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Agency for Planning

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Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)

DRAFT

STP Project Selection Committee Meeting Minutes

July 16, 2020

Via GoToMeeting

Committee Members Present: Jesse Elam, Chairman – CMAP, Dan Burke – CDOT, John Donovan – FHWA, Lorri Newson – RTA, Grant Davis - CDOT, Tara Orbon – Counties, Leon Rockingham – Council of Mayors, Jeffery Schielke – Council of Mayors, Jeffrey Sriver – CDOT, Eugene Williams - Council of Mayors

Others Present: Elaine Bottomley, Emily Daucher, Mark Decker, Jackie Forbes, Michael Fricano, Jeremy Glover, Scott Hennings, Kendra Johnson, Noah Jones, Mike Klemens, Daniel Knickelbein, Heather Mullins, Matthew Pasquini, Kelsey Passi, Ryan Peterson, Leslie Phemister, David Seglin, Troy Simpson, Joe Surdam, Audrey Wennink, Rita Yamin

Staff Present: Lindsay Bayley, Aaron Brown, Daniel Comeaux, Teri Dixon, Kama Dobbs, Doug Ferguson, Parry Frank, Craig Heither, Stephanie Levine, Jen Maddux, Timothy McMahon, Martin Menninger, Thomas Murtha, Russell Pietrowiak, Todd Schmidt, Elizabeth Scott, Tina Smith, Ryan Thompto, Mary Weber, Simone Weil

1.0 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 am by Chairman Elam. Ms. Dixon took attendance for the committee members on the call.

2.0 Agenda Changes

Chairman Elam reminded members and other attendees of best practices for participating in a virtual format. Due to changes in the Open Meetings Act, he explained that all votes need to be recorded as roll call votes.

Chairman Elam also announced Lorri Newsom’s new position as Chief Auditor at RTA. He thanked Lorri for her service and announced that Heather Mullins will represent the RTA going forward.

3.0 Approval of Minutes – June 25, 2020

A motion was made by Mayor Rockingham, seconded by Mr. Sriver, to approve the minutes of the June 25, 2020 meeting as presented. A roll call vote was conducted:

- Aye David Seglin, CDOT (on behalf of Dan Burke)
- Aye Grant Davis, CDOT
- Aye Jeff Sriver, CDOT
- Aye Mayor Rockingham, Council of Mayors
- Aye Mayor Schielke, Council of Mayors
- Aye Mayor Williams, Council of Mayors

With all in favor, the motion carried.

4.0 Evaluating the Lessons Learned

Ms. Dobbs reviewed the existing transportation impact scoring for bus speed improvement and stated that there are no proposed changes to the methodology. Next, Ms. Dobbs reviewed the current methodology for transit station improvement projects. She stated that staff is proposing removing passenger capacity from both the existing conditions and improvement scoring. Instead, staff proposes adding a new component for pedestrian and bicycle access to stations. Additionally, staff proposes the inclusion of bus terminal or transfer points and certain park-and-ride lots served by express buses as stations in this category. Mr. Sriver asked what criteria would qualify a location to be considered a station and suggested that in addition to Pace locations, some CTA transfer locations should be considered. Ms. Dobbs said there isn’t a defined list yet, but staff will include CTA in the discussion.

Ms. Dobbs then explained the existing conditions scoring components staff is proposing for transit stations projects, which include continuing the use of the cost-weighted average TERM rating and adding the percent of roads in the station area with no sidewalks. For projects that include both station improvements and access improvements, these criteria would be equally weighted. For projects including one improvement or the other, the applicable criterion would be used. Mr. Sriver raised concerns that the new scoring methodology may encourage applicants to separate one project into multiple. Ms. Dobbs noted that applicants would risk only having a portion of their project funded if the project were separated into multiple applications. Chairman Elam said staff will look into how to incentivize project sponsors to do as much as possible with a single project.

Next, Ms. Dobbs proposed that the percentage of new plus improved sidewalk, in linear feet, be used to determine the improvement for bike/ped access to stations. Mr. Sriver requested clarification that added sidewalk includes both new sidewalk and the improvement of existing sidewalk and suggested more credit be given for completing sidewalks on both sides of the street. Mr. Davis agreed and suggested consideration of including methods for crossing the street. Ms. Dobbs explained that these elements could get picked up in the complete streets planning factor score and that, at the moment, CMAP does not have the detailed data needed around each station for this type of analysis. Ms. Dobbs and Chairman Elam agreed this would, however, be a good next step to consider.

Ms. Dobbs noted that no changes to the jobs/household methodology for transit station projects were being proposed.

Ms. Dobbs presented the staff proposal for a new project category for bicycle and pedestrian barrier elimination. Physical barriers defined would be water features, railroads, or roads that are physically divided and/or unsafe to cross. Ms. Dobbs explained the proposed existing conditions score would include: route characteristics, market for facility and connectivity. She then discussed how points would be awarded as well as the unique characteristics of each barrier type. Mr. Davis expressed concern that the water barrier criteria may have unintended consequences that could penalize built-up areas. He noted the Navy Pier Flyover as an example, where other improvements have been done less than a mile away. Another example would be the extension of the Bloomingdale trail over the Des Plaines River. Cortland crosses the river less than 0.1 miles from the trail, but it does not make sense to route thousands of trail users onto Courtland instead of extending the trail across the river. He encouraged consideration for not penalizing built-up areas or jurisdictions that have included bike/ped facilities on roadway structures. Ms. Dobbs noted that the proposed scoring scale considers that across the region there are places where the distances are significant between crossings. Mr. Davis added that the number of users should be considered and Mr. Sriver suggested considering multiplying users by the distance to achieve a total distance saved. Chairman Elam stated that unfortunately there are not bicycle usage counts throughout the region. Mr. Burke stated that sponsors should have projected trail users if they're proposing a project. Ms. Dobbs noted that the scoring being discussed is for the existing conditions, and to consider potential future users would be a diversion from the methods used across all other shared fund project categories. Mr. Elam also noted that requesting data from sponsors would lead to this category being the only one that did not rely on standard databases. Mr. Sriver stated that when considering this type of project we have to consider how many would be using a facility, but for the barrier. Mr. Simpson suggested consideration of a scoring category for the quality of the nearest facility, such as lane verses path.

Ms. Phemister suggested that proximity to schools also be included as a third factor in the market for facility due to the number of school children that travel by walking or bicycling.

Mr. Klemens stated that Lake County DOT used level of traffic stress to evaluate potential future projects on county highways and state roads, and they found that for these facilities which tend to be higher speed, multi-lane facilities there was not a significant difference in points awarded. Mr. Elam stated staff will review traffic stress data.

Ms. Phemister stated that it will be hard for low income communities to get forecasts of potential trail users, particularly if they are applying for phase 1 funding. Chairman Elam and Ms. Dobbs agreed that getting forecast data for any project, trails in particular, will be difficult regardless of whether phase 1 is completed or not.

Mr. Davis emphasized that he doesn't think it's unreasonable to ask people for existing conditions for the water barriers. Ms. Dobbs stated that when there are larger distances between crossings, there may not be existing users. Chairman Elam said staff will look into other approaches to scoring that can overcome lack of data. Ms. Dobbs also noted that when there are larger distances between crossings, there may not be existing users. Mr. Sriver suggested a hybrid approach, where if data didn't exist, scoring would default to the scale presented by staff.

Next, Ms. Dobbs reported that staff proposes using cost effectiveness of changes to route characteristics for the improvement scores for barrier elimination projects. To calculate the jobs and households score, staff is proposing using data from the bicycle switching model to define the travel shed for barrier elimination projects. Then the jobs and households within the travel sheds would be calculated in the same manner as other existing project types.

Ms. Dobbs then stated that staff proposes applying the inclusive growth, green infrastructure, and the policy portion of the complete streets planning factors to this new project type, noting that specific points awarded for each category would be discussed at the next meeting.

Ms. Mullins asked how sidewalks measure bicycle access to station, noting that in many municipalities it's illegal to ride bikes on sidewalk. She suggested there be another factor to measure bicycle access to stations. Ms. Dobbs agreed but stated staff currently does not have bicycle facility data for the half mile area around stations. Mr. Sriver asked if inclusion of bike parking or bike sharing at the station would be a way to factor in bicycle access. Chairman Elam said that CMAP does not have an exhaustive analysis of bike parking or access at stations across the region, but there could be some consideration to providing bike parking. He also noted that pedestrian improvements

are probably going to be the thing that benefit the most transit users, so that is one reason for focusing on it. Ms. Mullins noted that Metra has data about bike parking at their stations, and the other service boards may also. Ms. Dobbs suggested one resolution could be to include additional points for items like improved bike parking or street crossings in the improvement scores, and stated that staff will discuss modifying the proposed scoring.

Finally, Ms. Dobbs presented staff's proposed changes to the complete streets planning factor. Staff proposes giving more weight to inclusion of complete streets elements, and reducing the weight for complete streets policies. She stated that staff also proposes that points be awarded for specific treatments, not as "all or nothing", and presented the proposal. Mr. Sriver noted that achieving maximum points may not be possible as presented and provided the example that it is unlikely a project would have both a protected bike lane and a multi-use path. Mr. Sriver also noted that there are other complete streets elements to include such as curb extensions, pedestrian refuge islands, and road diets to incentivize every tool in the complete streets toolbox. Ms. Dobbs agreed there are additional complete streets elements that could be incorporated, but did note that including more elements could further hinder projects from reaching maximum points. Mr. Davis stated he likes shifting more points to the elements and awarding more points for more impactful elements. He suggested setting a maximum number of points and having a menu of options that could get a sponsor to that maximum. Ms. Dobbs stated staff will look at what would be an appropriate maximum, keeping in mind that if all projects receive maximum points in this category it does not serve to differentiate one project from another. Mr. Sriver thanked staff for the detailed work behind the proposals. Ms. Dobbs and Mr. Elam added that staff also appreciates the committee's in depth discussion.

5.0 Shared Fund Status Update

Ms. Dobbs stated that status reports based on the June quarterly status updates were included in the meeting materials and that items in red reflect major changes since April.

6.0 Local Program Updates

Ms. Weber reported that public comment periods remain open for a few councils and CDOT. Council committees and governing bodies will begin consideration of comments and voting on recommended programs later this month.

7.0 Other Business

There was no other business.

8.0 Public Comment

There was no public comment.

9.0 Next Meeting

Chairman Elam announced that the next meeting will be held virtually on Thursday, August 6th at 9:30am. Discussion will include staff's proposal for transportation impact scoring for safety, truck route, and bridge projects, and the weighting and applicability of planning factors to the individual project types.

10.0 Adjournment

There being no other business, Chairman Elam adjourned the meeting at 10:42 a.m.