



Capitol Region Council of Governments

241 Main St., Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: (860) 522-2217 FAX: (860) 724-1274

Capitol Region Environmental Justice Advisory Board Meeting Notes

Date/Time: Tuesday, May 14, 2002, 12:00 Noon – 1:30 PM.
Location: South Congregational Church, 277 Main Street, Hartford CT 06106

Attendees:

Dr. Mark Mitchell, CCEJ
Alice Farrell, Catholic Social Services
Leon Churchill, Town of Windsor
Charlie Carson, CT Transit
James Johnson, Jr., Hartford Dept. of Human Services
David Kilbon, Town of East Granby
Sharon Lewis, CCEJ
Judy Oquendo, SINA Job Center
Bhupen Patel, City of Hartford
Elsa Smith-Pleasant, WIC Program
Renita Smith-Chaney, STRIVE/SAND
Barbara Breslin, FHWA
Mark Phillips, DOT
Marybeth WoJenski, DOT

CRCOG Staff:

Rick Porth
Tom Maziarz
Kerry R. Colvin
Mario Marrero
Dan Czaja

Welcome: Dave Kilbon served as chair for the meeting. He welcomed everyone, and explained the purpose of the meeting and the ongoing efforts of this new advisory Board.

Discussion of the TIP and the Regional Transportation Planning Program: Tom Maziarz described the Environmental Justice Challenge Grant project activities that have taken place over the last year. He indicated that the project focused on both technical methods for assessing the benefits and burdens of the region's transportation plans and the methods of engaging the minority and low-income populations in the planning process. He further indicated that as a result of the feedback received from the challenge grant effort, CRCOG had developed a proposed Action Plan consisting of seven elements:

1. Formally establish n Environmental Justice Advisory Board.
2. Appoint a member of Advisory Board to the Transportation Committee.
3. Expand special outreach efforts.
4. TIP – assess benefits & burdens, plus do better job of outreach.
5. Transportation Plan – assess benefits & burdens, plus do better job of outreach.
6. STP-Urban Funding Program – continue use of environmental justice criteria.
7. Establish transit users advisory group.

Each element of the action plan was then discussed in more detail.

1. Establish Advisory Board. Mr. Maziarz explained the purpose of the Advisory Board and described several elements of the transportation planning process that would benefit from the Board's input.

2. Transportation Committee Appointment. Mr. Maziarz explained that the agency wanted to add a member of this Board to serve as an official member of the Transportation Committee. .Dr. Mark Mitchell and Judy Oquendo offered to participate on the Transportation Committee. Mr. Maziarz will discuss the issue with the transportation committee at the next meeting and the members will be appointed at the Transportation Committee meeting in June.

3. Outreach Efforts. Mr. Maziarz described the higher level of public outreach efforts that would be used for studies that may result in impacts to minority or low-income populations. He suggested that outreach strategies should be seen as dynamic and should be directed and focused as required for the specific communities targeted.

4. TIP Updates. Mr. Maziarz described the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and CRCOG's methods for assessing if the distribution of projects and funds to minority and non-minority communities was equitable. The Board reviewed the maps showing project locations and the summary table funding allocations. The Board discussed the issue of whether the projects should be considered as having either positive or negative impacts to the minority communities. Mr. Maziarz agreed to draft some of the criteria CRCOG used in this assessment and send it to the Board for their consideration. The Board also requested that CRCOG develop a reduced form of the TIP that only included the projects or categories that are relevant for the discussion. The group also agreed that CRCOG needed to support additional outreach effort to the minority communities and that this effort should be discussed more at future Board meetings.

5. Transportation Plan Updates. Mr. Maziarz explained the importance of getting Advisory Board input into this process. He suggested potential ways the Board members could assist in improving outreach efforts specifically designed for reaching the minority populations.

6. STP-Urban Program. Mr. Maziarz explained that environmental justice was one of the criteria used in evaluating proposals received from the city and towns, and that the action plan called for continuation of this. Dr. Mitchell suggested that we also need to examine the share of funds received by the City of Hartford.

7. Community Bus Service Forum. Kerry Colvin explained that the concept of the bus service forum was a result of feedback received at the challenge grant project workshops. He explained that the forum was seen as a forum for transit users and potential transit users to come to a neutral place to voice their issues and concerns about specific transit services or needs. The Board agreed that this would be a positive step in assisting the region to better serve transit users, including minority and low-income communities. Mr. Colvin agreed to work with CT Transit to develop a plan for implementing the forum concept. The draft of the forum concept plan will be shared at the next meeting of the Advisory Board. The Board also suggested that the forum meetings should coincide with the quarterly service and route modification schedule at CT Transit.

Action to Endorse. The Board voted to endorse the basic elements of the Action Plan with the understanding that they would be able to refine some items in the future.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 PM.