



CMAQ Project Selection Committee Meeting

Thursday April 14, 2011

2:00 p.m.

Cook County Conference Room

Draft Minutes

CMAP Offices

Members Present: Chairman Ross Patronsky – CMAP, Marty Buehler – Counties, Larry Keller – Council of Mayors, Mark Pitstick - RTA, Keith Privett – Representing Luann Hamilton of the City of Chicago, Mike Rogers – IEPA (via phone) and Susan Stitt - IDOT

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Lenny Cannata, Bruce Carmitchel, Chalen Diagle (via phone), John Donovan, Jim Fiorito, Tatiana Jane, Bill Lenski, Kathleen Moore, Tom Radak (via phone), Tom Rickert, Chris Staron, David Tomzik, Mike Walczak, Tom Weaver, Mike Walczak, Jan Ward (via phone) and Jeff Young (via phone)

Staff Present: Patricia Berry, Doug Ferguson, Tom Murtha, Holly Ostidick, Russell Pietrowiak, Jose Rodriquez, Joy Schaad and Todd Schmidt

1.0 Call to Order and Introductions

Chairman Ross Patronsky called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2.0 Agenda Changes and Announcements

Susan Stitt introduced Bruce Carmitchel, IDOT's Senior Metropolitan Manager in the Office of Planning and Programming.

3.0 Approval of February 25, 2011 Minutes

The draft minutes for the February 25, 2011 meeting were approved as presented on a motion by Mr. Buehler and a second by Mr. Privett.

4.0 Project Changes

4.1 Cicero - Cicero Rail Yard Switch Engine Retrofit (TIP ID 05-09-0002)

Mr. Pietrowiak explained the scope change request and that there were two options before the committee – to change the type of engine for this project from a GenSet engine to a Tier II switch locomotive engine or to delay the project to 2012 or 2013 when Tier III switch engines will be certified and available. Chairman Patronskey explained that while it is undesirable to encourage delays to projects, the increased air quality benefits from the new technology are expected to be considerable, and because the locomotives are in service a long time, and because today’s decision will set a precedent, he thinks waiting may be the best option. Mr. Pitstick reminded the Committee that they recently approved a cost increase for another locomotive repower project and asked staff if another one is expected. Ms. Ostlick responded that none is requested now, but if the Committee votes to wait for Tier III engines, the cost won’t be known until the time of procurement. Mr. Privett pointed out that utilizing Tier II engines would lower the benefit from the original GenSet application to 372 Kg of VOC, while the Tier III technology is expected to give a 600 Kg reduction of VOCs. Mr. Rogers noted that it is possible that a Tier III engine will not fit in the current engine compartment. On a motion from Mr. Pitstick and a second from Mr. Buehler the Committee approved the delay to 2012 so that the railroad could repower to Tier III standards.

4.2 City of Chicago - CDOT-Lakefront Trail-Navy Pier Flyover (TIP ID 01-01-0009)

Mr. Pietrowiak explained that the City has requested a scope change to include the central segment of this lakefront path project, which was previously planned to be privately funded, to the CMAQ funded portion of the project and transfer \$9,000,000 total (\$7,200,000 federal) of the current funding for engineering and construction of the central segment. The funds had been designated for construction of the south segment and the City would use them for phase II engineering and construction of the central segment. Mr. Pitstick asked if this would be enough funding to construct the entire central segment. Mr. Privett answered that it is most of what is needed, the exact costs won’t be known until the design engineering is complete and this funding will more than cover the engineering. He added that if more funds are needed, CDOT intends to submit a separate application in a year or two for those construction costs, rather than ask for a cost increase; he added that the City is also exploring the use of STP funds. He also pointed out that the central segment has independent utility so it is a higher priority than the south segment however the south segment was included in their original application. Mr. Pietrowiak pointed out that the central segment was in the original CMAQ application, so the air quality benefits are known, but without costs the new scope cannot be ranked. On a motion from Mr. Buehler and a second from Mr. Pitstick, the Committee approved the requested changes.

4.3 McHenry County - Virginia Rd at IL 31(southwest quadrant) (TIP ID 11-07-0001)

Mr. Pietrowiak reported that McHenry County requested a cost increase of \$700,000 due to revised construction cost estimates, bringing the project total to \$1,050,000 federal. The project was originally programmed in FFY 2008 at \$350,000 and 100% federal share (because it is a ridesharing project). Mr. Pitstick raised concerns that the costs have tripled since the 2008 estimate. Jeff Young of McHenry County responded saying that phase 1 costs are preliminary and in this case some elements were not fully evaluated in the phase 1 engineering including drainage detention. Chairman Patronskey added that at the time the applications were reviewed, the per-space cost was around \$3,300 while other similar projects were generally around \$8,000. The new cost for the McHenry project is around

\$10,000 per space. On a motion from Mr. Buehler and a second from Mayor Keller, the Committee approved the increase.

4.4 Country Club Hills – Monarch Pedestrian Path (TIP ID 07-06-0004)

Mr. Pietrowiak reported that the Village of Country Club Hills requested a cost increase of \$14,750 total (\$11,800 federal) for total project cost of \$134,750 (\$107,800 federal) due to an increased scope of work. The project has already been completed and the final costs are included in the sponsor's request. On a motion from Mayor Keller and a second from Mr. Privett, the Committee approved the cost increase.

5.0 Call for Projects Update

The call for projects deadline was April 1, 2011. Mr. Ferguson supplied a preliminary list of the number and value of applications by project type and reported that a preliminary total cost of the 356 proposals is \$1.8 billion with over \$900 million in federal funding being requested. He said that a list of all the projects should be available in the next week; it is now being checked for duplicates and missing projects. Mr. Buehler asked what the program funding mark will be for the FFY 2012-16 program and Chairman Patronskey responded that the staff estimates \$350 million for use over that time frame. He added that a typical call for projects brought in 190 to 200 applications.

6.0 Program Focus Group Update

Mr. Murtha and Mr. Ferguson reported on the activities and progress of the four program focus groups. Mr. Murtha reported that the Regional Transportation Operations Coalition (RTOC), the Bicycle/Pedestrian Task Force and the ad hoc transit group have met several times and have been setting priorities, identifying strategies to use in evaluating project proposals, identifying gaps in systems of improvements, and identifying the projects that are the most important in implementing GO TO 2040. Mr. Murtha said he expects their work to be done in time for the July 7th CMAQ meeting when air quality analysis for the projects will be presented. He reported that the next meetings will be: RTOC - May 5th, Bike/Ped - April 20 and May 6th; transit group - May 12th.

Mr. Ferguson reported that the Direct Emissions Reduction group has met twice so far and is finalizing their goals and strategies. They are looking for ways to incorporate new measures such as affected at-risk populations and benefits to areas near highways and rail yards. The group expects to have their work done in late June or early July. Ms. Ostdick added that the four program focus groups will each get the list of all the project applications; CMAP staff will not screen which projects got to each group to evaluate. In response to a question, she clarified that electric vehicle charging stations are considered "other" as a project type but will likely be reviewed by the Direct Emission Reduction Program Focus Group.

7.0 Transit Status Report Update

Ms. Schaad reported that the quarterly status updates resulted in reports on 76 full projects. Of those, 38 projects are complete and 38 are still active. In part because of the on line form proved problematic for both the agencies submitting reports and for CMAP, financial data is not yet known. She added that CMAP staff and the agencies involved have agreed to use a spreadsheet format for future updates. She also mentioned that staff had met with representatives of the service boards, CDOT and RTA earlier in the day to discuss what is needed and why, and to

clarify any misinterpretations. She said the a call for first quarter 2011 status updates will be issued in the next two weeks, with reports due April 15th. Chairman Patronsky thanked the involved agency staff for their help and patience.

8.0 Program Management Status

Ms. Ostdick reported that the CMAQ program still has an unobligated balance of over \$200 million. She explained that when the reversal of the September 30, 2009 SAFETEA-LU rescission occurred, we received the 83 million dollars back as well as our FFY 2010 annual apportionment as “new” money, set to lapse at the end of FFY 2013. That is why there is a \$143 million at risk of lapse as of the end of FFY 2013. She highlighted efforts that have been made to remedy the situation: Multi-year programming; Realistic Programming for older projects; and Active Program Management Policies including: May and October status reports; the one time move policy; the CMQ A List; and the CMAQ B List. She confirmed that these efforts have borne fruit. She also commented that IDOT has been able to provide sufficient state appropriation for every project the region was ready to obligate. She pointed out that, while the region still has some time to deal with the problem, the Committee should strategize soon for the fall of 2013 so that we can avert a crisis if the region has not obligated that full amount in time. Keith Privett pointed out that obligating transit projects may be more difficult in the future. His recent experience is that FTA now limits transfers to one work phase rather than allowing sponsors to obligate a project as a whole.

A Committee member asked how the proposed rescission from the budget bill would affect CMAQ. Mr. Ferguson pointed out that if Illinois has to take a rescission, it is likely to be based on unobligated balances, so we are at significant risk for rescission before September of 2013 lapse date. He clarified that STP suballocated funds, safety funds and highway grade crossing funds are not subject to rescission, so CMAQ would take a larger proportion of a state-wide rescission than just its proportion of all unobligated balances. Ms. Ostdick pointed out that, unlike many of the bigger agencies, The CMAQ program does not have large projects already engineered and ready to go that we could move into the program to obligate quickly.

She noted that for FFY 2011 there is over \$200 million programmed, including projects moved from prior years. Generally, we assume 50% of what is programmed is likely to be obligated, so CMAP could have a banner year for obligations. Ms. Stitt suggested that besides keeping the momentum going for a better accomplishment rate with our improved project management, the CMAQ Committee needs to be very cognizant of project readiness when making programming decisions for the FFY 2012-16 program. There was some discussion of whether the new emphasis on funding projects that implement GO TO 2040 could delay projects because of the coordination that will need to occur. Mr. Murtha pointed out that there is a new emphasis on receiving projects that are already in current plans and programs, so there may be an improvement in the readiness of projects over past application cycles.

Mr. Patronsky pointed out that, when the new program is approved, projects programmed in any of the 5 years can move forward and be obligated in FFY 2012; so we potentially have around \$500 million in projects competing to meet that \$143 million dollar goal. Mr. Buehler pointed out that a bottleneck results from the fact that all \$500 million in projects is competing for the same staff resources for the processing. He suggested that, while it seems undesirable on its face,

having some big non-CMAQ projects ready that we can move into the program would be better than losing the funding. Mr. Donovan of FHWA pointed out that the region has learned some lessons the hard way on this topic, and that once any crises are averted and obligations are under control the region needs to remain vigilant to avoid future problems. It was remarked that while the region's obligations for the last four years averaged \$50 million and rising, we need to keep the pressure on and spend what is received every year, otherwise the lapse issue will keep recurring. We could consider moving into the program large, ready, non-CMAQ projects as a fall back strategy.

Mr. Pitstick asked if IDOT has any large CMAQ-eligible projects that would be candidates. Mr. Patronsky pointed out that there are two significant CREATE projects moving towards letting now. Also, it was noted that of the 120 new intersection improvement applications, 56 are from IDOT and many of those may go through engineering even if they are not selected for the CMAQ program. Also, the big projects that the Committee considers could be from a county or the City of Chicago. Mr. Pitstick suggested that at the appropriate time, the Committee should host a forum to discuss large, non-CMAQ funded projects. Mr. Patronsky suggested that the Program Focus Groups could be looking for funding for large unfunded projects within their purview.

Ms. Ostdick pointed out that IDOT utilizes the philosophy of spending the most restrictive funding first so that they maintain as much flexibility as possible; it is possible some of those projects are CMAQ eligible and the funding could be switched. Mr. Privett pointed out that we potentially have four strategies on the lapse and rescission problem: the active program management efforts, the new 5 year program with A List procedures, the CMAQ B List, and now this stop gap "move a new project in" idea.

Mr. Weaver suggested that the Committee also should take a good look at project applications that have the potential for significant slowdowns - such as those that require a lot of coordination, those whose timing is tied to other nearby projects, and those that require right of way acquisition. Mr. Privett stated allowing applicants to request funding in multiple years is allowing for more realistic project schedules, which will help. Mr. Pitstick reiterated that the Committee should make plans to hear about potential large, ready projects that are not in the current project applications. Mr. Patronsky responded that the Program Focus Groups can be asking their member agencies "What's in the pipeline?"

Mr. Weaver stressed that the Committee is responsible for decisions on removing funding from projects that are not moving forward. He stated that generally the Committee has a sympathetic ear and does not remove many projects - but given the lapse potential, the Committee will have to make tougher decisions. Mr. Donovan suggested that tracking what projects are moving and which are not and why would provide data for later tough decisions.

Ms. Ostdick said that CMAP staff will be analyzing the lapse potential of the program monthly and will present those findings with the May and October status updates. She also reminded the Committee that the May status updates will be initiated soon. The requests will go through the planning liaisons for the majority of projects and this time there will be a 15-day turnaround required, so that staff can do the analysis and present it at the Committee's June 2nd meeting. An October 1 to 15 status reporting schedule will also be necessary in order to meet the TIP change deadline for all the projects that are moving fiscal years.

9.0 Other Business

There was no other business.

10.0 Public Comment

There were no comments from the audience.

11.0 Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for June 2, 2011. The agenda will include project status updates from the May sponsor reports.

12.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:18

Respectfully Submitted,



Holly Ostdick
Associate Planner
/JMS

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