

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
DRAFT MINUTES
Thursday, May 28, 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
Mike Allison, Village Manager, Village of Vernon Hills
Jeff Berman, Trustee, Village of Buffalo Grove
Mike Janonis, Village Manager, Village of Mount Prospect
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:

Jeff Busby, CTA
Bruce Christensen, Lake County
Bob Dean, CMAP
Janine Farzin, CTA
Rick Mack, Metra
Steve Mastny, IDOT
Andy Plummer, RTA
Nathan Roseberry, Village of Hoffman Estates
Tiffany Schmuker, Village of Arlington Heights
Chris Staron, NWMC
Mike Walczak, NWMC
Larry Widmer, NWMC

I. Call to Order

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

II. Approval of the April 30, 2009 meeting minutes

The April 30, 2009 meeting minutes were unanimously approved on a motion from Mr. Allison, seconded by Mayor Mulder. Trustee Berman abstained.

III. CMAP GO TO 2040 Process

Mr. Dean informed the committee that he previously worked for the DuPage Mayors and Managers Association and the City of Naperville, which provides him with the municipal perspective. He reported that the "Go To 2040" plan will be the region's first comprehensive plan to link transportation and land use. He said that the plan serves as the region's official long-range transportation plan, which is federally required. He reported that CMAP is beginning its summer outreach program, which focuses on scenario development. He said that three interactive tools are available to engage the

public. He reported that “Visit 2040” is the simple kiosk version, “Invent 2040” more in-depth and the basis for the regional workshops that will be held and “Compare 2040” is the most in-depth and technical version that allows users to really examine the scenarios that CMAP is developing and create their own. He informed the committee that CMAP is looking for partners to host the regional workshops for the “Invent 2040” scenario simulations. He said that the workshops will be one and half to two hours long. President McLeod asked if there was something that could be played on public access. Mr. Dean responded that they will film an upcoming workshop and would likely have something appropriate. Mayor Mulder asked if Arlington Heights is hosting a workshop. Mr. Dean responded that the list is changing rapidly and that not all workshop sponsors are shown. Mr. Dean reported that CMAP worked with twelve communities around the region to create visuals of what 2040 might look like. Mr. Dean said that CMAP will be placing kiosks throughout the region and interested communities should contact him. He said that permanent kiosks will be at the Sears Tower and Millennium Park. A number of committee members expressed interest in having a kiosk at community events and Metra stations throughout the summer. Mr. Dean said that CMAP is also available to staff booths at fairs and community events. He went out to explain the “Invent 2040” tool, which is geared towards a general public audience. He said that CMAP has developed three broad scenarios: Reinvest, Preserve and Innovate. He noted that after the public engagement, a preferred alternative with the popular components of each of the three scenarios will emerge. He said that the “Compare 2040” provides the most technical version and is intended for local government officials and professional planners and engineers. He said that infill is defined as any development within municipal boundaries.

Mr. Dean reported that the plan will also include Major Capital Projects, such as expressway expansions, rail extension and bus rapid transit with a dedicated ROW. He said that identifying major capital projects and fiscal constraints is required by the federal government. He noted that the federal government requires that regions consider eight planning factors when selecting major capital projects. He said that CMAP hopes to identify the preferred scenario in the fall and have the list of capital projects identified in spring 2010. Chair Cummings asked if the STAR Line evaluation would be starting from scratch. Mr. Dean reported that CMAP looks at past plans and that the STAR Line has an advantage because of all the land-use work that has happened around proposed stations. Mayor Mulder said that she has heard from a legislator that RTA has been saying the STAR Line is dead. She said that the STAR Line is visionary and will benefit the region even if it is expensive. Mr. Plummer said he could not speak directly to the issue, but he noted that the funding passed by the General Assembly in the capital bill only allows for maintenance and not expansion. He said that perhaps this point was misinterpreted. President Cummings asked if a letter was appropriate to clarify RTA’s position on the STAR Line. Mayor Mulder said that she believed a letter was appropriate. Trustee Berman said he wanted to make sure the proper message was sent with the letter. Chair Cummings said that the issue should be deferred until later in the agenda in order to finish the “Go To 2040” discussion.

Mr. Peebles asked what the final product of the major capital projects evaluation would look like. Mr. Dean said that there will not be a straight point ranking when the major capital projects are presented to the CMAP Board. Trustee Preston asked how past regional plans are being incorporated. Mr. Dean said the NIPC and CATS plans are

being used as a starting point for the 2040 plan. He said that the federal government has told CMAP that the 2040 plan needs to be more fiscally constraints, since the 2030 plan was essentially a wish list. Trustee Preston asked who will approve the capital project selection. Mr. Dean said that staff will do the technical work and present to the MPO Policy Committee and the CMAP Board for approval. Mr. Mastny asked how implementation will be handled. Mr. Dean said that a major capital project must be listed in the plan in order to be considered for federal funding. Trustee Preston asked how transportation implementers are involved. Mr. Dean responded that the implementers are the ones that submit projects and serve on the MPO Policy Committee. Trustee Preston asked if this is the definitive plan for 2040. Mr. Dean said that new projects can be amended into the plan and that the plan is regularly updated. Trustee Preston asked how legislators fit in. Mr. Dean said that the legislators are very important and that many time federal funds require a match that must come from the state or locals.

IV. CTA Yellow Line Alternative Analysis Update

Mr. Busby informed the committee that he was going to deliver an abbreviated version of the presentation from the recent public meeting. He reported that the Yellow Line extension project is currently completing the Alternatives Analysis as part of the federal New Starts process. He said that the Yellow Line Extension has been in the Long-Range Transportation Plan for a long time and that CTA received federal funding to begin work on the project with SAFETEA-LU. He reported that the Alternative Analysis culminates in selection of the locally preferred alternative, which will be presented shortly. He said the Alternatives Analysis process took roughly two years. Mr. Busby noted that the project would likely take another 6-10 years to implement. He explained that the Yellow Line extension is different from other CTA rail extensions because the purpose of the project is to serve reverse commuters to the Old Orchard Area.

He reported that CTA brought three alternatives forward from the previous screening: One rail extension alternative in the abandoned Union Pacific ROW and two Bus Rapid Transit alternatives. He said that during the Screen 2 process, CTA worked to better define the alternatives and assess their benefits. He reported that ultimately the rail option was the preferred option and that the preferred alignment was to run along the east of the Edens Expressway, terminating at Niles North High School. He said that the eastern alignment service a higher activity area and creates less conflicts with ComEd utilities. He said that relocating even one ComEd tower costs roughly \$2 million, which dramatically impacts the cost of the project. He explained that the extension would only be single-tracked to avoid interference with utilities. He noted that the preferred alternative is also for an elevated track. Trustee Berman asked if a elevated track would force changes at the Dempster Street station. Mr. Busby responded that CTA will have to reconstruct the Dempster Street station over the street. He said that an at-grade crossing at Dempster would be the busiest crossing and the CTA system and they wanted to avoid creating congestion. He said that the estimated cost for the project is \$270 million. Mayor Mulder asked if there are residential impacts. Mr. Busby responded that there are no takings as part of this project. He said that CTA will have to look at the environmental impacts, which include noise and vibration, and identify ways to mitigate negative impacts. Mr. Roseberry asked about noise impacts. Mr. Busby responded that modern elevated construction is much different than what people are

used to seeing in the Loop. He said that modern elevated tracks are constructed with concrete and much quieter. He informed the committee that the Orange Line provides an example of the type of elevated track that CTA is proposing. Trustee Berman commented that the proposed alignment seems to make it difficult for any further extension north. Mr. Busby said that this is something the CTA staff struggled with. He said that the cost difference of the current extension and the service area ultimately led to the choosing the eastern alignment. Ms. Farzin also noted that the eastern alignment more directly addresses the purpose and need of the project. She further said that Metra serves areas farther north and at this time it did not seem necessary for CTA to plan for an expansion further north. Mr. Busby reported that the Yellow Line will soon have a stop at Oakton Street and that Evanston is examining potential stops in the future. He said that ridership projections for the extension look promising. He informed the committee that the next steps are compiling and responding to comments, getting the approval of the CTA Board, and submitting the Alternatives Analysis to FTA. He said that there are some funds identified for the environmental study, so work can begin on that portion of the next phase.

Mr. Walczak said that CTA is encouraging municipal endorsements of the locally preferred alternative. Chair Cummings noted that CTA has done an excellent job seeking local input throughout the Alternatives Analysis process. Mr. Busby noted that seeking New Starts funding is new ground for the CTA and he is glad to hear that the process is well-received.

V. Illinois Capital Program

Mr. Staron reported that activity on a state capital bill intensified in the last week and culminated with the passage of capital program. He said that the General Assembly passed revenue and appropriations for a capital program. He reported that House Bill 255 provides the revenue for the capital program through a variety of sources: video gaming, lottery changes (online lottery and private management), applying the sales tax to candy and certain uncarbonated beverages, higher taxes on alcohol, increased vehicle and license fees and streamlining sales tax collection. He further reported that House Bill 312 contains the bulk of the capital program appropriations. He noted that although the capital program is being reported at \$29 billion, the bill contains much less in new transportation funding. He said that the bill includes \$3 billion in new state funding for streets and highways and \$1.8 billion for Chicago area transit. Additionally, he informed the committee that the bill contains \$500 million for local governments that the state will distribute based on the Motor Fuel Tax distributions. Mr. Staron reported that the General Assembly is expected to pass an additional capital bill that contains funding for specific projects. He noted that Governor Quinn has said that he does not want to sign a capital bill until the work of the operating budget is complete. He said that a motion to reconsider was filed on the capital bills, which means they have not been sent to the Governor. He reported that although there has been a lot of talk about altering the Downstate/District One highway funding split, there is no evidence that there was an actual change.

Mr. Staron reported that IDOT has released its 2010-2016 Proposed Highway Improvement Program. He distributed a handout with the projects in NWMC municipalities. He noted that passage of a capital bill would allow for additions to this list and may potentially move projects forward. In addition, he noted that there does not

appear to be any change in the traditional Downstate/District One funding split. Mr. Mastny reported that IDOT can amend the program based on the progress and funding.

Mayor Mulder reported that the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus is encouraging a change in the highway funding split, and said that given reasonable measures, the region could justify District One receiving up to 75% of the highway funding. She said Senator Sandoval has called for the 55/45 split being reversed to favor District One.

Chair Cummings suggested that the committee finish the STAR Line discussion. She suggested that the NWMC seek a clarification from RTA and forward a letter of support to legislators. Mr. Plummer said that given the amount of funding that capital program is anticipated to supply; RTA has to stay in maintenance mode. He said that maintenance will do a lot to improve the system and bring it up to good standing.

VI. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

Mr. Walczak reported that subregional councils have selected all their projects and are moving forward to make sure that projects obligate their funding before the ARRA deadline. He noted that the Council of Mayors Executive Committee is meeting in early June to discuss a regional policy in case a subregional council is unable to spend its funding. He noted that no one wants to leave money on the table and disqualify the state from future redistribution opportunities.

Mr. Mastny reported that the state let a majority of its recovery act projects in April and anticipates awarding the remainder of IDOT's projects over the next few lettings.

VII. Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Update

Mr. Walczak informed the committee that staff is recommending that the Transportation Committee recommend making the NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee a standing committee. He reported that the committee has been meeting on an ad hoc basis since the production of the NWMC bike plan. He noted that he would like to establish a set membership with a chair from the membership.

Trustee Preston asked how the committee would fit into the organization. Mr. Walczak said that staff envisioned having a Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee member serve on and report to the transportation committee. Mr. Staron noted that staff thought it made sense to schedule Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee meetings earlier in the month so any policy or significant issues could be brought to the Transportation Committee. Trustee Preston asked how the committee would be identified in the bylaws. Mr. Walczak said he did not think there is a subcommittee distinction in the bylaws. Chair Cummings asked if there was a motion to approve the staff recommendation pending clarification of the committee structure. *A motion to approve the recommendation was unanimously approved*

VIII. Other Business

IX. Next Meeting

Mr. Walczak reported that the committee traditionally does not meet over the summer but that there had been some interest about the Elgin O'Hare – West Bypass study. He

said the next committee meeting could be on call for the summer if there was a worthy development. The committee agreed.

X. Adjournment

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