

MINUTES OF THE SECOND MEETING
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

DATE: April 26, 2010
TIME: 10:00 a.m.
PLACE: Zoofari Conference Center
9715 West Bluemound Road
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Committee Members Present

Brian Dranzik, Chairman Fiscal and Policy Administrator,
Milwaukee County Department of Transportation and Public Works
Sandra K. Beaupre Director, Bureau of Planning,
Division of Transportation Investment Management,
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
John M. Bennett City Engineer/Director of Public Works, City of Franklin
Jon Edgren Highway Commissioner, Washington County
Thomas M. Grisa Director of Public Works, City of Brookfield
Anita Gulotta-Connelly Managing Director, Milwaukee County Transit System
Richard M. Jones Commissioner of Public Works/City Engineer, City of Racine
William A. Kappel Director of Public Works, City of Wauwatosa
Michael M. Lemens Director of Engineering, City of Kenosha
Jeffrey J. Mantes Commissioner of Public Works, City of Milwaukee
Dwight E. McComb Planning and Program Development Engineer,
Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation
Gloria McCutcheon Regional Director, Southeast Region,
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
George Melcher Director of Planning and Development, Kenosha County
Jeffrey S. Polenske City Engineer, City of Milwaukee
David Prott Director of Public Works, Racine County
Sheri Schmit Systems Planning Group Manager, Southeast Region
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Wallace Thiel Village Administrator, Village of Hartland
Kevin Yanny Senior Civil Engineer,
(Representing Allison Bussler) Waukesha County Department of Public Works

Staff and Guests Present

Kenneth R. Yunker Executive Director, SEWRPC
Stephen Adams Public Involvement and Outreach Manager, SEWRPC
Sonia Dubielzig Principal Planner, SEWRPC
Christopher T. Hiebert Chief Transportation Engineer, SEWRPC
Ryan Hoel Principal Engineer, SEWRPC
Jeff Katz Civil Engineer, Racine County Department of Public Works
Carlos Peña Community Planner, Federal Highway Administration
Aileen Switzer Chief, Urban Planning Section, Division of Transportation Investment Management
Wisconsin Department of Transportation

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Dranzik called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and welcomed all of those in attendance. He indicated roll call would be accomplished through a sign-in roster circulated by Commission staff.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Dranzik noted that no members of the public were present to give public comment, and moved to the next item on the agenda.

REVIEW OF THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 26, 2010, MEETING

Chairman Dranzik asked the Committee to consider the minutes of the February 26, 2010, meeting. Mr. Yunker noted a correction to be made on page 2 of the minutes, in the first paragraph under the heading, "Consideration and Discussion of Preliminary Draft of Chapter II". He stated that the words "State and" should be removed from the last sentence of the paragraph so that it read, "Mr. Yunker noted that Federal agency representatives are non-voting members of the Advisory Committee..."

There being no comments or discussion regarding the minutes, Mr. Mantes motioned to approve them, as corrected. Mr. Prott seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

REVIEW OF REVISED PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF CHAPTER VI, "UPDATE OF YEAR 2035 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN" OF "REVIEW, UPDATE, AND REAFFIRMATION OF THE YEAR 2035 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN"

Chairman Dranzik asked Mr. Yunker to lead the Committee through a review of the revised preliminary draft of Chapter VI, "Update of Year 2035 Regional Transportation Plan." Mr. Yunker reminded the Committee that they had approved Chapters I through V at the last meeting, and that this chapter presented potential amendments and refinements to the year 2035 regional transportation plan. He reviewed with the Committee the chapter page-by-page, leaving the section of the chapter discussing the 19 miles of freeways in the City of Milwaukee to the end of the review.

[Secretary's Note: Commission staff held a meeting of Federal and State resource agencies and departments of transportation during the public comment period to solicit input. To document that effort, the following text is proposed to be inserted after the description of the public comment and response located on page 9 of draft Chapter VI: "Commission staff also organized a March 18, 2010, meeting of representatives from Federal and State resource agencies and the U.S. and Wisconsin Departments of Transportation, in order to directly involve those agencies in the review process. Staff from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) attended the meeting. Attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and suggest changes to the report. Only one substantive suggestion was made. The EPA representative suggested that, during the next major long-range planning effort, the air pollutant emissions analysis include a comparison of diesel particulate pollution emissions, since diesel vehicles are a small share of total traffic, but a large source of mobile source emissions. Commission staff agreed and stated that this analysis would be conducted during the next major review and update to the regional transportation plan."]

During the review, advisory committee members had the following questions and comments:

1. Mr. Grisa asked how the wording in the third paragraph on page 10 of Chapter VI would be amended to reflect the fact that the RTA legislation had not passed. Ms. Gulotta-Connelly clarified that the last sentence in the paragraph was correct in stating that a commuter rail authority and local dedicated funding for commuter rail had already been enacted; and that the legislation that was considered (and not adopted) in the latest legislative session related to the formation of an RTA and dedicated funding for transit in general. Mr. Yunker stated that only the third sentence in the paragraph may need to be changed. The sentence in question states, "The creation of a regional transit authority and enactment of local dedicated transit funding has not occurred, but continues to be advanced, with State legislation for a Southeastern Wisconsin regional transit authority and transit local dedicated funding now being considered by the State Legislature and Governor." Mr. Yunker stated that the sentence could be amended to state that RTA legislation will be reintroduced and would be expected to be enacted in future legislative sessions. Ms. McCutcheon pointed out that the next legislative session is not scheduled to begin until after the inauguration of the Wisconsin Governor on January 3, 2011. Mr. Yunker stated that for the purposes of estimating the costs and revenues attendant to the year 2035 transportation plan, it would be reasonable to expect that RTA legislation would eventually be enacted in the next two to three years.

[Secretary's Note: The following text will replace the last two sentences in third paragraph of page 10 of Chapter VI: "State legislation for a regional commuter rail authority and local dedicated funding for commuter rail was recently enacted. However, the creation of a regional transit authority (RTA) and enactment of local dedicated funding for all public transit has not occurred. Attempts were made to pass RTA legislation in June of 2009 (during preparation of the 2009-2011 Wisconsin State budget) and in April of 2010 (during the regular session of the Wisconsin State legislature). In each case, the legislation came very close to passing, but was not adopted into State law. However, efforts to ultimately pass transit funding legislation for southeastern Wisconsin will continue and may be expected to be enacted in future legislative sessions."]

Mr. Yunker noted that Chapter VI was not yet complete; the final section of the chapter will include a summary of the year 2035 regional transportation plan as amended according to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee. He then directed the Committee back to the City of Milwaukee's request to reconsider the recommendation to widen from six to eight lanes the 19 miles of freeway in the City of Milwaukee, which is discussed on pages 4-7 of Chapter VI. Mr. Yunker summarized the previous consideration of this issue, and the arguments made for and against the recommendation to add lanes to the freeway segments in question. Following this review, the following questions were raised and comments made by Advisory Committee members:

1. Ms. Gulotta-Connelly, referring to the first paragraph on page 6, asked for clarification on how the amendment requested by the City of Milwaukee compared to the recommendations in the regional freeway system reconstruction plan. Mr. Yunker explained that both the freeway system reconstruction plan and the year 2035 regional transportation plan recommended widening the 19 miles of freeway in the City of Milwaukee, both recognized that preliminary engineering should consider reconstruction alternatives with and without additional lanes, and both stated that the final decision would be made at the conclusion of preliminary engineering. The City of Milwaukee's requested amendment would remove recommendation to widen, but would retain the statement that preliminary engineering should consider both alternatives and make the final decision.

2. Mr. Polenske explained the City of Milwaukee's position. He stated that the recommendation to reconstruct with additional lanes in the regional transportation plan makes the widening seem like a foregone conclusion to the public, even though the final decision would be made in preliminary engineering. He also stated that the 19 miles of freeway in the City of Milwaukee do have significant impacts that are unique to the regional freeway system, due to the densely populated neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the freeway. He also argued that the Advisory Committee should take into account the perspective of the community that will be most affected by the additional lanes. Mr. Mantes added that the additional lanes would cost about \$250 million more than simply reconstructing the freeway to its current capacity, and would result in only a modest improvement in traffic flow.
3. Mr. Yanny asked how the \$250 million increase in cost for the additional lanes compared to the basic cost of reconstructing to current capacity. Mr. Yunker stated that the widening with additional lanes represents a 20 percent increase in the estimated cost of reconstructing the 19 miles of freeway.
4. Mr. Grisa noted that the 20 percent increase in cost would provide a 33 percent increase in capacity. He added that safety considerations should be one of the top priorities when considering the costs and benefits of a highway improvement, and that uncongested freeway segments are much safer than congested segments. He added that under the current recommendation, an alternative to reconstruct without widening would still be considered during preliminary engineering.
5. Mr. Thiel asked whether the language of Milwaukee's proposed amendment would still leave the consideration, and final decision of whether to widen with additional lanes, up to the preliminary engineering process. Mr. Yunker confirmed that it would.
6. Mr. Melcher asked whether the Marquette Interchange was reconstructed with additional lanes. Mr. Yunker stated that the Marquette Interchange was reconstructed with in such a way that it could accommodate additional traffic lanes, should the remainder of the freeway system in the City of Milwaukee be reconstructed with additional lanes.

There being no further discussion on the widening of 19 miles of freeways in the City of Milwaukee, Mr. Yunker asked for a show of hands from Advisory Committee members on the question of whether to amend the plan to remove the recommendation to widen with additional lanes the 19 miles of freeways in the City of Milwaukee. The amendment failed, with 6 in favor of the amendment and 10 against. Two members—including Mr. McComb, who is a non-voting member of the Committee—abstained from the show of hands.

Mr. Yunker offered a potential compromise amendment to the plan. Under this proposal, the plan would recognize the uniqueness of the 19 miles of freeway in the City of Milwaukee and would not make a recommendation—either for widening or not widening. During preliminary engineering both alternatives would be evaluated, and the determination to widen or not widen would be made during the preliminary engineering process due to the uniqueness of the freeway segments. The regional plan would be amended to incorporate the decision made in preliminary engineering. The 19 miles of freeway in question would be shown on the functional improvement maps in the plan as a yellow or some other colored line, indicating that the plan did not have a specific recommendation for those segments, and the reasons for the lack of a recommendation. In response to his proposal, the Advisory Committee members had the following questions and comments:

1. Mr. Kappel asked whether such a change may affect the preliminary engineering currently being undertaken by WisDOT and the FHWA for the Zoo Interchange. Mr. Yunker responded that the preliminary engineering for the short segments of freeway connecting to the Zoo Interchange is being conducted so that the option for potential widening is not precluded. He added that the preliminary engineering for the Zoo Interchange is still in progress.
2. Mr. Thiel and Ms. McCutcheon said that although they were sympathetic to the City of Milwaukee's position on freeway widening, they felt that a compromise amendment was not necessary because the current language in the plan already stated that the final determination whether to widen with additional lanes would be made during preliminary engineering for reconstruction of those segments. Mr. Bennett argued that it may be better to have the recommended widening included in the plan in order to alert people of the potential that it could occur.
3. Mr. Mantes stated that a compromise amendment would not be necessary. He said that his intent was to make clear the City of Milwaukee's position on the recommended widening for the 19 miles of freeway segments in the City. He also stated that the City would raise this issue again during the major plan review and update process that will occur in the upcoming years. Mr. Yunker agreed that this issue will be addressed during the major review and update.

There were no further comments or discussion regarding Chapter VI.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Yunker indicated that Commission staff will complete the last section of Chapter VI, summarizing the year 2035 regional transportation plan as amended by the Committee. He thanked the Committee for their work and noted that the Committee would likely not meet again until 2011 or 2012, when the Commission would begin working on the every-10-years major review and update of regional land use and transportation plans. The meeting was adjourned at 10:59 a.m. on a motion by Ms. Gulotta-Connelly, seconded by Mr. Thiel, and carried unanimously by the Committee.

Signed,

Kenneth R. Yunker
Recording Secretary