

MINUTES OF THE FOURTH MEETING

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL
FREEWAY SYSTEM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DATE: May 17, 2001
TIME: 3:30 p.m.
PLACE: Tommy G. Thompson Youth Center
Banquet Room 2
Wisconsin State Fair Park
640 South 84th Street
West Allis, WI 53214

Committee Members Present

William R. Drew Vice Chairman, SEWRPC
Chairman
Ruben L. Anthony, Jr. Division Administrator,
(representing Kenneth J. Leonard) Division of Transportation Investment Management,
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
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
Jeffrey H. Dillon Transportation Design Manager,
(representing John O. Norquist) Department of Public Works, City of Milwaukee
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
Gloria L. McCutcheon Southeast Regional Director,
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Thomas Meaux Administrative Coordinator,
(representing Katherine L. Smith) Washington County
Kenneth F. Miller Chairperson,
Washington County Board of Supervisors
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
Frederick J. Patrie Director,
(representing Allen K. Kehl) Kenosha County Department of Public Works

Betty A. Pearson.....Executive Director,
West Bend Chamber of Commerce
 William F. White.....Member, Executive Committee,
(representing Philip J. Scherer) Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin
 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
 Gary K. Korb..... Regional Planning Educator, UW Extension
 Kenneth Pesch..... Washington County Highway Commissioner
 Patrick A. Pittenger Senior Planner, SEWRPC
 Dennis A. Shook Reporter, The Waukesha Freeman
 Brian Swenson Vice-President, HNTB
 Don R. Uelmen..... Transportation Planner,
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
 Gus W. Wirth Jr.Commissioner, SEWRPC
 Kenneth R. Yunker..... Assistant Director, SEWRPC

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 APRIL 19, 2001, MEETING

Chairman Drew asked if there were any questions or comments on the [minutes of the Advisory Committee's third meeting](#) held on April 19, 2001. There being no questions or comments, a motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Morrison, seconded by Mr. Dwyer, and carried unanimously by the Committee.

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

Chairman Drew asked if there were any comments regarding [Chapter V, "Freeway System Problems and Deficiencies: Physical Design, Traffic Safety, and Traffic Congestion"](#). There being no questions or comments, a motion to approve Chapter V was made by Mayor Bloomberg, seconded by Mr. Fafard, and carried unanimously by the Committee.

PRESENTATION ON NATIONAL COMPARISON OF METROPOLITAN AREA TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Chairman Drew asked Mr. Yunker to provide information on a national comparison of metropolitan area traffic congestion to the Advisory Committee. Commission staff distributed copies of the presentation which utilized data from a Texas Transportation Institute report entitled, "The 2001 Urban Mobility Report," which attempts to compare traffic congestion in the nation's 68 largest urban areas.

[Secretary's Note: A [copy of the presentation](#) distributed at the meeting for this agenda item and the next agenda item is included in Attachment A to these minutes.]

During Mr. Yunker's presentation, Mr. Finley asked if the congestion in the Milwaukee urbanized area in 1999 was below average for metropolitan areas of similar size. Mr. Yunker stated that the level of traffic congestion for the Milwaukee urbanized area was slightly better than the average level of traffic congestion for similar large metropolitan areas in 1999, and the Milwaukee urbanized area was ranked similarly for population and level of congestion, having been rated the 30th largest metropolitan area and as having the 30th worst congestion. Mr. Evenson pointed out that some metropolitan areas experienced more congestion than would be expected for metropolitan areas of their population size, and some metropolitan areas experienced less congestion than would be expected for an area of their size. Mr. Finley noted that the Pittsburgh metropolitan area was one of those latter areas, as it had a larger population than the Milwaukee area, but had less severe congestion. He asked if Commission staff could review the data from the Pittsburgh area to assess why it experiences less traffic congestion. Mr. Yunker responded that Commission staff could attempt to analyze the data in the Texas Transportation Institute report to try to identify reasons for the lesser level of congestion. However, the answer to this question may be quite complex and require obtaining additional data from the Pittsburgh area, converting Milwaukee data to a similar format, and site visits. Mr. Finley stated he was only interested in what could be learned from a comparison of available data from the Texas Transportation Institute report.

[Secretary's Note: The table in [Attachment B](#) to these minutes compares the Milwaukee and Pittsburgh urban areas with respect to travel, congestion, and transportation system data from the Texas Transportation Institute report and public transit system data from the Federal Transit Administration. The comparison indicates that the Pittsburgh urban area has somewhat more freeway lane-miles per capita (37 percent) and total freeway and principal arterial traffic carrying capacity per capita (12 percent), and somewhat less vehicle-miles of travel per capita (9 percent). Public transit use would appear to account for about 10 percent of the difference in vehicle-miles of travel per capita in the Pittsburgh area.]

OVERVIEW OF A PROPOSED VISION STATEMENT FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE REGIONAL FREEWAY SYSTEM OF SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN

Chairman Drew asked Mr. Yunker to provide an overview of a proposed vision statement for the reconstruction of the regional freeway system of southeastern Wisconsin to the Advisory Committee. Following Mr. Yunker's review of the topic, Advisory Committee members raised the following questions and comments:

1. Mayor Bloomberg asked if recent developments in land use planning, called “Smart Growth,” were included in the proposed vision for the regional freeway system. Mr. Yunker stated that the proposed vision for the reconstruction of the freeway system assumed the implementation of the regional land use and transportation plans. He indicated that most, if not all, principles of “smart growth” were incorporated into, and recommended by, the current regional land use plan, which the regional transportation system plan was developed to serve. He noted some of those land use recommendations, including the placement of new urban development within existing urban centers as infill, and along the periphery of existing urban centers; the protection of primary environmental corridor lands; and the preservation of the most productive farmlands in the Region. He added that the regional land use plan recommendations included recommendations that urban development should occur in neighborhoods which would encourage pedestrian and bicycle use, provide access to the surface arterial street system at multiple points along the borders of neighborhoods, include a mix of residential densities within neighborhoods, and include an appropriate mix of commercial development within residential neighborhoods. Mr. Yunker stated that the forecast traffic demands on the regional freeway system assume the implementation of desirable land use development patterns, increased transit service, and an improved surface arterial street system recommended in the regional land use and transportation plans.
2. Mr. Fung noted that one of the purposes of the interstate highway system when it was initially proposed and constructed was for national defense transportation needs. He stated that since the regional freeway system consists primarily of interstate highway routes, he believed it would be appropriate to note the importance of serving national defense needs. Mr. Evenson stated that a reference to that function of the freeway system would be incorporated into the text of Chapter VI, which would discuss the vision for the reconstruction of the regional freeway system.
3. Mr. Meaux asked what projections for population were included in the regional transportation plan, and what the design life of the freeway system would be upon reconstruction. Mr. Yunker responded that the design life of a freeway upon reconstruction would be approximately 50 years. He stated that a previous chapter for this plan had indicated that about 40 percent of the region’s freeway system would need reconstruction by the year 2010, an additional 35 percent of the freeway system would require reconstruction by the year 2020, and the remainder would require reconstruction by the year 2030. He added that the reconstructed freeway pavement would have a design life extending from 2055 to 2080. Regarding population and traffic forecasts and projections, he stated the Commission had prepared travel forecasts and demographic and economic projections for the year 2020 in support of the regional land use and transportation plans. He stated that the projections of population, household, and employment were characterized as being “high-growth”, “intermediate-growth”, or “low-growth”. He noted that the population and household projections included in the regional land use plan were “intermediate-growth” projections, and that regional population and household growth since the completion of that forecast had been approximately following that projection. He also stated that the employment projection included in the regional land use plan was an “intermediate-growth” projection, but that employment growth in the Region had exceeded that projection, and had approached the level of the “high-growth” projection. Mr. Evenson stated that while the growth of employment in the 1990s had exceeded the projection included in the current regional land use plan, the growth in regional employment over the next ten years is not expected to continue at that rate.

4. In reference to the development of alternatives for the reconstruction of the regional freeway system, Mr. Patrie asked how the braiding of freeway on- and off-ramps with freeway frontage roads in Racine and Kenosha Counties would be addressed. Mr. Yunker stated that the design of individual interchanges would not be addressed as part of this study. Concerning the specific design referenced by Mr. Patrie, Mr. Yunker stated that Commission staff would review the completed preliminary engineering report regarding the freeway segments in Kenosha and Racine Counties, and include the programmed improvements, including the costs associated with those improvements, in the alternatives developed for those segments.

Also regarding the development of alternatives for the reconstruction of the regional freeway system, Mr. Patrie asked how major trip generators such as business and industrial parks adjacent to the freeway system would be considered during the development of alternatives for reconstruction. Mr. Yunker responded that the study was being conducted within the context of the regional land use and transportation plans, and most areas which are currently being developed or are planned to be developed have already been incorporated into that plan. He did add, however, that new and planned developments would be considered during the design of alternatives on a segment-by-segment basis. In reference to another type of major trip generator, Mr. Patrie asked how airports such as General Mitchell International Airport would be addressed during the development of alternatives for freeway reconstruction. Mr. Yunker responded that the projected growth of major trip generators such as General Mitchell International Airport are already included in the regional transportation plan, and the Commission monitors such facilities.

Mr. Patrie asked if the high-speed rail service proposed to operate within the Region would have an impact on the consideration of improvements to the regional freeway system. Mr. Yunker responded that the Commission has coordinated with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation during the development of this study and the study of high-speed rail service in the Region, and would continue to evaluate any potential impacts on the alternatives for reconstruction of the regional freeway system.

5. Mr. Finley also noted that Commission staff had proposed that two alternatives be fully examined and evaluated, with the difference between the two being that one would include proposed capacity expansion and the other would not. He suggested that it might be unnecessary to consider an alternative which did not include capacity expansion, as the need for increased capacity--because of historic and projected increases in congestion on the Region's freeway system and the lack of freeway system expansion since the original system was built 25 to 40 years ago--was widely recognized. Mr. Evenson stated that the development of an alternative without additional capacity was proposed to respond to any questions that may be raised regarding the need for capacity expansion and to comply with federal requirements that will need to be met as the process of reconstructing the Region's freeway system proceeds. Mr. Yunker added that the development of an alternative that would not include capacity expansion would provide baseline information for comparison of forecast congestion and costs. He stated that while additional lanes would be considered for many segments, it may prove to be impractical in some areas, and, therefore, the final plan for reconstruction of the freeway system may draw from each of the two visions proposed to be examined and evaluated.
6. Mr. Novak asked if during the segment-by-segment design of freeway system reconstruction alternatives, the relationship between the current and forecast congestion on the freeway

system and recent and planned improvements of the surface arterial street system would be considered. Mr. Yunker responded that the freeway traffic volume and congestion forecasts previously presented to this Committee were conducted within the context of the regional transportation plan and therefore assumed that the recommendations of that plan were implemented. He noted that those recommendations included the widening of approximately 405 miles of surface arterial streets, the new construction of about 125 miles of surface arterial streets, and the implementation of parking restrictions on approximately 400 miles of surface arterial streets. He stated that during the development and evaluation of freeway reconstruction alternatives on a segment-by-segment basis, the impact of proposed modifications for a freeway segment on the surface arterial street system would be evaluated, including the potential need for additional surface arterial street improvements, and the possibility of planned widening or new surface arterial system segments being unnecessary. In response to Mr. Novak's questions, Mr. Yunker stated that, additionally, Commission staff would request representatives of each county in the Region to identify any additional surface arterial improvements or extensions which could be implemented to potentially reduce the need for freeway system improvements. He stated this would be done by the study Technical Subcommittee.

7. Mayor Bloomberg said that she believed that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation had traditionally not acquired sufficient amounts of land for planned roadway expansions in rural areas. She suggested that it may be appropriate to include a statement in the proposed vision for the reconstruction of the regional freeway system regarding the need to acquire appropriate land during any freeway capacity expansion so that the intent of expansion is made clear to the residents of the area where freeway system expansion was planned. Mr. Yunker responded that the topic of land acquisition could be addressed later in the study with policy guidelines and recommendations to be incorporated in a reconstructed freeway system. He added that a suggestion regarding improvements to the stormwater drainage system attendant to the freeway system was made at the Technical Subcommittee meeting by a representative of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and that topic would be addressed in a similar manner to the topic raised by Mayor Bloomberg.
8. Mayor Bloomberg noted that there is a "barrier effect" of many freeways throughout the country, as freeway segments had divided many neighborhoods. She asked if consideration would be given to "reconnecting" neighborhoods which had been previously divided by providing better access for pedestrians and bicyclists to reach portions of neighborhoods that are currently inaccessible because of the presence of the freeway system. Mr. Yunker responded that the "barrier effect" mentioned by Mayor Bloomberg would be a consideration during the development of alternatives for reconstruction on a segment-by-segment basis.
9. Mr. Fung asked whether the study would consider setting aside right-of-way within the freeway right-of-way to accommodate potential light rail transit. Mr. Yunker responded that for a number of reasons this was not expected to be done under this study. First, there is no plan recommendation, or consensus, to implement light rail or any other transit fixed guideway. Second, previous transit corridor studies have concluded that the freeway right-of-way is not the most desirable location for a transit fixed guideway. Third, it is anticipated that it may be difficult to address freeway design, safety, and congestion problems within the existing right-of-way.
10. Mr. Fung asked if park-ride lots would be addressed as part of this study. Mr. Yunker stated that regional transportation plan already provides recommendations for the location and

construction of new park-and-ride lots. He added that should a freeway reconstruction alternative require relocation of an existing or planned park-and-ride lot, it would be addressed in the study.

11. Mr. DuPont asked if any new freeway segments would be considered during development of alternatives for the reconstruction of the regional freeway system. Mr. Yunker stated that the expansion of USH 12 in northwestern Walworth County would be considered as well as the Oconomowoc bypass that is a programmed extension of STH 16 in Waukesha County.

Mr. Dillon proposed that the study consider a new freeway segment that would connect IH 43 and USH 41/45 and allow motorists to bypass the Marquette Interchange and other heavily used freeway segments located in Milwaukee County. Chairman Drew responded by requesting that the City of Milwaukee staff provide Commission staff one or more potential alignments for the proposed freeway segment.

[Secretary's Note: The corridor envisioned for this potential new freeway segment, as suggested for consideration by the City of Milwaukee staff, would connect IH 43 and USH 45 within three to six miles north or south of the Milwaukee County/Ozaukee County line.]

12. Mr. Novak stated that while consideration will be given under this study to the need for, and cost of, the reconstruction of the freeway system and the addressing of freeway design, safety and congestion problems, there is also a need to maintain, improve, and expand transit service and to maintain, improve, and expand the surface arterial street system as recommended in the regional transportation system plan. He noted that additional funding will be required as well to implement those aspects of the regional transportation plan.
13. Mr. Patrie noted that the current level of congestion in southeastern Wisconsin was significantly worse than that of 10 and 20 years ago, and may be getting worse faster than was to be expected for its population size. He suggested that the data on freeway traffic congestion trends and forecasts for southeastern Wisconsin and the national comparison of traffic congestion supported the need for increasing capacity on the freeway system.
14. Mr. DuPont asked if improvements to the Region's surface arterial street and transit systems included in previous versions of the regional transportation plan had been implemented. Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission staff has monitored the extent to which regional transportation plans have been implemented. He stated that the improvements recommended in the most recent regional transportation plan were currently on pace to be implemented as recommended in the plan, including since 1997 about a 15 percent expansion of public transit measured in terms of revenue vehicle-miles of service, and 40 miles of surface arterial widening and extensions.

Mayor Bloomberg asked how the study would address the lack of completion of the originally planned freeway system and the subsequent need for additional expansion of the surface arterial street system. Mr. Yunker responded that this study would not attempt to quantify the effects of the lack of completion of the original planned freeway system. He stated that an element of the evaluation of freeway reconstruction alternatives will be to identify their impacts on surface arterial street traffic volumes and congestion, and attendant need for improvement.

15. Mayor Estness expressed her support for additional capacity on USH 45 north of the Zoo Interchange. She noted the increasing levels of congestion and the adverse effects on emergency vehicles attempting to access via USH 45 and Watertown Plank Road the numerous medical facilities located in the City of Wauwatosa.

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 June 21, 2001, at the Tommy G. Thompson Youth Center at State Fair Park.

ADJOURNMENT

The fourth meeting of the Advisory Committee was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Signed

Philip C. Evenson
Recording Secretary

PCE/KRY/PAP/mlh/kjk
6/11/01
#43557

Attachment B

**COMPARISON OF MILWAUKEE AND PITTSBURGH URBAN AREA TRAFFIC CONGESTION
USING DATA FROM TEXAS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE "THE 2001 URBAN MOBILITY REPORT"**

	Milwaukee Urban Area	Pittsburgh Urban Area	Percent Difference Between Pittsburgh and Milwaukee Urban Areas
Travel Rate Index			
-- Ratio of Peak Period Travel Time to Off-Peak Period Travel Time on Freeways and Principal Arterials	1.24	1.09	-12 Percent
-- Rank Among 68 Urban Areas	30	56	--
Population			
-- Number	1.26 million	1.79 million	+42 Percent
-- Rank Among 68 Urban Areas	30	21	--
Population Density (Population per square mile)	2220	1780	-19 Percent
Freeway Lane-Miles per 1000 Population	0.49	0.67	+37 Percent
Principal Arterial Lane-Miles per 1000 Population	1.01	0.83	-18 Percent
Equivalent Freeway ^a and Principal Arterial Lane-Miles per 1000 Population	2.24	2.51	+12 Percent
Freeway and Principal Arterial Daily Vehicle-Miles of Travel per Capita	12.70	11.60	-9 Percent
Public Transit Daily Passenger-Miles of Travel per Capita	0.56	0.64	+14 Percent
Public Transit Daily Transit Revenue Vehicle-Miles of Service per Capita	.055	.056	+2 Percent

^aFreeway and principal arterial lane-miles have been combined by multiplying freeway lane-miles by a factor of 2.5 to account for the additional traffic carrying capacity of a freeway compared to a principal arterial.