

CHIPPEWA-EAU CLAIRE

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION



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Minutes of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the Chippewa-Eau Claire Metropolitan Planning Organization

Held as a hybrid virtual/in-person meeting via Zoom and at the Gillette Room, Banbury Place, 800 Wisconsin St., Eau Claire, WI, Wednesday, September 14th, 2022, 1:30 p.m. Due to room capacity constraints, the Eau Claire Room had an audio and video feed of the meeting that members of the public could view.

Members present: Dave Walter – City of Altoona Engineering, Rick Rubenzer – City of Chippewa Falls, Brad Hentschel – City of Chippewa Falls, Scott Allen – City of Eau Claire Community Development, Dave Solberg – City of Eau Claire Engineering, Tom Wagener – Eau Claire Transit, Karl Buck – Federal Highway Administration (Zoom), Wes Vleck – Town of Brunswick, Rick Bowe – Town of Eagle Point, Dan Hanson – Town of Pleasant Valley, Jennifer Janssen – Town of Seymour, Jennifer Meyer – Town of Union, Janelle Henning – Town of Washington, Alice Droske – Town of Wheaton, Derek Schaad – Village of Lake Hallie, Diane Paoni – WisDOT (Zoom), Dena Ryan – WisDOT NW Region (phone)

Staff present: Eric Anderson – Director Chippewa-Eau Claire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Edwin Rothrock - Chippewa-Eau Claire MPO, Chris Straight – West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC)

Minutes

1. Mr. Anderson called the meeting to order a 1:35 pm.
2. Welcome and introductions- Due to the large number of attendees, an attendance roll call of members was taken.
3. The minutes of August 10th, 2022, TAC meeting were **approved by all** following a motion by Mr. Rubenzer, seconded by Mr. Solberg.
4. Sewer Service Area (SSA) Amendment request from the City of Eau Claire - Mr. Straight presented the draft West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (RPC) Staff Report on the report on City of Eau Claire's request for a Type I "Land Swap" amendment to the SSA. The Staff Report recommended that advisory approval, with multiple conditions to be required if 208 conformance review letters for a sewer extension were pursued at a later date. Mr. Anderson handed out a letter from Town of Washington's attorney reiterating its objection to the City's request. This letter was received September 9th. The letter is attached to the minutes.

Mr. Bowe spoke about the appropriateness of including the area which would be added by the amendment, the "receiving" area, to the City of Eau Claire and to the SSA. He also said that a holistic approach to the SSA would be better than "doing individual pieces" on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Solberg spoke about the receiving area already having been annexed into the City of Eau Claire and that development will happen. He said that it was better to have the area served by a city sanitary sewer system than with septic. He agreed with Mr. Bowe about the SSA needing a holistic approach. He advocated for an SSA update with financial support for the effort coming from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Ms. Henning stated that private well and septic water systems are legitimate and legal options. She said that a community septic system would be a viable option for the recipient area. She noted that the City of Eau Claire could have applied for an amendment request at any time, but only applied at this time in order to support the annexation. She objected to the receiving area being referred to as "Orchard Hills" in the RPC Staff Report since it seems to imply that the amendment approval was a foregone conclusion. Mr. Straight clarified that the report was using the project name that had been assigned in the City of Eau Claire's application for the SSA amendment and that WCWRPC's report is in response to the application.

Mr. Hanson said that there is no evidence that city sewer service is safer than septic systems. He stated that the County and Town of Washington had a plan for the area with private wells and septic systems, and that the proposed plan was obviously overreaching.

Mr. Vleck pointed out that if the area to be removed from the SSA (the “donor” area) were to be developed in the future, that it would need to be added into the SSA, making for needless paperwork. He said there was a discussion about a new park potentially located within the donor area and how it might need sewer service. He supported the idea that the SSA Plan was overdue for updating and that would allow for looking forward rather than backwards.

Mr. Solberg agreed that looking forward was best. He stated that City of Eau Claire utilities are only extended to an area that has requested that they be served. He also pointed out that during public meetings for the recent City annexation of the area, which includes the receiving area, that members of the public had voiced that no one thought septic and wells on private systems were a good idea and that adding wells to serve development in the receiving area might negatively impact existing wells.

Mr. Straight addressed the issue of updating the SSA Plan saying that the WCWRPC had asked the DNR for funding in the past to conduct the Plan update. He said he had earlier this year received WDNR encouragement to officially apply for funding which, if granted, would hopefully allow the Plan update to start in 2023.

Mr. Rubenzer said that the RPC had done a good and thorough preparing the Staff Report, and concurs with the report findings.

Ms. Janssen asked for an explanation of the use of the word “contiguous” to describe the receiving area. Mr. Straight explained that the north and east boundaries of the receiving area are immediately adjacent to the current SSA.

Mr. Bowe asked for clarification of the difference between an SSA amendment vs. a Plan update. Mr. Straight provided that explanation.

A motion to pass the advisory approval was made by Mr. Solberg and seconded by Mr. Rubenzer. The floor was opened for any further discussion.

Ms. Henning encouraged members to vote against recommending the amendment to the Policy Council based on two points where she believes the amendment was not consistent with the SSA Plan: 1. Development of the receiving area was not “orderly”, 2. Removing the donor area from the SSA would leave two voids, which is not allowed by the Plan.

A roll call vote was taken: Yes-7, No-8, Abstain-2. The votes were read back to and confirmed as accurate by the members.

There was a question about next steps in regards to the Policy Council’s consideration of the amendment application; Mr. Anderson giving a brief explanation.

5. Mr. Anderson presented the proposed Amendment #6 (Projects) to Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Eau Claire Urbanized Area, 2022-2026. After a motion to recommend this amendment be adopted by the Policy Council was made by Mr. Solberg, seconded by Mr. Walter, **all members voted “Aye”**.
6. Mr. Anderson presented the proposed Amendment #7 (Recertify) to the Transportation Improvement Program for the Eau Claire Urbanized Area, 2022-2026. He explained that the State requires MPOs to recertify TIPs in alternate years. After a motion to recommend this amendment be adopted by the Policy Council was made by Ms. Janssen, seconded by Mr. Walter, **all members voted “Aye”**.
7. Mr. Anderson presented the proposed 2023 Urban Work Program for recommendation of approval to the Policy Council. After a motion to recommend the Urban Work Program be adopted by the Policy Council was made by Ms. Meyers, seconded by Mr. Walter, **all members voted “Aye”**.
8. Mr. Anderson presented the MPO Traffic Safety report and distributed copies to the members. He stated that the Report will be discussed in more detail at a future meeting but wanted to distribute it now so that members could read it soon after it was completed.
9. Other business – none
10. The next TAC meeting was tentatively set for January 11, 2023.
11. Mr. Rubenzer moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Solberg. **All voted “Aye”**. The meeting adjourned at 3:05 pm.