

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

DATE: December 8, 2015
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
N. Lynnette McNeely..... Legal Redress Chair, Waukesha County NAACP
Rodney Prunty..... President, United Way of Racine
Jackie Schellinger..... Indian Community Representative, Retired Judge
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
Donna Brown-Martin..... Director, Bureau of Planning and Economic Development,
Division of Transportation Investment, Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Dennis Grzezinski..... Law Office of Dennis Grzezinski
Michael G. Hahn..... Deputy Director, SEWRPC
Andrew Levy..... Systems Planning Supervisor,
Southeast Region, Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Eric D. Lynde..... Principal Transportation Planner/Engineer, SEWRPC
Gary K. Korb..... Regional Planning Educator, SEWRPC
Benjamin R. McKay..... Principal Planner, SEWRPC
Kevin J. Muhs..... Principal Transportation Planner, SEWRPC
Jennifer Sarnecki..... Urban and Regional Planning Supervisor,
Southeast Region, 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 4:35 p.m., welcoming those in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 29, 2015

Ms. Greene asked if there were any questions or comments on the September 29, 2015, meeting minutes. There were none. Ms. Greene asked for a motion to approve the September 29, 2015, meeting minutes. Ms. Adams moved and Ms. Schellinger seconded the approval of the September 29, 2015, meeting minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Greene asked if there were any public comments. The following public comments were made:

1. Mr. Grzezinski commented that he has followed the VISION 2050 process closely and is impressed by the approach. Mr. Grzezinski referred to the evaluation of the alternatives presented in the handout used at the fourth series of VISION 2050 workshops and noted that the public investment in transit under Alternatives I and II is greater than under the Trend, but the savings in extending public infrastructure and in private transportation costs results in the cost of Alternatives I and II being very close to that of the Trend. He added that some benefits of Alternatives I and II, such as health benefits and equitable access to jobs and other important destinations, are not monetized. He stated that the additional cost of Alternatives I and II compared to the Trend are a small price to pay for reducing discrimination and isolation from jobs.
2. Ms. Rotker noted that the Milwaukee County Transit System is seeking drivers and wanted Task Force members to be aware and pass along the information to those who may be seeking employment.
3. Ms. Rotker complimented the VISION 2050 planning process. She noted that the graphics included in the handout and display boards used during the fourth series of workshops were helpful to participants in understanding the large amount of information regarding the alternatives and their evaluation. She also observed concerns from participants during the Milwaukee County workshop regarding outreach in central city neighborhoods. She suggested reformatting newspaper advertisements for the next series of workshops to focus on how VISION 2050 may impact aspects of people's daily lives, such as housing and access to jobs. She also suggested advertising on the radio.
4. Ms. Rotker suggested some minor improvements to the Equitable Access evaluation theme that she would like incorporated into the evaluation of the Preliminary Recommended Plan, including evaluating the impacts of the Preliminary Recommended Plan on people with disabilities and including whites in the race and ethnicity mapping.

BRIEFING ON THE WISCONSIN STATE FREIGHT PLAN

Ms. Greene noted that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) would like to brief the Task Force on the Wisconsin State Freight Plan. Ms. Greene then welcomed Ms. Brown-Martin of the WisDOT Bureau of Planning and Economic Development. Ms. Brown-Martin provided a briefing on the Wisconsin State Freight Plan using a PowerPoint presentation titled WisDOT Freight Activities (available [here](#)). The following comments and discussion points were made:

1. Mr. Dumas asked for an overview of WisDOT's public outreach for the State Freight Plan. Ms. Brown-Martin responded that extensive outreach is being conducted through outreach to communities in economic development corridors, social media, the internet, and face-to-face meetings. Mr. Dumas asked if WisDOT staff is conducting public outreach regarding the transportation of hazardous materials. Ms. Brown-Martin responded that safety regarding rail and highway transportation of materials is a very important concern and WisDOT staff will provide the public with as much information as possible regarding changes in the State Freight Plan as well as at the Federal level.
2. Ms. McNeely asked if the State Freight Plan is advisory, or if WisDOT has the ability to implement the plan. Ms. Brown-Martin responded that the plan will include a list of projects that should occur over a five-year period and recommendations regarding needed improvements to highways, rail corridors, and ports. Ms. McNeely asked if local governments are required to implement the freight plan recommendations. Ms. Brown-Martin responded that local government projects must be consistent with the plan if they are requesting funding from the State. Mr. Yunker added that the State Legislature and Governor provide funding to projects through the State Budget.
3. Mr. Wade asked about requirements for private railroad companies to comply with State Freight Plan recommendations. Ms. Brown-Martin responded that the railroads typically operate on privately owned facilities; however, the State can contact the Federal Surface Transportation Board for compliance. Compliance is generally achieved through a conflict resolution process. Mr. Dumas noted that the railroads have not been responsive to complaints regarding bridges in the City of Milwaukee. Mr. Wade noted that bridges in Sherman Park and over Mill Road have been maintained better than bridges in the 30th Street Industrial Corridor. Ms. Brown-Martin responded that she would follow up on the inconsistent bridge maintenance.
4. Mr. Wade noted that there are some negative impacts to residential properties that are located near freight rail traffic. Mr. Yunker noted that the State has applied for TIGER grant funding to re-route the freight traffic through the Menomonee Valley rather than through the Milwaukee Intermodal Station. Mr. Dumas asked if there are Federal requirements to notify communities when transporting hazardous materials. Ms. Brown-Martin responded that she is not aware of any requirements; however, the FAST Act includes provisions for improving freight rail safety. Mr. Dumas asked if it is possible to convert bike trails that were formerly rail corridors back to rail. Ms. Brown-Martin responded that it is rare, but would be technically possible.
5. Ms. Adams asked if employment opportunities with rail operators are publicized in Wisconsin. Ms. Brown-Martin noted that, while several Class I rail operators operate in Wisconsin, none are based in Wisconsin.
6. Mr. Dumas noted that some railroad crossings are in poor condition and asked if the State of Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Railroads (OCR) has authority over rail crossings. Mr. Brown-Martin responded the OCR is the State agency with primary responsibility for determining whether a rail crossing is safe and approving any changes to a rail crossing.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON THE EVALUATION OF VISION 2050 ALTERNATIVE REGIONAL LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PLANS

Mr. Yunker stated that the purpose of the alternative plans stage of VISION 2050 is to examine the outcomes and consequences of following recent trends in land use development and transportation system investment over the next 35 years compared to possible outcomes and consequences of more compact development patterns and changes in transportation system investments. Mr. Yunker stated that the evaluation of the alternatives was the focus of the fourth series of workshops held in November and early December. He then stated that input from those workshops will be incorporated into the next step of the VISION 2050 planning process, which is to develop a Preliminary Recommended Regional Land Use and Transportation System Plan. Mr. Yunker added that the Preliminary Recommended Plan may draw from elements of multiple alternatives as well as from concepts that may not have been included in the alternatives.

Mr. Yunker noted that the workshops were organized around a handout summarizing the alternatives and their evaluation, which Task Force members received prior to the meeting (the handout is available [here](#)). He asked Mr. Muhs and Mr. Lynde of the Commission staff to provide an overview of the alternatives and their evaluation using the summary handout. The following comments and discussion points were made during the overview:

1. Ms. Dunbar noted that transit service is reduced under the Trend and stated that frequency should be increased around worker shift changes. Mr. Muhs responded that increased frequency is one focus of Alternatives I and II and noted current levels of frequency could not be maintained under the Trend due to the anticipated level of funding for transit. Mr. Yunker noted that frequency during peak periods has declined over the last 15 years, and the decline is continued under the Trend.
2. Mr. Wade noted that Alternative II would not include additional lanes on IH 43 between Silver Spring Drive and Howard Avenue and asked if that would be realistic. Mr. Yunker noted that the regional transportation system plan is advisory, and WisDOT is the implementing agency. Ms. Schellinger asked if WisDOT considers regional plan recommendations. Mr. Yunker responded that WisDOT will study the segment at a greater level of detail, including the regional plan recommendation as one alternative. Ms. Schellinger and Mr. Wade stated that in particular the transit expansion envisioned under Alternative II is preferred from an environmental justice standpoint.
3. Mr. Dumas noted that some segments of IH 43 in the City of Milwaukee have green space within the right-of-way, which is uncommon in other cities. He stated that this is beneficial to residents adjacent to these segments of freeway and widenings are beneficial to people who travel through the corridor. He indicated he was not necessarily opposed to adding capacity in the corridor, but that green space should be maintained. Ms. Schellinger noted that commerce created by commuters is beneficial to residents and expressed concern regarding additional traffic within adjacent neighborhoods if capacity is not added in the corridor to address congestion. Mr. Dumas noted that transit alternatives and staggered shifts could also provide options for commuters to avoid congestion. Mr. Yunker noted that aesthetics would be addressed by WisDOT during preliminary engineering.

Ms. Greene asked if there were any further questions or comments regarding the evaluation of the alternatives. There were none. Mr. Yunker noted that staff would like to present a series of questions to Task Force members regarding the alternatives and their evaluation that was presented during the fourth series of workshops and on the VISION 2050 alternatives website using the iclicker keypad polling devices that were used during workshops. Mr. Yunker added that the purpose of the questions is to obtain input regarding which aspects of the alternatives should be included in the Preliminary Recommended Plan (see Attachment 1 for Task Force responses). Mr. Yunker then asked the Task Force members to rate the performance of the Commission staff regarding VISION 2050. He explained that buttons A through E correspond to staff performance grades A through F. Each of the Task Force members gave Commission staff an A for their work on VISION 2050.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND OUTREACH DIVISION UPDATE ON PRIMARY ORGANIZATIONAL CONTACTS

Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission's Public Involvement and Outreach Division maintains a list of organizations that represent minority and low-income populations, which includes about 100 organizations, to engage minority and low-income populations in regional planning efforts. Mr. Yunker then noted that the Public Involvement and Outreach Division also maintains a list of Primary Organizations that have shown past interest in the Commission's work and are contacted by Division staff on a regular basis. The Task Force has reviewed the list of Primary Organizations periodically since 2011. Mr. Yunker then asked Mr. Adams of the Commission staff to provide an update on the 2015-2016 Primary Organizations contact list (see Attachment 2). The following comments were made during the update:

1. Ms. Dunbar noted that the Social Development Commission (SDC) is omitted from the list. Mr. Adams responded the list will be corrected to include the SDC.
2. Ms. McNeely asked if the purpose of contacting the Primary Organizations is to obtain feedback on regional planning efforts. Mr. Adams responded that staff discusses regional planning efforts as well as other efforts the organizations may be involved with during a contact. Ms. McNeely asked if a summary is available of feedback on regional planning efforts obtained through contacts with the Primary Organizations. Mr. Adams responded that Public Involvement and Outreach Division staff is compiling a report for 2015 that will be provided to the Task Force when it is completed.

Ms. Greene asked if there were any further questions or comments regarding the 2015-2016 Primary Organizations contact list. There were none. Mr. Yunker noted that Task Force members can notify staff if they become aware of any organizations that should be added to the Primary Organizations contact list.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Ms. Greene noted that the next meeting would be in March if the Task Force would like to stay on a quarterly schedule. She requested that Commission staff email Task Force members with prospective dates and schedule a meeting in March based on the availability of members.

FURTHER PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Greene asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Greene noted that Mr. Dumas has volunteered for Vice Chair of the Task Force in response to the request made at the last Task Force meeting. Ms. Greene thanked Mr. Dumas for volunteering. Ms. Greene then thanked those in attendance and attending by phone. She announced the meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Benjamin R. McKay
Recording Secretary

* * *

KRY/EDL/BRM
EJTF Minutes - Mtg 35 - 12/8/15 (00229629).DOCX