



# Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

233 South Wacker Drive  
Suite 800  
Chicago, Illinois 60606  
312 454 0400  
[www.cmap.illinois.gov](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov)

## Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Transportation Committee

### Minutes

September 18, 2015

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, Gabrielle Biciunas – NIRPC, Bruce Carmitchel – IDOT OP&P, John Donovan – FHWA, Yonah Freemark – MPC, Luann Hamilton – CDOT, Robert Hann – Private Providers, Terry Heffron – IDOT District One, Emily Karry – Lake County, Patrick Knapp - Kendall County, Scott Hennings – McHenry County, Vice Chair Sis Killen – Cook County, David Kralik – Metra, Christina Kupkowski – Will County, Aimee Lee – Illinois Tollway, Holly Ostdick – CMAP, Mark Pitstick – RTA, Tom Rickert – Kane County, Steve Schlickman – Academic & Research, Kyle Smith - CNT, Chris Snyder – DuPage County.
- Absent:** Mike Bolton – Pace , Darwin Burkhart – IEPA, Adrian Guerrero – Class 1 Railroads, Randy Neufeld – Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force, Mayor Leon Rockingham – Council of Mayors, Joe Schofer – Academic & Research, Ken Yunker – SEWRPC
- Others Present:** Mike Albin, Donna Anderson, Ryan Anderson, Garland Armstrong, Heather Armstrong, Elaine Bottomley, Edward Bury, Bruce Christensen, Wally Dittrich, Jackie Forbes, Sheena Freve, Bob Ginsburg, Jill Hayes, Jessica Hector-Hsu, Mike Klemens, Jim LaBelle, Beth McCluskey, Kirsten Mellem, Lizveth Mendez, Nady Moini, Bill Morgan, Shira Orlowek, Sophia Parr, Brian Pigeon, Chad Riddle, Adam Rod, Carl Schoedel, David Seglin, Mike Walczak, Tammy Wierciak, Audrey Wennink, Barbara Zubek
- Staff Present:** Alex Beata, Bob Dean, Patricia Berry, Claire Bozic, David Clark, Teri Dixon, Kama Dobbs, Jesse Elam, Doug Ferguson, Tom Garritano, Lindsay Hollander, Elizabeth Irvin, Kara Komp, Leroy Kos, Tom Kotarac, Jennifer Maddux, Elizabeth Oo, Ross Patronsky, Russell Pietrowiak, Todd Schmidt, Liz Schuh, Gordon Smith, Joe Szabo, Berenice Vallecillos.

## **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**

None.

## **3.0 Approval of Minutes – July 17, 2015**

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 17, 2015 meeting, as presented, made by Mr. Carmitchel, seconded by Ms. Hamilton, carried.

## **4.0 Coordinating Committee Reports**

Mr. Connelly reported that the Regional Coordinating Committee and Local Coordinating Committee have not met since the last Transportation Committee meeting. Both coordinating committees are scheduled to meet on October 14, 2015.

## **5.0 FFY 14-19 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

### **5.1 FFY 14-19 TIP Amendments and Administrative Modifications**

Mr. Kos reported that TIP revisions exceeding financial amendment thresholds have been requested. Administrative modifications, including line items that have been awarded, moved, or deleted, were provided for the committee's information. Ms. Hamilton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Rickert, to approve the FFY 2014-19 TIP Amendments. The motion carried.

### **5.2 Semi-Annual GO TO 2040/TIP Conformity Analysis and TIP Amendment**

Mr. Kos reported that the public comment period for the semi-annual GO TO 2040/TIP conformity analysis and TIP amendment closed on August 17, 2015 and no comments were received. Mr. Rickert made a motion, seconded by Mr. Carmitchel, to recommend approval of the semi-annual GO TO 2040/TIP conformity analysis and TIP amendment to the Regional Coordinating Committee and MPO Policy Committee. The motion carried.

Mr. Kos continued that approximately \$260,000 in FFY13 section 5310 funds, due to lapse at the end of this month, were released by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to fund eligible section 5310 projects in northeast Illinois. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), with the concurrence of RTA, the co-designated recipient for Section 5310 funds in the region, will use the funds to purchase paratransit vehicles to be awarded to eligible private, non-profit agencies and/ or Certified Public Providers through IDOT's Section 5310 competitive application process

### **5.3 Proposed FFY 2016-2020 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program and proposed FFY 2015 -2017 Transportation Alternative Program (TAP-L)**

Mr. Ferguson reported that the public comment period for the proposed CMAQ and TAP-L programs closed on August 17, 2015. At their September 3, 2015 meeting, the CMAQ Project Selection Committee considered comments received and agreed with the staff recommendation to make no changes to the proposed CMAQ program. He reported that one comment was received on the proposed TAP-L program. That comment was from Homer Glen, in support of their project application, which was included in the proposed program. Staff does not recommend changes to the proposed TAP-L program. Mr. Snyder made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hamilton, to recommend approval of the FFY 2016-2020 CMAQ program and the FFY 2015-2017 TAP-L program to the Regional Coordinating Committee and the MPO Policy Committee. The motion carried.

Mr. Carmitchel commended implementers of TAP-L projects and CMAP staff for doing a great job administering the TAP-L program.

Mr. Ferguson also noted that CMAP will be issuing press releases and conducting other outreach activities for the programs following formal approval by the CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee on October 14, 2015. He introduced Mr. Garritano and encouraged committee members and implementers to reach out to Mr. Garritano for assistance with and coordination of press activities.

In response to a question from Mr. Snyder, Mr. Ferguson stated that following approval of the programs, they will be forwarded to FHWA for eligibility determination. Mr. Ferguson expects the determination by the end of October.

## **6.0 The Next Long-Range Plan**

### **6.1 Defining Regionally Significant Projects – Proposed Threshold**

Mr. Elam reviewed the need for developing a revised definition of regionally significant projects for the next long range plan and results of research into the definitions used by ten peer MPOs. He then explained proposed thresholds developed by staff based on the peer review, discussion at the committee's July meeting, and subsequent meetings with and comments received from members. Staff also extracted projects from the CMAP TIP database that would meet the thresholds, regardless of funding status; this resulted in a universe of about ten years of projects. Under the proposed thresholds, 117 projects currently in the CMAP TIP database would qualify as regionally significant. He noted that the proposed thresholds could lead to more frequent plan amendments. He also noted that the financial plan may be able to be structured in a way that would allow for projects to be amended into the plan without requiring other projects to be removed. He stated that staff would like to discuss the proposed definition today, and report the results

at the joint CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee meeting on October 14, 2015. Mr. Connelly stated that today's discussion is important for setting the framework of plan development going forward. The definition of regionally significant projects has implications on plan amendments and the ability of the region to demonstrate fiscal constraint in the plan.

Mr. Freemark stated that MPC sent comments to CMAP staff expressing concern that with the definition of the regionally significant network for transit projects could result in minimal improvements to the transit system being considered regionally significant. For example, one signal with transit signal priority (TSP) would be considered regionally significant if the remaining non-TSP project costs are \$50 million or more. Those comments suggested that the definition should involve a corridor of a certain length, such as 1 mile. In response to concerns from Mr. Snyder regarding utilizing only cost, and not regional significance, as a threshold, Mr. Elam stated that the requirement that projects be located on a regionally significant network (proposed to be the National Highway System (NHS) for highways and transit service that includes separate rights-of-way or shared rights-of-way where transit has priority over other traffic) was meant to address the issue of regional significance. The NHS system has national significance, and therefore also has regional significance and the eligibility requirements for new starts/small starts/core capacity funding from FTA was used to inform the proposed regionally significant network for transit. Mr. Rickert asked how the total cost of projects would be determined for comparing to the threshold. He said that in Kane County, for example, there are a series of individual projects on the Randall Road corridor that individually would not qualify as regionally significant, but the corridor as a whole would. He added that \$50 million seems low. Mr. Elam stated that the threshold was intended to be applied to entire projects, not individual line items within the project. Mr. Rickert stated he is also concerned about the definition of "Principal Arterials." He stated that locally, the County Board may designate a corridor as a Principal Arterial, because that is how it functions locally, but that from a regional perspective, the function is not the same. Mr. Elam stated that the intent was to use the NHS designation, not local classifications. Ms. Killen stated that she is concerned that \$50 million is too high a threshold and that projects that have a large economic impact, such as creation of jobs, are regionally significant, even if the cost does not exceed \$50 million. Mr. Pitstick stated that regardless of cost, new interchanges and grade separations should be considered regionally significant. Ms. Lee stated that reconfiguring existing interchanges on the tollways can easily exceed \$50 million to address a local congestion issue that is not regionally significant.

Ms. Hamilton asked if a low threshold would mean that additional conformity analyses would be needed. Mr. Elam noted that projects in the plan are already conformed. Mr. Kyle Smith stated that at the last meeting, the committee talked about both cost and impact as criteria and stated that regardless of cost, impacts will

always be debated at the time of plan adoption or amendment. Mr. Freemark stated that the estimate of 117 projects seems low, as the TIP only covers the near-term projects.

Ms. Hamilton noted that in past plans, programs of projects were identified, such as the Downtown Transit Plan. She asked if programs, such as implementation of BRT, were included in the plan, would a plan amendment be required every time an individual project was being implemented. Mr. Elam stated that his opinion is that plan amendments would not be needed as long as the individual projects contained within the program were listed in the plan at the time of engineering on those projects. Mr. Connelly noted that this was a concern raised by FTA during the MPO Certification review. Mr. Arkell confirmed that individual projects, such as New Starts, should be listed in the plan.

Mr. Snyder said that the dollar threshold is too low; implementers want to maintain local control of local projects, even if they involve large dollar amounts. Mr. Pitstick noted that at the \$250 million non-capacity threshold, projects intended to bring the system into a state of good repair would be excluded, even if achieving a state of good repair is the clear regional focus. Mr. Snyder asked how those projects would be determined in the plan and Mr. Pitstick noted that implementers should know which projects are likely within the plan horizon. Mr. Snyder asked if state of good repair projects should be screened for significance in some other way, rather than using the allocation of regionally significant or major capital project funding. Ms. Hamilton added that the Red/Purple Line Modernization project is a state of good repair project that will also add capacity; she wondered if the project would need to be split, or if the system would need to be gamed in some way. Mr. Snyder stated that the project should be considered as both a state of good repair and capacity project. Mr. Connelly stated that another example is CTA's purchase of 846 new rail cars. 700 of which are replacements and 146 of which are new cars that will add capacity to the system.

Mr. Snyder stated that he thinks only the new capacity cost should be considered for allocation of regionally significant project funds. Mr. Elam stated that in GO TO 2040, the assumption was that maintenance components of projects were taken care of as part of the allocation of resources for maintenance activities. Ms. Hamilton stated that the staff memo stated that total project cost, not just the cost of capacity, would be used to determine if a project met the threshold for regional significance.

Ms. Kupkowski suggested that since the cost thresholds are being debated, perhaps cost should be dropped from the definition, leaving only regional significance. She stated that low cost projects can be regionally significant and high cost projects may not be. She noted there may be a little more work to determine what is 'regionally significant', but that we wouldn't have to worry about missing projects. Mr. Snyder

added that bus on shoulders is an example of a low cost, regionally significant project. Mr. Kyle Smith agreed that the definition should be about project impacts. Mr. Kralik suggested that determining what is regionally significant would be a larger debate than cost and coming to regional consensus would be difficult. He stated that cost is a cleaner way to measure impact that all involved can live with and should be included. Mr. Freemark agreed and stated that the point of the regionally significant definition is to have a debate about the merits of projects and fitting the most important projects into the fiscally constrained plan.

Mr. Carmitchel stated that IDOT favors a higher cost threshold and that defining a dollar amount is a necessary evil for developing a long range plan. He added that having a smaller list is more manageable. In response to questions from Mr. Heffron regarding how the thresholds would affect bringing additional projects into the plan after adoption, Mr. Elam suggested that one approach would be to have budgets for State of Good Repair, capacity, and other project types and that those budgets could have buffers or other measures that would allow projects to be amended into the plan without requiring other projects to be removed. Ms. Lee asked if expressway to expressway interchanges would be considered regionally significant. Mr. Elam stated that they could be part of a corridor improvement or individual projects. CMAP staff will discuss this further with the Tollway.

Mr. Connelly suggested that if a \$50 million threshold is too low, perhaps a threshold of \$100 million would be appropriate. Projects totaling more than \$100 million that are on the regionally significant network and are changing capacity would be included in the plan, but lower cost projects could also be identified based on regional significance or other factors if the sponsor would like. Mr. Rickert stated that \$100 million is better and corresponds to the FHWA threshold for projects requiring a financial plan. He added that going beyond NHS facilities for the definition of regional significance does not make sense. Ms. Killen suggested a hybrid approach with exception procedures for projects that meet one threshold but not another.

Mr. Snyder stated that the public has an interest in knowing how the region spends money. He suggested that members could look at the 117 existing projects that staff identified as meeting the cost threshold and could say whether they are or are not regionally significant, based on the scope of the projects. Mr. Elam agreed to provide the list. Ms. Lee stated that cost is appropriate and that the plan is a tool to compel local agencies to work together to implement regional priorities.

Mr. Elam stated that staff was hoping to take comments and feedback from the committee to the joint meeting of the CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee for comments and a final definition. Ms. Karry and Mr. Snyder requested that the discussion come back to the Transportation Committee one more time. In response

to a question from Ms. Hamilton, Mr. Elam stated that consensus of the committee is desired and that staff was not encouraging a vote on every individual decision during development of the plan. Mr. Snyder stated that implementers will need time once the criteria have been defined to consider their long term plans and determine what projects may need to be submitted for consideration as regionally significant. Ms. Hamilton stated that the CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee depend on the Transportation Committee to vet these types of decisions. Mr. Elam stated that staff will provide a list of current projects meeting the proposed thresholds, receive feedback from the CMAP board and MPO Policy Committee, and bring the conversation back to the Transportation Committee for further discussion in November.

## **6.2 Socioeconomic Forecast**

Mr. Clark reported that CMAP staff is in the process of developing the socioeconomic forecast that will accompany the next long-range plan. He reported that development of forecasts involves two processes: development of regional totals and allocation of the regional totals to local areas. He reviewed the procedures used for GO TO 2040 and reported on the need for greater demographic detail in the next forecast. Also, since the next plan will build on GO TO 2040, the recommendations of GO TO 2040 will be incorporated into the forecast. Mr. Clark also reported that staff conducted a review of forecasting approaches taken by peer MPOs, which confirmed the two-step approach and led to the following conclusions: two contracts will be used, one for the regional forecast, and one for local allocations, due to different levels of expertise needed for each; the regional forecast should take an econometric approach; and that the local allocations should be linked to the scenario planning process and incorporate CMAP data assets such as green infrastructure, land use, employment, and development monitoring data. He stated that the Chicago Region Socioeconomic Forecast RFP was posted on September 4, 2015 and the Local Area Allocation RFP development is in progress and should be released before the end of the calendar year.

Ms. Hamilton suggested that coordination with local governments regarding their land use plans should be in the scope of the local allocations plan. Mr. Freemark asked if it would be possible to consider multiple outcomes, such as less growth in the region leading to less projected revenue. Mr. Clark stated that the scope for the Local Area Allocation is still under development, and that staff would consider the suggestions. He added that alternate scenarios would be developed. In response to a question from Mr. Snyder, Mr. Clark stated that the regional totals would not be adjusted based on scenarios, but that the scenarios will influence the local allocations of the regional totals.

## **7.0 Local Technical Assistance (LTA) Program**

Mr. Dean reported that the staff-recommended LTA program of 22 projects was included in the agenda packet along with project evaluation information, and basic statistics describing the distribution of the proposed program. In response to a question from Mr. Schlickman, Mr. Dean explained that the program includes direct staff assistance, consultant assistance through CMAP, and grants to local agencies. Mr. Heffron made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kralik, to recommend approval of the proposed LTA program of projects to the Local Coordinating Committee and the MPO Policy Committee. The motion carried.

## **8.0 The Regional Transportation Authority Capital Program Development Process**

Ms. Anderson presented an overview of the 2016-2020 Capital Program development process. Mr. Schlickman commended the RTA for developing program marks early in the process without controversy. He then asked why federal funding levels were projected to grow. Ms. Anderson stated that the modest growth is consistent with historic funding and that although funding was flat under MAP-21, various proposals under consideration for a new federal transportation bill differ, and noted that the projections can be adjusted annually. In response to additional questions from Mr. Schlickman, Ms. Anderson stated that CTA bonds are backed by sales tax revenue, but are paid with federal funds. If no federal funds were available, changes to services would be necessary to reflect the redirection of sales tax revenues.

## **9.0 Urban Transportation Center (Steve Schlickman)**

Mr. Schlickman presented an overview of the facilities, staff, and research programs of the Urban Transportation Center (UTC). He noted that although the UTC is continuously seeking funding, they also offer opportunities for partnering with local agencies through intergovernmental agreements to complete research projects and invited committee members to provide input on potential research topics. Ms. Killen stated that Cook County has undertaken projects with the UTC that have been very successful. Mr. Schlickman announced that he will be retiring as executive director of the UTC later this year, and that a search for his replacement has begun.

## **10.0 Legislative update**

### **10.1 Federal**

Mr. Beata gave an update on federal legislative activities. He reported that Congress extended MAP-21 through October 29, 2015. Additionally, the Senate passed its "Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy Act" or the "DRIVE Act." He stated that the Act is a six year bill from 2016-2021 authorizing \$360 billion in federal transportation funding but has only identified funding for three years.

Mr. Beata reported that the DRIVE Act is the first federal transportation bill to provide funding specifically for freight projects. It builds out planning provisions to multimodal networks and facilities and contains formula funding for freight from the Highway Trust Fund to be spent on the highway system. In addition to the formula funding, DRIVE also contains two competitive grant funding programs for multimodal freight projects.

## **10.2 State**

Mr. Gordon Smith reported that no progress has been made on the adoption of a state budget. He reported that HB2685, which allows the RTA to sell additional Working Cash Notes, was signed by Governor Rauner. SB2033, which contains IDOT's operating budget, was vetoed by the Governor. Since the IDOT budget includes CMAP's planning funds, CMAP has not received any reimbursements for state fiscal year 2016 activities. Mr. Smith noted that HB4166, a reappropriation of capital projects which were already approved, had a line item veto from the Governor removing \$700 million for IDOT to conduct a mileage-based fees study. In response to a question from Mr. Snyder regarding the authorization for the state to distribute local MFT funding, Mr. Smith reported that HB4149 is on the third reading in the House. It is expected that the Governor will veto the bill if it passes the House. Mr. Snyder noted that now is the time of year when bids for road salt are issued, and if MFT is not distributed, some local agencies may not have funding to procure road salt. Mr. Smith noted that based on legislative procedures, it is unlikely that any action could be taken in time for the bids.

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

Mr. Connelly noted that the current status reports on the LTA program and Major Capital Projects were included in the meeting packet.

## **12.0 Other Business**

Mr. Abraham announced that Ms. Beth McCluskey had been appointed as the director of the Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation. Mr. Carmitchel added that IDOT staff welcomes Ms. McCluskey.

## **13.0 Public Comment**

Mr. Garland Armstrong asked about the progress of sidewalks at 159<sup>th</sup> and Oak Park Avenue in Tinley Park. He also stated that Pace buses on routes 307 and 302 get behind schedule due to freight trains leaving the BNSF Yard in Cicero. He stated that if the buses knew when trains were leaving the yard, they could make the crossing before the trains arrive. He stated that it is good that the Yellow Line will be open in October, because he and his wife like taking the

holiday train. He also stated that the ADA community wants to help and be advocates for passing a state budget.

**14.0 Next meeting – November 20, 2015**

The next meeting is scheduled for November 20, 2015.

**15.0 Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Hennings, seconded by Mr. Heffron, the meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.m.