

CHIPPEWA-EAU CLAIRE

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION



800 Wisconsin Street, Mail Box 9
Eau Claire, WI 54703
715.836.2918 wcrpc.org

Minutes of the Chippewa-Eau Claire Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Council

Wednesday, September 28, 2022, 5:30 p.m.

Held at: Chippewa Valley Technical College, Casper Room, 620 W. Clairemont Ave. Eau Claire, WI

Members Present (13): Gary Spilde - Village of Lake Hallie (Chair), Jim Dunning – Eau Claire County (Vice-chair), Dean Mueller – Chippewa County, Matt Biren – City of Altoona, Terry Weld - City of Eau Claire, Wes Vleck – Town of Brunswick, Larry Marquart – Town of Hallie, Mark Brennan – Town of Lafayette, Dan Green – Town of Pleasant Valley, Jessica Janssen – Town of Seymour, Jennifer Meyer – Town of Union, Mike Peterson – Town of Washington, Alice Droske – Town of Wheaton, Brett Geboy – Eau Claire County (non-voting)

Members without representation present (3): City of Chippewa Falls, Town of Eagle Point, Town of Tilden

Staff Present: Eric Anderson – Director - Chippewa-Eau Claire MPO; Edwin Rothrock - Chippewa-Eau Claire MPO, Chris Straight – West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC), Michael Mills – WCWRPC, Hailee Bushman – WCWRPC, Lynn Nelson – Director - WCWRPC

Minutes

1. Chairman Spilde called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.
2. Welcome and introductions
3. The minutes of the August 24, 2022, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Policy Council meeting were presented. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Dunning, seconded by Mr. Peterson and passed unanimously.
4. The minutes of the September 14th, 2022, meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) were presented and accepted as information.
5. Mr. Anderson presented Amendment #6 (Projects) to the Transportation Improvement Program for the Eau Claire Urbanized Area, 2022-2026 for adoption. A motion to adopt Amendment #6 was made by Ms. Meyer, seconded by Mr. Brennan and passed unanimously.
6. Mr. Anderson presented Amendment #7 (Recertify) to the Transportation Improvement Program for the Eau Claire Urbanized Area, 2022-2026 for adoption. He explained that the TIP is created every two years, then the MPO is required to Recertify it in the alternate years. A motion to adoption Amendment #7 was made by Mr. Weld, seconded by Mr. Brennan and passed unanimously.
7. Mr. Anderson presented the 2023 Urban Work program for the MPO for approval. He gave a summary of the project categories covered in the Urban Work Program and explained the connection to the tasks and programs the MPO staff will engage in for 2023. A motion to approve the Urban Work Program was made by Mr. Weld, seconded by Mr. Dunning and passed unanimously.
8. Mr. Anderson presented the recently completed *Traffic Safety* Report for the Metropolitan Planning Area and distributed copies to the members.
9. Mr. Spilde convened the meeting as the Public Hearing for application from the City of Eau Claire to amend the Chippewa-Eau Claire Urban Sewer Service titled *Type I Sewer Service Area Plan Amendment-Orchard Hills*. The Policy Council Meeting was reconvened at the conclusion of the Public Hearing.
10. Mr. Spilde initiated discussion on consideration and action on an advisory resolution titled "*Resolution 22-09 Boundary Amendment of the Chippewa Fall-Eau Claire Urban Sewer Service Area Plan for 2025*" as requested by the City of Eau Claire in an August 4, 2022, application titled *Type I Sewer Service Area Plan Amendment-Orchard Hills*.

Summary of Policy Council Member Discussion:

Mr. Mueller (Chippewa County) asked the council to delay voting on the amendment until after litigation around the annexation of the area is settled.

Mr. Brennan (Town of Lafayette) encouraged better communication among developers, neighbors, and impacted neighbors. He recounted an experience in the Town of Lafayette where an initial development proposal that nearby residents found objectionable due to multiple concerns had shifted to a development more like existing homes in the area.

Ms. Janssen (Town of Seymour) said she understands the need for additional housing in the Eau Claire area, but how rural residents also expect to maintain their way of life. She also said it is important for the City to respect agreements with the surrounding towns. She asked that the Council either postpone the vote or vote "No".

Mr. Weld (City of Eau Claire) explained the City's need to add housing. He cited the rapid growth in population, and how expanding into the surrounding towns is the only option to add areas for new housing, and how the extensive residential areas just outside the City limits keeps that expansion from being as compact as would be preferable. He discussed how new businesses want to come to the area and are attracting new population. The area has become a hub for medical, retail and entertainment activities. He also addressed a theme of the public comments that the Sewer Service Area (SSA) should be updated rather than having amendments made to it, saying that the City has waited 15 years for an updated SSA Plan and can't wait any longer to address the need for additional residential areas to house new residents. He said that the City has tried to be a good neighbor, but that the growing population must be housed. He also said the best way to ensure groundwater quality in newly developed areas is with City sanitary sewer. Addressing concerns about transportation and water quality safety raised in the public comments, he stated that safety is something the City does well.

Mr. Peterson (Town of Washington) responded saying the Towns need to grow as well. He also stated that Towns can also deal with transportation and water quality safety well.

Mr. Vleck (Town of Brunswick) stated that good Towns with good planning are a major factor in making the Eau Claire area attractive to new residents. He encouraged better cooperation between the Cities and Towns in the area.

Ms. Janssen echoed the hope for better cooperation between the Towns and Cities. She said she realizes the WDNR will make its own decision on the amendment and because the WDNR has had 15 years to fund an update to the SSA and has not, she encourages members to vote "No" to hold the WDNR accountable.

Mr. Dunning (Eau Claire County – non-voting for water quality issues) said there needs to be some clarity on future plans so that the Cities, Towns, and school districts can plan for future growth. He said the area needs to get planning back to being proactive rather than reactive.

Ms. Janssen asked about timing for the next steps in the 1) SSA plan update 2) amendment application process. Mr. Straight stated that the MPO has requested funding from WDNR to support an SSA plan but has not heard whether those funds will be granted. He also detailed the next steps in the SSA amendment application process.

Mr. Peterson asked Mr. Straight whether any other governments had been brought into the discussion of the City's SSA amendment application. He asked Mr. Straight why the WCWRPC had chosen the donor area in the Town of Brunswick. He also asked for an explanation of why the donor area was not now considered a good target for future development but it had been when the current SSA plan was developed in 2006.

Mr. Mueller further asked on whose authority was the donor area chosen?

Mr. Straight responded that the donor area was identified by the City of Eau Claire in their application, not by the WCWRPC, and that any jurisdiction within the SSA providing municipal sewer service can request an amendment to the SSA involving the area proposed to be served and can be swapped for an equal area located anywhere in the SSA. He stated that one of the roles of the TAC is to consider such intergovernmental issues and that the Policy Council's advisory action today is considering whether the donor area is appropriate to be removed from the SSA. He added that the ultimate authority to approve an amendment rests with the WDNR.

Mr. Vleck asked why the WCWRPC was recommending approval even though it would leave a void within the SSA. Mr. Straight explained that, from a water quality perspective, which is the required approach for the WCRPC to take when considering an SSA amendment application, that the fact that the donor area is entirely within a 100-year floodplain for the Chippewa River and protecting this flood storage is important makes it less appropriate for urban development when compared to the receiving area.

Mr. Peterson stated that new modern community septic systems would be viable solution for development in the donor area.

Mr. Petersen motioned for a vote recommending denying the application titled *Type I Sewer Service Area Plan Amendment-Orchard Hills*. Mr. Vleck second the motion. A roll call vote was made. The results were ten (10) votes in favor of recommending denial of the application, two (2) votes against denying the application. The County of Chippewa voted in place of the Town of Anson, a non-participant in the MPO, as is allowed for in the SSA plan.

The MPO Policy Council adopted a resolution recommending the WDNR denies the amendment application to the SSA.

11. Other Business – None was presented
12. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for February 1, 2023.
13. After a motion by Mr. Weld, seconded by Mr. Peterson, members all voted to adjourn the meeting. Chair Spilde did so at 7:45 p.m.