

Letter from Chairman Holloway:

December 23, 2008

To the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors:

On November 15, 2008, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority (SWRTA), submitted recommendations to the Governor and Wisconsin State Legislature, in accordance with Wisconsin State Statute 59.58(6). The SWRTA adopted five recommendations:

1. Continuation of the SWRTA with membership from Kenosha County, Milwaukee County and the urbanized area of Racine County (defined as the area east of I-94);
2. Enabling the SWRTA to levy up to a 0.5% sales tax as a dedicated source for funding to support transit, commuter rail and other transit projects in the region, plus an additional 0.15% sales tax for public safety purposes for municipalities upon their request;
3. Authority to maintain oversight of transit service and operations in the SWRTA region and be the sole designated recipient in the region to receive federal, state and local transit aid;
 1. Authority to subcontract with current local bus service operations or assume operations as appropriate; and
 2. Authority to bond for capital improvements

The SWRTA vote on these recommendations was 6-1, with the representative of Milwaukee County, by far the largest transit provider in the region, voting against the recommendations.

As you know, upon consideration of the foregoing SWRTA recommendations, many members of the County Board voiced concerns over SWRTA's proposed funding and governance, as presented to the Governor and Legislature

The concerns largely include the lack of proportional representation on the RTA, non-elected versus elected membership of the RTA board, mechanisms for funding transit and the administration of such funding.

At this time, the creation of a task force to examine the impacts of the SWRTA recommendations and develop suggestions that would be more compatible with Milwaukee County's transit needs is the best available course of action to further the discussion without entirely rejecting the SWRTA recommendations.

Consequently, I am hereby creating a Task Force on the Regional Transit Authority Recommendations. I am appointing the following individuals to the Task Force:

Supervisor Patricia Jursik (Chair)

Supervisor Christopher Larson

Supervisor John Thomas

Ms. Anita Gulotta-Connelly, Managing Director of the Milwaukee County Transit System

Mr. Thomas Kujawa, former Managing Director of the Milwaukee County Transit System, and former Milwaukee County Supervisor

It is my intent in taking this action that the Task Force report its findings to the Committee on Transportation, Public Works and Transit in the January 2009 cycle of the County Board for its consideration at the February 5, 2009 meeting of the County Board. I look forward to seeing the results of the Task Force on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Lee Holloway
Chairman, County Board

cc: Ms. Anita Gulotta-Connelly
Mr. Thomas Kujawa