

MINUTES OF THE FOURTEENTH MEETING

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

DATE: May 10, 2006
TIME: 9:30 a.m.
PLACE: Meeting Room A
Zoofari Conference Center
9715 W. Bluemound Road
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Committee Members Present

Frederick J. Patrie, Chairman..... Director of Public Works, Kenosha County
Sandra K. Beaupre Director, Bureau of Planning,
Division of Transportation Investment Management,
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
John M. Bennett City Engineer, City of Franklin
Daniel A. Boehm Manager of Research and Planning,
(Representing Kenneth J. Warren) Milwaukee County Transit System
Donna L. Brown..... Systems Planning Group Manager, Southeast Region,
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Allison M. Bussler Chief of Staff, Waukesha County Executive's Office
Shane Crawford Director of Public Works, Walworth County
Robert R. Dreblow Highway Commissioner, Ozaukee County
Paul A. Feller Director of Public Works, City of Waukesha
Chris Fornal Planning Development and ITS Engineer,
(Representing Jeffrey J. Mantes) City of Milwaukee
Thomas M. Grisa Director of Public Works, City of Brookfield
Richard M. Jones Commissioner of Public Works, City of Racine
William A. Kappel Director of Public Works, City of Wauwatosa
Glenn M. Lampark Director of Public Works, Racine County
Michael M. Lemens Director of Engineering, City of Kenosha
Dwight E. McComb Planning and Program Development Engineer,
Federal Highway Administration,
U.S. Dept. of Transportation
Gloria L. McCutcheon Southeast Regional Director,
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Larry Moore Community Partnership Coordinator,
City of Milwaukee Housing Authority
Kenneth M. Pesch Highway Commissioner, Washington County
Jeffrey S. Polenske City Engineer, City of Milwaukee
Wallace C. Thiel Village Administrator, Village of Hartland
George A. Torres Director of Transportation and Public Works,
Department of Public Works, Milwaukee County
Sandra Rusch Walton..... Director, Injury and Violence,
Prevention Program, City of Milwaukee Health Department

Staff Members and Guests Present

Robert E. BeglingerChief Transportation Engineer, SEWRPC
David M. Jolicoeur..... Senior Engineer, SEWRPC
Kathryn Kuhn.....Medical College of Wisconsin
Bill Moore..... Sierra Club
Rosemary Potter..... Transit NOW
Karyn Rotker..... Staff Attorney, ACLU
Ronald J. Rutkowski Transportation Planning Director,
Department of Public Works, Milwaukee County
Gretchen Schuldt.....CASH
Aileen I. Switzer Program Administration Supervisor, Southeast Region
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Kenneth R. Yunker Deputy Director, SEWRPC
Josh ZepnickState Representative, 9th Assembly District,
Wisconsin State Assembly

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

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

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 1, 2006, MEETING

Chairman Patrie asked if there were any questions or comments on the minutes of the Advisory Committee's thirteenth meeting held on March 1, 2006. There being no questions or comments, a motion to approve the minutes as written was made by Mr. Moore, seconded by Mr. Lampark, and carried unanimously by the Committee.

REVIEW OF RECORD OF PUBLIC COMMENTS, REVIEW AND UPDATE OF REGIONAL LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLANS FOR SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN, VOLUME THREE, DECEMBER 1, 2005 THROUGH APRIL 20, 2006

Chairman Patrie asked Mr. Yunker to lead the Committee through a review of the third volume of the record of public comments on the review and update to the year 2035 of the regional land use and transportation system plans. During Mr. Yunker's review the following questions were raised and comments made by Committee members:

1. Ms. McCutcheon questioned the forecast motor fuel costs of \$2.30 per gallon, given the current motor fuel price per gallon. Mr. Yunker responded that the forecast motor fuel cost per gallon in the year 2035 was \$2.30 per gallon in 2005 constant dollars and about \$5.00 per gallon assuming a continuation of the rate of inflation experienced over the last 20 years. He noted that the forecast was higher than a recently issued U.S. Department of Energy forecast, and that this issue had been discussed at a previous Committee meeting. He added that it is important not to let current conditions influence too greatly a long term forecast. He noted that when regional plans were prepared in the early 1980's during a recession, many advocated for regional employment forecasts which would be no growth or continued decline. Mr. Yunker added that forecasts are reviewed annually and that the entire plan will be reviewed, and amended or reaffirmed every four years. Mr. Patrie noted that past Commission forecasts had been reviewed by the Committee at a previous meeting, and that they were determined to be very accurate.

2. Ms. Walton noted that the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) had transmitted a memorandum to Commission staff dated May 2, 2006, regarding Appendix C to the report. She added that Advisory Committee members received a copy of the ACLU memorandum and that Advisory Committee members had also received the Commission staff response on May 8, 2006. She asked if the Committee should reconsider this matter at a latter date, indicating that one day may not have been enough time for Committee members to review the ACLU memorandum and the Commission staff response. Mr. Patrie announced that the Advisory Committee would recess so that those members who had not previously or completely reviewed the materials could do so. He stated that the meeting would reconvene at 10:05 a.m.
3. Following the recess, Mr. Moore stated that he was not able to fully analyze the information in the time allotted. He added that there appeared to be serious concerns raised by the ACLU including regarding potential deficiencies in the collection of data and analyses. He asked if the ACLU should be given an opportunity at this meeting to explain their concerns. Mr. Lampark stated that he took the ACLU concerns seriously as well, but that the Commission staff response to their concerns was clear and sufficient and provided a good response to those concerns. Mr. Pesch agreed with Mr. Lampark and stated that based upon the Commission staff response to the concerns, there may have been a lack of research on behalf of those raising the concerns.
4. Mr. Polenske asked if this discussion was leading to a vote regarding Advisory Committee approval of Appendix C. Mr. Yunker stated responded the Advisory Committee had previously approved Appendix C at their February 8, 2006, meeting. He added that the Commission staff takes seriously the need to consider equity in the assessment of the costs and benefits of the regional transportation plan, particularly with respect to minority and low-income populations, and that the analyses conducted by the Commission staff comply with the applicable Federal requirements of Title VI and environmental justice (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 12898, *U.S. DOT Order on Environmental Justice*). Mr. Yunker stated that the analyses conducted by Commission staff are as, or more, comprehensive than those for other regional plans across the country. Mr. Yunker added that the Commission staff had been meeting with the ACLU and other groups in an effort to refine and enhance the Title VI and environmental justice analyses. He stated that the revised draft of Appendix C included some enhancements noted in the Commission staff letter of May 9, 2006.
5. Mr. Moore clarified that he was not questioning the integrity of the Commission staff, but he added that he also holds in high regard the agencies raising these concerns. Ms. McCutcheon noted that the allegations in the May 2nd memorandum are similar to those in the attachment to the March 1st meeting minutes. Mr. Yunker noted that this was correct, and that the staff response to the concerns raised in the attachment to the March 1 meeting minutes is outlined in *Record of Public Comments, Review and Update of Regional Land Use and Transportation System Plans for Southeastern Wisconsin, Volume Three, December 1, 2005 Through April 20, 2006*. Ms. McCutcheon asked about the consequences of postponing this matter until a later date. Mr. Yunker stated that there was a need to move forward on the final plan, and that postponing action on this Appendix could postpone completion of the final plan. Mr. Polenske stated that the Commission staff's response and their analyses are responsible, but questioned the timeliness of the issue given the seriousness of the ACLU concerns and that the Commission staff response was transmitted only two days prior to the Committee meeting.
6. Mr. Grisa asked about the date of the next meeting of the Advisory Committee should another meeting be required. Mr. Yunker responded that the next meeting, if required, would be at 9:00 a.m. on May 24, 2006, at a location yet to be determined.

7. Mr. Jones noted that there had been a public comment period in which the public and groups had an obligation to provide their comments. He stated that he was satisfied with the time frame provided for public comment which closed on April 20, 2006, and that the May 2, 2006, memorandum fell outside of the public comment period. Mr. Patrie noted that Ms. Rotker with the ACLU had requested 30 seconds to explain to the Advisory Committee why they did not meet the April 20, 2006 deadline. Ms. Rotker stated that the ACLU had been meeting with other groups and the Commission staff regarding Appendix C. She stated that she was not aware that recommended plan approval was going to be considered at this meeting until May 1, 2006, and therefore felt compelled to provide comment at that time. Mr. Yunker again acknowledged that the Commission staff had been meeting with the ACLU with the intent to refine and enhance analysis of Title VI and environmental justice in Commission planning efforts.
8. Mr. Polenske asked if groups such as the ACLU are allowed to make presentations at Advisory Committee meetings. Mr. Yunker responded that it be the Committee's decision if they wanted to allow such a presentation. Mr. Pesch stated that their comments should have been presented during the public comment period and that it would not be appropriate to allow them to address this Committee without offering the same opportunity to every group opposed to, or in favor of, some aspect of the plan, and therefore he was strongly opposed to allowing the ACLU to present at an Advisory Committee meeting.
9. Mr. Moore stated that not considering the comments from a group such as the ACLU may lead to questions regarding the plan. Mr. Yunker responded that the Commission staff had considered the ACLU comments, and some sections of Appendix C have been enhanced. He added that the purpose of the four series of public meetings and hearings held during the planning process, and the meetings and briefings between Commission staff and various groups was so that all interested persons and groups could provide their comments. He added that all comments received during the comment period had been brought to the attention of this Committee. Mr. Lampark noted that this Committee had just reviewed the third issue of the record of public comments and that the public had an obligation to provide their comments within that comment period.
10. Mr. Torres motioned to table consideration of the revised Appendix C until a May 24th, 2006, meeting. Mr. Grisa seconded the motion.
11. Mr. McComb noted that the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration on two occasions – in 2002 and again in 2004 – had reviewed the Commission's compliance regarding Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 12898, the *U.S. DOT Order on Environmental Justice*. He stated that both times, the Commission's Title VI and Environmental Justice efforts were found to be compliant. Mr. McComb added that he had attended meetings between the ACLU and Commission staff and stated that refining and enhancing the Commission's transportation planning Title VI and Environmental Justice analyses would continue to be an evolving process beyond this regional transportation plan.
12. Mr. Yunker stated that the Committee may want to first consider draft Chapters IX and X before further considering Appendix C. Mr. Torres withdrew his previous motion to table consideration of the revised Appendix C until May 24, 2006.

REVIEW OF PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF CHAPTER IX, “RECOMMENDED REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN” OF SEWRPC PLANNING REPORT NO. 49, “A REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLAN FOR SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN: 2035”

Chairman Patrie asked Mr. Yunker to lead the Committee through a review of the preliminary draft of Chapter IX, “Recommended Regional Transportation Plan.” During Mr. Yunker’s review the following questions were raised and comments made by Committee members:

1. Mr. Yunker noted that the Commission staff would propose that the text regarding new freeway interchanges on the existing freeway system on Maps 5 through 11 be added to the chapter text.

[Secretary’s Note: The following text is proposed to be added as the last paragraph prior to the heading **Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation of Environmental Impact** on page 38:

“On the existing freeway system three new freeway interchanges (IH 94 with Calhoun Road, IH 94 with Drexel Avenue, and IH 43 with Highland Road) are recommended in the plan, and the conversion of two half interchanges to full interchanges (IH 94 with 27th Street and IH 94 with CTH P) are recommended. The plan also recommends that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in the preliminary engineering now underway for the reconstruction of IH 94 between the Wisconsin-Illinois state line and the Mitchell Interchange consider the provision of collector-distributor roadways connecting CTH K with the existing interchanges at STH 50 and STH 158 in Kenosha County and provision of an interchange at CTH C in Racine County through provision of a split interchange with collector-distributor roadways connecting CTH C and STH 20. With respect to half interchanges, it is recommended that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation during the preliminary engineering of the reconstruction of the freeway system consider conversion of selected interchanges from half to full interchanges where interchange spacing and other conditions permit, consider as an alternative where conditions permit the combination of selected half interchanges into one full interchange, and retain all other existing half interchanges and examine during preliminary engineering the improvement of connection between adjacent interchanges. The plan also identifies four potential new future interchanges for consideration (CTH ML with IH 94, CTH B with USH 12, Bloomfield Road with USH 12, and CTH F with IH 43) and recommends that action be taken by local governments to preserve the potential necessary right-of-way to assure that the future development of these interchanges is not precluded. Should the concerned local governments take the next step of participating with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in the conduct of a preliminary engineering study of the interchange, and the preliminary engineering conclude with a recommendation to construct the interchange, the Regional Planning Commission, upon the request of the concerned local governments and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, would take action to amend the regional plan to recommend the construction of the interchange. (The potential interchange of CTH ML with IH 94 will be considered during the preliminary engineering now underway for the reconstruction of IH 94 between the Wisconsin-Illinois state line and the Mitchell Interchange.)”]

2. Mr. Boehm asked if it should be recommended that the State of Wisconsin return to funding 45 percent of the transit operating costs. Mr. Yunker replied that it was recommended that the State of Wisconsin fund 40 to 45 percent of transit operating costs, which should be sufficient to implement the plan.

There being no further comments or discussion regarding Chapter IX, Mr. Bennett motioned to approve Chapter IX. Mr. Feller seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

REVIEW OF PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF CHAPTER X, “PLAN IMPLEMENTATION” OF SEWRPC PLANNING REPORT NO. 49, “A REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLAN FOR SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN: 2035”

Chairman Patrie asked Mr. Yunker to lead the Committee through a review of the preliminary draft of Chapter X, “Plan Implementation.” During Mr. Yunker’s review the following questions were raised and comments made by Committee members:

1. Ms. McCutcheon noted that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources had some suggested text changes and would provide those to the Commission staff.

[Secretary’s Note: The last bullet item on page 7 has been revised to read:

It is recommended that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources continue to participate with the Regional Planning Commission to ensure transportation programs and plans conform with the State Implementation Plan for Air Quality.

Additionally, the text on page 21 under the heading, **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources** has been revised to read:

It is recommended that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources complete the State Implementation Plan for Air Quality and ensure that the regional transportation plan conforms to it.]

2. Mr. Lampark asked that a discussion regarding implementation of bicycle facilities be included in the Chapter. Mr. Yunker responded that such a discussion is included in Chapter IX, and the Commission staff would propose to include text in Chapter X as well.

[Secretary’s Note: The following text is proposed to be added following the first full paragraph on page 14:

“Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Element

The bicycle and pedestrian facility element of the final recommended plan is intended to promote safe accommodation of bicycle and pedestrian travel, and encourage bicycle and pedestrian travel as an alternative to personal vehicle travel. The regional plan recommends that as the surface arterial street system of about 3,300 miles in the Region is resurfaced and reconstructed segment-by-segment, the provision of accommodation for bicycle travel should be considered and implemented, if feasible, through bicycle lanes, widened outside travel lanes, widened and paved shoulders, or separate bicycle paths; that a system of approximately 575 miles of off-street bicycle paths be provided between the Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine urbanized areas and the cities and villages within the Region with a population of 5,000 or more located outside the three urbanized areas, such cities and villages being termed small urban areas; and that the various units and agencies of government responsible for the construction and maintenance of pedestrian facilities in Southeastern Wisconsin adopt and follow recommended standards and guidelines with regard to the development of pedestrian facilities, providing such facilities along streets and highways in areas of existing or planned urban development. A set of recommended standards and guidelines for bicycle and pedestrian facilities is provided in Appendix B.

It is also recommended that local units of government prepare community bicycle and pedestrian plans to supplement the regional plan. The local plans should provide for facilities to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian travel within neighborhoods, providing for convenient travel between residential areas and shopping centers, schools, parks, and transit stops within or adjacent to the neighborhood. The standards, guidelines, and system plans set forth in the regional plan should be the basis for the preparation of community and neighborhood plans. It is also recommended that local units of government consider the preparation and implementation of land use plans that encourage more compact and dense development patterns, in order to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle travel. The Regional Planning Commission, by request, will work with each local government to prepare community bicycle and pedestrian plans.

The level and unit of government responsible for constructing and maintaining the surface arterial street or highway should also have responsibility for constructing and maintaining the associated bicycle or pedestrian facility, or for entering into construction, operations, and/or maintenance agreements with local units or agencies of government. Accordingly, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation should assume responsibility for bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the right-of-way of State trunk highways and connecting streets; the respective county highway, transportation, or public works departments should assume responsibility for bicycle and pedestrian facilities located within the right-of-way of county trunk highways; and the various cities, villages, and towns should assume responsibility for bicycle and pedestrian facilities located within the right-of-way of streets and highways under their jurisdiction. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be considered for provision at the time a street or highway is constructed, reconstructed, or resurfaced.

A more detailed evaluation of the proposed accommodation of bicycles on surface arterial streets or highways should necessarily be conducted by the implementing agency as part of the engineering for the resurfacing, reconstruction, and new construction of each segment of surface arterial. Factors to be considered during the detailed evaluation include the availability of right-of-way; the number and type of structures and vegetation that may need to be removed or relocated to provide the bicycle facility; the effects on environmentally sensitive areas, including wetlands; the cost of providing the bicycle facility on a specific street or highway in relation to providing the bicycle-related improvement on a parallel street or off-street corridor; and the quality of the alternative locations and the likelihood that bicyclists would use those alternatives, including the potential for a recommended off-street bicycle path to serve as an alternative location. The location and design treatment of the proposed bicycle facility should also be coordinated with the location and design treatment of nearby bicycle facilities.

If the detailed evaluation process indicates that the recommended bicycle way location is not feasible due to site constraints, excessive costs, the traffic and operating characteristics of the roadway, or other factors, the implementing agency should identify an alternative location and evaluate the feasibility of the alternative route. The evaluation of the recommended bicycle accommodation, and, if necessary, the identification and evaluation of alternative locations, should be conducted during the preliminary engineering phase of project design. On all surface arterial streets and highways within the Region, preliminary engineering for rehabilitation, reconstruction, or new construction should consider the provision of the recommended bicycle accommodation, with the bicycle accommodation included as part of the project design,

or a commitment to provide an alternative bicycle facility on a parallel street or off-street corridor.

The level and unit of government responsible for constructing and maintaining the off-street bicycle facilities are shown on Map 1a and summarized in Table 1a. The recommended year 2035 off-street bicycle path jurisdiction is based on extending to the design year 2035 the year 2020 bicycle and pedestrian facilities system plan for the Southeastern Wisconsin Region.

Subsequent to the completion of the year 2035 plan, the Regional Planning Commission will review and update the jurisdictional responsibility of the off-street bicycle facilities as well as conduct an assessment of the priority of need for bicycle accommodation on each segment of the surface arterial street and highway system considering factors including traffic volume, composition, speed, and congestion.”

Map 1a and Table 1a referenced in the above text have been included as Attachments A and B to these minutes, respectively.]

3. Mr. Moore asked if the plan implementation recommendations included a timeline for the transit recommendations. Mr. Yunker responded that they did, and directed the Committee to Figure 1 on page 13a which sets forth a proposed 2.5 percent annual increase. Mr. Yunker stated that it was important to note that the plans prepared by Commission by law are advisory. He added that the public transit recommendations are considered in short-range planning and programming by local government transit operators, noting that the transit operators determine whether and when recommended transit improvement and expansion may be implemented.

There being no further comments or discussion regarding Chapter X, Mr. Feller made a motion to approve Chapter X. Ms. McCutcheon seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF APPENDIX C

Returning to previous discussion, Mr. Polenske motioned that this Committee meet again on May 24, 2006, to consider the May 2, 2006, ACLU memorandum, the Commission staff response, and the revised Appendix C. Ms. Walton seconded the motion. There being no further discussion regarding this matter, the motion passed on a vote of 16 ayes to 6 nays. Voting in favor of the motion were Messrs. Bennett, Boehm, Crawford, Feller, Fornal, Grisa, Kappel, Lampark, Lemens, Moore, Polenske, Thiel, and Torres, and Ms. Bussler, Ms. McCutcheon, and Ms. Walton. Voting against the motion were Messrs. Dreblow, Jones, Patrie, and Pesch, and Ms. Beaupre and Ms. Brown.

[Secretary's Note: Mr. Dwight E. McComb, the Federal Highway Administration representative on the Advisory Committee, is a non-voting ex officio member of the Advisory Committee, providing technical support and guidance during the planning process. Accordingly, Mr. McComb did not vote on this issue and has not voted on any of the other issues acted upon by the Advisory Committee throughout the regional transportation system planning process.]

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF THE YEAR 2035 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLAN FOR SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN

Mr. Patrie noted that to this point the Advisory Committee had considered and approved the plan chapters and appendices, with the possible exception of some changes to Appendix C which will be considered on

May 24, 2006. As such, he asked if the Committee was prepared to approve the year 2035 regional transportation system plan for southeastern Wisconsin. Mr. Thiel then made a motion to approve the year 2035 regional transportation system plan for southeastern Wisconsin. Mr. Kappel seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

The fourteenth meeting of the Advisory Committee on Regional Transportation Planning was adjourned at 11:00 a.m. on a motion by Ms. McCutcheon, seconded by Mr. Thiel, and carried unanimously by the Committee.

[Secretary's Note: Following the close of the public comment period on April 20, 2006, the Commission staff also received correspondence from the Sierra Club. That correspondence dated May 1, 2006, has been attached to these minutes as Attachment C.]

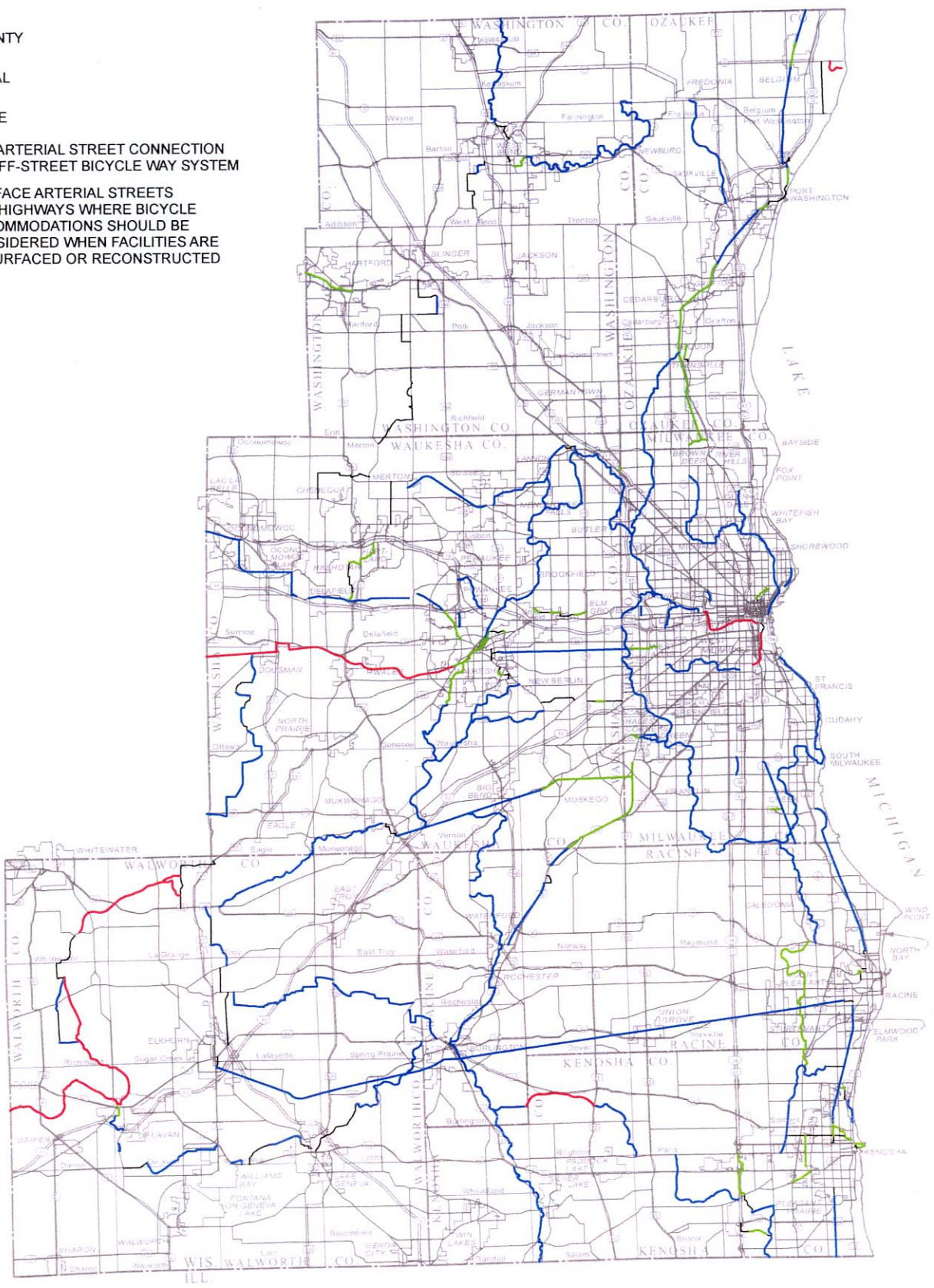
Signed

Kenneth R. Yunker
Recording Secretary

MAP 1a

RECOMMENDED OFF-STREET BICYCLE FACILITY JURISDICTION UNDER THE FINAL RECOMMENDED YEAR 2035 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

- COUNTY
- LOCAL
- STATE
- NONARTERIAL STREET CONNECTION TO OFF-STREET BICYCLE WAY SYSTEM
- SURFACE ARTERIAL STREETS AND HIGHWAYS WHERE BICYCLE ACCOMMODATIONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHEN FACILITIES ARE RESURFACED OR RECONSTRUCTED



Source: SEWRPC.

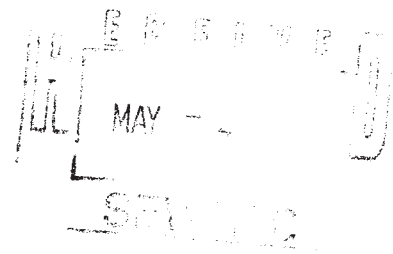
Attachment B

Table 1a

DISTRIBUTION OF OFF-STREET BICYCLE FACILITY MILEAGE WITHIN THE REGION BY COUNTY AND JURISDICTIONAL CLASSIFICATION: 2035 RECOMMENDED PLAN

County	State		County		Local		Total	
	Miles	Percent of Total	Miles	Percent of Total	Miles	Percent of Total	Miles	Percent of Total
Kenosha	4	7.5	43	9.7	12	15.0	59	10.3
Milwaukee	4	7.5	98	22.2	10	12.5	112	19.5
Ozaukee	1	1.9	27	6.1	15	18.7	43	7.5
Racine	0	0.0	73	16.5	14	17.5	87	15.1
Walworth	28	52.9	58	13.1	1	1.3	87	15.1
Washington	0	0.0	22	5.0	4	5.0	26	4.5
Waukesha	16	30.2	121	27.4	24	30.0	161	28.0
Total	53	100.0	442	100.0	80	100.0	575	100.0

Source: SEWRPC.



GREAT WATERS GROUP

John Muir Chapter

www.wisconsin.sierraclub.org/gwg/

P.O. Box 1125

Milwaukee, WI 53201

May 1, 2006

To the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission,

We commend you for the thorough job you have done on researching existing data to implement plans for Regional Land Use and Transportation System Plans for Southeastern Wisconsin. We appreciate this most recent opportunity for comments.

We noted little or no change in the recommendations that were proposed in your August 2005 newsletter #3.

Your recommendations to double the vehicle-miles of transit service in the next 20 years, representing only a 2.5% annual increase, seems insufficient considering the 50% increase in gas prices in the last year. The transit services proposals do not offer an attractive trade off for people who are giving up the spontaneity of personal automobile services for trips that take twice as long by bus. Your recommendations in Newsletter #4, Mar. 2006 show no change in this pattern. If transit continues to move on the same congested lanes crossing congested intersections with single driver vehicles, there is no incentive for automobile use reduction. Hence, Southeastern Wisconsin will continue the pattern of expanded highways with their additional environmental degradation.

While VOC's and NOx's may decrease significantly according to your forecasting model, we note that CO2 will increase by 2% under your Preliminary Recommended Plan, p. 19. The proposed destruction of 104 acres of wetlands is significant in an urban area that is struggling with stormwater overflows and water shortages. Wetlands are more than just another pretty scene. Also, the proposed removal of nearly 200 acres of environmental corridors to accommodate more traffic lanes is yet another taking of our natural world and the survival options of various species, which diminishes a little more each year.

The continued problem with your transit suggestions is they lack courage. They are a reflection of the unimaginative mission statement which calls for citizens to "support implementation of the regional land use plan, while minimizing the capital and annual operating costs of the transportation system." While these proposals minimize capital and annual operating costs of the transportation system they impose other costs on society such noise and pollution. It is time for elected officials including those on the SEWRPC to envision spending our public money on truly rapid transit so that Milwaukee can become a shining leader of Midwestern transit systems.

We must create clean, high speed transit corridors so that people can get to destinations faster than ever without the pollution caused by congested automobile and bus travel on shared roads and noisy freeways. Instead of defining buses on freeways as “rapid transit” and spending money on programs that we know will not attract new ridership, it is time to invest in true rapid transit such as light rail or rapid rail with their own high speed corridors and preferred signal systems. Your recommendations for transit preference signaling in the *Travel Demand Elements* on p. 9 & 10 are good. A better proposal would be to escalate development of rapid transit service in the 2035 proposal and go for the gold. If it is cleaner and faster than cars, people will use it. St. Louis has an exemplary light rail system that continues to expand because people want it. You are, in essence, recommending about 25 years until anything significant happens to transit.

Any new highway lanes should be for guided buses or light rail only. We should also be looking at subways. Many cities in Europe now have thriving subways despite lower than expected population densities, some significantly smaller than metropolitan Milwaukee. Even formerly Soviet bloc countries with lower standards of living include extensive subway systems in cities such as Prague and Budapest. Even Turin, Italy (pop. 856,000) has a subway! What it takes is political will initiated by an entity such as SEWRPC.

With SEWRPC’s lack of recommendations regarding I-94 widening between the Marquette and Zoo Interchanges, you have fallen back on the “it’s out of my hands” excuse because the Wis. Department of Transportation has decided, despite local Milwaukee area recommendations, to go ahead with studies for additional automobile traffic lanes. The costs of these studies should, instead, be going towards rapid transit corridors. Perhaps a bolder proposal for rapid transit on the part of SEWRPC might have changed this direction. Or, maybe it is just another indication that SEWRPC representation does not reflect the population significance and economic value of Milwaukee County. Healthy robust urban centers truly need the support of good transit options.

We continue to support your recommendation for a Regional Transit Authority. We have high hopes for the newly formed Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority which will help guide the development and operation of the KRM Commuter Rail. Your support of a dedicated local funding source other than the property tax for funding regional transit systems has merit. While it may be perceived as somewhat regressive, it supports the politically popular concept of payment for services, similar to the gas tax which funds highways but not enough transit.

The repeat of *Preliminary Proposals For Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities* on p. 8, newsletter 3, which “envision that as the surface arterial street system of 3,300 miles in the region is resurfaced and reconstructed segment-by-segment, the provision of accommodations for bicycle travel should be implemented, if feasible, through bicycle lanes, widened outside travel lanes, widened shoulders, or separate bicycle paths” is still excellent. Bicycle travel must be implemented wherever possible. Milwaukee has been a leader in this area. (As a biker who is riding more than ever, I appreciate the well marked bike lanes along Prospect Ave., Farwell Ave, North Ave., Center St. and others.) The number of bicyclists who are using these bikeways as well as off-road bikeways is increasing.

We suggest that your proposal include recommendations that all transit vehicles be required to accommodate bicycles on them to enable multimodal transportation alternatives to cars.

We support your “proposal for SEWRPC to prepare an assessment of the priority of need for bicycle accommodation on each segment of the surface arterial street and highway system....”. Since the last study was completed in 1995, it is time for another one, soon. We hope that the proposed study would also include further study of natural resource and utility corridors for bicycle and pedestrian trails. It’s a real opportunity to maximize all of our urban and suburban spaces and to keep the public in touch with the natural beauty and urban wild spaces of our neighborhoods. This is quality of life and economic development money that is well spent. Elected officials must take heed of this.

In your *Surface and Arterial Street and Highway Traffic Management* proposals, we support your recommended improvements for intersection safety. Those improvements will also enhance the safety (and perceived safety) of pedestrians and bicyclists.

We commend you for your *Travel Demand Management Element*. There are lots of good proposals in there. Your suggestion for a single information website for the various transit systems is good. We must take advantage of new information management opportunities when we can.

We are confused by your *Personal Vehicle Pricing* section p. 11, and question its political viability.

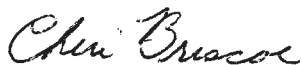
Your continued proposal from last year, that “local governments consider implementation of curb-lane parking restrictions during peak traffic periods in the peak traffic directions.... rather than widening with additional lanes or construction of new arterial streets” is good. This will also help with stormwater control by creating less impervious surfaces.

Your *Major Activity Center Parking Management and Guidance* suggestions are still good. We need to increase awareness of and use of shuttle buses wherever possible.

Encouraging ride share programs is also commendable. Currently there are no signs along I-94 heading west which indicate that there is a Park and Ride lot on Barker Rd. This is an example of failure to promote ride-sharing programs and to inform the public through something as simple as a few signs. This must change.

In conclusion, while you have recommended many laudable ideas, your transit proposals simply don’t go far enough. We’ll look forward to the next round of planning.

Sincerely,



Cheri Briscoe, Chairperson
Great Waters Group-Sierra Club
2016 E. Windsor Place
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