

Minutes of the Twenty Seventh Meeting of the
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

DATE: April 16, 2013
TIME: 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Independence*First*
540 South 1st Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Members Present

Adelene Greene..... Director of Workforce Development, Kenosha County
Chair
Nancy Holmlund..... President, WISDOM Interfaith Coalition
Vice-Chair
Ella Dunbar Program Services Manager, Social Development Commission, Milwaukee
Lynnette McNeely Legal Redress Chair, Waukesha County NAACP
Brian Peters Housing Policy Advocate, Independence*First*
Theresa Schuerman..... Walworth County Bilingual Migrant Worker Outreach
Willie Wade Alderman, City of Milwaukee

Guests and Staff Present

Stephen P. Adams Public Involvement and Outreach Manager, SEWRPC
Benjamin R. McKay Principal Planner, SEWRPC
Karyn Rotker..... ACLU of Wisconsin
Kenneth R. Yunker Executive Director, SEWRPC

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Greene called the meeting of the Environmental Justice Task Force to order at 4:07 p.m., welcoming those in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 9, 2012, AND JANUARY 17, 2013

Ms. Greene noted that not enough Task Force members were present at this time to constitute a quorum, although an additional Task Force member is expected to attend. She suggested that this agenda item be moved to later in the meeting when a quorum of Task force members may be present for approval of the minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Greene noted that only Task Force members were present.

DISCUSSION OF THE UWM – CENTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT “THE SKILLS GAP AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN WISCONSIN: SEPARATING FACT FROM FICTION”

Ms. Greene asked Mr. Yunker of the Commission staff to introduce the agenda item. Mr. Yunker noted that Task Force member Lynette McNeely requested an agenda item on a study recently conducted by the UWM Center of Economic Development discussing labor force characteristics and unemployment. He noted that a copy of the executive summary (see Attachment 1) was provided to the Task Force at the meeting and links to the Executive Summary and Full Report were provided to the Task Force prior to the meeting (<http://www4.uwm.edu/ced/>). The study presents data that opposes the “skills gap” argument that unemployment is high because the labor force is not adequately trained to fill job vacancies. Ms. Greene noted that Ms. McNeely is expected to arrive later in the meeting and suggested moving to the next agenda item until Ms. McNeely arrives.

UPDATE ON THE REGIONAL HOUSING PLAN

Ms. Greene asked Mr. Yunker to provide the Task Force with an update on the regional housing plan. Mr. Yunker noted that the Regional Planning Commission adopted the plan in March and staff is currently working on publishing the final report. He expects the final report to be printed in May. Local and County governments and State and Federal agencies concerned with housing will receive the report. The cover letter mailed with the report will request that the government or agency endorse the plan and the letter will identify the specific plan recommendations proposed to be considered and implemented by the recipient. In addition, a summary newsletter is being prepared.

Mr. Yunker also noted that the recommendation regarding job/housing balance and transit service as potential evaluation criteria for use in selecting projects for Federal Highway Administration Surface Transportation Program – Milwaukee Urbanized Area (STP-M) funding is being reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Transportation System Planning and Programming for the Milwaukee Urbanized Area. The potential evaluation criterion is No. 5 in the handout titled “Exhibit G – Potential Evaluation Criteria for Use in Selecting Arterial Resurfacing, Reconditioning, Reconstruction, and New Construction Projects for Federal Highway Administration Surface Transportation Program Funding Allocated to the Milwaukee Urbanized Area,” which was distributed to the Task Force (see Attachment 2). The following discussion points and comments were made on the regional housing plan update:

1. Mr. Wade asked if local governments typically request a presentation from SEWRPC when they are asked to endorse a regional plan. Mr. Yunker responded that the matter is typically referred to the local plan commission, or an appropriate committee. The plan commission or committee may ask for a presentation from SEWRPC prior to considering endorsement of the plan by the governing body. Mr. Yunker noted this is also the usual process for local plans that SEWRPC prepares at the request of local or county governments. Mr. Wade asked if local governments can identify exceptions to regional plans if they would like to endorse the overall plan, but disagree with specific portions of the plan. Mr. Yunker stated that SEWRPC would encourage the local or county government to endorse the overall plan, and identify the parts of the plan where there is disagreement.
2. Mr. Peters referred to criterion No. 6 on page G-3 of Exhibit G and stated that this criterion seems to emphasize highway capacity expansion. Mr. Yunker responded that this criterion is limited to projects that have completed preliminary engineering.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 9, 2012, AND JANUARY 17, 2013

Ms. Greene noted that a quorum of Task Force members was present and asked for a motion to approve past minutes. Ms. Holmlund moved and Mr. Peters seconded approval of the Environmental Justice Task Force meeting minutes of October 9, 2012, and January 17, 2013. The motion was approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION OF THE UWM – CENTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT “THE SKILLS GAP AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN WISCONSIN: SEPARATING FACT FROM FICTION”

Ms. Greene noted that Ms. McNeely had arrived and asked if she had any comments regarding the UWM report. Ms. McNeely noted the study refutes the commonly held position that high unemployment exists because potential workers do not have the needed education and skills. She stated that the EJTF should further examine the findings and conclusions of the UWM study. Mr. Yunker noted that the UWM study concludes that unemployment exists as a result of the amount of labor force exceeding the amount of available jobs. He noted that the issue of needed labor force skills, training, and education is the responsibility of workforce investment and development boards, but staff can contact UWM regarding a future presentation on the study. The following discussion points and comments were made on the UWM study:

1. Mr. Peters asked if the skills gap argument is a widely held view. Ms. Schuerman responded that it is widely held among employers.
2. Mr. Wade stated that it is important for the City’s economy for employers to hire employees from the surrounding community and asked if there is employment data available from the Census that would provide insight into this issue. Ms. McNeely suggested that SEWRPC could identify relevant Census data. Mr. Yunker stated that there is data regarding commute to work patterns from the Census that may be relevant. He stated that staff will put together the data for sub-areas of the Region.

[Secretary’s Note: About 63 percent of City of Milwaukee residents were employed in the City of Milwaukee. U.S. Census Bureau data from the 2005-2009 American Community Survey (ACS) that was compiled for the regional housing plan on the percentage of workers who are employed in their County of residence by sub-area is shown in Attachment 3.]

UPDATE ON THE YEAR 2050 REGIONAL LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

Ms. Greene asked Mr. Yunker to provide the Task Force with an update on the 2050 regional land use and transportation planning process. Mr. Yunker asked the Task Force members to turn their attention to the handout titled “Schedule for Reevaluation of Regional Land Use and Transportation Plans,” which was distributed to Task Force members at the meeting (see Attachment 4). He stated that the schedule was discussed at the January 17, 2013, meeting. Work on the collection of inventory data and population and employment forecasts has been completed since that meeting. The population and employment forecast work was guided by an Advisory Committee and Task Force member Jedd Lapid served on the Committee. Mr. Yunker then reviewed the PowerPoint handout titled “Year 2050 Population and

Economic Forecasts,” which was distributed to Task Force members at the meeting (see Attachment 5). The following discussion points and comments were made during the review:

1. During Mr. Yunker’s review of economic trends in the Region since 1970, Mr. Wade noted the steady job growth in the Region between 1983 and 2000, without the periodic downturns seen in other time periods. Mr. Yunker noted that growth in the Region’s economy during this period closely resembled that of the State and the Nation. Ms. Dunbar noted growth in the housing industry during this period. Ms. McNeely stated that deregulation of the savings and loan industry may have contributed. Savings and loan institutions were allowed to participate in new activities, which led to generation of new capital that was not sustainable and artificial growth in the economy.
2. During Mr. Yunker’s review of 2050 population projections, Mr. Peters asked about the influence the “baby boom” generation has had, and will continue to have over the socio-economic characteristics of the Region’s population. Mr. Yunker noted that baby-boomers were born between 1946 and 1964 and have had an impact because of the relative size of this age group of the population compared to other age groups of the population. They impacted net migration into the Region as they entered the workforce. As jobs were created in the 1970’s, 1980’s, and 1990’s, many were filled by the baby boomers coming of age to enter the labor force. He stated that the baby-boom generation will continue to have a strong influence on the Region as they are now beginning to reach retirement age and will continue to do so through the first half of the projection period. This will contribute to a labor force shortage in the Region, which will likely require net in-migration to the Region, if even moderate employment growth is to be achieved.
3. Ms. Greene asked if the Region will gain more young people through in-migration over the projection period. Mr. Yunker stated that a modest increase in in-migration is expected over the projection period as baby-boomers leave the labor force. Ms. Schuerman noted that technology advances may moderate the demand for new workers. Ms. McNeely noted that past trends may not be applicable to new projections because of changes in technology and employment. Mr. Yunker noted that increased automation across various industry types was considered in the employment projections, which are linked to the population projections. Age composition and likely work force participation levels are also considered in the employment projections.
4. Mr. Yunker noted that Ms. Schuerman asked about the accuracy of past SEWRPC population and employment projections. He stated that slides 18, 19, and 20 of the presentation compare past population, household, and employment projections to actual levels. He stated that the early population forecast completed by SEWRPC in 1963 for the year 1990 was less accurate because it did not anticipate the greater entry of women into the workforce, which allowed the Region’s existing population to absorb job growth and reduced in-migration. In addition, this forecast failed to anticipate the related reduction in the number of children per family. He noted that later SEWRPC population forecasts considered these factors and have been accurate in comparison to actual population levels. He also noted that the household forecasts follow the same pattern.
5. Mr. Wade asked if the labor force includes members of the U.S. Armed Forces. Mr. Yunker responded that the labor force does include members of the Armed Forces: however, he stated he was unsure if this includes members stationed outside of the Region.

[Secretary's Note: The labor force includes residents of the Region who are on active duty with a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, including the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard.]

6. Mr. Yunker noted that SEWRPC employment forecasts have been accurate compared to actual levels, including the earliest forecasts. Ms. McNeely asked if future income levels could be projected. Mr. Yunker responded that income forecasts are typically completed as part of regional land use and transportation plans, and will be reviewed and updated over the next few years.
7. Mr. Peters referred to the employment projection chart on page 20 of the presentation and noted that there seemed to be an under-estimate of projected employment compared to actual levels prior to 2010. Mr. Yunker agreed, and noted that the employment projections show long-term employment trends, irrespective of shorter term business cycle-related employment fluctuations. Mr. Yunker noted that SEWRPC monitors the projections yearly and revises the projections if needed. Mr. Yunker also noted that SEWRPC does population, household, and employment projections at the County level, which are attached to the end of the presentation.
8. Mr. Yunker asked the Task Force to turn their attention to the handout titled "Statement to Wisconsin State Legislature Joint Finance Committee," which was distributed to Task Force members at the meeting (see Attachment 6). He stated that the handout includes SEWRPC testimony given to the Wisconsin State Legislature Joint Finance Committee on April 4, 2013, regarding the need for public transit in Southeastern Wisconsin, which is the element of the regional transportation plan that has been most significant in lagging in implantation due to declining State funding and a lack of local dedicated transit funding. He noted that similar testimony was given to the Wisconsin Transportation Finance and Policy Commission in 2012, the State of Wisconsin Assembly Transportation Committee in 2010, and organizations such as the Urban Economic Development Association (UEDA)/Coalition for Advancing Transit and Transit Now.
9. Ms. Dunbar asked about efforts to address public transit reverse commute needs in the Region. Mr. Yunker responded that rapid bus routes provide reverse commute service for workers commuting between Milwaukee and Bluemound Road/Downtown Waukesha. In addition, service for workers commuting between Milwaukee and portions of Kenosha, Ozaukee, and Racine Counties is provided. He also noted that there was reverse commute service on the Washington County rapid bus route in the past that was cut due to a reduction in ridership during the economic downturn. He added that there may be consideration to bringing the reverse commute service back as the economy continues to recover.
10. Ms. Dunbar suggested that an information campaign about reverse commute service should be conducted in communities with high unemployment. Ms. McNeely asked if the reverse commute services are offered at times that are convenient for workers. Mr. Yunker responded that the service times are typically designed around business hours of specific employers. Ms. McNeely stated that the public transit needs of environmental justice communities should be considered. Ms. Holmlund noted that there may be Federal and State funding cuts for public transit. Mr. Peters stated that the Federal Transit Administration is developing new requirements for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) such as SEWRPC related to transit service. Mr. Yunker stated that the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) is developing guidance and regulations which would implement Moving Ahead for Progress – 21st Century (Map 21), the

new two year Federal Transportation Bill. He noted that the guidance/regulations may be expected to address transit operator representation on MPO governing bodies.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Ms. Greene asked if 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesdays is a convenient meeting time. The Task Force members in attendance stated that it is a convenient meeting time. Mr. Yunker stated that the next meeting date will likely be in July in keeping with the quarterly meeting schedule. He stated that staff will distribute a list of possible dates to Task Force members. Mr. Peters announced that this will be his last meeting as a member of the Task Force. He stated that his work load is requiring him to reduce some of his activities. Ms. Greene thanked Mr. Peters for his dedicated service on behalf of the Task Force. She also thanked him for facilitating the use of the Independence^{First} meeting room facilities. Mr. Wade suggested the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District Building as a future site if Independence^{First} is no longer available.

FURTHER PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Greene asked whether anyone in attendance had additional comments. The following comments were made:

1. Ms. Rotker recognized Mr. Peters for his service on the Task Force. She also recognized SEWRPC for the testimony regarding transit given to the Wisconsin State Legislature Joint Finance Committee.
2. Ms. Rotker referred to the population and employment projections and stated that poverty status should also be projected for the Region, and noted the relationship between increasing service industry employment and decreasing incomes. She stated that disability status should also be projected for the Region. In addition, race and ethnicity should be disaggregated in the projection of the future racial/ethnic makeup of the population. She stated that this is important for planning purposes because African Americans experience significant segregation in the Region and suggested preparing a comparison of the projected percentage of white population growth to minority population growth by County.

[Secretary's Note: Table 52 in SEWRPC Technical Report No. 11 (5th Edition), *The Population of Southeastern Wisconsin*, sets forth the projected racial and ethnic makeup of the Region for the year 2050 (see Attachment 7).]

3. Ms. Rotker referred to Exhibit G and stated that the Advisory Committees should be provided with best practices from other metropolitan areas in the Country regarding evaluation criteria for use in selecting projects for Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds. She stated concerns with potential criteria Nos. 2, 4, and 5. She stated that potential criterion No. 2 may benefit communities with a job/housing imbalance because it is based on traffic volume. She stated best practices from other metropolitan areas, such as the North Carolina Capital Area MPO should be reviewed in relation to potential criterion No. 4. She stated that potential criterion No. 5 should apply to all projects, not just those involving traffic capacity expansions. She stated that the overall goal of the evaluation criteria should be to help create a transportation system that would correct past mistakes, which she stated is clearly recognized in the regional housing plan.

4. Ms. Rotker referred to the earlier Task Force discussion related to the SEWRPC governing body and suggested that the Task Force make a recommendation regarding the makeup of the Commission based on the guidance being developed by the U.S. DOT. Mr. Yunker stated that the structure of regional planning commission governing bodies in Wisconsin is set forth by State law. Ms. Rotker stated that, although the method of appointing the Commissioners is determined by State law, SEWRPC should play a role in suggesting more equitable representation.
5. Mr. Yunker stated that he would like to respond to Ms. Rotker concerns regarding the potential evaluation criteria for projects using STP funds.
 - Mr. Yunker stated that links to documents that include the practices used by similar sized metropolitan areas around the Country that were provided to the Advisory Committees on Transportation System Planning and Programming were e-mailed to Task Force members and other interested parties (see Attachment 8). He stated that the Advisory Committees were provided information regarding the process used by 9 other MPOs for selection of projects for use of STP funds and evaluation criteria used by those 9 MPOs.
 - Mr. Yunker stated that the membership of the Advisory Committees on Transportation Planning and Programming are population proportional. He noted that 11 of the 22 voting members of the Advisory Committee for the Milwaukee Urbanized Area represent the City of Milwaukee or Milwaukee County and four additional members represent other communities within Milwaukee County.
 - Mr. Yunker stated that potential evaluation criterion No. 5 applied only to capacity expansion projects because there is a logical connection between communities with a job/housing imbalance or lack of transit service and need to expand highway capacity. Mr. Yunker stated that communities potentially could decrease the demand for new highway capacity by providing workforce housing and transit service as an alternative to commuting to work by vehicle from another community.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Greene thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Benjamin R. McKay
Recording Secretary

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