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Freight Committee Meeting Minutes

November 16, 2009

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

Committee Members: George Billows-Illinois Trucking Association (Co-Chairman), Tom Zapler, UPRR (Co-Chairman), Joe Alonzo-CDOT, Gregory Dreyer-ISTHA, Reggie Greenwood-SSMMA, Rob Hoffman, Lee Hutchins-AECOM, Kazuya Kawamura-UIC, Patti Killinger-Will County, Jim LaBelle-Chicago Metropolis 2020, Steve Lazarra-Will County Land Use Dept, Dean Mentjes-FHWA, Floyd Miras-USDOT-Maritime Admin, Larry Wilson-IDOT

Absent: David Chandler-CNT, Doug Grane-Central States Trucking, David Grewe-CTCO, Libby Ogard-Prime Focus, Gary Perry-Walgreens, Laurence Rohter-IIT Earl Wacker-Consultant, Norm West-USEPA

Staff Present: Brett Baden, Bob Dean, Doug Ferguson, Tom Murtha, Holly Ostdick, Todd Schmidt

Others Present: Kristen Andersen-Metra, Kristen Bennett-Metro Strategies, Bernardo Bustamante-FHWA, Erik Cempel-Cambridge Systematics, Joe DiJohn-UIC, Kevin Ebright-McKeehan- Cambridge Systematics, Eric Holemman-Wilbur Smith Associates, Sarah Lutz, McHenry County DOT, Alison Martin, CNT, Dean Mentjes-FHWA, Mark Rinnan-Jacobs, Barb Sloan-Cambridge Systematics, James Tigue-UIC, Monique Urban-Cambridge Systematics, Audrey Wennink-Cambridge Systematics, Tammy Wierciak-WCMC, Erika Witzke-Cambridge Systematics, David Zaroway-Hatch Mott McDonald

1.0 Call to Order

Co-chair George Billows called the meeting to order at 10:05a.m.

2.0 Introductions

Committee members and other attendees introduced themselves.

3.0 Agenda Changes and Announcements

No agenda changes were noted. Mr. Kawamura announced the UIC Supply Chain and Freight Conference on November 17.

4.0 Approval of Minutes – September 2, 2009

A motion to approve the minutes of the September meeting, with no revisions, was made by Mr. Zapler and seconded by George Billows. With all in favor, the motion carried.

5.0 GO TO 2040 Preferred Scenario Development

Mr. Dean briefly reviewed the status of the preferred scenario, and pointed out that facilitating freight in the region was an important element of the draft preferred scenario. He stated that the preferred scenario was in draft stage, and that review and input on the document was encouraged. Mr. Dean noted that the document is posted on the CMAP home page, <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov> [a short direct link is <http://bit.ly/6kxpVX>]. He stated that the review process for the preferred scenario would lead to endorsement at the January meetings of the CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee.

6.0 Regional Freight System Planning Recommendations

Mr. Murtha of the CMAP staff began by noting the Freight System Planning recommendation project was underway for several months, with only a few months to go. He stated that materials were posted at <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/cmp/freightsystem.aspx>. He also noted that CMAP was working with Cambridge Systematics on developing freight flow projections for the economic analysis that was a major goal of the project. He pointed out a graphic representation of draft 2007 and forecast 2040 truck flows in and through the region, and noted that stakeholders could examine these on the Web site or after the meeting.

Ms. Witzke from Cambridge Systematics – after introducing her colleagues on the project – presented an overview of the freight planning recommendations efforts thus far. She noted that the goal of the project was to propose a set of planning recommendations for the freight system to be considered within the GO TO 2040 process, and to estimate the effects of such recommendations, including any economic benefits. Project phases included developing a freight planning framework; data and forecasting; performance, policy, and investment analysis; and recommendations, with continuous public outreach.

Ms. Witzke then told the Committee that the focus of the meeting would be on the development of recommendations, both methods and results to date, and gathering Committee feedback regarding the draft recommendations.

Public Outreach

Ms. Wennink reviewed public outreach activities to date, and how they informed the development of the project and policy recommendations. She pointed out that outreach included one-on-one meetings as well as group meetings. There was an effort to engage a variety of geographic areas and modes, including rail-intermodal, trucking, water, and aviation modes. The effort also included outreach to communities via the Council of Mayors.

The outreach effort broadly informed policy development. In addition, the outreach process identified 44 separate projects.

The full stakeholder input report and appendices are posted at <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/cmp/freightsystem.aspx>. [direct link to the report:

<http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=17894>]. Ms. Wennink presented the following highlights of the outreach process:

- On a scale of 1 to 10, overall freight system adequacy was given a 6.1; air freight: 6.8; rail/intermodal: 6.4; roadway: 5.6; water: 5.2.
- Most potential truck improvements were considered important. Highest importance-ranked potential trucking improvements include expanded congestion management strategies (7.82); centralized traffic information resources (7.59); and changes to delivery time regulations (7.21). Many other improvements ranked closely behind these. The lowest ranked improvements (better enforcement and design of infrastructure to accommodate trucks) still ranked above 5 on a scale of 1 to 10.
- Most potential rail improvements were also considered important. The highest importance-ranked rail improvements were infrastructure investments to mitigate at-grade rail-highway crossing issues and improvements to reduce freight-passenger conflicts (tie, 8.6); rail safety improvements and public-private partnerships for rail improvements and related infrastructure (tie, 8.1). The lowest-ranked issues, addressing EJ&E impacts and addressing new intermodal developments, were still ranked above 6 on a scale of 1 to 10.
- Continuing the theme, most potential water freight improvements were ranked important. The highest-ranked potential improvements were improvements to the lock system on inland waterways (7.7) and improved maintenance of the waterborne freight system (7.2). The lowest ranking improvements, changes in taxation and fee structures and regulatory policy changes, were still ranked above a 6 on a scale of 1 to 10.
- More variation was present in the air cargo improvements. Highest-ranked improvements included a refined system of monitoring to reduce delay and improve safety and reliability (8.5) refinements to U.S. Customs procedures and government inspections (8.0), and better connections between airports and highways (7.9). O'Hare expansion (7.7) ranked higher than South Suburban Airport development (5.5).
- Favored general highway funding options included fuel taxes (7.6), tolls for passenger vehicles and impact fees (tied, 6.6) and tolls/congestion pricing (higher toll rates during periods of higher demand) (6.4). Lower-ranking options included property taxes (3.5), cordon pricing (e.g., flat daily fee to enter the Chicago Loop) (4.7), vehicle registration revenue (5.1), and a tax on vehicle miles traveled (all vehicles) (5.3).
- Specific freight funding options ranking highly included innovative public-private partnerships (7.7), fuel taxes (7.5) and tolls on dedicated truck lanes (7.2). Lowest-ranking options included a tax on vehicle miles traveled (5.3) and municipal contributions to pooled funds for regional freight projects (5.5).
- The most important community freight considerations included safety (8.4), traffic delays at at-grade highway-rail crossings (7.8), freight volume increases as a result of new business locations (7.7), and freight as an economic engine for local businesses (7.6). The lowest-ranking considerations still ranked above 6 on a scale of 1 to 10, and included redevelopment of brownfields for freight use (6.2), conflicts with other land uses, and freight as a driver of employment (tied, 6.8).

Further analysis of community freight planning considerations noted that while most (about 75%) communities say they consider freight needs in transportation planning, fewer consider freight needs and impacts in land use policies and working with local businesses, and only about one-fourth of communities coordinate freight transportation planning with neighboring jurisdictions.

Data Analysis

In addition to stakeholder input, data analysis was used to identify many freight improvement needs. Ms. Urban reviewed the data analysis process to identify projects and policies. She noted that rail capacity projects were identified by high rail density. Rail crossing improvements were identified by high casualty rate predictions, high truck volumes, and high train counts. Improved water facility needs were identified by lock delay. Freight-focused roadway improvements were identified by congestion (travel time index), high daily truck volumes, and proximity to a truck route/facility. 100 infrastructure projects were identified through these means.

Ms. Urban gave examples of the analysis, including truck, rail, and water volume analyses, the regional travel time indices, lock delays, water volume analyses, and rail crossing delays. Mr. Zapler questioned the last analysis, pointing out that many of the crossings mapped out wouldn't seem to have much freight involvement. Cambridge Systematics staff responded that the crossings were identified as intermodal connectors. A vigorous discussion ensued about the meaning of the crossing analysis, until it was realized that the intermodal connectors in the analysis included both freight intermodal connectors and transit intermodal connectors. Cambridge Systematics said they would review the analysis.

Ms. Urban continued with discussions of various land-use and freight interactions.

Transearch Data Update

Ms. Urban continued with a discussion of the analysis of Transearch data to develop a truck trip table. She noted that this did not involve a full travel demand model, but included data disaggregation, network development, and assignment at a sketch planning level. The growth to 2040 would be used to substantiate recommendations.

Preliminary Infrastructure Recommendations

Mr. Cempel pointed out that the infrastructure recommendation development process began with a very large universe of projects to consider, including recommendations from stakeholder input, data analyses, and regional plans and programs. To make the process manageable, the projects were bundled into complementary projects, with competing alternatives to address the same need considered together.

Using these identified bundles, the projects were evaluated using the performance measures we had discussed at previous meetings. The performance measures included measures of mobility, connectivity/accessibility, safety, economic growth, system preservation, and environment/community needs. Mr. Cempel pointed out that the last two categories were qualitative, rather than quantitative evaluations.

Mr. Cempel reviewed the evaluation process, which included a project analysis; a score for each measure with available data sources; establishing a project priority using an average score (with modes evaluated separately). Additional weight was given to projects identified through outreach and multi-modal projects. Finally, the results were reviewed to establish a reality-check.

Mr. Cempel pointed out that the region has an identified freight project priority, and that is CREATE. He said we were trying to build on CREATE for the long-term plan. The additional projects included grade crossing improvements or separations, accommodating freight growth where it is occurring, and capacity in areas of high freight activity.

Mr. Cempel then reviewed maps of the projects, including possible rail and highway improvements.

Preliminary Policy Recommendations

Ms. Sloan noted that, as with the project recommendations, our process developed a large number of policy recommendations. These recommendations were bundled by the vision themes identified in previous meetings (economy; industry logistics patterns; freight infrastructure; commodity/vehicle traffic flows; organization and public policy; and environmental/community impacts). The policies were then evaluated using performance measures (accessibility; economic development; mobility; safety; and environment/community). The result was a short list of 27 policy recommendations.

Small Group Workshop

The committee and other participants then broke up into small groups based on groups of vision themes to discuss the associated policy recommendations. The groups discussed the potential time frame for the policy implementation; potential implementing agencies; and priority. The results are posted on the project Web site, <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/cmp/freightsystem.aspx>.

7.0 Project and Issue Updates

This agenda item was deferred to the following meeting.

10.0 Meeting Schedule – Next meeting, December 3 at 10am [rescheduled for November 16].

Future meeting dates:

Jan. 6, 2010

Feb. 18, 2010

11.0 Adjournment

At 12:10 p.m., a motion to adjourn was made and approved by acclamation.

Respectfully submitted by Tom Murtha