

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
DRAFT MINUTES
Thursday, April 30, 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
Jim Wallace, Deputy Village Manager, Village of Barrington
Louella Preston, Trustee, Village of Niles
Al Larson, President, Village of Schaumburg
Tim Oakley, Director of Engineering, City of Des Plaines
Arlene J. Mulder, President, Village of Arlington Heights

Others Present:

Janet Bright, CMAP
Rick Mack, Metra
Andy Plummer, RTA
Chuck Gleason, Lake County DOT
Mike Hankey, Village of Hoffman Estates
Steve Mastny, IDOT
Ryan Mouw, CTA
Mike Pagones, Village of Arlington Heights
Chris Staron, NWMC
Mike Walczak, NWMC
Larry Widmer, NWMC

I. Call to Order

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

II. Approval of the March 26, 2009 meeting minutes

The January 29, 2009 meeting minutes were unanimously approved on a motion from Mr. Wallace, seconded by President Cummings.

III. Illinois Capital Program

Mr. Staron reported that a number of members of the Transportation Committee were in Springfield for municipal legislative days. He said that although a capital bill was discussed with legislators, he was not sure what type of capital bill will emerge. He reported that HB 1, which raises the motor fuel tax (MFT) does not currently include the traditional local share. He noted that the local share of an MFT increase may be used to encourage municipal support for the capital bill. Mr. Staron reported that transit funding in the mini-capital bill has been topic of concern, but the Governor has now said that the funding will be available for transit. He said that staff continues to follow HB 2359, which was discussed at last meeting, is likely to be amended. He informed the

committee that CMAP staff has been working with Representative Ryg on issues of representation for northeastern Illinois and duplication of CMAP's role. President Larson said that he talked to Representative Ryg about ensuring that the legislation does not negatively impact the role of CMAP.

Chair Nelson said that the mood in Springfield appears much more favorable for the passage of a capital bill. Mayor Mulder said that the General Assembly will have to face hard votes on the income tax and a capital bill. President Cummings said that in regards to HB 2359, she believes that a temporary task force to address the state's capital funding distribution and priorities is more appropriate than a permanent statewide committee. She told the committee that the legislation appears rushed. President Larson said that Secretary Hannig has made it clear that IDOT makes the ultimate decisions regarding transportation. Trustee Preston raised the issue of how IDOT selected projects for stimulus funding. Mr. Walczak noted that the stimulus or ARRA funding was based largely on what was shovel-ready. Chair Nelson and President Larson both made the point that IDOT will listen to the General Assembly and the Governor when given direction.

Mr. Walczak reported that he is working on a STAR Line letter in relation to the capital bill. He said that the letter would go out under the signatures of the chairs of the Mayors STAR Line Task Force. Mayor Mulder suggested highlighting the environmental benefits of the transit line in the letter.

IV. Elgin O'Hare West Bypass Update

Mr. Walczak reported that the options for highway access in the Elgin-O'Hare West Bypass study being conducted by IDOT is down to two. Both options extend the Elgin-O'Hare Expressway from I-290 to the planned western terminal at O'Hare, with one option featuring a complete highway linking I-90 and I-294 along the western edge of the airport, while the second only connects the Elgin-O'Hare and I-294 from the new terminal south. Busse Road through Elk Grove Village is widened to accommodate the additional traffic north of the Elgin-O'Hare under the second option. The exact alignment of the connection with I-294 on the southern end under both options is still being debated, due to right-of-way concerns. After the elimination of highway options using the Busse Road corridor, Elk Grove Village dropped its opposition to the project, and O'Hare expansion as a whole.

He also explained to the committee that transit options in the corridor were being considered parallel to the highway component, but mostly relied on existing planning projects from the three service boards. The exception being new transit service, either rail or bus rapid transit, through the Thorndale corridor, where the Elgin-O'Hare Extension would likely go.

The Committee discussed the importance of planning for the STAR Line, whether it terminates at the western terminal or in Rosemont. The Committee also agreed to ask IDOT to present an update of the project at a future meeting.

V. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

Mr. Staron reported that both the North Shore and Northwest Councils of Mayors approved their respective ARRA projects at the NWMC Board meeting on April 15. He

noted that the CMAP Transportation Committee subsequently approved the projects for inclusion in the TIP. He said that IDOT let nearly all of its projects on two April lettings. Mr. Mastny reported that the bids coming in for the April letting were better than anticipated and there may be an opportunity to use ARRA funds for more projects. He said that the bids came in roughly ten percent estimates. Mr. Staron said that the third component of the highway and road funding is the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP). He reported that IDOT has yet to select projects for the last application cycle and that IDOT and the Governor's office is examining the appropriate method for selecting ARRA projects. Mr. Walczak noted that if the state cannot spend all the ITEP funding it would prohibit Illinois from being eligible for redistributions from other states.

Trustee Preston asked if federal funds are in jeopardy if Illinois does not pass a capital bill. President Larson said that those federal funds are separate from ARRA funds and that the state does have time to match those funds. Mr. Walczak said that the federal funds at risk are the funds from SAFETEA-LU that have not been matched by the state. Mr. Mastny said that the federal funds are largely earmarked funding that only covers a fraction of the total project cost.

VI. CMAP Report

A. Developments of Regional Importance (DRI)

Mr. Walczak reported that the CMAP Programming Coordinating Committee approved the staff recommended changes to the DRI version 2 and forwarded the document to the CMAP Board. He said that the NWMC submitted comments of general support for the new version. He noted that CMAP received many comments that questioned the size of the thresholds and if a project would ever be big enough to constitute a DRI. He reported that the approved staff recommendations responded to these comments by reducing the number of thresholds that a project must be to be considered a DRI from two out of three to one out of three. He said the second approved recommendation addressed environmental concerns about halving the three thresholds if a development came within one hundred yards of a critical stream or natural area. The committee discussed how these critical streams and natural areas are defined. Mr. Staron and Mr. Walczak reported that the definitions are based on IDNR standards and that CMAP is working to produce a GIS map that will make it easy to identify the critical streams and natural areas. Mr. Walczak noted that the inclusion of only some parts of the forest preserve prompted some questions.

B. CMAP Report

Ms. Bright reported that the Governor's proposed budget zeroes out the Comprehensive Planning Fund, which provides CMAP funding for all its non-transportation related activities. President Larson said that state legislators all assured him that the funding would be restored, but until it is officially in the budget, CMAP needs to be concerned. Mr. Walczak reported that the NWMC sent a letter to members of the General Assembly urging funding for CMAP.

Ms. Bright informed the committee that the Council of Mayors Executive Committee will be meeting on June 9 and one of the agenda items will be a review of progress on the ARRA funding. She also reported that CMAP is

looking for locations to host scenario workshops for the Go To 2040 planning process. She said that the locations need to be ADA accessible and hold up to fifty people. She said that she anticipates the workshops lasting roughly two hours. Numerous committee members expressed interest in hosting a workshop and Ms. Bright said she would follow-up with specific members.

VII. Other Business

Mr. Mack reported that Metra would like to hold a STAR Line Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting in June and are working on finding a date. He said that Metra will hold public meetings in July and August followed by environmental scoping meetings with relevant stakeholders. He informed the committee that Metra plans to submit the completed Alternatives Analysis to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in September. Mr. Mack also reported that Metra has selected its ARRA projects and will be doing bridge work on the Union Pacific – North line to remove a bottleneck on the line. He also said that the Winnetka station is being improved.

Mr. Plummer reminded the committee that RTA has identified \$10 billion in capital funding needs. He said that the mini-capital bill covered roughly 10% of the need and given recent statements from the Governor’s office, those funds are uncertain. He also reported that the call for projects for the RTA funding programs is now open and that workshops will be held in early May.

President Cummings reported that Mayor Belsky from Highland Park has asked Pace to consider purchasing hybrid buses with its ARRA funding. Mayor Mulder said this should be something at which Pace looks. President Larson said that the decision was most likely financial and that he will bring up the issue at a future board meeting. President Cummings asked how the NWMC should address the issue. President Larson recommended having a representative from Pace out to the next meeting to discuss how they are spending the ARRA funding. Mr. Walczak said he would follow-up with Pace.

Mayor Mulder asked about the “Cool Cities” distinction. President Larson said that Schaumburg is a “Cool City” and he could forward information about the program.

VIII. Next Meeting

Chair Nelson reported that the next meeting is scheduled for May 28, 2009.

X. Adjournment

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