

**County Supervisor  
Lynne D. De Bruin**

# Memo

**To:** County Board Chairman Lee Holloway and Members of the Milwaukee County Board  
**From:** Supervisor Lynne De Bruin *LD*  
**Date:** 5/15/2007  
**Re:** May 17, 2007 County Board Meeting vote on the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission Regional Transportation Plan

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I am writing to encourage you to vote against SEWRPC's 2035 Regional Transportation Plan, or at the very least, refer the item back to the Transportation and Public Works Committee. This plan conflicts with previously adopted County Board positions regarding the expansion of I-94 and other freeways within Milwaukee County. By previous action, it is clear that a majority of members of the County Board do not support expanding the major freeways within Milwaukee County. This plan supports such expansions. The plan also conflicts with adopted anti-expansion positions of multiple area municipalities.

The 2035 Regional Transportation Plan does not contain any plan for how the improvements will be funded. Interested community groups have noted that there is a \$65 million funding gap between plan components and available funding. Now that the gas tax multiplier is no longer in place, the actual funding gap is likely much higher. While past plans have been voted on without funding responsibilities identified, voting for the most expensive freeway expansion and improvement plan in our lifetime without knowing who, how and when these initiatives will be paid for is risky for County taxpayers, for all taxpayers. Approving the plan sets County government on a course to being obliged to directly pay, in part, for these components.

In addition, approving the plan without knowing how each component will be funded puts the comprehensive nature of the plan at risk. Without funding being determined up front, the comprehensive nature of this plan will disintegrate over time. The winners will be plan components that are voted on first. Milwaukee County needs a comprehensive, coordinated plan. The best way to insure the likelihood of a comprehensive plan being actually implemented is to plan upfront and in the open, how the components will be paid for.

Further, Milwaukee County has taken the position that new transit initiatives should not be developed and supported with funding until, and unless, full funding for the rubber tire bus system is provided for. County Board members have publicly commented on the need to reject any and all transit proposals regarding the \$92 million dollars in federal funds available for local transit needs, unless such proposals include upfront full funding of the bus system. And yet, as approved by the Transportation and Public Works Committee on a 4-2 vote, the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan does not make full funding of the bus system a prerequisite to other system changes or expansions.

The plan does not recommend any implementation priorities within the transportation system. Given the plan's broad scope, long-term transportation impact, and high cost but uncertain funding, the lack of any prioritization is a disservice to public policy makers who will no doubt have to make choices between plan components.

There are also multiple concerns within the plan document that have been identified by advocacy groups and others interested in this plan. Attached is a copy of a letter sent by Citizens Allied for Sane Highways, which outlines their key concerns regarding plan components. It is attached for your review.

Please consider these concerns and vote to reject the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan or send the plan back to the Transportation and Public Works Committee.