

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

MEETING DATE: 03/10/06

MEETING LOCATION: CATS Offices

CALLED TO ORDER: 1:05pm

ATTENDANCE:

(Task Force Members)

Tom Rickert (Chair), Kane County

Ed Barsotti, League of Illinois Bicyclists

Bruce Christensen, Lake County

Deborah Fagan, DuPage County

Andrea Hoyt, Forest Preserve District of DuPage Co.

Bobbie Moore, Village of Northfield

Amy Malick, Chicago Transit Authority

Randy Neufeld, Chicagoland Bicycle Federation

Keith Privett, Chicago Department of Transportation

Bhibha Das, Illinois Department of Public Health

Todd Hill, Illinois Department of Transportation (via phone)

John Baczek, Illinois Department of Transportation

Ben Helphand Center for Neighborhood Technology

Taqhi Mohammed, Pace

(Staff)

Russell Pietrowiak, CATS

Tom Murtha, CATS

(Others)

Mary-Lynn Wilson

Greg Piland FHWA-IL Div.

Maryann Romanelli Walk to School Day

Marty Mueller, Knight Infrastructure

Stacey Meekins, EK

Trisha Sternberg (CDOT)

Bob Dean (Naperville)

Joe Kenney (Glenview)

Beth Gutelius (CDOT)

Approval of the Minutes: A motion for approval was made by Bobbie Moore, seconded by Bruce Christensen. The motion was unanimously approved.

Task Force Membership: A motion was made by Bruce Christensen, seconded by Randy Neufield to approve Bhibha Das as the representative for the Illinois Department of Public Health, replacing Megan Smith. The motion was unanimously approved.

Regional Pedestrian Safety Initiative:

(a) Request for Proposals. Staff has developed an RFP for the Pedestrian Safety Initiative, as approved in the work plan for 2006. The State of Illinois published the RFP on the meeting date (03/10/06). Staff briefed members on the goals of the Pedestrian Safety Initiative.

(b) ASIMO Video: Staff has acquired 1500 hundred copies of a pedestrian safety video for distribution to schools. We will be distributing these videos within the next several weeks. Staff will work with the City of Chicago staff to coordinate with their Safe Routes to School program, which already uses a portion of the video for instruction. The videos were being distributed to areas with high crash rates first. Any unused videos would be redistributed to other schools. The video will be sent to the building principals. It was agreed that the video would be shown at the next meeting.

(c) Pedestrian Safety Data Collection: Staff discussed pedestrian safety data analyses, along with plans to do more work. The pedestrian crash data was derived from 2003 accident reports. Each report was geocoded. A GIS system was then used to display the pedestrian crashes on a map (hanging on wall). The analysis suggests that a high number of crashes occurred in areas of low income and minority communities. The purpose of the project is to identify hot spots, as shown on the map. These “hot spots” can then be the focus of additional action to control. The plan is to do more analysis for subsequent years. Mr. Rickert asked if this is a resource that locals can use. Mr. Murtha said that they very well could. Mr. Baczek asked what the level of detail was for each crash and if the IDOT database had been used. Mr. Murtha stated that the crash data was compiled by IDOT Division of Traffic Safety for both on-system and local streets (LARS system crashes and non-LARS, often resorting to paper copies, a major effort for IDOT). CATS geocoded the IDOT data to within approximately 100ft of their reported location, with about 95% of crashes located.

(d) Mr. Murtha discussed pedestrian safety workshops to be held during the week of June 5-8, and asked attendees to put these workshops on their calendars.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Project Programming:

(a) Mr. Murtha explained the status of rescissions for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) and Illinois Transportation Enhancement (ITEP) Programs, regarding rescissions. These funds, often used to program bicycle and pedestrian improvements, have been subject to rescissions, directed by Congress, which reduce contracting authority for the programs. The rescissions have been allocated based on un-obligated balances. However, because of programming procedures established for ITEP and CMAQ (whereby the engineering and construction are often programmed together), and because the annual element for these programs is not actively managed, un-obligated balances are excessive for these programs. Therefore, these programs were

disproportionately affected by the rescissions. Rescissions for CMAQ for the past two rescissions totaled nearly \$28.5 million; ITEP rescissions totaled more than \$16 million. Task Force members were concerned that disproportionate rescissions negatively affect efforts to facilitate bicycle and pedestrian travel and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.

A discussion took place on the mechanism that caused the large unobligated balance. IDOT and CATS staff explained that CMAQ and ITEP funds do not maintain an annual element of projects “ready to go.” Programming for construction remains unobligated while engineering takes place. Engineering may take years. Thus, as more engineering-construction projects have been programmed, the unobligated balances have grown. Staff explained its recommendation to modify the program procedures to actively manage an annual element to fully obligate all available funds for these programs. Task Force members also requested information about how to reverse the rescissions already in place. Staff explained that this was not possible, but changing programming procedures might spare the programs from further cuts.

A motion was then made by Mr. Neufeld and seconded by Ms. Moore to recommend that MPO staff to work with local communities and IDOT staff to manage programming and project development process to deliver bicycle and pedestrian projects efficiently and in a timely manner, including for the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program.

Much discussion followed regarding the status of the current rescissions. Mr. Neufeld then offered an amendment to his motion suggesting additional action to assure authorized funds are obligated for intended projects.

The motion with the amendment then read as follows:

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force recommends that MPO staff work with local communities and IDOT staff to manage the programming and project development process to deliver bicycle and pedestrian projects efficiently, in a timely manner, and in a manner that minimizes unobligated balances and rescissions, including for the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program. Such a program process should include actively managed annual element with project readiness a prerequisite for inclusion in the annual element, and a multi-year program. The Task Force further recommends that rescissions should not be disproportionately borne by the CMAQ and Enhancement programs, but by all federal-aid highway programs. Because the CMAQ and ITEP programs were already disproportionately hit, the Task Force recommended that future rescissions should be assigned so that at the end of SAFETEALU, the rescissions are proportionate across all programs.

The motion was adopted unanimously.

(b) Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program: Referring to Attachment 3, the staff’s response to IDOT regarding proposals for the ITEP Program was briefly discussed. Staff explained that MPO staff review was only able to include consistency with the adopted Regional Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program, including

support for projects and strategies adopted in the TIP and RTP. This information was submitted to IDOT in fall, 2005. A program announcement was expected shortly.

Palatine Willow Corridor Study:

A preliminary training workshop for Palatine Willow Walkable Communities Workshops was held on March 2-3 in Northbrook. Staff discussed the results of this workshop, along with plans to hold these workshops on May 15-22 in communities in the corridor, the City of Chicago, and at a site in the western Suburbs.

Comments were made applauding staff efforts to conduct the workshops.

2030 Regional Transportation Plan Update: Staff discussed an update to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Strategic Regional System is being prepared. General safety strategies were distributed; feedback was requested by the end of March. Staff also stated that there will be a series of public involvement activities that is a part of the RTP Update.

Soles and Spokes Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan for Chicago Area Transportation: At this time, due to time and staff constraints, no products are ready. Staff hoped that the working group would meet in mid April.

FY 2005 Bicycle and Pedestrian UWP Proposal:

Staff briefly discussed the pedestrian and bicycle transportation planning proposals submitted for the UWP process (Attachment 4). As decisions were being made regarding the projects, involvement by Task Force members in the UWP process was encouraged.

Soles and Spokes Training Workshops:

Staff explained that planning for the workshops is now taking place. However, because of time constraints (including the Palatine-Willow and Pedestrian Safety workshops scheduled for the spring, it is anticipated that they begin in the Fall of 2006.

Other: Mr. Neufeld invited everyone to the Healthy Streets conference on March 22nd. Mr. Murtha reminded everyone that the NIPC is in the process of updating their Greenways plan. Their next meeting is April 20th.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is on call for sometime in mid-April.

Adjournment: 2:10 pm