

MINUTES OF THE THIRD MEETING

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL
FREEWAY SYSTEM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DATE: April 19, 2001
TIME: 3:30 p.m.
PLACE: Wauwatosa Civic Center
Lower Auditorium
7725 West North Avenue
Wauwatosa, WI 53213

Committee Members Present

William R. Drew Vice Chairman, SEWRPC
Chairman
Peter Beitzel Vice President, International Trade,
(representing Tim Sheehy) Transportation, and Business Development,
Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce
Kathryn C. Bloomberg Mayor, City of Brookfield
James T. Dwyer Chairperson,
Waukesha County Board of Supervisors
Theresa M. Estness Mayor, City of Wauwatosa
Leslie J. Fafard Director, District 2,
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Daniel M. Finley Waukesha County Executive
William K. Fung Wisconsin Division Administrator,
Federal Highway Administration,
U.S. Department of Transportation
Jean M. Jacobson Racine County Executive
Kenneth J. Leonard Director, Bureau of Planning,
Division of Transportation Investment Management,
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Gloria L. McCutcheon Southeast Regional Director,
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Thomas L. Millonzi Organizer, Teamsters Local 200
(representing Frank Busalacchi)
Allen L. Morrison Chairperson,
Walworth County Board of Supervisors
David A. Novak Director,
(representing F. Thomas Ament) Milwaukee County Department of Public Works
Karen O. Ordinars Chairperson,
Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Frederick J. Patrie Director,
(representing Allen K. Kehl) Kenosha County Department of Public Works
Betty A. Pearson Executive Director,
West Bend Chamber of Commerce

Mariano A. Schifalacqua.....Commissioner, Department of Public Works,
 (representing John O. Norquist) City of Milwaukee
 Philip J. Scherer.....Executive Director,
 Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin
 Katherine L. Smith Chairperson, Ozaukee County Board
 Thomas H. Buestrin (Ex-Officio)..... Chairman, SEWRPC

Staff Members and Guests Present

Robert E. Beglinger..... Chief Transportation Engineer, SEWRPC
 Donna L. Brown..... Urban Modal Manager, District 2,
 Wisconsin Department of Transportation
 Linda CutlerExecutive Director
 Milwaukee Regional Medical Center
 Brian G. DuPont..... Highway Commissioner, Walworth County
 Philip C. Evenson.....Executive Director, SEWRPC
 Edward J. Friede..... Systems Planning Manager, District 2,
 Wisconsin Department of Transportation
 Patrick E. Hawley..... Senior Traffic Engineer, HNTB
 Patrick A. Pittenger Senior Planner, SEWRPC
 Doug Senso Project Manager,
 Parsons Transportation Group
 Gus W. Wirth Jr.Commissioner, SEWRPC
 Thomas J. Wontorek City Administrator, City of Wauwatosa
 Kenneth R. Yunker..... Assistant Director, SEWRPC
 Chet Zurawik..... Director of Highways, and
 Deputy Highway Commissioner, Milwaukee County

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Drew welcomed all members present and indicated that roll call would be accomplished with a sign-in sheet being circulated by Commission staff.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 22, 2001, MEETING

Chairman Drew asked if there were any questions or comments on the [minutes](#) of the Advisory Committee’s second meeting held on March 22, 2001. There being no questions or comments, a motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Dwyer, seconded by Mr. Morrison, and carried unanimously by the Committee.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF FINAL DRAFTS OF STUDY REPORT AS APPROVED BY THE TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE

Chairman Drew asked if there were any comments regarding [Chapter III, “The Function of the Freeway System and Its Components”](#). Mayor Bloomberg asked what were the principal findings of the chapter, particularly with respect to the type of traffic carried by each segment of the freeway system and how these findings may be applied later in the study. Mr. Yunker responded that the principal findings were that each segment of the freeway system serves through traffic, as well as intercounty and local traffic, with the exception of the stub or spur freeways which serve very little or no through traffic, and the segment of IH 94 between the Marquette and Zoo Interchanges which serve a relatively minimal amount of through traffic. Mr. Evenson stated that the analysis of the function of the freeway system was only one element that would be considered during the development of the plan and program for the reconstruction of the Region’s freeway system.

With respect to Table 3-1, Mayor Bloomberg suggested that information on the existing traffic volumes could be added to this table, which displayed projected traffic volumes in the year 2020. Mr. Yunker stated that the table will be revised in the final study report to include that information.

Regarding Maps 3-16 and 3-17, which displayed the estimated percentage of current morning and afternoon peak hour traffic volumes by direction at selected locations on the freeway system, Mr. Scherer asked what hours were used as the morning and afternoon peak hours for that analysis. Mr. Beglinger stated that the morning peak hour for this analysis was from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and the afternoon peak hour was 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. for all locations on the freeway system. Mr. Evenson stated that the hours used as the peak hours would be noted on the maps in the final study report.

There being no further discussion, a motion to approve Chapter III, “The Function of the Freeway System and its Components,” was made by Ms. Ordians, seconded by Mayor Bloomberg, and carried unanimously by the Committee.

Chairman Drew asked if there were any comments regarding [Chapter IV, “The Condition of the Freeway System and Need for Reconstruction”](#). There being no comments, a motion to approve Chapter IV was made by Ms. Jacobson, seconded by Mr. Dwyer, and carried unanimously by the Committee.

OVERVIEW OF THE PHYSICAL DESIGN, TRAFFIC SAFETY, AND TRAFFIC CONGESTION PROBLEMS OF THE REGIONAL FREEWAY SYSTEM

Chairman Drew asked Mr. Yunker to provide an overview of the physical design, traffic safety, and traffic congestion problems of the regional freeway system to the Advisory Committee. Commission staff distributed copies of the presentation for this agenda item.

[Secretary's Note: A Copy of the [presentation](#) distributed at the meeting is included in Attachment A to these minutes.]

During Mr. Yunker's review of the topic, Advisory Committee members raised the following questions and comments:

1. In reference to the physical design criteria used to determine the extent to which each segment of the freeway system meets modern design standards, Mayor Bloomberg asked why the design standards for a 60 miles per hour design speed were applied in Milwaukee County, and the design standards for a 70 miles per hour design speed were applied in all remaining counties of the Region. Mr. Yunker responded that the design standards were applied based on how the freeway system segments were principally designed and constructed within each county. Mr. Yunker stated that the freeways in Milwaukee County were generally designed and constructed to a 60 miles per hour design speed, and the freeways in the other counties that comprise the Region were constructed to a 70 miles per hour design speed. He also pointed out that only three of the nine design standards varied with design speed, and that considering different design speeds would not significantly change the conclusions of the analysis. Mayor Bloomberg noted that while portions of the freeway system in Waukesha County may have been designed and constructed when the county had more rural land use patterns, the use of different design standards may be warranted in eastern Waukesha County, which currently has a more urban nature.

Mr. Schifalacqua suggested that the design standards for 60 miles per hour could be applied in some areas outside of Milwaukee County as traffic volumes have increased and traffic congestion has extended into other counties.

Mr. Leonard stated that this study should not produce a plan that would propose the reconstruction of freeways that would operate with posted speed limits lower than those that currently exist. He pointed out the importance of the southeastern Wisconsin regional freeway system serving trips between the Region and the rest of the state, and trips made through the Region.

Mr. Evenson suggested that the design standards for 70 miles per hour in outlying counties could be used at this point in the study, with the design standards for 60 miles per hour applied if the cost and disruption attendant to design standards for 70 miles per hour were determined to be unacceptable.

2. Ms. Jacobson pointed out that the map included in Mr. Yunker's presentation which provided a summary of existing freeway system physical design deficiencies depicted the portion of the freeway system in Racine County as containing at least one design deficiency at isolated locations. She asked what the reason was for that designation. Mr. Yunker responded that the deficiencies on the segments of IH 94 in Racine County were due to inadequate shoulder width and a few isolated locations which did not meet vertical alignment and curvature standards.

Mr. Schifalacqua asked how the range of American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) design standards were applied. Mr. Yunker indicated that a segment was rated as to whether it met a minimum or desirable standard.

Ms. Pearson asked if physical design deficiencies were unavoidable when constructing freeways. Mr. Evenson stated that while compromises are sometimes made during the construction of freeways, design deficiencies are not inherent to all freeways. Mr. Yunker added that the identification of a physical design deficiency does not necessarily mean that a freeway segment would be reconstructed to correct the deficiency. He stated that the design deficiencies identified would be considered along with other potential problems, such as traffic safety and congestion, during the development of alternatives for the reconstruction of the freeway system.

3. With respect to the information presented on safety problems of the freeway system, Mayor Bloomberg asked if there were comparable national crash rate figures which could be used to

provide a context for the regional crash rates presented by Mr. Yunker. Mr. Evenson responded that Commission staff would determine if comparable national figures were available.

[Secretary's Note: Commission staff is still attempting to obtain crash rates for the nation for comparison to the Region.]

Mayor Bloomberg asked if the crash rate data were displayed only for the mainline freeway segments, or if the data included crashes on interchange ramps. Mr. Yunker responded that the information was presented only for the freeway segments themselves, but that individual interchanges may be analyzed in greater detail later in the study when alternatives for individual freeway segments are developed.

4. In reference to the historic trend in freeway traffic congestion, Mr. Schifalacqua pointed out that there has been a growth in congestion experienced on the surface arterial street and highway network in addition to the growth of freeway traffic congestion. Mr. Yunker agreed, noting that as freeway segments have experienced increasing congestion, increasing amounts of potential freeway traffic are being carried by parallel surface arterial streets.
5. Mayor Bloomberg asked how much total weekday travel in terms of vehicle miles traveled occurs under each of the three levels of congestion—extreme, severe, and moderate. Mr. Yunker stated that that analysis had not been performed, but that Commission staff would do so and provide that information in the final report.
6. In reference to the map of expected freeway system traffic congestion, Mr. Scherer asked if planned improvements to the region's transportation system were included. Mr. Yunker responded that the data presented were for the forecast year 2020, and assumed implementation of the regional land use and transportation system plans, including public transit and surface arterial elements. He noted that one exception was the expansion and widening of IH 43 from four to six lanes between Bender Road and Highland Road, which was not included in this analysis. Mr. Evenson stated that the exception mentioned by Mr. Yunker would be noted in Chapter V.

7. Mr. Finley suggested that, the vision, or goals and objectives, for the study, that is, for the reconstruction of the regional freeway system, be considered and discussed soon by the Advisory Committee. He suggested that this vision could include, for example, the need to address increasing traffic congestion, and to guide the development of land in the region. He also asked whether the Region's freeway system could be compared to other metropolitan areas, for example, with respect to traffic congestion. Mr. Yunker responded that the next meeting of the Advisory Committee was intended to be devoted to a discussion of a vision(s) for, or the goals and objectives to be attempted to be achieved with, the reconstruction of the freeway system. Mayor Bloomberg noted that the regional transportation plan recommended goals and objectives to be achieved by the regional transportation system. Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission staff would also bring to the next Advisory Committee a report comparing Milwaukee area traffic congestion to other urban areas of the United States.
8. Mayor Bloomberg noted that the existing regional freeway system was an incomplete system, as numerous portions of the previously planned system were never completed. Mr. Evenson agreed, and indicated that Chapter V would briefly describe the original planned system. He stated that the completion of the previously planned system had been opposed in many quarters, even though many of the consequences of not completing the system were made known. He added that the Advisory Committee would be asked to discuss visions and alternatives for the reconstruction of the regional freeway system, including potential additional freeway segments and potential additional traffic lanes for existing freeway segments, at its next meeting, scheduled to be held on May 17, 2001. He stressed the importance of identifying potential additional freeway segments to the attention of the Committee at that meeting, so they could be properly evaluated and considered by the Advisory Committee. Mayor Bloomberg asked if freeway high occupancy vehicle lanes would be considered as part of the study. Mr. Evenson responded that freeway high occupancy vehicle lanes would not be considered as part of this study, as they had previously been considered and dismissed as part of other studies conducted within the Region.

Mr. Evenson stated that the preliminary draft of Chapter V, an overview of which was provided at this meeting, would be mailed after this meeting, and reviewed and approved by the Technical Subcommittee at its May 9th meeting. A final draft version of the chapter will then be prepared for Advisory Committee review and approval at the Advisory Committee's May or June meetings. He also stated that as had been previously discussed, alternatives for the reconstruction of the Marquette Interchange would not be

considered as part of this study, as a preliminary engineering study of that freeway system interchange was currently underway. He stated that representatives of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation involved with that study would likely provide a summary of the Marquette Interchange preliminary engineering study to this Advisory Committee at its June meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to come before the Advisory Committee.

CONFIRMATION OF NEXT MEETING DATE

Chairman Drew stated that the next Advisory Committee meeting would be held at 3:30 p.m. on May 17, 2001, at the Tommy G. Thompson Youth Center at State Fair Park.

ADJOURNMENT

The third meeting of the Advisory Committee was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Signed

Philip C. Evenson
Recording Secretary