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Regional Transportation Operations Coalition

Thursday, January 20, 2011, 1:00p.m.

Lake County Conference Room

CMAP Offices

Draft Meeting Minutes

Participants Present: Chair – Claire Bozic – CMAP, John Benda – ISTHA (conference call), Mark Bolton – Pace, Steve Coffinbarger – Kane County DOT (conference call), Kama Dobbs – DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference (conference call), Chris DiPalma – FHWA, Jon Nelson – Lake County DOT, Dean Mentjes – FHWA (conference call), Michael Olson – IDOT (conference call), Jason Osborn – McHenry County DOT, Mark Pitstick – RTA, Kevin Price – IDOT, Keith Privett – Chicago DOT, Tom Rickert – Kane County DOT, Chuck Sikaras – IDOT, Chris Staron – Northwest Municipal Conference, Tom Szabo – Kane County DOT, Randy Thomas – Illinois Trucking Association, David Tomzik – Pace, Steve Travia – IDOT, Gerry Tumbali – RTA, Mike Walczak – Northwest Municipal Conference, David Zavattonero – Chicago DOT, David Zesserman – DuPage County

Staff Present: Tom Murtha, Holly Ostdick, Ross Patronsky, Jose Rodriguez, Todd Schmidt

1.0 Call to Order and Introductions

Ms. Bozic called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2.0 Agenda Changes

None

3.0 CMAQ Programming Approach

Mr. Murtha began by noting that a major new task for the Regional Transportation Operations Coalition is to provide information for the CMAQ Project Selection Committee regarding transportation operations improvements to facilitate implementation of GO TO 2040, the recently adopted comprehensive regional plan. Mr. Murtha provided a brief

overview of GO TO 2040. Livable communities, human capital, efficient governance and regional mobility are the four main themes of GO TO 2040. Each theme has a set of strategic policy recommendation, but Mr. Murtha focused on the regional mobility theme. The strategic policy recommendations for the regional mobility theme include invest strategically in transportation, increase commitment to public transit, create a more efficient freight network and GO TO 2040 capital projects. [This brief presentation is now posted at <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/regional-transportation-operations-coalition/minutes>. – ed.]

Ms. Ostdick provided a brief background of the CMAQ program. The CMAQ program was created as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991 and was conceived to support surface transportation projects and other related efforts that improve air quality and relieve traffic congestion. The CMAQ program was reauthorized under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Under SAFETEA-LU the focus of eligible CMAQ projects expanded with a higher priority placed on diesel engine retrofits and cost-effective emission reduction and congestion mitigation projects that also provide air quality benefits. CMAQ funding is distributed to the States via a statutory formula based on population and air quality classification as designated by the EPA.

Mr. Patronsky discussed the modifications of the CMAQ programming approach. The MPO Policy Committee recently adopted a new approach for the development of the CMAQ Program [the final version of which is now posted at <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/cmaq> – ed.]. The new “GO TO 2040 focused programming” process will include a five-year program that meets the Federal goals of improving air quality and mitigating congestion but also supports the regional goal of implementing GO TO 2040, the comprehensive regional plan. Localized congestion relief, operational improvements, mode shift and direct emissions reduction are the additional objectives that have been identified to support GO TO 2040. However, the overall goals of the CMAQ Program will remain improving air quality and reducing congestion.

The call for projects will be modified to include direct outreach through the major implementers and the council of mayors planning liaisons. In addition to detailed project information, sponsors will identify how their proposals help implement the goals and objectives of GO TO 2040 and the local plans/programs that support the proposal.

Four program focus groups will review the CMAQ proposals to determine if they support GO TO 2040. The groups will also have the ability to directly identify projects that may achieve the goals and objectives of GO TO 2040. Directly identified projects are anticipated to come in many cases from regional and sub-regional plans and programs, and will address overarching needs, such as addressing gaps and/or barriers, reliable and efficient performance, and safety and security for all users. Multi-modal projects are

highly encouraged. Projects that are not selected for CMAQ funding or not eligible will be kept as RTOC priority projects and will be considered for implementation if other funding sources become available.

The four CMAP program focus groups are responsible for the initial review of proposed CMAQ projects and the identification of projects that advance the regional program goals.

- RTOC is responsible for review of proposed CMAQ projects that cover arterial and intersection improvements, bottleneck relief and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) improvements.
- Bicycle Pedestrian Task Force will identify effective non-motorized projects.
- Ad hoc transit focus group will review CMAQ projects related to transit facilities, equipment, service and parking.
- Ad hoc direct emissions reductions group will review diesel reduction and other related projects.

The Regional Transportation Operations Coalition (RTOC) is composed of individuals who help operate the transportation system in northeastern Illinois and who have a unique set of experience and knowledge in this discipline. The CMAQ Project Selection Committee (PSC) would like to use this expertise to recommend a package of operations related projects, consistent with the CMAQ program and GO TO 2040 goals and objectives. The CMAQ PSC would like the package of projects to achieve identifiable goals over the five year program time frame.

The CMAQ PSC will retain the responsibility of developing the five-year program, which is recommended to the MPO Policy Committee. All five years will be fully programmed. To encourage prompt implementation of selected projects the use of the "A list" will continue. The "B list" of projects, which are projects that have good benefits but are not funded, will also be maintained. The five-year program will provide CMAP with more options to manage the CMAQ program and have more projects successfully implemented in a timely manner. This will help reduce the unobligated balance, which still is unacceptably high, and exposes the CMAQ program to further rescissions.

Mr. Zavattero asked if there were any preconceived idea how CMAQ funds would be allocated or if each target group would get a percentage of CMAQ funds. Mr. Patrosky replied that there is no plan to divide the CMAQ funding any certain way and that the best projects that meet the CMAQ and GO TO 2040 goals would receive funding.

Mr. Osborn commented that the only performance measure used in the past for CMAQ funding was dollar per kilogram of VOC eliminated and now with the many of the goals of GO TO 2040 that CMAQ funding would be based more on qualitative measures than quantitative measures. Mr. Murtha stated that CMAP will have to use both quantitative and qualitative performance measures to rank proposed CMAQ projects and in some

cases, projects will have to rely on professional judgment. Mr. Zavatero commented on the need for multi-dimensional performance measures and used the example of miles of roadway with TSP in the region. Mr. Patronsky replied that the best projects submitted and eligible for CMAQ funding will be awarded. In the past proposed CMAQ projects were a scatter shot across the region and with a focused programming approach CMAP would like to see a cohesive program of projects.

Mr. Travia asked what happens if CMAQ eligible projects materialize within the five year programming schedule and if there is a mechanism for them to be incorporated into the programming schedule or do they have to wait for the next five year cycle. Mr. Patronsky replied that CMAP staff has yet to decide if the CMAQ program will be updated annually or biennially. This will allow for projects to be added to the program as projects are completed. Mr. Patronsky used the TIP as an example, with a new year of programming being added to the last year of the TIP as the current year is awarded and constructed.

Ms. Ostdick stated that project applications for the major implementers will be due to CMAP on April 1, 2011. The RTOC will review and prioritize the proposed projects and then have the opportunity to directly identify projects. Mr. Patronsky described the call for projects the bricks of the CMAQ program and the direct identification of a project by the focus group the mortar to fill in the gaps.

CMAP Staff was directed to draft a memo to provide direction for RTOC participants and to request participants to provide CMAP staff a list of performance measures, both qualitative and quantitative, and an operations-related project list before the next RTOC meeting. CMAP staff would like to emphasize that neither CMAQ PSC nor CMAP staff directed RTOC participants to develop performance measures for prioritizing project proposals, but it was their desire once the new programming approach charged RTOC with reviewing and prioritizing CMAQ projects and the ability to directly identify potential projects.

4.0 Regional Issues

5.1 Regional Archive Data User Service (ADUS)

Ms. Bozic provided an update on CMAP's ADUS project and thanked all the comments received for the ADUS Visualization Requirements Specification. CMAP staff will meet with the consultant to discuss final design and specification at the end of January.

5.2 Construction coordination update

Ms. Bozic informed RTOC of the upcoming construction coordination meeting which will be held on February 2, 2011 at the CMAP offices. [The meeting was cancelled due to weather; the meeting has been rescheduled for March 10 at 12:30 p.m.

5.3 Arterial incident management

Mr. Murtha told RTOC that CMAP would like to provide informational brochures to communities regarding arterial incident management. Mr. Murtha believes this would be a good project for an intern.

5.4 *Truck Route Identification*

Mr. Murtha is identifying truck routes in the region. IDOT has a good up-to-date state system of truck routes, but the local municipalities are lacking.

5.5 *At-Grade Railroad Crossing Data*

Mr. Murtha informed RTOC that CMAP staff will be working on a study that estimates at grade railroad crossing delay. The study will also report how the delay impacts the system region wide. A previous study conducted by the Illinois Commerce Commission will be posted on the RTOC website [posted at <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/regional-transportation-operations-coalition/minutes>). Mr. Murtha will be contacting members to assess data and analysis options for this study.

6.0 Future Direction of RTOC

CMAP requests all operating agencies in the region to support and actively participate in RTOC. CMAP would also request participants to identify agencies they feel should be included in RTOC activities. Mr. Tumbali suggested participants send CMAP staff their recommendations of agencies to be included in RTOC activities. CMAP staff will also post the most current RTOC work plan to the website [posted at <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/regional-transportation-operations-coalition/minutes>].

7.0 Next Meeting

The next RTOC meeting will be held Friday February 18, 2011 at 1:00 p.m.

8.0 Adjournment