

MINUTES
SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
PLANNING AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, August 4, 2015

1:30 p.m.

SEWRPC Office Building
Commissioners' Conference Room
W239 N1812 Rockwood Drive
Waukesha, WI 53187-1607

Present:

Excused:

Commissioners:

Daniel S. Schmidt, Chairman
Daniel W. Stoffel, Vice-Chairman
Charles L. Colman
Mike Dawson
Robert W. Pitts
Jennifer K. Rothstein
Nancy Russell
Linda J. Seemeyer
David L. Stroik

José M. Delgado
Brian R. Dranzik
William R. Drew
David L. Eberle
Michael J. Skalitzky

Staff:

Kenneth R. Yunker	Executive Director
Michael G. Hahn	Deputy Director
Elizabeth A. Larsen	Assistant Director – Administration
Kevin J. Muhs	Principal Transportation Engineer
Debra A. D'Amico	Executive Secretary

ROLL CALL

Chairman Schmidt called the Planning and Research Committee meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was declared present. Chairman Schmidt indicated for the record that Commissioners Delgado, Dranzik, Drew, Eberle, and Skalitzky had asked to be excused. Chairman Schmidt then welcomed and introduced Commissioner Rothstein who was appointed as a Commissioner by the Ozaukee County Board of Supervisors in June.

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APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MAY 5, 2015, MEETING

Chairman Schmidt asked if there were any changes or additions to the May 5, 2015, meeting minutes.

On a motion by Mr. Stoffel, seconded by Mr. Colman, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the May 5, 2015, Planning and Research Committee Meeting were approved as published.

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE ADOPTED YEAR 2035 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Chairman Schmidt asked Mr. Yunker to review with the Committee the memorandum for the proposed amendment to the adopted year 2035 regional transportation plan. A copy of the SEWRPC Staff Memorandum dated July 15, 2015, concerning this matter had been provided to Committee members for review prior to the meeting (copy attached to Official Minutes).

Mr. Yunker gave a brief overview of the proposed amendment for the reconstruction of the segment of IH 94 between 70th Street and 16th Street in Milwaukee County. He noted the amendment was requested by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) upon completion of the preliminary engineering and environmental impact study for the reconstruction of the segment of IH 94 between 70th Street and 16th Street in Milwaukee County, and the selection by WisDOT of a preferred alternative. The proposed amendment to the year 2035 regional transportation plan would incorporate this preferred alternative into the plan. He stated that the specific amendments to the regional transportation plan entailed by the preferred alternative were the conversion of the Hawley Road interchange from a full to a half interchange, and the removal of the General Mitchell Boulevard interchange. Access to and from IH 94 to General Mitchell Boulevard would be retained by providing new service ramps and roadways extending from the Stadium interchange. Mr. Yunker further stated that the Advisory Committee on Regional Transportation System Planning will consider this amendment at their August 19th meeting and staff will report on the action taken by the Advisory Committee at the September Commission meeting.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman, Mr. Yunker stated that rebuilding the freeway to eight traffic lanes at-grade and within the existing right-of-way requires the conversion of the Hawley Road Interchange to a half interchange, retaining the on-ramp to westbound IH 94 and the off-ramp from eastbound IH 94.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Seemeyer, Mr. Yunker stated that of the two preferred alternatives that WisDOT considered, rebuilding the freeway on the existing alignment is viewed as the better alternative by those groups that oppose the freeway reconstruction to modern design standards and with capacity expansion.

In response to questions by Mr. Stroik, Mr. Yunker stated that there will be a short segment of the freeway between Hawley Road and General Mitchell Boulevard with narrowed lanes and shoulders. He further stated the City of West Allis was concerned with the loss of the Hawley Road interchange; however, WisDOT has agreed to improve the connection between Hawley Road and 70th Street south of IH 94.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Mr. Yunker stated that staff is proposing that the Planning and Research Committee consider approval of this Amendment pending approval by the Advisory Committee on Regional Transportation System Planning at their meeting on August 19th. Should the Advisory Committee not approve, or recommend changes to the Amendment, a special Planning and Research Committee meeting would be scheduled prior to the Commission meeting on September 16th. He noted

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that the Committee also could consider not acting on the amendment today, and instead schedule a special meeting prior to the September Commission meeting.

In response to a comment by Ms. Rothstein, Mr. Yunker stated that the approximately one-half mile of the reconstructed freeway segment will have narrowed freeway lanes and shoulders.

There being no further questions or discussion, on a motion by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Ms. Seemeyer, and carried unanimously, the SEWRPC Staff Memorandum for the proposed amendment to the adopted year 2035 regional transportation plan, dated July 15, 2015, was approved and recommended for Commission adoption, contingent upon approval by the Advisory Committee on Regional Transportation System Planning at their meeting on August 19, 2015.

**CONSIDERATION OF SEWRPC COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PLANNING REPORT NO. 317,
“WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PLAN”**

Chairman Schmidt asked Mr. Yunker to review with the Committee the SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 317, *Washington County Transit System Development Plan*.

Mr. Yunker noted that Commissioner Stoffel served as Chairman of the Advisory Committee guiding this effort. He then introduced Mr. Kevin Muhs of the Commission staff to give a brief presentation on the Washington County Transit System Development Plan (copy attached to Official Minutes).

Following are questions and comments that were made during his review.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Mr. Muhs stated that current fare for the Washington County Commuter Express is \$3.25 with a pre-purchased ticket, or \$3.75 in cash onboard the bus. He noted that fares are expected to rise slightly during the Plan's timeframe in order to keep pace with inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index. Mr. Stoffel commented that in contracts with the Commuter Express contractor, fuel price risk lies with the contractor rather than the County, and therefore, fuel price volatility does not have a significant impact on the County's cost during the contract to provide the service. Mr. Muhs noted that fuel price increases usually result in more ridership, and therefore, more fare revenue on the Commuter Express service.

Mr. Stoffel, who also serves on the Washington County Board's Transportation Committee, gave a brief overview of the Committee's actions since the completion of the Plan, such as approving new operating contracts for both the Shared-Ride Taxi and Commuter Express services, the elimination of the three low-performing runs of the Commuter Express, and the elimination of late night Shared-Ride taxi service on weekends, with service now ending at 11 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. He stated that the planning process was very helpful to the County as it made decisions regarding changes to the transit services, and that he appreciated that Commission staff explored many service alternatives and prepared a recommended plan that prepared the County for the uncertainties in future funding of transit services.

Mr. Stoffel also stated that he hoped that Washington County and Ozaukee County would explore combining their shared-ride taxi services in the hopes of achieving some cost savings due to management efficiencies while providing improved services for passengers. Ms. Rothstein agreed that it would be worth exploring combining the services. She noted that Ozaukee County had recently purchased three new Priuses as shared-ride vehicles to save on fuel costs and that working together would provide benefits for those riders who live close to the County borders.

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noted that the association in Lake Geneva is seeking permission to use chemical treatment to control aquatic plants.

[Secretary's Note: The aquatic plant control approach described by Mr. Hahn is applicable to small areas of plant growth that require control. For larger areas of invasive non-native plants, species-specific chemical controls may be needed. In the specific case of Eurasian water milfoil, the chemical application should be made during the spring to avoid affecting potentially beneficial native plants that emerge later in the growing season.]

Mr. Pitts asked if low lake water levels cause the growth of weeds. Mr. Hahn stated that they could if the lake has a relatively flat, or gradually sloping, bottom extending from the shoreline. He added that if the lake bed drops off steeply, changes in lake levels would be less likely to result in increased growth of aquatic plants.

[Secretary's Note: When lake levels are low, and shallow areas are created, sunlight can more readily penetrate into a lake, promoting plant growth.]

Ms. Rothstein inquired about the cause of the blue green and floating algae in lakes, and how the algae is kept under control. Mr. Hahn replied that excessive phosphorus loads promote algal growth; thus, controlling phosphorus inputs to a lake would be important for controlling algae.

[Secretary's Note: Another means of limiting algal growth is maintenance of a healthy aquatic plant community that will compete with algae for the available phosphorus. In some cases where extensive chemical treatment was applied to remove aquatic plants, dramatic increases in algal growth have occurred because there are no plants competing for phosphorus.]

CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Schmidt asked Mr. Yunker if there was any correspondence or if there were any announcements.

Mr. Yunker stated that staff currently anticipates there will not be a need for a special Planning and Research Committee meeting held prior to the Quarterly Commission meeting in September.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Ms. Seemeyer, and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 3:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth R. Yunker
Deputy Secretary