

Capitol Region Council of Governments

241 Main St., Hartford, CT 06106

Phone: (860) 522-2217 FAX: (860) 724-1274

Web Page: www.crcog.org

Environmental Justice Advisory Board Meeting
South Congregational Church
Hartford, CT
April 15, 2003
Minutes

Committee Members Present:

Lee Erdmann	City of Hartford
Elsa Smith-Pleasant	Hartford WIC
Sharon Lewis	CCEJ
Dr. Mark Mitchell	CCEJ
James Johnson, Jr.	City of Hartford
Joel Sanchez	SINA & town of East Hartford
Yanil Teron	CPRF
Renita Smith-Chaney	STRIVE / SAND Corp.
Deborah Davis	Town of Bloomfield
David Kilbon	Town of East Granby & CRCOG Transportation Committee

Others:

Rick Porth	CRCOG
Tom Maziarz	CRCOG
Mario Marrero	CRCOG
Karen Olson	CRCOG
Dan Czaja	CRCOG
Barbara Breslin	FHWA
Mark Phillips	ConnDOT
Maribeth Wojenski	ConnDOT
Charlie Carson	CT Transit

1. **Welcome:** David Kilbon welcomed the group and introduced himself as the Chair of the CRCOG Transportation Committee. Introductions were made around the table.
2. **Review of Final EJ Report:** Tom Maziarz gave a presentation on the EJ planning effort undertaken with FHWA Challenge Grant funds. CRCOG was one of four agencies in the country to receive those funds and the results will be used as a model for the rest of the country. Mr. Maziarz reviewed 1) the

project process, 2) the key findings, 3) progress made since the completion of the project, and 4) what happens next.

During the discussion that followed, it was suggested that goals and objectives for the continuing effort to involve Environmental Justice target communities in CRCOG's transportation planning program be developed and used as a measure of progress. It was also pointed out that demographic information about low income groups has been made available since the completion of the study, but that a definition of the low income target group still needs to be determined.

3. **Review of EJAB Participation in CRCOG Transportation Committee:** Mr. Maziarz commented that the addition of two representatives from the EJ community to the Transportation Committee (TC) is already making a difference, but that the real benefits will show up over time as various aspects of the planning process continue to come under consideration. Dr. Mark Mitchell, EJ representative to the TC, commented that while the membership of the TC is not very "diverse," the members do make a significant effort in determining what is best for the Region. Mr. Kilbon added that the EJ reps bring a valuable, eye-opening perspective to the committee.
4. **Review of Draft Annual Work Program:** Mr. Maziarz discussed the draft Annual Work Program that will be adopted by the TC and CRCOG's Policy Board at the end of May. He asked the EJAB members to review the draft (complete copy of the latest version is enclosed) and provide him with comments and suggestions sometime in the near future. He pointed out that while many of the topics are standard planning efforts undertaken each year, the most significant new items were: 1) the update of the Regional Transportation Plan, including an EJ element, 2) the update of the transportation forecast model, which will allow the equity analysis of the Transportation Plan to proceed, and 3) the continuing implementation of the recommendations from the EJ Report.

During the discussion that followed, Mr. Maziarz explained that the Transportation Plan was a look at the region 20 years into the future and an opportunity to identify potential future transportation problems. Steps to mitigate those problems can then be undertaken. CRCOG has a history of making things happen, when the needs have been identified. Mr. Kilbon pointed out that once the needs have been identified, federal funds can be sought to solve the problems. Dr. Mitchell suggested that local sources of transportation-produced air pollution be addressed. Mr. Maziarz commented that while the tools to do a complete job of addressing that problem are not available, there may be policy issues that can be addressed.

5. **Transit Users Forum:** Mario Marrero stated that CRCOG intended to move forward with establishing a forum in which transit users (particularly transit-dependent users) can comment upon the local bus service. He has met with CT Transit officials and they are interested in being a part of this program. Charlie Carson of CT Transit commented that CT Transit does offer many opportunities for passengers to comment on their service and they have in place procedures for addressing issues raised by passengers. Rick Porth commented that while service specific comments are welcome, other valuable information would be comments on long-range plans and assistance in determining funding priorities. Elsa Smith-Pleasant suggested that a short survey of passengers be undertaken and distributed through community-based organizations. Sharon Lewis suggested that the survey be short (5 questions) and be brought directly to bus passengers. James Johnson, Jr. suggested that the One Stop centers would be a good place to reach bus passengers. Renita Smith-Chaney stated that transit within the city is not a problem, but that more service is needed to jobs in the suburbs. Dr. Mitchell suggested that the meeting be held in a room at the Hartford City Library.
6. **Media List:** Karen Olson distributed CRCOG's existing list of media outlets and asked the group to highlight for her the outlets that best serve the Environmental Justice target communities. She also asked the board members to suggest newspapers, radio and TV stations that were not listed on the sheet. Finally, she asked for suggestions regarding community-based groups and other outlets (libraries, activity centers) through which CRCOG might publicize opportunities for participation in the transportation planning efforts. These suggestions can be sent to her at CRCOG at any time.