



## Environment and Natural Resources Committees

### Minutes

Thursday, May 6, 2021

9:30 a.m.

### Via GoToMeeting:

- Members Present:** Lindsay Birt – Xylem, Keary Cragan – U.S. EPA, Aaron Durnbaugh – Loyola University Chicago, Andrew Hawkins – Forest Preserve District of Will County, Cynthia Kanner – Environmental Defenders of McHenry County, Stacy Meyers – Openlands, Ted Penesis – IDNR, Tom Rickert – Kane County, Vanessa Ruiz – IDOT District 1 Environmental Studies Unit, Deborah Stone – Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability, Sean Wiedel – Chicago Department of Transportation
- Members Absent:** Jack Darin – Illinois Sierra Club, Martha Dooley – Village of Schaumburg, Elena Grossman – BRACE-Illinois at UIC, Paul May – Northwest Suburban JAWA
- Staff Present:** Erin Aleman, Lindsay Bayley, Courtney Barnes, Sarah Buchhorn, Alison Case, Brian Daly, Avery Goods, Jane Grover, Victoria Jacobsen, Catherine Kemp, Tim McMahon, Martin Menninger, Jason Navota, Annie Parker, Jared Patton, Kelsey Pudlock, Simone Weil
- Others Present:** Chelsey Grassfield, Adam Flickinger, Edith Makra, Daniel Maziarz, Jamie Meyers

### 1.0 Call to Order / Introductions

Environment and Natural Resources Committee Chair Sean Wiedel called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

### 2.0 Agenda Changes and Announcements

Chair Wiedel stated that as permitted in the Governor's Disaster Declaration from November 13, 2020, the determination has been made that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent for this committee. To ensure as transparent and open a meeting as possible, staff posted the meeting materials one week in advance, will provide a recording of this meeting linked on the CMAP website, and will take all votes by roll call. Brian Daly stated there were no other announcements or schedule changes.

### **3.0 Approval of Minutes – March 22, 2021**

A motion by Tom Rickert to approve the minutes of the March 22 joint meeting of the ENR and Economic Development Committees, seconded by Stacy Meyers, carried with one abstention and the remainder in favor.

### **4.0 CMAP Board Meeting Updates**

Erin Aleman provided key updates from the CMAP Board. She reported on CMAP's new report on improving equity in transportation fines, fares, and fees. She also provided an update on recent work in the Local Technical Assistance program, which is working with high-need communities on long-range planning projects that will help them position themselves to access funding. Erin also discussed CMAP's equity initiatives, including an equitable engagement pilot program. She also provided updates on current funding opportunities for partners and on CMAP's planning for a return to the office.

### **5.0 New Member Introduction – Cynthia Kanner, Environmental Defenders of McHenry County**

The committee welcomed Cynthia Kanner as a new member and heard a brief introduction on her expertise and work with the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County.

### **6.0 Community Data Snapshots – Avery Goods, CMAP**

CMAP produces annual Community Data Snapshots: data profiles for municipalities and counties in northeastern Illinois, as well as Chicago Community Areas. These snapshots summarize demographics, housing, employment, transportation habits, retail sales, property values, and land use. Staff will review the content and purpose of current snapshots and facilitate a discussion about opportunities to improve them in the future, specifically within the context of land use and housing content.

- Transportation data. Aaron Durnbaugh noted interest in what transportation measures are included, since they often connect with the environment.
- Tree data. Aaron Durnbaugh noted that communities may be interested in tree canopy data, which is available from the Chicago Region Trees Initiative. Brian Daly noted that CRTI produces municipal canopy profiles and that CMAP may be able to incorporate elements of these documents.
- Energy data. Deborah Stone commented about a data set on energy burden, which is calculated similarly to housing cost burden. It considers the percentage of income spent on electricity and gas compared to the average income in a ZIP code. She offered to find the data set and share it.

- Waste data. Cynthia Kanner asked whether the snapshots include anything on food waste, composting, and recycling, especially in multifamily housing. Avery Goods replied that the snapshots have information on multifamily housing, but that CMAP does not know of any data sets on waste or composting.
- EPA tools. Committee members shared links to the EPA's [EJ Screen](#) and [Enviro Atlas](#) tools. Aaron Durnbaugh noted that data from EJ Screen is similar in concept to data on proximity to open space, showing proximity to facilities identified by EPA that might have a negative impact.
- Chicago Wilderness. Ted Penesis stated that Chicago Wilderness is developing a mapping program showing open space and natural resource areas. Jason Navota replied that he is tracking that effort on behalf of CMAP and is in regular contact with the Chicago Wilderness team.
- Ecosystem services. Aaron Durnbaugh asked whether the snapshots could include data on ecosystem services such as stormwater infiltration and carbon sequestration, which could aid municipal decision-making by making clear the value of the community's land and water resources. Jason Navota responded that CMAP did ecosystem services mapping work based on the Green Infrastructure Vision within the CMAP region, and that it would be interesting to calculate values within municipal boundaries. Brian Daly added that because the analysis was conducted for the GIV, it hasn't been updated in many years and that it doesn't include some key ecosystem services. He also noted that CMAP usually provides a lot of context for the data, which is hard to do in the snapshot format, but that it is valuable information that should be considered in future versions. Jason Navota said that updating the data set may be a good graduate student project.

## 7.0 Climate Initiatives – Martin Menninger, CMAP

CMAP staff gave an update of progress to date modeling potential strategies for reducing emissions and discussed the project's next steps.

- Vehicle electrification. Cynthia Kanner said that the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County is advocating for transitioning from internal combustion to electric vehicles. They are partnering with municipalities to add charging stations that EDMC provides through grants they receive from foundations, while municipalities contribute funds for infrastructure. Woodstock and Crystal Lake have been moving ahead. Cynthia also noted that they are fiscal agents of the Citizens' Climate Lobby in McHenry County and advocate for CEJA. Martin Menninger stated that because so many parking lots are municipally owned, there is the potential for a large government role.
- Federal funding complications. Sean Wiedel described CMAQ-funded projects that are underway, including Drive Clean Chicago

and a program for fleets across the region. These \$40-50 million programs are currently being held up by Buy America restrictions. The project sponsors are seeking waivers from this requirement, while FHWA is looked for a programmatic solution to the issue.

- Right-of-way. Sean Wiedel said that in the City of Chicago, public way charging becomes very complicated because of the parking meter contract and the possibility of displacing a metered spot. Also, many people do not realize that the parkway is owned by city, so they may object to using it for public charging infrastructure. The City has been talking about public ROW charging for years but has not solved it.
- Modeling results. Deborah Stone asked whether CMAP modeled the impact of lowered transit fares. Martin Menning replied that it will be modeled in the future. Deborah said that a current pilot project in south Cook County could provide some evidence. Aaron Durnbaugh asked what CMAP uses to inform the assumptions around vehicle technology transition. Martin responded that CMAP has a spreadsheet that lets analysts put in different values, and they are currently doing a literature review on reasonable transition timelines. He said that the MOVES model looks only at legislatively mandated vehicle technology, but a new MOVES tool will be better at understanding other factors. He noted that CMAP does not have one prediction on a transition timeline and is looking at a range of possibilities. Aaron Durnbaugh said he hopes EV commitments by automakers and fleets (such as Lyft, Amazon, and FedEx) would be considered in CMAP modeling.
- State priorities. Ted Penesis stated that GHG reduction is a priority for the governor's office. He said that IDNR will shortly be finalizing a strategic plan, including looking at decreasing IDNR's footprint through carbon neutral parks, vehicle purchasing, carbon storage, and energy generation. Edith Makra noted that there is a proposal in CEJA for third-party and last-mile EV solutions.
- Municipal action. Edith Makra said the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus developed a checklist of municipal actions to become ready for EVs. She said that MMC did a listening tour last year that informed the checklist, which has been helpful to municipalities. She suggested that CMAP could help by providing assistance on parking strategies for EVs that do not exacerbate other issues. She noted that communities are wary of building infrastructure too far ahead of regional planning, so planning from the state would be helpful. She said that local permitting processes seem to be well established now. She noted that MMC is working with the Great Plains Institute in Minnesota.
- Equity. Sean Wiedel said that many organizations, such as Electrify America, are not using an equity lens and have installed in malls in wealthier areas where many people have garages where they could

charge. He said the City of Chicago worked with graduate students from Northwestern University to identify charging deserts. Edith Makra said that Electrify America installed charging station without effectively communicating their plans, which led to charging stations mostly on the north shore. Aaron Durnbaugh stated that we could use a regional conversation around equitable EV rollout, noting that there are cheap, shorter-distance EVs for daily commuting that save money, but not if you cannot charge at home or work. Jason Navota noted that EV charging infrastructure is not a priority for Invest South/West, but if money starts flowing that could be a vehicle for deployment in the city.

- Fuel source. Cynthia Kanner stated that the electricity source is important as well, as we transition away from coal. Martin Menninger agreed that analysis cannot just look at mobile emissions.

#### **8.0 Clean Energy Plan for Cook County – Deborah Stone and Jamie Meyers, Cook County**

Cook County staff presented the Clean Energy Plan for Cook County, which outlines the path the County will follow to achieve a 45% reduction in carbon emissions and make County-owned facilities carbon neutral by 2050.

- Partners. Brian Daly asked whether the County worked with any partners or consultants on the plan. Jamie Meyers said that it was mostly done in-house, but that they talked to a few after partners, included Elevate Energy and the Environmental Law & Policy Center. Deborah Stone said they did a power purchase agreement boot camp from the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, a professional network for public sector staff. They talked with Philadelphia and Cincinnati and had some attorneys walk through the steps.
- Franchise agreements. Edith Makra asked whether Cook County has franchise agreements for non-revenue accounts. Deborah Stone responded that they do not and recognized that is often a barrier. There is a big difference between what can be done with facilities that are billed and those that are not.

#### **9.0 Garfield Green Line South LTA Project – Lindsay Bayley, CMAP**

Staff presented an update on the [Garfield Green Line South LTA project](#). CMAP is working with Elevated Chicago, community groups, and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) to update the Community Work Plan with the specific goal of continuing the progress of turning the station into a community asset. The project seeks to understand the impact that decades of disinvestment have had and work to change the narrative around a community with strong, positive amenities. More information on the project can be found [here](#).

- Greencorps. Sean Wiedel said that Greencorps Chicago got a grant and will be doing a job training program for 20-30 individuals in Washington Park, greening vacant lots, putting up fences, and doing neighborhood beautification. The grant comes from state cannabis money and may lead to funding for future phases. Lindsay Bayley said she would like to hear more about the project.

#### **10.0 Other Business**

- None

#### **11.0 Public Comment**

This is an opportunity for comments from members of the audience. The amount of time available to speak will be at the chair's discretion. It should be noted that the exact time for the public comment period will immediately follow the last item on the agenda.

- None

#### **12.0 Next Meeting**

The next ENR Committee meeting will be July 1, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.

#### **13.0 Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brian Daly and Kelsey Pudlock  
May 6, 2021