



# Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

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## Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Transportation Committee Minutes September 19, 2014

Offices of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)  
Cook County Conference Room  
Suite 800, 233 S. Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois

**Committee Members Present:** Chair Michael Connelly – CTA, Charles Abraham, IDOT DPIT, Reggie Arkell – FTA, Jennifer Becker – Kendall County, Bruce Carmitchel – IDOT OP&P, John Donovan – FHWA, Adrian Guerrero – Class 1 Railroads, Luann Hamilton – CDOT, Alicia Hanlon – Will County, Pete Harmet – IDOT District One, Vice Chair Sis Killen – Cook County, Emily Karry – Lake County, David Kralik – Metra, John Loper – DuPage County, Mayor John Mahoney – Council of Mayors, Randy Neufeld – Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force, Holly Ostdick – CMAP, Mark Pitstick – RTA, Tom Rickert - Kane County, Peter Skosey – MPC, Kyle Smith – CNT, Lorraine Snorden – Pace, Steve Strains – NIRPC, Rocco Zuccherro – Illinois Tollway.

**Absent:** Wally Dittrich – McHenry County, Robert Hann – Private Providers, Mike Rogers – IEPA, Steve Schlickman – Academic & Research, Joe Schofer – Academic & Research, Ken Yunker – SEWRPC.

**Others Present:** Garland Armstrong, Heather Armstrong, Bruce Christensen, Heidi Files, Brooks Hansen, Rick Harnish, Terry Heffron, Janell Jensen, Patrick Knapp, Christina Kupkowski, Ashley Lucas, Martha Perales, Brian Pigeon, Chad Riddle, Adam Rod, David Seglin, Ron Shimuzu, Mike Sullivan, Tom VanderWoude, Mike Walczak, Tammy Wierciak, John Yonan, Barbara Zubek.

**Staff Present:** Alex Beata, Patricia Berry, Randy Blankenhorn, Bob Dean, Teri Dixon, Kama Dobbs, Jesse Elam, Doug Ferguson, Lindsay Hollander, Leroy Kos, Jill Leary, Martin Menninger, Jacquelyn Murdock, Ross Patronsky, Justine Reisinger, Liz Schuh, Andrew Williams-Clark.

### 1.0 Call to Order and Introductions

Committee Chair Michael Connelly called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

### 2.0 Agenda Changes and Announcements

Mr. Riddle announced that IDOT will be holding a series of open houses to seek public comment on the IDOT Multi-Year Program (MYP) starting on September 23. There will be a meeting in each of the collar counties and three in Cook County, including the City of Chicago.

### **3.0 Approval of Minutes – August 1, 2014**

A motion to approve the minutes of the August 1, 2014 meeting as presented was made by Mr. Carmitchel, seconded by Mr. Strains, carried.

### **4.0 Coordinating Committee Reports**

Mr. Connelly reported that neither coordinating committee had met since the last Transportation Committee. Both are scheduled to meet on October 8, 2014.

### **5.0 FFY 10-15 TIP Amendments and Administrative Modifications**

Mr. Kos reported that TIP amendments and modifications were included with the meeting materials and reminded programmers that a new federal fiscal year begins on October 1 and line items programmed in FFY14 will need to be authorized or reprogrammed. Mr. Carmitchel made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hamilton, to approve the FFY 10-15 TIP amendments. The motion carried.

### **6.0 Local Technical Assistance Program (LTA) Program Evaluation, Part 2: Project Implementation and Part 3: Internal Project Evaluation**

Mr. Dean provided an overview of the alignment of LTA projects with the policies and principles of GO TO 2040. He explained that LTA plans were given a score of high or moderate to indicate the degree to which each plan addressed each GO TO 2040 recommendation. He reviewed the number of plans that addressed each recommendation at a high or moderate level. He reported that infill, mixed-use and context-sensitive development and bicycle and pedestrian improvements are the most common recommendations addressed at a high level and intergovernmental coordination and maintaining existing transportation infrastructure are the most common recommendations addressed at a moderate level. In contrast, projects addressing freight movement are less common.

The results of the analysis will be considered in determining future LTA efforts. He also noted that some topics will require securing external funding that is not restricted to transportation. Mr. Connelly agreed that it would be appropriate to use non-transportation funding for projects not related to transportation. Mr. Dean went on to provide a summary of three implementation case studies: the Joliet Correctional Center redevelopment study, the Park Forest sustainability plan and the Will County Fairmont neighborhood plan. He reported that in each case, implementation of plans required partner organizations, beyond the project sponsor getting involved in the implementation of plan recommendations. He noted that the three case studies illustrate how different the implementation process is, making systematic evaluation difficult. The evaluations revealed that early involvement of partners that may eventually be implementers should be increased. CMAP staff and financial resources should be increased for implementation tracking and assistance, balanced with new projects. He stated that high local commitment is the driver for successful projects.

In response to a question from Mr. Carmitchel, he noted that CMAP will be working to build partner relationships earlier in the planning process. In response to questions from Mr. Rickert, he explained that sponsors must provide a resolution in support of LTA projects and in addition, local commitment is evaluated by CMAP staff during interviews with applicants. In response to a question from Mr. Zuccherro, he explained that sponsors must provide quarterly reports on the progress of plan implementation for two years, with annual reports required after that time. Mr. Rickert expressed concern regarding shifting some focus to implementation given that CMAP is a planning agency and that the early steps are critical to the success of projects. Mr. Dean agreed that a balance is necessary and anticipated no more than ten to fifteen percent of the resources would be dedicated to implementation. In response to a question from Mr. Arkell, Mr. Dean noted that so far there have been few contradictions between local plans and GO TO 2040 and no direct conflicts. Projects are pre-screened and where contradictions have arisen they have been resolved so that there are no inconsistencies between local plans and GO TO 2040.

Mr. Dean next reported on the results of an internal evaluation of individual staff-led projects within the LTA program. He reported that projects were evaluated on several qualitative and quantitative factors and a score of zero to ten, with ten being best was calculated. Projects most commonly scored in the 5-7 range. Using the numerical scoring, staff attempted to answer a series of questions about what factors, such as overall project budget and local commitment, have an influence on project outcomes. He reported that the analysis suggests that projects with low scores tended to have significant issues with local commitment. There was no correlation between community need and project outcomes. Projects that were in the "other" category, tended to score lower, because they are unique. Project location was not a factor in scoring. CMAP staff's initial impressions of a project turned out to be a good predictor of project success leading to the conclusion that it is important to be aggressive when screening applications. As a result of the evaluations, the current practice of prioritizing resources to lower-capacity communities, and seeking a geographic balance will be continued. Local commitment should be assessed, as much as possible, when reviewing applications and a high level of commitment should be required.

CMAP will begin a more extensive use of "planning priorities reports" to figure out what type of planning is needed in a community. Ms. Hamilton stated that CDOT did not initially understand that the focus of the program is on planning that will lead to implementation, and submitted requests for data collection. She suggested that now that the program is defined, sponsors should be encouraged to seek UWP or SPR funds for data collection and analysis. Mr. Dean agreed and noted that while data collection is a part of planning, it shouldn't be the entire project.

## **7.0 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Programming and Management Policies**

Mr. Elam reported that over the past year staff and the CMAQ Project Selection Committee (PSC) have been working to update the CMAQ Programming and Management Policies. He reviewed the most significant changes, including clarifying project readiness requirements, connecting programming to planning for bicycle projects,

providing guidance on scoring projects, the portion of engineering costs eligible for funding for transit projects, clarification of policies related to match, and other language changes to clean-up the policies document. He reported that the current draft of the Policies included in the meeting materials was recommended by the CMAQ PSC for Transportation Committee recommendation to the MPO Policy Committee and Regional Coordinating Committee. Mr. Connelly added that a number of Transportation Committee members have been involved in the development of the recommended policies.

Mr. Pitstick made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hamilton to recommend the CMAQ Programming and Management Policies to the MPO Policy Committee and CMAP Board. The motion carried. Mr. Smith stated that these policies, which consider transportation impact criteria and the implementation of GO TO 2040 are a step in the right direction. Ms. Hamilton and Mr. Rickert expressed thanks to Mr. Elam for working with the PSC to come to a compromise and develop a final product that is a good.

## **8.0 GO TO 2040 Update**

Mr. Williams-Clark provided an overview of the outreach process for the GO TO 2040 plan update and the proposed Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2014-19 TIP. He reported that over 1,400 comments were received, nearly 1,300 of which were form letters. There were four major themes to the comments: Discussion of Bus and Arterial Rapid Transit (BRT and ART), support for CrossRail Chicago, opposition to the inclusion of the Illiana Expressway as a Major Capital Project, and implementation of reasonably expected revenues. He stated there were no comments on the conformity analysis. Regarding the TIP, there were questions and comments about individual projects and text changes were made regarding the sub allocation of FTA funds and Environmental Justice. In response to comments on BRT and ART, the RTA suggest text revisions, which have been made, to appropriately frame BRT and ART options in the context of improving the overall transit system's operations and fiscal health.

In response to comments in opposition to the Illiana Expressway, since there have been no major policy changes, no changes to the current major capital projects are proposed. Text has been added to the project description to reflect the volume of comments received and the need to protect the region's open and green space during project implementation. Given its very early planning phase, the CrossRail Chicago project will remain listed as an unconstrained project. However, language was added to the project description to encourage supporters to continue to study the project, identify funding sources and most importantly to identify a project implementer. Language was also updated to reflect that a flyover option at the A2 interlocker is still under consideration. In response to a question from Mr. Skosey, Mr. Williams-Clark noted that the A2 interlocker is one of many independent projects within the overall CrossRail Chicago project. Mr. Kralik added that the A2 is also included in the Metra UP West major capital project and alternatives analysis will occur before moving into the NEPA process to determine the optimal alternative at that location. In response to a question from Mr. Skosey, Mr. Kralik stated that CrossRail contains elements that would not be under Metra's jurisdiction, and therefore Metra does not believe they are the appropriate sponsor of CrossRail. Mr. Skosey asked how the jurisdiction, project ownership, and primary lead would be

reconciled if CrossRail moves forward. Mr. Abraham stated that DPIT is looking into these issues. Mr. Pitstick noted there are a lot of parallels with the CREATE program, which has individual projects moving forward that are not major capital projects. In response to a question from Mr. Arkell regarding the description of the Circle Line in the unconstrained project list, Mr. Williams-Clark stated that implementing agencies reviewed the project descriptions, and that in the case of the Circle Line, the project is broken into phases for implementation. Mr. Connelly added that phase one was the Paulina Connector which is complete, and there are two more phases. Mr. Williams-Clark added that the Ashland Ave. project is fiscally constrained as a systematic enhancement. Mr. Arkell stated that in his opinion the project will need to be a major capital project to move forward using certain federal funds.

Mr. Williams-Clark stated that all documentation, including the changes made in response to public comment, is available for final review. He stated that the Transportation Committee will consider recommending the plan update on October 3. The CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee are scheduled to meet jointly on October 8 to consider the plan update, conformity analysis and the FFY 2014-19 TIP. He reported that the CMAP Board had discussion at their last meeting regarding adopting the update without the Illiana included as a major capital project. Mr. Carmitchel stated that this issue should be discussed today. He stated that FHWA and IDOT have been talking about what the implications would be, including whether or not another public comment period and a new conformity analysis would need to be completed. Mr. Donovan stated that the addition or subtraction of any major capital project after the comment period would require some additional public comment and a new conformity analysis. The length of the comment period will have to be determined. In response to a question from Ms. Hamilton regarding the effect on the ability to authorize federal funds, Mr. Donovan stated that the current plan expires on October 13. Subsequently it was determined that the plan expiration date is October 25 and that federal actions on projects within the TIP will be limited after that date until a new plan is adopted.

Mr. Skosey asked if there is any precedent, and if the fact that the issue involves a major capital project, is driving the requirements. Mr. Donovan stated that the law refers to substantial changes that could not be foreseen. He stated that the need for a new conformity analysis is obvious. Mr. Skosey asked if it is possible that FHWA would consider it reasonable that the region didn't know this issue would arise and would allow federal action to continue during a 30 day comment period. He stated there should be concern that the threat of withholding federal funds could force the region to adopt a plan that is not favored by the public. Mr. Donovan stated that FHWA tries to be flexible where it can. Mr. Donovan continued, saying that we're running into federal requirements requiring an updated transportation plan. Mr. Carmitchel stated that in response to a letter from IDOT to FHWA Division Administrator Kay Batey, the FHWA office stated:

The MPO Policy Committee has the authority to vote for a Transportation Plan identifying a surface transportation network that includes a package of fiscally constrained projects of their choosing. However, the action of the Policy Committee must follow a process that satisfies all applicable

planning, public participation, and air quality regulations. It is the position of the FHWA Illinois Division that the addition or deletion of any Major Capital Project to the GO TO 2040 Update by the MPO Policy Committee on October 8 would require additional opportunity for public comment and a revised air quality conformity determination. Failure to adopt a Transportation Plan that meets regulatory requirements would obviously threaten the region's ability to advance projects from the Transportation Improvement Program.

We welcome dialogue on this issue at the September 19 CMAP Transportation Committee meeting so that all partner agencies have a clear understanding of the issues involved.

In response to a question from Ms. Hamilton, Mr. Blankenhorn indicated that a revised conformity analysis would not be an impediment to an updated schedule. Mr. Smith stated that CMAP received 621 standardized comments in opposition to the project and asked; at what point do we listen to the volume of comments and acknowledge the opposition. Mr. Carmitchel noted that IDOT understands the need to hear the public, but not at the risk of the plan and stated that in the future, more time should be built into the adoption schedule. Mr. Skosey stated that had Will County stakeholders known that this would be "on the ballot," the outcome of the public comment period would have been different. He stated that last year the region went through a very intense process of evaluation and public input. Mr. Smith stated that we have a public comment period to allow citizens to provide their opinion on projects and their voices should be heard. Mr. Carmitchel stated that had proponents of the project known that this would be another debate about the individual project; the outcome of the comment period would have been different. Mr. Rickert stated that it would be concerning to remove a project that the public assumed would be included during the comment period.

Mr. Blankenhorn stated that the CMAP Board has spoken once on this project and commented on the public comment period that already took place. He stated CMAP concurs that a new conformity analysis would have to be undertaken and that if USDOT requires an additional comment period, CMAP will get through that as expeditiously as possible. Ms. Hanlon stated that a year ago the Transportation Committee voted to recommend including the Illiana project. Although some were not happy, nobody can say that they didn't have an opportunity to be heard. She added that what is being considered now is an update to the plan, which includes the Illiana project. It is unfortunate that action on the update will be about this project, and not about the update. She stated the region should not be fighting over a slice of the pie, and instead should work together to bake a bigger pie. Mr. Harmet noted that the final EIS for the Illiana will be released on September 26. Mr. Rickert commended staff and the committee for their efforts on the update and stated the final product is good. Mr. Connelly reminded everyone that the committee meets on October 3 and the Regional Coordinating Committee meets on October 8 to make a recommendation on the plan, prior to the joint meeting of the CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee. He asked if there is any concern if the CMAP Board supports a different plan. Mr. Blankenhorn stated that there is no "other plan" but that the CMAP Board or MPO Policy Committee can take action as they see fit. Mr. Carmitchel

asked if removal of a project would be an amendment. Mr. Blankenhorn clarified that the upcoming vote is on an updated plan, not an amendment. After adopting the plan update in October, the addition or subtraction of individual projects would be an amendment.

#### **9.0 Status of Local Technical Assistance Program and Major Capital Projects**

Mr. Connelly noted that an updated LTA status report and an updated MCP report were provided with the meeting materials.

#### **10.0 Other Business**

Mr. Rickert stated that he hopes the committee can continue to discuss a more robust process for vetting and auditing TAP-L projects that would be similar to the CMAQ program process, as opposed to through the TIP amendment process.

#### **11.0 Public Comment**

Mr. Garland Armstrong stated that yesterday in Elmwood Park, a freight train stopped, blocking car traffic. He stated CTA route 90 buses and Pace route 307 buses made detours and asked what choices there are for cars and trucks. He asked if there is a solution or just more chaos. He stated an overpass is needed at Harlem or Grand.

Mr. Rick Harnish of Midwest High Speed Rail thanked CMAP staff for their help in describing the process for moving the CrossRail Chicago project forward. He appreciates that the project is included in the unconstrained project list for further study and the additional language added to the plan update regarding the A2 flyover. He stated that he also envisions CrossRail as a CREATE-like program of projects. One element could be a grade separation at Harlem or Grand that the previous speaker mentioned, one is a direct connection from Union Station to O'Hare airport, more direct routes to Milwaukee are another. He stated the A2 interlocker needs to be functional beyond a state of good repair and that a flyover is needed to meet the goals of CrossRail. He stated Metra, Amtrak and a future line to O'Hare airport would benefit.

#### **12.0 Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Transportation Committee is scheduled for October 3, 2014.

#### **13.0 Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn at 11:08 am, made by Ms. Hamilton, seconded by Mr. Zucchero, carried.