

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
DRAFT MINUTES
Thursday, January 29, 2009
9:00 a.m.
NWMC Offices
1616 East Golf Road
Des Plaines, IL 60016

Members Present:

Kerry Cummings, Co-Chair, President, Village of Glenview
Ken Nelson, Co-Chair, Mayor, City of Rolling Meadows
Mike Allison, Village Manager, Village of Vernon Hills
Mike Janonis, Village Manager, Village of Mount Prospect
Al Larson, President, Village of Schaumburg
Bill McLeod, President, Village of Hoffman Estates
Arlene J. Mulder, Mayor, Village of Arlington Heights
Derek Peebles, Civil Engineer, City of Des Plaines
Louella Preston, Trustee, Village of Niles
Jim Wallace, Deputy Village Manager, Village of Barrington

Others Present:

Janet Bright, CMAP
Bruce Christensen, Lake County
Rich Christopher, HDR
Tom Gill, Thomas Engineering Group
Mike Hankey, Village of Hoffman Estates
Bob Israel, Mactec
Tommy Kraus, Pace
Rick Mack, Metra
Steve Mastny, IDOT
Omar Nashif, Collins Engineers
Mike Pagones, Village of Arlington Heights
Andy Plummer, RTA
Fred Vogt, City of Rolling Meadows
Mark Fowler, NWMC
Chris Staron, NWMC
Mike Walczak, NWMC

I. Call to Order

Chair Cummings called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

II. Approval of the December 18, 2008 meeting minutes

The December 18, 2009 meeting minutes were unanimously approved on a motion from Mayor Nelson, seconded by Mayor Mulder (Abstention: President Larson).

III. NWMC Transportation Priorities

Mr. Staron reported that staff received nearly 100 projects for the transportation priorities list. He said that the 2006 priorities list included 32 projects and the current

list has grown to 93 projects. He informed the committee that 23 municipalities submitted projects. He said that there was still a lot of missing information that the committee wanted to have assembled, such as AADT, pavement conditions, and updated costs. He reported that the list contains 71 roadway projects in various categories, such as roadway widening, reconstruction, and extension. He said that the size and impact of the projects varies. Mr. Walczak reported that he hoped the committee could distill the list of projects and create a concise list of the NWMC transportation priorities. He said that these top priority projects would be highlighted for legislative initiatives related to a proposed state capital bill and new federal transportation reauthorization. He said the other projects would remain as supplement to showcase the region's need for infrastructure investment. He noted that there were projects that were not included in the list that are worthy of consideration, such as the Northwest Metra Line capacity expansion, Pace's ART and BRT corridors, and the Elgin-O'Hare and West Bypass project. Mr. Allison said he understands the goal of the list is to select the core projects that will be the Conference's top priorities. Chair Cummings asked how this list dovetails with IDOT's program. Mr. Mastny responded that there are some overlaps with the list and IDOT's multi-year program. Mr. Walczak noted that there is a difficulty knowing when a project will make it into the annual element of the IDOT program, which Mr. Mastny acknowledged. Mayor Mulder said that it does not hurt to show the projects as priorities. Mr. Allison noted that some of the projects on the priorities list are small local projects. Mr. Peebles ask how the committee is supposed to delineate between regional and local projects. President Larson said that the Transportation Committee used to focus all the attention on 3 projects. Mayor Nelson added that a project should affect multiple communities.

Mayor Mulder said that depending on the distribution of the federal recovery package, the Conference should be trying to secure funding for the STAR Line. President Larson noted that the project is not shovel-ready. Mayor Mulder said that it is hard for New Starts to be shovel-ready. Mayor Nelson said that the recovery package is a separate issue. Chair Cummings informed the committee that she thought the priorities list should include a total for all the projects. She said that it will demonstrate the need for infrastructure investment in the region. Mr. Staron said that staff has not provided a total for the list because of some project unknowns, but he noted that staff can provide a ballpark figure. She said that the list is focused on a state capital bill. Mayor Nelson asked if they should vote to highlight three to five projects. Mayor Mulder said that the projects should impact multiple communities. A committee member asked what the status of the STAR Line is. Mr. Mack reported that Canadian National is moving much faster than Metra. He said that it will likely take two years to finish the Environmental Impact Statement. Mayor Larson asked if there were any opportunities to streamline the process. Mr. Walczak reported that there have been discussions about design-build legislation at CMAP because Illinois is one of the few remaining states without design-build legislation. Chair Cummings said that it would be helpful to have an updated timeline for the STAR Line. President Larson noted that the Route 53 extension has long been a Conference Transportation priority. Trustee Preston questioned how the priorities list dovetails with the goals of the committee and asked what the committee would do with the final list. President Larson said that the committee is establishing the long-range transportation priorities for the region. He said that the North Central Line would not exist if it was not for the work of the Conference. Chair Cummings said the primary purpose of the list and priorities is to prepare for a potential state capital plan,

which will have multiple funding mechanisms. Mr. Fowler said that it can be confusing because there are multiple lists floating around related to the recovery package, a potential capital bill, and the next federal transportation authorization. He noted that the Conference needs to have a strategy for each eventuality. Chair Cummings asked if the priorities might be interpreted as unrealistic and a wish list. Mayor Nelson responded that he thinks legislators know the realities of the impediments to the larger projects. President Larson said that the committee should select a handful of priority projects, and suggested that staff attempt to come up with that short list. Chair Cummings said that the committee could come up with the priority projects today. Mr. Allison suggested that the extension of Route 53 should be one of the top priorities. There was general agreement among the committee. Trustee Preston recommended that the STAR Line continue to be one of the Conference's top priorities. There was general agreement among the committee. Chair Cummings suggested Palatine Road. There was general agreement among the committee. President Larson asked about western access to O'Hare. The committee decided that they would let the IDOT planning process continue and not add the project at this time. Mayor Nelson asked if the Northwest Highway bike path should be included as a priority project because it would impact many communities in the NWMC. Trustee Preston said that she did not think that bicycle projects should be a priority above roadway projects. Chair Cummings said that the NWMC could highlight the project as a green travel alternative. Mr. Peebles noted that the City of Chicago has found that mode share on Milwaukee Ave. is up to 30% bicycle. He said that bicycle facilities can aid the roadways. Trustee Preston responded that Milwaukee Ave. in Niles has no room for a bike lane. Chair Cummings asked if improvements on Lake-Cook Road should be a top priority. The committee did not feel that there was enough information provided about the project to warrant it being a top priority. Trustee Preston noted that the projects have tended towards the western portion of the NWMC area. Mike Walczak said that the Yellow Line extension is a North Shore area project with regional impacts. There was general agreement among the committee that the Yellow Line extension should be highlighted as a top regional priority. Chair Cummings summarized that the top priorities list included the extension of Route 53, Palatine Road, STAR Line, the Yellow Line extension, and the Northwest Highway bike path as a green alternative project. Mr. Walczak reported that staff will reformat the list and highlight the five top priority projects for presentation to the Executive Board.

IV. Federal Reinvestment and Recovery Package

Mr. Staron reported that the House approved the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act on Wednesday, January 28. He said that the staff has been reviewing the legislation regarding the transportation perspective. He said that the bill includes roughly \$30 billion for highways and \$12 billion for transit. He also said that the legislation requires that transportation projects adhere to existing federal guidelines and eligibility requirements. He reported that according to the House Bill, the state will get 55% of the funding and 45% will be distributed through the Surface Transportation Program formulas. He further reported that initial estimates of the House bill predict that roughly \$1 billion in funding will come to Illinois for highway projects. Mr. Walczak reported that because the House bill uses existing federal eligibility guidelines, many of the projects on the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus list would not be eligible for the transportation funding in the recovery package. He said that staff is working to understand how the funds will be distributed within Illinois. He said that there has been a push to make sure that Northeastern Illinois gets a large majority of the funds because

the region contains a majority of the economic activity. He reported that the projects will be 100% federally funded. He informed the committee that IDOT is generating their list of ready-to-go projects and that there have been preliminary discussions about IDOT front-loading the program for state projects because the state has more projects on the shelf. He reported that local projects would then spend more of the second part of the recovery package. He said that nothing has been formalized. Mayor Mulder asked about CMAP's role. Mr. Walczak responded that CMAP will have a role because all projects will have to be in the TIP. He added that some projects, such as widening project, will need to be conformed for air quality standards. Mr. Hankey asked if municipalities will be expected to update the TIP or if the existing Council of Mayors structure will be utilized. Mr. Walczak responded that the Planning Liaisons will be able to update the information. Mr. Janonis asked if money will be sent directly to counties. Mr. Walczak answered that under the STP formula counties do receive a portion of the funding for their rural areas.

V. Federal Transportation Authorization

Mr. Staron reported that with the attention in Washington D.C. turned towards a recovery package, there has been concern that Congress will neglect the expiration of SAFETEA-LU. He reminded the committee that SAFETEA-LU, the current federal transportation legislation expires at the end of September. He noted that the attached article describes the concern that Congress may think the stimulus bill addresses the nation's infrastructure needs. He said that staff is recommending sending a letter to the Illinois Congressional delegation about the need to do both a short term stimulus and a long term, comprehensive transportation bill.

The committee unanimously approved sending a letter to the Illinois Congressional delegation.

VI. CN/EJ&E Acquisition

Mr. Walczak reported that the approval of the acquisition of the EJ&E by the CN was finalized on January 23. He said that the purchase can be completed at any time. He noted that there are still appeals outstanding.

VII. CMAP Report

A. Developments of Regional Importance (DRI)

Mr. Staron reported that the CMAP Programming Coordinating Committee met on January 14 and discussed the draft DRI process. He said that the committee directed staff to formulate a new draft favoring the ULI proposal for more quantitative thresholds. He informed the committee that the new draft process will be reviewed at the Programming Committee's February meeting and then be opened to a public comment. He said that CMAP was anticipating a 30-day public comment period and that the NWMC might have to delegate the responsibility for comments to the Executive Board due to the schedule of meetings. Chair Cummings asked staff to request a 45-day public comment period to allow for full consideration of comments.

B. General CMAP Update

Mr. Walczak reported that CMAP is looking for Full Circle Grant Applications for data collection and local planning. He said that the grants are for \$25,000 and must be submitted to the NWMC by February 20. He said that there has been some initial

interest from municipalities. He further reported that staff was reviewing the 2010 CMAQ applications, and that the Northwest Council received 18 and the North Shore Council received 10. Ms. Bright reported that the Future Leaders in Planning (FLIP) program is coming to a close and that CMAP is hoping that the Councils of Government will invite the students to a board meeting.

VIII. Other Business

Mr. Mack reported that Metra staff is currently recalibrating the modeling for the STAR Line based on additional information from CMAP. He said that the project is still on schedule to have the alternatives analysis completed by September 2009, which is the FTA deadline. He further reported that the UPNW Metra line expansion is nearing the end of the environmental assessment process. He said that there will be community outreach and review. He said that regarding negotiations with CN for the STAR Line, the railroad companies traditionally want a high level of detail in the plan so they have something to react to. He said that at this early stage in the process, there are no detailed plans to react to. Chair Cummings asked when Metra would be at the point of having plans that CN could react to. Mr. Mack said that would likely be during the environmental phase or preliminary engineering.

IX. Next Meeting

Chair Cummings reported that the next meeting is scheduled for February 26, 2009.

X. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was unanimously approved on a motion from President Larson, seconded by Mayor Mulder.