

# Capitol Region Council of Governments

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## **Environmental Justice Advisory Board Meeting South Congregational Church Hartford, CT November 25, 2003 Minutes**

**Committee Members Present:** Katherine Jones, Career Team Plus; Philip Fry, CT Transit; Renita Smith-Chaney, STRIVE/SAND; Sharon Lewis, CT Coalition for Environmental Justice; Charlie Carson, CT Transit; Mark Mitchell, CT Coalition for Environmental Justice; Leon Churchill, Town of Windsor; Dave Kilbon, Town of East Granby; Lee Erdmann, City of Hartford; Richard Parmlee, Sr, CT Coalition for Environmental Justice

**Others:** Mark Phillips, ConnDOT; Tom Maziarz, Mario Marrero, and Karen Olson, CRCOG.

- 1. Welcome:** Dave Kilbon called the meeting to order at 12:20 p.m. and welcomed members of the Environmental Justice Advisory Board. Introductions were made around the table.
- 2. Bus Users Forum:** Karen Olson reported on a Bus Users Forum held October 16, 2003 at Capitol Community College in Hartford. More than 30 bus passengers attended and many offered ideas for improving the local bus service. CRCOG and CT Transit (co-sponsors of the Forum) are working together to address the comments received and to determine the best format for providing feedback to the passengers who attended the meeting as well as the bus-riding population in general. Dr. Mark Mitchell suggested that the local cable access television channel be used as an outlet to reach this population.
- 3. EJ Participation in CRCOG's Transportation Committee:** Dr. Mitchell reported that the two delegates from the Board to the Transportation Committee have been afforded a good opportunity to comment on transportation decisions being made in the Region, and that the other members of the Transportation Committee have been very receptive to those comments. He further stated that the CRCOG effort is a model for other planning agencies in the State.
- 4. Review and Action on STP-Urban Target Areas:** Tom Maziarz explained to the Board that CRCOG has asked its member towns to submit roadway projects for consideration for funding with the federal STP-Urban program. One criteria in selecting projects to be funded under this program is Environmental Justice: projects can receive up to 8 points if it benefits low income or minority neighborhoods. The definition of neighborhood, or "target area" has been left up to the members of the EJAB.  
  
Mr. Maziarz reviewed several classifications that the board could consider as defining the "target area": neighborhoods with 50% or 27% of its population classified as minority, and neighborhoods with 30% or 20% of its households classified as low-income. These classifications were combined into 4 options, and shown on 4 maps. Leon Churchill made a motion to approve a two-tier Target Area as follows: Projects benefiting a first-tier Target Area neighborhood with at least 50% minority or 30% low-income populations could receive up to 8 points for Environmental Justice. Projects benefiting a second-tier Target Area (outside the first-tier area) with at least 20% of its households defined as low-income could receive up to 4 points for Environmental Justice. This motion was seconded by Phil Fry and following an extended discussion of the 4 options, the motion was approved unanimously.
- 5. Regional Transportation Plan:** Mr. Maziarz explained that CRCOG is required to update its Regional Transportation Plan every three years. The latest update must be completed by March 2003. This Plan sets the direction for transportation programs for the next twenty years. The Board was asked to provide

input for the development of issues to be addressed in the Plan and to review Plan recommendations as they are proposed. Mr. Maziarz noted that Board members would be asked to meet more frequently during the process of preparing the updated Plan. Mr. Maziarz reviewed a list of issues that we contained in the Briefing Paper that was distributed with the agenda. Several members expressed a concern that representatives from the bicycling community and of senior citizens were not involved in the process. Mr. Maziarz assured th Board members that members of those groups would be invited to participate in the review process, but perhaps through a different forum (not EJ.) Due to the late hour, the Board members agreed to review the Briefing Paper and come back to a meeting in December to begin the process of itemizing issues of concern to the EJ populations that should be included in the Plan development.

6. **Future Meetings:** Board members decided to meet in December, if a convenient date could be found. Mr. Maziarz stated that a notice would be sent out to all Board members to determine which date and time in December would be convenient for the most members.
7. **Other:** Mr. Maziarz distributed a 2-page summary of an Assessment Tool that CRCOG has been using to determine the benefits of the New Britain – Hartford Bus Rapid Transit. He is hoping to use a similar methodology to determine the benefits of the proposals that are developed in the Regional Transportation Plan. He was giving it to the Board members to show then the type of analysis that might be done.
8. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Documents & handouts: Tom Maziarz's memo to the EJAB membership re: Definition of target area for STP-Urban funding program, dated 11/14/03; *Capitol Region Transportation Plan, Focus Group Briefing Paper – Environmental Justice*; *Capitol Region Transportation Plan*, dated March 14, 2001; *FTA's Summit as Equity Assessment Tool*, 2-page summary.