

MINUTES

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 17, 2009

1:30 p.m.

SEWRPC Office Building
Commissioners' Conference Room
W239 N1812 Rockwood Drive
Waukesha, Wisconsin

Present:

Excused:

Committee Members:

David L. Stroik, Chairman
William R. Drew
James T. Dwyer
Gustav W. Wirth, Jr.

Thomas H. Buestrin
Michael J. Miklasevich
Daniel S. Schmidt

(via teleconference)

Richard A. Hansen, Vice-Chairman
Adelene Greene
Nancy Russell

Staff:

Kenneth R. Yunker
Loretta Watson

Executive Director
Executive Secretary

ROLL CALL

Chairman Stroik called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum declared present, including Commissioners Hansen, Greene, and Russell who participated in the meeting via teleconference. Mr. Yunker noted for the record that Commissioners Buestrin, Miklasevich, and Schmidt had asked to be excused.

CONSIDERATION OF ENDORSEMENT OF THE 2009-2012 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Mr. Yunker noted that the Committee members had been provided in advance of the meeting copies of the 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program and Resolution 2009-03 which, if approved, would endorse the 2009-2012 Regional Transportation Improvement Program. He asked that the Committee consider Resolution 2009-03.

Mr. Yunker noted that the 2009-2012 Regional Transportation Improvement Program had been unanimously approved by the Commission's Advisory Committees on Transportation System Planning and Programming for the Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha, and Round Lake Beach urbanized areas. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Yunker stated that there were 19 members on the Milwaukee area committee, including five appointed by the Milwaukee County Executive and five appointed by the City of Milwaukee Mayor. He noted that the structure of the Committee was approved by the Commission in consultation with Milwaukee area local governments in 1975 and that the composition of the Committee is population proportional in the Milwaukee urbanized area. In response to another question from Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Yunker stated that with rare exception, the actions of the Milwaukee area Committee have been agreed to unanimously.

Mr. Yunker noted that two individuals submitted comments during the public comment period on the Transportation Improvement Program. One comment suggested the Transportation Improvement Program should include more funding for public transit projects. Mr. Yunker noted that the TIP is a listing of all projects proposed to be implemented by State and local governments. The Commission reviews the projects transmitted by local and State governments for consistency with the Regional Transportation Plan. He stated that expenditures for public transit represent about 25 percent of all expenditures in the Transportation Improvement Program and transit carries only about two percent of all the travel in the Region.

Mr. Yunker noted that another comment was that the selection of projects to receive American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds should reflect that priority is to be given to projects located in economically distressed areas, that is, areas with unemployment rates at least one percent greater than the national average and areas with per capita income 80 percent below the national average. Mr. Yunker noted that the Federal Highway Administration on their website identifies the counties in the State of Wisconsin which meet these requirements and would be considered economically distressed, and none of the counties in southeastern Wisconsin meet these criteria.

Mr. Yunker further noted that the Milwaukee area committee has yet to consider the guidelines for the selection of projects and the actual selection of projects with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds and may be expected to consider the location of projects relative to economically distressed areas within the Milwaukee area. Mr. Yunker noted that another comment indicated opposition to the addition of traffic lanes proposed in the reconstruction of I 94 from the Illinois State Line to the Mitchell Interchange in Milwaukee County. Mr. Yunker noted that the addition of traffic lanes is recommended in the regional transportation plan and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation has undertaken and completed preliminary engineering and an environmental impact statement which concluded with the recommendation to provide the additional lanes as part of the reconstruction of this section of I 94.

In response to an inquiry from Mr. Wirth, Mr. Yunker stated that if the Commission would add projects to the Transportation Improvement Program, this would not require the State or local governments to complete the projects. Ms. Russell noted that she had reviewed the projects programmed in Walworth County with the Walworth County Director of Public Works. She noted that their only question was with respect to Project No. 640, which proposed the reconstruction of STH 50 from STH 67 to Geneva Street. She noted that the resurfacing of this segment of STH 50 was recently completed.

[Secretary's Note: The project for reconstruction of STH 50 only proposes the preliminary engineering for that reconstruction. The programmed preliminary engineering recognizes the limited life of the resurfacing and the need to address reconstruction in several years.]

Mr. Drew noted Project No. 165, which proposes acquisition of vehicles powered by natural gas for General Mitchell International Airport operations. He asked whether the Region's transit operators were pursuing acquisition of natural gas-powered buses. Mr. Yunker stated that he knew the transit operators had investigated the acquisition of natural gas-powered buses and the investigation of natural gas fueling stations, but none had proceeded to implementation to date.

[Secretary's Note: A number of transit operators in the Region have investigated converting from diesel-powered buses to natural gas-powered buses. No operator has ever completed the conversion, in part due to little cost-savings in operation or reductions in air pollutant emissions to be achieved by such conversion. It is likely that the funding crisis facing public transit and the limited availability of capital funds has also inhibited the conversion of buses from diesel fuel to natural gas.]

Mr. Stroik noted that the Commission certainly recommends and supports the improvement and expansion of public transit and encourages the Region's transit operators and the State of Wisconsin to implement the regional transportation plan, specifically the expansion of public transportation recommended in that plan.

Following that discussion, on a motion by Mr. Wirth, seconded by Mr. Dwyer, and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 2009-03 was approved (copy attached to Official Minutes).

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m., on a motion by Mr. Drew, seconded by Mr. Dwyer, and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth R Yunker
Deputy Secretary

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Attachments