

Tier 2 Consultation Meeting
February 13, 2002 9:00 AM
Approved Meeting Summary

Participants

Patricia Berry	CATS
Randy Blankenhorn	IDOT
Steve Call	FHWA via speakerphone
Dean Englund	CATS
Ken Hemstreet	CTE
Patricia Morris	USEPA
Mike Matkovic	IDOT
Pat Pechnick	IDOT
Matt Rempfer	CTE
Mike Rogers	IEPA
Susan Stitt	IDOT
Sidney Weseman	RTA

1. Approval of October 18, 2001 meeting summary

Consideration of the meeting summary was deferred until the next consultation team meeting.

2. Dan Ryan Project

Mr. Matkovic said that engineering of the Dan Ryan project has been active for almost two years. The project was submitted for inclusion in the TIP as a reconstruction project and the intent was to reconstruct the expressway in kind. During phase 1 engineering, however, IDOT took a look at operations and saw an opportunity to improve operations and safety with this project. A fifth auxiliary lane will be added from 71st Street to 95th Street and also at I-57. Removal of ten ramps and adding two at 47th Street is also planned. North of the Skyway the intention is to remove some bottlenecks on local lanes and provide for three lanes of travel in each direction. IDOT is working with the city of Chicago on this project and has not completed the public involvement efforts.

Mr. Pechnick said IDOT has an agreement with the City on the number of lanes and the plan to relieve bottlenecks. There are a dozen alderman involved. Safety and access to and from the Skyway are important considerations. The City studied this possibility years ago but did not have the funds to proceed.

Mr. Matkovic asked what steps would be necessary to allow for consideration of design approval in June 2002. This time frame would allow for public hearings, off-system work in 2003 and set up of the main line work for 2004. Mr. Pechnick said setting up detours and work on frontage roads would be included in the advance work. The second year the advance work could be done without disruption of traffic, the third year the express lanes will be closed down and the fourth year the local lanes will be re-built.

Ms. Morris said it sounded like a change in the design concept and scope had occurred and this would require a conformity determination. Mr. Blankenhorn asked if a sketch model analysis would be sufficient. Mr. Englund suggested that one way to approach it is that the region was well below the budgets during the last conformity exercise and will still conform regardless of this project. There is no way it could have an impact that would result in the region being over the budgets. Ms. Stitt agreed, saying that a sketch model analysis showed that the order of magnitude of change in results would be in the hundredths of a ton.

Ms. Morris said that other areas have been required to go through a whole analysis and there is no precedent for allowing a sketch model analysis. Mr. Call said that since this is a regionally significant project, he would agree. Mr. Pechnick questioned the definition of regionally significant. The project is regionally significant given the importance of the Dan Ryan in the region's transportation system. The changes being discussed are not considered regionally significant. All agreed.

Mr. Pechnick said that he could not envision that putting in a long auxiliary lane would draw more people to use the Dan Ryan. It is more of an operations and safety issue. Mr. Call asked if the scope of the work is regionally significant. Mr. Hemstreet said the proposal is not to add additional access to the Ryan and would not draw any more traffic to the facility. Mr. Blankenhorn asked if it would be necessary to amend the Plan in order for this project to proceed. Mr. Pechnick stated that additional auxiliary lanes are not shown in the Plan. Mr. Matkovic said the revisions to the project are primarily for ingress and egress, connection to the ramps—the auxiliary lanes won't have the same hourly traffic as the other four lanes.

Mr. Weseman noted that CTA will be reconstructing the track and stations on the Dan Ryan line and are re-working the timing of that \$200 million Red Line project. Mr. Matkovic agreed, saying the timing will be 2003-2004 to work well with the reconstruction project. Mr. Pechnick said that drainage problems have been identified within the CTA area and timing the two projects right could save money for all. There are pipes that must be pushed under the tracks and doing so will disrupt traffic. Working together may result in less disruption as well as dollars saved.

Mr. Pechnick and Mr. Matkovic produced detailed plans of the project and the consultation team spent some time reviewing the plans. More discussion of the purpose and results of the proposed project followed. Mr. Rogers said the changes in scope to the project are a procedural issue, not an environmental one. Mr. Blankenhorn asked what would be required to satisfy the process. Mr. Pechnick said that the next regional conformity is scheduled for approval at the end of 2003 and the main line work will not proceed before that time. Mr. Matkovic said FHWA has expressed concern about the length of the auxiliary lane even though it's an operational improvement. Ms. Morris said USEPA is concerned about setting a precedent for other areas and asked what FHWA's concerns are. Mr. Call said that FHWA understands how this will function and would be satisfied with a minimal analysis, but USEPA is the lead on conformity issues.

Mr. Englund said that if there is agreement that this is an operational change, CATS could re-do the assignments without undertaking full model runs. At neither the regional or corridor level, will this project make a significant change in choice of mode or destination. Showing how the traffic flow is changes would be a reasonable way to proceed. Ms. Morris said that sounded satisfactory. Mr. Blankenhorn asked what the schedule would be. Mr. Englund asked for which analysis years results would be required. Mr. Rogers said 2007, 2015 and 2020. Mr. Englund estimated that once the project was coded for the networks, it would take three weeks to get the work done. Ms. Morris said she would take this proposal to headquarters and get back to CATS within the week to let them know if this approach is acceptable (subsequent to the meeting, she did and it is).

Mr. Englund asked if both of the airport scenarios would be required. He noted that the existing airport scenario is slightly worse in terms of VOC emissions and the supplemental airport scenario is slightly worse in terms of NOx emissions. Mr. Rogers said that VOC is more important and so CATS should use the existing airport scenario.

Mr. Rogers asked if there are any implications from the HOV bypass ramp study for this project. Mr. Pechnik said he has been working with Mr. Vick to get a feasibility study funded, but there is no commitment to include HOV bypass ramps in this project. The work will not preclude such ramps from occurring at these locations in the future.

It was agreed that conformity work would proceed on receiving word from Ms. Morris and that a public comment period on this work will be required.

3. Release of MOBILE 6 and RTP/TIP conformity schedule

Mr. Rogers said that MOBILE 6 was released January 29, so IEPA must update the emissions budget by January 2003. He said that there is a need to update the vehicle age distribution—the one currently in use is from 1996 and that is too old. Mr. Rogers distributed a table showing vehicle age distribution from the I&M database for five vehicle types. He also distributed graphs depicting the age distribution for LDGTs and LDGVs. Mr. Rogers noted that the guidance calls for the use of the latest planning assumptions. He will be working with CATS staff on updates. Ms. Berry noted that a conformity consultation meeting to discuss RTP issues would be held soon.

4. Attainment status

Mr. Rogers said that he did not anticipate a notice in the federal register regarding re-designation until the fall of this year. Ms. Morris said it is anticipated that USEPA would be reviewing IEPA's proposal concurrently with their development by IEPA. SIP revisions can take years. Mr. Englund asked if the revisions would have any effect on the budgets used for the conformity analysis. Mr. Rogers said that when an adequacy determination is made on the revised and new budgets, they would have to be used. Mr. Englund asked what the anticipated time frame is. Ms. Morris said that USEPA tries

to make an adequacy determination within 90 days of submittal. Again, the team asked to kept apprized of developments in this area.

5. Other Business

No other business was brought before the consultation team.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting is on call. It is likely that a meeting to discuss RTP issues will be scheduled soon. In addition, the consultation team will be called together to review the results of the work on the Dan Ryan project.