



Draft Meeting Minutes of the MPO Policy Committee

January 8, 2009

Offices of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
Cook County Conference Room
Suite 800, 233 S. Wacker Drive, Sears Tower, Chicago, Illinois

MPO Policy Committee Members:

Lawrence Walsh – Vice-Chairman, Will County, Frank Beal - Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (Representing Rita Athas), Marty Buehler - Lake County, Paul Fish – CTA (Representing Ron Huberman), Ted George – Cook County (Representing Joseph Moreno), Jack Groner - Metra (Representing Philip A. Pagano), Elliott Hartstein - Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, John McCarthy - Private Providers, Arlene Mulder - Council of Mayors (Representing Jeff Schielke), Mike Payette - Class 1 Railroads, Tom Rickert - Kane County (Representing Karen McConnaughay), T.J. Ross - Pace (Representing R. Kwasneski), Steve Schlickman - RTA, Dave Seglin - Chicago Department of Transportation (Representing Thomas G. Byrne), Dick Smith - IDOT (Representing Milton R. Sees), Norm Stoner - Federal Highway Administration, Chuck Tokarski – DuPage County (Representing Tom Cuculich), Rocco Zucchero - Illinois Tollway.

Absent:

Bob Davidson - Kendall County, Marisol Simon - Federal Transit Administration

Staff Present: Randy Blankenhorn, Dolores Dowdle, Gordon Smith, Don Kopec, Jill Leary, Patricia Berry, Doug Ferguson, George Johnson, Matt Maloney, Tom Murtha, Roseann O’Laughlin, Holly Ostidick, Ross Patronskey

Others Present: Aristide Biciunas - Public, Lenny Cannata – WCMC, Colleen Cannon – Tollway, Chalen Daigle - McHenry County, Maria Choca Urban – CNT, Joe Deal – City of Chicago, Kama Dobbs - DMMC, John Donovan - FHWA, Sheena Freve – Chicago Metropolis 2020, Jon-Paul Kohler - FHWA, Joe Korpalski – McHenry County, Sheldon Latz – Will County, Richard Highland – Public, Les Nunes - IDOT, Marta Perales - IL MPO Advisory Council, Chris Staron - NWMC, Mike Walczak - NWMC, Tammy Wierciak - WCMC.

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Vice-Chairman Larry Walsh called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

2. Agenda Changes and Announcements

There were no agenda changes or announcements.

3. Approval of Minutes – October 9, 2008

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 9, 2008 meeting, as presented, was made by Mr. Koehler and seconded by Mr. Smith. With all in favor, the motion carried.

4. Agency Reports

4.1. Council of Mayors' Report

Mayor Mulder reported that the Council of Mayors' Executive Committee is scheduled to meet on January 13th. The main agenda topics will include advanced funding requests, the scope of services for the planning liaison program, and consideration of a resolution supporting a capital bill for Illinois. The Mayor noted that the implementation of active program management has been a major factor in the suburban council's obligation over \$75 million in federal funds this fiscal year.

4.2. CMAP Report

Mr. Kopec informed the committee that CMAP would be hosting an Operations and Construction Coordination meeting on January 20th in conjunction with the Lake Michigan Interstate Gateway Alliance which was formerly known as the Gary-Chicago-Milwaukee (G-C-M) Corridor. He also urged members to visit the CMAP website to view the new interactive TIP mapping product now available in Beta test form. Another available product is what are called congestion scans of the interstate system in northeastern Illinois. Using IDOT and Tollway surveillance data, the scans show when and where congestion builds and subsides throughout the day.

Mr. Kopec also informed the committee of the latest developments in the DRI process and the development of the comprehensive plan. Finally, he noted that this summer, USDOT will be conducting its certification review of the transportation planning and programming process here in northeastern Illinois.

5. Unified Work Program,

Mr. Nunes informed the committee that the call for core projects goes out today with proposals due on January 27th. These projects relate to the federally required MPO activities. Discretionary projects will be due on February 27th. Recipient agencies report on the progress quarterly. Progress on current projects is taken into consideration when the committee develops a new program. All progress reports are available online. The program mark this year will be in excess of \$19 million.

6. Revised CMAQ Procedures

Ms. Berry introduced this agenda item by reviewing how the CMAQ Project Selection Committee has been working to develop procedures aimed at reducing the unobligated balance of the CMAQ program. A copy of the procedures is included in the member's packets. Ms. Berry and Mr. Ferguson of the CMAP staff emphasized that the responsibility for getting projects moved to implementation is on the sponsor. They need to understand that there will be repercussions for lack of progress. Staff will be actively managing the program and projects will be recommended to be withdrawn if no progress is made. This is

not something that has been pursued in the past.

Mr. T. J. Ross inquired about the definition of obligated. There ensued a discussion noting the differences between how highway and transit projects were obligated and how the philosophy of programming CMAQ funds has evolved over the life of the program. The introduction of the multi-year program will be a major factor in reducing the unobligated balance.

7. Acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway by the Canadian Nation Railway

Mr. Kopec began the discussion by noting that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) released its decision on December 24th supporting the acquisition. The decision stressed that the STB is directed by law to approve an application such as this unless as a result of the transaction there is likely to be substantial lessening of competition, creation of a monopoly, or restraint of trade in freight surface transportation or that the anticompetitive effects of the transaction outweigh the public interest in meeting significant transportation needs.

The STB review highlighted some of the concerns of various agencies including Metra's comments regarding the impact to implementing the STAR Line and the Southeast Service, the control of the inter-lockings in Barrington and West Chicago that could cause service delays for commuters.

Also noted were the voluntary mitigation measures agreed to by the CN which will be required along with additional measures specified by the STB. Most notable of these measures is the requirement for the CN to provide 67% of the cost to construct a grade separation at Ogden Avenue in Aurora and 78.5% of the cost for a grade separation at Lincoln Highway (U.S. 30) in Lynwood.

Mr. Kopec noted that Barrington and Will County have filed suit seeking to block the acquisition.

Mr. Schlickman asked if there has been any reaction from our Congressional delegation. Mr. Kopec replied that nothing official has been released. However a few have been quoted in the press generally expressing their disappointment with the decision. Mayor Mulder noted a potential similarity to the opening of a new runway at O'Hare which has generated a significant negative public reaction. In response to a question concerning CREATE, Mr. Blankenhorn noted that the CN was still a partner in the CREATE program. Mr. Payette stated that even though the CN only accounts for 7% of the train traffic in northeastern Illinois, it is still an active partner. With the acquisition, there will be a change to the projects in the central corridor, but the remainder of the program remains the same.

A number of members expressed various concerns and opinions regarding the decision and the process involved. Included were comments about the limited scope of the environmental impact statement and what the STB was required to consider in making its decision. Mr. Walsh questioned why the STB only looked out 5 years to assess impacts

when highway transportation projects need to evaluate impacts over a 20 year horizon. He stated that the CN should be responsible for mitigating all the impacts of the acquisition.

Mr. Beal summarized the issue by stating the CMAP needs to be able to develop a sensible transportation plan, one that serves the region – not something that is guided entirely by federal requirements. Mr. Stoner felt that USDOT does provide flexibility and should allow for a plan that meets the needs of northeastern Illinois.

8. Economic Recovery Package

Mr. Kopec began the discussion of this agenda item by reviewing an email from John Donovan of FHWA and the Principles for Infrastructure Investment in a Federal Economic Recovery Package that was adopted by the CMAP board. Of note regarding any transportation funding that may be a part of the package is that all the existing federal requirements relating to conformity, the long-range plan, the TIP and the STIP will remain in effect. FHWA will be creating a question and answer web site that will help to guide implementers developing projects for this program. The CMAP principles stress that any investments should be strategic along with being timely. “Ready-to-go” projects that produce little long-term economic benefit should be avoided. The principles also call for investments to be focused on metropolitan areas. Metropolitan areas drive the economy and therefore should be the focus of this investment. Investments should also be comprehensive in scope. For transportation, we cannot simply focus on the highway system. There needs to be investment in transit, freight and non-motorized networks also. Finally, with this investment should come real reform in how projects are selected and funded. There needs to be real performance-driven criteria that lead to outcome-based, mode-agnostic decisions.

Mr. Schlickman spoke to the Obama-Biden recovery plan that was recently released noting that it would make \$25 billion immediately available and \$60 billion over 10 years. Mr. Zucchero remarked that there needs to be an inclusion of large projects that produce real economic benefits, not just resurfacing projects. Mr. Blankenhorn emphasized that there is a tradeoff between ready-to-go projects and those that produce lasting value. That is not to say that maintenance of the system is not a worthwhile investment. He noted that there also needs to be an investment in white-collar jobs, along with construction jobs.

The discussion identified a number of potential problems with the proposed plan including the 90-day turnaround to implement projects and the lack of near-term and long-term elements. It was also mentioned that there may not be enough construction firms to perform all the work planned. There needs to be a well-thought out plan – not just a spend the money quickly approach.

A suggestion was made to transmit a letter to the Illinois delegation identifying the concerns of the committee. Other issues identified included the need for a state appropriation to spend these funds, the lack of design-build which would facilitate the timely implementation of projects, the need to have effective public-private partnerships

established and the fact that many projects that are currently under development would experience significant delays if they were federalized using recovery package funds.

9. Transportation Committee Membership

9.1. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair of the CMAP Transportation Committee

Mr. Walsh appointed LuAnn Hamilton Chair and Tom Cuculich the Vice-Chair of the Transportation Committee.

9.2. Business Leaders for Transportation

Ms. Berry reminded the committee that they approved the members of the Transportation Committee. One of the members is the Business Leaders for Transportation which has recently disbanded. Since they were really an offshoot of the Metropolitan Planning Council, she recommended that MPC be named as their replacement. On a motion by Mr. Zucchero, seconded by Mr. Smith, MPC was unanimously named as a member of the Transportation Committee.

10. Other Business

Mr. Kopec pointed out that Mr. Sheldon Latz was in attendance in the audience today and wanted to take the opportunity to thank him for his 47 years of service to transportation in northeastern Illinois. Mr. Blankenhorn presented Mr. Latz with a token of CMAP's appreciation for all the years he spent serving on the Policy Committee. He highlighted a number of Mr. Latz's accomplishments including the 2004 NACE Urban County Engineer of the Year award – a nationwide award.

11. Public Comment

No public comments were offered.

12. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2009.

13. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Tokarski, seconded by Mr. Zucchero. All in favor, motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,



Don Kopec
Secretary, Policy Committee

March 4, 2009