

**Minutes of the Fifteenth Meeting
Racine County Comprehensive Plan Multi-Jurisdictional Advisory Committee**

DATE: April 17, 2008

TIME: 6:30 pm

PLACE: Racine County Ives Grove Auditorium
14200 Washington Ave
Sturtevant, WI

Attendance:

Mary Kacmarcik (Chairperson), Town of Waterford
Audrey Viau, Village of Elmwood Park
Phil Peterson, Town of Burlington
Jim Moyer, Town of Yorkville
Dave Pattengale, Village of Rochester
Connie Mellem (Vice-Chairperson), Village of North Bay
Tom Roanhouse, Village of Waterford
Mike Weinkauff, Town of Rochester
Rebecca Ewald, Village of Waterford
Bob Miller, City of Burlington
Kevin Lahner, City of Burlington
Ken Hall, Racine County
Katie Simenson, City of Burlington
Ingrid Tiegel, Village of Mt. Pleasant
Kim Christman, Village of Union Grove
Matt Sadowski, City of Racine County
Jim Celano, Town of Dover
Julie Anderson, Planning & Development
Dave Schilling, SEWRPC
Tom Moes, SEWRPC
Kristen Lie, Racine County UW-Extension

1. Roll Call

Mary Kacmarcik called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. Roll call was taken by circulating a sign-up sheet.

2. Approval of February 21, 2008 meeting minutes

Ken Hall made a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. The motion was seconded by Connie Mellem. Upon a voice vote, the minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Review of preliminary draft of “condition of housing stock” section of Chapter II, “Inventory of Population, Housing Stock, and Economic Base,” of SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No 301, A Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Racine County: 2035

Dave Schilling of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) reviewed the information presented in the “condition of housing stock” insert to Chapter II; the insert provides data about the current physical condition and construction of residential housing. This information was gathered from local appraisers, and includes an overall physical condition rating which can range from unsound, very poor, poor, fair, average, good, very good, and excellent. Mr. Schilling noted that not all communities in Racine County use the same range of condition score ratings, and that each community’s ratings was set forth in Appendix II-1. He further noted that data on housing types was not available for the City of Burlington, Village of Wind Point, and the Towns of Burlington and Dover. Overall, about three percent of Racine County’s housing units were rated as unsound, very poor, or poor.

Connie Mellem indicated a footnote error in Table II-15a, which SEWRPC will correct. Dave Schilling also noted that there was an additional “slightly” in the fourth sentence of the last paragraph on page two, which will be removed.

Ms. Mellem also questioned the use of “deterioration” in the definitions of the ratings “good” and “very good.” She noted that the definition of “average” refers to “wear and tear,” which has a better connotation than “deterioration,” and she asked whether there could be consistency in the language. Tom Moes stated that there is a general Wisconsin assessors’ handbook that was consulted for the definitions in the insert; he also noted that there are at least six appraisers working in Racine County, and they use a variety of processes, database programs, and definitions. It was decided that SEWRPC would review the rating definitions.

Ken Hall asked whether it would be appropriate for the MJAC to encourage consistency in assessors’ data, so that future information would be comparable throughout Racine County. Tom Moes stated that a policy could be added to the Housing Element to promote the use of a common assessment program; however, it would likely be difficult to implement such a policy, especially since most appraisers—whether private consultants or government officials—also work in areas outside Racine County, which may have different standards. Bob Miller stated that a policy to make appraisals consistent would need to be statewide or even nationwide in order to work.

A motion to approve the insert, “condition of housing stock,” subject to revisions, was made by Connie Mellem and seconded by Ken Hall. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

4. Review of preliminary draft of Chapter XII, “Transportation Element,” of SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 301, *A Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Racine County: 2035*

Dave Schilling reviewed the information contained in Draft Chapter XII, “Transportation Element,” which includes plans for arterial streets and highways, collector and land access streets, public transit, transportation systems for persons with disabilities and the elderly, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, railroads, air transportation, trucking, and water transportation, as well as public input about transportation-related issues and countywide goals, objectives, policies and programs. Mr. Schilling noted that comprehensive plans are required to incorporate the regional transportation plan (in Racine County’s case, SEWRPC’s 2035 regional transportation plan) into their transportation element.

Under the 2035 regional transportation plan, Mary Kacmarcik asked whether the travel demand management element included recommendations for managing problematic intersections, such as those where two highways intersect. Dave Schilling replied that general recommendations were made to handle such situations—for example, constructing roundabouts in place of four-way stops. Ms. Kacmarcik then asked about the traffic congestion in the Village of Waterford, and whether that would be addressed specifically in the comprehensive plan. Dave Schilling stated that this issue would be looked at as part of the jurisdictional recommendations, which are currently being developed through a joint effort of SEWRPC and Racine County.

Mr. Schilling then stated that one purpose of the local government meetings was to review the regional transportation plan on the community-level, and to determine whether the local government unit had any issues or concerns with the plan that should be addressed in the County comprehensive plan. He further explained that community concerns could be included in a separate section of the Transportation Element, to be completed when the local government meetings were finished.

Mary Kacmarcik asked whether plans for future bicycle facilities would be extended beyond the arterial streets and highway system into natural areas, like the area surrounding Lake Tichigan. Dave Schilling stated that off-road bike paths and facilities would be addressed in the Utilities and Community Facilities Element.

Jim Celano voiced concerns about how the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) implements its transportation plans. He stated that the Town of Dover had not been given notice about the current Highway-75 improvement project, and that WisDOT does not always consider the overall effect of their projects on local land, such as how drainage issues will impact farmland. He asked whether a WisDOT representative could be invited to an MJAC meeting to discuss the Transportation Element, and how it relates to general land use and infrastructure planning. Jim Moyer commented that towns needed to take the initiative to discuss their concerns with WisDOT, and that the Town of Yorkville had generally found the department to be interested in, and respectful of, local information.

It was decided that SEWRPC would contact WisDOT to determine whether a representative can participate in an upcoming meeting.

Jim Celano then asked whether the off-street bicycle path along the Pacific Railway was already in existence, or if that was a plan for the future. Julie Anderson stated that the entire route was not yet a bike trail, and Ken Hall noted that the County was converting it section-by-section every year. Mr. Celano emphasized how important and useful that route would be in connecting western and eastern Racine County, and he strongly encouraged the County to finish its development as quickly as possible.

Katie Simenson asked whether a park-ride lot could be planned for Burlington, since many residents commute to Milwaukee and other counties via Highway 36. Dave Schilling stated that it would depend on the demand for a new facility. Julie Anderson noted that the development of the Ives Grove park-ride was funded by a grant, and that County Public Works could look into more grants for such facilities. Ken Hall agreed that Public Works would investigate the demand for a park-ride in Burlington.

Bob Miller commented that Racine County Workforce Development and Human Services conducted a meeting in 2007 with the intent to develop a system that would provide elderly persons and persons with disabilities with privately-owned door-to-door transportation service for medical appointments. He stated that the meeting participants decided that a countywide transportation coordinator position should be created, but that, as far as he knew, no further steps had been taken since that meeting due to a lack of funding. Julie Anderson stated that a second meeting had been conducted that morning, which included a draft of strategies and tactics to address a range of transportation issues. This draft document is likely to be available in May of 2008. Ms. Anderson also noted that the City of Racine was currently updating their transportation plan, and that all these plans should be considered and worked through together. SEWRPC staff will work to develop an objective which addresses the issue of private paratransit or other specialized transportation and on-demand options for elderly persons or persons with disabilities.

Katie Simenson commented that with the rising gas prices, people might become more interested in alternate transit modes, and she wondered whether it would be possible to include a policy to maintain space for a rail system. Bob Miller and Jim Celano spoke to the high cost of rail development.

Dave Pattengale noted that the transportation element contained numerous improvements that County residents would have to pay for, even if they were not likely to utilize them. He further commented that SEWRPC's population projections for the Village of Rochester had not been deemed likely by the village board, and yet, the transportation plan was based on these projections. Dave Schilling replied that transportation recommendations could only be implemented if the funding was available, and that governments had to look at a variety of measures to fund projects, such as the KRM commuter rail, since most public transit does not earn enough to pay for itself. He further noted that all local communities would have a chance to comment on the plan recommendations during the public informational meetings. Julie Anderson also stated that the local community meetings were intended to show the future road layout and plans specific to each community.

A motion to approve Draft Chapter XII, "Transportation Element," subject to additions and revisions, was made by Jim Celano and seconded by Jim Moyer. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

5. Other Business

Mary Kacmarcik informed the MJAC that information about the Housing Work Group, including minutes, agendas and presentations, was available on the Smart Growth website. She further noted that the next work group meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, April 30, 2008. Dave Schilling stated that at the upcoming meeting, the work group would review the preliminary draft of the housing element, and then would hold a fourth meeting the following week to finalize the draft for the MJAC.

Mr. Schilling stated that local community meetings were continuing to build community-level base maps for the comprehensive plan. Mary Kacmarcik added that approved community maps were available on the Smart Growth website. Rebecca Ewald noted that the Village of Waterford was close to completing its 2035 land use map.

Dave Schilling announced that Washington and Ozaukee Counties had adopted their comprehensive plans; they are the first in the Region to complete multi-jurisdictional County plans.

Kristen Lie informed the group that Ken Hall had requested additional analysis of the survey results, looking at differences in responses by age group and a comparison of the City of Racine responses to the countywide responses. She handed out a document regarding the findings and stated that a brief summary would be provided at the next MJAC meeting.

Dave Schilling asked whether the recent elections had any impact on the MJAC memberships. Bob Miller stated that he would continue to be the representative for the City of Burlington. Jim Moyer stated that Stan Bugnacki was no longer a supervisor in the Town of Raymond. Dave Schilling will contact the Town to determine who their representative will be.

6. Determination of next meeting date

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 15, 2008, starting at 6:30 p.m. in the Ives Grove Auditorium.

7. Adjournment

On a motion made by Bob Miller and seconded by Katie Simenson, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Kristen Lie
This meeting was tape recorded.