

THE 7TH ANNUAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT REPORT

Transportation & Jobs: The Case for Regional Cooperation – Getting There From Here

Sponsored by the Urban Economic Development Association of Wisconsin

The 7th Annual Community Development Summit explored the vital need for regional cooperation, with special emphasis on the closely linked issues of achieving effective transportation and job growth. Approximately 225 participants from across Southeast Wisconsin took part in this event including government, business, community and economic development leaders, and the general public.

Morning Presentations

- **Mayor Tom Barrett, City of Milwaukee**
Mayor Barrett opened the morning session with a presentation that emphasized the need to adopt a comprehensive strategy that employs the \$91.5 million in Federal funds that have gone unused for 17 years.
- **Robert Liberty, Metro Councilor, Portland, Oregon**
Robert Liberty produced a compelling case why regional cooperation on transportation and workforce development is successful and challenged critics who maintain that this kind of regional institution cannot be replicated in other metropolitan areas, including Southeast Wisconsin.

Morning Reaction Panel

Eric Von moderated a panel of regional experts active in transportation and workforce in the region. The panel discussed the challenges and opportunities facing Southeast Wisconsin in terms of regional cooperation. **Panelists agreed that the risk-adversity and the challenges around funding are two key factors; communicating the long-range vision versus the short-term difficulties is necessary.**

Afternoon Town Hall Session

Mike Gousha moderated a “town hall” session featuring a panel of top-ranking City and County political and business leaders in the seven-county region, who were challenged by the moderator to present their plans and ideas on improving local and regional transportation in relation to creating, expanding and preserving jobs and economic development for the region.

Panelists and participants overwhelmingly agreed that a quality public transit system is crucial to the economy of Southeast Wisconsin. They also agreed that to move a regional transit agenda forward, there must be a willingness to cooperate and work together.

In order to move a cooperative agenda forward, attendees put forth the following recommendations:

- ***Establish a public-private transportation coalition*** that would include public education and lobbying among its efforts.
- ***Address the immediate crisis with public transit*** (including MCTS).
- ***Immediately find consensus on utilizing the \$91 million in federal funds*** that remain available to the City and County of Milwaukee but requires agreement.
- ***Develop options for a dedicated funding source*** that will encourage and support regional cooperation and consensus-building among all levels of government.
- ***Strengthen mechanisms that support efforts to eradicate barriers to employment.***
- ***Consolidate transit systems in the region.***



A follow-up event is planned for September 17th at Manpower, Inc. in Milwaukee. The purpose of this meeting will be to seek consensus, form an agenda that encourages positive movement and further challenge elected officials to cooperate and move forward. Details on this event, as well as a full summary report of the 7th Annual Community Development Summit can be found at www.uedawi.org.

