

Letter to the Steering and Rules Committee

Submitted Monday, October 27, 2008

By Karl Ostby

Chairperson of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority

Dear Committee Members –

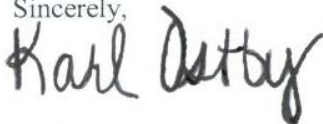
I feel compelled to respond to the resolution urging Milwaukee County to withdraw from the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC). As Chairperson of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority (RTA), I have seen first hand SEWRPC's commitment to transit and to the economic development of the City of Milwaukee.

For the last two years, SEWRPC has served as staff to the RTA, lending their technical skill and expertise to our efforts to address the growing transit needs in Milwaukee as well as the Southeastern Wisconsin region as a whole. They effectively research and evaluate alternatives and consistently provide independent, objective information to help guide our decision making. In addition, they have been intimately involved in the planning efforts at every major transit system in Southeastern Wisconsin, including Milwaukee County Transit.

The welfare of the City of Milwaukee is always top of mind for SEWRPC. They understand the critical role the city plays as the economic center for the region. They have consistently brought to our attention the critical challenges Milwaukee's transit system faces, including the need to expand services to the city's residents and addressing the funding crisis.

Those that complain SEWRPC has ineffective connections with low-income and minority communities are mistaken. As illustrated in a recent study by the University of Milwaukee's Center for Economic Development, cuts in transit offerings in Milwaukee are endangering Milwaukee area's economic development and increasing poverty and unemployment. SEWRPC is committed to the transit solutions that would stop this trend and improve our transit offerings in Milwaukee in order to get Milwaukee residents to their jobs and give them a means of income, subsequently battling poverty and unemployment.

Sincerely,



Karl Ostby
Chairman
Regional Transit Authority of Southeastern Wisconsin