

MINUTES
SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
PLANNING AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, May 21, 2019

1:30 p.m.

SEWRPC Office Building
Commissioner's Conference Room
W239 N1812 Rockwood Drive
Waukesha, WI 53188

Present:

Excused:

Commissioners:

Daniel S. Schmidt, Chairman
Jose Delgado, Vice-Chairman
Steve Bostrom
Charles L. Colman
Michael A. Crowley
Theodore Lipscomb, Sr.
Aloysius Nelson
Robert W. Pitts
Jennifer K. Rothstein
Nancy Russell
Jeffrey D. Schleif
Peggy L. Shumway

Donna Brown-Martin
James A. Ladwig
David L. Stroik

Staff:

Kevin J. Muhs	Executive Director
Benjamin R. McKay	Deputy Director
Elizabeth A. Larsen	Assistant Director – Administration

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 Brown-Martin, Ladwig, and Stroik had asked to be excused.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MARCH 6, 2019, MEETING

Chairman Schmidt asked if there were any changes or additions to the March 6, 2019, meeting minutes. There were none.

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On a motion by Mr. Nelson, seconded by Mr. Pitts, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the March 6, 2019, Planning and Research Committee Meeting were approved.

CONSIDERATION OF SEWRPC PLANNING REPORT NO. 17 (2ND EDITION): A JURISDICTIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM PLAN FOR OZAUKEE COUNTY

Chairman Schmidt asked Mr. Muhs to review with the Committee the SEWRPC Planning Report No. 17, (2nd Edition): *A Jurisdictional Highway System Plan for Ozaukee County*.

Mr. Muhs proceeded to review the Report with the Committee, including utilizing a PowerPoint presentation (copy attached to Official Minutes). During the review, the following questions and comments were made and addressed.

Mr. Colman asked if road degradation occurred faster on rural or urban roads. Mr. Muhs commented that road degradation is primarily dependent upon traffic volume, in particular truck volume.

Mr. Schleif commented that STH 167 was at one time planned to be the location of part of the freeway system, and asked if there were any future plans to implement something similar. Mr. Muhs agreed that a freeway was previously planned along that corridor, connecting IH 43 and IH 41, but noted that land development that has occurred in the past few decades would make implementing that expansion difficult and expensive.

In response to a question from Mr. Delgado, Mr. Muhs clarified that the jurisdiction of a roadway determined responsibility for the roadway, including responsibility for the costs of maintenance and snow plowing. In response to a further query by Mr. Delgado, Mr. Muhs stated that a City or Village might wish to assume jurisdiction of a roadway, despite the additional maintenance cost burden, if they feel road maintenance by the County has been poor.

Mr. Bostrom stated that in some cases in Kenosha County, there are agreements in which the County will expand the roads, but the City is responsible for maintaining the roads.

Ms. Rothstein commented that the opposite has happened in Ozaukee County.

Mr. Delgado asked if the Commission staff have information on the condition of the Region's arterial system. Mr. Muhs noted that WisDOT and Commission staff do have data on the condition of many of the Region's roadways, and that better data collection on road condition is expected to start soon following recent changes in Federal performance requirements. He noted that, in general, the Region's freeways are in good condition, and that the other parts of the National highway system have poorer conditions. Local road conditions in the Region can vary widely between location and responsible unit of government.

Mr. Delgado then inquired about funding and the motor fuel tax. Mr. Muhs stated that general funds have been transferred into the State transportation budget over the last ten years to subsidize State highway repairs and reconstruction projects, and that fees or automobile-related taxes would need to be increased to reduce or eliminate this subsidy. Federal transportation funds have similarly been subsidized by non-gas tax revenues and general treasury debt in recent years. The Federal gas tax would need to increase by 10 to 15 cents just to fully fund existing Federal transportation spending levels. Many local and county roads are not paid for by gas taxes or automobile related fees. Typically these roadways are subsidized by general revenues from the property tax levy.

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In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Mr. Muhs stated that currently, only Texas is a donor state with regard to transportation funding, with all other states receiving more transportation funding than they generate in Federal motor fuel tax revenue.

Ms. Russell commented that bridges are a larger issue, noting a bridge in the Village of Sharon that had weight restrictions and closures for an extended period, and therefore required detours of significant length.

Ms. Rothstein noted that local roads are most in need of repairs and then inquired about the Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP). Mr. Muhs stated that funding has not kept pace with inflation. Governor Evers budget proposed more funding and has received support from the League of Wisconsin Municipalities. He also noted that it appeared that the legislature supported additional funding for local roads as well.

Mr. Lipscomb commented on shared revenue and gas tax revenue, noting that changes that may be helpful to local governments do not appear to be making significant progress at the State level at this time.

Mr. Schleif inquired about the current Federal gas tax level. Mr. Muhs stated the tax is currently 18.4 cents per gallon, and noted that the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is supporting a 25 cent increase.

Mr. Schleif then inquired about the impact of electric vehicles on motor fuel tax revenues. Mr. Muhs stated that another revenue source will need to be considered in the future, possibly a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) tax.

Ms. Shumway noted that there was a recent proposal to utilize a portion of the funds from the Volkswagen emissions violation settlement granted to the State of Wisconsin for electric vehicle charging infrastructure, which may result in increased utilization of electric vehicles in the State.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Russell, Mr. Muhs stated the State motor fuels tax has not changed since 2006.

Ms. Rothstein noted that the cost of a roadway project tends to increase at greater than the rate of inflation the more a given project is delayed.

Mr. Schleif noted that existing electrical infrastructure may not have the generating or transmission capacity to support a fully-electrified transportation fleet. Mr. Muhs agreed, and noted that Japan has been studying and planning for this exact issue, as the country decommissions their nuclear power generation facilities at the same time as incentivizing rapid adoption of electric vehicles.

There being no additional questions or comments, on a motion by Ms. Rothstein, seconded by Mr. Schleif, and carried unanimously, the SEWRPC Planning Report No. 17 (2nd Edition): *A Jurisdictional Highway System Plan for Ozaukee County*, was approved.

**CONSIDERATION OF SEWRPC COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PLANNING REPORT NO. 331:
OZAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN: 2019-2023**

Chairman Schmidt asked Mr. Muhs to review with the Committee the SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 331: *Ozaukee County Transit Development Plan: 2019-2023*.

Mr. Muhs proceeded to review the Report with the Committee, including utilizing a PowerPoint presentation (copy attached to Official Minutes). During the review, the following questions and comments were made and addressed.

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In response to a comment by Mr. Pitts concerning low public meeting attendance with regard to this Plan, Mr. Muhs stated that attendance at public meetings often has to do with the public's perception of the importance of the topic and competing activities of the individuals. Mr. Muhs further stated that all transit riders in Ozaukee County were notified of the meetings.

Mr. Nelson asked if tele-meetings would be an option. Mr. Muhs replied that for the VISION 2050 plan a number of on-line tools were in place for people to access if they could not attend a meeting, and that Commission staff continue to invest in cost-effective online public participation tools and efforts.

Ms. Rothstein commented on educating drivers concerning bus-on-shoulder driving. Mr. Muhs stated that if bus-on-shoulder operations were implemented, a combination of driver education, pavement marketing, and enforcement would likely be needed to ensure driver safety and compliance.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman, Mr. Muhs stated that, Ozaukee, Walworth, Washington, and a portion of Kenosha Counties have shared ride taxi options.

Mr. Colman commented that shared ride taxis seemed to be successful in much of the Region, as it appears that use continues to increase.

During a discussion of the potential for Ozaukee County and Washington County to merge the operations of their shared-ride taxi services, Ms. Russell asked how the costs of operating a joint service would be distributed between the counties. Mr. Muhs indicated that it was likely that each County would continue to provide the needed local funding contribution to support trips that were within each County, and would evenly split the needed local funding contribution for trips that crossed the county line. He also noted that it was expected that operating the joint services may increase some costs associated with the services while reducing others. Ms. Rothstein noticed that further savings may be possible through the implementation of other efficiencies, including the use of hybrid vehicles to replace some older vehicles in Washington County's fleet.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Russell, Mr. Muhs stated that Ozaukee County's shared ride taxi service is available on Sundays.

Mr. Lipscomb asked if Ozaukee County is aware of possible Milwaukee County Transit System service eliminations or reductions, and how that may impact the transit connections between Milwaukee and Ozaukee Counties. Mr. Muhs indicated that Ozaukee County transit staff have been monitoring those conversations closely.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Delgado, Mr. Muhs stated that to develop recommendations for a short-range plan such as this, staff reviews the relevant recommendations of VISION 2050, analyzes data collected during the planning effort, considers feedback from the public, and follows the guidance of the locally-appointed Advisory Committee for the effort. This ensures that the recommendations of the plan are more likely to be implemented, and are more likely to have political support from inside and outside the transit system owner. Ms. Rothstein commented that she was on the Advisory Committee that guided this effort, and felt the process and the results were very useful to the County.

Ms. Russell noted that Walworth County had declined a grant for shared-ride vehicles due to the difficulty in obtaining matching funds and meeting the requirements associated with the grant. Mr. Muhs noted that although Federal capital funds for vehicles were distributed by the State through certain competitive grant programs, the State does not currently provide any capital transit vehicle purchase assistance, meaning that the burden of finding funding to qualify for Federal grants falls on local governments. Mr. Lipscomb noted

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that State limitations on local revenue sources and reductions in State shared revenue have made this situation exceedingly difficult for local governments.

Mr. Schleif noted that the potential merger of Ozaukee and Washington Counties transit services appeared to be moving forward. Ms. Rothstein noted that the joint health department between the two counties served as a valuable model.

There being no additional questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Mr. Nelson, and carried unanimously, the SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 331: *Ozaukee County Transit Development Plan: 2019-2023*, was approved.

CONSIDERATION OF THIRD AMENDMENT TO VISION 2050: A REGIONAL LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN, ESTABLISHING TARGETS FOR FEDERAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES: TRANSIT ASSET MANAGEMENT, NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM CONDITION AND PERFORMANCE, FREIGHT PERFORMANCE, AND CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Chairman Schmidt asked Mr. Muhs to review with the Committee the *Third Amendment to VISION 2050: A Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan For Southeastern Wisconsin, Establishing Targets For Federal Performance Measures: Transit Asset Management, National Highway System Condition and Performance, Freight Performance, and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement*.

Mr. Muhs proceeded to review the Amendment using a Power Point presentation with the Committee (copy attached to Official Minutes). During the review, the following questions and comments were made and addressed.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman concerning comparing the condition of transit assets in Southeastern Wisconsin to other regions, Mr. Muhs stated that this should be possible once additional baseline data begins to be uniformly collected across the country and reported to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Mr. Colman requested that peer reports be made available in future documents.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Schleif concerning the 12 year benchmark for vehicle replacement, Mr. Muhs stated that that benchmark is an FTA standard, but that local experience indicates that vehicle maintenance costs begin to rise disproportionately soon after that point, and that it is undesirable to operate a typical transit bus beyond 500,000 to 600,000 miles traveled. Mr. Lipscomb indicated that this matched Milwaukee County's experience.

In response to an additional inquiry by Mr. Schleif, Mr. Muhs stated that a cutaway bus is a vehicle with a truck chassis with a bus frame on the chassis.

During a discussion on the condition of the National Highway System in the Region, Mr. Colman inquired about the change over time in bridge conditions. Mr. Muhs stated that average age is no longer increasing due to a larger number of bridge replacements, and that bridge conditions are generally improving, albeit slowly, in the Region.

Mr. Schleif inquired if the Twin Cities bridge collapse impacted the level of Federal investment into bridges, and Mr. Muhs noted that bridge inspections have improved since that collapse, although no significant change in Federal investment levels was made.

During a discussion regarding the travel time reliability of the National Highway System in the Region, Mr. Schleif inquired why average reliability on the freeways in the Region improved so much during 2017.

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Mr. Muhs indicated that this was an anomaly, and stated that it was due to the Zoo Interchange Reconstruction project closing some of the least reliable segments of the freeway during that time period.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Russell concerning the reliability of STH 50 between Delavan and Williams Bay, Mr. Muhs stated that the resolution of some data may not have been high enough to accurately note the reliability of that segment, and that changing Federal requirements would result in better data on segments like this in the near future.

There being no additional questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Crowley, seconded by Ms. Russell, and carried unanimously, the *Third Amendment To VISION 2050: A Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan For Southeastern Wisconsin, Establishing Targets For Federal Performance Measures: Transit Asset Management, National Highway System Condition And Performance, Freight Performance, and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement*, was approved.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Planning and Research Committee will be held on August 13, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Muhs stated there was no correspondence or announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on a motion by Mr. Crowley, seconded by Mr. Schleif, and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin J. Muhs
Deputy Secretary