

Public Involvement Task Force

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Date: February 15, 2006
Location: CATS
Call To Order: 9:30 a.m.

Members in attendance:

Daniel Clark	Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission
Rick Curneal	DuPage Mayors & Managers Council
JoAnn Eckmann	Chair/Lake County Citizen
Judi Kulm	Pace
Eve Rodriguez	Chicago Department of Transportation
Gordon Smith	Illinois Department of Transportation
Laura Wilkison	Private Citizen

Others in attendance:

John Allen	CATS
Patricia Berry	CATS
Bola Delano	CATS
Jock Hardy	CATS
Don Kopec	CATS
Suzanne Lanzafame	CATS
LynnToi Lawson	CATS

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from December 22, 2005 were amended to reflect that Ms. Eckmann had spoken with Jim LaBelle and learned he had given the Regional Planning Board a presentation on public involvement. The amended minutes were then approved unanimously.

Presentations:

Communications Update

Mrs. Lawson discussed the "Partners in Progress" program, whose goal is to educate, inform and involve. There is an upcoming meeting with Developing Communities Projects at Pullman Christian Reformed Church in Chicago on February 22 and a career day at Emmanuel Lutheran School in Elmhurst in March. Mrs. Lawson also met with Barbara Byrd of the RTA and participated in a

meeting of public involvement representatives from RTA, CTA, Metra and Pace. IDOT and NIPC were also invited, but did not attend.

Ms. Lanzafame stated that the sixth annual poster contest is coming up in May. The theme this year is "Kids Know the Way to Go!" Information has been sent to more than 2,500 schools in the seven-county region and sponsors have been solicited. If any of the members have ideas for sponsors they may give them to staff. Ms. Eckmann asked what kinds of sponsors are being sought and Ms. Lanzafame responded that sponsors that would be appealing to children – it is a broad range. Mr. Hardy added that in the past we have even had hotels donate.

Mr. Allen said the annual pre-construction press conference will be held at 10 a.m. on March 7; there are several ideas for an emcee. Ms. Rodriguez asked if CDOT is involved and Mr. Allen stated that CDOT, Pace, Metra, CTA, ISTHA and IDOT are all involved. Mr. Smith asked when the open house will be and Mr. Hardy responded March 29. Ms. Eckmann asked if there is going to be a plug regarding the RTP at the open house and Mr. Hardy said yes. Mr. Smith added that the Regional Planning Board (RPB) has talked about having a unified voice, all information should be uniform. Ms. Wilkison asked what time the open house begins and Mr. Kopec responded that he did not know the hours, but it is going to be around the same time as the Midwest APA Conference. Ms. Berry stated that Tom Garritano and Jock Hardy are working on a postcard to send out regarding the open house.

UWP Outreach Initiative

Ms. Berry discussed the Unified Work Program Committee's proposal to utilize more public involvement in the UWP process, as suggested at the last UWP working group meeting. The current process is through NIPC 95 Review in the Illinois State Clearing House, but a suggestion to post on the website has been made to enhance this. Hopefully, more comments could be gathered. The UWP Committee compiled a list of selected core element proposals that are now posted on the website. The schedule calls for a meeting to discuss the Tier 2 proposals on February 21. These proposals will also be posted on the CATS website. The plan is to have an announcement on the CATS home page that links directly to the UWP proposals. Once a Citizens Advisory Committee is established by the RPB, Ms. Berry anticipates they will want to have direct input in UWP public involvement.

Mr. Smith added that there was a recommendation given to the Work Program Committee in the spirit of the CATS Public Involvement Plan. The projects on the website have not been selected, they have only been recommended. Ms. Eckmann asked if he thought people would actually peruse the list, saying that it is very overwhelming, especially if the reader does not know much about transportation. Ms. Berry said that citizens are usually interested in their own transportation issues, for example their train line.

Ms. Wilkison asked if there is a way for citizens to respond and Ms. Berry said it is by e-mail. Ms. Wilkison also asked if there is a way to capture comments if there are any. Ms. Berry said there is a way and there might be more meetings scheduled. There will be a March 21 meeting and any comments received prior to the meeting will be distributed and discussed at that time. Mr. Smith added that the group is flexible and knows that comments have to be reviewed. Ms. Wilkison thinks it will be interesting to see what the responses are when the UWP process is finished. Ms. Eckmann asked if there is a description of the UWP process on the website for people who lack knowledge about it. Ms. Berry responded that there is a page in the UWP section on the website that describes the UWP process. Ms. Berry added that the proposal summaries are shorter and easier for the public to read than in previous years. Ms. Delano asked what happens if there are no comments. Mr. Smith said the process keeps moving forward. The PITF would like to get an assessment of the public participation process when it is completed. Ms. Berry said that would be done.

RTP Outreach Strategy Update (consultant contract)

Ms. Wilkison disclosed that her firm, Metro Strategies, submitted a bid in response to the agency's request for proposals for consultants to help with the public outreach for the Regional Transportation Plan update.

Mr. Kopec stated that although this is an RTP update, not a new planning cycle, a significant outreach program is still desired for the update. Due to staff constraints, a consultant is being sought. NIPC is handling the administration of the contract and will also be the producing agent on the contract. Mr. Wies and Ms. Delano will be helping out internally (CATS) on the contract. Ms. Delano has economic development experience, having previously worked at the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Delano said the main objective is to get CATS' message out; she has worked with NIPC in the past and would like various interest groups to participate with CATS. She wants to link up with chambers of commerce, businesses and other organizations to expand on what the Communications Division has done, and also to get other groups involved in the RTP process. She and Mr. Kopec have gone through various recommendations and the issue is how to get the message out to ordinary people. She said there will be more public involvement than in the past and that is the main objective for now. She looks forward to working with everybody. Ms. Delano also said that CATS policy documents need to be easy to read and understandable and she is working with Mr. Wies on this.

Mr. Kopec said there is an ongoing public outreach program and Ms. Delano is adding a new dimension to it. Also, the RPB has the Public Participation

Committee and the Citizens Advisory Committee. The next meeting for the Public Participation Committee of the RPB is March 8 at 8 a.m.

Ms. Eckmann asked if the Communications staff will be involved with the consultant. Ms. Delano stated they will be. Mr. Kopec added that it depends on the proposals, but there will be some staff involvement.

Ms. Wilkison asked about the turnaround time for applications to become members of the RPB Citizens Advisory Committee. She stated that an application was talked about at the previous RPB meeting. Mr. Smith said the previous meeting had been a brainstorming session; right now they are more focused on identifying the mission of the Citizens Advisory Committee.

Ms. Eckmann asked about the role of the task force in the RTP process, explaining that in the past the PITF has been asked to comment on outreach mechanisms and to attend meetings in an advisory role. Mr. Kopec responded that it will most likely be for review and results of the RTP outreach will be brought to the task force. Mr. Kopec said the evaluation portion of the contract is the most significant change from previous efforts. Ms. Eckmann asked if the new RPB Citizens Advisory Committee will have a role in this process. Mr. Kopec responded that it is not known yet.

Other Business:

Ms. Eckmann stated that the letter from the task force to the RPB is going to be placed on the RPB's March 8 agenda. She also asked if the 2006 Communications Division work plan presented at today's meeting is meant for the PITF or staff. Mr. Hardy responded that it is a joint plan and the items in the plan are ongoing. There is also room in the plan for additions and subtractions.

Ms. Wilkison asked how many Partners in Progress meetings are held each year. Mr. Hardy said there are about 10-15 meetings a year and the program has been going on for two years.

Ms. Eckmann also asked about the new federal transportation legislation (SAFETEA-LU) and Mr. Hardy said the Public Involvement Plan will need to be updated to incorporate any new federal requirements. Mr. Kopec said SAFETEA-LU contains new provisions for seniors and people with disabilities, Job Access and Reverse Commute funds and Paratransit Programs. RTA is the lead agency and we are working with them to put together a plan. He does not know how it will affect the task force, but it is a significant change as more federal dollars are being shifted to these programs.

Ms. Eckmann requested an update of the task force member list and mentioned removing inactive members from the list.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 22, 2006 at 9:30 a.m. in the Cunningham-Williams Conference Room at CATS, 233 South Wacker Drive, Suite 800, Chicago.

Adjournment: 10:30 a.m.

Minutes Submitted by: Suzanne Lanzafame