

Tier Two Conformity Consultation Meeting

March 20, 1996

Meeting Summary

Attendance:

Linda Bolte	CATS
Doug Gerleman	FTA
Sidney Weseman	RTA
Patricia Morris	US EPA
Jon-Paul Kohler	FHWA
Patricia Berry	CATS
Eugene Ryan	CATS
Toby Frevert	IEPA
Randy Blankenhorn	IDOT

1. Approval of Meeting Summaries for October 18, 1995 and March 7, 1996

The meeting summaries were approved.

2. Analysis Years for the RTP Conformity

IEPA stated that there was a possibility that a budget would be available before the attainment plan was submitted to USEPA. If the region had a budget, the build-No Build test would not be needed. For a budget to be available mobile source strategies and growth estimates must be complete. Any budget would have to go through a public comment period before submitted to USEPA.

Questions were raised regarding what milestone years would be needed if a budget were available. USEPA and IEPA need to get back to us on that question. USEPA stated that if the region stayed within the budget, there would not be any negative impacts on conformity if VMT Offset parameters are not met. USEPA stated that this was true because the VMT Offset SIP is not a control strategy. The VMT tracking is the only link between the control strategy and the VMT Offset SIP. IEPA stated that if the VMT Offset SIP were violated then TCMs would be used. USEPA agreed with this assessment. Eugene Ryan pointed out that the enhanced HPMS will not come into play in the next conformity because we will not have a historical information from it this year. The federal DOT representatives agreed.

The group discussed the possible analysis years for the next TIP and the RTP. It was agreed that 1990 will be the base year. CATS proposed that the analysis years be 2000, 2007, 2015 and 2020. It was also discussed that for intermediate years or any budget year, interpolation would be used. CATS indicated it would discuss this proposal with NIPC. Approval of analysis years would be sought at the next meeting.

The group also discussed the way the baseline and action scenarios would be developed since this next conformity will be for a new plan and a TIP. It was agreed that the new conformity rules would impact how these analysis years were defined. No resolution of this issue was reached.

The use of these analysis years for the 98-02 was discussed. USEPA and FHWA will check on this issue.

3. Identification of Other 2020 RTP Requiring Consultation

This item was deferred until the next meeting because FHWA Region 5 was not present.

4. Other Business

There was no other business.

Tier Two Consultation Meeting

May 20, 1996

Meeting Summary

Attendance:

Linda Bolte	CATS
Jack Groner	Metra
Ron Shimizu	RTA
Samuel Herrera	FHWA-Region 5
Jon-Paul Kohler	FHWA- IL Division
Doug Gerleman	FTA
Toby Frevert	IEPA
Randy Blankenhorn	IDOT
Carl Mikyska	IDOT
Sidney Weseman	RTA
Patricia Morris	USEPA
Tom Murtha	CATS
Patricia Berry	CATS
Don Kopec	CATS

1. Acceptance of Meeting Notes for March 20, 1996

The acceptance was deferred until the next meeting.

2. TIP Changes for Non-Regionally Significant, Non-Exempt Projects

Discussion of this topic began with a review of the RTA's personal rapid transit project. Mr. Shimizu distributed a memo with attachments regarding this project. The consultation team concurred that this non-federal project is non-regionally significant and exempt for conformity purposes.

Discussion then turned to non-exempt project categories. Four categories of projects were discussed in the continuing dialogue to establish agreement that certain types of non-exempt projects that are not regionally significant in northeastern Illinois may be added to the TIP without a full conformity analysis. The categories discussed were: signal interconnects of three miles or less, in-line commuter rail and rapid transit stations, bottleneck elimination projects and grade separations (at a single location). The signal interconnects are included in a SIP revision, but until that SIP revision is approved another method of allowing these projects to proceed will be necessary. After lengthy discussion, the team concluded that no blanket agreement on the four categories could be reached. The approach agreed to is that if an implementor has a project in one of the above categories that is ready to go and is not included in the currently conformed TIP they will

submit the project as a TIP change to the Work Program Committee and thence to the Policy Committee. CATS staff will work with the federal agencies to obtain concurrence that the addition of the project will not require a full conformity analysis and to establish what documentation will be required. The WPC and PC will be asked to approve such projects contingent on federal approval. This approach will require a change to the TIP Change and Project Grouping Procedures.

3. VMT Field Visit

The federal representatives stated that a VMT field visit was scheduled for July or August. The purpose of the visit is to discuss the relationship between modeled VMT and HPMS.

4. Analysis Years for the RTP and Next TIP Conformity

While there was discussion about using 1990 as the base year and 2000, 2007, 2015 and 2020 as the analysis years there was no agreement. There was some discussion by the federal representatives that there should be an analysis done for each three-year interval. The federal agencies agreed to review these issues and provide further comments at the next meeting. The IEPA indicated that it was likely that there would be a 1999 budget. There would also be a grace period for conformity if a new SIP was submitted.

5. Update on Level of Detail to be Included in the RTP

The RTA provided information on Strategic Regional Transit (SRT) System concept it has proposed for the 2020 RTP. Adoption of the concept in the RTP would cover a number of improvement categories such as short extensions of existing rail facilities. A placeholder methodology would be developed to cover these extensions. Double tracking would also be included in the SRT. Specific projects in these categories would not be detailed in the RTP. All projects would be shown with the placeholder methodology selecting the ones to include for conformity tests. The SRT would be fiscally constrained. Station additions could also be included in the SRT. The SRT is being refined by the RTA in cooperation with the transit agencies and the RTP Committee. RTA and CATS staff will bring this concept back to the consultation process as it develops.

CATS staff informed the group that the RTP Committee had completed its refinement of the definitions of regionally significant actions. Projects not meeting the definition are: grade separations, local interchanges, arterials below SRAs, and transit stations. Bus improvements and SRAs will be treated as systems. Freeway/tollway to freeway/tollway interchanges would be shown in the RTP. CATS staff will distribute the SRA after it is reviewed by the transit working group and the RTP Committee.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for July 15, 1996.