

Policy Committee Meeting Minutes November 13, 2006

The meeting was held at the Chicago Area Transportation Study, Cook/Cunningham-Williams Conference Room, 233 S. Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois. Those present at the meeting were:

Policy Committee Members Present

Timothy Martin, Chair	Illinois Department of Transportation
Marty Buehler	Lake County
Chris DiPalma	Federal Highway Administration
	(Representing Norman R. Stoner)
Jack Groner	Metra
	(Representing Philip A. Pagano)
Cheri Heramb	Chicago Department of Transportation
Wally Kos	Cook County
	(Representing James Eldridge, Jr.)
Sheldon Latz	Will County
Joe Ligas	Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission
	(Representing Ed Paesel)
John McCarthy	Private Providers
Arlene J. Mulder	Council of Mayors
	(Representing Jeffrey Shielke)
Thomas Rickert	Kane County
	(Representing Karen McConnaughay)
T. J. Ross	Pace
	(Representing John Case)
Steve Schlickman	Regional Transportation Authority
Mary Wells	Illinois State Toll Highway Authority
	(Representing Rocco J. Zuccherro)

Policy Committee Members Absent

Ken Koehler	McHenry County
Frank Kruesi	CTA
Michael Payette	Railroad Companies
John Rita	Mass Transit Districts
Anne Vickery	Kendall County

Visitors

Aristide Biciunas	Public
Rocky Donahue	Pace
Bruce Gould	Will County
Luann Hamilton	CDOT
Tam Kutzmark	DMMC
Les Nunes	IDOT
Holly Ostdick	McHenry County COM
Mark Pitstick	RTA
Chad Riddle	IDOT
David Seglin	CDOT
Dick Smith	IDOT
Holly Smith	KDOT
John Tremper	RTA
Paula Trigg	LCDOT
Mike Walczak	NWMC
Erin Willrett	KKCOM

Staff

Randy Blankenhorn, Patricia Berry
Doug Ferguson, Jill Leary, Kerry Leigh, Claire Bozic
Ross Patronskey, Joy Schaad, Ron Thomas, Patricia Tinnelle

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Martin called the meeting to order at 11:08 am.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes for October 12, 2006.

Mr. Schlickman noted that the discussion concerned representation on the programming coordinating committee, not the transportation committee. The minutes should reflect that it is his position that the chair of the coordinating committee for programming should be from the Policy Committee. He also asked that the word “programming” in the following sentence be changed to “coordinating” so that it covers both the planning and programming coordinating committees.

On a motion by Mr. Kos, seconded by Ms. Heramb, the minutes were approved as amended.

B. Memorandum of Understanding with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Board

Mr. Schlickman noted that the revised MOU accurately reflected the discussion at the last Policy Committee meeting. He also felt that the word “fully” needed to be added to the sentence addressing staff support to the Policy Committee.

Mr. Rickert felt that the MOU now addressed his concerns with the disconnect between the Transportation Committee and the Policy Committee. Ms. Heramb pointed out that the previous version had a section on a conflict resolution

process that has been taken out and questioned whether that was because the federal process mandates that the MPO have the final determination on the plan and program. Secretary Martin felt that the section caused more confusion than it resolved. It should also be looked at as a one-year agreement which could be updated to include a meaningful conflict resolution at a later date. It was agreed that Ms. Heramb would draft some language noting that federal requirements have the MPO making the final decision on plans and programs and include it as part of next year's MOU.

Mr. Schlickman then moved, seconded by Mr. Buehler, that the Committee endorse the revised memorandum of understanding.

Mr. Buehler noted that the current MOU already states that the Policy committee would take final action as required by federal law. Ms. Heramb clarified that there needed to be a greater discussion about how the decisions were made between the CMAP board and the Policy Committee, including what could be done to resolve conflicts. Additional discussion among the members made clear that the agreement would be reviewed annually in January so that if necessary, adjustments to agency budgets could be made.

Mr. Blankenhorn informed the Committee that the CMAP board has not seen the revised MOU proposal. He felt that the board would have an issue with the request for three appointments to the coordinating committees. It would be a concern that transportation was more important than the other areas such as the environment or housing.

Mr. Ligas noted that even though he has been a participant in the MPO process for some time, he was concerned that the status quo was being maintained in spite of the legislation creating CMAP. He felt that CMAP would only be taking on the functions of NIPC and not really changing how regional planning is done. There needs to be greater interaction among the different focus areas, not simply keeping the present CATS committees and task forces in place. We need to deal with planning in a comprehensive manner. Mr. Groner felt that the coordinating committees would be able to provide the necessary comprehensive view.

Several members commented on the progress made including merging the staffs of CATS and NIPC and the proposed committee structure. There is a concern expressed that transportation will be buried with only one representative from the Policy Committee on the coordinating committees since that appears to be where the real interaction will be taking place among the various interests.

Ms. Hermab then suggested that a preamble be added to the MOU that addresses what we are intending to accomplish with these changes. Mr. Blankenhorn felt that would for public distribution some introduction would be helpful. He suggested that the staffs work to develop some wording that conveys what we are trying to achieve.

Secretary Martin then called for a vote to recommend this draft MOU, with the suggested additions, as the position of the Policy Committee. The motion passed with the abstention of NIPC.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Unified Work Program

Secretary Martin began by mentioning that transportation funding could change dramatically over the next two years. He emphasized that we make sure we use all available funds and that none are lapsed.

Mr. Nunes provided background information about the status of the UWP process. He explained the two tier approach, with the first tier having two phases. The first phase being the mandatory functions of the MPO covering the development of the TIP, the RTP, the UWP, the Congestion Management Plan and Public Involvement. The second phase identifying projects that supported those five mandatory functions. The second tier consisted of a discretionary process identifying good planning projects that the region would like to pursue.

Several members expressed a preference for the process to proceed as was explained in the annotated agenda – with three distinct phases, rather than two tiers. Mr. Groner offered that the Work Program Committee was scheduled to meet on Friday and take up this very issue and that he has an understanding of the preference of the Policy committee.

B. CMAQ Program

Mr. Patrosky reviewed for the committee two documents - a list of CMAQ projects programmed over the years and a cover memo of how the process has worked. There were a number of questions about how to read the list of projects and the meaning of some of the data fields. Secretary Martin requested that a follow-up report be created omitting closed projects.

Subjects that were discussed by the Committee included the amount of funding that has not been obligated; the current procedure for programming CMAQ funds, which funds all phases of a project from a single year's appropriation, resulting in more certain funding for implementers but causing larger unobligated balances; the changes in programming methods put into place for FY 2007 which created a multi-year program with out year commitments (and reduced unobligated balances in the future); the process used to capture unused funds and how to identify when a project no longer needs to retain unobligated funds; how to ensure that no funds will be lost to the region; and the impact of recessions on the CMAQ program and other federal funding programs.

Several members also expressed the need to be able to communicate effectively with state and federal legislative delegations. Knowing exactly how programs are performing is necessary to have a productive dialogue with the members.

Information contained in reports such as the one presented can be used to advocate for the continuation of such programs.

Subjects that members emphasized were the need to obligate and spend programmed funds in an expeditious manner; the need to closely track projects and identify those that are not progressing according to schedule; a better reporting mechanism to inform the members exactly what is happening with the program; and the need for a CMAQ report detailing benefits and a summary of projects by type. Secretary Martin requested that two charts produced by AASHTO be included in the minutes of this meeting.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business brought before the committee.

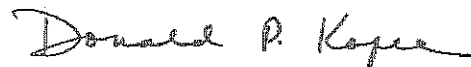
V. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the CATS Policy Committee is January 11, 2007.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

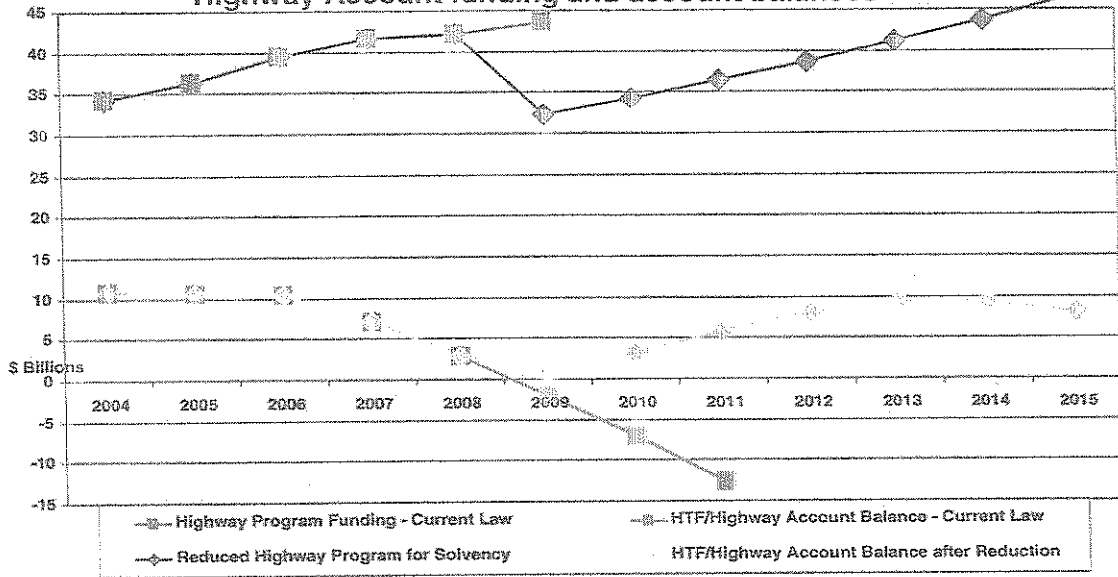
The meeting was adjourned at 12:36 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Schlickman, seconded by Ms. Heramb.

Respectfully Submitted,



Donald P. Kopec
Secretary

Highway Program Funding Faces Major Cuts as soon as 2009
Highway Account funding and account balances



Public Transportation Funding Faces Major Cuts as soon as 2010
Transit funding and Transit account balances

