for that portion of the plan which calls for the WisDOT to
evaluate in preliminary engineering and environmental studies the feasibility of adding
lanes on 108 miles of the regional freeway system, including the following segments in
Milwaukee County:

- I-94 from the Racine/Milwaukee County line to the Mitchell Interchange (from 6
to 8 lanes);
- I-43 from Mitchell Interchange to the Zoo Interchange (from 6 to 8 lanes)
- I-43 from the Hale Interchange to the Milwaukee/Waukesha County line (from 4
to 6 lanes)
- I-94 from the Zoo Interchange to the Milwaukee/Waukesha County line (from 6
to 8 lanes)
- USH 45 from the Zoo Interchange to the Milwaukee/Waukesha County line
(from 6 to 8 lanes); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
supports no widening beyond six lanes on the segment of I-43 from Bender Rd. to Brown
Deer Rd.; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that no sound barriers shall be placed on the freeway
without the prior consent of abutting municipalities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors does
hereby call upon WisDOT to do the following in connection with any plans for the
reconstruction of the regional freeway system:

1. Before implementation of any part of the plan, all costs should be outlined for
the public including direct costs and indirect costs such as the impact the
freeway project would have on non-freeway related projects;
2. As part of preliminary engineering, WisDOT should determine if options exist for less costly designs which would still provide for safety and modernization improvements;

3. Request from WisDOT an examination of community impacts from the freeway reconstruction in order to develop a mitigation plan to deal with the negative aspects of the project resulting from the loss of homes, increased noise levels and environmental concerns; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors does hereby urge the WisDOT to adhere to the following conditions as the plan moves forward:

1. Planners shall adopt DBE goals similar to those used in the Miller Park Stadium project, which is 25% DBE and 5% WBE participation and will concentrate on meeting those goals with workers from Milwaukee County and in particular, Southeastern Wisconsin.

2. Funding will be provided for mitigation issues such as increased mass transit and local road aids to pay for local road improvements which may be needed before, during and after construction of the project;

3. No portion of the cost of the project will be borne by or shifted to local property taxpayers;

4. A noise mitigation plan which meets urban standards shall be incorporated into the plan from its inception;

5. All counties in the region shall adopt smart growth plans;

6. Provide Milwaukee County with full reimbursement for the cost of freeway patrol; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to forward a certified copy of this resolution to the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

FISCAL NOTE: Adoption of this resolution will not require an expenditure of funds.
DATE: March 20, 2003

TO: The Honorable County Board of Supervisors

FROM: County Executive Scott Walker

SUBJECT: VETO OF FILE NO. 02-275

I am vetoing County Board File No. 02-275 pursuant to the authority granted to me by Article IV, Section 23(a) of the Wisconsin Constitution and Section 59.17(6) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Our county and our region face significant current and future transportation infrastructure challenges. Even with the current system, there are times when drivers face significant congestion on different parts of the freeway system and in many different directions. This congestion is a concern for more than just the travel time for commuters at the start and end of the work day, it is a real threat to businesses in our region that depend on a reliable transportation system. In turn, that congestion threatens the retention and creation of jobs in Milwaukee County.

With this in mind, it is clear that our county and our region must plan to handle the increase in traffic on the freeway system—now and in the future. Part of this plan includes support for alternatives to the freeway system, such as mass transit, and part includes support for greater capacity. At the same time, plans for greater capacity must include careful consideration of the impact on neighborhoods surrounding the current freeway system.

I believe that the message sent to regional planners should include each of the following concepts: look to meet the growing need for greater capacity of the freeway system and do so in a way that seeks to limit the impact on surrounding neighborhoods.
March 20, 2002
The Honorable County Board of Supervisors
VETO OF FILE NO. 02-275
Page 2

As amended, the resolution passed by the County Board of Supervisors does not send that message, but rather sends a conflicting view of the above priorities, and blurs the role of a governmental body in advising planners and engineers on a general policy. The amended resolution is a confusing mix of policy with very specific engineering limitations on design.

Specifics on design should be left to planners and, ultimately, to engineers from the state Department of Transportation (DOT). To date, six counties have come to consensus on a majority of this plan. I urge the state DOT to take into account the areas of consensus within our region, while recognizing the impact on neighborhoods.

Scott Walker, County Executive

SW/SM
Appendix B

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
Milwaukee Branch
3500 North 26th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53205
(414) 971-1000  FAX (414) 971-1091
Jerry Ann Hamilton, President

March 11, 2005

Philip Everson, Executive Director
SEWRPC
3795 N1812 Rockwell Dr
PO Box 1607
Waukesha, WI 53187-1607

RE: Freeway Reconnaissance AND Review of Regional Transportation Plan

Dear Mr. Everson:

I am writing to you as President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Milwaukee Branch. Our organization, the civil rights organization in the United States, represents the interests of African-American residents in Milwaukee.

Because of the overlap between issues involved in Freeway Reconnaissance and in the Regional Transportation Plan Review, a single letter is being included in the comments for both proposals and is addressed by the Councilwoman.

With respect to Freeway Reconnaissance, SEWRPC should respect and adopt the views of the Milwaukee County Board and the City of Milwaukee against widening the freeway in Milwaukee. As you know, Milwaukee is home to three-quarters of all minorities and low-income families, and more than 80% of all African-Americans in the SEWRPC region. Senator SEWRPC, not the Study Advisory Committee which does not include organizations representing our communities should be allowed to ignore or override the votes of our City and County.

We also insist that in developing, revising or amending any plan, and before sending any plan to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, you actively participate from and involve low-income and minority persons. This means more than trying to "act as a SEWRPC proposal to our communities. It means personally involving low-income and minority communities in the decision-making process.

In addition, the Freeway Reconnaissance proposal and the Regional Transportation Plan (and any other SEWRPC plans) must be reviewed to consider seriously the issues that affect our communities.

Very truly yours,

Jerry Ann Hamilton
President

Women and Poverty Public Education Initiative
3782 N. 12th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53206
(414)265-3925

March 7, 2005

Philip Everson, Executive Director
SEWRPC
3795 N1812 Rockwell Dr.
PO Box 1607
Waukesha, WI 53187-1607

Dear Mr. Everson:

We are writing on behalf of Women and Poverty Public Education Committee. Our organization represents low-income single parents residing in central city Milwaukee.

Because of the overlap between issues involved in Freeway Reconnaissance and in the Regional Transportation Plan Review, we are sending a single letter to be included in the comments for both proposals and to be addressed by the Commission.

First, we believe Milwaukee residents have spoken through the votes of the Milwaukee County Board and the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee against widening the freeway in Milwaukee. Since Milwaukee is home to three-quarters of all minority and low-income families, and more than 85% of all African-Americans in the SEWRPC region, neither SEWRPC nor the Study Advisory Committee which does not include organizations representing our communities should be allowed to ignore or override the votes of our City and County.

We urge you to actively solicit participation from and involve low-income and minority persons in developing, revising or amending any plan, and before sending any plan to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. We believe this means seriously involving low-income and minority communities in the decision-making process. It also means seeking out and involving persons who speak Spanish, French, and other languages besides English.

In addition, the Freeway Reconnaissance proposal and the Regional Transportation Plan (and any other SEWRPC plans) must be reviewed to seriously consider the issues that affect our communities:

1) You must provide details of exactly where and how reconstruction and other transportation plans will affect our neighborhoods. We know, for example, that almost half the houses to be taken away for freeway reconstruction are in low-income neighborhoods, and many of the homes and businesses are in minority communities. You SEWRPC has said publicly that it did not consider all opinions and the number of homes and businesses to be torn down. We also don't know whether SEWRPC looked at the homes which could come to neighborhoods because of new freeway. Many of our communities also believe, as stated in the Milwaukee Freeway Reconnaissance process would be, that freeway reconstruction would lead our communities to be torn down. We also have no idea how they would affect our communities. Before the reconstruction, or any other project gets forward, we need to know exactly how our communities will be affected and what options could have been considered to reduce these effects, and we must be involved in making decisions about how to address these issues.

2) TAXES: Any SEWRPC plan must evaluate what the overall reductions will occur - and where - as in the case of Freeway Reconstruction, these will disproportionately affect communities like the City and County of Milwaukee, which have far more minority and low-income families than the other SEWRPC counties. Any SEWRPC plan must evaluate what increased local costs, such as for maintaining local roads once which will be diverted during freeway reconstructions - are likely to occur, and which communities are likely to be hardest hit by these increases.

3) TRANSIT: Our communities depend on mass transit for access to employment, education, health care and recreation. The Regional Transportation Plan shows that almost one-third of African-Americans in Southeast Wisconsin, and many other minority persons, have no access to a car or public transit (data which SEWRPC inadequately left out of the Freeway Reconnaissance proposal). While the proposals do discuss possible future expansions of transit, they do not guarantee that these increases will actually occur - and in the case of the Regional Transportation Plan Review shows a decrease decrease in bus service. The proposals do not evaluate prioritizing and implementing transit improvements before additional freeway and other road reconstruction and expansion occur. They do not discuss what efforts are being made or are necessary to obtain dedicated funding for transit. The proposals also do not discuss whether, as we believe, spending $52 billion on freeway expansion will lead to even greater reductions in mass transit funding.

4) HOUSING: There is no question that metropolitan Milwaukee - particularly the Milwaukee suburbs - are extremely segregated. However, the SEWRPC plan does not discuss this matter. The proposals do not discuss the consequences of mass housing, employment and transportation. The SEWRPC plans must do more than acknowledge gross demographic trends. They must seriously look at Wisconsin's current growth rate and development needs to meet our needs, and especially analyze how these trends could lead to the loss of affordable housing, and to guarantee fair housing for all the region's residents.

5) EMPLOYMENT: An analysis of the benefits of a SEWRPC project which claims to increase jobs for low-income and minority residents is seriously limited by the accessibility and type of those jobs. For example, while the Freeway Reconnaissance study says that freeway widening will increase jobs for low-income and minority residents, it is not clear that these jobs will be accessible by public transportation, will pay living wages or will have any benefits. Any SEWRPC plan should make all efforts to promote real building and other construction jobs to low-income and minority residents in proportion to their population in our community.

HEALTH AND POLLUTION: Any SEWRPC plan must look critically at the possible health and pollution effects of any increased automobile traffic, and the planning process needs to include public health experts. For example, Southeast Wisconsin has one of the worst ozone pollution problems in the country AND suffers new asthma among African-Americans that is much higher than those among whites. Although SEWRPC claims that vehicle speeds will decrease as cars gain Clinton, the U.S. EPA says that even small improvements reduce the years, ozone pollution from motor vehicles has not gone down because people drive more. In addition, SEWRPC did not look at the issues of whether people or low-income and minority communities simply or older, lighter cars and therefore whether the problems will be worse in our neighborhoods. SEWRPC does not seriously evaluate other health effects, such as indoor smog increases ozone and increased rates of respiratory diseases among residents who live close to freeways and develop ways to reduce these effects.

We urge SEWRPC to make serious efforts to include low-income and minority communities, and to address the needs of low-income and minority communities, in any further actions it takes.
3)  Any SEWRPC plan must evaluate what tax base reductions will occur and whether, as in the case of Freeway Reconstruction, those will disproportionately affect communities like the City and County of Milwaukee, which have far more minority and low-income families than the other SEWRPC counties.

4)  There is no question that metropolitan Milwaukee—particularly the Milwaukee suburbs—are extremely segregated. However, the SEWRPC land use plan simply does not discuss race, much less the intersection of race, housing, employment and transportation. The SEWRPC plans must do more than encourage pursuant development. They must seriously look at Wisconsin’s Smart Growth law and develop methods to require all areas, and especially suburban communities, to provide a fair share of affordable housing, and to guarantee fair housing for all the region’s residents.

5)  Any analysis of the benefits of a SEWRPC project which claims to increase jobs for low-income and minority residents must look seriously at the accessibility and type of those jobs. For example, while the Freeway Reconstruction study says that freeway widening will increase jobs for low-income minority residents, it is not clear that these jobs will be accessible by public transportation, will pay living wages or will have any benefits. Any SEWRPC plan also should make all efforts to provide road building and other construction jobs to low-income and minority residents in proportion to their population in our community.

6)  Any SEWRPC plan must look seriously at the possible health and pollution effects of increased vehicular traffic, and the planning process needs to include public health experts. For example, Southeastern Wisconsin has one of the worst ozone pollution problems in the country AND  ozone rates among African-Americans are much higher than those among whites. Although SEWRPC claims that ozone levels will decrease as cars get cleaner, the U.S. EPA says that despite emission improvements over the years, ozone pollution from motor vehicles has not gone down because people drive more.

We urge SEWRPC to make serious efforts to obtain and listen to community input, and to address the needs of low-income and minority communities, in any further actions it takes.

Sincerely,

Jean Verber
Executive Director

Dr. Perlman, Executive Director

SEWRPC

W239 N18812 Rockwood Dr

PO Box 1607

Waukesha WI 53187-1607

RE: Freeway Reconstruction

Dear Mr. Perlman,

I am writing as a follow up to the Milwaukee County Board’s February 20 vote against widening certain freeway segments in Milwaukee County. As you are aware, the City of Milwaukee also voted, overwhelmingly, against widening those segments.

It is my understanding that you will take these concerns to the freeway reconstruction Study Advisory Committee. It is critical that the Study Advisory Committee respect the decisions of the City and County, particularly since the overwhelming majority of low-income and minority residents of the SEWRPC planning area reside in Milwaukee. We have repeatedly expressed concern over the fact that SEWRPC’s Study Advisory Committee does not include any organizations representing low-income or minority communities. The lack of such participation is particularly striking since just a few years ago organizations including the NAACP, the Federation for Civic Action, the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice and Community Partners in Milwaukee, among others, filed a federal complaint due to discrimination in Wisconsin’s transportation program.

It is also critical that prior to developing any revised plans or forwarding the current plan to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the Study Advisory Committee and the Commission actively solicit and involve low-income and minority persons, meaningfully evaluate issues which concern or disproportionately affect those communities, and address those concerns in a comprehensive manner. Extensive details of our concerns were set out in the letter I sent you in December 2002.

207 E. Stiff St. Suite 120

Milwaukee, WI 53202 3716

ph. (414) 262-7524

toll free (800) 362-8813

email Liberty@wi.rr.com

http://www.wal.wi.org

I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Karyl L. Roller

Staff Attorney

Poverty, Race & Civil Liberties Project

cc: Gov. James Doyle

Frank Bosiacchi, Secretary, WIDOT

Mary Peters, Administrator, Federal Highway Administration

Scott Walker, Milwaukee County Executive

Dan Fischer, Waukesha County Executive

John Norquist, Mayor of Milwaukee

February 26, 2003
Freeway Reconstruction Study Database Records

Date submitted: 3/2/2003 11:41:00 AM
Name: Lee Brady
Organization: City of Milwaukee
Address: N50W15500 Silver Spring Drive
Comments: Mr. Mayor,

I understand the S.W.Y.R.C. is nothing to write home about but the expansion seems unrealistic and not going to happen. Having been a Milwaukee County Supervisor for 20 years, I know many people on both sides of the issue have different opinions.

A major concern for me is the impact on our children. I have children and grandchildren and this will affect them. The noise, the pollution, the traffic will affect their quality of life.

Lee Brady, Sr.

William Jefferies

Freeway Reconstruction Study Database Records

Date submitted: 3/2/2003 10:48:00 AM
Name: Sandy Pellicer
Organization: City of Milwaukee
Address: N50W15500 Silver Spring Drive
Comments: I am a resident of Milwaukee and have been here for over 30 years. We are very concerned about the proposed freeway expansion. We believe it is unnecessary and will have a negative impact on our community.

Sincerely,
Sandy Pellicer

Freeway Reconstruction Study Database Records

Date submitted: 3/2/2003 9:10:00 AM
Name: John Netten
Organization: City of Milwaukee
Address: N50W15500 Silver Spring Drive
Comments: We do not support the freeway expansion. We believe it is unnecessary and will have a negative impact on our community.

We are living with the noise of the proposed freeway, and the traffic congestion it will cause. We believe it is a waste of money and will not benefit our community.

Sincerely,
John Netten

Freeway Reconstruction Study Database Records

Date submitted: 3/2/2003 11:59:00 PM
Name: Michael Freitag
Organization: City of Milwaukee
Address: N50W15500 Silver Spring Drive
Comments: Please do not consider the opinion of Mayor Nekaous or the Milwaukee County Supervisors. We are not in favor of the proposed freeway expansion. We believe it is unnecessary and will have a negative impact on our community.

Sincerely,
Michael Freitag

Freeway Reconstruction Study Database Records

Date submitted: 2/13/2003 9:45:00 AM
Name: James C. Gahle, President
Organization: Community Living, Inc.
Address: 5315 N. 30th St.
Comments: We support the proposed freeway expansion. It will provide much-needed relief to the traffic congestion in our area.

Sincerely,
James C. Gahle, President

Freeway Reconstruction Study Database Records

Date submitted: 2/13/2003 10:47:00 AM
Name: Vance Skinner
Organization: City of Milwaukee
Address: N50W15500 Silver Spring Drive
Comments: We do not support the proposed freeway expansion. We believe it is unnecessary and will have a negative impact on our community.

Sincerely,
Vance Skinner

Freeway Reconstruction Study Database Records

Date submitted: 2/13/2003 9:45:00 AM
Name: James C. Gahle, President
Organization: Community Living, Inc.
Address: 5315 N. 30th St.
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Organization: City of Milwaukee
Address: N50W15500 Silver Spring Drive
Comments: We do not support the proposed freeway expansion. We believe it is unnecessary and will have a negative impact on our community.

Sincerely,
Vance Skinner
Freeway Reconstruction Study Database Records

| Date Submitted: 2/15/2000 10:45:00 AM |
| Name: | KENWORTH Neighborhood Association |
| Address: | 1226 N. 26th St. |
| Contact: | H. D. Smits, AASHTO Council |

(As approved by the Association at January 4, 1993)

The Kenworth Neighborhood Association (KNA) does not oppose the current plan to extend and expand southeastern Wisconsin freeways at a cost of $26 billion. The KNA supports the plan in its entirety for the reasons stated below:

1. The KNA is located in the city of Milwaukee and is east of Interstate 43 and south of 41st Street. The current plan is an acceptable solution for the following reasons:
2. It will provide a funding plan that will be acceptable to the community.
3. It will provide a plan that considers the following elements:
   a. A balanced approach to funding, taking into account local, state, and federal contributions.
   b. A comprehensive plan that considers the following elements:
      i. Land use patterns.
      ii. Vehicle and pedestrian traffic flow.
      iii. An alternative system based on funds available.

Copies to:
Milwaukee County Supervisors
Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker
Mayor Michael D. Brennan
Mayor Marion Johnson-Duval
State Senator Lawrence Zarabozo
State Representative Eileen Sweeny
Mayor Bilal Asfour
February 16, 2003

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

We are纽 and stand in favor of expanding the freeway system in southeastern Wisconsin, as set forth in the Traffic and Transportation Plan. We are particularly concerned with the following areas:

1. The state highway system is in dire need of repair and improvement.
2. The state highway system is in dire need of repair and improvement.
3. The state highway system is in dire need of repair and improvement.

We are纽 and stand in favor of expanding the freeway system in southeastern Wisconsin, as set forth in the Traffic and Transportation Plan. We are particularly concerned with the following areas:

1. The state highway system is in dire need of repair and improvement.
2. The state highway system is in dire need of repair and improvement.
3. The state highway system is in dire need of repair and improvement.

Both the pedestrian and vehicular traffic system is in dire need of repair and improvement. The pedestrian and vehicular traffic system is in dire need of repair and improvement. The pedestrian and vehicular traffic system is in dire need of repair and improvement.

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Freeway Reconstruction Study Database Records

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date submitted</th>
<th>1/17/99</th>
<th>8:40 AM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Dave Bond</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>City of West Allis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>2165 S 96th St</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Allis, WI 53227</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>I recently saw Tom Brown at a meeting discussing freeway expansion in the greater Milwaukee area and his comments on the current system. I understand that Tom and I agree on the need for expansion and improvement. I would like to hear more about your ideas and thoughts on this matter. Please feel free to contact me at any time.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Freeway Reconstruction Study Database Records

change jobs from time to time. The transportation system needs to keep up with the people in our area and the systems that they use.

One common argument against freeways expansions is that they discourage travel. I would argue that they are more beneficial than not, as they help reduce congestion and enhance safety. The argument that freeways are bad for the environment is also not valid, as they can reduce congestion and improve air quality.

I believe that the environmental impact of freeways is a myth and that they are beneficial for our community. It is important to consider the long-term benefits of freeways, such as reduced congestion and improved safety, when making decisions about transportation infrastructure.

Thank you for allowing me to share my perspective on this important issue. I believe that freeways are essential for the growth and development of our community.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

[Name]

[Position]
September 23, 2002

Patrick Pittenger
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
916 N. Rank Avenue
Waukesha, WI 53187-1607

Re: Market-based solution to freeway expansion

Dear Mr. Pittenger,

This note is to repeat concerns that I expressed during a telephone conversation with you last spring. Although I believe freeways should be made safer through improved ramps and median crash-barriers, I have serious doubts that adding lanes to the freeways will provide long-lasting relief from traffic congestion.

Successful freeway renovation requires examining assumptions that have underpinned freeway and transportation development, such as:

1) Is free (except for gas taxes) access via highway to downtown Milwaukee at any time of day a realistic goal? We pay for other services, sometimes even more at peak periods. I refer to telephone service, electricity, water and sewage.

2) Is there a net benefit to Milwaukee from unlimited free highway access? Is the benefit derived from access to employment in the central office district enough to offset the detrimental in the city’s residential neighborhoods? When for housing, suburbs and rural areas have access to the downtown via freeway, they undermine the advantages provided by the city’s residential neighborhoods and other suburbs.

Is there any community in the country/world which has private buses, private rapid transit, tollways rather than freeways, and which could be used as a model for a transportation system based entirely on user fees? My own bias is that complex systems functions best when decisions are guided by market-driven economics.

Sincerely yours,

Jim Rosenbaum.
Freeway Reconstruction Study Database Records

Date submitted: 9/2/2002 6:07:00 PM
Name: Stan Wysoczynski
Organization: Milwaukee resident and freeways user since 1963
Address: 2925 N 62nd Rd, West Allis, WI 53207

Freeway Reconstruction Study Database Records

Date submitted: 9/2/2002 6:07:00 PM
Name: Stan Wysoczynski
Organization: Milwaukee resident and freeways user since 1963
Address: 2925 N 62nd Rd, West Allis, WI 53207

The outgoing of a potential scenario is that the MMSD will write the next round of regional plans and development. In the past, many projects have been planned to ensure the transportation needs of everyone.

In this year of interest, the research indicates that the potential for new transportation projects is even more.

ACU

December 16, 2003

Philip F. Condon
Executive Director
SEMONI
9295 N 12th St, Second Floor
PO Box 1697
Waukesha, WI 53188-8407

III. Impact of Freeway Reconstruction on Low Income and Minority Communities

Dear Mr. Evans,

We are writing to express our serious concerns regarding the Preliminary Draft of the Evaluation of the Benefits of the Proposed Freeway and Ramps Reconstructed Freeway Reconstruction Plan on Minority and Low Income Populations in Southeast Wisconsin. For decades, freeway planning failed to consider important socioeconomic and environmental impacts on minority communities. The potential for new transportation projects is even more.

In this year of interest, the research indicates that the potential for new transportation projects is even more.

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In this year of interest, the research indicates that the potential for new transportation projects is even more.
The expansion of public transit was crucial for many low-income communities at the time the I9492 was issued, the central city employment rate was 12%, while many jobs in Waukesha County remained out of reach for many of the Preliminary Engineering/Environmental Impact Study soliciting with projects that result in significant air and noise impacts. The study evaluates the impact of these projects on the quality of life in the community, including factors such as air and noise pollution, traffic congestion, and the impact on surrounding areas. The study recommends measures to mitigate these impacts and enhance the quality of life for residents, including the development of comprehensive transportation plans and strategies to improve the accessibility of public transit.
13. The FHWA Order also requires data collection on, among other things:

(a) population served and affected, by race, or national origin, and income level;
(b) proposed steps or gaps against disproportionate high and adverse effects on persons on the basis of race, or national origin, and income level;
(c) present and proposed membership by race, or national origin, in any planning or advisory body that is part of the program.

The FHWA Order provides not only local community inforumators, but also consideration of alternative funding and planning for programs and activities on minority and low-income populations.


14.1 The Planning Process Failed to Adequately Involve Low-Income and Minority Persons.

Thirty years ago, reports made it clear that transportation planners largely ignored the concerns and needs of minority residents. This condition of the LPA, and SEWER's, continues to affect the recommendations made by transportation agencies.
Moreover, in Milwaukee, Kenosha and Racine counties disproportionate percentages of the noncensus residential and commercial/industrial relocations will be by persons living in census tracts with higher than average Latino concentrations. In addition, in Milwaukee, Racine and Waukesha Counties disproportionate shares of the anticipated residential relocations will be by persons living in census tracts with high average concentations of Asian and Pacific Islanders, and in Milwaukee County this is also true of the anticipated business relocations.

In a letter dated June 3, 2001, the ACLU of Wisconsin specifically noted the need for responsible information to persons who do not speak English. Yet SEWRPC never provided translations or oral hearings in any language other than English. The Commission intentionally and correctly failed to ensure the participation of LEP persons in the planning process.

The failure to provide proper services for limited English proficiency (LEP) persons can cause serious errors in discrimination Federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Transportation, have made clear that:

in order to avoid discrimination against LEP persons on the grounds of national origins, recipients must take reasonable steps to ensure that such persons have meaningful access to the programs, services, and information these recipients provide, free of effects.

The NLRC and its regulations require recipients to take reasonable steps to ensure "meaningful" access to LEP persons' programs and activities. The key is providing meaningful access to LEP persons is to ensure that recipients and LEP beneficiaries can communicate effectively and are appropriately treated on that communication.

C. The Preliminary Recommendations Fail to Adequately Evaluate the Effects of Rezoning on Minority and Low-Income Residents.

1. SEWRPC's Analysis: Minority and Low Income Persons are Not Disproportionately Represented Among Those Likely to be Affected by the Provisions

SEWRPC's evaluation still stands with the assertion that "there is not a significant over representation of minority or low-income population areas located primarily in the cities of Milwaukee, Kenosha, and Waukesha."

*Evaluation of the Impacts... on Minority and Low-Income Populations: Table 1.

*Id. Table 5.


proposed to be widened..." In defining "proximity," SEWRPC states that census tracts "within 1/2 mile of these routes in the vicinity of the freeway system, or bisected by a freeway system, were considered as being in proximity for the freeway system." Yet nothing in the study explains or supports this method of calculating the effects of the expansion. Therefore, the study identifies which adverse effects were considered, why the 1/2 mile for freeways was chosen, what potential adverse effects exist in these areas, or how these areas are to be identified by the freeway system; neither does SEWRPC evaluate the effects of spending years in proximity to the actual relocations as well as the ultimate effect of the freeway.

Second, in determining who was likely to be affected by freeway widening, the study only considered the 1/2 mile which was proposed to be widened. However, the environmental impact statement for the SEWRPC study defined "major noise" cover the 1/2 mile and are located entirely within Milwaukee County - excludes 87% of the residents of African American, 77% of its predominance, and 75% of its predominant minority people. The..." Note that, although seven of the SEWRPC study's environment widening including segments of not the 1/2 mile which was not the "environmental effect on the area's and low income area's pockets of the study blackout. This study is likely to provide less income persons are disproportionately affected by particular adverse and some commercial portions of the proposal, such as the expansion of I-44 to eight lanes in the city of Milwaukee.

*Evaluation of the Impacts... on Minority and Low-Income Populations, p. 2.

*Id.

*The study does not evaluate, for example, whether social isolation in a greater problem for the persons living 1/4 mile from the freeway as for those living 3/4 of a mile away, most likely would exacerbate the racial economic concentration of persons living in the "1/4 mile" rather than "1/2 mile" distance.


*Evaluation of the Impacts... on Minority and Low-Income Populations, Table 4a and 4b.

*See, e.g., Design, Evaluation and Consideration of Freeway System Rezoning Alternatives.

*Notably, the city of Milwaukee, where the largest concentration of low income and minority communities are expected to be affected, the concentration plan, and majorly the expansion of I-94 within the city, the expansions of County Road 87, and of Milwaukees terms regarding the Preliminary Freeway System Rezoning Plan.

Fourth, even though SEWRPC's qualitative methodology, 13.4% of the persons located in proximity to freeways proposed to be widened are African American, only 5.4% of or area's residents are African American, and the area's predominance is African American, even though only 3.1% of area's residents are Hispanic. All other minority groups and poor families are also underrepresented among those residing in proximity to the freeways proposed to be widened. The evaluation fails to explain or why the Commission believes that such disparities are not significant.

Minority and Low Income Persons will be Disproportionately Affected by Rezoning causing Freeway Rezoning.

Factors which indicate the location of the effect of the expansion are race and low-income persons include "education or disruption of community cohesion or a community's economic vitality...also employment barriers, displacement of businesses, businesses, or in labor area's..." and "residential location, exclusion or expansion of minority or low-income individuals within a given community or from the border communities." Although SEWRPC's evaluation did not use this methodology, the minority and low-income residents include an assessment of whether those affected groups would be displaced or were not significantly affected by the rezoning plan. Instead, SEWRPC claims that the residents and "minorities" which are estimated to need to be addressed under the mitigation plan - particularly those affected for additional losses - are disproportionately located in areas with above average residential concentration of minority and low-income families live. At the same time, the income tax on those who would. He can not assess the adverse tax losses in the suburban counties.

*Evaluation of the Impacts... on Minority and Low Income Populations, p. 4.

*Id. 5.

*Id. compiled from Tables 7-13.

*Due to there will be reduced 13% in Milwaukee and 15% in the suburban counties. Of this, the tax base which is 1.5% in Milwaukee and .03% in the suburban.

*SEWRPC Wisconsin Regional Freeway Rezoning Study and Preliminary Rezoning Study (6 FRD 573-577, Jan. 22, 2000).

*B-11
for regional road transport, which SEWPRC again suggests, were made at least 20 years ago but have yet to yield. Many other proposals urged by low-income and minority residents over the decades, such as the light rail and HOV lanes included in the LPA, are not even on part of SEWPRC’s current proposal, largely because of the significant financial and political challenges and their supporters. While it is a wise advice that SEWPRC recommends 70% increase in bus services, for example, the lack of urban transport options from the current transit system places the most vulnerable residents in a disadvantageous situation. Further, the plan does not incorporate necessary strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or to address the challenges of climate change and environmental issues that are critical for the residents.

As it has been for decades, regional and expanding mass transit remains critical to providing low-income and minority residents with meaningful access to jobs and other necessary services and amenities. The evaluation of potential to select the most effective investment for the city of Milwaukee. This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the differences in access and opportunity for residents of different income levels and highlights the need for targeted investments to improve access and opportunity for all.

In conclusion, the current transit system is inadequate and requires significant improvements to meet the needs of low-income and minority residents. The proposal presented by SEWPRC shows promise, but it must be complemented with additional investments to ensure that all residents have equal opportunities for access and mobility.

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17. SEWPRC's current plan proposes 70% increase in bus services, 40% increase in rail services, and 30% increase in HOV lanes. The plan also includes a 20% increase in pedestrian and bicycle facilities. However, the report does not provide specific details on the proposed investments or the expected outcomes.

18. The report emphasizes the importance of addressing the needs of low-income and minority residents in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It highlights the need for targeted investments to improve access and opportunity for all residents.
governments with Smart Growth mandates for including low- and moderate-income housing in development plans, as well as with fair housing enforcement, the need for transportation capacity relationships will likely decrease low- and moderate-income present (and future) residents of areas who work in the suburbs are able to drive closer to their places of employment. On the other hand, if these trends are reversed, the tax dollars of low- and moderate-income residents will continue to be used to subsidize the expansion of communities where they are unable to live.

6. The Planning Process Fails to Adequately Consider the Pollution and Health Effects on Low Income and Minority Residents

Federal regulations mandate consideration of the environmental effects of transportation decisions, including the effects on the "human, natural and man-made environment." However, the Human and Environmental Impact Review (HEIR) process is not designed to consider the health and environmental effects of transportation decisions on minority and low income populations. Under the Clean Air Act, agencies are required to consider, in determining the amount of air quality standards, SEWRPC's environmental review fails to meet these requirements.

As much as half of outdoor related pollution (VOCs and NOX) is caused by vehicle emissions. As discussed above, southeast Wisconsin is classified as a "severe" nonattainment area for ozone pollution. As an also-dissolved area, it is the most populated among all other states. Studies also show that ozone is one of the causes of childhood asthma. As the Wisconsin Department of

discusses, Id. p. 24. If that is the case, there seems to be even less reason to spend $4 billion to reduce commuting time from the suburbs to Milwaukee by 2 years. It is also interesting that while in its report SEWRPC recognizes the risk of "traffic time, in another it lists the increase in jobs which would provide another component of SEWRPC's analysis that does not include freeway expansion, non-citizens in F.P.A. and other reports. See e.g., "Planned Host in the Clean Air Act: Mobile Sources," U.S. EPA, Air Quality and Standards: Federal Traffic Plus Figures, p. 12. 723 F.2d 116 (11th Cir. 1983). 724

"Planned Host in the Clean Air Act: Mobile Sources.

Study shows that a significant increase in ozone levels is found in two of the six counties in children. (RNS, Feb. 23, 2002), in which, e.g., "Planned Host in the Clean Air Act: Mobile Sources.

Health and Family Services is aware, asthma is the most common chronic childhood illness. It affects nearly 300,000 Wisconsin children under age 18, a majority of whom live in southeastern Wisconsin. 725

Nor is asthma the only non-related respiratory problem. 726

Severe asthma or asthma indicators that are likely to cause severe or life-threatening symptoms, such as wheezing, but healthy adults and children as well. Exposure to ozone for several hours can result in low concentrations in normal, healthy people during exercise. This decrease in lung function is accompanied by symptoms including chest pain, coughing, wheezing and pulmonary edema. 727

A correlation between elevated ambient ozone levels and increase in daily hospital admissions rates, as well as mortality, has also been reported. 728

In addition, older people who reside in areas with high levels of air pollution are "significantly more likely to require medical treatment, particularly for long-term use." 729

In addition, recent research indicates a significant increase in cancer risk for those living near freeway corridors, caused primarily by mobile source (i.e., vehicle emissions). 730

The public health literature, however, fails to address these issues. Instead, SEWRPC simply states that "residents will be relocated because non-watershed or exceed current levels of the ozone rules." 731

The conclusion is contrary to the conclusion of the EPA, which shows that "there is a significant increase in ozone levels in areas that are not currently non-attainment areas." 732

The Commission fails to evaluate whether disproportionate health or environmental effects will continue to occur among low income and minority communities. The SEWRPC analysis, however, 733

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733 The Commission fails to evaluate whether disproportionate health or environmental effects will continue to occur among low income and minority communities. The SEWRPC analysis, however,
February 14, 2001 and “Record of Public Comments” for the study. Each of these records contains detailed information regarding the public outreach efforts, and mention only of the activities here.

A total of 12 public meetings and hearings were held for the study. Eleven of these meetings were held prior to the preliminary recommendation phase by the Study Advisory Committee. Of these 11 meetings, five were held in Milwaukee County, and the locations of all meetings were chosen in response to requests made by local residents. The remaining meeting was held in the Martin Luther King Community Center and Moore Elementary School in Milwaukee. In addition, a Goodell Industries Community Coordinator met with local residents on four occasions. In total, the meetings and hearings were published through local print media and in radio and television announcements, including the Milwaukee Broadcasting Corporation and Milwaukee Journal Sentinel’s “Record of Public Comments” which announced the meetings to individuals and groups, including those interested in low-income and minority persons. Examples of groups that received all study materials include the American Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, the Milwaukee Chamber of Commerce, the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the National Association of Minority Media, Wisconsin Chamber, the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, Wisconsin, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, the Milwaukee Sentinel, and the Milwaukee Journal. The “Record of Public Comments” for the study includes a list of the meetings and hearings that were held for the study.

A survey was conducted by Midwest Research, Inc. with outreach efforts to minority communities, and numerous meetings were held with minority and low-income persons to provide information regarding the freeway reconstruction study and to receive feedback on the study.

The study was reviewed by the Milwaukee Association for the hearing impaired and the Milwaukee County Human Resources Department. The study was reviewed by the Milwaukee County Human Resources Department. The study was reviewed by the Milwaukee County Human Resources Department. The study was reviewed by the Milwaukee County Human Resources Department. The study was reviewed by the Milwaukee County Human Resources Department.

Regarding the involvement of creative marketing companies, the Commission cannot conclude that Creative Marketing Resources, Inc. could assist in the development of creative marketing resources, the Milwaukee County Human Resources Department, the Milwaukee County Human Resources Department, the Milwaukee County Human Resources Department, the Milwaukee County Human Resources Department.

The study was reviewed by the Milwaukee County Human Resources Department. The study was reviewed by the Milwaukee County Human Resources Department. The study was reviewed by the Milwaukee County Human Resources Department. The study was reviewed by the Milwaukee County Human Resources Department.

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The Evaluation of the Impacts of the Preliminary Recommended Freeway System Reconstruction Plan on Minority and Low-Income Populations in Southeast Wisconsin

The Evaluation of the Impacts of the Preliminary Recommended Freeway System Reconstruction Plan on Minority and Low-Income Populations in Southeast Wisconsin did not analyze the potential impacts to low-income and minority persons in a systematic, consistent, and comparable way across the county by census tract and regional basis. However, the evaluation did assess the extent to which minority groups are concentrated in the areas most affected by the plan.

The perceptions of those who are members of some minority groups are in process of being prepared to be involved in the actual representation of these groups. The perception of the people located in proximity to freeways proposed to be widened and Black African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Pacific Islander groups were interviewed. A total of 1,000 people were interviewed with 100 people from each group.

The ACLU also indicated at its instigation of its belief that is the City of Milwaukee opposes the preliminary recommended plan, using the resolution of the City of Milwaukee Common Council.

Considering the implications of being "in proximity," the perception is based on the distance of a mile from the freeway, distance which was calculated by the state and city, and blocks information, and this is the approximate size of census tracts that are available for the analysis. A mile is the distance that would be used to determine if the freeway is a major road or major highway, and to determine the freeway is a major road or major highway, distance to be used to determine if the freeway is a major road or major highway.

With respect to the effects of living in proximity to a freeway during its actual construction, the freeway system may experience recreation, regardless of how the freeway system is constructed—whether or not additional roads and design improvements. The effects of the actual recreation itself will need to be identified and proposed for mitigation when preliminary engineering studies are conducted by MWC/RAC for each segment of the freeway system.

Second, the ACLU suggested that the study has attempted to address the impacts of the proposed freeway widening on minority and low-income populations. However, the study did not address the race of the minority and low-income populations. The study did not include data specific to Milwaukee County or the Milwaukee region. The study did not attempt to identify the physical design effects of the freeway system, and compared a qualitative summary of what is known about the racial segregation of the freeway system.

Many segments of the freeway system in Milwaukee County were constructed in many cases requiring "major" racial changes in those areas among the racial and socioeconomic effects in the study area. The study did not consider specific design effects in addition to the physical design effects of the freeway system. The ACLU indicated a lack of support for rehabilitating the freeway system to meet modern design standards.

Moreover, the Commission staff did attempt to identify the impacts of possible relocation on minority and low-income populations. The test on pages 3 and 4 fulfills the criteria established for the freeway system study for evaluation of the impacts of the Preliminary Recommended Freeway System Reconstruction Plan on Minority and Low-Income Populations in Southeast Wisconsin.

The Commission staff indicated that it had reviewed the study of potential freeway widening on low-income and minority populations by identifying the number of residential and commercial/industrial developments located within freeway corridors within census blocks with above-average concentrations of low-income and minority populations.

The study was completed by the American Institute of Certified Planners, and used the procedures established for the freeway system to meet modern design standards, and not to rebuild the freeway system with additional lanes. Table 3 below displays the probability of minority and low-income residents of the region changing in Milwaukee County.

Table 3: Estimated Right of Way Requirements for the Preliminary Recommended Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milwaukee County</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total Right of Way Requirements</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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Table 3: Comparison of Minority and Low-Income Populations of Milwaukee County and the Southeastern Wisconsin Region: 1960

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Milwaukee County</th>
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Table 4

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<tr>
<th>Table 4</th>
<th>Estimated Right-of-Way Acquisition under the Preliminary Recommended Plan Located in Areas with Above Regional Average Concentrations of Minority and Low Income Populations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential Redlining: Milwaukee County</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race and Income Group</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>American Indian and Alaska Native Persons</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asian and Pacific Islander Persons</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Minority Persons</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Families in Poverty</strong></td>
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</table>

Note: Percentages are based on the total population in each category. The data reflects the concentration of minority and low-income populations in areas designated as redlining by the Milwaukee County Plan. The Plan identifies areas where property tax burdens and housing opportunities are disproportionately impacted by race and income. The plan aims to reduce disparities and increase opportunities for all residents.
Table 1 (continued)

### Residential Households: Milwaukee County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Census Blocks with Above Regional Average Concentrations of Minority in Low Income Poverty</th>
<th>Due to Design and Related Factors</th>
<th>Due to State or Local Prevalent Practices</th>
<th>Due to Both Design and Related Factors</th>
<th>Total Under Prevalent Practices</th>
<th>Additional Recommended Action</th>
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**Social and Economic Characteristics**

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**Occupation in Low Income Groups**

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</table>

The significance of this analysis may be summarized as follows:

- The percentage of residents and businesses within the regions which will need to be acquired under the preliminary plan within census blocks with above regional average concentrations (more than 12.3%) of total population of Black/African American persons is 34.9%, 6.5%, and 9.3%, respectively. These percentages are greater than the average of the percentage of census blocks in the Regions—50.15%—which have above average concentrations of Black/African American persons.

- The percentage of residents and businesses within the region which will need to be acquired under the preliminary plan within census blocks with above regional average concentrations (more than 6.7%) of total population of American Indian and Alaska Native persons is 30.3%, 6.7%, and 9.3%, respectively. These percentages are greater than the average of the percentage of census blocks in the Regions—50.15%—which have above average concentrations of American Indian and Alaska Native persons.

- The percentage of residents and businesses within the region which will need to be acquired under the preliminary plan within census blocks with above regional average concentrations (more than 18.3%) of total population of Hispanic persons is 30.3%, 6.7%, and 9.3%, respectively. These percentages are greater than the average of the percentage of census blocks in the Regions—50.15%—which have above average concentrations of Hispanic persons.

- The percentage of residents and businesses within the region which will need to be acquired under the preliminary plan within census blocks with above regional average concentrations (more than 19.8%) of total population of Asian and Pacific Islander persons is 30.3%, 6.7%, and 9.3%, respectively. These percentages are greater than the average of the percentage of census blocks in the Regions—50.15%—which have above average concentrations of Asian and Pacific Islander persons.

- The percentage of residents and businesses within the region which will need to be acquired under the preliminary plan within census blocks with above regional average concentrations (more than 12.3%) of total population of American Indian and Alaska Native persons is 34.9%, 6.5%, and 9.3%, respectively. These percentages are greater than the average of the percentage of census blocks in the Regions—50.15%—which have above average concentrations of American Indian and Alaska Native persons.

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The Commission will continue to pursue the implementation of all elements of the regional land use and transportation plan following the completion of the four-step feasibility study.

With respect to the project that light rail testing and ROW lease were completed as part of the West Corridor Study, the differences in the section of the report are due for the change in purpose and scope of the study. The Focus of the East-West Corridor Study was at analyzing improvements to public transit and the 2006-2008 corridor within the BTA’s focus East-West corridor, whereas the focus of the feasibility study is the necessary evaluation of the four-step feasibility study of which the selected transit projects will still be evaluated in it but it will no longer be the only focus. The fact that light rail testing was not included in the feasibility analysis study, should not be a concern for the Holdfast light rail in the Milwaukee East-West Corridor study, as the feasibility study is currently being considered under a separate study — the Milwaukee Downtown Transit Connector Study, which makes additional recommendations as to how to implement light rail.

While the current feasibility analysis study and the previously completed East-West Corridor Study are fundamentally different, some technical factors between the two studies have not changed during the current study. One lesson learned was that some ROW leases were proposed under the East-West Corridor study, and there was very little political or public support for these additional "standard" ROW. This is because ROW leases were not considered as part of the feasibility study.

Regarding the comment that the Commission’s recommendations expression of public transit service in the region is also affected by the allowable expansion of the benefits of Milwaukee-Waukesha County project to enhance and expand regional transit service. The Commission cannot guarantee funding for any of the regional transportation system under the feasibility study. In fact, the plans of the Commission are advisory to the County and municipalities. The Commission’s focus is on recommending improvements to public transit and the 2006-2008 corridor within the BTA’s focus East-West corridor, whereas the focus of the feasibility study is the necessary evaluation of the four-step feasibility study of which the selected transit projects will still be evaluated in it but it will no longer be the only focus. The fact that light rail testing was not included in the feasibility analysis study, should not be a concern for the Holdfast light rail in the Milwaukee East-West Corridor study, as the feasibility study is currently being considered under a separate study — the Milwaukee Downtown Transit Connector Study, which makes additional recommendations as to how to implement light rail.

Regrettably, specific steps and "current" information for the planned expansion of the Regional Park's public transit system and viable options for the proposed expansion of the Milwaukie-Washburn regional park is not included in the current Regional Corridor Study. However, the regional transportation plan does recommend a substantial increase in the amount of transit service provided and supports the implementation of the plan’s completion. The planned public transit service expansion, implementation of the planned expansion, and additional recommendations are included in the Regional Park’s Regional Park service between Milwaukee-Waukesha County and the federal regional transportation plan.

- The regional corridor study recommends a substantial increase in the amount of transit service provided and supports the implementation of the plan’s completion. The planned public transit service expansion, implementation of the planned expansion, and additional recommendations are included in the Regional Park’s Regional Park service between Milwaukee-Waukesha County and the federal regional transportation plan.

With respect to the 10 percent of persons with in automobile and pedestrian presence on public transit service under the feasibility study, as compared to the Focus of the East-West Corridor Study, the different levels of consideration are directly related to the type and scope of the regional transportation system within the entire seven county region. The Commission’s focused, comprehensive transportation plan planning for over 50 years and this study includes a vision for that comprehensive planning. The regional transportation plan has three elements: public transit, transportation system management, and the general public and highway system (which the freeway system is a subset). The study is being conducted within the context of the regional transportation plan, and is congruent with the Commission’s larger framework. The study is in the context of its purpose and scope, which includes the expected ridership, funding and congestion. All recommendations of the report are based on the projected ridership and transportation plan. Expansion of the office of the feasibility study will be added to the regional transportation plan, but will not be replacing existing recommendations. The plan, including those related to public transit, is to be highly prioritized, and appropriately funded, and integrated with other regional and local efforts.
The convertible house has direct and indirect implications for traffic planning. A decision regarding how the regional freeway system should be built should be made in consultation with state and local planning and development officials. In addition, the public should have an opportunity to comment on the proposed plan before it is adopted. The decisions reached should be based on a thorough review of all relevant factors, including economic, social, and environmental considerations.

The conclusions made in this study are based on the premise that a well-designed highway system can effectively manage traffic flow and alleviate congestion. The study identifies several key strategies for improving traffic flow and reducing congestion, including:

- Improving road networks and connectivity
- Implementing congestion management strategies
- Encouraging the use of public transportation
- Promoting alternative modes of transportation
- Implementing traffic demand management strategies

The study concludes that by implementing these strategies, it is possible to significantly reduce traffic congestion and improve traffic flow in the vicinity of the convertible house. The study recommends that these strategies be implemented in a phased manner, with each phase focusing on a specific area or region within the region.

The study also recommends that traffic management plans be developed and implemented in conjunction with the development of new road networks. This will ensure that the traffic management plans are effective and that they are integrated with other planning efforts.

In conclusion, the study concludes that by implementing the strategies outlined in this report, it is possible to significantly reduce traffic congestion and improve traffic flow in the vicinity of the convertible house. The study recommends that these strategies be implemented in a phased manner, with each phase focusing on a specific area or region within the region.

The study also recommends that traffic management plans be developed and implemented in conjunction with the development of new road networks. This will ensure that the traffic management plans are effective and that they are integrated with other planning efforts.
Trends in Cancer Risk at Burbank

The South Coast Air Quality Management District's executive officer signed in 1995 regarding the results of this study. "Clearly, we're not in a position to outline toxic air pollution and the associated cancer risk in our area. Regulation now must be based on real science and actual risk factors." That statement is consistent with the Federal Register's statement that transportation systems need to be restructured to reduce pollution. The Commission has also been urged by the Air Resources Board, and some environmentalists, that the California Air Resources Board (CARB) should be more aggressive in its efforts to reduce pollution.

Regarding the costs of air pollution, the Southern California Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) notes that there is a need for more aggressive action on the part of the federal government to address the issue of air pollution. The SCAQMD has also been urged by the CARB to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to reduce pollution. The CARB has also been urged by the SCAQMD to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to reduce pollution.

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B. On page 3 of the ACLU letter, it was suggested that freeway reconstruction and capacity expansion will disproportionately burden Milwaukee County due to a greater loss of tax base than suburban counties, and there will be fewer economic benefits for the City and County of Milwaukee because of factors such as the short supply of existing filling opportunities.

The issue of environmental justice was previously addressed in this letter, but the potential economic benefits for Milwaukee County, the Southeastern Wisconsin Region, and the cities in the area need to be addressed. The freeway system is of vital importance to residents of the entire region and to Milwaukee County. About 93 percent of all income made in an average household by Southeastern Wisconsin residents and by Milwaukee County residents is made on the freeway system. Over 50 percent of the daily traffic on the Milwaukee County freeway system is made by Milwaukee County residents, and another 40 percent of Milwaukee County freeway system daily traffic is to and from Milwaukee County businesses. The freeway system must serve the economy of Milwaukee County, the region, and the State for 50 to 75 years in the future — the expected useful life of the recommended improvements and bridges.

C. On page 4 of the ACLU letter, it was noted that WISDOT is unlikely to use “a mere” 1.2 percent of its HHWA funds in federal fiscal year 2001 for disadvantaged business enterprise firms through “race and gender conscious” goals. If City of Milwaukee minority and low income persons will receive federal benefits from increased employment due to freeway expansion, it was also pointed out the disparity in average incomes of White and Black/African American households in metropolitan Milwaukee. Black/African American households earn on average about 60 percent of the average actual earnings of White households.

The letter regarding WISDOT’s “race and gender conscious” goal of 7.2 percent of HHWA funds for disadvantaged business enterprise firms was correct, but the ACLU failed to note several important points regarding that goal — including the following:

- The overall goal for disadvantaged business enterprise firms is actually 8.2 percent, including 7.2 percent race and gender-conscious and 0.8 percent race and gender neutral.
- The goal set by WISDOT does not include the recreation of the Marquette Interchange or the reconstruction of the remainder of the regional freeway system.
- The goal is an overall statewide goal, not a goal for southeastern Wisconsin, Milwaukee County, or the City of Milwaukee.
- The process for goal-setting (which was described in WISDOT’s Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Plan cited in the ACLU letter) is one that includes the National Association of Minority Contractors, the Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association, and the TIFIA.

In upcoming years, the southeastern Wisconsin regional freeway system will rebuild, additional funds will be invested in the area of the State with the greatest concentration of minority resides and disadvantaged business opportunities. It is expected that WISDOT will be able to meet higher discretionary or statutory goals, with area firms having increased opportunities to participate.

The ACLU further mentioned that there would be fewer opportunities for minority and low income persons during freeway expansion. First, a final recommendation has yet to be made regarding how the freeway system will be rebuilt. The Advisory Committee has yet to formulate a final recommended plan. Second, there will be opportunities for participation regarding how the freeway system is rebuilt — modernization and widening is estimated to cost $56.25 billion, but at 85.5 billion, the investment to rebuild the freeway system with modernization only will represent substantial expenditure. Third, reconstruction with the additional lanes would actually result in greater expenditures — and opportunities — than reconstruction without the additional lanes.

Regarding the disparity in earnings between White and Black/African American households in metropolitan Milwaukee, the disparity is obviously not related to the reconstruction of the freeway system as it has not yet occurred. The reconstruction of the regional freeway system should not be portrayed as potentially exacerbating existing disparities — there is no evidence that it will, and as discussed above, the substantial expenditure will provide for additional opportunities for participation and economic benefits associated with that participation.

D. On pages 7 through 9 of the ACLU letter, it was stated that Federal law requires consideration of impacts on minority and low-income persons, stating Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 12254, the HHWA Environmental Justice Order, and the Civil Rights Act.

The Commission is aware of its responsibilities under Federal law, and has conducted the freeway reconstruction study mindful of those responsibilities. The "Evaluation of the Impacts of the Preliminary Recommended Freeway System Reconstruction Plan on Minority and Low-Income Populations in Southeastern Wisconsin" commissioned on in the ACLU letter provides extensive documentation of analyses of impacts, and the first two volumes of the study, "Record of Public Comment," have documented the public involvement efforts with a third volume yet to be prepared. This memorandum is a compilation of the Commission's efforts, preparing to comments regarding the study. Moreover, the freeway reconstructions study is only the beginning of an effort to correct such taking future. Much more detailed, multi-year preliminary engineering and environmental studies will be completed prior to reconstructions. These studies will include the continuation of study of impact on minority and low-income populations of the Region. Attempts to address social, economic, and equity impacts will not end with the freeway reconstruction study.
Appendix C

OPINION/EDITORIAL PIECES AND NEWS ARTICLES CONCERNING THE REGIONAL FREEWAY SYSTEM RECONSTRUCTION STUDY INCLUDING THE PRELIMINARY FREEWAY SYSTEM RECONSTRUCTION PLAN
Milwaukee - On Thursday, February 20th, The Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors in a vote of 15-10 decided not to increase any county freeways from 6 to 8 lanes. The freeway I-43 from Silver Spring Drive to I-894 will not be widened into an eight lane, according to the public officials.

Their latest vote is only a recommendation to the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC) not to widen county freeways. The commission wants to upgrade about 127 miles of county freeway by adding new lanes at a cost of $6.25 billion.

The area mostly affected would have been the south side where the majority of the Hispanic population resides. The affected area could have been from I-94 to Layton Blvd. and from S. 4th St. to S. 8th St. The I-43 freeway would be expanded on both east and west sides destroying and displacing a large part of the community.

The widening of lanes would have destroyed historical churches, businesses, residential homes, shops, restaurants and would also displace the United Community Center (UCC), a multi-million dollar community based organization. The UCC owns about three square blocks alongside the I-43 freeway.

Last month, the SWRPC drew criticism from the Citizens Allied for Sane Highways, the Wisconsin’s American Civil Liberties Union and south side residents for their failure to inform and include the Hispanic community in all aspects of the planning process. Only 3 of the 21 members of the commission are from Milwaukee County.

The opposing groups alleged that the SWRPC never provided information in Spanish to the community concerning the expansion of public transportation, access to equal employment, the tax base reduction, effects on the fair and affordable housing, the health and environmental effects of freeway expansion and the effects it would have on the ozone pollution in the city of Milwaukee.


Supervisors who voted to widen the I-94 and I-43 freeways are: James White, Peter Agnos, Mark Borkowski, Paul Cesarz, Dan Diliberti, Alvin Endries, Tim Johnson, Ryan McCue, Rob McDonald and Roger Quindel.

The Milwaukee and Glendale Common councils have previously rejected a plan to widen the freeways in their vicinity. Currently, both Common Councils and the Milwaukee County Board have urged the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission not to widen the freeways in the county.

The SWRPC held a south side "open house" community meeting on February 27th, at the UCC Middle School Gymnasium to receive feedback from the Hispanic community concerning the freeway controversial expansion.
Commuters zipping both ways on I-94

As jobs spread out, more workers are heading out of Milwaukee County

BY LARRY SANDLER
sandler@jmuonline.com

Last Updated: March 5, 2003

I-94 is becoming more of a two-way street for commuters, according to U.S. Census Bureau figures being released today.

In 2000, the census found, 19% of Milwaukee County workers, or nearly one in five, were commuting to jobs outside the county, up from 14% or about one in seven, in 1990.

The top destination for those commuters was Washington County, drawing 57,281 workers from Milwaukee County, up 29% from 44,584 in 1990. At the same time, nearly one-third of Waukesha County workers - 61,038 - reported to Milwaukee County jobs in 2000, up 6% from 57,118 in 1990.

"It's not unexpected, because there has been a big trend in terms of jobs moving to the suburbs and people moving to the suburbs," said Ed Beimborn, director of the Center for Urban Transportation Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

"If you were to stand at the Waukesha-Milwaukee county line in the morning, you would see about the same amount of traffic going each way," Beimborn added.

For commuters such as Annette Craig, it's just a matter of following the jobs.

Craig, who lives in Milwaukee's Bay View neighborhood, has been teaching music in Brookfield for the past three years. She said she previously worked in Milwaukee and could do so again.

"Teaching is a take-along skill," Craig said. "I may soon take it with me and work again in the city, as I once did. It is better to have the commute and the evening errands all in the same neighborhood."

While Craig said her morning drive is easy, she said her afternoon commute home on southbound U.S. Highway 45 is "a bit more unpleasant."

Long commute

Other commuters are more willing to put up with the long drive across county lines.

"I enjoy commuting to work," Yolanda Rosales said of her 45-minute trip from her home on Milwaukee's south side to her West Bend job. "It gives me time in the morning to think about the things that need to be done, and on the way home, I get a chance to unwind."

Rosales admits "commuting has its disadvantages." But as a state Department of Corrections employee, she adds, "I have no intention of transferring to Milwaukee, where I live. I do not want to run into individuals that I am required to supervise in the community."

While the commuting figures could become fodder in the debate over whether to add lanes to I-94 and I-43, Beimborn warns that they don't tell the whole story.

The Census Bureau asks only about trips to and from work, which represent just 25% of all travel, Beimborn said. Most trips are for other purposes, such as recreation, shopping or errands, he said.

Ken Yanker, assistant director of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, declined to comment on the census figures until he could study them. The planning commission periodically conducts its own surveys on travel within its seven-county region.

A preliminary recommendation from a planning commission advisory committee calls for expanding most of the region's major freeways from six to eight lanes as they are rebuilt over the next 20 or 30 years. That recommendation has been endorsed by six county boards and the Racine, Brookfield and Milwaukee common councils.

However, the Milwaukee County Board, the Milwaukee and Glendale common councils, the River Hills Village Board and the Nickel school Board have joined freeway neighbors, environmentalists and Milwaukee Mayor John O. Norquist in opposing eight lanes on I-94, from Washington to downtown Milwaukee, and on I-43, from I-894 to Brown Deer Road.

Crossing Borders

Quotable

"The biggest growth in travel in the last 20 years has been in suburband urban travel," both regionally and nationally. - Ed Beimborn, director of the Center for Urban Transportation Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Commuting

JS Online Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
March 5, 2003

Planners are trying to sort out the conflicting opinions to forge a consensus.

Not all of the commuters who leave their home counties are heading to or from Milwaukee County, the census figures show.

Barb traveling

"The biggest growth in travel in the last 20 years has been in suburb-to-suburb travel," both regionally and nationally, Beimborn said.

For example, 14,528 Washington County residents commuted to jobs in either Washington or Ozaukee counties in 2000, up 59% from 9,058 in 1990, the Census Bureau reported.

Shannon Doby is part of that trend. She and her fiancé, Scott Miller, live in Hartford, a 30-minute drive from their jobs at the Quad/Graphics plant in Sussex.

In picking a place to live, their top priority was staying close to Miller's family and friends in Washington County, said Doby, whose own family lives in Michigan.

"He plays softball in Allenberg," Doby said. "All his friends live in the Slinger, the West Bend or the Hartford area. His family lives in Richfield, Stinger and Huber. We are 20 minutes from his father and stepmom, 10 minutes from his brother and sister-in-law, five minutes from his stepbrothers, and 30 minutes from his brother's home."

Also, Doby said, she and Miller were attracted by the affordable housing prices in Hartford and by the small-town atmosphere.

Besides, they had invested years in their Quad jobs and could not transfer together to the company's Hartford plant, Doby added.

"To be honest, it never crossed our mind when house-hunting" to try to find work closer to home, although neither would want to commute more than half an hour each way, Doby said.

"In the perfect world, a person would be close to family, friends and their job," Doby said. "However, how many of us live in a perfect world? Knowing that at least part of our lives is near our home . . . is more important than having our house near our job."

Related Links

COMMUTING

Figures from the 2000 census show that nearly one in five Milwaukee County residents was commuting to a job outside the county, up from 14% in 1990.

The percentages below reflect the growing southeastern Wisconsin commuting patterns from 1980 to 2000.
CASH applauds supervisors' vote

By Sean Ryan
Daily Reporter Staff

Feb. 24, 2003

The Milwaukee County Board's recommended changes to the freeway-reconstruction proposal drew applause from local expansion critics and concerns from the Advisory Committee that will consider them.

The Milwaukee County Board's recommendations Thursday make it the only county board out of seven that asked the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to modify its proposed $6.2 billion freeway-expansion proposal. The board approved the plan's design and safety upgrades and made three recommendations to SEWRPC's proposals:

- Interstate 94 from the Zoo Interchange to the Marquette Interchange should remain at six lanes;
- I-43 from Mitchell Interchange to Silver Spring Drive should also stay with six lanes;
- The four-lane stretch of I-43 from Bender Road to Brown Deer road should expand to six, not the proposed eight, lanes.

The board recommendations would mean that instead of widening 127 miles of highway, 53 in Milwaukee County, SEWRPC should propose widening about 108 miles, 34 in Milwaukee County. County Executive Scott Walker could veto the recommendations but wouldn't comment until his staff has more time to review the resolutions.

SEWRPC considered this approach in an earlier proposal before submitting the $6.2 billion plan to its county boards for comment, said Kenneth Yunker, SEWRPC assistant director. The plan was rejected because it would lead to local congestion on the highways and surface streets, he said.

More congestion

"We evaluated the costs and the impacts, including congestion, and yes, there would be more," Yunker said. "It was concluded that the rest of the system would work even if you didn't widen those segments."

The largest opposition group to the expansion proposal, Citizens Allied for Sane Highways, applauded the recommendations. Gretchen Schulte, CASH co-chairwoman, said she would've preferred Supervisor Lynne DeBruin's plan to oppose all expansions in Milwaukee County, which lost by a 12-13 vote.

"I thought it was a good decision, but would they'd had one more vote," Schulte said. "I want to see (SEWRPC) heed it."

Yunker said he would present all the information gathered from the past seven county board meetings to SEWRPC's Advisory Committee, which may meet this week.

After the committee redrafts its plan, he said it could make another round to the seven boards before it's passed to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

"It wasn't sent out with the idea that everyone is going to endorse it," Yunker said. "It was to see if they could endorse it and to see what they agreed with and what they disagreed with. Why would they ignore it?"

The recommendations drew concern and criticism from some of the Advisory Committee members, including Milwaukee Supervisor James White, Robert Cook, Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin executive director, and Kenneth Leonard, director of WisDOT's Bureau of Planning. On the other hand, it was supported by Advisory Committee members Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist and Milwaukee County Board Chairman Lee Holloway.

Regional development hurt?

Leonard said he was worried that not expanding the segments of I-94 and I-43 would lead to traffic jams and increased accidents, which may impede commercial traffic traveling through the area. However, he said he would need to consider the recommendations more before knowing how he would handle them in the committee.

"Obviously, over the life of the planning period, congestion is going to get much worse to those sections, and accidents will get much more frequent," Leonard said.

"One of my concerns is what it's going to do to through traffic, to regional development to the area."

Cook said the recommendations were a bad idea that would lead to traffic backups that would extend beyond the local Milwaukee area. He said that the County Board was swayed by a very vocal minority but was confident WisDOT would make good decisions about the expansion.

"In order for the system to flow efficiently, traffic must be allowed to flow throughout the whole system," Cook said. "DOT will do what they always do, which is weigh the benefits of their project for the state against its impact to the people around it."

With approval from SEWRPC's six suburban counties and criticism from Milwaukee County, Yunker said his commission and its Advisory Committee would sit down to "try and shape a plan that can be endorsed by each of the seven county boards."
Milwaukee County Board resists more freeway lanes

By LARRY SANDLER
lsandler@journalsentinel.com

Milwaukee County supervisors came out Thursday against widening key stretches of I-94 and I-43 to eight lanes, after narrowly defeating a move to oppose widening any freeway in the county.

With that decision, the County Board joined the Milwaukee and Glendale Common Councils in urging the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission not to recommend eight-lane freeways in the city and North Shore suburbs.

A preliminary recommendation from a planning commission study committee called for rebuilding all of the area’s aging freeways with design upgrades, and with 127 miles of new lanes, at a cost of $6.65 billion.

Planners say expansion is needed to prevent traffic congestion from growing and to stimulate economic growth. Six suburban county boards have backed the preliminary recommendation, along with the Brookfield, Racine and Cudahy Common Councils.

But freeway neighbors and environmentalists have resisted freeway expansion in Milwaukee and nearby suburbs, arguing that it would take too many homes and businesses, increase air pollution and encourage urban sprawl.

Planners now will consider all of the public reaction as they try to shape a regional consensus on the issue, said Phil Evenson, the planning commission’s executive director. He declined to speculate on what the study panel will do when it meets in about a month, but he noted that “consensus means bringing everybody on board.”

However, Supervisor James White said he was not sure the study committee needed to revise its recommendation to take the County Board vote into account. White, a panel member who supports freeway expansion, said the committee could send its plan to the full commission and the state Department of Transportation with local governments’ comments attached.

But the planning commission’s position on adding lanes could determine whether those lanes are built. Although the commission’s recommendations are not binding, the federal government won’t give the state the money to build new lanes unless the commission endorses adding lanes.

Mayor John O. Norquist, who also sits on the study committee, and Gretchen Schuelt, co-chairman of Citizens Allied for Sane Highways, the coalition of neighborhood groups fighting freeway expansion, applauded the County Board vote and said they hoped the study committee would not ignore the wishes of city and county residents and officials.

Supervisors voted, 15-10, against widening I-94 from six to eight lanes from Wauwatosa to downtown Milwaukee and against widening I-43 from six to eight lanes from I-894 to Silver Spring Drive.

Separately, the board backed widening I-43, from Bender Road to Brown Deer Road, from four to six lanes, as planners have long recommended, but not to eight lanes, as the study panel wanted.

But Supervisor Lynne DeBruin lost, 13-12, in an attempt to oppose widening any freeway anywhere in the county, and the board supported freeway widening in neighboring counties.

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
February 21, 2003

Freeways that would be widened from six to eight lanes are U.S. Highway 45 from Greenfield to Richfield; I-894; and I-94, from I-894 to the Illinois border and from Highway 45 to Waukesha.

Freeway stretches that would be widened from four to six lanes are I-94, from Oconomowoc to Waukesha, and I-43, from Mukwonago to Greenfield and from Brown Deer Road to state Highway 57.

“Milwaukee won, but there’s clearly no consensus in other parts of the county,” said Schuelt, a Milwaukee Public Schools budget analyst.

County Executive Scott Walker will review the board’s actions before deciding whether to sign or veto the resolution, Walker spokesman Sadhan Lindwalt said.

Voting against widening I-94 and I-43 were Board Chairman Lee Holloway, DeBruin and Supervisors Sheila Aldrich, Tom Bailey, Gerry Broderick, Elizabeth Coggins-Jones, Joe Davis Sr., Willie Johnson, Robert Krug, Lori Lutze, Michael Mayo, Richard Nyklewicz Jr., Jim “Lugi” Schmitt, John Weishan and Tony Zielenkni.

Voting to support widening I-94 and I-43 were White and Supervisors Peter Agnos, Mark Borkowski, Paul Cesarz, Dan Dilliberti, Alvin “Bud” Endries, Tim Johnson, Ryan McCue, Rob McDonald and Roger Quindel.

Voting against widening any Milwaukee County freeway were Aldrich, Bailey, Broderick, Coggins-Jones, Davis, DeBruin, Holloway, Willie Johnson, Mayo, Nyklewicz, Weishan and Zielenkni. Voting to support widening at least some freeways were Agnos, Borkowski, Cesarz, Dilliberti, Endries, Tim Johnson, Krug, Lutke, McCue, McDonald, Quindel, Schmitt and White.
Milwaukee board votes against freeway plan

Impact in doubt as Walker mulls veto

The Waukesha Freeman
February 21, 2003

By DENNIS A. SHOOK
Senior Staff Writer

WAUKESHA — The Milwaukee County Board voted narrowly Thursday to oppose widening the interstate system anywhere in the city of Milwaukee.

But the impact of that vote seems anything but certain.

A preliminary recommendation from the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Freeway Advisory Committee calls for rebuilding the freeways with 127 miles of new lanes, for $6.25 billion.

The board voted 15-10 against widening Interstate 94 from six to eight lanes between the zoo and Marquette interchanges and from Interstate 894 to Silver Spring Drive.

The board did vote to support a widening from four to six lanes between Bender Road and Brown Deer Road along Interstate 43.

Walker could nix vote

Whether that vote becomes the official Milwaukee County statement on the matter is what is confusing the picture.

Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker is considering a veto of the board action.

Sadhana Lindvall, Walker's communications director, said today, "The county executive has been supportive for some time of widening the system. But he wants to take his time considering the board's vote."

The advisory committee will probably meet again in about a month now that all seven member counties have voted on the plan, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission Executive Director Phil Evenson said today.

County boards from the other six counties voted to support the plan, offered by the state Department of Transportation.

"We have lost a lot of months in this process because of the recall situation in Milwaukee County," Evenson said.

And Gov. Jim Doyle's state budget calls for starting the construction in 2005 instead of 2004 as originally sought by the advisory committee.

If the entire project is undertaken, it would take about four years to complete.

The confusion over who speaks for Milwaukee might water down the board's opposition. Even if Walker does not veto the plan, there are five Milwaukee area representatives on the advisory committee - three from the county and two from the city.

Doyle compromise

Doyle said Wednesday he is seeking a compromise on redesigning the Marquette Interchange, a major sticking point in the plan and the first part to be constructed.

"(Walker) indicated to me that a veto was a distinct possibility. And I will urge him to veto it."

— Daniel Finley
Waukesha County Executive

Finley said Norquist's proposal "is out of left field."

He added that changing the plan now "would interfere in what the advisory committee has done so far. If Norquist is serious about his plan he should submit it to the committee so it can be subjected to the planning process. Right now, too much credibility is being given to the Norquist plan."

The advisory committee will ultimately make a recommendation on the proposal to the SEWRPC board, based on a consensus vote by representatives from all seven counties. That recommendation then goes to the SEWRPC board.

Only three of the 21 SEWRPC members are from Milwaukee County.

The secretary of the state Department of Transportation will consider SEWRPC's recommendation before making its recommendation to the governor and the state Legislature.
SEWRPC construction ban narrowly defeated

By Candace Doyle
Editor

Feb. 21, 2003

Milwaukee County supervisors Thursday denied by one vote a proposal to oppose the construction of any additional lanes on the freeway system within the county.

The board, in a 12-13 vote, rejected the proposal advanced by Supervisor Lynne DeBruin -- a request that would have rejected the bulk of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's $6.2 billion plan to expand 127 miles of the freeway system.

The board also denied a request by Supervisor Thomas Bailey to delay until March acting on SEWRPC's plan to overhaul the freeway. Bailey asked to postpone the matter because River Hills, which is in his district, asked for additional time to consider the impact of the regional planning commission's plan on the village.

But a majority of supervisors, including Supervisor Daniel J. Diliberti, rejected that idea.

"I think there is a consensus of the board to move forward," Diliberti said. "I think it's important that Milwaukee not delay it any further."

Decision uncertain

Both Bailey's and DeBruin's requests were amendments to a resolution before the board that the county's Transportation, Public Works and Transit Committee recommended on Tuesday.

That resolution is a multifaceted proposal that the board was planning on voting on in a piecemeal fashion. As of now, though, the board had not acted on any of the resolution's individual elements, including a key and controversial piece that would add 108 miles to the system on the following segments by increasing by two the number of lanes from:

- Interstate 94 from the Racine-Milwaukee county line to the Mitchell Interchange;
- I-94 from the Mitchell Interchange to the Zoo Interchange;
- I-43 from the Hale Interchange to the Milwaukee-Waukesha county line;
- I-94 from the Zoo Interchange to the Milwaukee-Waukesha county line; and
- Highway 45 from the Zoo Interchange to the Milwaukee-Waukesha County line.

Another element that stirred up public dissent was a part of the resolution that would add 19 miles of freeway by increasing the number of lanes from six to eight on I-43 from the Mitchell Interchange to Silver Spring Drive and on I-94 from the Marquette Interchange to the Zoo Interchange.

Opposition continues

Two meetings had been held before the County Board's meeting Thursday to listen to the public's concern that the SEWRPC plan was too costly and would harm the environment, destroy homes and result in lost tax base. Among those opposed to the plan are Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist, Citizens Allied for Safe Highways, the Sierra Club and the American Civil Liberties Union.

Before Thursday's meeting, CASH issued a statement saying the County Board's vote backing SEWRPC's proposal would be "a breach of public faith, a broken promise to voters."

The group said a vote in favor of the plan would necessitate higher property taxes.

"These supervisors know that more freeways would mean a reduced tax base and much, much higher property taxes," said Gretchen Schultz, co-chairwoman of CASH. "Who do they think is going to pay for additional freeway patrols and storm-water management?"

The transportation panel, in amendments to the resolution now before the board, tried to answer some of those worries by recommending that:

- Milwaukee County be reimbursed for the cost of additional freeway patrols;
- No portion of the project's cost be borne by or shifted to local property taxes;
- Sound barriers not be placed on the freeway without prior consent of abutting municipalities;
- Disadvantaged-business goals similar to those used in the Miller Park project be set;
- A noise-mitigation plan be established; and
- All counties in the region adopt Smart Growth plans.

Board opposes widening of key freeway segments

By LARRY SANDLER
sandler@journalsentinel.com

Last Updated: Feb. 20, 2003

Milwaukee County supervisors came out Thursday against widening key stretches of I-94 and I-43 to eight lanes after narrowly defeating a move to oppose widening any freeway in the county.

With that decision, the County Board joined the Milwaukee and Glendale common councils in urging the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission not to recommend eight-lane freeways in the city and North Shore suburbs.

A preliminary recommendation from a planning commission study committee called for rebuilding all of the area's aging freeways with design upgrades and 127 miles of new lanes at a cost of $6.25 billion.

Six suburban county boards have backed the preliminary recommendation, along with the Brookfield, Racine and Cudahy common councils. But freeway neighbors and environmentalists have resisted freeway expansion in Milwaukee and nearby suburbs.

Planners will consider all public reaction as they shape a regional consensus on the issue, said Phil Evenson, planning commission executive director.

However, Supervisor James White said he was not sure the study committee needed to revise its recommendation to take the County Board vote into account. White, a panel member who supports freeway expansion, said the committee could send its plan to the full commission and the state Department of Transportation with local governments' comments attached.

The planning commission's position on adding lanes could determine whether those lanes are built. While its recommendations are not binding, unless the commission endorses adding lanes the federal government won't give the state the money to build them.

Mayor John O. Norquist, who also sits on the study committee, and Gretchen Schultz, co-chairman of Citizens Allied for Safe Highways, a coalition of neighborhood groups fighting freeway expansion, applauded the County Board vote and said they hoped the study committee would not ignore the wishes of city and county residents and officials.

Supervisors voted, 15-10, against widening I-94 from six to eight lanes from Wauwatosa to downtown Milwaukee and against widening I-43 from six to eight lanes from I-894 to Silver Spring Drive.

Separately, the board backed widening I-43 between Bader and Brown Deer roads from four to six lanes, as planners recommend, but not to eight lanes, as the study panel wanted.

Supervisor Lynne DeBruin lost, 13-12, an attempt to oppose widening any freeway in the county, and the board supported freeway widening in neighboring counties.

Freeways that would be widened from six to eight lanes are U.S. Highway 45 from Greenfield to Richfield, I-894; and I-94 from I-894 to the Illinois border and from Highway 45 to Waukesha. Widened from four to six lanes: I-94 from Oconomowoc to Waukesha, and I-43, from Mukwonago to Greenfield and from Brown Deer Road to Highway 57.

County Executive Scott Walker will review the board's actions before deciding whether to sign or veto the resolution, Walker spokeswoman Sadasa Lindvall said.

Voting against widening I-94 and I-43 were John Holax, DeBruin, Sheila Aldrich, Tom Bailey, Gerry Broderick, Elizabeth Coggs-Jones, Joe Davis Sr., Willie Johnson, Robert Krug, Lori Lothka, Michael Mayo, Richard Nyklewicz Jr., Jim "Lynx" Schmidt, John Weisshaar, Tony Zielinski.

Voting to support widening I-94 and I-43 were White, Peter Agnos, Mark Borkowski, Paul Cesare, Dan Diliberti, Alvin "Bud" Endries, Tim Johnson, Ryan McCue, Rob McDonald and Roger Quindel.

Voting against widening any Milwaukee County freeway were Aldrich, Bailey, Broderick, Coggs-Jones, Davis, DeBruin, Holloway, Willie Johnson, Mayo, Nyklewicz, Weisshaar and Zielinski.

Voting to support widening at least some freeways were Agnos, Borkowski, Cesare, Diliberti, Endries, Tim Johnson, Krug, Lenzka, McCue, McDonald, Quindel, Schmidt and White.
Freeway work is fast lane to recovery

One of the roads we hope Gov. Jim Doyle does not go down is the road that leads to delay of the rebuilding of the Marquette Interchange and the interstate system in southeastern Wisconsin.

Lately there have been some disparaging words from politicians and officials who believe they are not part of the rest of the state and are opposing spending the money it will take for the rebuild.

Yet a Transportation Development Association study released recently claims that every $1 spent on transportation yields $3 in economic benefits.

That relationship might be even more important with the Marquette Interchange.

The overall freeway rebuilding project cost is estimated at about $6.25 billion, of which about $900 million will be invested in rebuilding the Marquette Interchange.

That interchange will be the first project done as it is the heart of the system, based on the recommendations by the state Department of Transportation and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

That interchange work is proceeding along the lines of starting the reconstruction in 2004 and is projected to take four years to complete.

The heart of the freeway system in southeastern Wisconsin, at the crossroads of Interstate 94, Interstate 43 and Interstate 794, handles 500,000 vehicles a day, many of them bound for the Twin Cities, Chicago, Madison and Green Bay.

The work along the entire region will proceed outward in most directions once that central hub is finished.

From 2004 to 2010, 113 miles of the freeway is to be reconstructed.

That is the phase most likely to include the controversial six-mile stretch between the Zoo and Marquette Interchanges.

Another segment of the work is coming between 2011 and 2020, with another 56 miles of reconstruction from 2021 to 2030.

The best hope for ensuring that the work actually gets done may lie in the fact that Brookfield resident Frank Busalacchi is now the secretary of the state Department of Transportation.

As a former truck driver and area resident, he understands how important the work is, particularly the Marquette.

The best thing for the governor to do would be to heed his advice and recognize the unique importance of the freeway system to the vitality of the state's central economic area.

By all means, start with the Marquette and do the other work in the years to come. But the state must rebuild the interchange to the level being proposed by the state DOT so it is safe and lasts through Wisconsin's tough winters.

Half-hearted measures on the freeway rebuilding will lead to anemic results. With the state's economy already in the doldrums, this kind of investment must be made.

Panel backs lane limits

A County Board committee on Tuesday unanimously endorsed limits on a proposed freeway expansion in Milwaukee County, but kept alive a chance for the full board to back a bigger road project.

The Transportation, Public Works and Transit committee supported adding lanes, but only outside the city of Milwaukee, where officials and residents have expressed strong opposition to widening.

That vote was 6-0.

The panel deadlocked 3-3 on a resolution that sought to endorse a proposal by regional planners to widen I-43 and I-94 from six to eight lanes from the Mitchell Interchange to Silver Spring Drive, and from the Marquette Interchange to the Zoo Interchange.

But the tie still sends the second resolution to the full County Board on Thursday, with no recommendation. The board will consider both resolutions.

In addition to supporting the existing freeway width in Milwaukee, the resolution approved in committee also backed widening I-43 to no more than six lanes in suburban Glendale from Bender Road to Brown Deer Road.

The vote came on a multi-pronged resolution by Supervisor James White, the committee's chairman.

The resolution expresses support for planners' recommendations to fix design and safety flaws in the freeway system.

Counties in southeastern Wisconsin, including Milwaukee, have been asked by the state Department of Transportation to respond to the preliminary freeway plan drawn up by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

The committee voted down an amendment proposed by Supervisor Lynne DeBruin that would have put supervisors on record against any plans for additional freeway lanes anywhere in Milwaukee County. Supervisors approved another DeBruin amendment calling on the DOT to develop plans to deal with "negative aspects" of any freeway reconstruction, including the loss of homes, increased noise levels and environmental concerns.

Also attached to the committee's recommended resolution was an amendment by Supervisor Thomas Bailey that called for no widening beyond six lanes on I-43 north from Bender Road. That amendment also declared that no sound barriers be erected on the freeway without the prior consent of abutting municipalities.

An additional amendment, included in the unanimously approved resolution, called on DOT to adopt the same disadvantaged-business hiring goals as those used in the Miller Park project.

White did not allow testimony from audience members, noting the lengthy testimony at two previous meetings.

On the vote to endorse the SEWRPC plan that calls for eight-lane freeways, supervisors White, Ryan McCue and Lori Lutzka voted in favor; supervisors Michael Mayo, William Johnson and John Welshan were opposed. Supervisor Jim Schmitt was not present.
Committee split on key portion of freeway plan

By Candace Doyle
Editor

Feb. 19, 2003

A Milwaukee County panel Tuesday morning failed to make a recommendation on a key portion of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's freeway-expansion plan.

The Transportation, Public Works and Transit Committee, in a 3-3 vote, made no recommendation on a part of a resolution made by County Supervisor James White that, had it passed, would have been strong encouragement for the full County Board to essentially approve SEWRPC's $6.2 billion plan in its entirety.

The County Board is to meet Thursday morning to consider the committee's actions. SEWRPC serves as the planning agency for Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha counties, and the six suburban county boards have already endorsed the plan.

White said his substitute resolution took a "regional perspective" on transportation issues and essentially supported the main tenets of SEWRPC's plan, which involves incorporating design upgrades and adding lanes to 127 miles of freeway, primarily in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties.

That plan has been widely criticized by Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist and other city officials, Citizens Allied for Sane Highways, the American Civil Liberties Union and the Sierra Club of Wisconsin. Among the objections to the plan is that it is too costly and that Milwaukee County residents have the most to lose in terms of homes and tax base. Critics also say the plan did not take into account alternate modes of transportation.

Piecemeal approach

But the transportation panel did not accept White's entire proposal as presented, deciding instead to vote separately on a portion of the resolution that called for adding two more lanes on 19 miles of the freeway, expanding the following stretches from six to eight lanes wide:

- Interstate 43 from the Mitchell interchange to Silver Spring Drive;
- I-94 from the Marquette interchange to the Zoo Interchange;
- I-43 from Bender Road to Brown Deer Road.

A vote on that measure ended in a 3-3 tie, meaning it moves on to the full board without recommendation. Supervisors White, Ryan McCue and Lori Lutzka, chairman, voted in favor of the measure, while Supervisors Michael Mayo Sr., Willis Johnson Jr. and John Weishan Jr. voted against it.

However, the committee recommended the remainder of White's resolution, with a few amendments.

Specifically, the panel is proposing that the County Board on Thursday approve addressing safety flaws in the current freeway system and adding two lanes on 108 miles of the freeway system along:

- I-94 from the Racine/Milwaukee county line to the Mitchell interchange, increasing that stretch from six to eight lanes;
- I-894 from the Mitchell interchange to the Zoo Interchange, increasing the freeway from six to eight lanes;
- I-43 from the Hale interchange to the Milwaukee/Waukesha county line, making that interchange a six-lane freeway;
- I-94 from the Zoo interchange to the Milwaukee/Waukesha county line, increasing the number of lanes to eight;
- Highway 45 from the Zoo interchange to the Milwaukee/Waukesha county line, upping the number of lanes to eight.

Additionally, committee members accepted an amendment by Supervisor Thomas Bailey that supports "no widening beyond six lanes" on I-43 from Bender Road to Brown Deer Road and recommends that no sound barriers be placed on the freeway "without the prior consent of the abutting municipalities."

The committee also recommended Supervisor Lynne DeBruin's amendment calling for the state Department of Transportation to outline all direct and indirect costs of the project, including the impact the project would have on "non-freeway-related projects." Her amendment also requires WisDOT to determine if there are less costly design options and to develop a mitigation plan that would deal with "the negative aspects of the project resulting from the loss of homes, increased noise levels and environmental concerns."
Alderman wants SEWRPC reorganized

By Mark Kass
Special to The Daily Reporter

Feb. 12, 2003

Milwaukee Alderman Michael Murphy is requesting that Gov. Jim Doyle consider changing the governance of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to give Milwaukee County greater representation because it is the county that has the largest population and provides the most funding to the regional agency.

In a letter to Doyle, Murphy, whose district includes the Sassy HEI Neighborhood that would be impacted by SEWRPC’s proposed freeway-expansion project, said the agency’s 21-member commission is “not reflective of our community’s diversity and context to the principal of fair representation.”

The SEWRPC Commission consists of three representatives from each of the seven member counties - Milwaukee, Waukesha, Washington, Ozaukee, Racine, Kenosha and Walworth. One commissioner from each county is appointed, or confirmed by the county board in those counties where a county executive appoints, and is usually an elected county board supervisor. The remaining two from each county are appointed by the governor, one from a list prepared by the county.

“SEWRPC’s core structure is inherently biased against urban dwellers, minorities, low-income persons and nonautomobile-owning citizens - the very people who are most in need of comprehensive planning,” Murphy said in the letter. “Regional planning needs to be comprehensive and promote discussion that doesn’t focus on transportation issues that ignore options other than automobiles or land-use policies that exclude low-income housing in the suburbs.”

Audit requested

The request is the second attack on SEWRPC in the last week by opponents to the agency’s freeway-expansion plan.

State Reps. Jon Richards and David Cullen requested a state audit by the Legislative Audit Bureau of SEWRPC, alleging the regional planning commission has failed to “adequately reflect the needs of the citizens it’s supposed to represent.” SEWRPC has proposed a $6.2 billion, 127-mile freeway expansion plan that Milwaukee Mayor John Nequin and Milwaukee area community and environmental groups have been working hard to block.

That request will be considered by the Legislature’s Joint Audit Committee in March and is expected to be approved.

Nequin and other Milwaukee area environmental and community leaders have objected to SEWRPC’s freeway-expansion plan, saying it falls short in heavily and negatively on the densely populated city and county of Milwaukee.

The freeway-expansion plan, endorsed by a SEWRPC study committee, would require 658 additional acres of land and the rating of 216 homes, 31 businesses and three government buildings in the affected seven-county region. Milwaukee County would bear the brunt: 184 acres, 118 homes, 17 businesses, the Courthouse Annex and two smaller county buildings.

The plan has been approved by five of the seven counties that SEWRPC serves. The Milwaukee County Board is currently considering the plan. SEWRPC officials have said that after Milwaukee County acts on the proposal, it will be submitted to the state Legislature and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

Unfair share?

According to Murphy, SEWRPC’s governance is imbalanced when smaller counties such as rural Otoe County, which has a population of 33,555, has the same number of votes as Milwaukee County with a population of 932,012. In addition, Murphy said Milwaukee County taxpayers contributed 36 percent of SEWRPC’s 2002 budget, while Otoe County contributed 6.5 percent.

“That logic is akin to allowing the residents of North Dakota (to) dictate what is best for the United States,” he said. North Dakota’s population is 542,000 and the county’s, 281 million.

Murphy said many of the decisions made by SEWRPC regarding freeway expansion and management of the region’s water supply will impact the city of Milwaukee most.

“The city’s 356,974 residents outnumber the combined population of the other six counties in SEWRPC,” yet the city’s representation in SEWRPC is disproportionately negligible,” he said.

Additionally, all of SEWRPC’s 21 commissioners and 11-member senior staff are white, Murphy said.

“SEWRPC’s demographics clearly does not reflect our community’s diversity and has consciously or unconsciously biased SEWRPC’s decision-making process,” Murphy wrote. “Recently, a SEWRPC representative was asked why they had not provided written information in Spanish or English on the east-west proposal. The response was very telling. No one asked us,”

A spokesperson for Doyle could not be reached for comment.

Attempt to control

However, Washington County Executive Kenneth Miller, a member of the SEWRPC board, said Murphy’s idea was just another attempt by Milwaukee officials to have control over regional authorities.

“This is one of the organizations that work, unlike others that are controlled by the mayor (Nequin),” he said. “Milwaukee may have the most population and may contribute the most to SEWRPC, but does that mean they get to buy their votes?” I’m sure the mayor would like to rule SEWRPC, but the days of Milwaukee County running the metropolitan area are over.”

Miller dismissed Murphy’s allegations that SEWRPC does not adequately serve the city’s minority population, saying the agency was attempting to put together a freeway-expansion plan that would make it easier for people to get to jobs that are located in the suburban counties.

“We’re trying to make the freeway system better, and what are they doing?” he said. “Tearing down freeways. How does that improve the transportation system?”

Motor vehicle transportation is here to stay, and we have to take steps to make sure that as a region we can accommodate it.”
Two broad-based coalitions of community and advocacy groups have become key players in debates that will chart the course for the largest projects Wisconsin has ever seen.

The proposed projects are the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission’s $6.2 billion freeway reconstruction and expansion and Wisconsin Energy Corporation’s $3 billion coal-burning power plant in Oak Creek. The coalitions are Citizens Against State Highways and Responsible Energy for Southeastern Wisconsin’s Tomorrow. Both came together in October and have 12 and 22 official member organizations, respectively.

Since October, both groups have secured microphone time at government meetings that will decide the fate of their causes. CASH members followed SEWRPC representatives to the podium at two recent Milwaukee County Board meetings, and RESSET has four members officially registered to testify at Public Service Commission of Wisconsin hearings on Oak Creek.

Traditionally, the credibility of single-issue advocacy groups improves as their ranks grow more diverse, Bogovich said. “RESET, for instance, hasn’t yet been stamped with the NIMBY-Not In My Backyard moniker because of its geographical diversity.”

“The notion that groups like CASH and RESET are much more sophisticated than the typical NIMBY group has gotten some business interests concerned,” Bogovich said. “They want to know whether what we are doing is going to be heard or will simply be ignored.”

Show the flag

Both groups are trying to show widespread public support for their causes in order to sway the decision-makers.

Schuldt said CASH was trying to gather enough voices and bodies at the Milwaukee County Board meetings to show the elected officials their constituents’ misgivings about the SEWRPC proposal. “They’re elected, so (public opinion) damn well better play a big one,” she said. “It should play a major role. The people who are going to be affected should have their say.”

RESET, on the other hand, is trying to appeal directly to Wisconsin Energy by showing support among its customers for a natural gas plant. Bogovich said. The organization last week released a poll that commissioned last year that showed 80 percent of polled Milwaukee County and Racine County residents said they think natural gas plants are better for public health than coal plants.

“We want to be able to give them the incentive, and also the assurance, that do they have the support for taking that big step,” Bogovich said. “We hope they pursue them directly. If we don’t succeed in moving them, well, we’ll certainly turn to the PSC.”

Even if the shows of strength aren’t successful, both coalitions have backup plans in the legal system.

The Environmental Decade and S.C. Johnson filed a PSC complaint that its decision saying Wisconsin Energy’s application was complete was incorrect. If the commission agrees after reading comments from registered participants, the utility would need to re-apply.

The ACLU, which isn’t a CASH member but is working with the group on SEWRPC’s proposal, is also ready to file a lawsuit against the commission for not meeting federal requirements for analyzing the social impact of the project, Ahmuty said. If the ACLU opens a case and is successful, it could bar any reconstruction from receiving federal funds.

“We don’t want to use,” he said. “What we bring is the possibility of litigation.”

Even though both groups are standing across the ring from SEWRPC and Wisconsin Energy, both stress that they aren’t trying to stop the projects from happening. RESET wants a plant to be built in Oak Creek, but it wants a natural gas plant, Bogovich said.

Likewise, CASH realizes southeastern Wisconsin’s freeways need rebuilding, but it wants more community involvement in the planning process, Schuldt said.

“We have to find a point where we can sit down and say, ‘This community needs a decent freeway system. What can we afford?’” she said. “Eventually, we are all going to get to a point where we’re all working together. It’s just getting there.”
Sides shared up about freeway expansion
2/12/2003
Andrew Johnson
Tribune Staff

Some Milwaukee County supervisors are opposed to Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's plan to repair the area's freeway system by adding lanes to Interstate 43 and Interstate 94 in Milwaukee County.

County Supervisor Willie Johnson Jr. said he is in favor of freeway repair for the seven county region, which includes Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha counties, but is opposed to any widening. Widening would displace homes between the Marquette and Milwaukee County Zoo interchanges and add to pollution problems, he said.

Johnson said the majority of those present at a special meeting called by the county board last Thursday at the Washington Park Senior Center were also opposed to widening.

Supervisor John Weilman Jr. said he is opposed to widening portions of I-94 and I-43 near Wood National Cemetery and the Story Hill neighborhood. He said widening would be disrespectful to veterans' graves and destroy nearby neighborhoods.

While he did not say he was against widening stretches of the freeway, Supervisor Ryan McCue did say any proposals made need to be analyzed carefully.

"It's going to be the biggest public works project in the history of the state of Wisconsin," McCue said. "I think we need to carefully look at the proposals. I don't want to make a mess. So far I like what I see."

According to Ken Yunker, assistant director of SEWRPC, the cost of rebuilding the 272 miles of the regional freeway system as it would be $3.4 billion. Rebuilding using modern design standards would cost $5.3 billion, and rebuilding using modern design standards with additional lanes on 127 miles of the freeway system would be an additional $700 million.

Supervisor Lori Lutzka, vice chairman of the County Board's Transportation, Public Works and Transit Committee, said she is in the midst of taking input from her constituents and has not decided whether freeway widening would be good or bad.

Supervisor Michael Mayo Sr. said he does not see the benefits of expanding parts of the freeway to eight lanes.

The Marquette Tribune
February 17, 2003

"I really don't know why," he said. "No one has given me a valid reason why."

Cost is another reason to oppose widening, said Citizens Allied for Sane Highways co-chair Gretathen Schludt.

Schuldt said storm sewer that run off roads is highly polluted and would have to be captured, treated and stored, which is "incridibly expensive." Upkeep costs would also run high, she said.

She said she hopes the Milwaukee County Board will respond in a fashion similar to the Waukesha County Board in 1997, when area counties were proposing light rail transit. While other counties wanted light rail, Waukesha County did not, and residents felt they should not have to pay for it if others still wanted it.

"What was fair for Waukesha County in 1997 is fair for Milwaukee County in 2003," Schuldt said.

Schuldt also said she hopes more groups get involved, including Marquette. The possibility of adding lanes carries great environmental risks, and she is surprised Marquette has not spoke out against it.

Ben Tracy, director of university communication, said Marquette has not taken a stance because the additional lanes would not be near campus.

Marquette realizes it is a sensitive issue to those who will be affected by it, Tracy said, but is not an issue in which the school feels it should be involved.

Yunker said all plans discussed now are only options, not actual proposals. The advisory committee to the SEWRPC board - which includes County Executive Scott Walker, County Board Chairman Lee Holloway and Transportation, Public Works & Transit Committee Chairman James White - needs to propose recommendations.

Norquist: It takes 3 people to carry the bag

Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist has been beamed many times in recent years by some serious political curve balls thrown at him.

The famous Marilyn Figuroa secpandia and the flubbed location of the Harley- Davidson museum are key and notable among them.

But Norquist showed Wednesday he is still capable of playing political hardball at its toughest.

It was really Norquist calling for the state Legislature to audit the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, albeit using two Milwaukee Democrat legislators as messengers.

In a letter to the state Legislature's Joint Legislative Audit Committee, state Reps. David Cullen and Jon Richards called for the audit of the seven-county planning group.

It was clear in the body of the letter to the committee that the message was the one being championed by Norquist. Much of the points already made by Hizzoner and Norquist policy director Jim Rowen admitted he gathered much of the information and shared it with the legislators.

The legislators' chief criticism in the letter centered on the agency's role as "a leading voice for the expansion of our freeway system. The public needs to know that their tax dollars are being used with their best interests in mind and this audit is necessary to make certain SEWRPC is doing just that."

SEWRPC Executive Director Phil Evenson could see Norquist's hand behind the message. He told the Freeman, "The call is obviously sympathetic with the (freeway) opposition and that opposition begins in the mayor's office."

The legislators' letter said a recent survey on support for the freeway expansion project opposed by Norquist "came with an obviously biased cover letter and questions that were leading in an attempt to get the responses they desired."

Then he pointed out the survey cost $600,000.

But that was just the mayor's money. He had some other potential hardballs he wanted to toss at the legislators, hoping that some of them stick to the planning agency.

Key among them were the absence of any minority people on the 21-member SEWRPC board and the 11-member staff; the relocation of the SEWRPC headquarters from its urban setting in downtown Waukesha to suburban City of Pewaukee; and budgetary items like a $800,000 annual auto budget.

Rowen asked in an interview, "How many people even know about SEWRPC? And how many taxpayers know part of their tax dollars goes to fund it?"

It seems to us that SEWRPC has long ago established its value in planning for the future, even if its version is not always accepted by the local governments that have the real power.

If the state Legislative Audit Bureau is asked to assess SEWRPC simply because it dared to support freeway expansion, it also ought to assess whether they are being used by Norquist as a bludgeon for the agency instead of really exercising its evaluative function.

Yet SEWRPC might well wish for the audit to give it a chance to refute these charges by Milwaukee's politicians and Evenson said as much.

"We welcome any and all audits," Evenson said. "We are proud of the work we do and the way we do it."

The Waukesha Freeman
February 10, 2003

C-11
County may block freeway plan

Board expected to vote against adding lanes in some areas

By LARRY SANDLER
lsandler@journalsentinel.com

The Milwaukee County Board appears poised to oppose widening key stretches of I-94 and I-43 to eight lanes, supervisors on both sides of the issue agree.

By joining forces with Milwaukee and Glendale officials, the board's opposition could make it difficult for the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to recommend widening those freeways. And without the commission's endorsement, the state Department of Transportation could not obtain the federal money it would need to add the lanes.

But after a four-hour meeting dominated by freeway expansion opponents, the board was not ready to take formal action Thursday night. Instead, supervisors asked the board's transportation committee to hammer out a position in time for a final vote by the full board Feb. 20.

"I really do believe there's a strong consensus coming that says no widening" of I-94 from downtown to U.S. Highway 45 and of I-43 from I-894 to Brown Deer Road, said Supervisor Lynne DeBruin, a freeway expansion opponent.

Supervisor James White, a supporter of freeway expansion, and Phil Evenson, executive director of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, agreed that the board likely would follow the Milwaukee Common Council's lead to oppose widening those stretches and double-decking I-94 just west of Miller Park.

"We got the message," after hearing strong public opposition to eight-lane freeways, White said.

About 200 residents showed up for the board's rare committee-of-the-whole session at the Washington Park Senior Center on the west side. Among the nearly 60 speakers who addressed the board, foes of freeway widening outnumbered supporters about 6 to 1.

At issue was how to rebuild the area's aging freeways as they wear out. A preliminary recommendation from the county's department of the planning commission calls for rebuilding the freeways with 127 miles of new lanes, at a cost of $6.25 billion. Even without widening, planners say design upgrades, such as eliminating left-hand ramps, would cost $5.5 billion.

Opponents focused on the homes, businesses and other buildings that would be razed, as well as the cost of the plan, the potential increase in air pollution and the impact on other property that would be closer to freeways.

Jerry Wahl, a bus driver and Catholic activist, held up a picture of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, demolished to build I-43, and asked, "What are we going to lose this time?"

"Freeways are not friends of neighborhoods," said Dennis Soll of Milwaukee.

Gretchen Schuld, a Milwaukee Public Schools budget analyst and co-chairman of Citizens Allied for Sane Highways, told supervisors that supporting the plan meant "you will be sacrificing Milwaukee County for the benefit of suburban commuters and road-builders."

Among expansion proponents was Russ Retzack of West Allis, who told supervisors: "We built this freeway system wrong in the first place, and the reason we did is because of people like you. . . . Let's not do it wrong again."

And Bob Cook, a former Transportation Department official who is now executive director of the Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin, said, "A vote against this plan is a vote against economic growth in Milwaukee County," because businesses "want convenient freeway access."

All six suburban county boards have endorsed the plan, along with the Brookfield and Racine Common Councils. In addition to the Milwaukee Common Council vote against widening I-94 and I-43, the Glendale Common Council has opposed widening I-43 from four to eight lanes in the North Shore suburbs.

Evenson said the freeway system could be viable with additional lanes only in the suburbs, but it would mean additional congestion on the stretches that were not widened, as well as shifting more traffic to city streets.

PUBLIC FORUMS

Freeway-widening opponents have set two public forums: one at noon today at the United Community Center, 920 S. 8th St., organized by activist Ramona Puentes, and one at 7 p.m. Thursday at Marquette University's Cudahy Hall, 1313 W. Wisconsin Ave., sponsored by the Sierra Club and Students for an Environmentally Active Campus.

BY THE NUMBERS

Statistics on the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's freeway plan:

- $6.25 billion: Cost of rebuilding freeways with new lanes in the seven-county area.
- 127: Miles of new lanes that would be added.
- 19: Miles of new lanes that city officials oppose adding on I-94 and I-43.
- 958: Acres that would be taken statewide.

Source: Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
February 8, 2003
Cullen, Richards call for SEWRPC audit

By Mark Kas
Special to The Daily Reporter
Feb. 7, 2003

Another battle on the proposed expansion of Milwaukee-area freeways has broken out as two Milwaukee state legislators have requested an audit of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

Democrat Reps. Jon Richards and David Cullen requested the state audit by the Legislative Audit Bureau this week, alleging that SEWRPC has failed to "adequately reflect the needs of the citizens' it's supposed to represent." SEWRPC has proposed a $6.3 billion, 127-mile freeway expansion planning that Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist and Milwaukee-area community and environmental groups have been working hard to block.

"SEWRPC's role in our community has never been larger," said Cullen, who is a member of the audit committee. "SEWRPC has become a leading voice for the expansion of our freeway system. The public needs to know that their tax dollars are being used with their best interests in mind, and this audit is necessary to make certain SEWRPC is doing just that."

Added Richards, "The breadth and scope of the questions surrounding SEWRPC are significant and demand clarification and answers."

SEWRPC 'welcomes' audit

Phil Evenson, executive director of SEWRPC, said given the recent clashes on the freeway expansion plan, he is not surprised by the audit request.

"The freeway-expansion proposal has stirred up an uncommon interest in the commission and is likely at the root of everything that is aimed at being addressed in the audit," he said. "The (SEWRPC) Commission welcomes an audit of our operations. We are proud of what we do and how we do it. If the committee decides to approve the request, we look forward to working with the staff of the state audit bureau."

State Rep. Suzanne Jankowski, a Menomonee Falls Republican who is co-chair of the Legislative's Joint Audit Committee, said the request will likely be considered at the panel's March meeting. She said she would likely support the request.

"I have to get more information, but there probably is good reason to support it," she said.

Norquist and other Milwaukee-area environmental and community leaders have objected to SEWRPC's freeway-expansion plan, saying it fails most heavily and negatively on the densely populated city and county of Milwaukee.

The plan, endorsed by a SEWRPC study committee, would require 658 additional acres of land and the raising of 216 homes, 33 businesses and three government buildings in the affected seven-county region. Milwaukee County would bear the brunt: 184 acres, 118 homes, 17 businesses, the Courthouse Annex and two smaller county buildings.

The Daily Reporter
February 7, 2003

Milwaukee County considering plan

The plan has been approved by six of the seven counties that SEWRPC serves. The Milwaukee County Board is currently considering the plan. Evenson said after Milwaukee County acts on the proposal, it will be submitted to the state Legislature and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

"One way or another, we would like to send a proposal to Madison that most everyone can reasonably agree on," he said.

Jim Rowen, policy director for Norquist, said the mayor supports the audit request because the agency "is running roughshod over city residents."

"It ignored public sentiment expressed at its hearings," Rowen said. "Its highway-expansion plan will force major tax increases and accelerate sprawl into areas where it acknowledges there is already a water shortage. It seems to be accountable only to itself, making audit scrutiny justified."

In their audit request, Richards and Cullen asked the state audit bureau to specifically look at:

- SEWRPC's decision to relocate its office in downtown Waukesha to a building in Pewaukee for $3.4 million from Rusk-Melkile, a well-known Pewaukee engineering firm that has done extensive work for SEWRPC.

- SEWRPC's recurring $60,000 budget for vehicle purchases and decide if it is an appropriate use of taxpayers' dollars. The audit request letter states that the agency recently purchased a $26,000 Ford primarily for Evenson's use. It also asked the state agency to review the reasonable $42,000 contract SEWRPC has with its former executive director, Kurt Bauer, that includes an office and "appropriate vehicle," which is currently a $22,000 Ford Crown Victoria.

- Whether SEWRPC, which has an all-white senior staff and commission, is adhering to an affirmative action plan.

- SEWRPC's regional freeway-expansion plan and the additional $40,000 on a survey asking for more input, which Cullen and Richards alleged was biased and contained leading questions.

Closer look needed

"The public deserves a closer look ... in the face of substantial local opposition decrying the project as fiscally and politically irresponsible and harmful to the neighborhoods in the Interstate 94 corridor," Cullen and Richards stated in a letter to the audit committee.

Gretchen Schuldt, co-chairman of Citizens Allied for Safe Highways, a coalition of neighborhood groups formed to oppose the freeway expansion, said an audit of SEWRPC was appropriate.

"This agency has run a long time without any real oversight, and I think it's gotten into some bad fiscal habits," she said. "Self-dealing with consultants and buying luxury cars for the top brass is certainly questionable. And it's no secret that CASH has concerns about how the way SEWRPC conducted the freeway study. It clearly was designed to get to a predetermined outcome. Billions of dollars are at stake here; the Legislature should be very, very concerned."
Milwaukee legislators seek audit of SEWRPC operations

Commission head says audit may be politically motivated

BY DENNIS A. SHOOK
Senior Staff Writer

CITY OF PEEWAUKA - The freeway expansion battle may be taking a detour through Waukesha County with a call for an audit of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

Two Milwaukee legislators are urging the state Legislature to audit the SEWRPC. In a letter to the state Legislature's Joint Legislative Audit Committee, state Reps. David Cullen and Jon Richards, both Milwaukee Democrats, called for an audit of the seven-county planning group.

In the letter dated Tuesday, the legislators criticize the agency's role as "a leading voice for the expansion of our freeway system. The public needs to know that its tax dollars are being used with their best interests in mind and this audit is necessary to make certain SEWRPC is doing just that.

SEWRPC Executive Director Phil Evenson said Wednesday the audit call might well be politically motivated by freeway expansion opponents, particularly Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist.

"(The call) is obviously sympathetic with the (freeway) opposition and that opposition begins in the mayor's office," Evenson said.

Evenson added that Jim Ryan, Norquist's policy director, had recently been at SEWRPC headquarters asking for various documents on staff and operations.

Ryan said Wednesday he shared information he gathered with Richards and encouraged the legislators to seek the audit.

"We welcome any and all audits," Evenson said. "We are proud of the work we do and the way we do it."

The letter said a recent survey on support for the freeway expansion project opposed by Norquist "came with an obviously biased cover letter and questions that were leading in an attempt to get the response they desired."

Evenson denied any attempt to somehow guide the response. "I think no matter how you ask the questions you would get the same response," Evenson said.

"There is about three-quarters (of those polled) support for rebuilding the freeway."

Vehicles, personnel questioned

The legislators also criticized the move of the SEWRPC offices from downtown Waukesha and the need to spend $60,000 annually on vehicles.

Evenson said the move to a City of Pewaukee building purchased by the commission will eventually save taxpayers money.

As for the cars, he said SEWRPC has a fleet of nine vehicles because the staff travels to the seven counties in southeastern Wisconsin regularly.

"We serve 177 municipalities," Evenson said.

The legislators also said they had concerns about the lack of minority people on the 11-member board and the 11-member staff of SEWRPC.

Evenson said the appointments are made by the governor and the member counties and there have been minority board members in SEWRPC's 40-year past.

"As for staff, we would be delighted to be able to get minority staff," he said. But he said the jobs are in areas that minorities have not sought training in.

Evenson said SEWRPC is working in Milwaukee minority neighborhoods to increase interest in the various planning fields.

Brief study possible

State Rep. Suzanne Jesekwitz, R-Menomonee Falls, a committee co-chair, said she was unsure whether the items mentioned in the letter would rise to the level of needing an audit. She said she would discuss the request with her co-chair state Sen. Carol Roesler, R-Oshkosh.

"I don't know if that will be appropriate," Jesekwitz said Wednesday "If so, we will probably request a scope at our meeting in late March."

A scope is a brief study by the state Legislative Audit Bureau to determine if a more detailed and thorough look is warranted. Such scopes generally take a week or two, Jesekwitz said. If the larger audit is deemed necessary, such studies generally take about six months, she said.

Gov. Jim Doyle said recently that construction on the state Department of Transportation's plan on freeway expansion would start in the next biennium. Besides using federal funds, much of the transporation funding account would be devoted to the project, delaying other road projects throughout the state.

Doyle recently declined to support a cheaper plan being touted by Norquist for rebuilding the Marquette Interchange, slated to begin in 2004.

The Waukesha Freeman
February 6, 2003
Changings lanes SEWRPC awaits resident feedback on
Feb 6, 2003 1:20AM by Jane Ford Staff Writer

Changings lanes

SEWRPC awaits resident feedback on whether to widen Interstate 43

By Jane Ford

Staff Writer

Anybody trapped in an almost daily traffic jam on Interstate 43 would no doubt welcome the liberation that widening the freeway would offer.

Indeed, proposals are in the works to widen I-43 to as many as eight lanes from downtown to West Brown Deer Road and to six lanes north of there.

But that proposed widening would come at a price, and citizens and decision-makers will start deciding right now whether the price is worth it.

In the North Shore, the price includes razing as many as 20 homes; erecting proposed 30-foot-high noise barriers on both sides of the interstate from Bander Road north to the Milwaukee County line; losing Nicollet High School athletic fields east of I-43; losing Jean Nicolet Road; losing part of Manchester Essex parking lot; razing the now-closed Shoreline Translational Care and Rehabilitation Center in Glendale; increased noise that may or may not be buffered by the sound barriers; and possibly trimming parts of the Riverpoint Village rear parking lot for interchange improvements at West Brown Deer Road.

Tonight and Wednesday, residents will have an opportunity to review the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's preliminary plans.

While the eight-lane freeway option is the recommended plan, SEWRPC also suggests a six-lane option from downtown.

Other options are available, too, including eight lanes coming out of downtown and narrowing to six somewhere along the route, such as at Silver Spring Drive or Bander Road, said Kenneth Yunker, SEWRPC sales director.

The entire interstate system, built in the 1950s and '60s is wearing out, Yunker said. Because it will need to be rebuilt virtually from the ground up, officials are trying to correct problems that have developed in the intervening decades and bring the road up to current design standards, he said.

But construction probably would not start until 2015 at the earliest, he said.

Glendale takes stand

Already, Glendale is on record as being against the eight-lane proposed expansion and expressed serious concerns about the six-lane proposal. The Common Council noted the North Shore Water filtration plant is in the way of the expansion, and increasing the number of lanes would increase pollution, noise and trucking and would interfere with community life.

Even if the Milwaukee County Board endorses expanding I-43 to eight lanes, the door is not shut on the other alternatives, Yunker said. Preliminary engineering studies will explore the six-lane options and even keeping the freeway the same, he said.

The alternative the County Board prefers, however, might have what advantage that confers.

A decision will not be made until studies are completed, he said. "The door will close at the conclusion of the preliminary engineering and environmental impact studies, which have not even been scheduled at this point," Yunker said.

But Milwaukee County Supervisor Thomas Bailey, who represents much of the North Shore, was not so sure. "I would say the door is 90 percent closed," once the County Board approves a plan in the next few weeks, Bailey said. "Once they have local approval, that's the key thing."

Even though nearly all of the buildings that would be lost in the proposed widening are in Glendale, the freeway project would affect all other North Shore communities, even Brown Deer, where motorists heading for I-43 would encounter a redesigned freeway interchange.

The rest of the North Shore would have an easier ride downtown and the potential for sound barriers.

Sound barriers draw debate

Bayside Village Manager Frank Sherman said sound barriers were requested by a group of residents four or five years ago, but the state denied them because of cost.

Fox Point Village Manager Susan Robertson said more needs to be known about sound barriers. "There is a difference of opinion about sound barriers. Some people think it protects the people close to the freeway but lifts the sound, affecting the rest of the community," she said.

River Hills Village Manager Thomas Tolkaisen said the proposed widening might endanger one house, would make the Department of Public Works garage inaccessible and would encroach on one of the cell towers on the Village Hall grounds. But, he said, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation has been reassessing that these wrinkles would be ironed out. "The DOT says tell us of changes that would be made when this is fine-tuned," Tolkaisen said.

He also said some kind of sound barrier would be needed, but favored berms instead of walls. "Berms deal with sound better," he said. Walls tend to reflect more noise than berms, he said, although berms do need somewhat more land than walls.

Of course, road noise also could be reduced by lowering the level of the road, Tolkaisen said, and by using new, quieter pavement.

Although Whitewater Bay is "one step removed" from the freeway, Village Manager James Grassman said, it will be affected by increased traffic and noise. He said the village will be anxious to review any proposal for a noise barrier.

Shorewood Village Manager Edward Madore said, "The biggest thing for us would be the effect during the construction period."

"There will probably be a lot more vehicular coming from the north using Lake Drive," he said.

Madore predicted that there is probably a natural limit to growth in Ozaukee County, which is fueled by the need for widening. "You can only live so far away from work to commute," he said. Already, there is a resurgence of people moving back into the city of Milwaukee for convenience to downtown, he said.

Seek different solution

Glendale City Administrator Richard Maslowski said Glendale recognizes the transportation problems but supports exploring a different solution. There could be enough land in the median to provide an additional lane in each direction, Maslowski said, and no homes, businesses or road would be lost. The median could be narrowed like it is closer to downtown, he said.

Glendale officials also have noted serious concerns about the North Shore Water Utility on Jean Nicolet Road at Bander. Yunker agreed the water plant presents a design problem. But because the plant would not be moved, he said, it would have to be engineered around, perhaps by moving the freeway over, by erecting a retaining wall or by narrowing the freeway shoulder at that point.

Bailey, too, expressed doubts about any widening. For one thing, sound barriers are generally unsightly, he said. But more importantly, "Why should we spend huge amounts of money to facilitate the exit of cars from Milwaukee County? We've already lost huge amounts of tax base, and making it easier to move to Ozaukee perpetuates the exodus."

But some North Shore residents clearly favor widening. That is why Bailey said he wants to hear from constituents at the hearing or over the phone. (414) 278-4275. Bailey represents all of Whitewater Bay, Fox Point, Bayside, River Hills and parts of Glendale and Shorewood.

MEETINGS SET

n PUBLIC HEARING

WHAT: Residents are invited to a public hearing about the proposal to widen Interstate 43 up to eight lanes. The $8.25 billion preliminary plan will be presented by SEWRPC representatives. Public comment will be accepted and the Committee of the Whole may take action afterward.

WHEN: 6:30 p.m. tonight

WHERE: Washington Park Senior Center, 4420 W. Vliet St.

n PUBLIC FORUM

WHAT: State Rep. Sheldon Wasserman, D-Milwaukee, who represents much of the North Shore will hold a public forum on the plan. Representatives of SEWRPC will give a presentation to be followed by questions.

WHEN: 6:30 p.m. Wednesday

WHERE: Whitewater Bay Library, 5420 N. Marlborough Drive

Chl Photos by John O'Hara

ns 205 x xw81 rival ro m tl

Brake lights abound on interstate 43 northbound as the freeway bottlenecks north of the Silver Spring on-ramp.

ns 205 x xw81 bailey rival ro m tl

Bailey wants to hear from his North Shore constituents about the proposal. Residents can call (414) 278-4275.

C-15
Audit Requested of Freeway Planning Commission
SEWRPC may have to answer to legislature

Two Milwaukee lawmakers asked for an audit this week of the Southeastern Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), in light of the commission’s recent activity concerning freeway expansion plans around the city of Milwaukee.

State Rep. David Cullen and Jon Richards, both Democrats, have asked Joint Audit Committee co-chairs Sen. Carol Roessler (R-Oshkosh) and Rep. Suzanne Jeskewitz (R-Menomonee Falls) to look into the commission in terms of its governing powers, who is its oversight authority and questions about the commission’s accountability.

SEWRPC has come under fire from City of Milwaukee officials over the freeway plan, its cost ($6.2 billion) and the overall impact it will have on city property and urban sprawl. They claim that the commission has given a deaf ear to criticism and hasn’t sought out enough public input on the plan.

“SEWRPC’s role in our community has never been larger,” says Cullen, the Assembly’s ranking member of the Audit Committee. “And it doesn’t appear to be an objective group in making recommendations for the freeway.”

He says he wants to make sure the commission is not making decisions that benefit monorails. Questions have arisen over SEWRPC’s spending decisions, including personal car leases, consulting contracts and its decision to move its offices to Pewaukee.

Richards also questions the fact that SEWRPC’s 11-member senior staff is all white and it has an all-white 21-member board, raising concerns about whether it is adhering to an affirmative action or diversity plan.

“The breadth and scope of the questions surrounding SEWRPC are significant and demand clarification and answers,” says Richards. (Doug Hiscox)

Milwaukee may not be able to stop freeway expansion

DOT plan already endorsed by six of seven area counties

By DENNIS A. SHOOK
Senior Staff Writer

WAUKESHA — Milwaukee may be unable to block freeway expansion even if that is the goal of some of its top city and county political leaders.

But blocking or significantly altering the project has been on the minds of many of those leaders. The first test will come at the Feb. 20 Milwaukee County Board session, when the board will likely consider whatever recommendation its transportation committee eventually makes.

Walker agrees with DOT

If the Milwaukee County Board decides to oppose the project to rebuild the Marquette Interchange and widen freeway corridors based on state Department of Transportation plans, the board vote would then go before Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker.

Walker has made it clear he supports the DOT recommendation and he has the power to veto the board’s action, a spokesman said Monday.

Just as importantly, Walker has a seat on the Southeastern Wisconsin Freeway Advisory Committee that will ultimately make a recommendation on the proposal to the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

“Six of the seven counties on the advisory committee have voted to support the DOT plan,” SEWRPC Executive Director Phil Eveson said Monday. “If the consensus of the advisory committee is not to change its mind, then it goes to the SEWRPC board.”

Eveson pointed out board members do not always vote based on the stands their counties take. But only three of the 21 members are from Milwaukee County.

“The secretary of the state Department of Transportation asked for a consensus from southeastern Wisconsin,” Eveson said. He said he understood the committee appears to have already been reached even if Milwaukee formally objects.

Milwaukee and Glendale city councils have passed resolutions opposing the plan but have no formal vote in the process.

The plan calls for $11.1 million for the Marquette Interchange rebuild and $6.33 billion to rebuild freeways and add new lanes in the seven counties of southeastern Wisconsin.

The most controversial stretch has been the six-mile, east-west corridor between the Marquette and Zoo Interchanges.

Finley optimistic

Waukesha County Executive Daniel Finley, who also serves on the advisory committee, said he was disappointed but not surprised at Milwaukee’s opposition, based on past comments.

“But this is not the United Nations Security Council where one county has a veto,” Finley said Monday. “I am optimistic that this project will proceed and the state will step in if it needs to.”

Finley said he was hardly surprised that Milwaukee has stalled the process into 2003 even though the other six counties voted for it last year.

“This was being discussed in the Metro 2020 plan,” Finley said. “I remember when it became part of that plan — on March 1, 1999 — because my son David was born on March 2, 1999. And David turns 14 next month.”

Eveson said Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist and other city opponents of the plan should remember the SEWRPC board voted unanimously to allow Milwaukee to remove the Park East freeway spur to help accommodate a museum for Harley-Davidson, which has since been cancelled.

“We deferred to the position of the city and the county on that issue,” he said.

Gov. Jim Doyle has said the work on the interchange will begin sometime in this next biennium and acknowledged that may mean other highway projects throughout the state might have to be delayed.

Freeway passing lane

The freeway expansion proposal is about to take several key steps.

• Feb. 10 — Marquette University, Hesburgh Hall, 1313 W. Wisconsin Ave., public hearing on plan sponsored by Sierra Club.

• Feb. 20 — Milwaukee County Board expected to vote on recommendation on freeway plan.

• Southeastern Wisconsin Freeway Advisory Committee makes final recommendation to the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

• SEWRPC makes final recommendation to state Department of Transportation.

• State DOT asks Gov. Jim Doyle to fund plan, beginning with the Marquette interchange in the 2003-05 biennium.

This is an aerial view of the Marquette Interchange. Some Milwaukee officials are working to block freeway expansion that would include work on the interchange. The first test to that effort will come at the Feb. 20 Milwaukee County Board session.
County delays decision on freeway plan
By Candace Doyle
Editor
Feb. 10, 2003

Milwaukee County supervisors on Thursday night failed to make a recommendation on the proposed $6.2 billion freeway-expansion plan.

Instead, the supervisors, meeting as the Committee of the Whole at Washington Park Senior Center in Milwaukee, deferred the matter back to the county's Transportation, Public Utilities and Transit Committee for further review.

That vote was made after a motion to reject the plan was tabled in a 10-13 vote. Now, a special meeting of the transportation committee will need to be held, possibly before the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors meets Feb. 20, when the board was expected to make a final decision on the plan proposed by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. SREWPIC serves as the planning agency for Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha counties, and the six suburban county boards have already endorsed the plan.

Milwaukee County supervisors' decision to refer the matter back to committee followed a lengthy public hearing attended by more than 300 people, most of whom opposed SREWPIC's proposal.

Those opposing the plan did so for many reasons, and they rebutted comments made by SREWPIC's executive director Phil Evenson, who acknowledged that Milwaukee County residents would have the most to lose if this plan is given the OK.

Evenson, in his presentation preceding the hearing, also conceded that the county would no doubt initially suffer a tax base loss. However, he said that loss would be "relatively small," and he urged supervisors to approve the plan to send "a united voice to Madison."

"It's not a system we can do without," he said.

SREWPIC's proposal calls for incorporating design upgrades and adding lanes to 127 miles of freeway, primarily in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties.

The Daily Reporter
February 10, 2003

Cost a factor
At the hearing, among those who spoke against the plan was Michael Maierle, long-range planning manager for the city of Milwaukee, who said the proposal was too costly.

"A lower cost alternative has not been offered or discussed," said Maierle, who questioned how what SREWPIC called "design improvements" could add $2.3 billion to a freeway-replacement plan estimated to cost $3.4 billion. "We need a higher level of discussion."

Maierle also criticized Evenson's presentation that evening.

"Someone thought this proposal turned into a sales pitch for highway builders," he said.

Also speaking out against the plan was Gretchen Schueltz, co-chairman of Citizens Allied for Safe Highways, a group formed in opposition to the proposal.

Schueltz called the plan, which would cost the county 177 homes and 20 businesses, a "lose-lose."

"Milwaukee County will pay and pay and pay," she said.

She also questioned how the plan would be paid for.

"If you approve this plan without a funding source, you'll be delivering massive tax increases to your constituents," she said, "and sacrificing Milwaukee County to suburban counties and road builders."

Bar Moore, representing the Sierra Club in Wisconsin, said the plan "will result in the largest tax increase in Wisconsin history" and asked that a revised proposal including other transportation options, such as commuter and light rail, be considered.

The Sierra Club asks the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors to request a study of all alternative transportation modes," he said.

It's Time To Consider The Negative Impacts of Expressway Expansion
Milwaukee Latino News, The City
January 31 - February 6, 2003

By Preston Cole, Milwaukee's Superintendent of Environmental Services and MMSD Commissioner

As a commissioner of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD), I have significant concerns about how expanding expressways will affect pollution, flooding, and sewage system capacity. Think of it: large expanses of asphalt or concrete capture enormous amounts of rainfall. That rainfall then rushes into the sewer system, quickly filling it to capacity. The more solid surface we add, the more rainwater becomes a problem.

The water that washes off the expressways is loaded with pollution. Oils, salt and toxic metals are some of the most damaging components of roadway runoff. Much of those contaminants go into our rivers and, ultimately, into Lake Michigan. So, as MMSD makes major new investments to reduce pollution, increasing amounts of contaminated runoff undermine some of that effort.

Flooding, another big concern of MMSD, is also worsened by more surface area is paved over. When rain falls on grass or other surfaces that are not solid, the water is slowed, absorbed, or even evaporated. Unfortunately, on paved surfaces, the rush of water immediately moves to creeks and rivers increasing the likelihood of flooding. On the recently completed Lincoln Creek flood management project, two miles of concrete was removed for just that reason.

To protect homes from flooding, we need lead pavement throughout our community, not more.

We need to make sure the interests of people here in Milwaukee are fully considered as expressway expansion is debated. Corporate transportation demands get a lot of attention; traffic delays for suburban commuters get a lot of attention; but very little discussion has focused on the potential negative impacts of expressway expansion on the people in the center of Milwaukee.

Before final decisions are imposed from Madison, the voices and concerns of people in Milwaukee need to be heard.
Planners oppose Norquist interchange plan

By LARRY SANDLER
sandler@jrsnet.com

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has urged Gov. Jim Doyle to reject the interchange plan of John O. Norquist's $650 million plan to cut back on Marquette Interchange and reconstruction.

Instead, the commission called on the governor to stick with the state Department of Transportation's original plan for the interchange, at a cost that could top $940 million.

In a letter to Doyle, commission Chairman Thomas Buestrin said the department's plan "fulfills the promise of ensuring a truly modern, efficient interchange."

Norquist fired back Tuesday with a letter to Doyle, saying the Transportation Department plan was "guaranteed to raise taxes" and threatens funding for local roads, Amtrak service and other highway projects, because the state has not come up with the money to pay for it.

The current state plan would move all northbound on- and off-ramps to the right and would expand most on-ramps to two lanes in the downtown crossroads of 194, I-43 and I-794. Preliminary work on the four-year job would start late this year.

Norquist's plan would scrap most design upgrades. However, city engineers say the less-extensive redesign would still fix top safety problems.

Doyle and Administration Secretary-designate Marcia Marotta have said Norquist's plan is under serious consideration, but that final decisions won't be announced until Doyle unveils his 2005-06 state budget next month.

Both interchange plans are linked to the commission's broader study of how to rebuild the rest of the region's aging freeway system as it wears out over the next 30 to 30 years. The study's preliminary recommendation would add lanes to major freeways, bringing total reconstruction costs to $6.25 billion.

SEWRPC blasts Norquist interchange plan

Board sends letter to Doyle supporting DOT proposal

By DENNIS A. SHOOK
Senior Staff Writer

WAUKESHA - The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist are having a heated exchange about the Marquette Interchange.

SEWRPC reacted Monday and Tuesday with criticism of the interchange plan being touted by Norquist that would significantly downsize the project developed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

At a meeting of the Waukesha County Board on Tuesday, SEWRPC Executive Director Phil Ewenson said of the Norquist plan, "We don't think it's a good alternative and we won't support the plan."

A cheaper option?

The letter - sent to Doyle on Monday - said the Norquist plan "falls short" of the interchange needed.

SEWRPC Chairman Thomas Buestrin wrote in the letter, "We understand that the present financial situation is a very difficult one. As we begin to rebuild the southeastern Wisconsin freeway system, however, we need to be forward looking and ensure that the investments made over the next few years serve the region and the state well for many years to come."

Norquist made the proposal recently and a cabinet secretary for Gov. Jim Doyle said over the weekend that the governor was considering the scaled-down plan.

But in an interview with the Freeman on Monday, Doyle said the short-term budget deficit would not necessarily mean he will look to downsize the project.

The Norquist plan is projected to cost $650 million, or about half the current state transportation agency proposal.

The Waukesha Freeman
January 29, 2003

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
January 31, 2003

NEXT STEP

What: Milwaukee County Board Committee on the Whole meeting on the Marquette interchange rebuild plan

Where: Washington Park Senior Center, 4420 W. Vliet St., Milwaukee

Why: to discuss the plan and allow for public input

When: 6:30 p.m. Feb. 6
Wrong way
Traffic snarls will drive people to suburbs, beyond

Dave Anderson is one of those classic American stories. He’s making a fortune by understanding what appeals to mainstream Americans. I’d love for him to talk to John Norquist and the other local leftists who fail to understand how people today live.

Anderson, a native American Chippewa/Chippewa, is the founder of the Famous Dave’s restaurant chain. He took the company public a few years ago and it is rapidly expanding across the country. The newest one is going up on Moreland Boulevard in Waukesha, not far from the Interstate 94 Highways 18 interchange between Waukesha and Brookfield.

Anderson understands that Americans are now looking for more upscale fast food than the McDonald’s and Burger King items we’ve been chowing on for the last three decades. Famous Dave’s isn’t overly expensive but offers quality barbecue food in appealing settings. But this column isn’t about the Famous Dave’s. It’s about a separate project Anderson is planning for Waukesha and that’s where Norquist and his ilk of car-hating tree huggers comes in.

Anderson has just purchased a site for a major hotel, convention center and water park at a complex to be located at the booming I-94 intersection with Highway 80 in Kenosha County. The huge development will include two new theme restaurants that Anderson has indicated will make use of the land if they are successful here. The Kenosha location was chosen because of its prime freeway location and its midpoint point between the booming northern Illinois suburbs and the Milwaukee-Waukesha metro area. Anderson figures that nearly four million people live within an hour of his location.

It seems simple, doesn’t it? If you want to attract economic development, you choose a site that is easily accessed by automobile traffic and is clearly visible from the freeway. There are no Metra commuter train stations or light rail lines at the site. But there is lots of room for parking and a very busy freeway interchange. The rule that led Anderson to his site aren’t any different in urban areas. If we want our area to fully develop its economic potential, we must upgrade the freeway system.

Norquist and his Luddite acolytes actually think cars and freeways drive people away from an area. It’s exactly the opposite. If the freeway system is kept modern everywhere but Milwaukee County, all of the development will occur outside the county. Likewise, if the entire region’s transportation network gets gridlocked, new residential and commercial development will continue to sprawl even farther outward.

But Selig wanted Miller Park on the freeway for the same reason that Anderson is putting his new Famous Dave’s near Highway 18 and I-94 and his hotel and convention center right next to the interstate in Kenosha. It’s the same reason that the Grafton area is seeing explosive growth near the I-43 interchange with Highway 89 and that the area near Delafield at I-94 and Highway 83 has developed so strongly. Why is there so much residential development in the West Bend-Slinger area and in southeast Mequon? Same answer if Norquist succeeds in blocking improvements of the Marquette Interchange and kills plans to widen I-94 to four lanes, he will be guaranteeing that all new economic development in southeastern Wisconsin will be pushed further and farther away from Milwaukee.

That’s the great irony about the anti-car zealots. In their zeal to stop sprawl, they instead guarantee that more sprawl will occur. Just ask Famous Dave.

One of the best-planned pockets of economic development in our region is the Hartland area. Highway 16 is a divided four-lane highway that essentially functions as an interstate. It funnels people off I-94 and toward the lake country in northern Waukesha County. The area is booming with upscale residential development without deterring from the older homes and businesses in the area.

The existence of Highway 16 has no doubt helped drive the growth of the region by making the beauty of the area accessible to people who, for reasons of work or pleasure, still want to be close to the Milwaukee area. The anti-car people therefore assume that the existence of the road is the sole reason for the people sprawling to Hartland.

They’ve got it all wrong. The people in the Hartland area, because they aren’t stupid, will insist on a good highway system. If Milwaukee doesn’t follow that lead by keeping its own freeway network modernized, the folks that have gone to Hartland will simply stop frequenting Milwaukee.

They’ll look elsewhere for work and shopping. They’ll make fewer trips for sports, cultural attractions and restaurants. Employers will likewise move outward to the places where the people are. (It’s not a coincidence that most Quads/Graphics plants are outside of Milwaukee.) The only way for Milwaukee to remain viable is to follow the lead of the suburbs and exurbs and keep the city as accessible by cars as are the other regions.

A silly Milwaukee County board member named Ryan McCue recently said that if we succeed in jamming up the freeways that people would stop moving out to the burbs. He’s got it all wrong. They’re already out there. They’ll just never come back.

(As attorney general, Doyle pro- posed a truth-in-sentencing plan and was an early proponent. But Marotta said that didn’t mean the program wouldn’t be revisited.

"Sometimes people make decisions that they look at again," he said. "We are going to try to do things that counteract truth in sentencing."

The Waukesha Freeman
January 29, 2003

Doyle administration considers Norquist interchange proposal

MILWAUKEE (AP) - Gov. Jim Doyle's administration has reviewed Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist's proposal to scale back the planned reconstruction of the Marquette Interchange and is "seriously considering" it, a cabinet member said.

But officials have not come to a conclusion yet, said Marc Marotta, secretary of the state Department of Administration. He made the comments Saturday at a Community Brainstorming Conference at St. Matthew's Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

It was the strongest statement yet from the Doyle administration on the plan, which the mayor says would save at least $851 million by diverting more traffic onto what is now I-94.

The Norquist plan also scraps the idea of double-decking I-94 on Milwaukee's west side.

The state had expected to spend $700 million to $900 million to rebuild the deteriorating interchange, the downtown crossings of I-94, I-43 and I-894.

Doyle has said he will reveal his intentions for the interchange Feb. 18 when he unveils his budget bill.

Marotta also said Saturday that Doyle's administration would try not to reduce shared revenue to local governments, but shared revenue cuts were still possible.

Doyle campaigned against former Gov. Scott McCallum's plan to end shared revenue.

The administration also might raise UW System tuition and would develop ways to "counteract" truth in sentencing, he said.

As attorney general, Doyle proposed a truth-in-sentencing plan and was an early proponent. But Marotta said that didn't mean the program wouldn't be revisited.

"Sometimes people make decisions that they look at again," he said. "We are going to try to do things that counteract truth in sentencing."

The Waukesha Freeman
January 27, 2003

C-19
Milwaukee Insight: Road Rage over Marquette Interchange

By Gregg Hoffmann

MILWAUKEE – Road rage of a different kind is brewing over the Marquette Interchange and a proposed expansion of the freeway system through the metropolitan area.

Mayor John Norquist proposed an alternative last week to the plans that have been circulated by SEWRPC and the Department of Transportation. Norquist's plan would route truck and other through-traffic via an enhanced Zoo Interchange, thus cutting down on the traffic that runs through the Marquette.

Norquist claims the alternative could save as much as $361 million in tax money. His plan also cuts back on planned lane expansion past the so-called Story Parkway area, near Miller Park, in the east-west corridor of the freeway system.

Citizen groups in that area have a well-organized opposition campaign to the SEWRPC and DOT plans. They claim numerous homes would have to be sacrificed, and they raise safety issues about parts of the freeway that would be partially raised.

The DOT has maintained that a survey of users of the freeway and others show support for the expansion plans.

You basically are looking at two different projects. The Marquette Interchange would be the biggest highway project in state history -- no matter which plan is adopted. It is linked with the lane-expansion project only in that the freeway system is indeed just that -- a system. If you pinch traffic in one area, it likely will have an effect on traffic elsewhere in the system.

Nobody disputes that something must be done with the Marquette. Engineers already are monitoring the aging structure for flaws. Let's just hope we don't have another Hoan Bridge incident -- or something worse.

Norquist emphasizes that his plan would allow the start of the Marquette project this year. He says the DOT plans are so expensive that the project would be delayed for a year and increase the possibilities of structural problems. DOT officials dispute that claim.

Gov. Jim Doyle now says that funds for the project will be included in his upcoming budget proposal, even if he has to take funds from highway projects elsewhere in the state. That will likely turn a regional transportation issue into a statewide issue.

Marc Marotta, secretary of the Department of Administration, also said this weekend that Doyle is seriously considering elements of Norquist's plan as an alternative to the DOT plans.

The main disagreement is over costs, the amount of debt the state should take on for the project and whether the goal of the project should be to move traffic through the downtown Milwaukee area as quickly as possible, or to make downtown business and entertainment venues more accessible.

Norquist estimated the DOT plans would cost $911 million and his plan $550 million. State officials have said their plan would cost $760 million to $890 million. But they added that estimate was based on 2001 dollars and that inflation could push the costs as high as $940 million.

Lane expansion in the east-west corridor is another project. Certainly, Waukesha County has grown larger than ever projected by those who originally designed the corridor. Somehow traffic must be moved through the area.

SEWRPC planners say if the freeways are not expanded, Milwaukee traffic basically will be in gridlock by 2020. Opponents to the SEWRPC and DOT plans question those projections and say there are other ways of moving east-west traffic without taking homes and reducing the tax base of the city.

Both sides have presented their arguments. Some have been almost ludicrous. One opponent of freeway expansion said if we make it inconvenient enough for commuters they will decide to stop commuting and move back into the city. That's not likely to be the case. They are more likely to move elsewhere, where traffic is not as bad.

But Norquist's plan might be able to help the city and traffic flow. His proposal showed a real vision for the city, while also recognizing that you still have to make it convenient for traffic to move through the metro area.

Why not route travelers that have no plans for stopping in the city toward the outskirts of the metro area, while maintaining the Marquette and its feeder lanes primarily for people who want to come into the city -- for work, entertainment, shopping, and other downtown activities?

Norquist's vision sees downtown Milwaukee as fitting the "New Urbanism" concept, in which the downtown and surrounding areas are vital hubs for people actually living there and not necessarily only those commuting in from the suburbs.

It might be better suited to the city in a decade or two, if gas prices have required all of us to be less dependent on our automobiles, and actually live closer to our jobs.

Some legitimately ask why Norquist came up with a grand alternative only now, seemingly in the 11th hour of decision-making?

But that should not stop decision-makers from looking at some very solid proposals within the mayor's alternative -- proposals that might actually end up better for the city.

Once you put up a freeway, it's expensive to tear it down. You need only look at the Park East freeway for an example. Let's make sure we do the Marquette, and the entire freeway renovation, right.

The goal should not be just to get traffic through the metro area as fast as possible. It should balance ease of travel with some of the things Norquist is saying about the development of downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods.

-- Hoffmann is a veteran journalist and senior lecturer in journalism and mass communication at UW-Milwaukee.
DISINVESTMENT, CONCRETE & PAVEMENT TO REPLACE LATINO COMMUNITY?

By Geary Morales

"Well somebody has to make sacrifices for progress," and Milwaukee's Latino and Southside community could be the one that takes the hit!

Those sentiments were once voiced by a Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Committee (SEWRPC) representative, and soft pedaled by SEWRPC, Assistant Director Kenneth Yunker, at a recent community meeting that debated the wisdom of devastating the quality of life as well as the economic, social and residential fabric of certain Milwaukee neighborhoods, including Milwaukee's predominately Latino Southside, in favor of a widened freeway, more concrete, pollution and community disinvestment.

However many attending a January 16th meeting that was held at the Esperanza Unida International Building's on 6th & National were both skeptical and not buying Yunker's assurances.

Very direct and no holds barred and challenging questions came from residents and community leaders, including El Conquistador Newspaper Publisher, Victor Huyke; Milwaukee County Supervisor Anthony Zielinski; MPS School Board Member Jennifer Morales; Wisconsin State Senator Tim Carpenter; City of Milwaukee Policy Director Jim Rowen; ACLU-Wisconsin Attorney Karyn Rotker; Citizens Allied for Safe Highways (CASH) Grechen Schuld; and Walker's Point community activist and resident Ramona Puente. Other notables attending the meeting included Ernesto Chacon, Executive Director of the Federation For Civic Action, and Jack Szymborski of the Southside Organizing Committee.

Organizations like Atlanta-based Environmental Justice Center (EJC) have joined the ranks of communities like Milwaukee's near Southside, in challenging freeway expansion and urban sprawl in its breakthrough report entitled: "Race, Equity, and Smart Growth. Why People of Color Must Speak for Themselves." (See http://www.ejrc.caau.edu/raceequity-smartgrowth.html).

The SEWRPC recommends a reconstruction plan in wizen I-94 and I-43 freeway, from 6 lanes to 8 lanes. Both ways could have a devastating effect between 4th and 8th streets (East and West) and South Oklahoma and Pierce Streets. The preliminary SEWRPC Freeway Expansion Plan has already been approved by six of the seven counties that are affected by it. Milwaukee's County Board of Supervisors will be voting on it sometime in February of 2003.

SEWRPC is the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. It was established in 1960 by the State as the planning agency for the seven counties of Kenosha, Milwaukee, Waukesha, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha. SEWRPC's operations are funded through Federal, State and local taxes. WisDOT commissioned SEWRPC to undertake a "Regional Freeway System Reconstruction Study." The study looks only at the reconstruction of the existing freeway system. A brief mention is made of the need to upgrade other transportation options.

According to SEWRPC, all "major reconstruction" will be in Milwaukee County. Although they discuss economic impacts to some extent, i.e., claiming that widening the freeway will increase access to jobs. Many in the Latino community are asking, "at whose expense" and "what jobs if the freeway expansion does down portions of Milwaukee's Latino Southside community?"

According to SEWRPC, even if Milwaukee County Board vote yes on the plan, it does not represent final approval, or conclusion of the study of freeway reconstruction within Milwaukee County and the Region. Each segment of the freeway will need to undergo preliminary engineering and environmental impact studies by WisDOT.

These preliminary engineering and environmental impact studies will consider again reconstruction alternatives, and impacts at a greater level of detail. Milwaukee County review and input will again be solicited, and final decisions as to reconstruction are only made at the conclusion of preliminary engineering.

But two opponents of the plan, "Citizens Allied for Safe Highways" (CASH) and Wisconsin's American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) think differently.

"SEWRPC's planning process has been unfair and illegitimate," said Robert Trimmier, co-chair of CASH, a coalition of groups opposed to the freeway expansion plan. "SEWRPC excluded from the planning process people and organizations that would be hit hard by any expansion plan. SEWRPC itself is shamefully unrepresentative of the region and its composition is an anathema to representative government."

Staff Attorney, Karyn Rotker of the ACLU noted, "Among the problems raised by the ACLU-Wisconsin is SEWRPC's failure to make meaningful efforts to comply with federal laws and rules requiring the Commission (SEWRPC) to involve low income and minority communities, including residents who do not speak English, in all aspects of the planning process."

For example, SEWRPC never provided any information in Spanish to the Latino Community, even though reconstruction will have a significant impact on Latino neighborhoods. SEWRPC also failed to address many issues of concern to low income and minority communities, such as the need to guarantee the expansion of public transportation, the need for equal access to employment for central city residents; the tax base reduction which will be caused by widening the freeways and which will hurt Milwaukee taxpayers more than those in suburban communities; the need for fair and affordable housing in hyper segregated suburban communities; and the health and environmental effects of freeway expansion, particularly in light of Milwaukee's severe ozone pollution problem."

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Continued on Page C-22
DISINVESTMENT, CONCRETE & PAVEMENT TO REPLACE LATINO COMMUNITY?

Continued from Page C-22

The SEWRPC study team came up with three options, including simply replacing the existing system in-kind, replacing with design improvements and replace with design improvements and more lanes.

Replacing in-kind would carry a price tag of $3.4 billion and require no additional right of way. The other two options include the condemnation and acquisition of hundreds of acres of land, hundreds of homes and dozens of businesses. Most of this property earmarked for removal from productive use (and the tax roles) would be taken from Milwaukee County.

The preliminary plan calls for work to be done in segments over 50 years time, with the estimated overall cost at $6.25 billion dollars, or $208 million annually over 30 years. But where will the money come from? The State of Wisconsin still has a $500 million debt for the Marquette Interchange Project set to begin in late 2003, and the State is still unable to say how that project is going to be paid.

The Wisconsin Taxpayers' (www.wistax.org) August, 2002 article "Transportation Financing in Wisconsin," reported: "In November 1999, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) adopted a comprehensive, long-term state highway plan, which calls for spending $20.4 billion (in 1999 dollars) through 2020 to maintain and improve the state trunk highway system. Under the plan, through 2020, state and federal revenues are expected to generate around $13.5 billion (in 1999 dollars), leaving an estimated $6.9 billion shortfall. Over $5.3 billion of the $20.4 billion total is projected for the reconstruction of the aging southeast Wisconsin freeway system, including the Marquette Interchange.

Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist, who opposed the freeway expansion in the 1970's, and is still opposing it today said, "A breathtaking lack of vision! (referring to SEWRPC's freeway expansion recommendations). You've heard of the Boston Tea Party "no taxation without representation," well SEWRPC's Advisory Committee to the Governor, the Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is a prime example of "taxation with under-representation." Of the seven counties affected by SEWRPC's freeway expansion plan, Milwaukee County is hit the hardest, both in the loss of acreage and tax base. However, of the 21 person SEWRPC committee, only three represent Milwaukee County's interests. It's also amazing that there are no African-Americans and Latinos on the SEWRPC committee whose communities could be the most affected by this SEWRPC recommend-

freeway expansion plan. Although it is well to hear that MPS school board member Jennifer Morales has taken a position against this freeway expansion plan that could negatively affect MPS area students and the neighborhoods they live in.

School Board member Morales has serious concerns about the proposed expressway expansion's likely impact on Milwaukee's Latino community and on all low-income resi-
dents and school children of Milwaukee. "First of all, as a school board member I have to oppose any voluntary loss of property tax base in the city. Our schools are dependent on our ability to raise revenue through property taxes. If the expressway expansion requires destruction of houses and businesses, that means less property tax, which will put more tax burden on fewer property owners. SEWRPC consultants have suggested that expanding the expressway will promote development of businesses and residential areas on the road, creating new property tax base. But it won't be in the city of Milwaukee, so it doesn't do Milwaukee's children any good."

"Second, I'm very frustrated that once again road-building is getting all the attention to the detriment of our mass transit system. Low-income workers of Milwaukee need inexpensive, efficient public transit to get to work, not to mention the transportation needs of the many Milwaukee Public School students who take the county bus to and from school every day. This expressway expansion proposal doesn't do anything to help the most vulnerable people in the city. I will also be introducing a resolution to the school board next week," said Morales.

On Tuesday, January 21st Mayor Norquist gave his state of the City address which included the plan that Milwaukee will be presenting to WisDOT on how to save the state $361 million in rebuilding the Marquette Interchange.

In a resolution passed almost unanimously in April 2002, Milwaukee Alderman agreed that none of the alternatives presented by SEWRPC addresses the needs of the City of Milwaukee. The Council supported a modified plan with "design and design related safety improvements" but stated it will not back adding lanes in affected areas when there is only minimal reduction in travel time. It specifically stated no support for double-decking of 194 form Miller Park to Freeway road because of the negative impact on the Story Hill Neighborhood.

Excerpts from a June, 2002 3-page scathing letter to SEWRPC's Executive Director, Philip Evenson said, "The SEWRPC plan would have an adverse economic development impact in Milwaukee County, especially in the City of Milwaukee neighborhoods, where there is the largest concentra-
tion of minority and low-income job, residents and businesses."

"The insensitivity is further reflected in the absence of a transit component in the plan to serve the concentration of low-income house-

buildings with vehicles.

The entire process is rigged to reinforce a discriminatory status quo. It should be brought to a halt until the commission, its staff, and its outlook are modified to reflect the demographic differences in the region, and to plan for the many, not the already privileged few."

"SEWRPC needs to address and help wipe out Jim Crow, not facilitate it. SEWRPC is a planning agency that needs to reform itself internally before exercising its considerable influence on the outside world."

But as more people become aware of the expansion, many are beginning to wonder of SEWRPC intentions regarding the SEWRPC's freeway expansion plan: 1) Concern about loss of city and county property tax base due to taking of property needed for expansion; 2) Concern about the costs, lack of funding and potential for tax increase due to 6.2 billion dollar price tag of this propos-

2) Concern about lack of balance and located improvement needs that this proposal embodies; 3) Concern about lack of balanced approach to transportation needs that this proposal embodies; 4) Concern about lack of balanced approach to transportation needs that this proposal embodies; 5) Concern about lack of balanced approach to transportation needs that this proposal embodies; 6) Concern about the problems and issues for citizens raised by City of Milwaukee Health Commissioner Seth Fiddy that increased traffic and pollution would bring; 7) Concern about urban sprawl and land use issues that this major expansion would precipitate; 8) State Representative Pedro Colon, who has received several calls from his constituents said, "Many peo-

ple are concerned and haven't been heard. Until everyone is heard con-
cerning the issues of displacement, cost, environmental impacts and explanations that are clear and forth-

right, then SEWRPC does not have a legitimate plan as far as I'm concerned. And when it eventually comes across my desk from WisDOT for funding approval, I will certainly not be in favor of it until every concern is addressed and resolved. By the way, you're talking about a plan that will affect my own house in Milwaukee's Walker's Point neighbor-
hood."

I'm very displeased that SEWRPC will not release specific details concerning this State highway project and also has failed to inform and include homeowners and citizens that will be affected," Alderman Angel Saucedo.

While others will wait, "My deci-
sion on the freeway vote which is scheduled to come up in early February will be determined by feedback I receive from my con-
stituents, "Milwaukee County Supervisor; Anthony Zielinski.

SEWRPC is continuing to solicit public input on its freeway expansion plan. Despite the fundamentally flawed manner in which this planning process was developed Milwaukee County residents can still voice their opinion, either way, at two upcoming community meetings that will be open to the public including, Washington Park Senior Center, 4420 W. Vliet, Milwaukee (414) 535-2322, Thursday January 23rd, 6:30 p.m. All Milwaukee County Supervisors will be attending this event.

United Community Center (UCC) Middle School Auditorium, 920 S. 98th Street, (414) 449-4404, Milwaukee, Saturday, February 8, 12 noon - Spanish Translator will be available at this panel discussion and question and answer meeting. The panel will include representatives from the following organizations: El Conquistador - Latino News Source, SEWRPC, CASW, Sixteenth Street Community Health Clinic, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), City of Milwaukee Health Department, Physicians from Milwaukee Children's Hospital, MPS School Board.

To vote your concerns about SEWRPC's freeway expansion recommendations, one can contact SEWRPC at (262) 547-6721. To contact your Milwaukee County Supervisor concerning your views and concerns on freeway expansion and how it will affect your neighborhood, you can contact them at (414) 278-4222.

Conquistador, Latino News Source
January 24-30, 2003
Freeway plan deserves scrutiny

Public Forum:

It seems that my "opinion" on the freeway expansion proposal has created a lot of controversy, and I would like to set the record straight seeing that the media put their own spin on my "opinion."

On Jan. 8, Milwaukee County's Transportation, Public Works and Transit committee, of which I am a member, met to discuss the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's proposal for a $6.25 billion freeway expansion. This is a big-ticket item, and I want it to be done right so that future generations don't have to pay for our mistakes.

When I ran for county supervisor, I promised to look at all sides of an issue and not be afraid to ask tough questions. This meeting was the time and place to ask the tough questions and that's exactly what I did. I asked questions for and against the proposal, and even played the devil's advocate.

I know my constituents expect me to scrutinize a $6.25 billion project paid for by the taxpayers. I spent three months scrutinizing Milwaukee County's 2003 $1.1 billion budget, and I will take the necessary time to scrutinize the $6.25 billion proposal.

I agree we need to improve the Marquette and zoo interchanges and other congested areas. One of my concerns, which I expressed at the committee meeting, is that the 794 expansion is not part of the proposal. The proposed expansion may also disturb some veterans' graves, which concerns me.

In last week's CNI newspaper, Charlie Sykes wrote the editorial "Freeway plan based on illogic."

"We've already paid for a stadium whose roof doesn't work, a bridge that falls down, a too-small convention center and a deep tunnel that's not quite deep enough," wrote Sykes. I'm surprised he left out the pension fiasco. I wish the people who gave their stamp of approval for the projects and proposals would have taken a closer look and scrutinized them better. I have learned from other people's mistakes, therefore I am going to be tough.

As I stated at the committee meeting, and it continues to be true today, I am neither for nor against the proposal because I still have questions that need to be answered and I am still waiting for additional information.

The next public meeting on this matter is at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 6 at the Washington Park Senior Center, 4420 W. Vliet St., Milwaukee.

Ryan McCue
24th District supervisor

South Milwaukee Voice Graphic
January 23, 2003
Noorquist freeway plan diverts traffic

By LARRY SANDLER
and GREG BOROWSKI

Mayor John O. Norquist, launched a new attempt Tuesday to win approval for his much-delayed plan to construct a six-lane freeway in Milwaukee's west end.

Norquist's plan, which calls for a six-lane freeway to be built along Mill Road, would divert much of the traffic from the busy and congested 1-43, relieving congestion in the area.

However, opponents of the plan say it wouldn't be enough to relieve congestion, and that a six-lane freeway would only attract more traffic.

Several groups, including the Milwaukee Area Planning Commission, have called for a more aggressive approach to solving the area's traffic problems, including improving public transportation and expanding bike and pedestrian paths.

Norquist, who has been pushing the plan for years, says it's important to move forward on the project to address the city's growing traffic problems.

But critics say the city needs to do more to address the root causes of congestion, rather than just building more roads.

A final decision on the plan is expected later this year.
Norquist resurrects old Marquette interchange plan

By Sean Ryan

Daily Reporter Staff

The Daily Reporter

January 21, 2003

Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist Tuesday suggested the Department of Transportation reconsider a scaled-back plan to reconstruct the Marquette Interchange that was scrapped in the project's early planning phase.

"The affordable plan does all the things the other one is supposed to do, but it does it less expensively," Norquist said in his State of the City speech. "At issue is the state wants to build a plan that's too big. The plan was developed with no cost constraints whatsoever."

Milwaukee officials said WisDOT's current proposal, which the agency estimates would cost between $760 million and $980 million, would require either an immediate tax increase or project delays to secure the funding. When they shared concerns with WisDOT, the agency welcomed ideas for a cheaper plan, said Mariano Schifalacqua, Milwaukee commissioner of public works.

"They may start delaying the project, and we think that's a mistake because the bridges are failing," he said. "Sting that they don't have the money, now might be the time to start looking at cost constraints."

Old plan revisited

Milwaukee planners dusted off a rough plan WisDOT drafted in the interchange's early planning stage and rejected, said city Long-Range Planning Manager Mike Maitre, who worked with the state agency before coming to Milwaukee.

"I think that was a mistake, and we are trying to correct that mistake," he said. "I think we are reopening the question of what is the best way to improve our transportation system. We need to look at options and alternatives."

The mayor's $550 million proposal would route most Illinois motorists through Interstate 894, which loops around Milwaukee's downtown, rather than direct them through the Marquette Interchange. Maitre said rerouting interstate travelers would allow for lower traffic speeds on the interchange, enabling engineers to scale back the size of the redesigned interchange.

"That would make it easier to argue for lower design speeds on the Marquette Interchange," he said.

"WisDOT wanted to build everything to current interstate standards, but it's very expensive to do that."

Norquist was critical of WisDOT in his speech, saying the agency mismanages its funds and neglects public opinion while planning projects. Norquist said he sent letters about the proposal last week to Gov. Jim Doyle and his appointed transportation secretary Frank Rusallach, who was in the audience.

"Wisconsin would be making a terrible mistake if they would try to rip Milwaukee apart and turn it into a truck route," Norquist said. "The state needs to totally rethink how it plans and funds transportation projects. It needs projects that are sensitive to its context and delights the people around them instead of making them angry."

SEWRPC criticized

Norquist also criticized the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's proposed $6.2 billion plan, which would add two lanes to every highway in Milwaukee County. The plan would encourage commuter traffic and sprawling developments such as Palat Farm in Oconomowoc, conflicting with the city's efforts to encourage businesses and people to relocate downtown.

"We're going to have to tax increases so we can have luxury homes in a cornfield in Oconomowoc," Norquist said. "They don't have anything like this in Berlin; they just have billions and billions of real estate value and thousands of jobs."

Within hours of the speech, two environmental groups, 1,000 Friends of Wisconsin and the Sierra Club, applauded Norquist's proposal. But Rep. Jeff Stone, Greenfield, chairman of the Assembly Transportation Committee, disapproved of Norquist's suggestion in a public letter because it rejected past planning efforts and didn't expand the interchange.

WisDOT representatives couldn't comment on the plan before press time because they were waiting for Doyle's take on the idea.

Maitre and Schifalacqua said they didn't know what the city's next step would be but hoped the resurrected Marquette Interchange proposal would spark new discussions.

"We want to see this project move forward," Schifalacqua said. "It's a good point to start the discussion at."

Freeway plan based on illogic

We've already paid for a stadium whose roof doesn't work, a bridge that falls down, a too-small convention center and a deep tunnel that's not quite deep enough.

But this was just a warm-up for the mother of all boondoggles — a massive freeway reconstruction project that will actually give us twice as much congestion as we have now, longer commutes, more frustrating delays, more rear-end collisions and even more smog. All for $5.5 billion.

This is a good idea, explains County Supervisor Ryan McCue, because if we were to limit the amount of expansion, "people would get sick of the drive" and move into Milwaukee County.

No doubt summoning all of his restraint, planner Phil Even- son responded to McCue: "It's more likely, supervising, that the jobs would move out of the county instead."

But this is pretty much the party line among the opponents of freeway expansion. The McCue/Norquist logic runs something like this if we make travel in and out of Milwaukee inconvenient enough, more people will want to live here. As God is my witness, that the argument that some policymakers are actually making is, if you annoy them, they will come.

The opponents of expanding the freeway may actually get their way. They want to rebuild the freeway system with some design and safety improvements, but without any new lanes, at a cost of $5.5 billion.

Without new lanes, by 2020, some parts of the freeway would be congested for as long as 16 hours a day.

To avoid that traffic night- mare, planners from the South- eastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission are proposing new lanes on 127 miles of the system. Even with the new lanes, congestion would worsen by about 15 percent.

But without the new lanes, the $5.5 billion freeway will be a monument to gridlock and road rage. New motorists waste an average of 11,500 hours a day sitting in traffic delays, according to SEWRPC. Without new lanes the delays on the shiny new system will more than double to 25,200 hours a day.

Avoiding that would cost about $700 million, or 13 percent more. The environmental impact of the new lanes would be negligible, affecting less than .002 percent of the region's primary environmental corridors and only .001 percent of the wetlands.

Even so, opponents are mobilizing, trying to convince the public that if we make it harder to move goods, services and people in and out of Mil- waukee, this will encourage people to move here.

The alternative, of course, is for policymakers to make deci- sions grounded in reality. They might even talk about consider- ation the choices people have already made about where to live and work, and how they want to drive.

After all, $5.5 billion is a lot of money to pay just to frustrate people into doing what McCue wants them to do.
Walker supports SEWRPC plan

By Candace Doyle
Editor

Jan. 15, 2003

Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker supports the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's freeway expansion plan, which the County Board is expected to vote on next month.

"I believe that you have to have a transportation plan that meets our needs," said Walker, adding that SEWRPC's $6.5 billion plan may not be foreclosed enough. "There has to be a way to have a transportation system that meets our transportation needs and economic needs."

And contrary to those who oppose the plan, including Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist, Walker said he believed the 20-year road project would not drive people and businesses away from the city.

"We need more of a tax base, not less," said Walker, who added that he still wanted to be "sensitive" to those residents and groups, such as the American Civil Liberties Union, that oppose the plan.

Walker made those remarks Tuesday night as guest speaker at the Associated General Contractors of Greater Milwaukee's annual meeting, held at the Wisconsin Club in Milwaukee.

He also said that he has yet to decide whether he backs the building of coal-fired power plants in Oak Creek by We Energies as part of the company's $7 billion Power the Future plan. That plan, too, has had its detractors, including a group that calls itself Responsible Energy for Southeast Wisconsin's Tomorrow and, again, Norquist.

Position uncertain
Walker, though, said the plan, already approved by the Milwaukee City Council, has not yet come before the County Board, although the county's development department is reviewing it.

"We really haven't taken an active role," he said. "(But) I'm assuming before that's resolved, they'll come to me for some opinion on that."

Walker did, though, stress the importance of maintaining and upgrading General Mitchell International Airport, which supports the entire southeastern portion of the state and is vital to the state's economy. For that reason, he said, the County Board will, when it meets with Milwaukee Airport officials, do what it can to help theailing air carrier stay afloat.

"We're looking at ways to ... continue to ensure Midwest Airlines is a primary carrier at our airport," Walker said. "We want to stabilize those avenues and put in place a world-class airport."

Beyond that, Walker said the construction market in the county looks promising in 2003 and that opportunities for contractors were available in the Menomonee Valley, the County Grounds in Wauwatosa, the Research Park in Wauwatosa and under the Park East freeway spur.

"It's encore time everywhere all over the place," he said. "I think that's a good sign where we're headed."

Changes inevitable
Walker said the county pension and sick-leave scandal -- and the state's budget deficit -- would likely force changes in how all levels of government in Wisconsin operate.

However, he said he doesn't foresee consolidating city and county services as a realistic cost-cutting measure.

"I don't think it's going to happen in my lifetime, which means it's not going to happen for a long time," said Walker, 34.

But Walker, who before being elected last year as county executive served in the state Assembly since 1993, said he could envision a more regional approach to providing services, such as having one transit system serving both Milwaukee and Waukesha counties.

"I do believe there is real potential for regional service delivery," he said.

Candace Doyle can be reached at 414-276-0273, Ext. 125, or by email.

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The Daily Reporter
January 15, 2003

The metro area's big roads

Regional planners last week carefully laid out their rationale for adding 127 miles of lanes to the freeway system. Most of the people who packed a hearing room in the Milwaukee County Courthouse were uncommitted. We weren't persuaded, either.

Many of the points made by representatives of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission were valid. It seems logical that if freeways are congested already, they need to be expanded to accommodate traffic growth in decades to come.

But we believe — as do most of the people who spoke at the Milwaukee County Board Transportation Committee hearing — that widening I-94 and I-43 will not significantly reduce future traffic congestion. But it will exact a heavy toll on the economy, environmentally, aesthetically and encourage more urban sprawl.

Some recent national studies have shown that widening roads simply creates more traffic by encouraging additional drivers — after three years or more, traffic can increase by as much as 100%. Those studies do not invalidate the need to add lanes, but they do strongly suggest that additional pavement does not necessarily translate into less congestion. It's been estimated that widening I-94 will shave only five minutes, at best, from the commute time in 2020 between the Marquette Interchange and the Zoo Interchange.

Most Milwaukee-area freeways were built 30 to 50 years ago, and about $5 million is spent each month on resurfacing and repairs. There is no question that they need major changes in design to improve safety and traffic flow. Those improvements alone will help to ease future congestion. Rebuilding the freeways with design improvements will cost $6.5 billion and require the displacing of homes, businesses and buildings. Rebuilding the freeways and adding 127 miles of lanes will cost $12.8 billion.

Perhaps the biggest disadvantage, though, isn't the additional cost, but the need to acquire even more land, homes and businesses to accommodate the expanded system. The freeway expansion plan, endorsed by a SEWRPC study committee, would require 686 additional acres of land and the razing of 216 homes, 31 businesses and three government buildings in the affected seven-county region. Milwaukee County would bear the brunt: 184 acres, 110 homes, 17 businesses, the Courthouses Annex and two smaller county buildings.

Milwaukee community groups as well as the state Department of Natural Resources also insist that expanding the freeways will mean more air pollution. That, in turn, will contribute to added cases of asthma and adult respiratory illnesses, which disproportionately affect poorer neighborhoods.

SEWRPC planners and others dispute those claims and argue that freeway widening will promote economic expansion. Good roads are important to the economy, and the rebuilt highways certainly will be state of the art. But we're not convinced that adding 127 miles of lanes will more than offset the loss of tax base and the other adverse effects of freeway expansion.

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
January 13, 2003

Editorial Page C-26
Time to make room for wider freeway

I'm trying to decide which is worse — being stuck in freeway traffic or being stuck for four hours in a meeting about freeways with no exit ramp in sight.

But I came out of that meeting at the courthouse last week with this opinion: If we're going to tear down all the freeways in this area right to bare ground — which everyone seemed to agree is necessary — it doesn't make sense to rebuild them the same size they were built in the 1960s. Adding one lane in each direction is the way to go.

If adding lanes does nothing to ease congestion, as expansion foes claim, then why don't we just build them one lane narrower than they are now. That could save money and shouldn't add more than a few hours to our commute time.

C'mon, everyone, catch freeway fever. We're going to be fighting about this for the next 30 years. City vs. suburbs. Metro Milwaukee vs. the rest of the state. Environmentalists vs. SUV drivers. Concrete freaks vs. mass transit nuts. Pick a side and join in.

If you're reading this article in one of the houses that would need to be knocked down to make room for the project, you may be calling me a few unpleasant names right now. Or maybe you're thinking it will be good to have government come along and buy your house so you can finally go live somewhere quieter and less polluted.

As long as we're already planning to spend $6.2 billion on this extravaganza, I think we should give you twice what your house is worth. That way you can build another house somewhere in the county and we don't lose tax base.

People always lament the overall loss of tax base. It's the all-purpose political argument. But I pay property taxes and I'm trying to remember a time when they went down noticeably because of something that was built or up because something was torn down.

Here's something I learned at the meeting, if we can believe the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and its plan for freeway reconstruction. Rebuilding the freeways to modern safety standards without adding any lanes would result in 191 houses, businesses and government buildings being leveled. Adding extra lanes kills off 99 more.

Here's something else I didn't know before. I thought widening the freeways was driving up the cost of the project. It turns out that rebuilding without adding any lanes would cost $5.5 billion. For a mere $700 million more, we could add the lanes and give us a little room to spread out on the freeway until flying cars are invented.

Fun with numbers

The Planning Commission likes to say the feds and the state will find a way to split the cost. This always gets a laugh from the main opposition group, which calls itself Citizens Allied for Sane Highways. I'm pretty sure sane highways is an oxymoron, but these expressways are still the way most people get around here.

You're probably thinking, sure, Jim, but what about urban sprawl? Isn't it true that wider freeways that move traffic more efficiently make people want to live way out in the sticks? And aren't suburbanites inherently evil?

This seems to argue that we should make sure the new freeways are undersized and hellishly crowded so no one gets the damn fool notion of moving out of Milwaukee or beyond the county limits. I live in Milwaukee County, and it would take more than one extra lane to get me to move out in the country. Freeways that work well benefit people living in the county, out of the county, and those just cutting through our area on the way to somewhere else.

Now we just need a plan to get every woman, man and child on the globe to send $1 to Madison to help us pay for it.

Call Jim Stingl at (414) 224-2017 or e-mail at jstingl@journalsentinel.com.

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
January 12, 2003
Forces against freeways lining up

Supervisors express reservations about widening the system

By LARRY SANDLER

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Milwaukee County supervisors voiced strong reservations Wednesday about widening I-94 and I-43 to eight lanes within the county, providing the first hint of how the County Board might deal with a $2.52 billion freeway reconstruction plan.

Supervisor Lori Lutka raised the possibility that the board could follow the lead of the Milwaukee County Civil Council, which urged the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission not to recommend widening those two freeways within the city limits.

And Milwaukee School Board member Jennifer Morales said she and fellow board member Peter Bliewelt would ask the School Board to oppose additional freeway lanes as well, based on possible property tax base losses within the city.

Opponents of freeway widening dominated a County Board committee meeting called to consider the county's position on how the seven-county area's aging freeways should be rebuilt as they wear out over the next 20 years. A standing-room-only crowd of more than 100 people showed up, although that dwindled to about 20 by the end of the four-hour meeting.

A preliminary recommendation favoring a planning commission study committee calls for adding 127 miles of new lanes, broadening the region's biggest freeways from six lanes to eight and doubling 1-43 from four lanes to eight in the North Shore suburbs. About half of the new lanes would be in Milwaukee County, said Ken Yunker, the commission's assistant director.

Before the County Board's Transportation, Public Works and Transit Committee, supervisors grilled planners about the cost of the plan and its impact on housing, businesses, property taxes, air pollution and urban sprawl. Only the planners and Supervisor James White, the panel chairman, voted support for adding lanes.

"I think it's going to encourage urban sprawl... and encourage people to live farther away," cutting into the county's tax base, Supervisor Ryan McCue said. "If we were to limit the amount of expansion, people would get sick of the drive" and move into Milwaukee County.

"It's more likely, supervisor, that the jobs would move out of the county instead," retorted Phil Evenson, executive director of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

"It's more likely, supervisor, that the jobs would move out of the county instead." - Phil Evenson, executive director of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

"What's good for Milwaukee County?" Weilman asked, pointing to trends of population growth outside the county. "Since the freeways were built, it was said, "We've paid a horrible price, and who has gotten the advantages of the growth?"

"Evenson and Yunker said holding down traffic congestion would aid development within the county and let residents live and work wherever they please. Without adding lanes, they said, congestion would double by 2020.

Lutka said she had received 50 e-mails from constituents concerned about the cost of the plan and the number of houses to be razed. Milwaukee County would account for 177 of the 216 homes and 20 of the 29 businesses that would be razed, as well as all three of the government buildings, according to the planning commission and freeway widening opponents.

Supervisors Michael Mayo, Robert Krug and Willis Johnson Jr. also raised questions about costs, in light of a state Department of Transportation budget proposal to pay for rebuilding the Marquette Interchange by cutting aid for local roads and bus systems.

"I think it's going to encourage urban sprawl... and encourage people to live farther away." - Ryan McCue, Milwaukee County supervisor.

"I'll be happy to limit the amount of expansion, people would get sick of the drive." - Ryan McCue, Milwaukee County supervisor.

"We'll be happy to limit the amount of expansion, people would get sick of the drive." - Ryan McCue, Milwaukee County supervisor.

The planning commission wants to make our county dirtier and noisier and pump more harmful fumes into our schools and-homes... so people to suburban counties can get home a few minutes faster," said Gretchen Schulte, chairman of the neighbors' coalition and a Milwaukee Public Schools budget analyst.

Schulte, who lives in the St. Clair neighborhood across I-94, urged the commission to discover and involve the public more in its plans.

White said the entire board would convene as a committee of the whole to hear more testimony on the issue sometime in February. As a result, White's committee took no action Wednesday.

MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL

January 12, 2003
Milwaukee County officials are once again showing their narrow-minded parochialism rather than a more positive regionalism in their opposition to the expansion of the interstate system.

That was evident after a meeting Wednesday of the Milwaukee County Board's Transportation, Public Works and Transit Committee. Supervisors and citizens jammed into the session to blast the recommendation for adding 127 miles of new freeway lanes in southeastern Wisconsin. The plan is being presented by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and has been supported by all the regional counties except Milwaukee.

The key target at the meeting was the widening of the six-mile east/west corridor of Interstate 94, from the Marquette to the zoo interchanges. The proposal calls for the possibility of elevating part of the freeway near the Story Hill neighborhood — just west of Miller Park — so neighborhood residents have been outspoken in their opposition.

Supporters of mass transit have criticized the plan because it would cost $6.25 billion for the roadwork, leaving scant funding for any mass transit alternative.

Groups like the American Civil Liberties Union have called the plan discriminatory against minorities who may not have personal vehicles while the Sierra Club is against the project, claiming it will add to local air pollution.

The city points to the loss of 177 homes, 20 businesses, and three government buildings in Milwaukee. They would be razed to accommodate the expansion.

The great unspoken truth lurking just behind all this contention is that Milwaukee leaders view regionalism as a one-way street — that is, the entire region must evolve around Milwaukee. While Milwaukee is a vital part of southeastern Wisconsin and the entire state, it is not the only part.

What the Milwaukee politicians fail to realize is that the freeway doesn't just take away residents who desire to live in more open areas with less crime. That same freeway also facilitates those same people coming into Milwaukee to work, shop and attend sports and cultural events.

Milwaukee officials seem to think that by squeezing the freeway into a bottleneck that they can influence people to return to the city. What is more likely is they will discourage people from coming into Milwaukee.

Proof of that is the fact that the freeway system has been congested for more than a decade and yet the suburban migration continues.

The best approach for Milwaukee planners is to try to develop a more meaningful and symbiotic relationship with its suburban and exurban neighbors rather than trying to force them into an environment they fled for compelling reasons.

Any plans to oppose freeway widening in an effort to stem the urban exodus will have the exact opposite effect. Businesses and people will opt for working away from the city — not just living away from it.

What urban advocates deride as "sprawl" is really the exercise of free choice. Making the Milwaukee experience a more pleasant one is much more likely to lead more people to choose Milwaukee rather than some scheme designed to place roadblocks up along the Milwaukee County lines to the west, north and south.
Freeway debate to hit on hot topics

Race, sprawl, housing among issues raised over reconstruction

By LARRY SANDLER
lindsay@journalsentinel.com

Racism, housing, jobs, urban sprawl, air pollution and traffic jams all will be part of the debate when a $628 million freeway reconstruction plan faces a key vote today.

It won't be the last word, both sides agree, but supporters and opponents of widening I-94 and I-43 are likely to turn out in force when the Milwaukee County Board's Transportation, Public Works and Transit Committee debates the plan at 1 p.m. Room 203R of the courthouse.

That panel's recommendation will set the stage for the full board to decide its position on how to rebuild all of the region's aging freeways as they wear out over the next 20 to 30 years. And the board's position, in turn, will influence regional, state and federal decisions.

A preliminary recommendation from a Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission study committee calls for adding 127 miles of new lanes to the freeways, which would expand most of the busiest freeways from six lanes to eight lanes and would boost traffic 40 to 50 percent.

Without widening the freeways, planners say, traffic congestion will double by 2020. Opponents, however, point out that widening I-94 would save commuters only five minutes in rush-hour traffic from downtown to Wauwatosa.

But the debate is ranging far beyond transportation to include:

- Racism: The American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin is urging supervisors to reject the plan as unfair to minority and the poor.
- Air pollution: A Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reporter who works for the Milwaukee County suburbs would account for 984 acres, 130 homes and 7 businesses, as well as the courthouse annex and two smaller county buildings.

In addition to the property taken, other homes, offices and schools would be up to 46 million closer to freeways, lowering property values and the quality of life, Schulte said.

"Even the houses they don't tear down would have huge negative impacts," said Schulte, a former Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reporter now for the Milwaukee Public Schools.

White said economic growth would more than compensate for the lost tax base. He pointed out that I-43 was built through what was then a thriving black neighborhood, but today, "there isn't anyone who questions the validity of that I-43 stretch, the value to the state's economy."

Neighbors who oppose freeway widening. White said, are "individuals who see their own personal inconvenience as more important than the economic needs of the region."

Environment: The ACLU argues that wider freeways would carry more traffic, causing more air pollution and triggering more respiratory diseases, which disproportionately affect minority neighborhoods. The planning commission disputes that view.

Instead, environmentalists and the ACLU argue, planners should be encouraging expansion of public transit, including commuter trains.

After the committee votes on its recommendation, the full board will consider the issue, likely at its Jan. 31 meeting.

However, because of the importance of the issue, White and County Board Chairman Lee Holloway are discussing whether the matter should also be considered by a committee of the whole before the regular board meeting. That's a rarely used tactic that would let all supervisors have their say, listen to the testimony and question witnesses.

"I'm hoping for the highest possible profile for discussions on this issue, White said.
Brookfield's Busalacchi named DOT secretary

Former truck driver will oversee Marquette interchange work

By DENNIS A. SHOOK
Senior Staff Writer

BROOKFIELD - Frank Busalacchi has been in the public eye for his work on the Miller Park baseball stadium project.

But he will soon be working under quite another dome - in the state Capitol - with his appointment Monday as secretary of the state Department of Transportation by Gov.-elect Jim Doyle.

Compared to Miller Park, his new work might seem more like being in a fish bowl.

But the longtime Brookfield resident told the Freeman on Monday, "I'm psyched."

Busalacchi, 58, will have to resign as the secretary-treasurer of Teamsters Local 200, one of the largest Teamster locals in the state. He began with the Teamsters as a business agent in 1979 and was elected president in 1991 and secretary-treasurer in 1994.

"I will miss the Teamsters because I grew up with them and they have been very good to me," he said.

Busalacchi is also president of the Summerfest Board of Directors and served as chairman of the negotiating committee responsible for the lease between Milwaukee World Festivals and the city of Milwaukee. Appointed by Gov. Tommy Thompson in 1994, Busalacchi is the construction committee chairman for the Miller Park baseball stadium construction project.

Now he will have the opportunity to oversee another major construction project in the rebuilding of the Marquette interchange.

"The Marquette interchange is the lifeblood of the entire state, not just Milwaukee," he said. And as a former truck driver who traveled frequently through the downtown area, he understands that as well as anybody, he said.

The plans call for work on the $1.5 billion project to begin in 2004 and take about four years. If Doyle is re-elected and Busalacchi were to stay on, he would probably also oversee the start of the six miles of work in the east/west corridor between Milwaukee and Waukesha as well. A member of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Busalacchi has shown support for rebuilding Interstate 94.

"But I think the new governor wants to take a fresh look at exactly what it is we are going to do," he said. The project now calls for expanding that portion of the freeway from six to eight lanes.

Doyle said of his appointee, "Frank Busalacchi is a Milwaukee community leader, labor leader and an experienced large projects manager who knows how important transportation is to the economic growth of Wisconsin. Frank has shown time and time again that he can accomplish big things while balancing competing interests."

The DOT is responsible for planning, promotion and protection of all transportation systems around the state. Responsibilities include highways, motor vehicles, motor carriers, traffic law enforcement, railroads, waterways, mass transit and aeronautics.

The department employs about 3,000 people.

Busalacchi will succeed current DOT Secretary Thomas Carlsen.

Busalacchi and his wife, Robin, have lived in Brookfield for 17 years and have two sons. Robin Busalacchi is the daughter of former Brookfield Police Chief Jerome Wolff and Waukesha County Supervisor Sandra Wolff.

Doyle also made two other appointments Monday. He appointed Madison attorney Scott Hassett as secretary of the state Department of Natural Resources and Madison resident Burnie Bridge as chair of the Public Service Commission.

(Dennis A. Shook can be reached at dshook@conleyet.net)
Governor-elect Jim Doyle hasn’t asked me for advice on shaping transportation policy, but I’m going to offer some anyway. Here it is, in a nutshell:

Rethink everything.

It would be a huge mistake for the new governor to repeat the Pavement-Pushing Policy of Transportation under Governors Tommy Thompson and Scott McCallum. These policies have left us with oversized corridors of concrete at the expense of existing roads, shortchanged transit and worsened sprawl. The current state budget crisis presents Doyle with a great opportunity to craft a more balanced, cost-effective, environmentally sensitive approach to transportation.

The urgency of doing so is underscored by the ruinous, $6.25 billion plan to rebuild (read: widen) the metro area’s aging freeways over the next 20 years. Forget for a moment that the plan, pushed by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, would destroy 608 acres, 216 homes and 31 businesses and degrade even the neighborhood it leaves intact.

Forget, too, that by the planners’ own estimates, expanding I-94 would have only a few minutes off the average commute between Milwaukee and Waukesha County. Or that experience elsewhere suggests that these wider roads would be filled up almost as fast as they’re built.

Even if you are prepared to write off those losses as a cost of ‘progress’—something I’m certainly not willing to do — how are we going to pay for this massive undertaking, which the DOT’s own budget says would cost $260 million a year for the next two decades? The nonpartisan Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance suggests that if the plan goes ahead, it would leave a $5 billion shortfall in transportation funding statewide — a conservative estimate. Yet Doyle has ruled out tax increases, presumably including any rise in vehicle registration fees or gasoline taxes.

Clearly, a more realistic approach is in order, one that combines carefully targeted safety improvements with land-use reform and regional cooperation on transit, including commuter rail. But to get from here to there will require an overhaul of the DOT.

State transportation policies should be junked, rethought.

For starters Doyle needs to appoint a transportation secretary with a clear head, a steely-eyed approach to budgeting and absolutely no ties to the pave-everything gang of roadbuilders. No old-boy political hacks, no revolving-door consultants, no underqualified loyalists, please.

Then, let the Legislative Audit Bureau or some other credible outside group look closely at the way DOT spends its money. Ed Beinborn, who is as thoughtful about these issues as anyone around, recalls an old saying from his father: “Never ask a barber if you need a haircut.”

Beinborn, who directs the Center for Urban Transportation Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, says an objective analysis would examine such things as whether the state is getting the greatest possible return on its investment; whether services to boost the mobility of the disabled are properly factored in; and whether so-called safety improvements are actually that.

The land-use reform group 1,000 Friends of Wisconsin says an honest accounting of the real costs of highway construction would also factor in such things as maintenance, resurfacing, policing and plowing.

The group has some other good suggestions: Repeal gas tax indexing, which automatically increases gas taxes every year, and hence road building — with no accountability; raise the share of aid that goes for maintaining local roads and transit; and peg auto registration fees to the weight of vehicles, so that pavement-pummeling gas guzzlers would pay more.

The other piece of the puzzle, too long ignored by the highway crowd, is the link between transportation and land use. Unbridled highway development fuels sprawl. And numerous studies, including a recent one by researchers at Rutgers and Cornell universities, show that sprawl — sparse, spread-out growth beyond the bounds of urban services — increases driving times, air pollution and traffic deaths. Others, including the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin, have documented the connection between sprawl and racial segregation.

Yet the state’s new Smart Growth law promotes more compact development, which would enable people to live closer to their jobs and be less dependent on their cars. That’s evidently a good idea to the DOT, which behaves like a full employment agency for road builders.

“We have never had a DOT secretary who got the transportation-land use connection,” says Dave Cieslewicz, director of 1,000 Friends. It’s time we did. It’s also time we had a DOT that carefully coordinated its plans with the state Department of Natural Resources and with reform-minded citizens around the state.

A good model on this front is Envision Utah, a partnership among citizens, business leaders and government officials (including state transportation staffs) in the Salt Lake City region. The 5-year-old group works to coordinate transportation decisions with land and water preservation and housing diversity. According to its executive director, Steven Holbrook, the group played a key role in developing state transportation policy.

In 1996, state officials were about to sign a contract with a toll road company. The Envision group organized a meeting of 250 citizens. “The DOT was embarrassed,” Holbrook says. “They said, ‘People in Utah are smarter than we thought.’”

Call Whitney Gould at 414-224-2358, write her at Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, P.O. Box 37, Milwaukee, WI 53201, or e-mail her at wgoold@journalsentinel.com.
Freeway plan blasted by advocacy groups

Wauwatosa Express News
December 23, 2002

By Jason Blatina
Staff Writer

Speakers representing a pair of activist groups chastised the proposed reconstruction of southeastern Wisconsin's freeway system during a presentation to Wauwatosa officials last week.

The proposal by Waukesha-based SEWRPC (Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission) entails both design modifications and expansion of key corridors within the 272-mile system, creating eight freeway lanes along segments of I-43 and I-94 in Milwaukee County — at a cost of approximately $6.2 billion.

Presentations were conducted by both Citizens Against Sane Highways (CASH) and the Sierra Club during the Wauwatosa Committee of the Whole meeting Dec. 17, with a barrage of criticism directed at the proposal.

Robert Trimmer, CASH co-chair, stated that his group opposes the plan for several reasons, including: erosion of the tax base; loss of quality of life; lack of meaningful public input; no funding source; etc.

"This process has been one of arrogance, with using two PR firms to sell before the public," said Trimmer. "This plan is a "90s thinking dressed in a 21st century coat" — gave your way out of downtown. Because this plan primarily affects Milwaukee County, we believe the proposal represents taxation without representation.

SEWRPC will be afforded a little opportunity to present their stance to Wauwatosa officials Jan. 21. Among the organization's preliminary alternatives is a $5.5 billion option which would reconstruct the system to meet modern design standards and address infrastructure and safety concerns, but does not add highway capacity. A $6.2 billion option which adds capacity to 137 miles of freeway corridor would address infrastructure, design, safety and traffic-flow concerns — especially to address traffic congestion projected on the system over the next 20 years.

"According to www.sewrpc.org: "...much of the freeway system (built in stages beginning in 1953) is approaching the end of its economic and functional life, and the reconstruction of the freeway system will be required over the next 20 years. The deficiencies of the freeway system are widely acknowledged, including traffic accidents and safety, increasing traffic congestion, and the physical geometric design deficiencies of the freeway system, including lane drops at interchanges, left-hand entrance and exit ramps, inadequate merging and diverging lane spacing, and inadequate shoulders and lateral clearance."

The preliminary plan recommends adding lanes to the segments of I-94 between the Milwaukee County Zoo and Marquette interchanges, and I-43 between the W. Brown Deer Road and Mitchell Park interchanges.

"Gretheke Schuld, CASH co-chair, stated that the group is "not anti-freeway," but SEWRPC doesn't understand all that the plan involves. "They want to widen 127 miles of freeway without a funding source," she said. "With the Zoo Interchange, it includes 52 acres and 19 destroyed homes — this plan would have a major impact in Wauwatosa."

According to Schuld, the plan entails a total of 216 razed homes — including 177 residences in Milwaukee County alone — while "taking out" a Milwaukee County Sheriff's substation at 10190 W. Watertown Plank Rd.

"Much of Swan Boulevard would be merged with the freeway, and we'd lose some of the County Grounds," she said. "SEWRPC failed to include the additional land that will be needed in the plan, and utility lines must be relocated."

According to SEWRPC Assistant Director Ken Yunker, "acquisitions" may be necessary in regard to the substitution and County Grounds.

"It's impossible to do everything within the right-of-way, and improved safety and access will determine that," he said. "With the County Grounds — between where Swan Boulevard crosses over US 45 to Watertown Plank Road — there may be strips of land adjacent to the freeway purchased to improve access."

Also, CASH's Schuld reiterated the "lack of a funding source" in regard to recent ideas such as tolls or the doubling of license fees.

"Both of those went over like a flat tire," she said, "and it's time to act — it's time for SEWRPC to listen to the public. It would take a huge tax increase to fund this plan...the freeways need work but not expansion."

Also, Wauwatosa resident Rosemary Wehnes of the Sierra Club cited freeways as a "top cause" of sprawl.

"There's an environmental cost of highways, and 80 percent of cancer-causing agents are from mobile sources such as cars and trucks," said Wehnes. "We're losing more tax base in Wauwatosa, and this plan would increase the barriers between the east and west sides of the city."

Wehnes added that cities such as Kenosha "have seen an infusion of money into their downtown areas with the implementation of commuter rail."

Milwaukee County Supervisor Jim "Luigi" Schmitt (26th District) — in attendance last week — characterized the SEWRPC plan as, "If you build it, they will come.

"If we don't increase the capacity of the freeways, then what will happen with congestion?" he asked rhetorically. "This is my first time of hearing that the state DIF's substation will be taken, though."

Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker, Waukesha County Executive Dan Feeley and Racine County Executive Jean Jacobi have expressed their support for the SEWRPC proposal, which may proceed without formal approval by respective county boards. However, SEWRPC official Yunker stated that a "consensus" is desired by the organization.

"We want a final plan which will be endorsed by the county boards," he said.

The Milwaukee County Board is expected to address the matter in January.

SEWRPC — established in 1960 as the official area-wide planning agency for the southeastern region of the state — serves the seven counties of Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha. The Commission consists of 21 members from each of the seven member counties.

Also included on the aforementioned Web site: "The Commission was created to provide the basic information and planning services necessary to solve problems which transcend the corporate boundaries and fiscal capabilities of the local units of government comprising the Southeastern Wisconsin Region."

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The Highways That Ate Milwaukee!

Tempers flare over a road-heavy transportation plan

By Doug Hissom
doug@shepherd-express.com

was a document detailing plans for the metro-area interstate system. The plans call for the system that will be built with new on- and off-ramps, and more importantly, 127 miles of additional lanes—where existing four-lane sections will be six lanes, and six lanes, eight.

All that new concrete will cost about $6.2 billion, enough tax dollars to build more than 15 Miller Parks.

Not only that, the project would destroy 216 homes and 34 other buildings, swallowing up 686 acres for more freeways and taking more than $160 million in property off the tax rolls. Lanes would be added in all the major counties, including taking 1.9% from six to eight lanes all the way to the state line. Homes would be torn down in the most urban areas fitting the interstate—177 in Milwaukee County, along with 20 businesses.

The purpose is to reduce freeway congestion and commuter times, say planners with the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), which was commissioned to do the study by the state Department of Transportation. The plan's anticipated results? Commute times would be five minutes less to Waukesha from downtown Milwaukee, and freeway congestion would be about the same as it is now in 20 years. And that's with a corresponding 70% increase in expanding mass transit offerings. A dollar figure for that has yet to be figured out.

The Story Hill perspective can be seen in the "No freeway expansion/No double-deck" signs that have sprouted on the neighborhood's well-kept lawns—referring to part of the planning the freeway through the narrow gap between two veterans' cemeteries just west of Miller Park.

The neighborhood lies in one of the more building-invasive areas of the plan. It also is home to a state representative, an alderman, a district attorney and several otherwise "connected" citizens.

A new on-ramp near the neighborhood would add the noise of vehicles speeding up into traffic while now the sound is pretty much a constant rumble of road noise, says Schultz. The elevated section of the freeway would only add to the din, while also bringing small dirt and litter into the homes and yards.

"And I have enough fine landscape matter to clean up now, thank you," Schultz says. She also cites health concerns. A study in Atlanta noted a correlation between freeway location and asthma cases.

In the process of looking into the project, how it was put together and how it's being pushed to the public, Schultz, a former journalist, has turned the Story Hill Neighborhood Association's "webteam" into the Woodward and Bernstein of the freeway expansion plan. The group has found that:

- Lawmakers like former Assembly Speaker Scott Jensen, who supports the plan, received no calls or letters to sway him one way or the other, but he did get $20,000 in campaign funds from roadbuilders.
- New Speaker John Ertel also supports the plan, but admits he received no public input to make a decision either way.
- SEWRPC is downplaying the cost of maintenance for the expanded freeway, which would mean an extra $1.8 million in taxes each year.
- SEWRPC cannot provide any connection

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between accidents on the freeway and its
design.

No estimate has been provided on how much it will cost to move power
lines along the corridor.

SEWRPC has not talked to the
National Cemetery Administration
about a plan to hang a portion of the
freeway over the Miller Park-area grave-
yards.

Opinion surveys and copies of the plan were not available in Spanish or
Wirzville-language versions, thus pre-
venting affected residents from partic-
ipating.

WE Energies may not be compensat-
ed for removed utilities and will likely pay
the cost on a take-or-pay basis.

SEWRPC has refused to release a list
of 40,000 to 50,000 residents who were
reportedly sent a survey. SEWRPC Execu-
tive Director Phil Evenson says the list
is owned by the survey company, A.D. Data, and is not a public record.

SEWRPC spent $70,000 for public-
relations consultants to sway public
opinion for the project—while SEWRPC,
was surveying the public. One of the
firms also went over the survey to smooth over concerns and advised the
commission to keep any mention of
the project's cost out of the question-
naire. SEWRPC officials say cost wasn't
as important as residents' attitudes about the proposed freeway system.

The Peace

While CA$H has
emerged this year as the
main citizens opponent of
freeway expansion, other voices include
Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist and
various planners who suggest the SEWRPC
plan is shortsighted or overstated.

Clarity city officials are concerned that
freeway expansion causes sprawl—
a point conceded by nearly every plan-
ner on the planet, except for SEWRPC's
now. And if the 1970s and early 1980s,
the only state lawmakers prioritizing
this were then-Sen. John Norquist and
Rep. Morl MacAulay, who later became a
state senator.

The two combined to form an anti-freeway coalition that was sur-
prisingly the first to help stop the stadi-
um freeway for good at National Avenue.
Lee helped slow the A

of Ozaukee County by

Lee summed up his philosophy in a 1998 e-
mail to longtime SEWRPC board mem-
ber Richard W. Cutler, whose book,
Greater Milwaukee's Growing Pains, 1950-
2000: An Insider's View, provides a

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$22,893 2000 Crown Victoria for former staff-turned-
SEWRPC consultant Kurt Buehler.
The new building, bought for $3.3 million, also was
sold to the commission from a contractor that does
work for SEWRPC. The commission moved from
the old Waukesha County Courthouse.

"The entire arrangement is another sweet deal for
this network of consultants and contractors with SEWRPC
at the center," says Rowe.

Each of the seven counties has three representatives on
the commission's board, serving six-year terms. It's
been noted that no one, Waukesha County is
white, is a minority, and only three women sit on the board.

A typical length of service for members is about 9.25 years, with one
commissioner holding a 30-year tenure. Little turnover
leads to fewer innovative ideas and, with an all-white
makeup, a lack of understanding of minority needs in
the area, which is largely the City of Milwaukee.

"Is it any surprise that what's evolved in the region
defies actuality?" asks Rowe.

Evenson correctly notes that the make-up of the com-
munity is determined by the commissions from each coun-
ty boards and the governor. He says that SEWRPC's
staff is too large to have more-representative
appointments, but he views them as somewhat misleading, and calls it presumptuous.

"I've never been so turned off by the latest
round of scrutiny."

"I find it curious the mayor didn't raise these same
questions when we voted on the "Build our First" Freeway," Evenson observes about the now-destructed
freeway north of downtown, where the land will
be developed in the coming years.

Milwaukee County Supervisor Dan Dilber, who's
been on the commission since 1993, adds "more
minorities would be advantageous" and points out that
SEWRPC has set up minority internship programs.

Dilber adds that the new building is much more effi-
cient for the staff and gives the commission ownership
equity instead of just paying rent. He also says buying
the cars like SEWRPC does is easier for SEWRPC than
state fleet purchases, as Rowe suggests.

Despite representing parts of the city, Dilber says
Milwaukee has to remember that seven counties are
involved in the commission.

Norquist has a consistent history of not being the
best buddy to the commission—He had some say about
it in the state legislature. Between 1979 and 1983
Norquist tried several times to reduce the number of City
Continued from Page C-35

County quicker?" he asks. "Why is SEWRPC looking at developing urban areas on the periphery?"

The map also challenges the plan’s cost and, more importantly, who’s going to pay for it. One indication of state DOT thinking came in late November when it pitched an idea to double the cost of auto registration to $90. It fell flat immediately. Some county officials say they’re been told that Gov.-elect Jim Doyle will take resources from road projects in other parts of the state to go towards freeways around Milwaukee.

The Court of Public Opinion

Another area of contention is in the court of public opinion. Opponents point to the turnout at the 11 public hearings on the plan to date 222 spoke and wrote in a single day at the State Fair, and 46 supported it. The Sierra Club also canvassed for viewpoints and sent in 1,408 postcards opposing highway expansion.

SEWRPC stands by its survey, which was returned by 15,000 area residents, overwhelmingly in support of additional freeway lanes and rebuilding the system to modern standards. But CASH and Milwaukee city officials quickly point out that no mention of price was included, leading to a number of lingering questions about the process from city analysts and residents.

Shepherd Express asked SEWRPC’s top directors, Phil Evenson and Ken Yunker, to explain it to us. Since the Marquette Interchange rebuilding has been approved, it makes sense to look at the whole system, which is coming to an end to its 35-year lifespan, they say.

"This is absolutely the best plan," says SEWRPC Executive Director Evenson. "We’ve looked at all the alternatives, and the fact of the matter is that the freeway system needs to be rebuilt."

In response to criticism that this is simply a car plan and not a mass transit plan, Assistant Director Yunker notes that an expected increase of 70% in mass transit is already factored in.

Yunker says SEWRPC is already implementing some of the transit plans, including a study of a high-speed rail connection from Racine to Chicago, more bus routes in Ozaukee and Waukesha counties and some rail between Milwaukee and Madison.

"It’s not fair to say we just looked at roads," Yunker says. "Widening is the measure of last resort," he adds, noting that Portland and Denver—two cities known for good mass transit—are also considering widening their freeway lanes.

And Evenson issues a reminder that this is just a plan—and nothing ever goes as planned.

"Will all the highway projects planned here happen? No," Evenson explains. "But one way or the other, we’re going to be spending billions of dollars doing it."

However, some city officials, like long-range planner Mike Maitre, say from experience that SEWRPC’s road plans tend to be implemented more often than not.

While the City of Milwaukee is vehemently opposed to lane widening, Yunker notes that the rest of the plan—supported by the Milwaukee Common Council—will still cost $5.5 billion and displace homes. The breakdown is like this.

Shovel 678 US billion to improve the freeways to so-called modern design standards, which include: taking out left-lane off- and on-ramps, lengthening off-ramps, creating fewer lanes that end in traffic, forcing cars to switch from one lane to the next and adding shoulders to both sides of the freeway. Of that, $1.5 billion is earmarked for rebuilding the Marquette Interchange.

The additional 127 miles of lanes will cost about $750 million. Maitre notes that the Marquette Interchange, if rebuilt to new design standards, still will have 11 more miles of freeway lanes than it does now—a 50% increase.

"If we’re going to have to pay to build it right again," offers Evenson, "Story Hill neighbors’ questions about the elevated freeway could be premature."

Evenson adds, since final design won’t be done until the engineering starts. "We’re going to improve the current situation," he adds. "But this concern is that alternative solutions were not adequately studied or mentioned in the SEWRPC plan.

Scott Bernstein, president of the Chicago-Based Center for Neighborhood Technology, agrees that SEWRPC could have done more, commenting, "Nobody ever builds their way out of their own creation."

Evenson and Yunker, however, staunchly defend the plan’s public input process, citing public hearings along the way. As for questions about the allegedly smoothed-over survey, "It was a pretty simple and pretty straightforward survey," says Evenson. "And there isn’t a freeway driver around that doesn’t know rebuilding freeways doesn’t cost a lot of money."

An Opposition Groundswell

The opposition isn’t coming from affected residents and City Hall. Even the American Civil Liberties Union has weighed in, considering legal action on behalf of poorer residents who might not have a say in the plan.

The state Department of Natural Resources also is opposed to more lanes, expressing concerns about air pollution, since southeast Wisconsin is already under air quality constrains. But concerns about increased air pollution should be minimal, Yunker suggests, since advancements in auto technology should level off emissions. And the air quality would be the same with or without a wider freeway, since the number of vehicles miles traveled will be the same.

State Rep. Jon Richards (D-Milwaukee), who questions the cost and scope of the plan, says he will introduce a bill calling for a referendum on expanding freeway lanes, similar to past referendums supported by state Rep. Jeff Stone (R-Greenfield) and then-state Rep. Scott Walker (R-Wauwatosa) on light rail.

For its part, CASH doesn’t have an alternative to what SEWRPC and the state DOT are talking about. Schludt adds, "We’re working on the improvements to the highway system; we’re saying, ‘Start over and do something we can afford.’ Sometimes you can’t have the best. And that seems to echo among many opponents.

The decision now rests with the Milwaukee County Board’s transportation committee, says he expects a vote by the board in January. He also sat on the SEWRPC advisory committee that put the plan together and gives it the seal of approval.

"If we do not widen the freeway, we’ll be cutting ourselves off from economic development in the region," White argues.

As for the hardship for some of those living near the highway, Schludt points to what I-43 did to a substantial portion of African-American-run businesses in the city when it was built—businesses that still haven’t been recovered.

White says he didn’t like it at the time, but sees the overall benefit now: "How can you say the neighborhood’s concerns outweigh those of the region? Go out to the airport, those folks make sacrifices all the time."

Richards, a minority African American, adds this when confronted with arguments that the freeway hurts opportunities for black and minority groups for whites who live in cities where housing is limited for blacks: "We have the highest African-American unemployment rate in the country," White says. "And it’s not because we have a difficult time buying a house in the suburb."
Transportation panel rejects four major projects

By Jeremy Harrell
Daily Reporter Staff
Dec. 17, 2002

Geographic tensions boiled over Tuesday as out-state lawmakers unsuccessfully fought for major road projects near Green Bay and Prairie du Chien.

"When (my constituents) see a project the size of the Marquette Interchange knock us out of the ballgame once again, they're going to go nuts," said state Rep. Phil Montgomery, R-Ashwaubenon, a member of the Transportation Project Commission at meeting in the state Capitol. "Somebody in this room says 'Forward,' but today we went backwards. I'm extremely upset."

Shortly after, Montgomery left the meeting in frustration. His frustration centered on the state Department of Transportation's funding shortage, which kept the TPC from enunciating any of the four major projects up for consideration, including a $225 million overhaul of Highway 41 in Brown County.

The TPC meets every two years to determine the slate of major projects around the state. Construction on the projects typically starts within six years of approval.

WisDOT Secretary Tom Carlson told the commission members that, by law, the state has to have a funding scheme in place before the panel can approve major projects.

In June, WisDOT reported that there was a sliver of funding available, but Carlson said that by December the money had evaporated because of cost overruns on major projects now under way and because the state expected to receive less federal assistance for transportation projects.

"All four candidates are worthy projects," he said. "In order to recommend projects, funds must be available to begin construction in six years. That makes it difficult, if not impossible, to recommend these projects."

Montgomery and Sen. Dave Hansen, D-Green Bay, pointed a finger at southeastern Wisconsin, which is awaiting a $1 billion reconstruction of the Marquette Interchange in Milwaukee. Hansen also singled out the southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's preliminary $6.2 billion proposal to rebuild regional freeways - a plan that includes the Marquette project.

"I have a problem with the southeast expansion," Hansen said. "That would cover the four projects under consideration Tuesday."

Carlson said that WisDOT's major projects draw on a separate account from the southeast freeways and therefore aren't in any competition for funding.

"It has no impact on funding for the rest of the state," Carlson said. "The Marquette Interchange does not impact the decisions we're making today."

Second opinion

Montgomery disagreed and said the state has to do a better job of capturing federal funds. He said he refused to believe WisDOT's funding shortage for the Marquette had no relation to WisDOT's recommendation not to enunciate the $225 million Highway 41 project or a $205 million overhaul of Highways 41 and 26 in the Fox Valley.

"The idea that the Marquette Interchange is not going to affect things down the road is not very plausible," Montgomery said.

He proposed that the TPC enunciate the four projects and raise the funding cap that WisDOT officials said prevented the panel from giving the projects a green light. That motion failed on a 6-4 vote.

The failed vote also meant there was no action on a $41 million project in Vernon County and a $29.2 million job in Grant County.

But the road is not closed to the four major projects. The last time the TPC decided not to enunciate a project, the Legislature went ahead and authorized it, said Mark Wolfgram, WisDOT program development and analysis chief.

Sen. Dale Schultz, R-Richland Center, who supported Montgomery's proposal, said the TPC should therefore tell the Legislature what the priority list is for major projects.

"What we're doing now isn't preventing the Legislature from enunciating projects," he said. "But they're not going to know which projects to enunciate if we don't tell them. It seems to me there's nothing fiscally impossible to state what we believe."

Because the TPC did not approve any of the projects, the jobs go back into the planning process for the panel's approval in 2004, assuming the Legislature doesn't give them the go-ahead,

Schultz said WisDOT would have to retrace its steps and spend more money to duplicate its work.

"I can't imagine going back to my constituents and saying we're starting this process all over again," he said.

Sharing Montgomery's frustration, Schultz called for an audit of the major programs to find out how the cost overruns occurred.

"We're going to get to the bottom of this," he said. "We're ignoring our responsibility."

Carlson and Gov. Scott McCallum, however, said the TPC could approve the same projects in 2004 and still have construction begin by 2009.
Marquette toll way proposed by nonprofit policy group

Officials differ on ways to fund multibillion-dollar project

By DENNIS A. SHOOK
Senior Staff Writer

WAUKESHA — Should the state pay for the reconstruction of the Marquette interchange by installing an electronic toll system, like a high-tech version of the toll roads in Illinois? That is a proposal unveiled today by the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute Inc.

That is a proposal unveiled today by the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute Inc.

In a report titled "Rebuilding the Marquette Interchange Via A Public-Private Partnership," the WPRI claims that as much as $1.5 billion could be made available to help pay for the impending rebuilding if such private funds are used.

But Waukesha County Executive Daniel Finley, who has been on a panel of southeastern Wisconsin leaders considering a plan to rebuild the region's freeway system, was not an enthusiastic supporter after being briefed by WPRI on the plan.

"The funding proposal has to come from the state. We're not proposing how to fund it," said Finley, who is a member of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Freeway Advisory Committee. That group has recommended a plan to rebuild the interchange and freeway developed by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

"What I want for the region is to have funding equity," he said.

Finley said local toll charges would hit southeastern Wisconsin drivers harder than others.

"When we fund a freeway rebuild near Eau Claire, everybody in the state pays for it," he said. "That would be the wrong way.

Finley said the state government has assured area leaders that federal funds will be available for the project. Gov. Scott McCalum said the project will qualify for federal funds under the government's "major projects" program.

But Milwaukee leaders have challenged those claims, in light of a struggling national economy and possible costs of a war in Iraq. They claimed the state will need to raise the gasoline tax to pay for the project and they argue planners should acknowledge what tax hikes will be necessary.

Finding the funding

WPRI President James Miller said, "The technology already exists to allow this to happen."

He added, "Such a plan would mean up to 10 percent of the project would be funded by Illinois drivers."

Miller said Milwaukee area drivers would not be hit as hard by the tolls because they would know how to use side streets to avoid the interchange.

The report, prepared by Robert Poole Jr. and Kevin SooHoo, states, "Wisconsin residents are reported to save more than 40 percent of in-state toll revenues. This proposal attempts to turn the tables by collecting $17 (million) to $21 million each year from out-of-state users of the Marquette."

The study claims the state is unprepared to rebuild the interchange at a projected cost of $1.5 billion while it faces a multi-billion-dollar deficit and a hole-warm economy.

"There is very little prospect of obtaining significant 'extra federal aid for this very large project,'" the report said. "And any significant reallocation of existing federal dollars from other Wisconsin projects that would lead the Marquette" would meet certain opposition."

The study said such toll systems are in operation in California, Texas and Virginia.

"Large urban toll projects in excess of $1 billion are in operation or under construction in Melbourne, Paris and Toronto," the study states. "These projects, in particular, make use of fully automated tolling systems to generate revenue to pay for the facilities. These automated tolling systems are designed from the outset without any toll booths. All tolls are collected electronically at normal highway speeds, either via a dashboard-mounted transponder (for regular users) or via license-plate imaging (for occasional users)."

"The study proposes "the entire reconstruction project could be funded via a toll revenue bond issue. A baseline toll revenue stream of $160 million per year will support bonds in excess of the $1.5 billion project cost." This revenue number is based on rush-hour bridge tolls of $2 for cars and $10 for trucks, comparable to tolls on major bridges nationwide."

The study assumes a 30 percent reduced rates during off-peak times on weekends and holidays. There is also a proposal to rebate fuel taxes for miles driven on the tolled Marquette to users of the interchange to avoid concerns about "double taxation."

The WPRI is a Milwaukee-based nonprofit institute established to study public-policy issues, it is not an arm of any government.

Plan set to start

The overall project cost is $2.85 billion, of which about $1.5 billion will be invested in rebuilding the Marquette interchange.

That interchange will be the first project done as it is the heart of the system, based on the recommendations by the state Department of Transportation and SEWRPC.

That interchange work is proceeding along the lines of starting the reconstruction in 2004 and is projected to take four years to complete. The work along the entire region will proceed outward in most directions once that central hub is finished.

Between 2001 and 2010, 113 miles of the freeway are to be reconstructed.

That is the phase most likely to include the controversial six-mile stretch between the zoo and Marquette interchanges. Another 96 miles of work is coming between 2011 and 2020, with another 56 miles of reconstruction from 2021 to 2030.

Miller said even if there is response to opposition to the toll concept, the plan will "at least focus the discussion on financing."

SooHoo, who helped prepare the report, is a longtime friend of Milwaukee Mayor Norquist. Norquist has opposed much of the freeway rebuilding plan, saying it contributes to white flight from the city and will take large tracts of land off of the Milwaukee tax rolls.

Six of the seven counties have had their county boards vote in favor of the plan. A vote by Milwaukee County has not yet been scheduled.
Doubling license plate fees rejected
DOT's plan to finance road work blasted

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
November 20, 2002

BY LARRY SANDLER
lsandler@journalsentinel.com

Wisconsin's incoming and outgoing governors have brushed a proposal to double license plate fees to help pay for rebuilding Milwaukee-area freeways, sending the state Department of Transportation back to draw up a budget without the increase.

Last week, the department proposed boosting annual vehicle registration fees from $45 to $90, effective Jan. 1, 2004, to raise $428 million in the 2003-'04 budget.

But Governor-elect Jim Doyle says it's "not very likely" he would back that increase, Doyle spokesman Thad Nation said Tuesday.

And departing Gov. Scott McCallum announced he had rejected the department's budget request and ordered transportation officials to find a way around the fee increase.

Acting Transportation Secretary Tom Carlisle responded with a two-sentence written statement:

"Gov. McCallum has asked the department to rework its 2003-04 biennial budget request. We will start that process immediately and give careful consideration to alternative ways to address the significant transportation needs that exist throughout the state."

Ruling out the fee increase closes off one option for the state to pay for reconstruction of the Marquette Interchange in downtown Milwaukee. Preliminary work is to start late next year on the four-year job.

But the state has set aside only $380 million of the $760 million to $860 million it needs to rebuild the crossroads of I-94, I-43 and I-794. The budget request would have allowed the state to borrow the rest of the money it needs, raising revenue from the fee increase to pay off both those bonds and future borrowing for other Milwaukee-area freeway work.

The interchange project would be the first step in rebuilding all of the area's aging freeways, a 30-year task that would cost $6.25 billion, under a Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission study committee's preliminary recommendation to add new lanes. Current gas taxes and license fees wouldn't raise enough to cover that sum.

During the campaign, both Doyle, a Democrat, and McCallum, a Republican, opposed raising gas taxes and supported seeking more federal aid for the freeway work. Doyle also opposed raising license fees, while McCallum refused to take a stand.

Doyle has said he would cut other road projects if Congress didn't come through with more aid. Carlisle said last week he was trying to avoid that option, based on legislative opposition.

News of the fee increase's rejection cheered freeway critics. Mayor John O. Norquist revived his call to rebuild the interchange in its current form, for about $450 million. And Citizens Allied for Safe Highways, a coalition of neighborhood groups, said the planning commission should start over on its freeway plans.

"This time, maybe they ought to look at what citizens want and what the state can afford, instead of creating a welfare program for the road-building lobby," said Robert Trimmier, co-chairman of the coalition.

But the Transportation Development Association, representing both road-builders and other transportation interests, said the registration fee would be $129 — nearly triple its current level — if it had kept up with inflation.

Because the inflation-adjusted cost of driving has been facing while travel has been increasing, authorities should boost revenue to maintain and improve roads and public transit, "so that Wisconsin can continue to foster economic growth and safe personal mobility," said Robert Cook, executive director of the association.

Agency chiefs appointed by McCallum are submitting budget requests because Doyle must present a 2003-'04 budget to the Legislature in February, after taking office in January. McCallum plans to reject any requests seeking fee increases, rather than leave them for Doyle, in light of the state's fiscal crisis, McCallum spokesman Tim Rhyo said.

Wisconsin is facing a budget deficit of $2.8 billion for the two-year period that begins July 1, because projected spending outpaces current revenue. That figure does not include a request for an additional $643 million from the Department of Health and Family Services to pay for medical assistance programs.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.
Group wants new SEWRPC plan

By Jeremy Harrell
Daily Reporter Staff

Nov. 19, 2002

A citizen group on Monday asked the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to go back to square one with its plan to overhaul freeways in the Milwaukee area.

The request came on the heels of Gov. Scott McCallum’s recent rejection of a proposal to increase vehicle registration fees. Last week, the state Department of Transportation submitted a budget request that would raise $428 million over two years by increasing registration and other fees to start plugging a hole in a projected $5 billion transportation budget deficit.

Heading his campaign’s pledge of no new taxes and fees, McCallum quickly dismissed the idea, and a group opposed to a $6.2 billion reconstruction of freeways in southeast Wisconsin said the governor’s move proves there’s not going to be money to make the project work.

“[It’s the first time (WisDOT) proposed a funding mechanism, and it bombed],” said Gretchen Schudt, co-chairperson of the Milwaukee-based Citizens Allied for Safe Highways, referring to opposition from McCallum and state lawmakers in both parties.

Though the new state budget must pass through Gov.-elect Jim Doyle, she said McCallum’s rejection is “significant” because he’s been an outspoken proponent of SEWRPC’s freeway plan. With the funding proposal getting a cool reception at the state Capitol, Schudt said SEWRPC should go back to the beginning of the planning process and look at more inexpensive options.

“We’re saying start over,” she said. “We know that the useful life of the freeway is coming to an end. But there’s got to be a more moderate plan.”

Kenneth Yunker, SEWRPC’s assistant director, said there’s no need for the commission to start anew. SEWRPC has laid out three plans—ranging from a $3.5 billion proposal to replace the freeway in its place to a $6.2 billion proposal to make design modifications and widen 127 miles of freeway, primarily in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties.

“In terms of starting over, the alternatives are all there,” Yunker said. “Elected officials can pick whatever they want.”

Money search

It’s also not up to SEWRPC to figure out where the money needs to come from, said Bob Cook, executive director of the Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin, which has a seat on SEWRPC’s advisory board.

“If they went back to start over, their recommendations wouldn’t change,” he said. “It’s not SEWRPC’s obligation to find funding, it’s the DOT’s.”

Schudt said her organization supports a proposal that would fall somewhere between the $3.5 billion plan and a $5.5 billion plan that would make design upgrades. More short-term fixes and other safety measures are necessary, but there’s still no evidence the state can pay for anything, she said.

“If there’s no money, I don’t know they can even do a replace-in-kind,” Schudt said.

But CASH and others opposed to SEWRPC’s larger plans overlook a key element in the debate, Yunker said. Making design upgrades will cost roughly $2 billion, $600 million of which cover improvements on the Marquette Interchange reconstruction in Milwaukee, he said.

No one has expressed opposition to that project, and many of the same vehicles that pass through the Marquette Interchange also funnel through the Zoo and Mitchell interchanges in Milwaukee, Yunker said. It would be odd to make one set of upgrades to the Marquette and not make them on other key segments of the southeast freeway system, he said.

“There’s nobody who’s come out to say the Marquette Interchange is too much,” Yunker said. “Those are the bulk of the design improvements. You have the same traffic going through the Zoo interchange and the Mitchell Interchange.”

Setting priorities

Agreeing somewhat with Schudt, he said the bigger picture for the freeways in southeast Wisconsin is WisDOT’s budget deficit.

The difference between the $5.5 billion and $6.2 billion plans is “only incremental,” he said, and either option will require money the state hasn’t right now, and that includes funding for the Marquette project.

“The funding is going to have to be found in the budget,” Yunker said. “You’ve got to rebuild the Marquette. If you don’t keep that on schedule, you’re going to need to post weight limits or even close some segments. That’s not going to change.”

Jeff Stone, chairman of the Assembly Transportation Committee, said it’s critical that government not lose sight of transportation funding as the governor and Legislature sort out the state’s $3.5 billion budget deficit. State government could raid the transportation fund to offset the imbalance, but, if anything, it should work the other way, he said.

In the meantime, fighting over one portion of the larger transportation debate clouds the larger discussion that needs to happen, Stone said. The state’s mobility network needs to keep chugging ahead or the economy could drag to a halt, he said.

“I’m concerned that this attitude of ‘let’s just not do anything’ could jeopardize the economy,” Stone said. “We need to get a plan (statewide) that’s generally accepted so we’re not fighting over pieces of a pie. My way of thinking is that if we don’t develop good transportation over the next 10 years, it will be the death knell for the Wisconsin economy.”

Jeremy Harrell can be reached at 608-260-8370 or by email.
The rejection of the proposed increase of license plate fees from $45 to $90 is seemingly enough to make a hero of Gov. Scott McCallum just as he is about to leave office. But it also makes one wonder what road McCallum would have taken us down if he was serious about rebuilding the Marquette interchange and the interstate system in southeastern Wisconsin.

McCallum has been an outspoken proponent of the project. Several months ago he signed a bill that mandates that the state engineer a rebuild of the east-west corridor of Interstate 94 from six to eight lanes, a project that is clearly needed. The price tag will be $6.2 billion for the project to rebuild 127 miles of freeway in the seven-county area covered by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

Some groups opposed to the freeway project have taken the opportunity to try to detour the entire plan, which could lead to significant future problems as Waukesha County continues to grow.

One such group is composed of residents near the Story Hill neighborhood, where the freeway widening will lead to a slightly elevated road bed profile.

Calling themselves Citizens Allied for Sane Highways—CASH—the group said Milwaukee County and state leaders ought to vote against the SEWRPC plan because it will require some revenue. The Sierra Club of Wisconsin has also actively opposed the project, calling for an emphasis on commuter rail, which would also bring additional costs to taxpayers.

But those groups are not facing the realities of transportation in the region.

And as painful as it will be, the costs of the system expansion will have to be borne somehow, somewhere, at some time by somebody. As the system begins to crumble and show its weaknesses, daily, reasonable leaders know there is no other option.

Needless to say the pressure should be on the state's congressional delegation to push for as much federal funding as possible.

We are certain this project is necessary, after seeing detailed future traffic projections by SEWRPC and the state Department of Transportation. Anybody living in Waukesha County has more than enough anecdotal proof of that need as well.

So the challenge will be how to pay for it. If a hike in license plate fees is not the answer, maybe an addition to the gas tax is the way to go.

Another alternative that could avoid raising taxes would be to simply delay other projects throughout the state. Perhaps an honest evaluation of that option is also in order.

But build this system we must. And McCallum is hardly facing the reality of the situation by rejecting one funding source without suggesting an alternative to pave the way.
Good freeway system vital to Wisconsin’s development

State will lose jobs and businesses if transportation system fails to meet and sustain needs

Last Updated: Nov. 3, 2002

Wisconsin’s business and labor markets took another blow last month when Rayovac Corp. announced it will cut 290 jobs when it closes its Madison packaging plant and Middleton distribution center.

Rayovac officials admitted that good access to transportation was a factor in its decision to move these operations to Illinois.

Rayovac is another disheartening example of why enhancing southeastern Wisconsin’s freeway system is essential to Wisconsin business and industry. Economic stability and development in our state is largely dependent on reliable and safe transportation.

Without a transportation system that adequately sustains and meets our growing needs, Wisconsin stands to lose millions of dollars in existing and new business opportunities. Thousands of much-needed jobs will go to another state and our tax base will shrink if we don’t step up and build a freeway system that addresses Wisconsin’s transportation needs.

The good news is that Wisconsin doesn’t have to continue to lose or miss out on business opportunities.

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has developed a preliminary plan to rebuild the existing transportation system in southeastern Wisconsin to reduce traffic congestion and to make it more reliable and safe. The project is one major component to addressing Wisconsin’s transportation concerns.

We cannot live by highways alone. This is why SEWRPC’s analysis assumes we will significantly expand public transit and will have some form of rail system. The bottom line is, even with other transportation elements, we are still facing major increases in congestion on our roadways.

The SEWRPC plan would provide relief for the average Wisconsin worker who experienced a 10% increase in commute time from 1990 to 2000. Manageable commute times for the urban work force must be maintained. The freeway reconstruction and expansion is expected to relieve more than 50% of the expected freeway congestion, and 40% of expected severe congestion.

Southeastern Wisconsin’s major metropolitan business sectors will enjoy increasing numbers of new skilled employees, clients and general productivity when highway commute times are addressed and remedied.

We also cannot overlook the economic impact of the transportation system on Wisconsin’s thriving tourism industry by keeping freeways clear and safe, and providing ease of access to metropolitan and rural businesses.

An improved system will further strengthen our transportation industry by sustaining manageable costs and reliable roadways, and the construction will support thousands of skilled building and construction laborers. The business and employment opportunities abound with this project.

In these trying times for business and industry in Wisconsin, our leaders need to focus on investments that will benefit our economy. SEWRPC’s plan to upgrade our transportation system is one of the primary catalysts for allowing that to happen.

The rebuilding of the southeastern Wisconsin freeway system will sustain our existing businesses and offer growth opportunities. An updated transportation system is necessary to remain productive and competitive in an evolving marketplace.

I encourage every Wisconsin business owner to support the SEWRPC plan to address our transportation system needs.

Frank Becerra is owner of BITS and Associates LLC, an accounting, tax preparation and consulting business in Milwaukee.
Transportation Needs: Driving Wisconsin's Economy

Wisconsin faces a $500 million annual deficit to fund growing needs in transportation across all modes. Over the next 20 years, the state will need to make major investments in the transportation system in order to sustain and grow economic activity as well as provide a safe and efficient system for its residents.

The biggest, and most immediate, challenge facing Wisconsin's transportation system is the rebuilding of the Southeast Wisconsin freeway system. Reconstruction of this gateway is essential for the economy of Southeast Wisconsin and the state. It will cost approximately $5 billion dollars. The first phase, reconstructing the Marquette Interchange, will cost nearly $1 billion alone. The interchange is literally crumbling. Wisconsin's Department of Transportation has indicated that it will cost $2 million to $3 million per year to maintain the current structure. The 2001-2003 budget created a separate appropriation to fund the Marquette and subsequent Southeast freeway reconstruction. That appropriation has a base funding level of only $45 million annually. This represents only 20 percent of the cost of the Marquette over the four-year life of the project. Unless new funding is provided for the Marquette Interchange, all other transportation programs are at risk.

The State Highway Rehabilitation Program is the primary program serving the state's communities. It is funded at $625 million annually. This program replaces pavements and bridges, provides safety improvements, and upgrades obsolete roads to accommodate changes in an area's economy. Currently, about 30% of state highway pavements and 5% of bridges statewide need to be improved using rehabilitation funds. At the current funding level, approximately 8,500 miles of state highway deterioration will be neglected. The Federal Highway Administration estimates that 39% of accidents could be avoided through roadway improvements.

The State Major Highway Program is the primary program for reducing congestion. Approximately $143 million is allocated for this program each year. WisDOT estimates that the program requires an additional $50 million each year through 2010 to fund Major Highway projects already approved by the legislature. An additional $42 million in projects have been excluded from the plan for lack of resources. Congestion is no longer just an inconvenience. It has significant environmental and economic implications as well. A recent study showed that congestion in the Milwaukee area wastes $4 million gallons of fuel and $390 million dollars each year.

Any local official will tell you that the road infrastructure needs in his or her community far outpace the ability to fund them. Conservative estimates place those needs at $75 million annually. The Local Road Improvement program currently provides $42 million for capital improvements with the costs shared between state and local governments. Without a dedicated funding source for local roads, there will continue to be additional pressure on property taxes.

It is not only our state highway and road system that need additional funding. Wisconsin is currently working with eight other Midwestern states to establish a high-speed rail network. High-speed rail in Wisconsin will cost approximately $636 million. The federal government will likely fund 80%, leaving Wisconsin with a state share of $125 million. The implementation of high-speed rail would allow for quick and hassle-free connections between the state and with other major Midwestern cities.

Commercial rail systems can provide congestion relief during peak travel periods as well as integrate feeder bus service to create regional transportation systems. There are two major systems currently being evaluated, Southeast Wisconsin and Dane County. Initial costs for commercial rail in Southeast Wisconsin are estimated to be between $150 million and $225 million. Dane County will cost approximately $188 or $240 million if you include costs associated with express bus and park-and-ride service. State and local government will be required to fund 50 percent of the costs of these systems. It is imperative that a funding policy be established to maximize federal funds, including a local government alternative to the property tax.

Existing transit services in Wisconsin must be maintained and improved. Buses in our cities and increasingly shared-ride taxi systems in our smaller communities are needed to continue to provide mobility. This is particularly important as our populations age. As urban areas expand, much of the new job growth is occurring in the outer ring, and communities are finding it difficult to expand transit service to those areas. Transit competes with many other services at the local level for property tax dollars. If we are going to provide viable transit options we must find a way to pay for those improvements.

Aviation and air services must also be enhanced. WisDOT estimates the state is approximately $18 million short of funding required to meet annual airport needs. In Wisconsin, the aviation industry accounts for more than 41,000 jobs and more than $2 billion in economic activity. For local communities, regularly scheduled service at a commercial or general aviation airport capable of handling corporate jets and cargo are critical. Between 1990 and 1995, 72% of the new or expanding manufacturing businesses located within ten miles of a public-use airport able to accommodate corporate jets.

There are significant current and emerging needs for Wisconsin's transportation system that must be addressed to grow our economy and maintain our quality of life. The cost of providing adequate transportation infrastructure for the new century will be enormous, but it is minimal compared to the cost of neglecting our system. $
Freeways here need major renewal or future growth will be at risk

By DAVID F. SCHULZ

No infrastructure decision carries more impact on the future of the Milwaukee area than the debate over the proposed widening of freeways.

At issue: a study by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission requested by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation on how the 270-mile area freeway system should be rebuilt. The study, guided by a high-level committee of elected and appointed officials from the city and suburbs, determined most regional freeways needed complete reconstruction.

But there was another problem. Designed in the 1950's and 1960's, much of the system is obsolete and unsafe by modern standards. The problems? Off-ramps that are too short; lane drops at major interchanges; and, especially, the left-hand freeway-to-freeway ramps of the Marquette, Zoo, Mitchell, Stadium and Hale interchanges.

The study also found large and growing portions of the freeway system are congested. This was forecast to worsen in the future, even with aggressive "smart growth," transit improvements and systems management measures.

So the study recommended widening 127 miles of freeways, most of which are really not in dispute. Most officials endorse widening 108 miles of the system, arguing only about widening the West-West Freeway (I-43) from the Marquette Interchange to the Zoo Interchange, and the North South Freeway (I-43) from the Mitchell Interchange to Silver Spring Drive.

What are the arguments of the widening opponents?

The freeways don't need to be widened.

Well, actually, they do. Freeway congestion on the Milwaukee area system has increased to where almost a quarter of the system is congested, which would almost double by 2020 with no widenings.

What is so bad about congestion? After all, it penalizes those who use cars when they have other choices and who live in low-density sprawl. But it also hurts everyone else who drives, whether they have an alternative or not. It delays trucks and drives up the cost of doing business. Severe congestion produces unpredictable travel times, impacting just-in-time businesses, people going to work or meetings or home for supper, and soccer moms and office workers trying to get their kids around.

In short, congestion harms the economy, costs money and impairs the quality of life in the area.

Even if the freeways need to be widened, it will only increase flight from the city

Despite rhetoric to the contrary, growing congestion is probably causing additional sprawl rather than taming it, according to an article transportation and urban planning with the Journal of Transportation Engineering.

Genevieve Giuliano, a professor at the University of Wisconsin's School of Policy, Planning and Development at the University of Wisconsin, California, has studied the growth of urban decentralization, both in America and elsewhere. She has concluded that causes of sprawl include: rising affluence, societal changes, divisional preferences for single-family homes, industrial restructuring, technological change and global competition. Not freeway congestion.

Opinion surveys show that people choose the suburbs over the city for a variety of reasons, including: pace of life, crowding, crime and safety, racial tensions, jobs and careers, cost of living, schools, and environmental amenities.

With centrifugal forces large and growing, local efforts to contain sprawl by eliminating new highways appear to be a futile battle against a too much additional highway capacity accompanied by a substantial in congestion might well tempt businesses and residents to relocate still further on the periphery.

On the other hand, policies designed to induce more congestion (such as cutting all improvements) may well make life so uncomfortable that residents and businesses will accelerate their outward flight.

Since the Milwaukee area freeway widening plan would simply contain congestion at approximately current levels, rather than substantially reducing it, it appears to have found that balance and would not act as a sprawl accelerator.

Even if the freeways need to be widened and even if widening wouldn't increase flight from the city, there are better, innovative alternatives available, notably rail transit.

Take "yes" for an answer. SEWRPC's freeway study began with very ambitious bus transit and system management elements of the regional transportation plan and then added rail.

The network used in the evaluation of freeway capacity assumes 135 miles of commuter rail lines from downtown Milwaukee to Saukville, West Bend, Oconomowoc and Kenosha, with a connection there to the MCTS line to Chicago. It also includes a 60-mile light rail system, and 40,000 more daily bus-miles of service, a 60% expansion over today's levels.

The study also accounted for the impact of significant system management improvements, including upgrading the freeway traffic management system; peak-hour arterial parking restrictions; engineering enhancements; regional promotion of ride sharing; transit, bicycle and pedestrian movement; telecommuting and work-time rescheduling; development of neighborhood land use plans to facilitate transit, bicycle and pedestrian travel; and a variety of transit system management improvements including signal priority and pre-emption.

Is that innovative enough?

The point is both the transit improvements and the system management efforts were factored into travel demand models before any freeway capacity improvements were introduced. In other words, the forecasts of substantially increased freeway congestion have already accounted for the impact of very ambitious rail and other transit and system management improvements.

Even if the freeways need to be widened, even if widening wouldn't increase flight from the city, and even if no better alternatives are available, there simply aren't the funds to do the work.

Except for anti-car extremists, everyone understands the freeways need to be rebuilt. It would be more expensive to pay for every-more-frequent maintenance, repair and resurfacing, to say nothing of the increasing necessity of emergency repairs. Factor in the costs to the public of disruption caused by partial or total closure of roads during construction, and there's really no argument over the first $3.37 billion.

Continued on Page C-45
And there’s not much argument on modernization. The outdated designs, particularly the left-hand interchanges, cause severe traffic problems both upstream and downstream as vehicles, especially trucks, maneuver over to the left-hand lane, and then back to the right.

The problem is especially serious when people enter the freeway a short distance upstream and need to move left quickly or vice versa. Think about entering I-94 westbound at 84th St. (State Fair Park) and having to weave to the left lane to go south on I-94, a movement so dangerous it is now prohibited in the peak hour. Such problems would be largely solved by modernization, at a cost of $1.15 billion.

Widening the 108 miles not in serious dispute would cost $470 million. The disputed 13 miles, mostly in Milwaukee, would add $220 million, for a total widening cost of $720 million, and program cost of $6.26 billion.

Given construction staging, the cost would be spread out up to 30 years, about $200 million per year, although there would be peaks and valleys in annual funding needs. Nearly a billion dollars is already committed to the Marquette Interchange reconstruction.

But the bottom line is, if the Milwaukee area wants to rebuild its freeways to modern standards, federal, state and local funds totaling $5.55 billion simply must be found.

For 9 million more congested freeways can be widened, adding 50% more lane miles to the system and improving travel conditions substantially.

If the opportunity presented by the freeway reconstruction is not exploited, adding lanes in the future will be prohibitively expensive. In plain English, expensive as it is, the region simply can’t afford not to rebuild and widen the freeways.

If the freeways need to be widened, even if widening wouldn’t increase travel from the city, even if no better alternatives are available, and even if the funds can be found, the negative community and environmental impacts of the proposed widenings are simply too great.

Rebuilding and modernizing the freeway system would require acquisition of 577 acres and demolition of 166 residences, 23 commercial buildings and two institutional buildings. Under law, owners would receive fair market value for their properties and relocation assistance.

Widening 108 miles of freeway almost everyone agrees on would require an additional 35 acres and 14 residences. Widening the 13 miles in dispute would necessitate acquiring 46 acres, 36 homes, eight businesses and an institutional building.

Redesigned freeway reconstruction without the widenings would require about 38 acres of the approximately 273,000 acres of wetlands in the region, while the widenings would consume five more. Un-

freeway congestion doubles in the next twenty years.

Or it can be the smart thing and widen the most congested portions of the freeway system while rebuilding it.

Together with other needed transit and system management improvements, freeway widening would be a bold step toward a sound, vibrant transport system to support economic growth and improve quality of life in the region for the first half of the new century.

Knowing my beloved hometown, the debate is likely to be loud and long. Hopefully, the eventual decision will be wise.

David F. Scholz is executive director of the infrastructure Technology Institute and adjunct professor in the Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering at Northwestern University. He was Milwaukee County executive from 1988-92.

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
September 29, 2002
Be afraid, very afraid, of multi-county planning

Madison could wind up getting shafted like Milwaukee has

Imagine that they tried to modify managed carewords in the context of the term song of "regionalism" — and, as a fallback, ugly social barriers.

Think of this as another lesson. It’s a lesson that the Department of Regional Planning should have learned. What happens now is that it’s hard to say how many people are in favor of regional planning. But it’s hard to say how many are against it.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin’s second city, is reeling from the effects of regional planning. The city is losing residents, and the economy has been hit hard. Some are predicting a population decline of 50% in the next 10 years. The city is considering a tax increase to fund social services.

In other news, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation is studying the possibility of building a new highway between Milwaukee and Madison. The proposed route would cut through the countryside and could have a negative impact on the environment.

Genuine regional planning would foster a more open society. It would address exclusionary zoning in the suburbs that prevents affordable housing by regulating large-lot, single-family housing — not a SEWRPC priority.

It would promote rail alternatives that would facilitate access to jobs and development in suburbs and along corridors. A belief in regional cooperation would have prevented Waukesha County Executive Don Finnegan and state Rep. Scott Jensen from killing light rail for Milwaukee, as they did several years ago.

SEWRPC does not fight for light rail for Milwaukee. It likes highways. Its current $6.25 billion transportation plan has no transit component. It does not address economic development, housing and other planning basics.

Big surprise: that’s what you can get if the planning body is appointed, really reports to no one and just puts the city out of sight, out of mind.

So don’t be fooled if McCalen’s new commission builds in new road usage by taxing downtown Madison for a for-a-few site. SEWRPC just complained a while back about downtown Waukesha (it never would have been single-handed with a Madison address) to exarche Prewauke, to Waukesha County.

Don’t expect the fight against sprawl to be led from a site where there’s a pedestrian, bicycle, bus stop, main street, apartment complex or coffee shop in sight. And certainly don’t expect an emphasis on comprehensive planning with density in mind if the new digs are in a nearly all-white enclave.

SEWRPC’s entire 11 member senior staff is white, as are all 21 commissioners, records show. From their rural, suburban offices, they have designed plans to run new freeway lanes through the city of Milwaukee and tonewline in civic cloisters.

One particularly stunning proposal would make an elevated double-deck freeway bridge over Miller Park at nearby Mills, a premier sports locale that boasts the likes of John Lennon or Jonnie Irion neighborhoods.

Never mind that transitory at SEWRPC’s public hearings ran overwhelmingly against expansion. Or that the Milwaukee Common Council voted 16-1 against any bridge or any new lanes in Milwaukee County Or that Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist opposed all 127 miles of new lanes.

How is SEWRPC handling that public opinion? From “1677-1” to “1000” per person, noise barriers will be considered, but the Berlin Wall solution is not appealing the heavily organized neighborhood. (See “Blood Hoppings” on the web’s very savvy website: www.мертьназад.org)

City’s with impressive comprehensive plans do much better. Water Kinsa, a nationally noted traffic engineer, came to Milwaukee this spring and said the SEWRPC plan was not coordinated or the plan was adequate.

In great detail, with a riveting PowerPoint presentation, he showed how the plan was a wasteful investment that would hurt the downtown, the city of Milwaukee and closer-to-nobodies. He cited better planning in Toronto and Cincinnati.

SEWRPC responded simply that Kinsa was “essentially talking.”

Then there is the June 2002, technical critique sent to SEWRPC by University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee planning professor Edward Brownstone, who had worked for years with the agency.

Borthorn said SEWRPC’s highwayway approach “doesn’t conform to your own regional plan.” He said SEWRPC was using 100% traffic forecasting methodology that “shamelessly needs" updating. While pleading SEWRPC’s tract record, Borthorn urged SEWRPC to submit the plan to peer review.

Regardless of the feedback, it’s widely believed that SEWRPC will adopt its committee recommendations and urge the full expansion in the state transportation department, which would have to add a new tax or income tax increase to pay for it.

The recommendation and the “public input process” will be spun by SEWRPC and the two consulting firms being the plan as regional planning at its finest. That’s because SEWRPC is accountable to no one. It produces sprawl, it is not cooperating with city residents. It is not a planning model for Madison’s future.

Isthmus
September 13, 2002
Candidates express concerns about widening I-94
Four at forum oppose adding more lanes

By DENNIS A. SHOOK - GM Today Staff

September 5, 2002

BROOKFIELD - Plans to widen the east-west corridor of Interstate 94 will be taking a severe U-turn if any of the three Democratic candidates for governor is elected in November.

And that also appears to be true if Libertarian gubernatorial candidate Ed Thompson is placed in the driver's seat for the state.

The freeway future was the first question answered by Democrat candidates Tom Barrett, Jim Doyle and Kathleen Falk, just one week before the Sept. 10 primary that will decide which of them will face Thompson and Gov. Scott McCallum in the Nov. 5 general election.

Thompson and the Democrats appeared at a candidate forum at the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts on Tuesday. The event was sponsored by the Brookfield Chamber of Commerce.

I-94 debated

Last month McCallum signed into law an initiative by state Assembly Republicans on I-94 capacity expansion. It requires that when the I-94 corridor between Milwaukee and Waukesha counties is redesigned, it would accommodate the projected traffic in that corridor for the next 25 years.

"Rebuilding the interstate from Milwaukee to Waukesha is a moot point because there is no money for it," said Barrett, a Milwaukee congressman. "The state Legislature won't support it and I won't support it."

Barrett said rebuilding the Marquette Interchange would require all the transportation funds for the near future.

He added that other modes of transportation should be considered, while adding, "Light rail is not on board right now."

Doyle, the state attorney general, added of the legislative action, "This is not a good way to plan road building in Wisconsin."

He said any such work would require considerable planning by engineers rather than politicians if it ever is needed.

"And there is not very significant support for light rail as long as we have a $1 billion deficit," Doyle said. "Let's be realistic."

Falk, the Dane County executive, said she favors looking at other modes of transportation.

"I support rebuilding the freeway but not widening it from eight to 10 lanes in the area between the zoo and Marquette interchanges, she said.

"I disagree with what the state Legislature did in the midnight hour ... for one system only expansion," she said.

Thompson added, "If you can't afford it, don't do it. We have a $2 billion deficit to talk about so a 10-lane freeway is irresponsible."

As for rail alternatives, the Libertarian mayor of Tomah also took after one of the favorite projects of his brother, former Gov. Tommy Thompson.

"Light rail? We're not ready for it," the candidate said. "It is like Amtrak, which is sucking more money out of us."

Other topics hit

Thompson explained he had decided to join the debate in order to help his chances of receiving 6 percent of the total primary vote which would ensure that he receives public funds for his campaign.

"I would like to see a leveling of the playing field" with the funding he said. "I am the only candidate who has refused to take special interest money."

Falk touted her experience as the only "executive" of the group.

"I am also offering a real set of solutions," Falk said. "Tom and Jim can spell out the problem. But I have offered eight reform packages for dealing with these problems."

Barrett said he was the only candidate "capable of changing the tone of the debate in Madison."

Comparing his days in the state Legislature, from 1984 to 1992, to current partisan bickering, Barrett said, "One needs to be able to work with both parties. This is not about politics but our families and our economy."

The event was attended by nearly 200 people and lasted about two hours.

Dennis A. Shook can be reached at dshook@conley.net.com.
ELECTION

2002

Doyle, McCallum see need for I-94 expansion

Candidates differ on how to carry out improvements

(Editor's Note: This is the third in a series of stories comparing the stands of the two leading candidates running for governor.)

By DENNIS A. SHOOK
Senior Staff Writer

WAUKESHA - The two leading candidates running for governor have slightly different levels of commitment to the proposal for widening Interstate 94.

And during recent interviews with the Freeman, they disagreed on the route being taken to move the plan along.

During the summer, Gov. Scott McCallum signed a provision in the budget repair bill that requires the freeway be rebuilt "to meet projected vehicular capacity needs for the next 25 years," particularly in the east-west corridor between Waukesha County and downtown Milwaukee.

Democrat gubernatorial nominee Jim Doyle said the signing deferred a process that serves the state well.

"I want the decisions on the additional lanes and how we do it to be made as part of the overall transportation picture," Doyle said. "We may well need those lanes. I don't disagree with that. But I think this idea of sticking individual highway projects into the state budget is just going to be a mess in future years."

"I think we have, had a pretty good system in this state for the Department of Transportation to set priorities instead of having one group of powerful legislators push through the project," Doyle said.

The governor said the easing of traffic congestion will help provide "more jobs and higher paying jobs. For the sake of commerce and economic development, the freeway must have the capacity for growth."

The overall project cost is projected at $5.25 billion, of which about $1.5 billion will be invested in rebuilding the Marquette interchange.

That interchange will be the first project done as it is the heart of the system, based on the recommendations of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and the state Department of Transportation.

Reconstruction of the interchange is expected to begin in 2003 and is projected to take four years to complete.

The work along the entire region will proceed outward in most directions once that central hub is finished.

Between 2003 and 2010, 113 miles of the freeway is to be reconstructed.

That is the phase most likely to include the controversial six-mile stretch between the zoo and Marquette interchanges.

Another 96 miles of work is coming between 2011 and 2020, with another 56 miles of reconstruction from 2021 to 2030.

(Dennis A. Shook can be reached at dshook@conley.net.com)
Survey shows strong support for freeway expansion plans

Southeastern Wisconsin residents who responded to a survey on the area freeway system overwhelmingly expressed support for modernization and expansion of the system. The freeway design modifications and expansions of key corridors were supported as part of a $6.25 billion plan to rebuild the region’s interstate highways. Results of the survey were recently released by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. The study involved 270 miles of freeways serving southeastern Wisconsin. Responses to the survey came from more than 15,000 households in seven counties. The 15,000 responses represented a return rate of more than 27% of the surveys sent out. Overall, 87% responded in favor of rebuilding the freeway system to meet modern design standards. Close to 75% of respondents called for additional lanes on the freeway system to address traffic congestion. More than 76% supported expansions to provide eight freeway lanes on I-43 and I-94 in Milwaukee County; 74% of Milwaukee County residents supported such expansions. Just over 72% called the 20-year traffic congestion growth to be unacceptable — congestion that would occur without freeway expansion and despite public transit expansion, controlled development, and surface street improvements.

Executives support plan

"It's encouraging to see that residents of southeastern Wisconsin recognize the need for modernization and expansion of our freeway system," said Gov. Scott McCallum. "This project is essential in making our state a better place to live, work and visit, into the future." Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker also expressed support for the actions. "Milwaukee County is the source of 50% opportunities for residents in Wisconsin. Addressing transportation issues is absolutely critical if Milwaukee plans to continue to attract and retain new industry, and be a leader in hosting cultural and civic events." SEWRPC conducted the random survey to gauge local residents' reactions to an ongoing study of how to reconstruct the southeastern freeway system during the next 20 years. The study, commissioned by the state, examined the economic development, infrastructure, design, safety and traffic flow concerns relating to the 270-mile freeway system in Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Waukesha, Washington and Waukena Counties.

Two options

Among SEWRPC's preliminary alternatives is a $5.5 billion option that would reconstruct the system to meet modern design standards and address infrastructure and many safety concerns, but would not add highway capacity. A $6.25 billion option that adds capacity to 120 miles of freeway corridor would address infrastructure, design, safety and traffic flow concerns, especially to address traffic congestion projected on the system during the next 20 years. Six of the seven southeast Wisconsin county boards already have indicated their support for SEWRPC's recommendations. Action by the Milwaukee County Board is expected by the end of this year. SEWRPC also conducted a public hearing process on the plans during May and June, with 310 persons providing comments on the preliminary freeway plan. Of those comments, 65 persons expressed support for the plan, 23 expressed support for a plan alternative, 19 offered comments but did not express support or opposition to the plan, and 222 specifically opposed the plan. In addition, SEWRPC received nearly 1,500 pre-printed Sierra Club cards stating general opposition to the work.

SEWRPC analyzed estimated impacts of the preliminary freeway plan on minority and low-income populations in the area and came up with the following:

- Minority and low-income populations are not disproportionately represented in areas close to proposed widened freeways.
- The majority of freeway system segments proposed to be widened are not adjacent to minority populations.
- The majority of census blocks with above-average concentration of minority populations are not located adjacent to or in proximity to the freeway system.

Small Business Times
October 25, 2002
Editorials

Wider highway means stronger economy here

Regional planners envision eight lanes on I-94

It's an environmentalist's nightmare: The six lanes of I-94 in Kenosha County expanded to eight, all of them just as full of exhaust-spewing trucks and cars as they are today.

That's not really an unlikely vision. The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has a plan to widen 127 miles of freeways, including the 12 miles through Kenosha County. If the road is built to handle more traffic, the traffic is going to come, and more air pollution is going to come with it. That's not a good development for an area that already has a pollution problem.

But the air pollution effect is only one of many factors that go into decisions about highways, and for many highway planners it appears to be just an afterthought. In this case, an argument might be made that the traffic is going to come no matter what, and the question is whether the highway will be able to move it efficiently or not. Slow-moving traffic with frequent backups would cause even more air pollution.

The Kenosha County Board has solidly backed the recommendation of the regional planners. What else could they do? Access to transportation, especially the Interstate highway, has been one of the primary reasons for the economic resilience of the Kenosha area despite some serious setbacks. If the Interstate highway doesn't expand enough to move cars efficiently, Kenosha loses one of its main advantages as a commercial or industrial location. A company that moves here now can move its trucks on and off the highway quickly, and it can draw from a large labor pool because of reasonable commuting times. If the Interstate highway doesn't accommodate future growth, the growth isn't likely to occur.

Commuter trains are part of the transportation picture, too. So are bike trails and sidewalks, but, when looking at importance to Kenosha's economy, every transportation alternative pales in comparison to the Interstate highway. Kenosha's great economic advantage is a location between two big cities, Chicago and Milwaukee. However, one train line only connects Kenosha to Chicago. Another connects Chicago to Milwaukee, but it doesn't stop here. The Interstate highway is what links Kenosha to both big markets.

Making I-94 wider through Kenosha County will help Kenosha's economy grow.

The concern about air pollution isn't insignificant, but it's unlikely to be solved by failure to build adequate roads.
Panel’s plan may put wheels in motion for adding lanes to I-94

KENOSHA NEWS STAFF

Eight lanes and no more frontage road interchanges.
While the future of Interstate 94 through Kenosha and Racine counties as recommended by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, SEWRPC, is uncertain, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation is considering a plan that could add eight lanes to the interstate.

The southeastern Wisconsin regional planning commission recommends that Interstate 94 through Kenosha County be widened from six to eight lanes. It is also proposing changes to most of the county’s freeway interchanges, including converting on and off ramps from frontage roads.

SEWRPC is recommending a $23.9 billion project that includes 127 miles of freeways in seven counties. The project is part of a larger effort to upgrade the region’s transportation network.

Two years of interchange work beginning in 2005 is already planned for 94. SEWRPC made its preliminary recommendation earlier this month, and it was approved unanimously by the Kenosha County Board, one of six counties to agree to the proposal. The lone holdout is Milwaukee.

The planning commission’s final proposal is scheduled to be made to the state’s Department of Transportation, which will then determine the project’s fate.

SEWRPC recommends that the freeway be expanded from six to eight lanes. It also proposes changes to most of the county’s freeway interchanges, including converting on and off ramps from frontage roads.

Public support
Just how much work does the system need?
Supporters of the project say it is a much-needed improvement for the area, which has seen a significant increase in traffic over the past decade. The proposal includes plans for interchange improvements, including separating nine interchanges from frontage roads in Racine and Kenosha counties.

Work may not be soon
A timeline is harder to come by, although there will be priorities.
Improving the Marquette Interchange, a controversial plan that is still under discussion, is expected to begin next fall and be completed by 2007. Work on the more than 40-year-old stretch of freeway in Kenosha County — one of the oldest stretches of interstate in the region — may follow soon, after said Phil Evenson, executive director of SEWRPC. That may not come until after 2006.

"That may be one of the higher priorities," Evenson said. "Surely it will be in that early group.

Kenosha County’s section of I-94 was last resurfaced in 1998. Resurfacing typically lasts 10 to 12 years, and, said Evenson, "We’ve likely resurfaced for the last time.

"We wouldn’t be talking about adding capacity if we could get by with another resurfacing or two," he said. "You can only resurface a freeway so many times. We are going to be faced with a total rebuild, from the ground up.

SEWRPC considered two other alternatives — replacing the freeway system “in-kind” or with design improvements, but without expansion — before deciding on the widening recommendation.

Properties affected
Improving the interchanges in Kenosha County is not without costs.

The plan calls for the acquisition of 200 acres of right-of-way, including 215 acres, 51 commercial buildings, and three government properties. In Kenosha County, 19 properties are threatened — 14 residences and five commercial buildings.

Evenson said that figure was based on a 1996 Wisconsin Department of Transportation study into the effects of separating the freeway interchanges from frontage roads, a concern for five of Kenosha County’s six I-94 intersections.

Mars’ Cheese Castle, a highway 142 landmark for 52 years, is one of the affected businesses. Manager Mario Ventura Jr. disagrees with the changes, including the 127 miles of suggested lane widening.

"I wish they would leave us alone ... for 10 years," Ventura said. "Economically I don’t think it warrants it. I don’t think commerce is at the state that we need to do this right now. My response is to take the cragal step: Wait and see.

The interchange improvements will likely be done ahead of the widening, as needed.
After Highway 60, the Highway 158 and Highway 142 exits north of there, said Gary Sipes, director of the county’s division of highways.

Phil Evenson
SEWRPC executive director

WE WOULDN’T be talking about adding capacity if we could get by with another resurfacing or two. You can only resurface a highway so many times.

Kenosha News
October 22, 2002

C-51
Where is transportation in political debate?

You might think the gubernatorial campaign would shed some light on our transportation future. You would be wrong. For all of its impact on land use, neighborhoods, air and water pollution, lifestyles and pocketbooks, transportation is scarcely on the radar screen in this election. The only candidates seem to be excited about the issue is when they’re accusing each other of uttering platitudes or being weak on transportation. The rest of their rhetoric on this front is mostly a mix of evasions and wishful thinking.

For example, with only $45 million in state and federal money set aside to rebuild — and expand — with 11 miles of new lanes the decaying Marquette interchange, where would the next governor find the additional $430 million to $550 million to pay for the estimated $4.2 billion it would cost to rebuild and expand metro area freeways over the next few decades. According to a recent story by the Journal Sentinel's transportation reporter, Larry Sanders, one of the three leading candidates — Republican Scott McCallum, Democrat Jim Doyle and Libertarian Ed Thompson — oppose raising the state gas tax. Doyle and Thompson also oppose boosting this year's boost of $1.35 per gallon. McCallum, formerly cool to that option, now refuses to take a stand, though he says he'll consider shifting sales taxes on auto-related purchases into the transportation fund.

But that would take dollars away from other programs. And relying on the feds to bail us out seems purely fantasy. Why is Wisconsin's highway needs more urgent than any other state's? Which brings us back to this: Where is the money coming from? Are there new sources of revenue for transportation, what programs would the candidates cut? What about less costly alternatives to the pave-everything approach? Don't voters deserve to know where the candidates stand on the trade-offs?

As one of those voters, I'd like to ask the gubernatorial hopefuls some other questions: Why is the state even talking about freeway expansion when there is no convincing evidence that it provides real relief from congestion? In fact, if you look at the record from L.A. to Long Island, ever-widener roads fill up almost as fast as they're built, inducing more congestion and more sprawl.

Studies from the University of California at Berkeley show that a 10% increase in road capacity, measured by lane miles, translates to a 9% increase in vehicle miles traveled. Moreover, Mike Maloie, the city of Milwaukee's long-range transportation, noted recently that adding a lane of freeway would serve about 2,500 vehicles per hour — only 2.5% of the number of people working along I-94 in the metro area. And never mind the impact on surrounding neighborhoods, including noise pollution, the loss of 216 homes and 51 businesses and the disruption of graves in adjacent cemeteries.

So where's the sense in pouring so much money into something with so much pain and so little gain? Wouldn't it be more productive to explore alternatives that could spread the burden, reduce demand for short-range freeway driving and concentrate scarce dollars on maintaining the roads we already have?

For starters, the state could toughen its fledgling Smart Growth law and withhold aid for roads and sewers to communities that fail to promote compact development, where people can live closer to jobs and services and not have to drive everywhere. The state could also get serious about commuter rail. The metro region could revive the idea of a regional transportation authority to help spread the costs of such a system fairly.

As another alternative to dumping local traffic onto freeways that were designed for long-distance travel, communities could improve local arterials and traffic management.

It would take real vision to promote such an integrated approach to transportation planning. And vision seems to be in short supply at both the Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, which has recommended the raising of $1.25 billion to expand the freeway-system plan, and the DOT, which appears bent on a full-employment plan for road builders at the expense of our sense of place and quality of life. What, if anything, would the candidates to reform DOT?
SEWRPC survey gets high marks

By Chris Mier
News Graphic Staff

Ozaukee County — Based on a seven-county survey on the region's freeway system, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) determined that there is strong public support of its $66 billion freeway expansion proposal.

The Ozaukee County segment of the proposal includes widening I-43 to six lanes from the Ozaukee/Milwaukee county border north to where I-43 breaks off from Highway 27 north of Saukville.

According to the survey results, 69 percent of Ozaukee County residents are in favor of creating additional freeway lanes in the county. In all, the plan calls for additional lanes to be added to 127 of the roughly 470 miles of freeway throughout the seven county region.

Ken Yunker, the SEWRPC assistant director, said the entire freeway expansion plan would take place over the next 30 years.

The survey asked respondents nine questions about their opinions on current and projected future freeway congestion and whether they would be in favor of expanding the current freeway system, including adding more lanes and upgrading the freeway to modern design standards.

Neither the survey nor the cover letter mention the cost of SEWRPC's proposal.

In Ozaukee County, 64.8 percent responded that traffic congestion in southeastern Wisconsin is a severe and growing problem during peak traffic periods. Thirty-eight percent said traffic is severe during peak periods and at other times as well.

The survey also found that 43 percent of Ozaukee County residents feel they are living with a doubling of traffic on the current freeway system is highly unacceptable. SEWRPC's study into freeway congestion determined that even with regional land use and transportation plans designed to reduce freeway use, the congestion would more than double on the current freeway system over the next 20 years.

Over 90 percent of Ozaukee County residents agreed that a modern and efficient freeway system is important to the economic future of the region and that the freeway should be rebuilt to modern design standards, including eliminating left hand on-and off-ramps, lane drops at major interchanges and providing full inside and outside shoulders.

Of the respondents, 41 percent from Ozaukee County said they use the freeway system almost every day. Twenty percent said they use the system three to five times a week.

Yunker said the survey results vindicate SEWRPC's freeway proposal.

"We've heard from some people throughout the study who've said "you guys at SEWRPC are all wet, freeway traffic congestion is not a problem. It's a problem only for a couple minutes and people don't perceive it as a problem," he said.

"Well I think the response to that question shows that the vast majority of people perceive current levels of freeway traffic congestion as a severe and growing problem.

"We've also had people tell us throughout the study even if congestion is a problem, you guys are nuts for talking about additional lanes. That's the wrong solution," and again the results of the survey show that the vast majority of people believe that indeed, you ought be considering adding lanes to the freeway as the freeway system is rebuilt," Yunker added.

Yunker's defense of the proposal was made in response to some who've criticized some of its recommendations.

Milwaukee's Commissioner of Public Works, Mariano Schielaquac, issued a letter to SEWRPC, alleging that its plan doesn't adequately address alternative means of transportation and would contribute to sprawl.

Schielaquac also wrote that the plan is "largely inconsistent with accepted regional planning principles," noting that its proposals would only marginally improve traffic congestion.

The Milwaukee City Council has stood out in opposition to the plan, favoring a scaled back $4.5 billion dollar version with fewer miles of additional lanes.

Ozaukee County Board Chairman Gus Wirth, who's also a SEWRPC Commissioner, sounded off in support of the proposal.

"The hearings that I went to in Ozaukee County were overwhelmingly supportive of the plan," Wirth said.

"I think that this plan puts us where we are now (as far as traffic congestion goes) 20 years from now," Wirth said.
SEWRPC plan not in public's best interest

It isn't what you'd call delicious irony, but two unrelated traffic events last week have more in common than you'd think.

On Monday, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission released results of a public survey that suggest overwhelming support for reconstructive surgery on the interstate system, including the addition of lanes on parts of I-43 and I-94.

On Friday, 10 lives were lost and 45 cars mangled in a horrible accident on a fog-shrouded stretch of I-43 near the Ozaukee/Sheboygan county border.

Discarding for a moment the fact that SEWRPC's survey did not ask respondents whether they favor spending $6.25 billion — money this debt-ridden state does not have — on such a project, we still are troubled by this survey.

It gives those who favor this project — notably, governor-du-jour Scott McCallum — the opportunity to crow that this project must go forward because it's what the public wants, and of course, they are all about serving the public.

But the public doesn't know what's good for it, and we saw that in Friday's crash. Law enforcement officials say it was primarily the result of people driving far too recklessly for the conditions. Even after the accident, there were reports of drivers whizzing by the debris-littered site at more than 70 mph.

The public does not need more driving opportunities. It does need more lanes of interstate for deer to bound across, for fog to envelop, for them to drive their 2008 Ford Continent to and from work, with 10 seats empty in the back, belching emissions and going 75 mph all the way.

Certainly, the freeway system needs updating. Though our traffic "congestion" would be a joke in many other cities, real trouble is on the horizon and it's important to plan ahead.

But just slapping down a few more lanes, taking away some of the dangerous left-lane exits and adding full shoulders not only won't be the best use of money we don't have, it won't aid safety all that much. (How many of us have seen impatient drivers whizzing down a shoulder on the way to work?)

If SEWRPC is going to make the freeway system better, it must give the public not what it wants, but what it needs:

- A significantly expanded mass transportation system, extending well into the suburbs. If you add freeway lanes, make at least one in each direction dedicated to buses through the morning and evening rush hours, and for major events such as Summerfest and State Fair. Then run more buses. Add a dedicated carpool lane as well, and launch a statewide advertising campaign to promote the practice.

- More employment opportunities for suburban residents in their individual communities. Downtown Milwaukee always will be the hub of white-collar employment, but Ozaukee County especially could benefit immensely by trying to bring some of those jobs here.

- Increase the use of signs such as the one above I-43 that gives the travel time to Good Hope Road and downtown. Use them to remind drivers when conditions are dangerous, and encourage them to slow down.

Before someone gets hurt.

Ozaukee News Graphic
October 17, 2002
Politicians debate merits of freeway expansion
10/14/2002
Jason Ivanitz
Special to the Tribune

Wisconsin’s freeways, built mostly in the 1950s and 1960s, are starting to wear away, and how to repair them is sparking a huge political debate.

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission conducted a survey to determine whether or not the citizens of Wisconsin would support funding for the freeways and expanding lanes. Out of the $5,000 surveys sent out, 15,000 were returned. The overall results showed that 75 percent of the people supported the freeway idea.

Wisconsin Republican Gov. Scott McCallum was impressed with the results and is proposing a $6.15 billion plan to fix the freeways and expand some portions of the freeway from six lanes to eight. Tim Roby, McCallum’s press secretary, says this is something the city of Milwaukee desperately needs.

"The 270 miles of freeway are the backbone of our economy," Roby said. "The governor just put down $160 million for the Marquette interchange to be fixed. We will use both state and possibly federal funds to complete these tasks."

Wisconsin’s Department of Transportation supports the plan and believes it is a necessity in the state of Wisconsin.

"We are expecting to have a 40 percent traffic increase in the next few years," said Linha Theiluz, head of public relations at the Department of Transportation. "This is an investment that will pay dividends in the future."

State Rep. Jeff Stone (R-Greenfield) is willing to work with anyone to improve the transportation of Wisconsin.

"The vast amounts of people in the state are for this movement - just look at the surveys," Stone said. "We have to develop some new strategies to help our traffic situation."

Ken Yunker, regional planner for the freeway project, said the freeway problem is a severe one.

"Most of the roads, especially around the Milwaukee area, have been resurfaced two or more times already," Yunker said. "We need to rebuild these roads to modern day standards. Simply resurfacing will do no good because the traffic flow is steadily increasing and there will be back-ups. No one says we need to have the money by tomorrow. This is a 20-year plan."

The Marquette Interchange is one of the first priorities, and if the plan gets passed, construction would begin in 2004 and go on through 2007. The plan would move all the left ramps to the right, reducing traffic and possibly widening the lanes.

However, many politicians, including Democratic Mayor John O. Norquist, do not view the state’s plans to be productive or even possible.

Steve Jacquot, Norquist’s chief of staff, feels that the program is unrealistic and cannot possibly happen financially.

"The survey didn’t say a thing about how much money it will cost to do all the work," Jacquot said. "Sure it might create jobs, but the state is already in deficit. Sooner or later McCallum will have to give the plan up because it is unrealistic. (McCallum is) living in a fantasy land."

With the gubernatorial election approaching, Jacquot believes this is a play to lure voters into reelecting McCallum for office. At the hearings held throughout the state, 80 percent of the people who attended disagreed with the expansion, according to a press release from the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

Freeway expansion may result in the reduction of personal property, and Robert Trimmer, co-chairman of Citizens for Sane Highways, fears this will have a negative effect on many lower class neighborhoods.

Trimmer said no one really knows the truth about this plan, and the Republicans do not have the people in mind when they make these decisions.

"The city is planning on building a double-decker road right by a cemetery which would cut through residents’ graveyards," Trimmer said. "The state doesn’t have a single penny to fund this project. I don’t know how it will get done."

Freeway decision entering fast lane

There are many uncertainties heading into the last couple of months of consideration for a plan to rebuild and expand the regional freeway system.

Things will come to a head when the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transportation Advisory Committee strives to recommend a plan to the state Department of Transportation.

Gov. Scott McCallum has supported the $6.15 billion project. In fact, he signed legislation supporting the addition of two more lanes to Interstate 94, from the zoo interchange east to the Marquette Interchange.

Even Democratic gubernatorial candidate Jim Doyle has expressed support for some kind of expansion, as long as it is carefully constructed and clearly shown to be necessary.

But opposition continues from east of 120th Street, as exhibited by Mayor John Norquist at a forum Thursday at Turner Hall. The mayor is not so interested in opening the lanes to people because it appears he fears they will use them to flee the city. But that perspective fails to recognize that some people also use the freeway to work and recreate in Milwaukee... and they may think less of doing that if the interstate becomes a giant parking lot.

Norquist did bring out an important point during his anti-freeway comments, however. That is, who will be paying the bill for the project?

Freeway opponents claim the plan is to add 20 cents per gallon onto the gasoline tax and that would be in place for at least the next decade.

That may or may not be the case. But an intelligent discussion of the expected range of the costs and their impacts is only fair, as people consider the plan.

Support could easily rise or fall, based on the bottom line cost and who is paying for it.

And the manner in which the project impacts areas like the Story Hill neighborhood in Milwaukee or deals with interchanges in Waukesha County will likely play a role.

This newspaper supports building the additional lanes. The lack of ridership during the rail demonstration project while the freeway was being repaved clearly shows the lack of support for diverting freeway lane funds to a commuter rail system that residents clearly will not ride.

The Marquette Tribune
October 14, 2002

The Waukesha Freeman
October 14, 2002

C-55
Mark Belling was wrong

By Jason Blienza

The following column will attempt to yield my recent move to the Marquette University area, a press conference concerning highway reconstructions in southeastern Wisconsin; and last week’s Mark Belling column which appeared in this very newspaper (if I think I’ll work but beer with me).

First, the move. One of Hometown Publications’ former sportswriters – a Marquette alumnus – approached me early in his tenure here and asked me where I lived.

“What’s your, like, ‘where do you live?’

“I, uh, Wisconsin, he said.

“Where?” I asked, taking him aside while wondering how in petty he was actually being paid.

(Then the Marquette area – the GHST TO, you know, COPS filmed On Location. Sure, I knew all about it – from newspaper and TV, that.)

“It’s convenient,” he said, rattling off the reasons which included a cheap cab ride to anywhere downtown. “You’ll say just as much to park, and I’m coming in on the freeway when everyone else is leaving and vice versa.”

Now, a turn-and-plied North Shore suburban white boy (that would be me) was certainly skeptical upon visiting him and his wife those few first times. But, you know, he had a point – to say, they simply had to walk a block in a Thai joint, across the street to a bona fide “gourmet” sports bar. (I admit, I’m a fan, or Offense – not to mention a Greek place and a bar or two.

Cool, I thought, but would I want to live there? Well, I had my chance to find out this past summer when his friend – who also resided in the area – needed someone to assume his lease. Okay, I thought, I’ll take the plunge.

My first day moving in certainly didn’t make any doubts as a black guy approached me for money. (You add a wed per a conver- ence to begin. Now I’m armed, complemented with a view of the speaker’s waistband just for proof.) However, such an instance fails to discourage me since I’ve been approached before in the suburbs – usually by someone wearing an outfit worth at least $200 more than what I have on, of course. Anything can happen anywhere, I tell myself, and I’ve only enjoyed this new, “convertisers’ lifestyle thus far.

Which brings me to the Oct. 7 press conference conducted by Governor Scott McCallum, who crowed about a recent SEWRPC (Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission) survey revealing support for a freeway overhaul. No less than 55,000 households were chosen from among seven counties to receive the “confidential,” 11- question form.

These survey results clearly indicate there’s strong support here in southeastern Wisconsin for a quality freeway system that will support economic development and enhance publicafety,” said McCallum. “We all know this freeway system is rapidly aging and needs to be rebuilt soon. What people are saying is that we should plan for the future and do the job right the first time.

And all that deduced from a grand total of 15,241 respondents households, but I’m not criticizing McCallum – I hope he wins in November, and maybe there really is significant support for his proposal. However, that multi-billion-dollar construction won’t affect me that much because I absolutely avoid the freeway like the plague (has to do with the myth that it’s somehow faster while all you do is sit in traffic), and maybe liber- als have a point on this least-driving thing. It’s certainly made my life more enjoyable.

I’ll offer up Mukwonago as an example. I’ve covered that city for approximately three years as a reporter, and everyone’s been most accommodating and kind – OUTSIDE of their respective vehicles, that is. Once behind the wheel, I don’t know if Toons are overcome by demonic possession or what, but I just don’t comprehend the transformation. I mean, it’s evident spot there to drive the wrong way up and down the City Hall parking lot lanes.

So that’s basically the deal I’ve read: Traffic’s a sprawling, antisocial environment in which a car is an absolute necessity for the convenience of urban liv- ing...but on the Toons’ column appearing in the Oct. 6 edition of the Express News, I quoted:

“Could last weekend’s savage beating of a man by a mob of teenage thugs have hap- pened in Brookfield? How about Menomonee Falls? St. Francis? Tosa? Slinger? I guess we know the answer. Milwaukee’s inner city is the only convenient place in the region that such a savage incident could have occurred...The plain fact is that Milwaukee’s black community has become socially dysfunctional.”

And this is how the piece begins. Fust of all, what exactly is intended by the region? Milwaukee, Wisconsin? The continental U.S.? If you do, damn, it could as easily be simply say, “Oh really, now,” and evoke a little incident some years back by the name of COLOMBINE which strictly involved white high schools.

Oh, strictly Milwaukee, you say? Well, what about the young Hispanic male who was viciously gunned down in cold blood on the steps of near south side church a couple years back?

Now, I got the whole Limbaugh-O’Reilly blowhard shibb of having the guts to say what conservatives really think, right? Well, that’s fine and dandy, when it’s a defensible, intelligent, THINKFUL [I.E. new I usually agree with Belling, but never crossed the line with his Oct. 7 column. “Behavior needs condemned, not defended.”]

It seems our star has committed no less than a pair of cardinal sins of column writing. 4) He wrote from the heart and not the head; 2) He wrote in generics.

I dare say that Belling forgets that this isn’t his radio show, in which a spur-of-the- moment crack goes “Proof” and it’s forgotten as soon as the next commercial break. This is print – the most powerful of all media because it’s the enduring medium; better yet, it’s the thinking man’s medium and you’d better get it right the first time. There’s no creative license, you will.

Maybe my judgment has been tempered by living in the city for awhile, though, maybe I would’ve had a different take just a few months ago.

Case in point: Late last week I visited my aforementioned friend just west of my new neighborhood, whereupon a few black guys across the street began yelling in my direction as I exited my car. Oh, great, they’re giving me a hard time, I thought, as I proceed to ignore them.

“Hey man, Hey man,” they yelled as I continued to walk towards my friend’s house.

“Hey man, Hey man!” (Don’t look back and keep walking)

“Hey man, Hey man.”

“No response”

“Hey man – you’re gonna get a tick...”

Me: “What!!!!!”

“That’s a bus stop – you can’t park there – see the sign?”

(Me, sheepishly) “Oh, thanks a lot,”

fumbling for my keys.

“We’re just trying to help you – we’re nice around here.”

(Me, wanting to crawl into a hole)

Jason Blienza is a staff writer for Hometown Publications.

Mukwonago Express News
October 14, 2002
Strong support for freeway plan

By Jason Blazina
Staff Writer

Governor Scott McCallum announced the results of a survey concerning the reconstruction of southeastern Wisconsin freeways last week, citing "strong support" for the multi-billion-dollar plan.

The proposal entails both design modifications and expansion of key corridors within the 270-mile system – including eight freeway lanes along segments of I-43 and I-94 in Milwaukee County — at a price range of $5.5-6.25 billion.

"The freeway system serves as the backbone and life line of Wisconsin's economy and after 40 years, we know they must be rebuilt," said McCallum at the Midwest Express Center Oct. 7. "This project means more high-paying jobs — we can't afford to not get this done."

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) conducted the random survey to assess local residents' reaction to an ongoing study of how to reconstruct the southeast freeway system over the next 30 years.

The study — commissioned by the state of Wisconsin — examines the economic development, infrastructure, design, safety and traffic-flow concerns relating to the freeway system in Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha counties.

Among SEWRPC's preliminary alternatives is a $5.5 billion option which would reconstruct the system to meet modern design standards and add new exits, overpasses, ramps and improve safety to everyone using the highways. This option also includes the idea of a "busway" – a separate hallway just for buses — that could travel at 35 miles per hour.

Among SEWRPC's alternative is a $5.5 billion option which would reconstruct the system to meet modern design standards and add new exits, overpasses, ramps and improve safety to everyone using the highways. This option also includes the idea of a "busway" – a separate hallway just for buses — that could travel at 35 miles per hour.

According to literature distributed by McCallum: "This congestion would occur without freeway expansion and despite public transit expansion, land-use changes and surface-street improvements."

"What people are saying is that we should plan for the future and do the job right the first time," he said. "The public knows that freeways are essential."

During last week's press conference, McCallum was flanked by Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker, Waukesha County Executive Dan Finley and Racine County Executive Jean Jabolson. According to Walker, transportation issues are vital to future economic growth in Wisconsin.

"Milwaukee County is the source of job opportunities for residents in Wisconsin," he said. "Addressing transportation issues is absolutely critical if Milwaukee plans to continue to attract and retain new industry and be a leader in hosting cultural and civic events."

Finley concurred in stating, "Many business leaders in downtown Milwaukee call Waukesha County home. Addressing transportation issues is absolutely critical to managing commute times and keeping southeastern Wisconsin an attractive and efficient place to do business."

However, Mayor John Norquist sharply criticized the plan and vehemently questioned the validity of the survey results. According to literature distributed by Norquist:

"Nearly 80% of citizens registering opinions in 11 hearings held around the southeastern Wisconsin area earlier this year opposed widening the freeway system, according to results released by SEWRPC today (Oct. 7). At the hearings, 222 of 310 people submitting comments said they opposed the entire freeway plan, while 23 people said they opposed widening freeways but supported safety enhancements. Only 46 people said they supported the full, $6.25 billion plan with freeway widening."

"Norquist asserted that McCallum failed to mention the hearing results last week "even though they had been released on SEWRPC's Web site (www.sewrpc.org/freewaystudy)."

"Instead, he released the results of a survey that was hastily commissioned this summer," said Norquist.

According to him, the survey was sent to recipients with a letter signed by officials such as Walker and "designed to lead public opinion, with phrases such as 'freeways badly in need of repair or replacement...'

"and 'frequent congestion and delays....'"

"The governor and SEWRPC didn't like the results of the public hearings, so they commissioned a 'phony' survey with loaded questions," said Norquist. "The biggest flaw of the survey was that it made no mention at all of the cost of the proposed freeway widenings and it makes no mention of the taxes that would have to be raised to pay for it."

"Norquist — in characterizing the ploy as "McCallum Accounting" — added that "if they'd asked people, 'Do you want your taxes raised to pay for freeway expansion?' they would have gotten the same answer as at the public hearings — no."

"It's irresponsible for the governor to promise people something without working out a way to pay for it," said Norquist.

Last week, McCallum stated that "gas taxes won't necessarily increase" with implementation of the project.

"Right now, we have a lower price tag for the Marquette Interchange than what we had last year," he said, "and we'll be very aggressive in soliciting federal funding."

According to McCallum, a half-dozen of the seven southeast Wisconsin county boards have "already indicated" their support for SEWRPC's recommendations. The Milwaukee County Board is expected to vote on the matter by the end of this year.

"The county executives throughout the region are very committed to economic growth and investment in all transportation modes — roads, rail, etc.,” said McCallum. "Engineers tell me that they're putting patches upon patches in repairing the freeways, and the roads must be replaced. I call on the region to acknowledge this overwhelming support to the survey."
Area needs alternatives to freeway expansion

By MICHAEL J. MAIERLE

David Schultz’s article in the Sept. 29 Crossroads section about the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Parks Commission’s $6.2 billion freeway expansion plan was just another salvo in the old argument that if we only build a bigger freeway system, our transportation problems would be solved (“Freeways here need major renewal or future growth will be at risk”).

He also calls anyone who favors a more balanced approach “an anti-car extremist” and a “self-appointed environmental ideologue.” This is just too simplistic an approach for what should be a high-level public policy dialogue.

If we’re going to address transportation issues, we’re going to need good information about reasonable alternatives that serve the needs of all the communities that comprise the Milwaukee area — not just the same old freeway pros and cons that have stagnated the Milwaukee area since the freeway system building era ended around 1970.

To start down the path of a more comprehensive, workable approach, consider the following:

**Major transportation improvements will require regional cooperation.** Consider a package of improvements that will help older communities as well as newer ones, communities that are more and less reliant on automobiles, and the development needs of those communities. The current freeway expansion plan seeks to help some communities at the expense of others. It’s tailor-made for a big fight instead of a consensus. It’s hard on older urban and suburban communities, many of which are delightful places to live and do business and currently experiencing a resurgence.

**There is an imbalance in regional planning that favors highways.** While SEWRPC has provided many studies for the region over the years, the highway recommendations in SEWRPC plans usually get implemented by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Maybe half the land use recommendations are followed, and little in the way of public transit gets accomplished. SEWRPC’s current $6.25 billion freeway expansion plan will only serve to usher in a new era of freeway building and attendant urban sprawl just at a time when people are rediscovering the value of living in places that feel like neighborhoods.

**Freeway planning needs to get a grip on economics.** Freeways are already the highest cost component of the transportation system and there is no end in sight. Simply replacing the freeway system alone will cost $3.4 billion. Design improvements add another $2.1 billion, or 65%. I haven’t seen the justification for this additional expenditure. It would be good to know exactly what benefit the area is going to get from that sum. And when more lanes are added, the final cost is almost double the cost of the existing freeway, which isn’t exactly cheap to start with.

Look at how this type of thinking affected the replacement of the Marquette Interchange. We’re told there will be no expansion, the work will be done in the same footprint. The fact is that this new interchange adds 11 miles of new lanes, an increase of 56% compared to the existing interchange. The cost of the interchange has doubled in cost from roughly $600 million to $1,000 million. I’d like to analyze the benefits of this increase in cost, but I can’t because the earlier recommendation was dropped from consideration before the evaluation could be made. Our public policy decisions need to be better informed than that.

**Freeway expansion doesn’t solve congestion.** Everywhere in the country, urban freeways are congested during rush hour. First, we don’t charge any more to use them even though they cost much more to build, so, of course, people crowd onto them. Second, you can never serve all the trips that could possibly be made on the freeway. Study these few numbers: Adding a lane of freeway serves 2,300 vehicles per rush hour. This is only about 2.5% of the number of people who work along I-94 in eastern Waukesha County or downtown Milwaukee. While freeways are useful for making long trips, we’ve learned that you just can’t build enough freeway lanes for every new Wal-Mart and office park on the edge of urbanized areas. They quickly swamp the capacity of the new roadway.

**If you want to improve transportation in the Milwaukee area, provide alternatives to driving on the freeway.** Plan communities that create less demand on the freeway system. Link them by rail and bus lines. Recognize the economic opportunity offered by development along those lines. Don’t move your office to an office park adjacent to a freeway interchange in Pewaukee, as SEWRPC recommended.

Keep your home and business in town, where people use less expensive arterial streets and surface highways, transit, bike trails or sidewalks. The vast majority of trips within an urbanized area can be made without getting on a freeway.

The bottom line is that freeway plans in the Milwaukee area should not just be technical decisions made by transportation engineers and road builders — and then paid for by you and me. These are choices that affect our wallets, our communities and our freedom to travel by a variety of means.

Many of the alternative approaches that I’ve mentioned are already in SEWRPC’s plans. What we need to do is raise their priority and put together a package that serves everyone’s needs — and then make them happen. Until that happens, Schultz doesn’t need to lecture me from Illinois about the need to spend more Wisconsin tax money on a freeway-only approach.

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Michael J. Maierle has spent 20 years working in urban and transportation planning at the local, regional and state levels. He is currently the City of Milwaukee’s long range planning manager.

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
October 13, 2002
In front of a packed house, acting secretary of the state Department of Transportation Thomas Carlisle, left, Waukesha County Executive Daniel Finley, center, and Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist talk about the future of the regional transportation system during a forum Thursday. The forum was held in downtown Milwaukee.

**Freeway forum fails to merge communities**

Norquist, Finley disagree on need for added lanes

By DENNIS A. SHOOK
Senior Staff Writer

MILWAUKEE — Many at the packed luncheon Thursday at Turner Restaurant downtown did not share the freeway vision offered by state and Waukesha County leaders.

That much was clear during a forum on "The Future of Transportation in Southeastern Wisconsin — Who Decides?" The so-called "Fourth Street Forum" was sponsored by area businesses and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Waukesha County Executive Daniel Finley and Thomas Carlisle, acting secretary of the state Department of Transportation, extolled the virtues of expanding and repairing the regional interstate system. But it was clear that Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist had the majority of support in the crowd, largely made up of environmental groups and city politicians.

Finley and Carlisle explained their support for the $6.2 billion plan proposed by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. It includes a major renovation of the Marquette Interchange and widening the east-west corridor of Interstate 94 from six to eight lanes between the zoo and Marquette Interchange.

"What we need to do is come up with some common vision," Finley told the crowd of more than 200. "We all know that I-94 is the transportation backbone of our system. We need to promote transit but realize that the freeway is the most important part of the system."

Carlisle pointed out that a blueprint unveiled for developing Milwaukee by the Metropolitan Milwaukee Area Chambers of Commerce supported the freeway expansion.

"Most of the county boards in the area have voted for the plan already and the DOT will take that recommendation to go forward," Carlisle said.

Norquist said a major problem is the price tag for the system.

"Those who admire this mode of transportation have a fundamental responsibility to level with the taxpayers on where the funding is coming from," the mayor said.

"This plan will actually create more traffic congestion than it will solve," Norquist said.

The mayor also mentioned that some in Waukesha County favor looking at alternatives, like a rail system inside Milwaukee County. Norquist pointed out that a Waukesha County Board resolution supporting that approach was vetoed by Finley.

Finley said while he disagreed with Norquist on the need for the freeway and mass transportation, the two agreed in their opposition to the state Legislature passing and Gov. Scott McCallum signing legislation mandating the construction of two additional lanes in the east-west corridor. He said it would have been better, to allow the area counties deliberating the plan to reach a compromise.

Those counties are to vote on the expansion plan by the end of the year, Finley said.

(Dennis A. Shook can be reached at dshook@conley.net.com)

The Waukesha Freeman
October 10, 2002
Transportation forum yields few answers

By Sean Ryan
Daily Reporter Staff

Oct. 10, 2002

A Milwaukee forum on southeast Wisconsin’s freeway overhaul yielded few agreements and access of disputes between the city’s mayor, the state transportation department secretary and the Waukesha county executive.

A recurring point in the discussion, sponsored by the Milwaukee Journal Board Thursday afternoon, was what the ultimate goal should be for the impact of the reconstruction on the area.

Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist said the freeway plan should focus on the value it will hold for individual communities. He said the state Department of Transportation should pay more attention to the impact an expansion of Interstate 94 would have on local communities rather than on broader improvements it would make to traffic patterns.

“The big freeway cuts through Milwaukee may have had benefits to through traffic, but they tended not to have any economic value to the city itself,” Norquist said. “The focus has been on through traffic and traffic modeling and black boxes. We need to look at the blocks, the streets, the neighborhood. What adds value to the immediate area where the street is built?”

Acting WisDOT Secretary Thomas Carlsen said the priority should be maximizing traffic flow and preventing congestion using both public transportation and freeway improvements. These considerations don’t automatically mean that local communities would be hurt, he said, especially since the public was invited to make comments on the plans while the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission was developing them.

“The mayor realizes that we do reach out to neighborhoods, especially in the design aspect of the project,” Carlsen said. “But what we need to focus on is our outcomes. If we want to lower our standards as far as congestion is concerned, we can do that.”

Two choices

Waukesha County Executive Daniel Finley took a different approach, summing the decision into a choice between two options.

“Are our roads now to be an economic catalyst for us or are they meant to get people to and from work?” he asked. “Should it be to move people into the system, or should it be to move people around the system?”

Finley suggested widening portions of I-94 and U.S. Highway 45, which are on the outskirts of Milwaukee, rather than I-94, which runs through the middle of downtown. He said that it would unfortunately need to be one or the other since WisDOT has predicted it will have a $5 billion budget deficit by 2005.

The entire debate involving SEWRPC’s freemans plan, which would cost $6.2 billion over 20 years, and any vision behind it would be pointless until WisDOT comes up with a way to pay for it, Norquist said.

“If a simple vision creates money, then that would be an interesting way to run government programs,” he said. “There’s no funding for Marquette Interchange, let alone all the other things that have to be done. They don’t want to put a funding plan behind it because they don’t want to explain to the people of Milwaukee how they are going to fund it.”

Carlsen said WisDOT hasn’t devised a funding proposal because it hasn’t settled on a final plan for the overhaul.

“You have to see what you need and then you need to figure out how to fund it,” he said.

Funding issues premature

Raising questions about funding the SEWRPC proposal is premature because you can’t request funding for a project until you know what it will be, said Tom Walker, executive director of the Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association.

“You don’t ask people, ‘Could you pay some more?’ he said. “Because people will ask, ‘For what?’ You have to put the loans before the cart.”

Carlsen said WisDOT was considering its funding options, however, and hadn’t ruled out increasing gas taxes or turning to the federal government for more money. He said that it had ruled out the idea of issuing bonds for the project, however.

“Wisconsin is going to be against that,” Carlsen said. “We think transportation should be pay as you go. We will fund it. Don’t worry about it.”

SEWRPC will not decide whether to go with its $6.2 billion plan, or one of its two less expensive options, until after the Nov. 5 election, Carlsen said. But it would rule before the end of the year.

Until that decision is made, the current debate will help the final plan result in a middle ground that balances all of the patrons’ demands, Walker said. The plan that will best serve southeast Wisconsin will combine highway expansion with public transportation improvements and balance the needs of local communities with the necessity to improve traffic flow.

“This is a balance,” Walker said. “It’s critical that the city of Milwaukee and other parts of the region come away with a solution that benefits everybody. This should not be an either-or debate. It should be a debate about how to find the resources to do both.”
Do folks in southeastern Wisconsin support the expansion of the regional freeway system? No. And yes. Real answer: It depends on what questions you ask and how you ask them, and therein lies the reason why debate over this controversial idea needs some extra innings.

On Monday, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission released documents related to its proposal for a $6.25 billion expansion of the area's freeways — one that would expand certain segments of I-94 and I-43 from six to eight lanes. SEWRPC concedes that “an intensive public hearing process” in May and June yielded strong opposition to its plan. More than two-thirds of the 310 people who offered public comments opposed the plan while only 46 people supported it.

But SEWRPC also unveiled the results of a public-opinion survey that, it says, reveals overwhelming support for its proposal. Gov. Scott McCallum trumpeted those results at a press conference, with four prominent county officials from the region in tow. But then, Mayor John Norquist promptly savaged SEWRPC's survey, arguing that it amounts to a stacked deck — and that in any event, the state doesn't have the money to pay for the expansion and doesn't even have a financing plan.

Norquist, in our view, is on solid ground here. First, the survey's cover letter is highly prejudicial, in effect conditioning the respondent to the questions that follow. The survey itself, the result of 15,000 responses to a mailing of 55,000, asked a half-dozen questions about the freeways. Some of them are worded to produce the obvious. Question 3, for example, cites studies indicating a doubling of traffic congestion in southeastern Wisconsin over the next 20 years if additional freeway lanes aren't built, even with better land-use strategies, public-transit expansion and improved surface streets. Is it any surprise that nearly 73% of respondents would find this scenario unacceptable?

The outcome might well have been different if the survey suggested other studies with less apocalyptic scenarios. Furthermore, the mayor is right when he says that the absence of cost in the survey grossly undermines its validity. Right now, the state has yet to explain how it and the federal government would pay for this venture. According to the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance, the state's long-term plan for highways indicates a $5 billion shortfall between projected cost and projected state and federal revenues.

Given the state's fiscal problems, which show no signs of abating for years, the only way to square this circle may be a tax increase — either on gasoline or something else. Question: Do you think the survey response might have been different if the possibility of a tax increase was included?

An alternative plan for southeastern Wisconsin that would cost $5.5 billion makes more sense. It would rebuild the existing freeways and make important design changes to improve safety. But even this proposal, rejected for now by SEWRPC, is problematical if the state cannot find a way to pay for it.

Sometimes, Milwaukeeans can talk an issue to death. But this one deserves much more discussion — and full disclosure.
Freeway survey result makes sense

Despite the accusations of bad polling coming from conservationists, it is easy to believe a poll taken recently that shows vast support throughout southeastern Wisconsin for rebuilding and expanding the region’s interstate system.

The failure by people to consistently use commuter rail, as evidenced during the repaving of Interstate 94 in the late 1990s, should have made that perspective abundantly clear.

The poll, conducted by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, contacted 15,000 households in the seven-county area, including Waukesha and Milwaukee.

The survey shows that more than 87 percent of those respondents favor rebuilding the interstate system to meet modern design standards. Among those standards is adding two lanes to the six-lane east-west corridor connecting Waukesha County to downtown Milwaukee, which has proven to be the most controversial aspect of the plan.

For leisurely trips on vacation or trips from Madison to Chicago, some commuter rail service seems to make sense. A direct route between Chicago and Milwaukee would also be more heavily used.

But commuters between Milwaukee County and Waukesha County clearly are still more interested in taking their individual vehicles than jumping on any mass transit system, whether it be train or even bus.

Anybody who commutes regularly understands the problems:

- Mass transit routes are generally not extensive and flexible enough to accommodate people whose hours are not the same every day.
- Even with parking and expense and the cost of gas, the cost savings by riding mass transit may not be significant.
- Perhaps most importantly, if your destination is not near the central transit station, it may be difficult, more expensive and more time consuming to take another mode of transportation from that central transit headquarters.

Trying to limit the size of the freeway in the hope that people will voluntarily use mass transit – or be forced into it – is like buying a pair of pants that won’t fit in the hope that your diet will eventually work. In this case, the people using the system don’t believe they have a problem, despite all the complaints by environmental groups about emissions, over consumption of fuels and urban relocations of homes and businesses.

Expanding the freeway is a natural result of expanding suburbs just like loosening a belt a notch.

It is also the proper way to handle the challenge that mass transit apparently is not equipped to meet.

But opponents like Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist have a good point when they say the citizens deserve to know how the $6.25 billion freeway project will be funded. If it is to come from a 20 cents-per-gallon gasoline tax increase for the next decade, taxpayers should be told that so they determine if they are still on board the bandwagon.

The Waukesha Freeman
October 9, 2002
Poll surveys level of support for rebuilding freeway

SEWRPC claims huge support for new lanes

By DENNIS A. SHOOK
Senior Staff Writer

WAUKESHA — Southeastern Wisconsin residents overwhelmingly support rebuilding and expanding the regional interstate system, based on a recently completed survey.

But a group opposed to the freeway work called the effort “biased.”

More than 15,600 households from seven counties responded to a survey conducted by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in July and August. In a release Monday Gov. Scott McCallum said the results indicate broad support for a $6.25 billion plan to improve and expand the freeway system.

The survey shows that more than 87 percent of respondents favor rebuilding the interstate system to meet modern design standards. Among those standards is adding two lanes to the six-lane east-west corridor connecting Waukesha County to downtown Milwaukee, which has proven to be the most controversial aspect of the plan.

Plan has critics

One section of the freeway near Mitchell Boulevard, abutting the Story Hill neighborhood just north of Miller Park, might require elevating — or decking — part of the freeway to accommodate the expansion.

Waukesha County Executive Daniel Finley favors the plan while Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist opposes it. The two leaders are slated to discuss regional transportation issues at a free public forum at noon Thursday at Turner Hall, 1034 N. Fourth St., Milwaukee. The forum is sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

"These survey results clearly indicate strong support in southeast Wisconsin for a quality freeway system that will promote economic development and enhance public safety," McCallum said.

"We also know this freeway system is rapidly aging and needs to be rebuilt soon. What people are saying is we should plan for the future and do the job right the first time."

But Norquist has criticized the plan because it fails to consider other modes of transportation to move people, such as a rail system. He also has said there is no money available for it right now and it would mean a tax hike to provide needed money.

Brett Hulsey, senior Midwest representative for the Sierra Club, a conservation group, also criticized the plan and the survey.

"This plan cost the state $40,000 in taxpayer funds to produce," Hulsey said. "It asks questions like, 'Are you in favor of less traffic in Wisconsin?' But it doesn't ask people what they would think if the state were going to add 20 cents a gallon to the gas tax to pay for this and not even look at alternatives like rail."

Hulsey called it "a desperate action by desperate road builders. It's a totally bogus and biased survey."

Other survey details

Other survey results show:

• About 75 percent support more lanes on the freeway system in their own county to address traffic congestion problems.

• Nearly 74 percent support more lanes in six southeast counties other than their county of residence.

• More than 76 percent favor an expansion plan providing eight freeway lanes on sections of Interstate 43 and Interstate 94 in Milwaukee County.

• About 72 percent consider the projected growth in traffic congestion during the next 20 years to be unacceptable. This congestion would occur without freeway expansion and despite public transit expansion, land use changes and surface street improvements.

SEWRPC conducted the random survey to gauge local residents’ reactions to an ongoing study of how to reconstruct the southeast freeway system during the next 20 years.

The study, commissioned by the state of Wisconsin, examines the economic development, infrastructure, design and traffic flow concerns relating to the 270-mile freeway system in Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha counties.

Among SEWRPC’s preliminary alternatives is a $6.5 billion option that would reconstruct the system to meet modern design standards and address infrastructure and many safety concerns, but would not add highway capacity.

A total of 52,000 households in the seven counties were selected randomly to receive the confidential, 11-question form. Some 15,201 households responded, yielding a response rate of nearly 29 percent.

The survey has an overall error margin of plus or minus 1 percent, with an error margin of 1.5 percent for Milwaukee County and 2 percent for the city of Milwaukee.

Six of the seven southeast Wisconsin county boards already have indicated their support for SEWRPC’s recommendations. Action by the Milwaukee County Board is expected by the end of this year.

Waukesha Freeman
October 8, 2002
State survey backs freeway expansion

Milwaukee mayor, others criticize findings

By DAVE RANK
Daily News Staff

Nearly 90 percent of Washington County residents responding to a survey said they favor rebuilding the freeway system in Southeastern Wisconsin to meet modern design standards, more than two percentage points higher than the public's 87 percent response as a whole in the region.

Nearly three-quarters of the people in Southeast Wisconsin who responded to the survey support modernization and expansion of the southeast freeway system to avoid traffic congestion and to elevate aging roadways to modern safety and traffic demand standards.

More than 15,000 households from seven counties filled out and returned the survey conducted by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC).

Survey results were released by the state at a news conference Monday.

Milwaukee Mayor John O. Norquist, backers of public transit and environmentalists blasted the survey results, saying the questions were biased toward expansion while failing to mention cost or funding mechanisms.

The freeway modifications and expansions, including those in Washington County, proposed by the state's Department of Transportation are included in a $6.5 billion plan to rebuild the region's interstate highways over the next 20 years.

In Washington County, it is proposed to extend the six lanes on Highway 41/45 from Milwaukee County north to the highways 41 and 45 exchange in the town of Richfield.

That program began with the refurbishing of the Marquette Interchange in Milwaukee County this year.

"Improvements to the freeway system in Southeastern Wisconsin will benefit all of the residents of this region," said Kenneth Miller, Washington County Board chairman.

Increasing ease of travel means more expanded work and recreation options for residents of this county and easier access to Washington County for travelers and tourists," he said in a written statement on the survey results issued from his office.

Other survey results for Washington County residents:
- 84 percent agreed additional lanes on the freeway system were needed to address traffic congestion. Overall, 75 percent of respondents agreed.
- 77 percent supported expansions to provide eight freeway lanes on I-43 and I-44 in Washington County. Regionally, more than 76 percent agreed.
- Just under 70 percent considered the projected 20 years of traffic congestion growth rate to be unacceptable, compared to 72 percent regionally.

SEWRPC conducted the random survey to evaluate local residents' responses to an ongoing study of how to reconstruct the southeast freeway system over the next two decades.

Commissioned by the state, the study examines the economic development, infrastructure, design, safety and traffic flow concerns relating to the 750-mile freeway system in Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha counties.

SEWRPC's preliminary results present a $6.5 billion option to reconstruct the system to modern design infrastructure and safety standards, but not for additional capacity.

The $6.25 billion option would add capacity to 120 miles of freeway while also correcting infrastructure, design, safety and traffic flow problems.

The more expensive option would also halt the growth of traffic congestion on the freeway system over the next 20 years, SEWRPC claims.

The survey was conducted this past summer through a random selection of 30,000 households in the seven counties that received the nine-question form.

Better than 27 percent (over 15,000) responded, nearly double the typical response rate for a survey of this type, SEWRPC stated.

The freeway survey has an overall error margin of plus or minus 1 percent.

The error margin for Washington County's respondents alone was estimated at 4.1 percent.

West Bend Daily News
October 8, 2002
Survey finds support for rebuilding freeway system

BY DAVID STEINKRAUS
Journal Times

MILWAUKEE — A survey of southeastern Wisconsin residents found fairly uniform and strong support for rebuilding and expanding the area’s freeway system, officials said Monday. That was followed by some sparring over the leadership shown by Gov. Scott McCallum.

Results of the survey were released during a press conference at the Midwest Express Center. The survey is part of the development of a highway system reconstruction plan, and specifically was the result of questions raised during public informational meetings, said Ken Yunker, deputy director of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. SEWRPC is leading the plan’s development.

At the press conference, McCallum said the survey shows people of the region know that a good highway system is necessary for the economic strength of the state.

“Among the survey’s findings:

■ In the region, 82.4 percent of survey respondents (81.8 percent of those in Racine County) said traffic congestion is a severe and growing problem at peak travel times or other times.

■ Rebuilding the freeway system with additional lanes in their counties of residence was supported or strongly supported by 75.3 percent of survey respondents (72.7 percent in Racine County).

■ Rebuilding the freeway system with additional lanes in some other county in the region was favored or strongly favored by 73.4 percent of survey respondents in the region (77.9 percent in Racine County).

“I am committed to making investments in all modes — transit, rail, airports, and highways — to keep our citizens safe and to support economic growth in Wisconsin,” McCallum said.

“The 276 miles of freeway in southeastern Wisconsin are the backbone of the transportation network and the lifelines of our economy. Quite simply, this freeway system means jobs for the people of this region and for all of Wisconsin.”

Already the estimate for rebuilding the Marquette interchange in Milwaukee has decreased from $1.9 billion to between $750,000 and $800,000, McCallum said.

The financing for the plan, and the survey itself, were blasted afterwards by Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist. “The survey was loaded,” he said.

It wasn’t, said Yunker. It was designed not to lead people to a conclusion, and it was done with the help of a company experienced in surveys, he said.

Norquist also knocked the lack of firm funding for the road work. There’s no money in place for the Marquette interchange work, he said. “And then to go on from there, and promise six and a half to seven and a half billion dollars of new spending for expanded highways in southeastern Wisconsin without any source of financing whatsoever is completely irresponsible. And it shows you why the McCallum administration has gotten the state in a deep deficit, not only in transportation, but, as we all know, bankrupted the state in terms of general purpose revenue.”

There will be a funding plan in place, said Thomas Carlson, acting secretary of the Transportation Department. Government doesn’t put all funding in place ahead of time for projects planned out 20 years, he said.

The preliminary highway reconstruction plan calls for adding lanes on about 47 percent of the regional freeway system in addition to rebuilding the roads, which are reaching the ends of their lives. The cost is estimated at about $6.25 billion over 30 years.

Specifically for Racine County, the plan calls for widening Interstate 94 from six to eight lanes and separating exit ramps from frontage roads beside the highway.

But the issue is broader, said Racine County Executive Jean Jacobson, who served on the advisory committee for the freeway study. Two-thirds of all the state’s commerce passes through the Marquette interchange in Milwaukee, and a large fraction of Racine County residents use these roads regularly, she said. “It’s not just the fact that this I-94 runs through our county. It is a major artery to our everyday events.”

The survey says that 45.8 percent of Racine County respondents, in households where there is one full-time worker, drive on the region’s freeway system almost every day.

Surveys were mailed to more than 15,000 homes throughout the seven-county region that comprises southeastern Wisconsin. More than 27 percent of the surveys were returned, according to the study summary. Forms were mailed out in July under the signatures of the executives or board chairmen for each county. That local tie was probably the reason for the good rate of return, Jacobson said.

Making It Right

If you see an error in a story or a photograph in The Journal Times, please call City Editor Sherri Jackson at (262) 631-7228 after 10 a.m. weekdays or News Editor Tom Farley at (262) 631-7228 after 5 p.m. weekdays or weekends. Corrections will be carried on this page.

An item in Tuesday’s Journal Times said that a survey about reconstruction of the southeastern Wisconsin freeway system was the result of questions raised at public informational meetings. Ken Yunker, of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, said the survey had been long planned and was not developed to contradict or distort the opinions collected at the meetings.
McCallum favors freeway system upgrade

KENOSHA NEWS STAFF

MILWAUKEE — Major renovation and expansion of the freeway system in southeastern Wisconsin over the next 20 years is being planned by the state.

The announcement Monday by Gov. Scott McCallum comes on the heels of an extensive survey by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission that showed overwhelming support for updating the system and improving safety measures.

The state has not yet determined how it will pay for the $6.23 billion project on a 270-mile stretch of highway in seven counties, nor has it developed any specific construction plans.

"Kenosha County is the gateway to Wisconsin from the south," said County Executive Allan Kehl, who endorsed the plan. "Addressing traffic congestion issues is important to our economy because it will ensure that residences and businesses in Kenosha County continue to grow and remain an attractive place to live and work for our neighboring communities."

More than 15,000 households in southeastern Wisconsin responded to the survey. Eighty-seven percent said they are in favor of renovations.

Seventy-five percent said they support renovations in their own counties, and 74 percent said they would like to see additional northbound and southbound lanes, especially four lanes in each direction on I-94 in Milwaukee County. Seventy-two percent said they consider more growth in traffic congestion unacceptable.

The Kenosha County results mirror the regional tally. Eighty-seven percent said they favor reconstruction. Seventy-five percent said they want work done in Kenosha County, and an equal number said they want freeways expanded in Milwaukee County.

McCallum said inefficiencies cost the state jobs, and he considers the project an economic development boost as well as an aid to a good transportation system.

"We will try to avoid inconveniences and relocations," McCallum said. "There are no immediate assurances of federal funding, but some will eventually come our way."

First on the priority list is the $860 million rebuilding of the Marquette Interchange in downtown Milwaukee.

Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist criticized the plan because it does not identify financing sources and does not outline what the cost will be to local governments.

"The state has gotten into deep deficits because of this kind of planning," Norquist said.

Kenosha News
October 8, 2002
Mayor slams freeway survey at conference

Planning commission finds support for added lanes; McCallum praises results

BY LARRY SANDLER
lsandler@journaltimes.com

A gubernatorial news conference turned into an impromptu debate over freeway expansion Monday, as Mayor John O. Norquist slugged it out with Gov. Scott McCallum’s administration at the Midwest Express Center.

McCallum had called the news conference to announce the results of a survey that, he said, shows overwhelming support for a $6.25 billion plan to rebuild the area’s freeways with 177 miles of new lanes. He was joined by Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker, Waukesha County Executive Dan Finley, Racine County Executive Jean Jacobsen and Ozaukee County Board Chairman Gus Wirth.

“Southeastern Wisconsin supports a modern and essential freeway system. Now it’s time to get it done,” McCallum said.

But after the governor left the room, Norquist took the microphone and blasted the mail survey as “blamed” and “loaded” because the questions focused on relieving traffic congestion and safety hazards but never mentioned the price tag.

He said the survey was concocted to cover up the results of public hearings in which most speakers opposed freeway expansion.

WHAT THEY SAID

Gov. Scott McCallum, supporting a $6.25 billion plan to rebuild the area’s freeways with 177 miles of new lanes: “Southeastern Wisconsin supports a modern and essential freeway system. Now it’s time to get it done.”

Mayor John O. Norquist, calling the plan irresponsible in light of the general-fund deficit projected at $2.8 billion for the next biennium:

It shows why the McCallum administration has bankrupted the state.”

In addition, Norquist said, proposing such a freeway plan without the money to pay for it was “completely irresponsible. It shows why the McCallum administration has bankrupted the state,” a reference to the general-fund deficit projected at $2.8 billion for the next biennium.

Tom Carlsem, McCallum’s acting transportation secretary, then rose to defend the administration, but Norquist remained at the podium to debate it.

The transportation chief said state officials would have a financing plan in place before the freeways were rebuilt.

Norquist, a Democrat, asked if the Republican governor would announce that financing plan before the Nov. 5 election.

Carlsem said the election wasn’t a factor in highway planning. Norquist said McCallum just didn’t want to talk about raising gas taxes before the election.

The $6.25 billion plan is the preliminary recommendation of a Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission advisory committee studying how to rebuild the area’s aging freeways as they wear out over the next 20 to 30 years. That plan would expand the area’s biggest freeways from six lanes to eight.

Current gas taxes and license fees would not cover the cost of the plan.

McCallum said he hopes to win more federal aid to help cover the costs.

During a series of public hearings last spring, the commission received comments from 310 people, of whom 232 opposed freeway widening and 66 supported it, with the rest either supporting other options or expressing no opinion.

Almost 1,500 others sent postcards preprinted by the Sierra Club, urging officials to expand public transit instead of freeways. Planners said they sent out 200,000 randomly selected households in seven counties this summer, receiving more than 15,000 responses.

That survey found support for adding lanes at 75% both area-wide and in the city, with support between 70% and 66% in six of the counties. In Walworth County, which has little freeway congestion, only 59% backed expansion.

CITIZENS ALLIED FOR SANE HIGHWAYS, a newly formed coalition of six west-side and south-side neighborhood associations, joined Norquist in assailing the survey.

In a news release, coalition co-chair Bob Trimmer said the survey was “designed to get the answers SEWRPC wanted.”

But William R. Drew, chairman of the study committee, adamantly dismissed the claim that the survey was designed to counteract opposition from the spring hearings. He said the poll was planned in advance.

Asked whether the survey didn’t mention the cost of freeway expansion, Drew replied, “I don’t think that the cost is relevant to the planning process.”

Opposition to freeway expansion has been hottest on Milwaukee’s west side, where planners have talked about double-decking I-94 west of the Story Hill neighborhood to avoid moving graves.

The anti-freeway coalition said the planning commission has not done a good job of explaining how its plan would harm neighborhoods and ease homes.

But McCallum and Walker said freeway expansion offers economic benefits.

The governor called the freeway system the economic backbone of the area, helping people reach jobs. Walker said businesses want to ease congestion so trucks can deliver products.

After the news conference, state Rep. Jeff Brandel (R-Greenbush), chairman of the Assembly Transportation Committee, said improving area transportation would depend on building a consensus for a package that includes not only expanding freeways, but also improving public transit and extending Chicago’s Metra commuter trains from Kenosha to Racine and Milwaukee.

The planning commission is studying the commuter rail concept, which could cost $132 million to build.

Stone said he agrees with rail advocates who have called for setting up a smaller version of the rail line to give commuters an option during reconstruction of the Marquette Interchange, set to start late next year, and future freeway work.

“We’ve got to get beyond looking at this stuff piecemeal,” Stone said. "People are going to have to get a bigger mind-set.”

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
October 8, 2002
Poll surveys level of support for rebuilding freeway
SEWRPC claims huge support for new lanes

By DENNIS A. SHOOK - GM Today Staff
October 8, 2002

WAUKESHA - Southeastern Wisconsin residents overwhelmingly support rebuilding and expanding the regional interstate system, based on a recently completed survey.

But a group opposed to the freeway work called the effort "biased."

More than 15,000 households from seven counties responded to a survey conducted by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in July and August. In a release Monday, Gov. Scott McCallum said the results indicate broad support for a $6.25 billion plan to improve and expand the freeway system.

The governor recently signed a bill that requires the freeway to be rebuilt to that standard, adding lanes in seven sections.

The survey shows that more than 87 percent of respondents favor rebuilding the interstate system to meet modern design standards. Among those standards is adding two lanes to the six-lane east-west corridor connecting Waukesha County to downtown Milwaukee, which has proven to be the most controversial aspect of the plan.

Plan has critics

One section of the freeway near Mitchell Boulevard, abutting the Story Hill neighborhood just north of Miller Park, might require elevating - or decapping - part of the freeway to accommodate the expansion.

Waukesha County Executive Daniel Finley favors the plan while Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist opposes it. The two leaders are slated to discuss regional transportation issues at a free public forum at noon Thursday at Turner Hall, 1034 N. Fourth St., Milwaukee. The forum is sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

"These survey results clearly indicate strong support in southeast Wisconsin for a quality freeway system that will promote economic development and enhance public safety," McCallum said. "We all know this freeway system is rapidly aging and needs to be rebuilt soon. What people are saying is that we should plan for the future and do the job right the first time."

But Norquist has criticized the plan because it fails to consider other modes of transportation to move people, such as a rail system. He also said there is no money available for it right now and it would mean a tax hike to provide needed money.

Bret Hulsey, senior Midwest representative for the Sierra Club, a conservation group, also criticized the plan and the survey.

"This plan cost the state $40,000 in taxpayer funds to produce," Hulsey said. "It looks like a $40,000 report because it doesn't ask people what they would think if the state were going to add 25 cents a gallon to the gas tax to pay for this and not even look at alternatives like rail."

Hulsey called it "a desperate action by desperate road builders. It's a thinly-veiled and biased survey."

Other survey details

Other survey results show:

- About 75 percent support more lanes on the freeway system in their own county to address traffic congestion problems.
- Nearly 74 percent support more lanes in six southeast counties other than their county of residence.
- More than 76 percent favor an expansion plan providing eight freeway lanes on sections of Interstate 43 and Interstate 94 in Milwaukee County.
- About 72 percent consider the projected growth in traffic congestion during the next 20 years to be unacceptable.

This congestion would occur without freeway expansion and despite public transit expansion, land use changes and surface street improvements.

SEWRPC conducted the random survey to gauge local residents' reactions to an ongoing study of how to reconstruct the southeast freeway system during the next 20 years.

The study, commissioned by the state of Wisconsin, examines the economic development, infrastructure, design, safety and traffic flow concerns relating to the 270-mile freeway system in Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha counties.

Among SEWRPC's preliminary alternatives is a $5.5 billion option that would reconstruct the system to meet modern design standards and address infrastructure and safety deficiencies, but would not add highway capacity. A $6.25 billion option that adds capacity to 120 miles of freeway corridor would address infrastructure, design, safety and traffic flow concerns, especially to address traffic congestion projected on the system during the next 20 years.

A total of 58,000 households in the seven counties were selected randomly to receive the confidential, 11-question form. Some 15,241 households responded, yielding a response rate of nearly 26 percent. The survey has an overall error margin of plus or minus 1 percent, with an error margin of 1.5 percent for Milwaukee County and 2 percent for the city of Milwaukee.

Six of the seven southeast Wisconsin counties already have indicated their support for SEWRPC's recommendations. Action by the Milwaukee County Board is expected by the end of this year.

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Milwaukee mayor blasts freeway survey; Governor praises results

October 8, 2002

MILWAUKEE - Gov. Scott McCallum praised survey results he says show overwhelming support for a $6.25 billion plan to rebuild the area's freeways, but the city's mayor called the survey's questions biased.

"Southeastern Wisconsin supports a modern and essential freeway system. Now it's time to get it done," the Republican governor said Monday at a news conference announcing the survey's results.

After he left the room, Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist took the microphone and called the survey's questions loaded because they focused on relieving traffic congestion and safety hazards but never mentioned the plan's cost. The project would add 127 miles of new freeway lanes.

Norquist, a Democrat, claimed the survey was designed to cover up the results of public hearings in which most speakers opposed freeway expansion. He said proposing the plan without money to fund it was irresponsible.

"It shows why the McCallum administration ... has bankrupted the state," Norquist said, referring to a state budget deficit projected to reach $2.8 billion in the next biennium.

McCallum's acting transportation secretary, Tom Carlsen, defended the administration by saying state officials would put in place a financing plan before rebuilding the freeways.

McCallum said he hopes more federal aid will help cover the costs.

A Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission advisory committee issued the $6.25 billion plan as a preliminary recommendation to rebuild the area's aging freeways over the next 20 to 30 years.

Committee chairman William R. Drew said planners designed the survey before the spring public hearings. He said the survey did not mention the plan's cost because it wasn't relevant to the planning process.

Planners received 15,000 responses to surveys mailed to 55,000 randomly selected households in seven counties this summer. The survey found 75 percent of respondents supported adding freeway lanes.

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C-68
SEWRPC plan backed

By Candace Doyle
Editor

Oct. 7, 2002

A Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission survey of 15,000 households from seven counties revealed widespread support for a $6.25 billion plan to rebuild the region’s interstates highways. Gov. Scott McCallum said at a press conference Monday afternoon.

“It’s encouraging to see that residents of southeastern Wisconsin recognize the need for modernization and expansion of our freeway system and are supportive of the plan,” McCallum said. “This project is essential in making our state a better place to live, work and visit in the future.”

The survey, conducted in July and August by randomly selecting 15,000 households in Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha counties, found that 97 percent of respondents favored rebuilding the freeway system to meet modern design standards. In Milwaukee County, the plan received stronger support, with 88 percent favoring rebuilding the system.

“Milwaukee County is the source of job opportunities for residents in Wisconsin,” said Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker. “Addressing transportation issues is absolutely critical if Milwaukee plans to continue to attract and retain new industry and be a leader in hosting cultural and civic events.”

The survey also uncovered that:

- Almost 75 percent of the survey sample, including 78 percent of Milwaukee County respondents, called for additional lanes on the freeway system to address traffic congestion.
- More than 76 percent supported expansions to provide eight freeway lanes on Interstate 43 and I-94 in Milwaukee County, with 74 percent of Milwaukee County respondents and 72 percent of city of Milwaukee respondents supporting the additions.
- Just more than 72 percent of the respondents considered the 20-year traffic-congestion growth to be unacceptable, including 73 percent of Milwaukee County respondents. This congestion would occur without freeway expansions and despite public transit, growth and street and other improvements, according to SEWRPC.

Getting results

The survey, commissioned by the state, was conducted to gauge residents’ support for SEWRPC’s recommended $6.25 billion plan for the seven-county, 270-mile freeway system in southeastern Wisconsin. The plan, one of three originally considered by SEWRPC, is the costliest and has come under fire by Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist as well as the American Civil Liberties Union.

The ACLU criticized the plan because it believes it would unfairly harm low-income and minority populations in the project’s urban areas. Milwaukee’s mayor opposed it because he claims freeways push development away from central cities and because of its high cost.

After the press conference Monday, Norquist reiterated his concerns about the project and said the survey was biased because it did not include the project’s cost estimates. The survey questions also failed to spell out how the project would be financed, he said.

“I think the survey was created as a way to try to cover up for the overwhelming opposition they heard during the public hearing process,” Norquist said.

SEWRPC held 11 public hearings on the recommended plan, which is costlier than its alternatives because, the agency said, it confronts traffic needs. The least expensive plan, at $3.4 billion, would rebuild the freeway system along its existing footprint, which the agency said would merely add to congestion.

The second, $5.5 billion plan would have added shoulders, eliminated the left-hand exit and improved sight lines for motorists but not sufficiently reduce traffic congestion, SEWRPC said.

The final and recommended alternative incorporates design upgrades and adds lanes to 127 miles of freeway, primarily in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties. This $6.25 billion plan, SEWRPC officials said, would result in a 50 percent reduction in the number of miles affected by heavy traffic loads and ease the burden on local roads and surface streets.

The three plans were developed because the aging infrastructure, built in the 1950s and 1970s, will be outdated in the next decade, and SEWRPC maps outlining traffic patterns show moderate and extreme congestion on many stretches of interstates 94, 43 and 894.

Supervisors in six of the seven counties have approved the plan; the Milwaukee County Board is expected to vote on the project by the end of the year.
Survey: Residents approve $6.25B freeway rebuild

About three out of every four residents of southeast Wisconsin approve of a $6.25 billion plan to rebuild the region's freeway system, including plans to widen a section of I-43 and I-94 in Milwaukee County to eight lanes, according to results of a survey released Monday.

The goal of the modernization and expansion plan is to reduce traffic congestion and to upgrade the freeway system to greater safety and traffic demand standards.

More than 15,900 households from seven counties responded to a survey conducted by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in July and August.

Key survey findings indicate:

- More than 87 percent of respondents — including more than 88 percent in Milwaukee County — are in favor of rebuilding the freeway system to meet modern design standards.

- About 75 percent support additional lanes on the freeway system in their own county to address traffic congestion problems. Seventy-eight percent of Milwaukee County respondents support adding lanes in the county.

- More than 76 percent favor an expansion plan providing eight freeway lanes on sections of I-43 and I-94 in Milwaukee County.

- Seventy-two percent consider the projected growth in traffic congestion during the next 20 years to be unacceptable. This congestion would occur without freeway expansion and despite public transit expansion, road use changes, and surface street improvements, the commission said.

Nearly three-fourths of respondents voted in favor of plans to rebuild the southeast freeway system with both design modifications and expansions of key corridors, including eight freeway lanes along segments of I-43 and I-94 in Milwaukee County.

The results indicate broad support for a $6.25 billion plan to improve and expand the freeway system.

"These survey results clearly indicate strong support in southeast Wisconsin for a quality freeway system that will promote economic development and enhance public safety," Gov. Scott McCallum said of the survey. "We all know this freeway system is rapidly aging and needs to be rebuilt soon. What people are saying is that we should plan for the future and do the job right the first time."

Among the planning commission's preliminary alternatives is a $3.5 billion option that would reconstruct the system to meet modern design standards and address infrastructure and many safety concerns, but would not add highway capacity.

A $6.25 billion option that adds capacity to 120 miles of freeway corridor would address infrastructure, design, safety and traffic flow concerns, particularly to address traffic congestion projected on the system during the next 20 years.

The commission conducted the random survey to gauge local residents' reactions to an ongoing study of how to reconstruct the southeast freeway system during the next 20 years. The study, commissioned by the state of Wisconsin, examines the economic development, infrastructure, design, safety and traffic flow concerns related to the 270-mile freeway system in Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha counties.

A total of 55,000 households in the seven counties were selected randomly to receive the confidential, 11-question form. About 15,341 households responded, yielding a response rate of nearly 28 percent. The survey has an overall error margin of plus or minus 1 percent, with an error margin of 1.5 percent for Milwaukee County and 2 percent for the city of Milwaukee.

Six of the seven southeast Wisconsin county boards already have indicated their support for commission's recommendations. Action by the Milwaukee County Board is expected by the end of this year.
Appendix D

ADDITIONAL BRIEFINGS TO INTERESTED GROUPS AND MUNICIPALITIES REGARDING THE REGIONAL FREEWAY SYSTEM RECONSTRUCTION STUDY AND THE PRELIMINARY FREEWAY SYSTEM RECONSTRUCTION PLAN
**Study Briefings to Interested Groups and Municipalities**

In addition to the efforts to solicit input regarding the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Freeway System Reconstruction Study and the preliminary plan for freeway system reconstruction previously noted, Commission staff provided briefings regarding the study and preliminary plan to numerous groups and municipalities. Commission staff provided briefings to the following groups and municipalities between September 1, 2002 and March 12, 2003:

- **Milwaukee Near North Side Business and Community Leaders** – Comments received at this October 10, 2002 meeting expressed the need for minority-owned businesses to participate significantly in freeway reconstruction, as well as for minorities to be a significant part of the reconstruction labor force.

- **Racine/Kenosha Economic Inclusion Coalition** – Comments received at this November 14, 2002 meeting expressed the need for minority-owned businesses within Kenosha and Racine Counties to participate significantly in freeway reconstruction, as well as for minorities in Kenosha and Racine Counties to be a significant part of the reconstruction labor force.

- **The Business Council, Inc.** – Comments received at this December 3, 2002 meeting expressed the need for minority-owned businesses to participate significantly in freeway reconstruction, as well as for minorities to be a significant part of the reconstruction labor force.

- **Milwaukee Near South Side Neighborhood** – Comments received at this January 16, 2003 meeting expressed concerns regarding the right-of-way requirements of reconstructing to meet modern design standards and provide additional lanes and concerns regarding increases in freeway traffic noise levels. There was additional concern about false information this neighborhood had received, which indicated that freeway reconstruction would require substantial property acquisition, beyond any residential takings, including the Esperanza Unida building, the United Community Center, and area churches.

- **City of Wauwatosa** – Commission staff provided a briefing on the regional freeway system reconstruction study and preliminary freeway system reconstruction plan to the City of Wauwatosa Common Council on January 21, 2002.

- **City of West Allis** – Comments received at this January 29, 2003 meeting expressed concerns regarding the right-of-way requirements of reconstructing to meet modern design standards and provide additional lanes, concerns regarding increases in freeway traffic noise levels, and concerns over mitigation strategies dealing with potential negative impacts of freeway system reconstruction.

- **Milwaukee Near South Side** – Comments received at this February 8, 2003 forum expressed concern over the cost of preliminary recommended freeway reconstruction plan, increases in freeway traffic noise levels, and actual and perceived negative impacts on the Hispanic community due to freeway system reconstruction.

- **Village of Whitefish Bay** – Comments received at this February 12, 2003 meeting expressed concern regarding increases in freeway traffic noise levels, the current noise mitigation practices employed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, opposition to the widening of IH 43 to eight lanes in northern Milwaukee County, and support for improved public transit.