

MINUTES OF THE TENTH MEETING

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL
FREEWAY SYSTEM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DATE: March 21, 2002
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
Philip E. Barnes Acting Wisconsin Division Administrator,
Federal Highway Administration,
U. S. Department of Transportation
Kathryn C. Bloomberg Mayor, City of Brookfield
Frank J. Busalacchi Secretary/Treasurer, Teamsters Local 200
James T. Dwyer Chairperson,
Waukesha County Board of Supervisors
Theresa M. Estness Mayor, City of Wauwatosa
Daniel M. Finley Waukesha County Executive
Leslie J. Fafard Director, District 2,
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Janine P. Geske Interim Milwaukee County Executive
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
Kenneth F. Miller Chairperson, Washington County Board of Supervisors
Allen L. Morrison Chairman, Walworth County Board of Supervisors
John O. Norquist Mayor, City of Milwaukee
Karen O. Ordians Chairman,
Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Betty A. Pearson Executive Vice President (retired),
West Bend Chamber of Commerce
Philip J. Scherer Executive Director,
Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin
Tim Sheehy President,
Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce
James G. White Supervisor, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Gustav W. Wirth, Jr. Commissioner, SEWRPC
(representing Katherine L. Smith)

Thomas H. Buestrin (Ex-Officio)Chairman, SEWRPC

Staff Members and Guests Present

- Fareen Abbas Transportation Engineer, HNTB
- Peter W. Beitzel Vice President, International Trade,
Transportation, and Business Development,
Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce
- Peter E. Bock Representative, 7th Assembly District,
State of Wisconsin
- Donna L. Brown..... Urban Modal Manager, District 2,
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
- 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 Traffic Section Director, HNTB
- Christopher T. Hiebert Senior Engineer, SEWRPC
- Steven Jacquart Policy Director, Office of the Mayor,
City of Milwaukee
- David M. Jolicoeur..... Engineer, SEWRPC
- Jeffrey J. Mantes Chief Transportation Planning and Development Engineer,
City of Milwaukee
- Thomas L. Millonzi Organizer, Teamsters Local 200
- Steve M. Mokrohisky..... Chief of Staff / Director of Communications,
Office of the Milwaukee County Executive
- Michael J. Murphy Alderman, City of Milwaukee
- David A. Novak Director of Public Works,
Milwaukee County
- Kenneth M. Pesch Highway Commissioner, Washington County
- Patrick A. Pittenger..... Senior Planner, SEWRPC
- Ronald J. Rutkowski Director, Transportation Planning Division,
Milwaukee County Department of Public Works
- Larry Sandler Reporter, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
- David Schlabowske..... Program Manager,
Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin
- Dennis A. Shook Reporter, Waukesha Freeman
- Sandy Rusch Walton..... President, Story Hill Neighborhood Association
- Maurice Williams..... Citizens for a Better Environment
- 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 circulated by Commission staff.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 13, 2001, MEETING

Chairman Drew asked if there were any questions or comments on [the minutes of the Advisory Committee's ninth meeting](#) held on December 13, 2001. There being no questions or comments, a motion to approve the minutes as published was made by Mr. Barnes, seconded by Ms. Pearson, and carried unanimously by the Committee.

CONSIDERATION OF PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATION WITH RESPECT TO THE INCLUSION OF ADDITIONAL LANES IN THE FREEWAY RECONSTRUCTION PLAN FOR SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN

Chairman Drew pointed out that a copy of the action taken by the Technical Subcommittee with respect to additional lanes on the freeway system had been distributed to the Advisory Committee prior to this meeting. He then asked Mr. Yunker to proceed with a presentation regarding the alternative of additional lanes on the freeway system, to be followed by the consideration by the Advisory Committee of a preliminary recommendation that the freeway system be reconstructed with additional lanes.

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

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

1. Regarding the comparison of traffic congestion under existing 1999 conditions and forecast year 2020 conditions, Mayor Bloomberg suggested that in addition to presenting the miles of freeway expected to experience traffic congestion on an average weekday, the amount of weekday vehicle-miles of traffic and delay which occurs on congested freeway segments also be presented.

Mr. Yunker agreed and he noted that there would be slides presented later in the meeting indicating the estimated hours of travel delay on an average weekday for both existing 1999 conditions and forecast year 2020 freeway reconstruction alternative conditions.

2. In reference to the alternative proposing reconstruction to modern design standards with design and design-related safety improvements, Mayor Norquist asked if federal law mandated that freeways be built to particular standards. He noted concern over the segment of IH 94 between Mitchell Boulevard and Hawley Road, and asked whether or not exceptions are allowed.

Mr. Barnes indicated that there are standards to which Interstate Highways should be constructed. He noted that the existing Interstate Highway system in Southeastern Wisconsin was completed before implementation of these standards, and that during reconstruction these deficiencies should be addressed. He noted that there may be some limited exceptions to these standards, but they are discouraged.

Chairman Drew stated that the process used by this Committee applied the same urban and rural standards across the regional freeway system to identify where these standards were not met, and design and design-related safety improvements required. Mayor Norquist added that uniformly applying a standard might not be to the advantage of a community or neighborhood. Chairman Drew added that uniformly applying a standard may also not be to the disadvantage of a community or neighborhood.

3. Regarding the public information process, Mayor Norquist asked if communities and neighborhoods would be able to express their concerns. Chairman Drew assured him that they would, and asked Mr. Evenson to outline the public involvement process. Mr. Evenson stated that process begins with the Advisory Committee making a preliminary recommendation. The Commission staff will take the preliminary recommendation to a series of public informational meetings and hearings and solicit public comment. The Commission staff will also solicit review and comment from each County Board and Executive, from the 147 municipalities within the Region, from State legislators, and from business, community, and other groups. All comment received on the preliminary plan will be brought to the Advisory Committee for their consideration in shaping a final recommended plan. Mr. Yunker added that Commission staff will meet with any community group upon their request.

Mr. Fafard stated that as the Wisconsin Department of Transportation conducts subsequent preliminary engineering for the reconstruction of the regional freeway system on a segment by segment basis, that they would conduct further public information and involvement processes. Mayor Norquist stated that he wanted to ensure that citizens would be able to participate, and that citizens impacted by reconstruction would not be told that it was too late for them to voice their opinions.

4. Regarding the freeway reconstruction alternative with 121 miles of additional lanes, Ms. Ordian asked if the reduced construction cost of \$90 million, as compared to the alternative with 127 miles of additional lanes, was representative of not building additional lanes and not correcting design and design-related safety improvements. Mr. Yunker responded that the reduced cost of \$90 million was attendant only to not constructing the additional lanes on IH 94 between the Marquette and Zoo Interchanges. He noted that even if additional lanes are not provided, elevating the westbound lanes would be required to address design and design-related safety problems, including inadequate shoulders and the proximity of the Mitchell Boulevard and Hawley Road Interchanges.
5. Mayor Bloomberg noted that a cost/benefit ratio was not calculated for freeway system reconstruction. Mr. Evenson replied that the Commission staff has attempted to provide all costs and benefits of the alternatives for freeway system reconstruction, but has not converted the benefits to monetary values. He added that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation as it pursues preliminary engineering of each freeway segment, will address the costs and benefits of each individual freeway segment:

Following Mr. Yunker's presentation, Chairman Drew indicated that he thought it would be appropriate for the Committee to consider freeway reconstruction alternatives in three increments. First, the Committee should consider whether to preliminarily recommend additional lanes on 108 miles of freeway. The second increment would include 13 miles of additional lanes on IH 43 between the Mitchell Interchange and Brown Deer Road, and the third increment would address additional lanes on the 6 mile segment of IH 94 between the Marquette and Zoo Interchanges.

Ms. Pearson made a motion to recommend that the preliminary plan include additional lanes on the 108 miles of freeway. Mr. Sheehy seconded this motion, and Chairman Drew asked if there was any discussion on the motion.

Mayor Bloomberg noted that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) had completed preliminary engineering for the reconstruction of the Marquette Interchange, which did not provide for additional lanes on the connecting freeway segments on IH 94 and IH 43 or through the interchange. She asked what changes would need to be made to WisDOT's preliminary engineering for the Marquette Interchange and the estimated additional cost if additional lanes were provided on IH 94 and IH 43. Mr.

Yunker responded that the Marquette Interchange preliminary engineering addressed the interchange core and connecting freeway segments including IH 94 west to about 42nd street, IH 94 South to National Avenue, IH 43 North to North Avenue, and IH 794 east to the Lake Interchange. He added that the Commission staff has worked closely with WisDOT staff, and the improvements necessary would include the widening from 6 to 8 lanes of the connecting segments of IH 94 and IH 43, and the expansion of IH 43 northbound and southbound movements through the interchange from 2 lanes to 3 lanes in each direction. He stated that the construction cost and right-of-way acquisition attendant to these widenings are presented in Chapter VI of the study report, and include an increase in construction cost of the Marquette Interchange and connecting freeway segments from \$1.07 billion to \$1.22 billion, and additional right-of-way of 20 acres, 3 residences, 5 commercial/industrial buildings and the Milwaukee County Courthouse Annex.

Ms. Jacobson then stated her understanding that the Committee was preparing a preliminary recommended plan for public comment and that the subsequent final plan would provide recommendations that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation would then refine in preliminary engineering including consideration of alternatives and further involvement of local communities and citizens on a freeway segment by segment basis. Mr. Fafard responded that her understanding was correct. He said that as the Department prepares to reconstruct each segment, they would necessarily conduct a preliminary engineering and environmental assessment study, including public involvement. He stated that at the conclusion of this preliminary engineering, the Department would make a decision on the final design of the freeway segment.

Ms. Pearson asked about the posting of public informational meetings and hearings. Mr. Evenson indicated that Committee members would be notified of the public informational meetings and hearings, along with each local unit of government and elected officials, and that a newsletter mailing, the study website, a press release, and selected paid advertisements would announce the hearings.

Mayor Norquist stated that the Committee should not accept the uniform application of freeway design standards, and noted that professional organizations such as the Institute of Transportation Engineers have studied and recommended modifications to highway design standards, such as narrower lanes and shoulders.

[Secretary's Note: The Institute of Transportation Engineers has not studied, or issued reports or recommendations regarding, freeway design standards, and neither has any other professional engineering or planning organization. The Institute of Transportation Engineers and other professional organizations have issued recommendations and reports regarding standards only for neighborhood land access and collector streets.]

Ms. McCutcheon indicated that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources had prepared both a position statement and a position paper concerning the reconstruction of the freeway system with additional lanes.

[Secretary's Note: The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources position statement, position paper, and supplementary letter are included in [Attachment B](#) to these minutes.]

Ms. Geske stated that she would like some discussion regarding whether this Committee should take a position regarding additional lanes, noting that this Committee was not elected for this purpose. Mr.

Evenson responded that the Regional Planning Commission's function is to prepare advisory plans for the physical developments and infrastructure of the Region, including for the transportation system, and the Commission has always relied upon advisory committees to assist in the preparation of these plans. It is the only practical way to approach regional consideration of matters that are, in fact, of regional concern, absent the creation of an elected regional body.

Ms. Ordinans said that while she is not speaking on behalf of the Milwaukee County Board, she viewed the proposal of a preliminary plan as a means of obtaining public discussion, and that her intent would be to present information to the public so as to promote discussion and feedback. Mayor Bloomberg added that the purpose of this Committee is to provide for discussion of regional transportation needs. She noted that the Interstate Highway System is not intended to serve community or neighborhood travel needs. She said that this meeting was not the time for county and local governments to be taking positions on behalf of their individual governments, but rather the Committee needs to discuss and consider the regional needs.

Mayor Norquist agreed that it was useful to bring local officials together and consider regional needs, but he stated that he believed it was not appropriate for the rest of the region to propose plans that entail right-of-way acquisitions in the City and County of Milwaukee. He also stated that he believed that there was a bias towards the highway system with respect to funding. He said that whenever public transit is studied, funding is the primary issue. He added that funding has not been addressed with respect to the freeway system.

There being no further discussion on this motion, Chairman Drew said that he had received letters from Mr. Kehl and Ms. Smith supporting a freeway reconstruction preliminary plan including all 127 miles of additional lanes. He said that their votes would be appropriately recorded. The motion passed by a vote of 19 ayes to 2 nays, with Ms. McCutcheon and Mayor Norquist voting against the motion. Ms. Geske abstained from the vote.

[Secretary's Note: The letters received by Chairman Drew from Mr. Kehl and Ms. Smith are included in [Attachment C](#) to these minutes]

Mr. White made a motion to recommend that the preliminary plan include additional lanes on the 13 miles of IH 43 between the Mitchell Interchange and Brown Deer Road. Mr. Busalacchi seconded this motion, and Chairman Drew asked if there was any discussion on the motion.

Mayor Bloomberg questioned the need to widen IH 43 between Bender Road and Brown Deer Road to 8 rather than 6 lanes. She noted that the widening to 8 lanes would require taking an additional 15 residences and 3 commercial/industrial buildings. Mr. Yunker responded that widening to eight lanes may be expected to permit avoiding future severe congestion on this segment of IH 43.

[Secretary's Note: The traffic congestion implications of this segment of IH 43 are as follows:

Hours of Congestion on an Average Weekday: Year 2020

<u>IH 43</u>	<u>6 lane widening</u>	<u>8 lane widening</u>
Between Bender and Good Hope Road	3 hours 1 severe 2 moderate	None
Between Good Hope and Brown Deer Road	1 hour (moderate)	None

Mr. Sheehy stated that unless an alternative was so objectionable that it should clearly not be further considered, the proposal for additional lanes should be presented to the public to get their input and feedback. Ms. Geske said that she believed that including an alternative in a preliminary plan indicates a preference for that alternative. She stated that she believed that all alternatives should be presented to county and municipal governments.

Mr. White stated that the preliminary recommendations of this Committee on a regional level do not take away the opportunity of county and municipal governments to oppose, or express concerns over, specific elements of the plan. He said that this process needs to be approached from the standpoint of what is best for the region, not what is best for each county or municipal government. He stated that it was vital for this Committee to make preliminary recommendations, based on the study to date. Mr. Evenson added that, together with General Mitchell International Airport, the freeway system in Southeastern Wisconsin is one of the few transportation facilities that are truly regional in nature and impact. He added that decisions must be made soon about how that freeway system will be reconstructed, because the freeway system is nearing the end of its useful life.

Mayor Norquist noted that there has been no discussion of funding this plan. He asked what the cost of the plan would be. Mr. Evenson responded the cost of the preliminary plan would be about \$200 million a year for 30 years, and the cost of rebuilding the freeway system as is was about \$110 million per year over the next 30 years. Mayor Norquist indicated that in order to pay for the preliminary plan through an increase in the gas tax, it would require a gas tax increase of 6-7 cents per gallon. Mr. Yunker pointed out that not all of the \$200 million per year would require new funding. He said that the State Legislature had already acted to allocate about \$50 million in funds per biennium to the reconstruction of the area freeway system, and that approximately \$50 million per year in funds spent on resurfacing projects within the Region could be expected to be redirected over the next 30 years towards reconstruction.

Chairman Drew added that previous plans prepared by the Commission, such as the regional transportation plan, addressed funding needs once a plan had been recommended and the plan cost has been determined. Mayor Bloomberg added that reconstructing the freeway system is going to have a large price tag, regardless of this Committee's recommendations relative to additional lanes. Ms. Jacobson

stated that the charge of this Committee is to determine how the freeway system should be reconstructed in Southeastern Wisconsin.

There being no further discussion on this motion, Chairman Drew asked that the motion be put to a vote. The motion to include in the preliminary plan additional lanes on the 13 miles of IH 43 from the Mitchell Interchange to Brown Deer Road passed by a vote of 19 ayes to 2 nays, with Ms. McCutcheon and Mayor Norquist voting against the motion. Ms. Geske abstained from the vote.

Ms. Jacobson then made a motion to include in the preliminary plan additional lanes on the 6 miles of IH 94 between the Zoo Interchange and the Marquette Interchange. Mr. Sheehy seconded this motion, and Chairman Drew asked if there was any discussion on the motion.

Ms. Ordians indicated that she has substantial concerns about the impacts on the communities adjacent to this stretch of IH 94. She added that while she at this time was opposed to widening this stretch of IH 94, she supports including this stretch of IH 94 in the preliminary plan so that the public has the opportunity to fully discuss, react to, and comment on this alternative.

Mayor Norquist stated that this Committee must make a recommendation – either to accept or reject this alternative. He stated that he believed that adding lanes on this stretch of freeway was a waste of taxpayer money, and that each Committee member had to vote based on their assessment.

Mr. Sheehy stated that he had substantial concerns about the widening of this freeway segment and questioned the relative benefits and costs of adding lanes on this segment of IH 94. He stated that he also supported including the widening in the preliminary plan to permit the public to receive information on all alternatives and to encourage discussion of all alternatives, and he noted the intent of the Committee to base its final recommendation upon public input and feedback.

[Secretary's Note: The Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce recently conducted a survey regarding the regional freeway reconstruction study alternatives. A copy of the survey form is included in [Attachment D](#) to these minutes. With over 300 responses, the survey results were: 67 percent preferred reconstruction with design and design-related safety improvements and 127 miles of additional lanes; 22 percent preferred reconstruction with design and design-related safety improvements and 108 miles of additional lanes; 5 percent preferred reconstruction with design and design-related safety improvements only; and 6 percent preferred reconstruction of the freeway system "as-is".]

Mr. Fafard indicated that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation supported additional lanes on 127 miles of freeway in the preliminary plan, and he distributed a paper to the Advisory Committee indicating the Department's position.

[Secretary's Note: The Wisconsin Department of Transportation paper is included in [Attachment E](#) to these minutes.]

Mayor Estness indicated that she also had substantial concerns about the provision of additional lanes on IH 94 between the Zoo and Marquette Interchanges. She noted that she came to this Committee meeting unsure as to how to vote on this issue. She said that looking at it from a regional perspective, that she

believed that this Committee should include the widening in the preliminary plan to encourage public comment and discussion.

There being no further discussion on this motion, Chairman Drew asked that the motion be put to a vote. The motion to include in the preliminary plan the widening with additional lanes on 6 miles of IH 94 between the Zoo and Marquette Interchanges passed by a vote of 18 ayes to 2 nays, with Ms. McCutcheon and Mayor Norquist voting against the motion. Ms. Geske abstained from the vote, and Ms. Ordians had to leave the meeting prior to this vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Drew stated that this Committee would most likely meet again in August, after a series of public informational meetings and hearings over the next four months.

[Secretary's Note: Commission staff received a letter at the March 21, 2002 Advisory Committee meeting from the Story Hill Neighborhood Association. This letter is included in [Attachment F](#) to these minutes.]

ADJOURNMENT

The tenth meeting of the Advisory Committee was adjourned at 5:20 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Sheehy, seconded by Mr. Morrison, and carried unanimously.

Signed

Philip C. Evenson
Recording Secretary

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