

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
DRAFT MINUTES
Thursday, October 1, 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
Donald Bach, Alderman, City of Park Ridge
Jeff Berman, Trustee, Village of Buffalo Grove
Sandy Frum, President, Village of Northbrook
Brian Kozminski, Trustee, Village of Northfield
Derek Peebles, Civil Engineer, City of Des Plaines
Louella Preston, Trustee, Village of Niles
George Van Dusen, Mayor, Village of Skokie

Others Present:

Bunny Anderson, Illinois Tollway
Janet Bright, CMAP
Bruce Christensen, Lake County
Kristi DeLaurentiis, MPC
Earl Dunn, IDOT
Mike Hankey, Hoffman Estates
Bob Israel, Mactec
June Johnson, Village of Schaumburg
Rick Mack, Metra
Ryan Mouw, CTA
Mike Pagones, Village of Arlington Heights
Chris Staron, NWMC
Peter Stresino, Pavia-Marting
Emily Tapia, MPC
Mike Walczak, NWMC

I. Call to Order

Chair Nelson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. He noted that there are new members of the committee and asked for introductions.

II. Approval of the May 28, 2009 meeting minutes

The May 28, 2009 meeting minutes were approved on a motion from Trustee Preston, seconded by President Cummings. Alderman Bach, Mayor Van Dusen abstained.

III. Congestion Pricing Study Update

Ms. DeLaurentiis reported that the Illinois Toll Highway Authority's first round of modeling in its Congestion Pricing Study is complete. She said that other states and regions have implemented congestion pricing strategies on highways, and she noted that

congestion pricing techniques are common in other industries like air travel. She explained that the Tollway has completed system-wide modeling in the Chicago region, and the Tollway will now narrow the study to three corridors for further study. Ms. DeLaurentiis said that the Tollway and the Metropolitan Planning Council believed it was a good time to provide an update to municipal representatives and seek additional input. She said that the study uses 2007 traffic conditions, examines constructability, short-term revenue potential and traffic management potential. President Cummings asked if the study looks beyond the Tollway system. Ms. DeLaurentiis replied that the study looks at the totality of the interstate system in the region because travel to and from Chicago is still very congested. She said the study looks at adding a priced lane versus converting an existing lane. She noted that the CMAP Transportation Committee recommended that the Tollway further study I-90 (The Kennedy) and I-55 (I-294 to Downtown Chicago).

Mr. Peebles asked if or how this study relates to the former Governor's "Green Lanes" proposal. Ms. Anderson said that this is a separate study that predates the "Green Lanes" idea and said that no decisions have been made on implementation. President Cummings asked if the study was expanded. Ms. DeLaurentiis responded that CMAP had sought a different grant opportunity for just the I-90 corridor, but that funding was not received and this study is different. Trustee Preston asked if Chicago winning the Olympic bid for 2016 will impact the study. Ms. DeLaurentiis replied that an Olympic bid could fast-track implementation of the study's findings, but said there is no direct connection. Ms. Tapia said that the Olympic bid includes funding transportation projects, although she noted that more funding could come if Chicago is awarding the games. Alderman Bach asked how the modeling can predict the affects of congestion pricing with all the construction on the system. Ms. DeLaurentiis said that the modeling uses 2007 traffic counts and assumes that the current Tollway construction will be completed. Alderman Bach asked what the margin of error is on diversion and noted that there has been diversion into Park Ridge due to the current construction. Ms. Anderson responded that the construction on the Tollway is coming to an end after a system-wide expansion. Ms. DeLaurentiis said that she was unable to answer any technical questions regarding the modeling. She reported that the Tollway study is looking at diversion onto local roads, other highway lanes and transit. Mr. Israel asked how congestion tolling the Kennedy reversible lanes would improve travel for reverse commuters. Ms. DeLaurentiis said that the engineers are looking into alignment options. Mr. Walczak asked how specific the diversion modeling will be. Ms. DeLaurentiis said the more in-depth corridor studies will further look at diversion. Chair Nelson asked when the Tollway will choose the corridors. Ms. DeLaurentiis responded that she expects that decision to be made very soon. President Cummings asked what exactly is being modeled. She asked if there will be different rates based on the number of passengers. Ms. DeLaurentiis said that the model looks at a fixed price for all vehicles in the priced lane, but she noted that the lane will likely be available for express bus service. Trustee Preston asked if the study considers pricing lanes on highways that are currently freeways. Ms. DeLaurentiis said that the study does examine all highways in the Chicago Region. President Cummings said she would like to look at examples from other regions. Chair Nelson suggested that when the Tollway release the corridors, it also provide information about examples. Mr. Israel asked how the Tollway decided on \$.15 per mile as the appropriate rate. Ms. Tapia reported that \$.15 was the best rate to limit diversion but still provide congestion reduction benefits.

Trustee Preston asked who the decision maker would be to convert freeways to tollways. Mr. Walczak said that the state would have to approve the change and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) would have to sign-off on the pricing. Chair Nelson said that conversion might be palatable at the state level. Ms. Tapia reported that research has demonstrated that these congestion-priced lanes are not “Lexus Lanes.” Alderman Bach said that he wants to see diversion numbers to local roads and not just the percent. President Frum said that diversion to transit is a good thing, but that parking at many Metra stations is over-capacity, which needs to be looked at as well. Mr. Peebles asked what information is available online regarding the study and what benefits is the modeling showing. Ms. DeLaurentiis said that the modeling report is available online and that she can make it available to the committee. She reported that MPC can make more information available.

III.a. Transportation Investment Accountability Act

Ms. DeLaurentiis thanked the committee for their time and said that the Transportation Investment Accountability Act has been inserted into House Bill 4590 (formerly HB 2359). She said the bill focuses on prioritization of transportation investment and transparency in the decision making process. She said that the bill does not address the 55/45 Downstate/District One funding split. She noted that HB 4590 is a new bill that MPC hopes to have called in veto session. She said that MPC is also working to have a companion bill introduced in the Senate. She said the bill establishes a statewide advisory committee that advises IDOT as to the best allocation of transportation funding. She said the bill establishes the framework for the statewide committee to establish statewide transportation goals. She reported that regions will have flexibility to propose their own goals and performance criteria. She informed the committee that the federal transportation legislation will likely include accountability and performance criteria, and this bill will put Illinois ahead of the game.

Mr. Peebles asked how the bill will impact municipalities that receive MFT and STP based on existing formulas. Ms. DeLaurentiis responded that the methodology for STP funding was considered when crafting a statewide approach. She said that transportation investments should be strategic and based on priorities. Chair Nelson asked if this bill will add review time. Ms. DeLaurentiis said that the goal is not to review all projects, but establish statewide goals and objectives. President Cummings commented that she thought the 55/45 split will come up whether or not the bill directly addresses the issue. Ms. DeLaurentiis said the bill does not directly address funding. Ms. Tapia said that the goal of the legislation is to put more focus on strategic prioritization versus percentages. She noted that the state needs to get the most value from its investments. Mr. Walczak said funding distribution did come up with the capital bill and that there was discussion of the Metro regions in the state joining together. Ms. DeLaurentiis also noted that the bill aims for mode neutral decision making. She said that MPC is looking for another champion of the bill because Representative Ryg has left office.

IV. CTA Yellow Line Alternatives Analysis Update

Mr. Walczak reported that the CTA’s Locally Preferred Alternative for the Yellow Line Extension is an eastern alignment along the east of the Edens Expressway, ending at Old Orchard Road. He said that there was a large turnout of residents regarding the proximity of the extension and station to Niles North High School. Mayor Van Dusen reported that the public meeting was one of the best attended public meetings in Skokie

that he can remember. He said the vast majority of the comments and the concern of attendees was the proposed alignment's proximity to Niles North High School. He said there were concerns about safety, parking and noise. He said that he asked CTA to reconsider alternatives. Mr. Mouw reported that the deadline for public comment on the Yellow Line Extension preferred alternative is October 27. He noted that comments can be submitted directly to YellowExtension@transitchicago.com. He said that the CTA is going to look at other alternatives as it moves through the environmental scoping process. President Cummings said that the western alignment could raise concerns with Glenview and communities to the north because of a proposed bike path project. Mr. Mouw said that that the bike path concern has been raised in the past and that CTA is cognizant of this issue. Mr. Walczak asked if the opposition at the public meeting was towards the extension or the terminus. He noted that the project is one of the Conference's top five transportation priorities. Mayor Van Dusen said that most residents like the extension idea but the concern is about the alignment. Trustee Preston asked if there are any CTA rail lines that terminate at a high school. Mayor Van Dusen said that there are no such examples in the current system. Trustee Berman asked if CTA made any statements about the western alignment. Mayor Van Dusen said that the meeting was strictly for public comment and that CTA did not respond. Mr. Berman said that when CTA chose the eastern alignment, questions were raised about future extensions. He said that Metra serves markets to the North. Mayor Van Dusen said that northern extension has been opposed by some communities in the past.

V. IDOT Elgin O'Hare West Bypass Update

Mr. Walczak reported that there is not much new to report except that IDOT released the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for public review. He said that two alternatives have been carried forward for the draft EIS. He explained that the two alternative alignments (203 and 402) being considered both include an extension of the Elgin O'Hare Expressway to the western edge of O'Hare with a southern connection to I-294; however, the alignment of the southern connection has not been finalized. He said that Franklin Park has volunteered to take the southern alignment. He reported that the northern connection of the West Bypass represents the major difference between the two alternatives. He said that alternative 203 includes an expressway section that would extend from I-90 at the current location of the Des Plaines Oasis, south along the western edge of O'Hare Airport, and alternative 402 includes an arterial improvement to York Road/Elmhurst Road between I-90 and the proposed Elgin O'Hare extension. He said that the public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is open through October 26.

VI. SAFETEA-LU Rescissions

Mr. Staron reported that the current federal surface transportation legislation, SAFETEA-LU, included a \$8.7 billion rescission, or take back, when the legislation expired at the end of federal fiscal year (FFY) 2009. He said that October 1 marked the start of FFY 2010, and congressional action did not stop FHWA from implementing the rescission. He said that roughly \$290 million was taken from Illinois. He explained that the rescission was supposed to be taken proportionally from each program based on the original amount allocated. He said that the CMAQ program was supposed to lose \$23 million and the Urbanized STP was supposed to lose \$23 million. In reality, he noted that not all programs had enough unobligated balance to meet the rescission amount. For example, he said that the National Highway System Program was supposed to lose

\$54.8 million, but the program only had a \$5.9 million unobligated balance. He informed the committee that in order to make up for these funding differences, programs with large unobligated funding amounts were disproportionately impacted. He said the CMAQ program lost \$83 million. He said that the CMAP Policy Committee meets next Thursday and will have to provide direction as to how the rescission is applied to the region. He noted that urbanized STP lost roughly \$20 million; however, he explained that the suburban council actual have a negative balance right now because they have overspent the amount allocated in SAFETEA-LU. Trustee Preston asked if all the suburban councils obligated their funding. Mr. Staron responded that the North Shore Council obligated more than its balance and the Northwest Council has an unobligated balance. Mr. Christensen said that CMAP has always looked at the suburbs as a whole when it comes to STP funding. He said that the funding is split between Chicago and the suburbs and that Chicago has an unobligated STP balance.

Mr. Staron reported that the second part of the rescission story is the end of SAFETEA-LU. He explained that SAFETEA-LU, the current federal surface transportation legislation, expired at the end of September. He said that SAFETEA-LU was extended as part of a one month continuing resolution. He noted that the House passed a three month extension and the Senate was debating an eighteen month extension, which is backed by the administration; however, he said that no compromise was reached and a one month continuing resolution was the result. The last transportation authorization was extended for nearly two years.

VII. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

Mr. Staron reported that the suburban councils have met their initial deadline to obligate ARRA funding. He said that the North Shore Council has awarded five projects. Mr. Walczak and Mr. Christensen reported that the Northwest Council and Lake County Council are making solid progress and on schedule to obligate all ARRA funding before the March 2010 deadline.

Mr. Staron reported that the state announced the programming of ARRA Transportation Enhancement funding. He reminded the committee that 3% of the surface transportation funding was set aside for enhancement projects, which equates to roughly \$28 million in Illinois. He said that the state chose 27 projects and three are from NWMC members. He reported that Evanston's Lakefront Corridor Reconstruction Project, Lincolnwood's Restoring Native Trees, and Skokie's Skokie Boulevard Streetscape are the projects from NWMC members. He said that these projects much meet the same deadlines as other ARRA projects. He reported that Pace will be purchasing ten hybrid paratransit vehicles with ARRA funding awarded to IDOT for Transit Investments for Greenhouse Gas and Energy Reduction (TIGGER).

VIII. CMAP Report

Ms. Bright reported that the public outreach *Invent the Future for Go To 2040*, the regional comprehensive plan, has ended. She said that CMAP held workshops, visited fairs and community events, and had kiosks at high traffic areas. She said that CMAP will be coming out to future COG meetings to discuss the next phases of the *Go To 2040* Plan preparation. Mr. Walczak noted that CMAP is also in the working on the prioritization of major capital projects for the plan.

IX. Other Business

Mr. Walczak reported that the next STAR Line Municipal Task Force meeting is scheduled for October 19. Mr. Mack reported that Metra's website has been revamped and that online ticket purchases are now available. He said the budget process is coming up and that public hearing meeting dates and locations will be announced soon. Mr. Walczak announced that Pace will present its budget overview at the next Transportation Committee meeting.

X. Next Meeting

Chair Nelson asked staff to talk about scheduling for the next Transportation Committee meeting. Mr. Walczak reported that since this meeting was held late, the committee would only have three weeks in between meetings if it met on October 22; however, because of Thanksgiving, the November meeting will be on the third Thursday of the month. Chair Nelson recommended that the committee meet on October 29 and cancel the November meeting. The committee agreed to meet on October 29 and keep the November meeting on call.

XI. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was unanimously approved on a motion from Mayor Nelson, seconded by Trustee Preston.