

Attachment 1
DRAFT MEETING NOTES
Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force

MEETING DATE: 6/11/04

MEETING LOCATION: CATS

CALLED TO ORDER: 9:40am

ATTENDANCE:

(Task Force Members)

Keith Privett	Acting Chair, Chicago DOT
Ed Barsotti	League of Illinois Bicyclists (LIB)
Bruce Christensen	Lake County, representing Counties
Taqhi Mohammed	Pace
Pat Schroeder	McHenry County Council of Mayors Representing Council of Mayors
Randy Neufeld	Chicagoland Bicycle Federation (CBF)
Craig Williams	Edwards and Kelcey
Catherine Kannenberg	Metra
Jan Metzger	Center for Neighborhood Technology
Bobbie Moore	Palatine Willow Community Mobilization Team
Ray Campbell	American Council of the Blind of Metropolitan Chicago
Gordon Smith, Jr	Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)
Heather Tabbert	Kane County, representing Counties

(Staff)

Steve Breese	Staff
Tom Murtha	Staff

(Others)

Michael Moss	IDOT
Maryann Romanelli	Walk to School Day
Barb Ladner	Pace
Dave Longo	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Brian Gebhardt	South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association
Ders Anderson	Openlands Project
John LaPlante	Ty-Lin
Nick Jackson	CBF
Marty Mueller	Knight Infrastructure
Bev Moore	Illinois Trails Conservancy
Steve Buchtel	CBF
Beth Nations	Chicago Metropolis 2020
Joel Baldin	Wolff Clements & Assoc.

APPROVAL OF NOTES: Notes from the May 5, 2003 meeting were approved unanimously without discussion.

PRESENTATIONS:

Context Sensitive Solutions in Illinois

Mr. Michael Moss, Policy Advisor to Secretary at the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) announced the development of a policy on Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). A 10 page report of the policy is available at <http://www.dot.il.gov/css/home.html>. A more detailed set of guidelines that describes IDOT's approach will be available soon. IDOT relied heavily on the draft of the AASHTO guide "Flexibility in Highway Design" which covers engineering and legal aspects of CSS. Mr. Moss highly recommended the AASHTO guide. [The book is available at <https://www.transportation.org/publications/bookstore.nsf/Newarrivals?openform> –ed.]

With CSS, IDOT and other transportation agencies find out about a project's surroundings which include the community, the environment, and the economy, not just the traffic data. Challenges, restraints, and opportunities are explored. Finally, action is taken by designing the project in a way that is compatible with project surroundings. CSS balances safety, mobility, the environment, and the community. IDOT's approaches to implement CSS policy include getting stakeholders involved early and often, keeping a multimodal frame of mind, using all appropriate expertise in a multidisciplinary mode, and finally using a flexible set of rules for planning and design. Aesthetically pleasing design may be important. The important idea is to apply flexible design to what IDOT learns in the project study.

Mr. Moss compared the old way of doing things ("DAD" – Design, Announce, Defend) to the CSS process (POP – a Publicly-Owned Project: the approach that a project is important to the public, nearby residents, and users).

CSS is not about tweaking a project at the end, but a design process, according to Mr. Moss. It's not about putting a project to a vote, IDOT still has safety, budget, mobility, and other policy goals that are serious. CSS will balance these with community needs. CSS is not about compromising safety, but is about arriving at a safe design among many safe designs.

Mr. Moss listed approaches that comprise CSS. First was public involvement. Early and constant involvement is important. The second approach is multi-modalism, including private vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, and public transportation. The third approach is establishing a multi-disciplinary team to study a project. Early work by a team is important. The last approach is flexible design. Flexibility should be applied to each of the preceding approaches. A one-size-fits-all approach will not work for public involvement, for example.

Mr. Moss presented a flowchart of stakeholder involvement (available in the report

referenced above). The first stakeholder involvement activity is to form a management group to determine the stakeholders. The second activity works with the stakeholders to develop the purpose of the project (regardless of whether a formal “purpose and need” statement is required). The third activity is to analyze and choose preferred alternatives which for large, complicated projects may require a long series of meetings to narrow down the particular options. Finally, the goal is to gain consensus of a final alternative.

Mr. Moss reviewed the other approaches, including multi-modalism, the multi-disciplinary approach, and flexible design. Mr. Moss reiterated that the decisions belong to IDOT, because of its responsibilities to the public.

IDOT will apply CSS techniques to projects that change the character of the facility. This would exclude projects that are strictly maintenance. IDOT will tailor the CSS stakeholder involvement to the complexity of the project.

Mr. Moss added that CSS is not a local mandate. IDOT will leave it up to local agencies as to how each agency uses the CSS approaches.

The next steps in implementing the policy include educating IDOT planning, design, and Local Roads staff by creating an in-house training course to teach how to use CSS approaches and know how to manage CSS work when done by consultants. Mr. Moss said many consultants are being trained in CSS, since it represents the state of art.

Upon a question by Mr. Barsotti, Mr. Moss responded that the guidelines wouldn't include specific bike/ped policy. The guidelines are oriented towards better and earlier stakeholder involvement which will clarify issues for a particular project. Earlier and more extensive stakeholder involvement will clarify bicycle and pedestrian issues, allowing solutions tailored to these issues. Are the problems the rules or applying flexibility? The idea is to find out the issues, then apply solutions. Mr. Barsotti suggested the creation of a website displaying projects in early planning phases where the public can type suggestions and submit it to the project engineer. Mr. Moss noted that ideas like these are being considered.

Mr. Campbell suggested that persons with disabilities be specifically mentioned in the list of potential stakeholders. Mr. Moss responded that the larger report includes these populations. He noted that an entire page was dedicated to this issue, and that there are still federally regulated procedures in place to assure accessible designs.

In response to a question by Ms. Moore, Mr. Moss noted that CSS isn't about mandating changes to the Bureau of Design and Environment Manual, but developing a process to bring out issues like bike and ped issues. CSS is an overarching policy that mandates looking at different aspects of a project, to arrive at a “community centered” design.

Ms. Metzger questioned when IDOT will start applying CSS. Mr. Moss replied that IDOT will be creating a staff training program and then mandating these approaches to as many projects as possible. Mr. Moss preferred state-wide implementation rather than

test cases. Mr. Moss said projects starting up will be evaluated for necessary stakeholder involvement. Mr. Moss suggested an integration process. People who understand CSS are using it now.

Mr. Neufeld suggested auditing a couple of projects each year to verify progress on the use of CSS components. He also cautioned that in projects where character of a facility would not be expected to change, the potential for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations may still exist. He noted bridges, which are only built every fifty years. An opportunity should be made available to put in sufficient width, even if the original plan is to “not change the character of the facility.” There are some opportunities on a repaving project re-stripe for bicycle lanes. Lastly, Mr. Neufeld noted the importance of consultant training, since they are playing increasing roles in project development.

Mr. LaPlante added that the training materials should be made available for continuing education courses for consultants. Mr. Moss said Mr. LaPlante’s approach made sense. Mr. Moss said IDOT couldn’t train everyone on its own. Mr. Moss added that he’d like to see CSS be incorporated as an actual course in engineering schools. Mr. Neufeld responded that a line in RFP’s requiring changes would help. Mr. Moss responded that it’s a very large organization whose direction we are changing; there will be a lot of good ideas to be captured and implemented.

Mr. Anderson asked how CSS would be used in the programming process. He noted that there were projects on which people have been working for several years. Mr. Moss responded that the approach is “Here’s a project in the program – what do we do with it?” All states CSS programs have focused on the design process, which belongs to the DOT. The programming process is necessarily more open. Implementing CSS in the programming process has yet to be addressed.

Mr. LaPlante pointed out that the programming process determines the dollar amount of the project. If any additional costs come from design alternative arrived at through CSS (e.g., widening a bridge to facilitate non-motorized travel) weren’t programmed, they won’t be constructed. The scoping process is important. Mr. Moss said the scoping process isn’t very well documented, but added that improvements and innovations are on the way. He noted that a question addressed at an early corridor planning meeting in southern Illinois started with the question “do we want to do this?”

Mr. Privett questioned how he sees this changing the standard public IDOT meeting. Mr. Moss replied that IDOT wants to first gain consensus and then using the final mandated meeting as a benchmark to see if they met that goal. He reiterated that the CSS will help engineers assigned to projects to get better stakeholder involvement early, so the beginning meetings are more productive.

Pace’s Focus on Bike & Pedestrian Access

Mr. Taqhi Mohammed of Pace said that one of the statements in Pace’s *Vision 2020* plan is that Pace’s success depends on how it brings customers to its network: the “first

and last miles” of the passenger trip, including pedestrian and bicycle access. Transit use can be promoted by designing developments so that they can provide convenient pedestrian links to transit stops. Pace's Development Guidelines identify design options that promote a more pedestrian-and transit-oriented environment. To assist the public and private sectors in the implementation of these design strategies, Pace has established a Technical Review Assistance Program (TRAP). The guidelines and review process are intended to promote the incorporation of public transportation features, such as walkway systems and bicycle routes, within suburban developments. The idea is to minimize walking distances from residences to transit services.

Mr. Mohammed noted that the design guidelines emphasize direct routes and accessibility. He demonstrated how the design guidelines work in practice. Mr. Mohammed then discussed bicycle access, pointing out the importance of coordination with local communities so their bicycle facilities link with public transportation. Mr. Mohammed pointed out that Pace maintains several bike racks and lockers at its transportation centers.

As of 2002, all fixed-route buses have been equipped with bike racks. When usage was tracked, counts showed that bike rack usage increased dramatically each year. A Bike Rack User Survey was conducted to evaluate the benefits gained from the ongoing “Bikes on Bus” program. The majority of the trips were work related. Most trips originated at home. Pace was the only public transit used for most bike rack users. The users liked the ease of using the bike racks but some complained about the lack of rack space on some routes. A quarter of respondents indicated the bike racks influenced their decision to ride Pace.

Mr. Mohammed concluded by pointing out the importance of the first and last miles and walkable neighborhoods in the suburban mobility network. He added that Pace recognizes the importance of good pedestrian and bicycle access to bus stops and is committed to operate a pedestrian and bicycle friendly suburban transit system.

Mr. Campbell suggested investigating ways to distinctively mark bus stops for the blind. Ms. Ladner responded that as part of their intelligent bus system, real time bus stop announcements are planned that will give the route number and estimated time to arrival. Also, electronic voice systems are being considered along heavily traveled corridors. Ms. Metzger suggested utilizing simple solutions such as plastic bands around posts instead of making people wait for implementation of high-tech solutions. Ms. Ladner responded that Pace is limited by the restrictions of the municipality. Some municipalities don't even allow bus stops. They are trying to find a solution that is acceptable to everyone. The first installation of real time bus stops should be within a year and a half. Ms. Ladner added that Pace will implement these improvements as soon as possible, but it's not easy.

Mr. Buchtel suggested that Pace continue counting bicycle rack usage. Mr. Mohammed and Ms. Ladner responded that with the new intelligent bus system, there are no longer fare box buttons available for drivers to count rack usage. However, Pace has

acknowledged the bike rack program as a success and will now focus their efforts on determining the location and time of boardings, and travel direction riders are taking.

Mr. Campbell asked when Pace will be eliminating the school buses off some of the feeder routes. He noted that yellow school buses presented a safety hazard to the visually impaired in particular. Ms. Ladner responded that Pace will be rewriting the contracts with the carriers to provide them with Pace's own buses.

Mr. Williams noted the tremendous progress Pace has made over the past several years in all aspects of its service, including work on improving the first and last mile of transit trips by improving bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

Chicago Trails Plan

Mr. Privett announced that the update to the 1997 Bicycle Facilities Development Plan has been renamed the "Chicago Trails Plan" to recognize that on-street facilities are not in the plan and that trails are used by various non-motorized users. It's also a simpler name. CDOT retained the consultants Wolff Clements. A fold-up map will be the primary public document while the full text document will be available in print or CD-ROM. Thus, the format will be similar to the *2030 RTP*. Most importantly, the updated plan has been expanded to include connections to regional trails outside the City limits. The plan also introduces Chicago Trail Loops which are a series of circular routes with distances varying from 15 to 70 miles. The product is a system of trails. Mr. Baldin of Wolff Clements & Associates added that the update studies an additional 11 corridors which include potential rails-to-trails, rails-w/-trails, and trails along waterways and utility corridors. The map depicts existing and potential multi-use trails, on-street connections, and the Grand Illinois Trail. Mr. Privett explained that the map shows suburban linkages, but added that the coverage is sporadic. The back of the map has a description of the trail corridors and prioritizes them based on cost, feasibility, and public demand. Mr. Privett ended the formal presentation by briefly giving an update regarding several of the projects shown on the map.

Ms. Bobbie Moore questioned if the plan addresses the liability issue of designating bicycle facilities. Mr. Privett explained that the plan develops off-street facilities. He also noted that in the City of Chicago, bicycles are prohibited on sidewalks in business districts. The city concentrates many bicycle facilities on-street. Thus, the City has accepted liability for their safe maintenance and operation – it's just not a big deal.

Upon an inquiry from Mr. Anderson, Mr. Privett noted that the Department of Aviation is working with the Department of Transportation regarding bicycle access for ground employees at O'Hare Field, while still maintaining security.

Ms. Moore asked about the completion date. Mr. Privett concluded that the plan may be released by Labor Day and will be available as a fold-up map and posted on the City's website.

Implementation of Sub-regional Bike/Ped Plans

Mr. Tom Murtha introduced Steve Buchtel of the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation who would seek input with regard to the consideration of bicycle and pedestrian accommodation along a proposed highway improvement.

Mr. Buchtel described the existing conditions and proposed improvements which would reconnect 183rd St. over the Metra RID tracks in south suburban Tinley Park. The proposed design is a 64 foot roadway with four 12 foot lanes, a 16 foot landscaped median, and a buffer strip and 5 foot sidewalk. The sidewalks wouldn't continue over the Metra tracks. Mr. Buchtel went into great detail showing how the project fits into the south suburban transportation system, and several deficiencies in the bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. Mr. Buchtel discussed the funding and public involvement activities with the project. Several local CBF members wrote letters to the Village to request that bike lanes be considered in the construction. Mr. Buchtel stated that no correspondents received a reply. A project advisory committee stated that bike lanes were not appropriate and that Village's master Bikeway Plan does not include bike lanes on 183rd St. However, Mr. Buchtel stated that some of the meetings were closed, not allowing public input into recommendations made. In addition, he noted that both the Tinley Park and South Suburban plans propose a bicycle facility along 183rd Street. The project's consultants and village officials appear to be unaware that 183rd was designated as a proposed bike route on the Villages and South Suburban bike plans. Further, at the project's open house, he was told that Metra wouldn't allow a pedestrian or bicycle crossing at their ROW. Because of a lack of response from the project planners, the cause of the Village's reluctance to include bicycle or pedestrian accommodations is unclear. He is here today to inquire about the next appropriate action he should take in the context of the MPO process.

Mr. Campbell suggested that there might be an issue with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

Mr. Christensen explained that there's a very precise process that needs to be followed for federally funded projects. The written comments gathered during the Phase 1 public comment period need to be addressed in writing by the consultant or the sponsoring agency and included in the Phase 1 report. He suggested contacting Local Roads at District 1 to clarify public involvement procedures required.

Ms. Bobbie Moore noted that the mayors fear liability if they provide bicycle accommodations. Mr. Buchtel suggested that access should trump liability. Mr. Neufeld responded that there is a lot of confusion and misunderstanding on liability issues when in reality their liability context is no different than providing road access for motor vehicles and providing sidewalk access for pedestrians. Mr. Neufeld suggested that liability is no big deal.

Mr. Privett stated that the issue of federal public involvement procedures is central, in the context of the local board as well as federal requirements. Mr. Neufeld suggested that the bigger issue is the standing of the subregional plans in project development.

Mr. Murtha suggested that the latter point be addressed in the context of the next agenda item.

Soles and Spokes Plan Update / Local and Subregional Plan Information

Mr. Murtha switched the focus of the discussion to explore the regional perspective concerning how we distribute bicycle planning information to project planners and encourage adherence. He questioned how we make sure plan information is available and processed in a way that's consistent with the regional plan. Most suburban Council of Mayors areas have an approved bike plan. He suggested that we investigate plan implementation procedures at the subregional level. He also requested suggestions on how to distribute the bicycle planning information that CATS inventories.

Ms. Moore suggested that a non-threatening way of proceeding would be to require that engineers be required to determine and document whether an applicable bike plan exists.

Ms Schroeder pointed out that the existence of a bike plan could be brought up at the kick-off meeting which includes IDOT, the planning liaison, consultants, and village officials.

Mr. Christensen said that for their projects, IDOT inquires whether there are any bicycle plans within the corridor they are studying. The question could be added to the Bureau of Local Roads Form 5250 that consultants are required to fill out before kickoff. Mr. Smith said he would talk to Local Roads staff to see if it's included in the pre-implementation process.

Mr. Christensen said that pedestrian and bicycle issues are seldom if ever brought up in Local Roads kickoff meetings if the project is not a pedestrian or bicycle project. Mr. Neufeld noted that for 183rd, some issues were considered but design issues tilted the other way. For example, the sidewalk is being dropped because a retaining wall would be required that the local agency doesn't wish to maintain. On the other hand, the projected ADT for the road is only approximately 14,000, but is being built to a four-lane cross-section with a sixteen foot center median; a design that was initially established for the corridor in the 1960's. Several people spoke at once, indicating that the roadway design seemed excessive.

Mr. Barsotti noted that two of the Councils have already adopted a requirement to do a before and after calculation of both bicycle level of service and pedestrian level of service for all road projects within the Councils. While this is just one tool in many, having a general CATS requirement of that simple calculation would raise awareness of project impacts. It was noted that since this information will only be required for new projects; projects like 183rd Street that are already in project development are not subject to the requirement.

Mr. Privett concluded that the task force should find a way encourage subregional bicycle and pedestrian plan implementation at the beginning of the design process.

Further discussion of the issue would continue at the next Task Force meeting.

Bike Parking for Your Business

Mr. Murtha distributed the updated "Bike Parking for Your Business" flyer and requested comments regarding distribution. Mr. Privett hoped that companies that develop a lot of real estate, such as Walgreens, received a copy of the flyer.

Soles and Spokes Workshops

Mr. Murtha announced that a Soles and Spokes Workshop is proposed in the UWP and requested ideas of what should be considered. Proposed sessions include funding and the new MUTCD guidelines.

Ms. Metzger suggested a presentation on what a context sensitive design or solutions program would entail so that municipalities could learn how to implement them also.

Mr. Privett suggested expanding the MUTCD discussion to include routine accommodation of bicycles and pedestrians in roadway projects. Mr. La Plante added that elements of the new guidelines regarding accessibility should be discussed. Mr. La Plante added that he is among a cadre of engineers recently trained to provide training in this area.

Mr. Barsotti announced that the IDNR is holding a Greenways and Trails Workshop on October 15, 2000 in DeKalb. Funding will be discussed at that workshop, so discussing it at a separate Soles and Spokes Workshop may be redundant.

Mr. Murtha said staff would work with interested parties to develop a proposal.

Other Business:

Ms. Kannenburg noted the availability of some draft information regarding bicycle parking at Metra stations. She noted that Metra is continuing to review the data. A final report will be forthcoming.

Adjournment: 12:00pm

Next Meeting Date/Location: July 23, 2004, 9:30am at CATS

Notes Submitted By: SRB