

Southeastern Wisconsin **Regional Planning Commission**



Updating the EJTF Background Document

Environmental Justice Task Force

June 23, 2022

●●●●● Background on Background Document

- EJTF was established by SEWRPC in 2007
- Stated purpose was to enhance the consideration and integration of environmental justice throughout the regional planning process
 - Environmental justice = fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the developing, implementing, and enforcing environmental laws, regulations, and policies
- Given Commission's federally mandated MPO role, staff pay particularly close attention to environmental justice as it relates to potential benefits and impacts associated with land use and transportation to:
 - People of color
 - Low-income populations
 - People with disabilities



●●●●● Preparing to Update Background Document

- Commission staff are proposing to update the background document that articulates the purpose, activities, structure, and functions of the EJTF
- Update will incorporate:
 - Past requests and suggestions from EJTF members
 - Most recent federal guidance
 - Relevant research related to considering and integrating environmental justice during the regional planning process
- Following slides describe proposed approach to updating background document



Proposed Approach

1. Review with EJTF at June 2022 meeting:
 - Initial list of possible changes to document
 - Initial list of non-Commission staff to involve in updating process
2. Finalize and contact list of non-Commission staff to gauge their interest in assisting with update process
3. Incorporate EJTF member suggestions related to document changes and provide updated list of proposed changes to external group to obtain input
4. Revise document and send to external group for further input and additions
5. Incorporate suggestions from external group and review draft document with EJTF at future meeting
6. Incorporate EJTF member suggestions on draft document and present final draft to EJTF



Initial Possible Changes

- Consider whether “Background Document” is appropriate title
- Update federal environmental justice principles and definitions
- Revise population groups represented by EJTF to indicate:
 - Core groups protected under environmental justice regulations (minority populations and low-income populations per Executive Order 12898)
 - Additional groups protected under Title VI (people with disabilities, limited English proficiency, seniors, LGBTQ+, and women)



●●●●● Initial Possible Changes (cont'd)

- Revise how and when EJTF is evaluated, including adding reference to using action item list to track input and progress in addressing EJTF requests
- Update how future EJTF appointments will be made noting that efforts will be made to appoint members with knowledge of transportation, land use, housing, environmental, or other Commission planning topics
- Specify process for evaluating EJTF members based on attendance/participation (e.g., evaluate every two years, include mechanism for removal, document excused/unexcused meeting absences)



●●●●● Initial Possible Changes (cont'd)

- Specify appointment of vice chair and liaisons to Commission committees (e.g., TIP Committee and Regional Transportation Planning Committee)
 - Also indicate how functions are carried out and how EJTF feedback is shared with committees
- Include reference to how EJTF meetings are scheduled and when virtual-only meetings should be conducted
- Include that in-person EJTF meetings should be scheduled at community locations (e.g., schools, local organizations, churches)
 - Encourage EJTF members to nominate specific locations



●●●●● Initial Possible Changes (cont'd)

- Specify that expert speakers should be suggested and invited to attend EJTF meetings to present on relevant matters
- Emphasize that EJTF members should share information related to planning efforts and open positions at the Commission with communities and population groups they represent
 - Clarify how EJTF members should report back to EJTF and Commission staff on how they have shared information



●●●●● Proposed External Group to Invite

- Steve Adams, former Public Involvement and Outreach Manager at SEWRPC
- Adelene Greene, Workforce Development Director at Kenosha County (former EJTF Chair)
- Dennis Grzezinski, Owner of Law Office of Dennis Grzezinski
- Brian Peters, Assistant Director of Independent Living Services at Independence First (former EJTF member)
- Joel Rast, Professor and Director of Urban Studies at UW-Milwaukee
- Karyn Rotker, Senior Staff Attorney at ACLU of Wisconsin
- Kori Schneider-Peragine, Senior Administrator at Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council
- Bruce Wiggins, Executive Director at Milwaukee Urban Gardens

