

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
DRAFT MINUTES
Thursday, November 17, 2011
9:00 a.m.
NWMC Offices
1616 East Golf Road
Des Plaines, IL 60016

Members Present:

Sandy Frum, President, Village of Northbrook, Chair
Mike Allison, Manager, Village of Vernon Hills
Jeff Berman, Trustee, Village of Buffalo Grove
Al Larson, President, Village of Schaumburg
Jeff Mandsley, Administrative Analyst, City of Crystal Lake
Arlene J. Mulder, Mayor, Village of Arlington Heights
Louella Preston, Trustee, Village of Niles
Tom Rooney, Mayor, City of Rolling Meadows
Greg Summers, Director of Engineering and Building, Village of Barrington

Others Present:

Bunny Anderson, Illinois Tollway
Steve Andrews, Pace
Bruce Carmitchel, Senior Metro Planning Manager, IDOT
Ylda Capriccioso, CMAP
Marnie Hooghkirk, IDOT
Rick Mack, Metra
Mike Pagones, Village of Arlington Heights
Andy Plummer, RTA
Chris Staron, NWMC
Mike Walczak, NWMC
Larry Widmer, NWMC

I. Call to Order

Chair Frum called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. and asked those present to introduce themselves.

II. Approval of the October 27, 2011 Meeting Minutes

The October 27, 2011 meeting minutes were approved on a motion from Trustee Berman, seconded by Trustee Preston.

III. Pace Budget Report

Mr. Andrews provided a brief overview of the Pace 2012 budget. He reported that the Pace Board has passed a balanced budget with no fare increases or service cuts. He said that fuel continues to be a financial strain, but previous cuts and fare increases in 2009 and 2010 have put Pace on good footing. He reported that Pace has a \$100 million capital program, which is primarily for the purchase of new vehicles. Mr. Andrews also presented a brief overview of the ADA budget of \$126 million, which is primarily supported with public funds. In addition, he reported that Pace is moving ahead with new projects and mentioned the recent roll-out of

the I-55 bus on shoulder project, a Chicago Ridge to Schaumburg express bus and plans for I-90 express bus.

IV. Metra Budget Report

Mr. Mack reported that the Metra Board approved the budget last Friday and it includes a 25.1 percent fare increase. He reported that Metra was facing a very deep deficit of \$70 to \$100 million. He said that based on board and rider input, Metra decided to pursue a fare increase versus service reduction. He noted that Metra sales tax revenue is at 1999 levels. He said that the fare increase will occur on February 1, 2012. Trustee Preston asked why there is such a large increase. Mr. Mack responded that Metra's fares have not kept pace with the financial needs or its peer commuter transit providers. He said that Metra fares will still be below many of its peer agencies. Mayor Mulder said that the Metra Board talked about alternatives and decided that cutting service would not be appropriate. Mr. Mack further reported that Metra will be undergoing a strategic capital planning process in 2012 to examine capital priorities. He said that Metra will seriously examine the resources available for capital projects.

V. Illinois Tollway Project Update

Mr. Walczak provided an update on the Tollway's capital projects currently in the planning phase. He reported that discussions on I-90 continue around the transit alternatives and the transition to the Kennedy expressway. He informed the committee that Elk Grove Village's proposal to delay construction on the north leg of the Elgin O'Hare – West Bypass is still under consideration and neither the Tollway nor IDOT have discussed how the proposal will impact the project's future. Finally, Mr. Walczak reported that the Tollway sponsored planning for the IL 53 expansion is looking at the design, purpose and environmental impacts of the project.

VI. STAR Line Update

Mr. Walczak reported that Metra is completing the Alternatives Analysis process for the STAR Line. He noted that Metra will hold a Technical Advisory Panel (TAC) meeting on December 5 and then hold public meetings in January or February. He said Metra anticipates wrapping up the Alternatives Analysis in March or April. He explained that because Metra has no workable financial plan, the project cannot enter into preliminary engineering. He noted that Pace did receive CMAQ funding for express bus service in the corridor that will operate in conjunction with the additional lane the Tollway plans to construct. Mayor Mulder noted that Metra has four authorized New Starts projects that are all waiting to move forward because of the financial constraints. Mr. Walczak said that NWMC plans to be engaged during Metra's strategic planning process. He said that NWMC could look at alternative ways to keep the project moving forward, such as a Mass Transit District.

VII. Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Update

Mr. Staron reported that the NWMC is making good progress on the two planning projects that received CPPW Model Communities funding. He said that the Northwest Highway Bicycle Facilities Plan is splitting the corridor into a number of segments and assigning a typical segment and cross-section to those segments. He said that the next step in the plan is to put together an implementation plan with cost estimates regarding the various segments. He further reported that the North and Northwest Cook County Bicycle Signage Plan has finalized the list of destinations, and the consultant is now working to finalize the signage network and implementation plan.

Mr. Staron reported that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee has also reviewed the federal transportation authorization proposals, started looking at opportunities to improve crossings on I-90 during the Tollway's widening project and the potential for ITEP applications in 2012.

VIII. Federal Transportation Legislation

Mr. Staron reported the Senate and House are taking different approaches on the bill. He said that a Senate bill has been introduced and passed out of the Environment and Public Works Committee. He explained that the Senate bill (MAP-21) is a two year bill that keeps spending flat plus inflation. He said that the bill consolidates a number of programs and the full impact on how STP and CMAQ funds would be distributed and programmed is unclear. He explained that there is an estimated \$12 billion funding gap in the Senate bill and the transit and Amtrak portions of the authorization have not yet been introduced. Mr. Staron reported that the House has not introduced a bill, but Representative Mica has said it is close to release. House Speaker Boehner said that House Republicans would release a five-year bill, but details on the House proposal are unclear. Mr. Staron said that some House Republicans have talked about tying infrastructure spending to domestic energy production.

IX. CMAP Report

Ms. Capriccioso reported that CMAP is working to analyze the MAP-21 proposal and its effect on the region. She made announcements on upcoming GIS workshops and IEPA Green Infrastructure grants.

X. Other Business

Mr. Plummer reported that RTA made the transition for seniors ride free program smoothly. He informed the committee that the RTA has introduced legislation regarding FOIA requirements related to sales tax rebate agreements to help clarify the situation with Kankakee and Channahon.

Ms. Anderson reported that the Tollway will begin work on the IL 47 and I-90 interchange in the spring. She reminded the committee that the toll increase goes into effect on January 1.

Mr. Walczak reported that IDOT has developed a preferred alignment on Willow Rd. He said that he would keep the committee updated.

XI. Next Meeting

Chair Frum reported that the next NWMC Transportation Committee is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on January 26.

XII. Adjournment

On a motion from President Larson, seconded by Trustee Berman, the committee unanimously voted to adjourn.