

Minutes of the Sixty-Seventh Meeting of the  
**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE**

DATE: June 10, 2025  
TIME: 5:00 p.m.  
PLACE: Virtual Meeting

Members Present

Aloysius Nelson, Chair ..... Sigma Pi Phi (the Boulé)  
Yolanda Adams ..... Board of Education Member, Kenosha Unified School District  
Donna Brown-Martin.....Commissioner, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission;  
Director, Milwaukee County Department of Transportation;  
Liaison to Advisory Committee on Regional Transportation Planning  
Brad Holz..... Board Member, Independence First  
Keith Martin..... Construction Representative Senior, Wisconsin Department of Administration  
Kermiath McClendon..... Impact Investment Manager, Greater Milwaukee Foundation  
N. Lynnette McNeely..... Legal Redress Chair, Waukesha County NAACP  
Andrea Mendez Barrutia.....Director of Milwaukee Chapter of Techqueria  
GeorgeAnn Stinson.....President, African American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Racine

Members Excused

Annabell Bustillos..... Bilingual Outreach Advocate, BeLeaf Survivors  
Huda Alkaff ..... Founder & Director, Wisconsin Green Muslims  
Jackie Schellinger ..... Indian Community Representative, Retired Judge

Guests Present

Dennis Grzezinski ..... Law Office of Dennis Grzezinski  
Karyn Rotker..... Legal Action of Wisconsin

Commission Staff Present

Eric Lynde.....Chief Special Projects Planner  
Benjamin McKay ..... Deputy Director  
Nakeisha Payne..... Chief Community Engagement Specialist  
Jennifer Sarnecki..... Deputy Chief Transportation Planner  
Dana Shinnars .....Transportation Planner

**CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr. Nelson called the meeting of the Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) to order at 5:04 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON MARCH 11, 2025**

Mr. Nelson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 11, 2025, meeting ([link](#)). Ms. Brown-Martin moved, and Mr. McClendon seconded the approval of the meeting minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Nelson asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE**

At the request of Mr. Nelson, Ms. Payne provided an update on the Commission's community engagement activities in the seven counties. Following the report, Mr. Nelson asked about the Commission's engagement with the NAACP in Racine and Kenosha. Ms. Payne responded that the Commission is engaged with both chapters. She added that she serves as the Climate Justice Chair for the Kenosha Chapter.

## **EPA CLIMATE POLLUTION REDUCTION GRANT UPDATE**

At Mr. Nelson's request, Ms. Sarnecki shared an update on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant ([link](#)). She explained the next grant deliverable will include a comprehensive list of measures to reduce pollution in all economic sectors. The following discussion occurred after the update:

1. Ms. Brown-Martin asked how Commission staff were coordinating with existing city and county plans. She noted coordination may be challenging across plans with varied scopes. Ms. Sarnecki reported that staff are looking for alignment in existing plans, particularly in the areas of transportation, land use, and agriculture.
2. Ms. Brown-Martin asked if the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) update will be integrated with the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant deliverables. Mr. McKay said that federal priorities provide guidelines for the CEDS and that Commission staff will work to reflect those in the update.
3. Mr. Nelson asked why all seven counties were not included in the grant. Ms. Sarnecki explained that grants were distributed by Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), but that other counties in the seven-county Region are included in the State of Wisconsin grant. She added that staff have engaged with other counties in the Region on being involved in the State's process.

## **RECENT COMMUNICATION FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

At Mr. Nelson's request, Mr. McKay provided an update on recent communication from the United States Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) ([link](#)). Mr. McKay stated that recipients of federal funds, including the Commission, received a letter from the U.S. DOT in late April. He said that staff continue to track communications and remain in contact with U.S. DOT representatives. The following discussion occurred during the review:

1. Ms. McNeely asked if the letter required immediate action. Mr. McKay stated that the letter asks recipients of federal funds to comply with its contents. Ms. McNeely expressed that the Commission should continue to conduct demographic analysis to support program or policy recommendations in plans.
2. Ms. Rotker asked if Commission staff are working with U.S. DOT or Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) representatives regarding the communication. Mr. McKay confirmed that staff are in contact with members of both agencies. Ms. Rotker asked if there has been an assessment as to whether the guidance is legally binding. Mr. McKay indicated that the Commission has not been made aware of specific legal guidance. Further, the Commission has not instituted changes to programs or policies at this time. Ms. Rotker asked if Commission staff

were speaking with U.S. DOT or WisDOT lawyers. Mr. McKay stated that staff have not been speaking directly with lawyers at this time.

3. Mr. Nelson asked how the letter impacts the Commission and the EJTF. Mr. McKay responded that there have been no actions to date, but that there may be an opportunity to review the EJTF guidance document.

### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – MILWAUKEE PLANNING AND POLICY ANALYSIS CLASS ENTITLED, “IDENTIFY THE TOP REGIONAL PLANNING STRATEGY TO SUPPORT OLDER ADULTS”**

At Mr. Nelson’s request, Ms. Sarnecki presented an overview of strategies to support older adults from a University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee graduate student case study ([link](#)). The case study asked students to identify one strategy that would do the most to improve the quality of life of older adults by 2050. She stated that VISION 2050 does not have a specific recommendation on older adults, although the plan references many themes that are relevant to this age group. Students selected strategies including building garden communities, providing home retrofits, and deploying mobile adult activity centers. She highlighted that the Commission is engaged in planning for seniors through Human Services Transportation Coordination Plans, the Milwaukee County Paratransit Taxi Task Force, and project selection for FTA Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program). The following discussion occurred after the presentation:

1. Ms. Brown-Martin asked about the frequency of the Human Services Transportation Coordination Plans. Ms. Sarnecki responded that the plans are updated every four years for each county. The plans are used to identify projects for 5310 funds, which support services for seniors and individuals with disabilities.
2. Ms. Barrutia asked if the strategies were shared with seniors as part of the case study. Ms. Sarnecki explained that the students’ strategy recommendations were only shared with Commission staff and the community organizations at this time. The organizations included the Commission, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, Kenosha Area Family Aging Services, AARP Wisconsin, Milwaukee County Division on Aging, and United Community Center.
3. Ms. Brown-Martin commented that there is a need to expand transportation options to respond to Baby Boomers in retirement. She added that there is a gap between fixed-route transit service and paratransit service.
4. Mr. Nelson shared that he liked the strategies and asked if the students considered how low-income individuals would be impacted. Ms. Sarnecki said that the project did not go into detail on the costs to individuals with lower incomes, but some strategies recommended leveraging nonprofit funds to offset costs for low-income individuals.

### **REVIEW OF EJTF ACTION ITEM LIST**

At Mr. Nelson’s request, Ms. Sarnecki reviewed the action item list (available [here](#)). She indicated there have not been any notable changes to the list since the March meeting.

Ms. Brown-Martin asked about the status of the Regional Food System Plan. Mr. McKay noted that staff have been working to integrate new information from the Census of Agriculture into existing chapters. He stated that staff intends to reconvene the advisory committee in the fall to review draft chapters.

## **OVERVIEW OF COMPOSITION OF APPLICANTS FOR RECENTLY FILLED COMMISSION POSITIONS**

Mr. McKay shared that a new graduate student started a two-year internship and has begun assisting in research on appropriate land uses for siting renewable energy projects.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Nelson asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

Ms. Brown-Martin provided an update that the on-demand paratransit taxi service in Milwaukee County has been active for several months and is growing in ridership. She stated that the Milwaukee County Paratransit Taxi Task Force is looking to extend the pilot for another year and that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors will consider whether to include the service in the budget for 2026.

## **NEXT MEETING DATES**

Mr. Nelson indicated that the next meeting is scheduled for September 9, 2025, as a virtual meeting. He noted that the December meeting may be hybrid in-person and virtual.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Nelson adjourned the meeting at 6:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana M. Shinnars  
Recording Secretary

\*\*\*