

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

**Joint
Regional Comprehensive Plan Committee & Economic Development Committee**

East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
ECWRPC Offices
June 5, 2018

Regional Comprehensive Plan Committee Members Present:

Steve Cummings Winnebago County
Nadine Miller (alt. Kevin Sturn)..... Outagamie County
Joe Moore (Chair)..... Fond du Lac County
Michael Thomas Outagamie County

Economic Development Committee Members Present:

Allen Buechel (Chair)..... Fond du Lac County
Chuck Dallas Shawano County
Mark Harris Winnebago County
Paul Mayou (alt. Brian Smith)..... Waupaca County
Thomas Nelson Outagamie County
James Nygaard Waupaca County
Ruth Winter..... Menominee county

Staff Present:

Eric Fowle Executive Director
Sarah Van Buren Associate Planner

1. Welcome and Introductions, Mr. Moore, Chair – Regional Comprehensive Plan Committee

Mr. Moore called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

Mr. Moore provided background as to the purpose of the meeting before introductions occurred.

2. Statement of Compliance with Wis. Stats. Ch. 19, Subchapter V, Sec. 19.84 Regarding Open Meetings Requirements

It was determined that the meeting was in compliance with Wisconsin § Chapter 19, Subchapter V, Section 19.84 regarding Open Meeting Requirements and that a quorum of members was present.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Approval of Agenda / Motion to Deviate

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. Cummings and seconded by Mr. Thomas, passing unanimously.

5. Public Comment

No public comment.

6. Brief Overview of Initiative 41

Ms. Van Buren provided an overview on each of the initiatives funded as part of the Phase II Department of Defense-Office of Economic Adjustment (DoD-OEA) grant (Initiative 41). She also provided the group a graphical depiction of the grant.

Brief discussion took place regarding the overview and further explanation of the need for a joint meeting.

7. Review of *Driving the Future: A Strategy for Fostering Collaborative Economic Development Along the Interstate 41 Corridor*

Mr. Fowle provided a detailed overview of the preparation and contents of the recently prepared report from TIP Strategies with special focus being placed on the three major goals and specific strategies for implementation. A review of the recommendations for the involvement of various regional and local economic development partners was also conducted.

Brief discussion took place regarding the connectedness amongst the counties and potential partners.

8. Update of Known Economic Development Organization Activities/Actions Related to I-41

Mr. Fowle updated the Committee on known activities or discussions related to each regional/sub-regional economic development entity along the I-41 Corridor. Many of them are reviewing the corridor strategy and making considerations for more involvement, some through their formal work programming and internal strategic planning activities. Mr. Fowle noted that in nearly all cases, it will be tough to garner more involvement in an I-41 Corridor effort simply due to staffing and capacity issues. It has/will continue to be tough to engage the Brown County area as their participation was somewhat lax throughout the strategy development process.

Mr. Fowle noted that there is a timely opportunity for East Central to possibly fill this gap for economic development work in a corridor fashion. Mr. Fowle noted that with the retirement of the SSA Planner position this summer, other staff could fulfill that role and the agency could then look at re-filling the vacant position with an economic development position, or perhaps at least ½ of that position. This position could provide support to current staff and lead certain aspects of an I-41 corridor program. Mr. Fowle provided details of the current budget and 2019 budget outlook stating that IF the Commission were to do this, about another \$80-\$100,000 of contract or new program revenue would be needed to maintain the position and East Central staff is conducting a review of future revenue opportunities for the Commission.

Brief discussion ensued regarding contract work, levy increase, and role of East Central in implementing the plan.

9. Discussion on Commission Role, Leadership, and Capacity for Implementation of *Driving the Future Report Strategies and Recommendations*

Mike Thomas stated that this is an important initiative and more involvement and leadership from the business community needs to occur. The focus should be on talent attraction and New North may be able to fit that role, however; East Central could be involved in leading some aspects of this in terms of getting high level buy-in from government and business on other topics, citing the lack of consistency in development regulations as one of them.

Mr. Fowle stated that it is worthy to expand any future efforts to include the outlying counties such as Shawano, Waupaca and Waushara as the corridor is also the life-blood of their communities' future economic success. Based on workforce commuting, supply chain and freight movements, all of these areas are strongly interconnected to the I-41 corridor. Joe Moore agreed that some type of "chief collaborator" needs to be present with East Central being able to fulfill that role.

Discussion ensued on East Central's ability to work outside of its region with respect to Brown County with Mr. Fowle noting that technically, some of our work would benefit the County and be subsidized by the Commission. It was suggested that meetings with New North, Bay-Lake RPC and the local EDCs occur to review and discuss East Central's possible role in coordination of efforts. Mr. Fowle will set up meetings to that end.

Mark Harris brought up the question of WEDC's role in moving forward, stating that he feels that many State issues/efforts have discounted the importance of the I-41 Corridor's assets.

Steve Cummings noted concerns with other related issues such as housing and providing the right match for current and future workers as many communities are struggling to meet these demands. Mr. Cummings wondered how this can be incorporated into a corridor-wide initiative.

The group also discussed the current issue with the I-41 infrastructure that being the 4-land bottle neck between DePere and Highway 15 in the Fox Cities. Tom Nelson agreed that this should be a top issue and that help from the business community will be needed. The group discussed details of the state funding issue and current involvement by East Central and others in this conversation. Mr. Fowle noted the need to further expand this conversation as every I-41 Corridor community has a stake in this issue – their employees and their freight move along this stretch of the highway. Mr. Nelson felt that focus around this issue in an expanded manner, if successful, could formulate a good framework for addressing other issues or topics, as well as future needs.

10. Joint committee Recommendation(s) Moving Forward

The Committee concluded that East Central should further examine the needs and opportunities for building additional capacity within the agency to conduct more economic development activities that would support or lead coordination efforts in partnership with others for the I-41 corridor impacted area. Specifically, the Committee felt that:

- 1) Staff should reach out to each regional/sub-regional economic development entity to discuss the implementation of the I-41 Strategy and East Central's possible role and leadership/partnership arrangements;
- 2) Staff should review any detailed proposals – once determined – with the study committee from the I-41 Strategy;
- 3) Staff should assist in convening a broader public/private effort for supporting the I-41 bottleneck issue.
- 4) That staff and the Steering Committee examine the 2019 budget elements early on in order to seek the inclusion of a second economic development staff position to fill the vacated SSA Planner position.

11. Adjourn

The motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Cummings, with a second by Mr. Nelson. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:09p.m.