

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
DRAFT MINUTES
Thursday, October 23, 2008
9:00 a.m.
NWMC Offices
1616 East Golf Road
Des Plaines, IL 60016

Members Present:

Ken Nelson, Co-Chair, Mayor, City of Rolling Meadows
Kerry Cummings, Co-Chair, President, Village of Glenview
Mike Allison, Village Manager, Village of Vernon Hills
Jeff Berman, Trustee, Village of Buffalo Grove
Al Larson, President, Village of Schaumburg
Louella Preston, Trustee, Village of Niles
Tim Oakley, Director of Engineering, City of Des Plaines

Others Present:

Mike Hankey, Village of Hoffman Estates
Mike Pagones, Village of Arlington Heights
June Johnson, Village of Schaumburg
Bruce Christensen, Lake County
Chris Rose, Pace
Janet Bright, CMAP
Bunny Anderson, Illinois Tollway
Rocco Zuccherro, Illinois Tollway
Steve Mastny, IDOT
Janine Farzin, CTA
Jeff Busby, CTA
Chris Staron, NWMC
Larry Widmer, NWMC
Mike Walczak, NWMC

I. Call to Order

Chair Nelson called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

II. Approval of the August 28th, 2008 meeting minutes

The September 25th, 2008 meeting minutes were unanimously approved on a motion from Mayor Larson, seconded by Mayor Nelson.

III. CTA Yellow Line Extension Alternatives Analysis

Mr. Busby delivered a presentation on the Alternatives Analysis for the CTA Yellow Line Extension. He reported that they delivered a briefing in August to municipal stakeholders at which time Mr. Walczak suggested taking the issue to the NWMC Transportation Committee meeting. He said that the Yellow Line extension is in the alternatives analysis phase, which is essentially the starting point for a federal "New Starts" project. He reported that the Alternatives Analysis ends with the locally preferred alternative, which CTA hopes to arrive at next year. He said that the current

project examines extending the Yellow Line to Old Orchard Road. He also said that the study area for the project is a narrow area around the proposed alignments and station. He told the Committee that the Alternatives Analysis has to look at the host of transit options and that some of these options such as monorails are unrealistic. He said they also look at various alignments and profiles for the extension. He also said that an elevated line would not look like the CTA elevated trains in the Chicago loop, but would resemble the Orange Line near Midway Airport. Mr. Busby reported that the range of alternatives has been narrowed down in an initial screening to heavy rail transit along the UP Railroad Corridor at-grade, elevated or in trench and bus rapid transit along the UP Railroad Corridor or Gross Point Rd./Skokie Blvd. Corridor at-grade. He noted that the CTA is now initiating the technical portion of the alternatives analysis, which will cover ridership projections and cost estimates. He said that once a locally preferred alternative is selected, the CTA will begin work on preliminary engineering and the environmental impact statement (EIS). President Cummings said that Glenview is Skokie's neighbor and has an interest in this project. She also said that the final alignment and where the extension ends will be big issues for Glenview. She noted that Glenview has submitted comments to CTA already and asked when CTA would be responding. Mr. Busby responded that the CTA staff should have responses out to all the comments received thus far next week. Mr. Mastny asked what the distinction is between light rail and heavy rail. Mr. Busby said that Metra is usually considered commuter rail. He said that CTA is considered heavy rail because it is powered by the third rail and has grade separation while light rail is commonly powered from overhead electric lines and may not have a grade separation. Trustee Preston asked what the timeline is for the project. Mr. Busby said that they will be completing the alternatives analysis next year, but he indicated that he does not control the money and noted that a local match for the project is still necessary. He reported that six years until construction would be a best case scenario. President Cummings asked if it would be easier and cheaper to implement BRT instead of the rail line. Mr. Busby responded that the project would still have to go through the various phases. He said that the cost might be cheaper, but the steps in the federal process would not necessarily take a shorter amount of time. Trustee Preston asked if this project has any connection to the Olympics 2016 bid. Mr. Busby replied that this project would be an enhancement of the bid, but would not be a requirement. He said that the Olympics draws attention to projects and creates deadlines for completions. Trustee Preston asked if the new elevated lines would need new rolling stock. Mr. Busby replied that the cars currently on the line would be able to use the elevated line, but that much of the CTA rolling stock is past its useful life and is due to be replaced. Ms. Farzin reported that a new elevated line would be a different experience and suggested that individuals try to ride the Orange Line near Midway Airport if possible. Mr. Walczak said that the study area is focused on Skokie, but that CTA has been open to involving neighboring communities. Mr. Busby reported that there is a Technical Committee to discuss the details of the project. Mr. Walczak informed the committee that CTA staff has recognized that there are plans for a bike path along the UP Railroad Corridor and will consider this fact during the planning process.

IV. Pace 2009 Budget Presentation

Ms. Rose distributed a pamphlet regarding the Pace 2009 budget. She reported that Pace is raising fares from \$1.50 to \$1.75. She said that Pace raised fares last in 2001. She informed the Committee that fuel costs and free rides for seniors have had a negative

effect on Pace's budget. She further reported that Pace's fleet is in need of replacement. She reported that Para-transit service will not require a fare increase. Ms. Rose said that Pace is not receiving reimbursement from RTA from CTA for 7-day passes. She reported that Pace will suspend the acceptance of these passes because they are not being reimbursed. Trustee Preston gave an example of when she regular takes Pace to CTA and CTA to Pace. She said that it is less expensive for her on her return trips when she travels on CTA and then Pace. Ms. Rose said that Pace would like to continue being able to accept 7-day passes, but such a decision would not be fiscally responsible. Chair Nelson asked if this was a RTA issue. President Larson said that a universal pass should be obtainable for the RTA. Mr. Walczak asked if the committee wanted to comment on the issue and Co-Chairs Nelson and Cummings stated that it was appropriate.

V. CMAP Report

A. Developments of Regional Importance (DRI)

Mr. Walczak reported that CMAP staff delivered presentation to the NWMC Executive Board and full Board. He said that staff has attempted to compile comments and drafted the attached letter. President Larson asked if the letter met the concerns that President Cummings had expressed. President Cummings responded that it did.

A motion to recommend the letter to the Executive Board was unanimously approved on a motion from President Larson, seconded by Trustee Berman.

B. General CMAP Update

Ms. Bright reported that CMAP has released a now online TIP interface and encouraged comments from the committee. Mr. Mastny reported that he thinks the new TIP map is very useful and makes the TIP data more accessible.

Mr. Walczak reported that CMAP is compiling a Technical Assistance Directory, which includes an informal list of different service providers on their website. He encouraged the Committee to check the CMAP website for more information. In addition, he reported that the regional indicators were going to be approved by the CMAP Board and were approved MPO Policy Committee. He reported the CMAP held an Indicators Workshop over the summer in Arlington Heights.

VI. Tollway "Green" Lanes

Mr. Zucchero reported that the Illinois Tollway announced their Congestion Relief Program, Phase II. He said that officials at the Tollway have been discussing what to do after Phase I of the Congestion Relief Program is complete. He reported that Phase II includes the implementation of Green Lanes, System Interchanges, and Arterial Interchanges. He informed the Committee that \$400 million will be used to institute green lanes, which will operate as HOT lanes. He said that cars and buses with multiple passengers will not have to pay a higher toll in these lanes, but single occupant vehicles will have to pay a higher toll depending on congestion. He also said that environmental friendly vehicles will not have to pay as much as standard single occupancy vehicles. He said that having green lanes allows for a built-in dedicated transit lane.

Mr. Zucchero reported that the green lanes are getting the majority of media attention, but that there are other very important components to the proposed program. He said

that the program includes two system interchanges at I-294 & I-57 and I-290/53 & I-90. He also said that the \$500 million will be spent on the I-290/53 & I-90 project by the Tollway. He reported that they will accomplish as much as they can with the \$500 million. He noted that the Tollway will also spend \$400 million on arterial interchanges, which could be converting a partial interchange to a full interchange or improving existing interchanges. He said that the Tollway will look to locals to be financially involved in this portion of the project.

Mr. Zucchero reported that implementation of the program is not completely set. He noted that the green lanes will be a toll within a toll, which is unique when compared to other congestion pricing systems. He informed the Committee that the green lanes would likely be done by striping to make it simple and keep the cost of the project down. He said that the Tollway is holding hearings on the proposed congestion reduction program before the Tollway Board votes on the program on November 20. He reported that the Cook County meeting will be held at NIU Hoffman Estates on November 6 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. He also reported that hearings will be held on commercial vehicle toll increases, which will occur in 2015. Mr. Mastny asked in the Tollway needed any approval from the General Assembly for the bonding authority. Mr. Zucchero indicated that they did not need approval from the General Assembly, but only the Tollway Board. Mr. Allison asked what affect the Tollway's program will have on local traffic. He noted that US-41 had increased truck traffic after the last commercial toll increase. Mr. Zucchero responded that the congestion pricing study is looking at the impact on local traffic and this will be something they want to monitor. Mr. Oakley said that he was not convinced that green lanes were going to work. He noted concerns that there may not be enough through lanes and it will be difficult to get the right amount of traffic in the green lanes. Mr. Zucchero responded that it is important to set the pricing in the green lane for single occupancy vehicles correctly to make sure the green lanes carry 1700 vehicles per hour or Level of Service C. Chair Nelson asked if heat sensors were going to be used for enforcement. Mr. Zucchero responded that the technology is important and they are going to have to use it appropriately to make sure the green lanes are not abused. Trustee Berman asked if the green lanes would be regressive and only available for the wealthy. Mr. Zucchero responded that HOT lanes have been called Lexus Lanes by critics, but that a recent study found that users choose the HOT lane for time sensitive trips. He further stated that the Tollway will likely implement the green lanes in a single corridor first to gauge its effectiveness. Trustee Preston noted that this type of lane is untested on a tollway. President Cummings added that enforcement will be a challenge. Mr. Zucchero reported that an added benefit of the green lanes is that it is a dedicated transit lane. President Larson noted that bus in an unpopular mode of public transportation in the suburbs. Mr. Zucchero responded that for buses to be successful there has to be a way to connect them to the places people want to go.

VII. NWMC Transportation Priorities

Mr. Walczak reported that the Mayor Mulder attended a Metra meeting were they looked at there capital priorities with the possibility of a state capital bill. He said that the NWMC put together transportation priorities in October 2006, but it would be good idea to update the list. Trustee Preston asked if any of these projects have been funded since 2006. Mr. Walczak responded that some projects have received funding and that the staff would make updates to projects that have funding. He said that staff is looking for municipalities to also review the list of projects and provide updates. He said that he

hopes to get the list down to a smaller number of priorities. He also said that feedback is appreciated and that the Committee would discuss at a future meeting.

VIII. Other Business

There was no other business.

IX. Next Meeting

Chair Nelson reported that the regularly scheduled Committee meeting for November falls on Thanksgiving. Mr. Walczak said that they could move the meeting to the third Thursday of the month, November 20th. The committee agreed to schedule the next meeting for 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, November 20th.

X. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was unanimously approved on a motion from President Larson, seconded by President Cummings at 10:20.