Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

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Draft Minutes

CMAQ Project Selection Committee Meeting

Thursday July 7, 2011
CMAP Offices

Members Present: Chairman Ross Patronsky – CMAP, Marty Buehler – Counties, Jeff Schielke/Larry Keller – Council of Mayors, Mark Pitstick - RTA, Luann Hamilton - City of Chicago, Mike Rogers – IEPA, Susan Stitt - IDOT

Members Absent: none

Others Present: Allison Bos, Len Cannata, Bruce Carmitchel, Bruce Christensen, Ashley Collins, Michael Connelly, Chalen Diagle, Jackie Diaz, John Donovan, Sharon Feigon, Jim LaMantia, Bill Lenski, Randy Neufeld, Tom Niemiec, Keith Privett, Tom Rickert, David Simmons, Chris Snyder, Chris Staron, Gerry Tambali, David Tomzik, Steve Travia, Mike Walczak, Jan Ward, Tammy Wierciak

Staff Present: Claire Bozic, Randy Blankenhorn, Patricia Berry, Doug Ferguson, Don Kopec, Tom Murtha, Holly Ostdick, Russell Pietrowiak, Jose Rodriquez, Joy Schaad, Todd Schmidt,

1.0 Call to Order and Introductions

Ross Patronsky, Committee Chair called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. Members and attendees introduced themselves.

2.0 Agenda Changes and Announcements

There were no agenda changes or announcements.

3.0 Approval of June 2, 2011 Minutes

On a motion by Mayor Keller and a second by Mr. Pitstick, the draft minutes for the June 2, 2011 meeting were approved as presented.

4.0 Project Changes

4.1 McHenry County DOT – Walkup Rd/Crystal Lake Rd from Bull Valley to IL 176 (TIP ID 11-03-0019)

On a motion by Mr. Buehler and a second by Ms. Stitt, the Committee approved a cost increase of $13,459,000 total ($3,351,054 federal).

4.2 Illinois Environmental Protection Agency – Chicago Area Diesel Retrofit Program (TIP ID 13-09-0003)

On a motion by Mayor Keller and a second by Mr. Rogers, the Committee approved a scope change and $500,000 cost increase to increase the number of school districts receiving retrofits.

4.3 Lincolnwood – Lincolnwood Union Pacific (UP) Rail Line/Weber Spur Bike/Multiuse Trail (TIP ID 02-10-0001)

Mr. Pietrowiak said that Lincolnwood requested a transfer of funds from Phase-2 engineering into Phase-1 engineering. This was undertaken as an administrative modification.

4.4 Lincolnwood - Lincolnwood Commonwealth Edison (Com Ed) Utility ROW / Skokie Valley Bike/Multiuse Trail (TIP ID 02-10-0002)

Mr. Pietrowiak said that Lincolnwood requested a transfer of funds from Phase-2 engineering into Phase-1 engineering. This was undertaken as an administrative modification.

4.5 Kane County DOT – Huntley Rd at Galligan Rd (TIP ID 09-09-0010)

Mr. Pietrowiak said Kane County requested a transfer of funds from right of way acquisition to Phase-2 engineering and Construction. This was undertaken as an administrative modification.

5.0 Active Program Management

5.1 May 2011 May Status Updates

Ms. Ostdick reported that the May status updates have been collected for 178 project phases. 84% were reported correctly, 13% were reported, but incorrectly (i.e. in with information for another phase), 1% did not submit. She pointed out that 36% of project phases required to be obligated by September 30th were obligated in May. She said that she anticipates that some will not make the September deadline, but 63% of 2011 project phases have already had a one-time move, so they may be considered for removal from the program if a move is requested during the October 2011 and the reason for delay is within the sponsor's control. She reported that the most common reason cited for delay was coordination with IDOT and other agencies.

She reported that staff recommends one project be removed from the program at this time, Oak Forest's 158th St and 155th St sidewalk project between Laramie Ave and Cicero Ave-TIP ID 07-10-0002. The sponsor has been contacted and agrees that they cannot pursue it at this time. On a motion by Ms. Stitt and a second by Mr. Buehler, the Committee approved the request.

5.2 Contingency Project Forum

Ms. Ostdick stated that everyone agrees accomplishing the regularly programmed projects is the first priority. She informed the Committee that a summary of the meeting and list of projects was included in the packet. Ms. Stitt responded that, while agreeing with Ms. Ostdick's statement on accomplishing the regularly programmed projects as the first priority, a strong second priority is to not lose any federal funding. The committee members discussed various perspectives and settled on releasing the contingency list for public comment with the proposed program, just in case it should be used. Mr. Blankenhorn addressed the Committee saying that November 2011 is too soon to put this kind of an emergency strategy into action, and pointed out that in October a whole 5-year program will be adopted from which ready projects can be drawn over the next 15 months. He commented that he has no problem with doing contingency planning at this time, even presenting a list of potential projects to the public, if warranted. He said he would like to see more focus put on why the current projects are not being implemented in a more timely fashion.

Mr. Donovan reminded the Committee that if past history is used as the indicator it is unlikely that the region will obligate $190 million by September of 2013. Mr. Privett commented that if we were to take a list of potential contingency projects out for public review more time needs to be provided for adding projects as CDOT and RTA are on record saying that they have others to submit. He also suggested calling the list the C List as it would fill in projects after those on the A List and B List are accommodated. Mr. Rogers pointed out that a C List project could easily jump over a B List project if its timing is a match to what is needed.

Mr. Pitstick commented that the region is still at risk of rescission. Ms. Ostdick stated that even if we implement contingency projects, the CMAQ program will be at risk of rescission until the entire unobligated balance is spent. Mr. Tomzik asked if the C List projects would be ranked and Mr. Patronsky responded that, in his perspective, staff would do an air quality cost/ benefit analysis of each, but projects would not be ranked against each other in the traditional way.

Mr. Connelly commented that we need to proceed in a transparent fashion; if we implement this contingency strategy, the reasons should be laid out including an explanation of how hard the region has tried to get the regularly programmed projects done first. Ms. Ostdick pointed out that, if the committee believes implementing the currently programmed projects is the highest priority and the projects listed as being ready in summer and fall of 2013 are not currently fully funded, then adding the un-funded projects to the contingency list will not guarantee funding. Therefore the chances of the sponsors accomplishing the projects without having construction funding are small. However, there are numerous projects that are ready to go immediately. She suggested completing another contingency forum near the end of FFY 2013 to find the projects that will be ready for immediate implementation near the end of FFY 2013. Ms. Stitt agreed revisiting this nearer to implementation would be more productive. Mr. Patronsky suggested postponing further consideration of a contingency strategy for about 15 months and the Committee concurred.

5.3 Unobligated Balance by Sponsor

Ms. Ostdick explained the exhibit summarizing analysis of the $300 million unobligated balance by sponsor to the Committee. Committee members asked that CMAP distribute the list of individual projects that are not fully obligated. Ms. Ostdick agreed and asked sponsoring agencies to review their lists and to contact her if any inaccuracies are identified.

6.0 Program Focus Groups

A representative of each of the four program focus groups presented a short summary of their group's deliberations and results. Later, project sponsors were given a chance to speak about their projects.

For the Regional Transportation Operations Coalition (RTOC), Mr. Steve Travia of IDOT drew the Committee's attention to the June 30th memo from the focus group and gave highlights. He said that RTOC looked at projects which had operational impacts on higher level routes such as highways, SRA routes and other major arterials. RTOC identified a package of projects totaling $177.2 million in CMAQ requests that breaks out into three categories: system modernization and intelligent transportation systems (ITS); corridor recommendations (i.e. packages of projects that if implemented together would provide discernable benefits to particular roadways); and special or unique projects serving important operational concerns. A fourth operations program was also submitted consisting of strategies and projects which the RTOC believes should be undertaken by the region, and supported by CMAQ or other funding, but which were not yet put forward as project applications.

Mr. Mike Rogers of the Illinois EPA spoke for the Direct Emissions Reduction Focus Group, saying that CDOT, CTA, Metra, Pace, private railroads, Chicago DOE, the Respiratory Health Assoc., the US EPA and the IL EPA participated. He drew the Committee's attention to the June 30th memo from the focus group and gave highlights: that their focus was reducing exhaust and idling, repowering /replacing engines, new fueling technologies and alternative fuels. The GO TO 2040 action areas most involved are modernize the region's transit system and conservation of energy. The focus group saw their main goal as reducing VOC, NOx and particulate matter emissions and secondarily, to reduce petroleum consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. They screened projects by proximity to sensitive populations (children and seniors) and to areas of high levels of reported asthma cases; whether the project demonstrates innovative/state of the art technology and if the project improves the condition of the region's fleets. Several plans were considered supportive of GO TO 2040: the IEPA's State Implementation Plan and related programs, the Chicago Climate Action Plan, municipal sustainability plans, private sector sustainability plans and Pace's Strategic Plan. Eighteen projects were reviewed and 9 were recommended for CMAQ inclusion as a package. Ms. Hamilton noted that the IEPA's umbrella project making sub grants to sponsors has a 50/50 matching requirement which is down from the 65/35 ratio CMAQ had done previously. Mr. Rogers noted that this is an ongoing program through IEPA which has been at a 50% match.

Mr. Tom Rickert spoke for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force and stated that the Task Force was proposing a package of projects intended to achieve mode shift (i.e. a shift from single-occupant private vehicles (SOV) to transit and/or non-motorized modes). The projects in the package feature innovation and best practices; improving access to transit and providing seamless coordination and connection between modes; addressing substantial barriers to walking and cycling (including gaps in the cycling network); and

supporting *complete streets* concepts, which will create modernized, multi-modal roadways. Mr. Rickert reviewed the Task Force's work examining and analyzing of a wide range information and data for each project proposal in regards to: the purpose of each project; the scale or functional class of affected infrastructure (i.e. were facilities on or over arterials and collectors, as opposed to local streets); and consistency with GO TO 2040 and existing supportive (local and sub-regional) plans. The Task Force selected projects that: had good proximity/access to transit; supported *complete streets* concepts by providing non-motorized accommodation to motorized transportation projects; built out the network in the Regional Greenways and Trails Plan (especially those projects that would close significant gaps in this network); and/or overcame barriers to walking and biking , especially pedestrian-focused projects that were either innovative and/or would significantly improve access to transit. The Task Force has provided two lists or matrices – those projects that are recommended (with the primary package's suggested funding totaling $80 million), and which is sub-divided into listing in several tiers, and those projects that are not recommended for funding because they either do not have a discernable planning basis or serve only purely local needs.

Mr. Mark Pitstick spoke for the Transit Focus Group which was made up of RTA, CTA, Metra, Pace, CNT and CDOT staff and said that the group reviewed 39 projects and produced two lists: the recommended list and the not included in recommended list. The criteria reviewed in support of this effort included three areas: *advancement of GO TO 2040 action areas*, which was an analysis of how likely a project was to advance each action area specifically identified in the GO TO 2040 focused program approach adopted by the MPO Policy Committee; *Plan Basis* which was an analysis of the project's relationship to specific GO TO 2040 major capital projects or other adopted plans and *Project Readiness* which was an evaluation of how ready the sponsor is to implement the project. The six projects being forwarded for CMAQ program particularly address the following action areas: *focus investment on modernization, adopt best practices in new technologies, establish seamless coordination between modes* and *include transit components as part of highway major capital projects*.

Ross thanks the Focus Groups for all their good work and indicated that the projects will be discussed further at the next meeting.

7.0 FY 2012-2016 CMAQ Program

7.1 Program Mark

Mr. Ferguson discussed the exhibit on CMAQ apportionments and the development of draft programming marks for FFY 2012 through 2016. He pointed out that there are numerous uncertainties about the future of the CMAQ program and the marks are not up for approval at this meeting. Staff considered the $90 million annual apportionment level to be conservative in the context of previous apportionments. He mentioned that a rescission was announced at the end of June, yet how the CMAQ program will be affected has not been determined. Ms. Stitt stated that the effect on the CMAQ program will be available on Friday July 8th. The staff recommendation will be refined with Committee member input and presented for the Committee's consideration on July 21st.

7.2 Project Rankings

Mr. Ferguson discussed the preliminary project rankings exhibit which summarizes the findings for the 369 proposed projects in terms of VOC, NOx and particulate matter eliminated as well as VMT and trips eliminated. He said that the final rankings will be available before the next meeting.

Mr. Snyder asked how the focus groups' recommendations would be folded into the project selection thinking. He also told the Committee that most of the highway agencies are having the experience of project bids coming in well below the engineers' estimates. He said that this phenomenon further erodes the region's ability to spend down the unobligated balance. He suggested that it may not be wise to put off the consideration of contingency projects until next year. Ms. Ostdick answered his questions and the Committee reiterated their comfort in focusing on getting the regularly programmed projects accomplished for now.

Mr. Jason Osborn of McHenry County addressed the Committee to explain why he feels that the Randall Road pedestrian crossing in Algonquin ranked poorly despite very strong benefits. He believes that, while the project is near a high school and areas of high concentration of restaurants and medical facilities, there is little ability to cross Randall road for 3 miles and that the VOC analysis is affected by the context. Mr. Murtha indicated that the Bike/Ped Task Force placed this project in their "neutral" category.

Mr. Pitstick Spoke about the *Chicago Commute Options* project for comprehensive transportation demand management which is similar to Pace's rideshare marketing in its ability to get single occupant vehicles off the road. Mr. Gerry Tumbali of the RTA explained the five key tasks in the proposal.

Mr. Buehler noted that if the recommendations of the four focus groups were to be adopted that would utilize $446 million, just about all the CMAQ funding. Options on how to proceed were discussed and it was suggested that besides the air quality rankings and focus group recommendations, project readiness and implementer interest will be considered. Ms. Sharon Feigon of CNT asked the Committee to "push the envelope" in order to give strong consideration to the worthy demonstration projects.

8.0 Other Business

Ms. Berry reminded the Committee of the concerns which Mayor Mulder brought up at the last meeting about how slow the process to obtain right of way can be. Ms. Berry informed the group that Mike Walczak, the planning liaison for the Northwest Council is working with the mayor to find a solution.

9.0 Public Comment

There were no public comments.

10.0 Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for July 21, 2011 at 2:00 p.m.

11.0 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.