



SEWRPC Public Involvement and Outreach Process



#132712

November 27, 2007



For Environmental Justice Task Force Consideration --

- OVERVIEW OF COMMISSION ACTIVITIES regarding public information and outreach, using the recent long-range land use and transportation planning process as an example.
- TASK FORCE REACTIONS to the approaches used and activities conducted:
 - What seems to be appropriate and worked well.
 - What seems to have been overlooked or would be better replaced by other efforts.
- YOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT, such as additional organization contacts, approaches or activities to consider, and/or means of networking.



SEWRPC Public Participation

The Commission's goal for public participation has three major components:

- ENSURE EARLY AND CONTINUOUS PUBLIC NOTIFICATION about regional transportation planning and programming activities.
- PROVIDE MEANINGFUL INFORMATION concerning such regional transportation planning and programming activities.
- OBTAIN PARTICIPATION AND INPUT to regional transportation planning and improvement programming efforts.

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Long-Range Plan Public Participation

The Commission's long-range Land Use and Transportation Plans, completed in 2006, involved ongoing public participation efforts - as well as major sequences of outreach and involvement:

- PUBLIC MEETINGS AND ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES, AT MULTIPLE JUNCTURES
 - Study inception/previous plan review
 - Completion of inventory findings
 - Availability/review of plan alternatives
 - Preliminary recommended plan stage

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Public Meetings and Notification

- OPEN HOUSE FORMATS ALLOWING FLEXIBILITY for attendees' schedules, gaining information, and commenting.
- AT LEAST ONE MEETING PER COUNTY at each juncture in an accessible location.
- CENTRAL CITY LOCATIONS for Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, and Waukesha County meetings.
- MINORITY NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS for two of three meetings held each time in Milwaukee (typically HeartLove Place and United Community Center).

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Public Meetings and Notification (continued)

- PUBLIC TRANSIT AVAILABILITY where possible for meeting sites, notably in urban areas.
- LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY STEPS, including arrangements for requested translators, and typically providing one in Hispanic/Latino neighborhood locations.
- PAID MEETING ADS IN MINORITY NEWSPAPERS, as well as larger media outlets, and published in Spanish as appropriate.

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Summary Publications

- NEWSLETTERS, prepared and sent at each study juncture to some 2,000 recipients.
 - Typically providing study updates, announcing public meetings, and describing planning content.
 - Sent with personal letters of invitation to minority and low-income group contacts (described below).
- SUMMARY BROCHURES, which shortened newsletter content to four pages.
 - Translated into Spanish.
 - Used as public meeting handouts and provided to groups as appropriate.

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Environmental Justice-Related Contacts

Additional Steps Taken to Engage Minority and Low-Income Populations:

- EXPANDING LIST REGULARLY USED FOR MINORITY AND LOW-INCOME CONTACTS representing important organizations (about 60 in number).
- PERSONAL LETTERS SENT TO LEAD CONTACTS of minority and low-income organizations, at each major juncture corresponding to study newsletters and public meetings, also highlighting key points (four times during recent long-range planning).

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Environmental Justice-Related Contacts (continued)

- TELEPHONE CAMPAIGNS over the course of the study to arrange meetings, encourage participation, answer any questions, and possibly take comments, for each of the minority and low-income group contacts.
- SPECIFIC INVITATIONS TO MEET PERSONALLY with Commission staff at the organizations' convenience, whether one-on-one, with committees/boards, stakeholders, or full memberships. Over 30 such meetings were conducted during recent long-range planning.

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Additional Ongoing Involvement

- ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS
 - Population-proportional body for recent long-range transportation planning
 - Chapter-by-chapter plan review and approval
- WEBSITE UPDATES - www.sewrpc.org
 - Committee meeting materials
 - Current study and historic plan materials
 - Public meeting handouts and display content
 - Open opportunity for comment
- MEETING PRESENTATIONS OR BRIEFINGS
 - Given throughout the study at any point in time.
 - Upon request, and offered to governmental units, as well as to minority and low-income organizations accepting invitations.

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For the Future

Comments received during recent planning studies are reflected in the Commission's Public Participation Plan for Transportation Planning:

- ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE is a nontraditional attempt by SEWRPC to generate additional ideas and further broaden input, which may benefit minority and low-income populations, and others.
- CONTINUING ATTEMPTS TO BROADEN GROUP CONTACTS – adding organizations to contact list, renewing offers to meet on their turf at local convenience (e.g., ongoing Milwaukee County Transit Study included an open house meeting for the homeless).
- OTHER MEANS WILL BE TRIED to obtain public involvement, for example, focus groups, small group techniques, visioning, brainstorming, and non-traditional meeting places and events, such as fairs, festivals, or the like.

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Task Force Recommendations

- ANY SUGGESTIONS TO BETTER INVOLVE, inform or equip the public, including ways that minority, low-income, and disabled populations might support and help implement plan recommendations of benefit to them and society.
- ADDITIONAL VIEWS on what has worked well thus far, or could be improved upon.
- THANK YOU for participating today and contributing to the process.

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