

**Draft Meeting Notes
Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force**

MEETING DATE: 01/18/07

MEETING LOCATION: CMAP Offices

CALLED TO ORDER: 2:05 pm

ATTENDANCE:

(Task Force Members)

Keith Privett (Chair *pro tempore*), Chicago Department of Transportation

Allan Mellis, Cook County Forest Preserve District

Maryann Romanelli, School District 181 & NE IL SRTS Task Force

Ed Barsotti, League of Illinois Bicyclists (via telephone)

Barbara Moore, Local communities (Village of Northfield)

Richard Bascomb, Village of Schaumburg

Amy Malick, Chicago Transit Authority

Randy Neufeld, Chicagoland Bicycle Federation

Deborah Fagan, Du Page County

Mark Minor, Metra

Ben Helphand, Center for Neighborhood Technology

(Staff)

Tom Murtha, CMAP

John O'Neal, CMAP

Patricia Berry, CMAP

(Others)

Rosanne O'Laughlin, Edwards & Kelcey

Dan Thomas, Edwards & Kelcey

Harley Cooper, CNT

Meleak Geertsma, Environmental Law and Policy Center

Jessica Dexter, ELPC

Holly Ostdick, McHenry County Council of Mayors

Chalen Hunter, Northwest Municipal Conference

Greg Piland, FHWA-IL Division

Introductions: Attendees introduced themselves

Approval of the Minutes: After three small changes to the minutes of the 11/30/06 Task Force meeting, motion was made and seconded for approval of the meeting notes. The motion was unanimously approved.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Project Programming:

(a) Safe Routes to School

Mr. Murtha introduced and summarized CMAP's letter to communities in the region (distributed to the Task Force as a handout) regarding the Illinois Safe Routes to School Program and the Program's upcoming training sessions. He explained that this letter was mailed to all local governments in the region, subsequent to discussions with Program's coordinator, Megan Holt. Mr. Murtha added that a postcard, produced by IDOT and announcing the training sessions, had been mailed out to all schools in the state.

(b) Rescissions

Mr. Murtha reported that there was no news on rescissions.

(c) CMAQ Program

Mr. Murtha reminded the Task Force of the approaching deadline for CMAQ applications (Feb. 2, 2007). He stated that the primary staff contact for the Program is Ross Patronsky, 312-386-8796.

Mr. Privett emphasized that for project submittals, CMAP is now asking for a plan for multi-year funding. In addition, current projects in the annual element are being reprogrammed to the multi-year programming.

Mr. Murtha stated that agencies with construction programmed in the out years of the CMAQ program should at this point be moving forward expeditiously with engineering.

(d) CMAP Programming

Patricia Berry, Principal Planner in Programming and Operations, gave the Task Force a brief overview of CMAP programming and the ways in which CMAP is working to expedite projects that have, for various reasons, been delayed.

Ms. Berry explained that CMAQ projects will be reprogrammed to reflect the multi-year structure of the program. She added that CMAP is working with IDOT on the letting of projects. She stated that, under current procedures, if programmed STP projects are not ready for letting, then Councils of Mayors can propose a substitute project to replace them.

Ms. Berry added that CMAP is seeking an additional appropriation in order that the Councils of Mayors, which have moved quickly with projects and spent more of their funds, can obtain funding to move forward with new and ongoing projects. She added that our region and its transportation programming, however, need a reality-check, and that projects (and the entities that sponsor and implement them), which are continuously and chronically "not ready" should, in some way, be penalized. In response to this problem, Ms. Berry explained that CMAP plans to develop a procedure of "individual project monitoring". Part of this procedure involves coordinating with sponsors, implementers and IDOT to insure that all parties are working together to get our region's money spent.

Mr. Mellis then raised a couple of issues and concerns he has had about funding programs and processes/procedures. First, he expressed concern that there not be any repercussions for sponsors/implementers seeking to expedite projects; and secondly, more generally, Mr. Mellis

was concerned that while IDOT had stated that it is looking for ways to streamline the programming/letting processes, in actual fact, his experience is that it has become more complicated and fraught with uncertainty.

(e) Project Update

Mr. Privett updated the Task Force on the Valley Line Trail, in the northwest Chicago neighborhood of Sauganash, which is due to go out for letting next month. He warned that CDOT's experience in dealing on this letting indicates that implementers must have all their "I"s dotted and all their "T"s crossed. He added that CDOT was asked for paperwork regarding the \$1 ComEd lease, and that they wanted an operating agreement before the construction letting.

Mr. Privett stated that work has been proceeding on the planning of the Bloomingdale Trail

Regarding the Bloomingdale Trail, Mr. Helphand announced that an exhibit will be held at a Chicago gallery, which will show the work of several university design studios who developed plans/designs for the Bloomingdale Trail.

Ms. Moore spoke briefly about her work on the Skokie Valley Trail, and announced a public open house meeting on April 19th about the trail and the Feasibility Study currently being undertaken by five communities along the route.

Mr. Mellis announced that the Centennial Trail was going out for letting tomorrow (January 19, 2007). He added that the Paul Douglas Trail would be let in March of 2007.

(f) Update – Bikeway Information Requests

Staff described the general process and recent examples of CMAP's response to bikeway information requests, referring to several maps posted in the meeting room.

Mr. Mellis asked whether CMAP – in relation to its work providing bicycle facilities information requests – could help control development in areas between existing bicycle facilities, where a future connection were envisioned and desired. Mr. Murtha explained that CMAP, as a regional, advisory body, does not have the authority to block such development, but that municipalities may through exactions (development fees, donations, impact fees, etc.) require developers to construct or provide for linkages in bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

Hazard Busing Analysis:

Mr. Helphand gave a presentation introducing and summarizing the findings of the Center for Neighborhood Technology's newly published report, "School Safety Busing: Serious Safety Hazards in Cook County, 1980-2006."

Mr. Helphand expressed his hope that this study would prove useful for other efforts, activities, and programs – like the Safe Routes to Schools Program – which concern themselves with safety, health and the physical environment we, and especially our children, inhabit.

Mr. Privett asked whether hazards busing funding applications were submitted by school districts. Mr. Helphand responded, "Yes, they did."

Mr. Barsotti asked what the primary criteria were for judging whether a road, or other element, were a hazard or not – wondering if it was traffic volume? Mr. Helphand stated that he did not, off the top of his head, know. Mr. Helphand expressed concern that the whole hazards busing program was about avoiding hazards rather than eliminating them.

Mr. Murtha asked whether the Northeastern Illinois Pedestrian Task Force was aware of CNT's study. Mr. Helphand said that it was just finished; that this was the first time it had been presented; and that he anticipated presenting it to the Northeastern Illinois Pedestrian Task Force and other groups in the near future.

Regional Pedestrian Safety Initiative:

Staff informed the Task Force that to date nine communities had submitted Letters of Interest for CMAP's Pedestrian Safety Initiative, Community Program; that one other community had promised a Letter; and finally that six other communities had expressed some interest. Staff referred to a handout listing these communities.

Mr. Murtha added that funding for an additional (second) year for the initiative would have to be reprogrammed for FY2008. He asked for concurrence from the Bicycle-Pedestrian Task Force to put this into the budget.

Palatine Willow Corridor Study:

Mr. Murtha presented a draft overview of the Palatine-Willow Corridor Study, giving the project background, and outlining the process and preliminary results/suggested countermeasures.

Mr. Barsotti, drawing attention to one of Mr. Murtha's slides, asked whether there exist any studies that examine at the relative safety of (well planned and designed) mid-block crossings versus intersections, where the turning movements greatly complicate matters. Mr. Murtha responded that he did not, off hand, know of any such studies, but that he believed they existed.

Mr. Neufeld whether Ms. Moore might not have something to add to the discussion of the Palatine-Willow Corridor study, since she has spent nearly nine years as an engaged citizen and a bicycle and pedestrian advocate in communities through which the corridor runs. Ms. Moore stated that it has been a roller-coaster ride. That fear at the grass-roots level has led to opposition of any attempts to change things for the better. Distrust is, she said, a major hurdle.

Ms. Malick asked whether any more workshops were being planned. Tom replied that at this point there were not, but that he hoped that there would be in the future.

Subregional Bicycle Planning:

Mr. Murtha gave the Task Force a brief update on the status of the contracts for subregional bikeways planning. CMAP has entered into bicycle facilities planning agreements with six subregional Councils of Mayors. All but one, Mr. Murtha stated, have been signed and returned to CMAP. The final agreement was reported to have been signed by its Council and was expected to arrive at CMAP shortly.

Unified Work Program:

Mr. Murtha reported on CMAP's Unified Work Program and asked the Task Force whether they supported the request for additional sub-regional bicycle plans and updates. Mr. Murtha stated that some Councils plans were out-of-date.

Mr. Privett stated that it would be helpful, he believed, to have a list of which Councils have plans and what year those plans date to. Mr. Murtha stated that all Councils have some kind of bicycle plan, though the age and quality varied.

Mr. Neufeld stated that he believed it would be useful to have a discussion, at a future meeting of the Task Force, of follow-through on projects; of how projects are implemented; of the different experiences people have had with actually building bicycle plans.

Mr. Privett agreed that this would be a useful topic to schedule for discussion, and that at a future meeting the Task Force would formally consider it.

Mr. Murtha asked the Task Force to confirm their interest in a work program that included additional efforts for the Pedestrian Safety Initiative Program and additional low-cost regional bicycle and pedestrian planning efforts. The Task Force concurred and confirmed their support of and participation in these efforts. Mr. Murtha added that in the future bicycle and pedestrian planning would fall within CMAP's "Strategic Initiatives", which would include, among others, efforts in IT, Operations, and Traffic Management.

Mr. Privett asked if the strategic initiatives would remain part of the core level of the UWP. Mr. Murtha replied, "Yes."

Regional Transportation Plan:

Mr. Murtha reported that CMAP was in the process of updating the RTP. The update, he added, was based in part upon the evaluation of the federal government and specifically addressed aspects which the federal government judged inadequate.

Mr. Murtha added that the update would include expanded policy statements on safety and security.

Other Business

Mr. Minor announced the Call for Papers for the Transport Chicago conference to be held at IIT on June 1, 2007. He said there is a March 12 deadline for abstracts to be submitted. Mr. Privett noted Metra's posting on its website of the number of bikes allowed on board per run.

Next Meeting: Next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, March 15, at 2:00 pm.

Adjournment: 3:30 pm