

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
DRAFT MINUTES
Thursday, December 18, 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
Bill McLeod, President, Village of Hoffman Estates
Mike Allison, Village Manager, Village of Vernon Hills
Jeff Berman, Trustee, Village of Buffalo Grove
Louella Preston, Trustee, Village of Niles
Derek Peebles, Civil Engineer, City of Des Plaines
Mike Janonis, Village Manager, Village of Mount Prospect

Others Present:

Dan Jdrzejak, Chastain & Associates
Mike Hankey, Village of Hoffman Estates
Mike Pagonis, Village of Arlington Heights
Rick Mack, Metra
Andy Plummer, RTA
Chris Rose, Pace
Janet Bright, CMAP
Steve Mastny, IDOT
Chris Staron, NWMC
Mike Walczak, NWMC

I. Call to Order

Chair Nelson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

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

The September 25th, 2008 meeting minutes were unanimously approved on a motion from President McLeod, seconded by Trustee Berman.

III. NWMC Transportation Priorities

Mr. Walczak reported that he has been working to update the NWMC Transportation Priorities list from 2006. He said that currently, the document is essentially a laundry list of municipally submitted projects. He informed the Committee that staff was hoping that the document could highlight 5-10 projects as top regional Conference priorities and contain the list as an appendix. Mr. Allison asked why certain projects are highlighted on the document. Mr. Walczak explained that the highlighted projects are projects that have been added to the 2006 list or have updated funding information. He said that staff is looking to the Committee for direction on how to carry this list forward. He informed the Committee that with a potential state capital bill, a potential federal infrastructure package, and the new federal transportation authorization, this is a good time to update

the Conference's transportation priorities. Chair Nelson asked if this list was also going to go the Technical Committee. Mr. Walczak responded that for the most part, the Technical Committee projects have already lined up funding through the Surface Transportation Program. Trustee Preston asked how bicycle projects are funded in Illinois. Mr. Walczak reported that there are various funding programs through which bicycle projects can receive funding. He said that some programs have funding dedicated to bike projects while other programs consider bike projects eligible. Mr. Mastny added that some funding is flexible; meaning that it can be shifted among programs. Trustee Preston said that roadway maintenance such as pothole repair should be a priority over bike projects.

Trustee Berman said that he sees the priorities list be broken down into three categories. He said that there are regional projects that affect all or nearly all of the NWMC membership. He said there are subregional projects that cross jurisdictions. He also said that there are local projects that are contained within a municipality. He suggested that the regional projects get more attention since the NWMC is a regional organization. Chair Nelson asked where a regional road, such as Palatine Road, would fall into that categorization if only one segment was being worked on. Trustee Berman responded that it would likely fall at the subregional level because the roadway is multi-jurisdictional. Trustee Preston asked if traffic would be a good indicator of what should be a priority. Mr. Peebles said that IDOT has AADT statistics for roadways. Chair Nelson added that the condition of the roadway should also be considered. He said that Rolling Meadows conducts a roadway study every few years. Trustee Preston said that IDOT will have their way of prioritizing and categorizing. Chair Nelson said that the priorities document is a discussion item and terminology should not prevent the NWMC from organizing the document as it sees fit. President Cummings asked how a road widening project would compete. Chair Nelson said that there should be two to three criteria that can be used to elevate projects. Mr. Walczak said that the Councils of Mayors have methodologies for ranking projects. Chair Nelson said that the Committee also needs to look at the current funding. Mr. Allison asked how much time a community is going to spend generating a list if it is purely advisory. Chair Nelson asked how the list had been used in the past. Mr. Walczak said that it was used as background for our legislative program. Chair Nelson said that it will be important to delineate local and regional priorities. Chair Cummings said that she thinks legislators will like to see the complete list and see what projects are requested in their districts.

Trustee Preston asked what the purpose of this list is and why this Committee will have a different list from the Councils of Mayors. Mr. Walczak responded that the Councils do not cover the entire NWMC membership and that many of these projects are not eligible for STP funding or are too big to realistically receive funding from the program. Trustee Preston asked if Council projects should be identified. Mr. Walczak said that information could be included. Mr. Allison said that the NWMC stretches beyond the Northwest and North Shore Councils of Mayors and that the Transportation Committee is supposed to look at the broader issues. Trustee Preston questioned whether the list provided represents the entire NWMC membership. Mr. Walczak reported that they have received a good response and that staff expects to receive more responses. Chair Nelson said that the Committee cannot make a community respond and noted that it is to the communities benefit to respond. President Cummings asked if it would be helpful to see a full list of NWMC area projects. Trustee Preston responded that it would be

helpful. Mr. Walczak said that staff can try to get a handle on what projects are programmed and having funding identified. Chair Nelson said compiling such a list might be a lengthy process. Mr. Allison suggested that staff follow-up on projects and have municipalities explain the projects and the funding they have sought. Mr. Walczak said that they can put together a list of IDOT projects as well. He reported that part of the reason for compiling the NWMC transportation priorities is to hold a transportation summit similar to the one that the South Suburban Mayors and Managers held. He said that such a summit would have to be pushed off until the priorities are clearly defined. Trustee Berman suggested that the Committee continue to work with the current list and get more information to refine the list. Chair Nelson said that the priorities should be clearly organized because the goal is to provide legislators with the regions needs and demands. Trustee Berman asked if the Committee should be looking to create a list of projects or a priorities document. Chair Nelson said that it is difficult to prioritize with the information they currently have available. Mr. Allison added that it is difficult to define regional. Chair Nelson suggested sending out a reminder to the Conference and work to refine the list of the truly local projects. Mr. Walczak said that the request for projects can ask for more detailed information. Chair Nelson suggested adding a target date category. Mr. Walczak added that the new questionnaire will also ask for transit projects. He said that although the municipalities are not always directly involved in these projects, there are projects that are important to locally and regionally. Mr. Peebles clarified that this request is different than the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus request for the federal package because the NWMC is not asking for projects that are ready to put shovels in the ground.

IV. CN/EJ&E Acquisition Update

Mr. Walczak reported that the Final EIS regarding the proposed acquisition of the EJ&E was issued. He informed the Committee that the mitigation measures included requiring CN to make any necessary improvements to crossings in order to ensure that the quiet zone from Barrington to Bartlett remained quiet. He said that the Vernon Hills quiet zone should remain quiet under the proposed action; however, the mitigation requirements make CN is responsible for any improvements necessary if the quiet zone loses its designation. Mr. Staron reported that there was an expanded analysis of the STAR Line in the Final EIS. He said that the Final EIS ran four scenarios for implementation of the STAR Line. He said the most expensive one estimate a 19.3% increase in the cost if Metra decided to completely separate operations. He reported that the Final EIS concluded that the STAR Line could operate within the EJ&E corridor for only 2.3% higher capital costs. He said that the Final EIS concludes that the sale would not have substantial adverse affects. Mr. Staron reported that he thought the STB has to wait to make the final ruling. Trustee Berman corrected him saying that since the STB has an appeal process, they can make the ruling anytime they want. He said that US Steel does have the year-end deadline for the sale. Mr. Walczak reported that CN tried to force a quicker decision but failed, but no one knows exactly how the year-end deadline will impact the proposed acquisition.

Mr. Peebles asked if there has been any activity regarding the Chicago exemption for quiet zones. Mr. Walczak said that the exemption does not seem to be a high priority for the FRA.

V. CMAP Report

A. Developments of Regional Importance (DRI)

Mr. Walczak reported that CMAP came out to present to the NWMC multiple times regarding the draft DRI process. He said that CMAP received numerous comments; however, the Urban Land Institute's (ULI) comments were given special attention because they proposed a completely different process. He said that the CMAP Programming Coordinating Committee has asked staff to present a staff recommendation for how to proceed at their January meeting. Mr. Staron reported that the ULI proposal is much for quantitative and focuses on major transportation facilities, trip generation, effluent discharge and impervious surface area. Mr. Walczak added that a many of the comments asked for a more defined process with clear thresholds.

B. General CMAP Update

Ms. Bright reported that CMAP has released their principles regarding the potential federal infrastructure stimulus program. She reported that the CMAQ call for projects went out on December 8th and that applications must not go through the Planning Liaisons. Mr. Walczak reported that the Planning Liaisons will check the applications for completeness. He said that he will review the applications for the Northwest Council, Christ Staron will review the applications for the North Shore Council, and Bruce Christensen will be the Lake County contact. He said that the applications must be to the Planning Liaisons by January 23rd. Ms. Bright also reported that there is a Transit-Oriented Development seminar on Monday, January 12, 2009 in Oak Brook. She reported that the Council of Mayors Executive Committee is meeting January 13, 2009.

Mr. Walczak reported that CMAP is looking to extend its Full Circle Program into the suburbs. He said that Full Circle program is a web-based community mapping and planning tool that has been used in various Chicago neighborhoods and a limited number of suburbs. He reported that four \$25,000 grants are supposed to be awarded. Mr. Staron reported that the Council of Mayors are going to actually submit the applications and will be involved in the execution of the grant. He said that NWMC staff is working on how to develop the application process and that the timing is quick because February 20th is the application deadline. He reported that staff is waiting to receive a final Request for Proposals from CMAP and then will proceed.

VI. Other Business

Mr. Plummer reported distributed a pamphlet that the RTA put together to communicate the capital needs of the RTA. He said that RTA wants municipalities to be partners in requesting capital spending on transit. He informed the Committee that RTA states that the capital needs of the system are \$10 billion.

Mr. Staron reported that staff received a briefing from the FHWA on last Friday regarding the Illinois ethics legislation, which becomes active on January 1st. He said that the ethics legislation does not comply with federal regulations because it limits the amount a contractor cannot donate to politician. He reported that the FHWA only recognizes cost and qualifications as acceptable restrictions placed on bids. Consequently, he said that FHWA has told IDOT that they will not authorize projects to

be eligible for Federal-aid funding reimbursement. Mr. Staron reported that New Jersey had a similar problem with ethics legislation and attempted to fight the FHWA and ultimately lost and had to exempt federal projects from the law. He said that IDOT is looking into the issue and how it will affect the January letting. He said the legislation needs to be altered to resolve the issue. Mr. Mastny reported that he does not know much about this issue but said that they could defer projects to the March letting. Mr. Staron said that staff will keep the Committee updated. Chair Nelson recommended sharing any relevant information with the entire membership.

Trustee Preston asked what the status of the Milwaukee Ave. project is. Mr. Mastny says that he does not have the specifics but said that construction is supposed to continue throughout the winter and finish next year. He said the project includes rebuilding a bridge.

VII. Next Meeting

Chair Nelson reported that the next meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2009. He wished everyone a Happy Holidays.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was unanimously approved on a motion from President McLeod, seconded by Trustee Berman.