



**Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)**  
**DRAFT**  
**Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force Meeting Minutes**  
June 17, 2020

Online Go To Meeting ID: 299805741

**Members Present:** Ed Barsotti, Sidney Kenyon, Patrick Knapp, Jim Merrell, Jessica Ortega, Lee Ann Prather, Keith Privett, Tom Rickert, Karen Shinnars, Pamela Sielski, Kevin Staniel

**Staff Present:** Patrick Day, Caitlin Goodspeed, Quinn Kasal, Catherine Kemp, Stephanie Levine, Jen Maddux, Diana Martinez, Lily Nepl, Mary Weber, Beatrix Yan

**Others Present:** Emily Daucher, Charles Haller, Scott Hennings, Jacque Henrikson, Vickie Jacobsen, Mike Klemens, Michele Lee, Aaron Maertins, Marty Mueller, Derek Peebles, Andres Ruiz, Dave Simmons, Audrey Wennink, Ginger Wheeler, Sean Wiedel, Terry Witt, Jim Woods, Kristin Youngmeyer

**1.0 Call to Order and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by chair, Tom Rickert.

Mr. Rickert reviewed the Task Force's new digital communication protocol, reflecting its new virtual format. Attendees are asked to remain muted unless speaking or use the chat function for questions and comments.

**2.0 Agenda Changes and Announcements**

Jen Maddux and Caitlin Goodspeed were introduced as the new staff liaisons for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force.

Ms. Maddux made an announcement for Future Leaders in Planning (FLIP), a leadership development program for high school and college students, for summer 2020 online sessions. The sessions will be held on Thursdays between 2:00 and 3:00 pm from July 9 through August 6. Registration is available on CMAP's website and questions can be directed to Ms. Maddux.

### 3.0 Approval of Minutes

Motioned by Sidney Kenyon, seconded by Kevin Staniel, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as presented, with no comments.

### 4.0 Biking, Walking & Universal Mobility – Metropolitan Planning Council

Audrey Wennink from the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) and Michele Lee presented on accessibility recommendations outlined in *Toward Universal Mobility: Charting a Path to Improve Transportation Accessibility* and local strategies to address increased demand for safe space for biking and walking.

The presentation began with a brief introduction of the MPC, an independent 85-year old organization that advocates for a sustainable and equitable region. The discussion looked to address active mobility solutions while framing the issue around the experiences of individuals with disabilities.

Ms. Lee, a powerful voice in the advocacy community for disability accommodations, began with her background and personal struggle in commuting from Glenview into downtown Chicago by Pace, Metra, and walking, an ordeal that could take over three hours each way. She noted that many CTA rail stations remain inaccessible to those with disabilities and even when they are, elevators are frequently found out of service. The pedestrian experience is very difficult as well when the sidewalk is obstructed.

Following this was an overview of the concept of universal mobility, which was defined as a combination of universal design and community mobility.

Key objectives from this presentation included:

- Addressing the disparity in proportion of workers with disability status are much less likely to have full-time employment.
- Mobility coordination and improved information, improved consistency of wayfinding. This is a lower cost implementation that allows us to leverage our existing transportation system for significant improvement.
- Stronger engagement around accessibility with transportation network companies (TNCs).
- Paratransit would benefit from improved technology for better service, and this is more feasible now that paratransit received significant funding in last year's state capital bill.
- Improve the final steps of the journey, referencing CMAP's 2018 Regional Sidewalk Inventory study and its findings of poor sidewalk conditions.
- Empower the public to advocate to improve these conditions.

Discussion:

- Mr. Privett mentioned the taxi access program.
- Mr. Staniel mentioned the RTA interagency signage program, in collaboration with CTA, Metra, and Pace. Mr. Staniel also highlighted the need to address sidewalk gaps in the suburbs, as well as maintenance and snow clearance. The committee discussed the importance of coordination between RTA's mobility group and IDOT.
- Ms. Lee noted that paratransit is a great service, but service is limited.

A second presentation by Ms. Wennink highlighted the need for biking and walking infrastructure in the COVID-19 era. The context behind this need includes transit capacity that may be reduced up to 75% in the short term and a need for mobility alternatives, as the region's infrastructure cannot handle a significant influx of cars.

Ms. Wennink presented a number of strategies in terms of a COVID-19 "response toolbox": temporary shared "open" streets, more temporary or permanent bike lanes, more space for bike parking including in offices, converting parking lanes to pedestrian space, and slowing down auto traffic to improve safety. These tools must be customized for each community as appropriate. A best practices example included Milan, Italy, where the answer has been a rapid transformation towards biking and pedestrian infrastructure. Barriers that the Chicago region needs to acknowledge include law enforcement relations in black and brown communities, lack of access to bicycles, varying levels of bicycle infrastructure and pedestrian conditions, concerns about personal and traffic safety, and longer distances to destinations on the city's south and west sides, limiting access provided to those communities by biking or walking.

A review of CDOT's COVID mobility survey results showed shared streets to be the most requested improvement on the north side, compared to bicycle infrastructure improvements on the south and west sides. It was noted that many less responses from the south and west sides. Still, more opportunities for walking and biking could be very useful in the city: 22% of car trips are below one mile and 17% are between one and two miles. Ms. Wennink emphasized that planning intervention regarding these improvements is critical. Based on ON TO 2050 projections, the share of jobs in walkable areas will actually decrease by around 2%, a trend that needs to change.

Recent developments include a June 8 letter to IDOT from the Illinois Congressional Delegation calling for prioritization of biking and walking, an equity and environmental framework within, provisions for flexibility and innovation, and more transparency. Other initiatives underway include a city bike giveaway program and a business survey on transportation needs.

Leading into open discussion following the presentation, the question of how to provide more active transportation options for people as the city reopens was posed. The answer given was to engage communities from the start, implement existing plans developed with high quality engagement, accelerate bike/ped pop up projects/pilots, collect data, iterate projects based on community response, and make successful projects permanent.

Discussion:

- Mr. Privett noted that pedestrians in commercial districts feature inconsistent use of masks on narrow sidewalks, and a need to focus on messaging that stresses mask use and safety in limited space is as important as infrastructure improvements.
- Ms. Wennink noted that this is the first formal public presentation on the topic, but MPC continues to share the message with implementing partners, including aldermen in the City of Chicago.

- Mr. Kenyon mentioned the challenge of engaging the business community in planning, noting that some businesses are unconcerned about how their employees get to work. He asked how to get businesses more involved in solving accessibility issues. Ms. Wennink referenced MPC's Transit Means Business report and Talent Wants Transit program, which encourage employers to take an active role in employee mobility.

## **5.0 East Branch DuPage River Trail Feasibility Study – DuPage County**

Sidney Kenyon from the DuPage County Division of Transportation and Jessica Ortega from the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County provided an overview of the East Branch DuPage River Trail Feasibility Study.

Mr. Kenyon began the presentation with the trail's place in regional context, as well as its current status. The East Branch is the main trail in DuPage County trail network that has yet to be completed. The unfinished portion under study will run from St. Charles Road to Bloomingdale Road through Glen Ellyn. This difficult stretch faces numerous challenges including crossing multiple major streets and railroads. The most recent project timeline shows Phase I engineering starting in 2020, and the county is seeking future phase funding through various sources. The stretches to the north and south of Roosevelt Road are advancing on slightly different timelines.

The goals of this project include completing the trail through Glen Ellyn, connecting natural areas between Churchill Woods and Hidden Lake Forest Preserve, overcoming major barriers at IDOT roads and rail trackage along Metra's Union Pacific West line, minimizing ecological and hydrological impacts, creating opportunities for future local trail connections, and avoiding conflicts with ComEd.

Ms. Ortega continued the presentation with the project's plans to manage the trail's impact on natural areas including wetlands, waterways, floodplains, and compensatory storage basins. The trail will be made from asphalt for better water flow.

Mr. Kenyon addressed a major problem the project must overcome: identifying sufficient right-of-way amidst a significant amount of property owned by ComEd. It may not be possible to avoid ComEd property as previously thought in a 2004 study of the same corridor. Current analysis finds that the trail cannot be built under the power lines or above the NICOR pipeline. Overall, despite an overall width of 210 feet, it is unknown if the trail can be accommodated within this right-of-way. These complications impact 2.5 miles of the trail.

The Salt Creek Greenway Trail was then introduced as a relevant case study of a similar trail built on ComEd property. In that case, building close to ComEd power facilities jeopardized the trail's pavement at numerous points and fixes are ongoing. Lessons learned from the Salt Creek Greenway Trail example include a need for critical clarity with ComEd by being specific and persistent, to find a friend, to know the environment well, and to expect cost escalation.

## **6.0 CMAP Local Government Network**

Patrick Day presented on CMAP's all-agency effort to establish a Local Government Network (LGN) to strengthen ongoing communication on local and regional priorities.

These efforts are consistent with ON TO 2050 goals to promote collaboration with local governments and to better understand the local priorities of communities. A forthcoming step of this program will establish a network of staff connections to the region's leaders, based on staff personal and professional backgrounds.

Mr. Day then presented the results of the LGN's initial action – a regionwide COVID-19 Regional Recovery Survey – completed in partnership with the City of Chicago's COVID-19 Recovery Taskforce. As it pertains to planning, the context behind this survey included municipalities facing constrained budgets and increased expenditures, especially for public safety, due to COVID-19. Initial themes arising from the survey include anticipated revenue losses forcing municipalities to consider delaying capital projects, and a concern for the health and safety of transit riders and operators.

## **7.0 Project Updates**

Implementing agencies were invited to provide a brief update on completed projects, projects recently let for construction, and projects with delays requiring attention.

Ride Illinois Executive Director, Dave Simmons, who announced the upcoming Illinois Bike Summit on September 15. The summit will feature topics of importance to both planners and engineers, and will take place virtually with breakout sessions and coffee talks. Continuing education credits will be available, as well. Other topics that will be covered include e-bikes and scooters, a riverfront path, and mobile apps.

## **8.0 Other Business**

There was no other business before the Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force.

## **9.0 Public Comment**

There were no public comments raised at the meeting, but one question was sent in advance by email.

Terry Witt: What role will the committee play in developing a coordinated greenway network that will also continue north to Wisconsin and south along the Wilke corridor to join the East Branch Trail in DuPage County? Ms. Maddux stated that CMAP has done work in this area and will continue to work with communities through its regional greenways and trails planning and Local Technical Assistance program.

## **10.0 Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be September 16, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.

## **11.0 Adjournment**

At 2:33 p.m., a motion to adjourn was made and seconded. All in favor, the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Quinn Kasal