

Minutes of the Thirty Second Meeting of the
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

DATE: October 7, 2014
TIME: 4:30 p.m.
PLACE: Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD)
General Commission Room
260 W. Seeboth Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Members Present

Adelene Greene..... Director of Workforce Development, Kenosha County
Chair
Yolanda Adams..... President and CEO, Urban League of Racine and Kenosha
Tyrone Dumas..... Educational Consultant,
SOS Center Garden of Hope After School Program, Milwaukee
Ella Dunbar..... Program Services Manager, Social Development Commission, Milwaukee
Nancy Holmlund..... Past President, Racine Interfaith Coalition
Lynnette McNeely..... Legal Redress Chair, Waukesha County NAACP
Jackie Schellinger..... Indian Community Representative, Retired Judge

Guests and Staff Present

Stephen P. Adams..... Public Involvement and Outreach Manager, SEWRPC
Christopher T. Hiebert..... Chief Transportation Engineer, SEWRPC
Benjamin R. McKay..... Principal Planner, SEWRPC
Nakeisha N. Payne..... Public Involvement and Outreach Specialist, SEWRPC
Karyn Rotker..... ACLU of Wisconsin
Karen Schmiechen..... Transit Urban Planner and Wisconsin Rideshare Program Manager,
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Kenneth R. Yunker..... Executive Director, SEWRPC

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Greene called the meeting of the Environmental Justice Task Force to order at 4:30 p.m., welcoming those in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 6, 2014

Ms. Greene noted that not enough Task Force members were present at this time to constitute a quorum, although additional members are 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 asked if there were any public comments on the agenda or other Task Force business. There were none.

UPDATE ON THE MAJOR UPDATE AND REEVALUATION OF THE REGIONAL LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PLANS, AND EXTENSION OF DESIGN YEAR FROM 2035 TO 2050

Ms. Greene asked Mr. McKay of the Commission staff to provide the Task Force an overview of the third series of VISION 2050 visioning workshops. Mr. McKay noted that a PowerPoint handout titled “Review and Evaluation of Regional Land Use and Transportation Scenarios” was distributed to members at the meeting (the PowerPoint is available www.sewrpc.org/VISION2050Scenarios). He noted that the sketch scenarios were presented and evaluated at the third series of visioning workshops. Mr. McKay stated that public input will be used to help refine the five sketch scenarios into three detailed alternative plans. He noted that this update is intended to allow the Task Force to comment on the sketch scenarios and provide direction on refining the sketch scenarios into three detailed alternative plans and on the evaluation of the detailed alternative plans. He then noted that a handout titled “Review of Sketch Scenarios,” which includes a scorecard that measures the performance of the scenarios against 13 criteria, was provided to the Task Force prior to the meeting (see Attachment 1). The following comments and discussion points were made during the overview:

1. Ms. Dunbar noted that new bicycle lanes painted a different color from the pavement have been completed in Wauwatosa. She asked if this is an example of a higher level of bicycle accommodation. Mr. Yunker responded that this is an example of a higher level of bicycle accommodation. Mr. Yunker noted that one of the best examples is located on Bay Street in the Bay View neighborhood of Milwaukee where the bicycle lane is raised from the traffic lanes with a rolled curb. Ms. Holmlund noted that bicycle lanes that are a different color are more visible.
2. Ms. Schellinger asked if a cost estimate of the various scenarios was shared with the public at the visioning workshops. Mr. Yunker responded that the scenario evaluation criteria include a “Cost of Supporting New Development to Local Governments” criterion and an “Average Annual Transportation System Cost” criterion. He noted that all 13 criteria are included in the handout titled “Review of Sketch Scenarios.” Ms. Adams noted that the Urban League of Racine and Kenosha hosted a visioning workshop and stated that the evaluation criteria were very helpful in providing attendees an understanding of the tradeoffs between the scenarios. Mr. Yunker noted that scenarios C, D, and E, which include compact development patterns and robust transit investments, perform better on criteria such as service to environmental justice populations, job/housing balance, and households with affordable housing plus transportation costs. Scenarios A and B perform better on the transportation system cost criterion.
3. Ms. McNeely questioned whether the scenarios prepare Milwaukee for the future. Ms. Holmlund suggested that some of the scenarios accomplish this noting that a number of the scenarios include compact development patterns and new transit technologies. She asked if the scenarios reflect development in other Regions. Mr. Yunker responded that transit technologies from other Regions, such as Portland, were used as examples in developing some of the scenarios. He added that these are only conceptual level scenarios intended to allow consideration of the long-term consequences of alternative future paths of developing the Region’s land and transportation system. Mr. Yunker noted that public input, as well as input received from the Environmental

Justice Task Force, the Commission's Advisory Committees on Land Use Planning and Transportation System Planning, and VISION 2050 Task Forces on key areas of interest, will be used to refine the sketch scenarios into three detailed alternative plans.

4. Mr. Dumas stated that a major political shift will need to occur to permit funding transit expansion in the Region. Mr. Yunker noted that the recently completed report of the Wisconsin Transportation Finance and Policy Commission calls for increased transportation funding for both transit and roads. He noted State legislation that would have allowed the creation of regional transit authorities and local dedicated funding for transit operators was almost passed in 2009 and 2010. That legislation would have resulted in approximately \$65,000,000 annually in Milwaukee County to fund transit, compared to the approximately \$15,000,000 currently provided by Milwaukee County to support the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) under the existing transit funding structure. Ms. Holmlund expressed concern about the upcoming general election referendum on the creation of a transportation fund because transit funding could be moved out of the transportation fund and into the State's general fund where it would have to compete with other State programs for funding.

Mr. Yunker stated that Commission staff would like to have discussion by the Task Force on each sketch scenario. The following comments and discussion points were made:

Scenario A

1. Ms. Adams stated that the major flaw of Scenario A is the 25 percent reduction in transit service. Ms. McNeely stated that considering Scenario A would be short sighted because there may be future increases in gas prices, widening income gaps between the wealthy and poor, and more working poor. She noted that all of these possibilities would make it difficult for more people to depend on driving in the future. Mr. Yunker noted that Scenario A is intended to provide a baseline comparison for the other scenarios. He stated that Scenario A is intended to represent regional land use and transportation development trends over the last 15 years.
2. Ms. Holmlund noted that a greater number of people living in rural areas will not be able to drive as the number of older residents increases. She stated that many of these residents will need transportation to receive health care services. Ms. McNeely stated this will be a community issue regardless of the economic status of residents.
3. Mr. Dumas noted that cutting driver education classes from public schools has had a disproportionately negative impact on the ability of students from lower income households to obtain a driver's license. He noted that significant job growth is occurring outside urban centers. Transit connections to jobs will be even more important in the future because public high schools no longer provide driver education. Ms. McNeely noted that reducing transit service would exacerbate the driver's license issue because people without a license will drive to work if there is not another option.
4. Ms. Schellinger stated that Scenario A is outdated because it does not include new transportation options. She stated that we need to anticipate how the Region will meet future needs to remain viable regardless of current satisfaction with the transportation system options. Ms. Schellinger noted that the Madison area is experiencing a large amount of growth and questioned whether transit service has been declining, or expanding in that area. Ms. Holmlund noted that Madison is

experiencing an influx of lower income households. Mr. Yunker stated that staff could prepare a comparison of recent transit service trends for the Madison area and Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS).

[Secretary's Note: Since 2000 the amount of fixed route bus service in the Madison area has remained constant, as compared to the about 20 percent decline in Southeastern Wisconsin.]

5. Ms. Adams noted that language can be a barrier to using transit. She noted that the Urban League of Racine and Kenosha had run a grant funded Spanish Language hotline for the Racine Urban Belle System. Riders with limited English proficiency found it very helpful. Mr. Yunker noted that he believed transit systems are required to have a limited English proficiency plan.
6. Ms. Schellinger asked what the reaction to date to Scenario A has been. Mr. Yunker responded that the reaction of the Task Force to Scenario A is similar to the reaction from attendees of the visioning workshops. He noted that Scenario A reflects development trends in the Region from the past 15 years and is intended to be used as a baseline for comparison to other Scenarios.

Scenario B

1. Ms. Holmlund noted that Scenario B does not have a regional transit system. Mr. Yunker noted that bus service would extend across County boundaries under Scenario B.
2. Ms. Adams asked about the cost of adding to the regional bicycle network and noted that usage probably decreases in cold weather months. Mr. Yunker responded that the cost of the regional bicycle network will be determined in the detailed alternative plans and noted that it is likely a very small percentage of the total cost of the regional transportation system. Ms. Holmlund noted that bicycle facilities have very vocal users. Mr. Yunker noted that the provision of bicycle travel is required, where reasonable, on highway construction and reconstruction projects receiving State or Federal funding. In addition, all of the Counties in the Region have expanded off-street facilities. Mr. Dumas noted that the addition of bicycle racks to buses is very popular and supports coordination between transit and bicycling. Mr. Yunker noted that the Region is in competition with other regions of the Country for attracting employers and young workers. He noted that transit and bicycle/pedestrian facilities are popular with younger workers and may make the Region more desirable to employers.
3. Ms. Dunbar asked if there are funds dedicated to improving reverse commute options for workers seeking employment in the Region, such as the Ways to Work program. Mr. Yunker responded other similar programs were funded through Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) grants. He noted that Federal transportation legislation (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)) eliminated these programs, but permitted them to be funded from the Federal formula funds received by public transit systems for capital and operating assistance.
4. Ms. Schellinger noted that "Access to Transit" is the criterion with the most dramatic difference between Scenarios A and B. Ms. Holmlund stated that some younger workers may not move to the Region if there are not attractive transit options.

Scenario C

1. Ms. Holmlund noted that development is heavily focused in Milwaukee County. Mr. Yunker noted that much of the new development under Scenario C would be transit oriented development (TOD) centered on a rapid transit network in the Milwaukee area. He noted that the rapid transit network would consist of light rail and bus rapid transit (BRT) lines. Both would have stations every half mile to mile, service frequencies of five to 15 minutes, and a dedicated right-of-way. Light rail vehicles typically use overhead electrical power and run on a rail. Bus rapid transit vehicles are typically powered by diesel fuel and run on rubber tires. He noted that investment in residential, office, and retail development has been linked to investment in higher levels of transit service such as light rail and BRT. Bus service over existing streets and highways does not provide a long-term service commitment, and therefore, is less likely to result in investment in land development and redevelopment around stops.
2. Ms. Dunbar questioned whether Scenario C would lead to gentrification in some neighborhoods and asked if a percentage of the new housing units within TODs would be subsidized. Mr. Yunker noted that increased land prices may raise housing costs and reduce affordability and noted that subsidized housing recommendations have not been addressed at this point. He stated that subsidized housing recommendations from the recently adopted regional housing plan will be incorporated into the VISION 2050 plan. Ms. Dunbar noted that the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program could be used to create affordable housing within TODs. Ms. Holmlund noted that recent LIHTC proposals have been very contentious and asked if there are any lessons to be learned. Mr. McKay noted that standards for new LIHTC projects result in high quality developments that cannot be distinguished from market rate developments.

Scenarios D and E

1. Ms. Holmlund noted that major employers in the Racine area, such as S.C. Johnson Wax, find it difficult to attract younger workers because there is a lack of high quality transit. She stated that implementing Scenarios D or E may attract enough younger workers to the entire Region to offset their high costs.
2. Mr. Dumas noted that there was competition between communities for stations along the proposed high speed rail line from Milwaukee to Madison, but questioned whether some communities rejected the idea of a station because people of different racial and demographic backgrounds could be attracted to the community. He stated that residents of the Region need to be educated not to be afraid of those with different backgrounds. Ms. Schellinger stated that people tend not to like change. She noted that on the other end of the socio-economic spectrum, people often complain about new McMansions that do not match the existing character of neighborhoods. Ms. Holmlund stated that the high-speed rail proposal to Madison was poorly marketed because it was not described as part of a larger network. Mr. Yunker noted that communities such as Brookfield, Hartland, and Oconomowoc supported stations and viewed them as important additions to the community. He noted that change has been an issue in other regions where guideway transit lines were added to the transit system, with communities often fighting the new lines at first and then demanding service extensions after implementation has begun.

3. Ms. McNeely stated that implementing Scenario D would be prudent because it may help to address racial issues in the Region. She noted that people who want to separate themselves from others of a different racial or ethnic background move to outlying communities. The increased connectivity between large urban centers and outlying communities under Scenario D may help address some of the racial separation issues in the Region. Mr. Dumas noted that redevelopment can attract people back to urban centers. He noted redevelopment of the 3rd Ward in Milwaukee as an example. Ms. Holmlund noted that gentrification is an issue when neighborhoods are redeveloped and attract residents with higher incomes.

Mr. Yunker thanked the Task Force members for their participation in the discussion and then asked each member to share their preferences and concerns regarding the Scenarios. Most members stated they preferred Scenario D because it includes an upgrade in transit technology that applies to the entire Region and may be attractive to younger workers; increases connectivity between large urban centers and outlying communities; and costs less than Scenario E. Several members also acknowledged that Scenario B significantly increases transit service at a lower cost than Scenarios C, D, and E.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 6, 2014

Ms. Greene noted that a quorum of Task Force members was now present and asked for a motion to approve past minutes. Ms. Holmlund moved and Mr. Dumas seconded approval of the Environmental Justice Task Force meeting minutes of May 6, 2014. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT *TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN: 2015-2018*

Ms. Greene asked Mr. Yunker to provide the Task Force an overview of the draft *Transportation Improvement Program for Southeastern Wisconsin: 2015-2018*. Mr. Yunker noted that a flow chart titled “Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Development Process” was distributed to members at the meeting (see Attachment 2) and discussed the steps in the TIP development process. Mr. Yunker then noted that a PowerPoint handout titled “Draft 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program” was distributed to members at the meeting (the PowerPoint is available www.sewrpc.org/Draft2015-2018TIP). He provided an overview of:

- The project selection process
- Project type categories, including:
 - Highway Preservation
 - Highway Improvement
 - Highway Expansion
 - Transit Preservation
 - Transit Improvement
 - Transit Expansion
 - Highway Safety
 - Environmental Enhancement
 - Highway Off-System
- Proposed expenditures for the year 2015, the first year of the TIP, and expenditures for years 2015 through 2018

- Results of comparison of project location and minority and low-income populations as documented in Appendix G of the TIP
- Comparison of arterial highway and public transit expenditures
- The effect funding has on the implementation of arterial street and highway and public transit projects
- The need for dedicated funding for transit in the Region.

The following comments and discussion points were made during the overview:

1. Ms. McNeely referred to the proposed arterial street and highway expenditures for the year 2015 and the total for years 2015-2018 and asked about the source of the funding. Mr. Yunker stated that 10 percent is from local and County governments, 40 percent is from the Federal government, and 50 percent is from the State government.
2. Mr. Dumas referred to the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee (KRM) commuter rail line proposal and asked if it would have used an existing rail line. Mr. Yunker responded that an existing Union Pacific Railway line would be used, but improvements were required. He stated that the authority and funding for the KRM project were eliminated in 2011.
3. Ms. McNeely asked for more information about the Milwaukee Streetcar project. Mr. Yunker responded that it is a 2.1 mile fixed guideway line running from the Intermodal Station through downtown Milwaukee to the lower eastside. He stated that it is a modern streetcar line that could be the first segment in a larger light rail system. Ms. McNeely asked if funding is already dedicated to the project. Mr. Yunker responded that Federal funding has been dedicated that can only be used for this project.
4. Ms. Adams asked where minority and low-income populations are located in the City of Kenosha. Mr. Yunker responded in and adjacent to downtown as shown on Maps G-6 and G-7.
5. Ms. McNeely noted that arterial street and highway expenditures appear to be three times greater than public transit expenditures and asked how this is justified. Mr. Yunker responded that public transit accounts for about two percent of all trips. He noted that improved transit would have a similarly low percentage of trips. Mr. Yunker noted that the cost of the transit system in some of the more detailed alternative plans will be significantly more than current expenditures. Ms. McNeely noted that the increase could be offset by a decrease in the cost of the arterial street and highway system.

UPDATE ON THE REGIONAL HOUSING PLAN

Mr. Yunker noted that a handout titled “Examples of Community Implementation of Regional Housing Plan 2013-14” was distributed to members at the meeting as an update on the Regional Housing Plan (see Attachment 3). He noted that a more detailed report is included in the Commission’s Annual Report, which will be distributed to Task Force members upon completion. Mr. McKay stated that the handout would be emailed to Task Force members not in attendance.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Ms. Greene noted that the next meeting date would be in December 2014, or February 2015, depending on whether Task Force members would like to meet in two months or continue meeting quarterly. Mr. Yunker noted that Commission staff will be developing alternative plans and evaluation criteria over the winter and anticipated significant progress would be made by February. He suggested that staff email a list of potential February 2015 meeting dates for the Task Force to consider.

FURTHER PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Greene asked if anyone in attendance had additional comments. There following comments were made:

1. Ms. Rotker commended Commission staff for undertaking the scenario planning process and including Equitable Access evaluation criteria. She also commended the Task Force for their guidance of Commission staff in the development of the evaluation criteria. She suggested that an attempt be made to apply this evaluation to the TIP. She stated that unemployment among minority populations in the Region remains high and increased transit availability would increase connectivity to job opportunities. She noted that the graphic titled "Transportation Elements: Improve/Expand or Maintain As Is" on page 9 of *Guiding the Vision* shows that improving/expanding public transit is a priority for residents of the Region and suggested attaching it to the meeting minutes (see Attachment 4).
2. Mr. Dumas noted that driver's license data compiled by the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) may be useful in developing the VISION 2050 plan.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Greene noted that the Commission will be receiving a lifetime achievement award from Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful at its 2014 IDEAL Awards Gala in November. Ms. Greene then thanked those in attendance and announced the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Benjamin R. McKay
Recording Secretary

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