

Minutes of the Sixth Meeting

THE RACINE COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT PLAN WORKGROUP

Date: June 24th, 2013
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Place: Racine County Ives Grove Auditorium
14200 Washington Avenue
Sturtevant, WI 53177

Workgroup Members Present

Julie Anderson Director, Racine County Department of Public Works & Development Services
Bob Bradley President, Village of Caledonia
Raymond DeHahn..... Alderman, 7th District, City of Racine, and
Vice Chair, Transit and Parking Commission, City of Racine
Jonathan Delagrave..... Director, Human Services Department, Racine County
Deborah Ganaway..... Chair, Transit and Parking Commission, City of Racine, and
Executive Director, National Alliance on Mental Illness – Racine
Richard Goetsch..... Western Racine County Coordinator, Racine Literacy Council
Nancy Holmlund..... President, Racine Interfaith Coalition
Gordon Kacala Executive Director, Racine County Economic Development Corporation
James A. Ladwig..... Racine County Executive
Willie E. McDonald, Jr. General Manager, Belle Urban System
Jacob Miller Policy & Program Analyst, Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Albert Stanek Manager, Parking and Transit Systems, City of Racine
Patrick Starken..... Transportation Director, Racine Unified School District
Sarah Street..... Transportation Coordinator, Human Services Department, Racine County

Guests and Staff Present

Kenneth R. Yunker Executive Director, SEWRPC
Eric D. Lynde..... Principal Planner, SEWRPC
Kevin J. Muhs..... Senior Planner, SEWRPC
C Terrence Anderson..... Planner, SEWRPC
Karen Schmiechen Urban Planning Analyst, Wisconsin Department of Transportation

ROLL CALL

Ms. Anderson called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. She indicated that roll call would be taken through the circulation of a meeting sign-in sheet.

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 21, 2013, MEETING

Ms. Anderson indicated that the first item on the agenda was the consideration and approval of the minutes for the previous meeting of the Workgroup held on January 21, 2013. Mr. Kacala made a motion to approve the previous meeting’s minutes. Mr. DeHahn seconded the motion, and the Workgroup unanimously approved the minutes.

REVIEW OF SEWRPC DOCUMENT “*RECORD OF PUBLIC COMMENTS, RACINE COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT PLAN: 2013-2017*”

Ms. Anderson indicated that the next item on the agenda was the review of SEWRPC document “*Record of Public Comments, Racine County Public Transit Plan: 2013-2017,*” which had been distributed to the Workgroup. Mr. Lynde noted that the document contained oral and written comments received on the proposed transit service improvement alternatives, newspaper articles concerning the plan alternatives, materials announcing public meetings, and summary materials distributed at those public meetings. Mr. Yunker noted that the document also contained a summary of the comments received and responses to those comments, which had been prepared by the Commission staff.

There being no discussion, Mr. Stanek made a motion to receive and file SEWRPC document “*Record of Public Comments, Racine County Public Transit Plan: 2013-2017*”. Ms. Holmlund seconded the motion, and the motion was passed unanimously by the Workgroup.

CONSIDERATION OF PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF CHAPTER VII, “FINAL RECOMMENDED TRANSIT SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN”, OF SEWRPC COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PLANNING REPORT NO. 286, “*RACINE COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT PLAN: 2013-2017*”

Ms. Anderson indicated that the next item on the agenda was the consideration of the preliminary draft of Chapter VII, “Final Recommended Transit Service Improvement Plan”, of SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 286, “*Racine County Public Transit Plan: 2013-2017*”, which had been distributed to the Workgroup. Mr. Lynde indicated that the chapter presented the final recommended public transit plan for the City of Racine and Racine County for the years 2013-2017. He noted that the chapter was divided into three sections: recommendations specific to the City of Racine, recommendations specific to Racine County, and actions necessary to adopt and implement the recommended plan.

During Mr. Lynde’s review of the recommendations for the City of Racine included in the chapter, the following questions and comments were raised and addressed:

1. Mr. Stanek noted that the City of Racine was still in negotiations with the Regency Mall regarding the development of the proposed southwest transfer point for the Belle Urban System (BUS).
2. In regards to City Recommendation 1—which recommends that the City of Racine pursue a revised structure for the routes of the BUS—Mr. Yunker indicated that further refinements to the recommended route structure may be necessary in order to achieve consistent round-trip schedules so that each route is able to pulse at the Transit Center on each trip. Mr. Stanek noted that other routing changes may also be considered in order to respond to land use development which may occur within the next year. He noted one potential development near County Highway H and State Highway 11.
3. Mr. DeHahn asked whether the four percent increase in State mass transit operating assistance funds proposed by the Joint Finance Committee was likely to be included in the final 2013-2015 Wisconsin State budget adopted by the Governor and State Legislature. County Executive Ladwig indicated that the proposed four percent increase appeared to have bipartisan support. Mr. Stanek agreed, noting that the Joint Finance Committee had voted unanimously to include the four percent increase in its proposed version of the budget. Mr. Yunker noted that the Commission staff had developed the operating cost estimates for the

revised BUS route structure proposed in City Recommendation 1 assuming a combined percentage of annual Federal and State operating assistance over the five-year plan period of about 55 percent. He indicated that 55 percent was likely a reasonable estimate, noting that there are a number of factors that can affect that percentage, including changes in Federal and State operating assistance funding levels and changes in service levels among transit systems in the same State transit operating assistance funding tier as the City of Racine.

4. In regards to City Recommendation 2—which recommends that the City and County work incrementally to improve coordination between their demand-response specialized transportation services—Mr. Stanek remarked that he would be supportive of more coordination between the County and City.
5. In regards to City Recommendation 4—which recommends that the City of Racine take steps to integrate the Milwaukee-Racine-Kenosha commuter bus route with existing BUS routes—Mr. Stanek remarked that adding the commuter route alignment to the BUS route map is a good suggestion and that City staff would consider this addition as they update the BUS route map.

During Mr. Lynde’s review of the recommendations for Racine County included in the chapter, the following questions and comments were raised and addressed:

1. Ms. Holmlund indicated that demand for senior transportation services is going to increase significantly, especially in rural areas. Mr. Yunker agreed, citing that the senior population of Racine County, and the Region overall, has been increasing significantly.
2. County Executive Ladwig noted that public transportation services are needed in Western Racine County, but they would have different service characteristics than fixed-route bus service provided in urban areas.
3. Mr. Miller indicated that if the County intends to apply for funding through the State Section 85.20 transit operating assistance program, the County would need to notify WisDOT of that intent in advance. Mr. Delagrave asked if multiple counties could jointly apply for funding. Mr. Miller responded that it may be possible to do so.

[Secretary’s Note:

The following text was added on page 45 of Chapter VII after the last sentence under the bullet “*Commuter Bus Service between Burlington and Milwaukee*”:

“To continue the service with funding through the State Section 85.20 transit operating assistance program, the County would need to notify WisDOT of the County’s intent to apply for these funds, no later than April 15 of the even-numbered year to be eligible for funding in the next biennium (e.g. by April 15, 2016, to be eligible for funding in 2018).”]

4. In regards to County Recommendation 5—which recommends establishing guidelines for vanpool programs in anticipation of future demand—Mr. Stanek indicated that vanpools could be more suitable in certain areas of the County that are difficult or costly to serve with bus service. Ms. Schmeichen noted that some successful vanpools rely heavily on park-ride lots.

There being no further discussion, Ms. Holmlund made a motion to approve the preliminary draft of Chapter VII, "Final Recommended Transit Service Improvement Plan" of SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 286, "*Racine County Public Transit Plan: 2013-2017*," as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Goetsch, and was carried unanimously by the Workgroup.

DISCUSSION OF NEXT STEPS

Mr. Yunker indicated that this was likely the final meeting of the plan's Advisory Workgroup, and thanked all Workgroup members for their participation and guidance in the plan's preparation. He indicated that the Commission staff would prepare and distribute a newsletter summarizing the plan recommendations, and also prepare a draft Chapter VIII of the plan providing a summary of the plan's findings and the final recommended plan. He noted that the Commission staff would send the draft Chapter VIII to the Workgroup for consideration and request approval via postcard or email.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Workgroup, Mr. DeHahn made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Delagrave seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:16 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth R. Yunker
Recording Secretary