



# Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

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## Freight Committee

Minutes

March 16, 2015

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

**Members Present:** Joe Alonzo, Ben Brockschmidt, Mike Burton, David Chandler, Kevin Donahue, Reggie Greenwood, Mike Klemens, Jim LaBelle (by phone), Steven Lazzara (for Alicia Hanlon), John Loper, Floyd Miras, Libby Ogard, Adam Rod, DeAnna Smith, Randy Thomas, Doug Whitley

**Staff Present:** Alex Beata, Tom Kotarac, Jacki Murdock, Tom Murtha, Joe Szabo

**Others Present:** Kristen Andersen (Metra), Garland Armstrong (Access Living), Heather Armstrong (Access Living), Jennifer Becker (Kane/Kendall Council of Mayors), Nathan Bishop (IDOT), Max Bosso (Elwood International Port District), Sheena Frève (UIC-UTC), Elaine McKenzie (Cambridge Systematics), Matt Stratton (Parsons Brinckerhoff), Tom Vander Woude (SSMMA, by phone), Barbara Zubek (Southwest Council of Mayors)

### 1.0 Call to Order

Randy Thomas, co-chair of the Freight Committee, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

### 2.0 Approval of Minutes – January 26, 2015

Mr. Whitley moved to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Burton. The Committee unanimously approved the minutes.

### 3.0 Agenda Changes and Announcements

There were no agenda changes, but there were several announcements. Mr. Beata introduced Tom Kotarac, CMAP's new deputy executive director for policy and programming. Mr. Beata also announced that an RFP had been issued for the regional truck permitting project; Mr. Murtha noted that the RFP period had closed and five proposals were received.

### 4.0 Freight Planning Framework – Policy Framework

Mr. Beata introduced the latest iteration of the freight policy framework, a document summarizing potential types of freight projects and programs for study as part of the regional planning process. This document reflects edits suggested by the Freight Committee at its January, 26 2015 meeting, as well as new material summarizing potential

research methodologies and technical resources for the identified freight projects and programs.

Within the “supportive land use and zoning” item, Mr. Loper noted the importance of focusing on inaccessible land uses, and the impacts of excess travel on the local road system. Mr. Greenwood supported the “emerging technologies” item, noting that SSMMA and Cook County will soon issue an RFP for a project investigating emerging freight-related technologies in Chicago Heights. Mr. Rod suggested the addition of improvements to air and water cargo facilities to the list of potential capital projects. Finally, Mr. LaBelle asked about the relationship between the freight policy framework document and the draft work plan for FY 2016. Mr. Beata responded that the freight policy framework has helped CMAP staff and the Freight Committee to better understand available technical resources; the draft work plan lays out specific research projects to be pursued over the next fiscal year.

#### **5.0 Draft Work Plan for Freight Existing Conditions Analysis**

Mr. Beata presented the draft scope for the freight existing conditions analysis in FY 2016. Staff is currently envisioning five projects: 1) the region’s position in national and global supply chains, (2) the extent and use of the freight system, (3) the extent and locations of freight land uses, (4) locations of freight bottlenecks and other deficiencies and (5) freight operational issues. Mr. Beata noted some of these projects would be of interest to other CMAP working committees, and also asked the Committee about convening a technical working group to review this work.

Mr. Murtha described ATRI trucking data that CMAP is in the process of purchasing. This dataset relies on observed data, including some 3 billion records, and will help CMAP better identify trucking bottlenecks on the National Highway System. While the ATRI dataset represents a major step forward in the agency’s data resources, Mr. Murtha noted that it does not include data for smaller trucks, and so stakeholder outreach will be critical in better understanding those movements.

The Freight Committee members discussed various aspects of the proposed work plan. Mr. Chandler asked if the existing conditions analysis would continue the work of the freight cluster drill-down report, including a focus on workforce issues. Mr. Beata responded that these issues may be touched upon in the supply chain project; he also noted that CMAP is very active economic development issues in other areas of the agency. Mr. Thomas commended staff’s intention to reach out to the private sector throughout the existing conditions analysis and offered the Committee’s support in identifying points of contact. Mr. Thomas also commented on the driver shortage facing the trucking industry, as well as federal regulations that affect the trucking workforce. The Committee also briefly discussed overnight truck deliveries, including the potential for unattended deliveries.

Mr. Alonzo commented on the consolidation and decentralization of intermodal rail yards and the impacts of these changes on local truck trips. Mr. Greenwood commented on technological innovations that serve to make smaller industrial sites more marketable for freight-related development. Mr. Klemens discussed the importance of waterborne

freight in the region, and Mr. Miras discussed experimental work planned by the Army Corps of Engineers at the Brandon Road Lock to control aquatic nuisance species.

Mr. LaBelle asked who at CMAP is involved in freight work. Mr. Beata responded that the team includes himself, Jacki Murdock, Tom Murtha, Liz Schuh, Todd Schmidt, as well as Joe Szabo and Tom Kotarac.

#### **6.0 Freight Planning at Peer MPOs**

Ms. Murdock summarized staff research into freight planning at other major MPOs with significant freight hubs, including ARC, MARAC, NCTCOG, PSRC, and SCAG. These MPOs provide descriptive statistics summarizing existing conditions broadly across the freight system. Most of the MPOs go further, providing detailed studies into a smaller subset of topics, and also developing capital project lists and policy initiatives. Ms. Murdock noted that the work of peer MPOs is broadly consistent with the proposed freight planning process at CMAP.

Mr. Rod asked how the peer MPOs were chosen. Mr. Beata and Ms. Murdock responded that the effort was relatively informal, relying on staff's expertise and assessment of suitable peers. Ms. Ogard noted that her work on the Illinois State Freight Advisory Committee emphasized the importance of performance measures – especially for freight volume and velocity – and that there is interest in tracking and comparing these measures across other Midwestern gateway cities. She also noted that some of these Midwestern metropolitan regions are active in ITS applications and exceed federal requirements for regional data architecture. Mr. Whitley asked about forecasting future freight capacities and volumes. Mr. Beata responded that staff is current focusing on the existing conditions of the freight system, and that long-term forecasts may come from the larger regional transportation planning process.

#### **7.0 Freight-Related Policy Updates**

Mr. Murtha presented two recent Policy Updates, "Rail Crossing Delays in Metropolitan Chicago" and "CREATE Program Status Check." Both of the Policy Updates were written to provide more information about items included in CMAP's new mobility data visualization website, which Mr. Murtha presented to the Freight Committee at its January 26, 2015 meeting.

The Freight Committee discussed the impact of federal hours of service requirements, passenger rail movements, yard capacity (particularly among smaller, older yards), and various operational issues on rail crossing delay. Mr. Murtha noted that the CREATE process identified many grade crossing improvements. Mr. LaBelle commended staff for looking into the issue of grade crossing delay. Mr. Murtha noted that the Illinois Commerce Commission data dates from 2011 and an update to that data source might be worthwhile, although the overall trends for most rail crossings would likely remain unchanged.

The Committee also discussed the status of the CREATE program, noting changes in the rail industry that have occurred since the program's inception in the early 2000s (e.g., longer trains), as well as major remaining initiatives in the program (e.g., 75<sup>th</sup> Corridor

Improvement Program). Mr. Whitley asked how the region could generate greater national support for the CREATE program. Mr. Alonzo noted that the CREATE Advocacy Committee has been active in that area for many years, and Mr. Brockschmidt noted that difficulty of making the CREATE program more salient to policy-makers. Mr. LaBelle expressed an interest in learning more about the how passenger and freight rail share the same infrastructure. Mr. Murtha noted that passenger and freight rail each impose delay on the other.

**8.0 Other Business**

Mr. Lazzara reported that the IL 53 corridor plan has moved into the implementation phase, and that related work is underway in Will County to develop a Patterson Road neighborhood plan and to promote the redevelopment of the old Joliet Prison.

**9.0 Public Comment**

There was one public comment from Mr. Garland Armstrong regarding a conflict between freight and passenger rail service at the Elmwood Park Metra station.

**10.0 Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be May 18, 2015.

**11.0 Adjournment**

The Task Force adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alex Beata, CMAP Staff