



Policy Committee Meeting Minutes March 9, 2006

The meeting was held at the Chicago Area Transportation Study, Cook/Cunningham-Williams Conference Room, 233 S. Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois. Those present at the meeting were:

POLICY COMMITTEE

Jeff Schielke, Vice Chairman
Randy Blankenhorn

Tom Cuculich
Paul Fish
Al Giertych

Robert Hann

Cheri Heramb
Jon-Paul Kohler

Joe Korpalski

Wally Kos

Jeff Ladd
Karen McConnaughay
Ed Paesel
Mike Payette
T. J. Ross

Steve Schlickman
Marisol Simon

Anne Vickery

Council of Mayors

Illinois Department of Transportation
(Representing Tim Martin, Chairman)

DuPage County

Chicago Transit Authority

Lake County

(Representing Marty Buehler)

Private Transportation Providers

(Representing John McCarthy)

Chicago Department of Transportation

FHWA

(Representing Norm Stoner)

McHenry County

(Representing Kenneth Koehler)

Cook County

(Representing James Eldridge, Jr.)

Metra

Kane County

Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission

Railroad Companies

Pace

(Representing John Case)

Regional Transportation Authority

Federal Transit Administration

(Representing Don Gismondi)

Kendall County

Visitors

Vanessa Adams	FTA
Rachel Bishop	McKinsey
Linda Bolte	NIPC
Jan Carlson	Kane County Board
Rick Curneal	DMMC
Chris DiPalma	FHWA
Heather Gates	WCGL
Karen Greenbaum	CCA
Jacky Grimshaw	CNT
Jack Groner	Metra
Joe Heinrich	SSMMA
Norman Johnson	IDOT - OP&P
Clarita Lao	IDOT – District 1
Jill Leary	WCMC
Fredrika Lightfoot	EIRGO
Diana Nevitt	IDOT
Les Nunes	IDOT – OP & P
Hugh O’Hara	WCGL
Bob Pilat	Village of Niles
Thomas Rickert	Kane
David Seglin	CDOT
Priscilla Tobias	IDOT - Safety
Maria Urban	CM2020
Mike Walczak	NWMC

Staff

Don Kopec
Bola Delano, Patricia Berry, Kermit Wies
Teri Dixon, Bill Kiley, Ross Patronskey
Patricia Tinnelle

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Schielke called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes for October 13, 2005.

On a motion by Mr. Korpalski, seconded by Mr. Cuculich, the minutes of the meeting on January 12, 2006 were approved.

B. Council of Mayors Report

Mayor Schielke informed the Committee that the Council of Mayors Executive Committee met on February 14 and approved an advance funding request for the West Central Council in the amount of \$350,000. He also noted that the Committee approved a set of discussion points to aid the Councils in explaining the need for sufficient and flexible State appropriations to their legislators and letters of support to the legislative leadership for IDOT's proposal to remedy the situation. Mayor Schielke reported that Mr. Steve Schlickman gave an overview of the RTA's Strategic Planning effort and Mr. Ed Paesel gave an update on the activities of the Regional Planning Board. He also said that Mayor Mulder gave a report of a very positive preliminary meeting that she and other members had with IDOT representatives from the central office and District One regarding jurisdictional transfer policy.

He informed the Committee that the Executive Committee approved the FY 2007 Scope of Services for the Planning Liaison program including new language to support the Council of Mayors role in support of the Regional Planning Board. He reported that the Regional Rail Working Group had an initial meeting with FRA last week to begin discussion of how the re-analysis of Chicagoland railroad crossings that was promised in the Final Rule on Train Horns should be conducted. He said that the working group was preparing a response to options presented. Lastly, he notified the Committee that the next meeting of the Executive Committee will be an annual business and luncheon meeting to be held in late April or May. All are invited to attend.

C. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Kopec introduced Ms. Bola Delano as the newest member of the CATS staff. Ms. Delano assumed the position of Associate Executive Director in late January. Her most recent position was with the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and she will bring needed expertise as the region goes about linking transportation and land use planning.

Mr. Kopec informed the Committee that USDOT has concurred in the conformity finding for PM_{2.5} for the entire non-attainment area which includes both northeastern Illinois and northwestern Indiana. He thanked staff for their fine effort in getting this analysis done quickly while still keeping up with the other agency work.

He also notified the Committee that the region has received a notice to proceed to final application from FHWA for a Value Pricing Project grant. Staff has been working with the Illinois Tollway, Pace, IDOT, CDOT and the RTA in putting together this grant application. The project will examine the feasibility of implementing high occupancy toll lanes with ramp queue jumping. These features will address the reverse commute and suburb to suburb markets. An important aspect is the potential to accommodate express bus service, making it competitive with the auto in terms of commute time.

Concluding his report, Mr. Kopec invited everyone to attend the Open House being planned for March 29. It will be a joint effort of the new Regional Planning Board, CATS and NIPC.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Report on the Shared Path 2030 Update Development Process

Mr. Wies gave a brief overview of progress on the 2030 RTP Update. He announced that IDOT had agreed to fund a consultant to perform an independent public review of the 2030 RTP Update in advance of the August public comment period. During that period, the Regional Planning Board will have an opportunity to review and comment on the 2030 RTP Update before the Policy Committee considers adoption in October.

B. Regional Planning Board

Mr. Schlickman reported to the Committee on the status of the Regional Planning Board. He noted that the Board has begun organizing itself and established several committees. Besides the RPB Executive Committee, there is a Transition Committee, a Planning and Priorities Committee and a Public Participation Committee. Much work has been put into the integration of the staff of the two agencies. It is possible that the staff of CATS will be leaving the administration of IDOT as early as this July.

Mr. Schlickman noted that all of these changes will require a thorough analysis of their impact on the bylaws of CATS. An interagency agreement between the new Board and CATS may also be appropriate.

C. SAFETEA-LU Subcommittee

Ms. Berry reported that the Policy Committee's SAFETEA-LU Subcommittee had a thorough discussion of the drastically reduced CMAQ mark of \$24 million for FY 07. The CMAQ Project Selection Committee had requested such discussion. The reduction was described as the result of a perfect storm of rescissions, obligation authority and overly optimistic estimates of FY 05 and FY 06 funding. The CMAQ Project Selection Committee will meet again in early April.

Enhancement program funding and programming methods for both the CMAQ and enhancement programs were addressed at the Subcommittee's meeting. IDOT will provide members and participants at the next Subcommittee meeting with an analysis of the reductions. Other programs discussed were local and county STP, Safety, and Safe Routes to School.

The group briefly discussed the dues structure for support of the Unified Work Program. The 1971 structure is still employed. The next meeting of the Subcommittee is scheduled for March 30 at 9 a.m.

Mayor Schielke asked if the drastic reduction in the CMAQ program is expected to be a one-time occurrence. Mr. Blankenhorn said yes, the FY 07 year is an anomaly. The obligation ceiling will continue to be applied, and future rescissions are likely, but an annual program in the range of \$70 million is expected for future years.

D. CTA and Metra New Starts Alternative Analyses

Mr. Groner of Metra presented an overview of the Federal Transit Administration's New Start Process and the projects Metra currently has in some phase of that process. He explained the Alternatives Analysis process, the development of a purpose and need statement and the goals and objectives of the improvements. He also provided an overview of the role of CATS and NIPC in the Alternative Analyses. Metra's current New Start projects include upgrades on the Union Pacific North and Northwest lines, and implementation of the Southeast Service and the STAR Line. Mr. Groner detailed the status of each of these projects along with the project management. He concluded with the tentative schedule and the steps following the Alternatives Analysis.

Mr. Paul Fish then described the status and explained the CTA's New Starts projects covering the Blue Line Douglas Branch rehabilitation which was completed in January 2005; the Brown Line capacity expansion which is currently under construction; the Circle Line and the Ogden-Carroll-Navy Pier Transitway which are undergoing Alternatives Analysis; and the Red, Orange and Yellow Line extensions which are in concept development.

The Circle Line consists of approximately six miles of new or rebuilt track and connects all CTA rail lines. In addition to facilitating travel in and among growing areas, it facilitates connections with major commuter rail lines. The Red Line extension is also approximately six miles long and in a corridor through the Roseland and West Pullman neighborhoods. The Orange Line extension is approximately two miles line and runs along the Cicero Avenue corridor to Ford City. The Yellow Line extension is approximately two miles long and connects to Old Orchard Mall. The Ogden-Carroll-Navy Pier Transitway is approximately eleven miles long and connects the North Riverside Park Mall to Navy Pier.

Ms. Grimshaw asked if all of the projects were going forward and whether they had been prioritized. Mr. Groner said all of Metra's projects are moving forward. Mr. Fish said that all five CTA projects are of equal priority. That may change based on the results of the Alternatives Analyses. Ms. Grimshaw asked if an environmental analysis of station locations would be done. Mr. Groner replied affirmatively, that environmental impacts are part of Major Investment Studies and is one of the topics of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). There will be opportunity for public meetings and public comment. Mr. Fish agreed, noting that a meaningful public participation process is an essential part of the project development.

Ms. Adams asked if the two mile Skokie extension might be a candidate for the Small Starts program. Mr. Fish said yes, as are the Ogden and Orange line projects. If it's to be a BRT, it may be under the threshold for the New Start program. Mr. Ross noted that Pace serves on the TAC for all Metra projects.

E. IDOT Major Project Update

Mr. Blankenhorn provided the Committee with an update on the major projects for the Department in this construction season. Included is the work on the Kingery, Dan Ryan, Bishop Ford and I-394 expressways.

The \$430 million Kingery reconstruction project began in 2003 and will be substantially complete this year. The main work currently underway includes the Bishop Ford and I-394 from South Holland to Lansing and new ramps at Torrence.

The Dan Ryan is the most significant IDOT project, costing \$600 million and involving significant lane reductions. The advance work is mostly complete. Traffic will be reduced to three lanes in each direction from 13th Street to 28th Street. The express lanes will be closed between 31st Street and 71st Street and all traffic will be diverted to the local lanes. All ramps will remain open. From 71st Street to I-57/I-94 there will be three lanes in each direction later this summer. This is one of the largest "Green Construction" projects in the nation. IDOT's Clean Air construction initiative retrofits heavy construction equipment to reduce emissions.

Further information on these projects is available on the IDOT website. Interested parties can also sign up on the website for weekly e-mail alerts for the Ryan project.

Mr. Blankenhorn reported that the Department's overall highway program, released February 24, totals \$10.5 billion and focuses on maintaining the existing highway system. This complements Governor Blagojevich's \$2.3 billion Jobs for Illinois capital program which makes critical investments that promote job creation and meets state and local community needs. Jobs for Illinois also includes \$425 million in funding for transit capital projects.

Highlights besides the Dan Ryan and Kingery reconstruction projects are the reconstruction of US 6, additional lanes on US 14 in Crystal Lake and further work on IL 22 in Lake County.

F. FY 2005-2009 Transportation Improvement Program Changes

Ms. Berry reported that due to the timing of letting and the late notice in requesting inclusion in the TIP, changes that typically would be addressed by the Work Program Committee are coming before the Policy Committee at today's meetings. She described the three exempt projects to be added to the FY 05-09 TIP. The changes were approved on a motion by Mr. Blankenhorn, seconded by Mr. Paesel.

G. FTA Subarea Allocation between Indiana - Illinois and Designated Recipients of Section 5307 and 5340

Mr. Patronsky introduced five resolutions for which Policy Committee adoption was sought. Two resolutions endorsed the subarea allocation of Federal Transit Administration 5307 and 5340 funds between Northeastern Illinois, Northwestern Indiana and Southeastern Wisconsin. He said the allocations had been negotiated by the Regional Transportation Authority.

Mr. Patronsky continued that the other three resolutions endorsed the three service boards, the CTA, Metra and Pace, as designated recipients of FTA funds. This endorsement would allow the service boards to directly apply for and receive FTA grants.

Following a motion by Mr. Schlickman, seconded by Mr. Fish, the Policy Committee adopted resolution 06-05 titled, "A Resolution Endorsing the Northeastern Illinois/Northwestern Indiana Subarea Allocation of the FY 2006 Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 and Section 5340 Combined Apportionment," resolution 06-06 titled, "A Resolution Endorsing the Northeastern Illinois/ Southeastern Wisconsin Subarea Allocation of the FY 2006 Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 and Section 5340 Combined Apportionment," resolution 06-07 titled, "A Resolution Endorsing the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), as a 'Designated Recipient' of Section 5307 and Section 5340 Combined Capital and Planning Funds," resolution 06-08 titled, "A Resolution Endorsing Metra, the Commuter Rail Division of the Regional Transportation Authority, as a 'Designated Recipient' of Section 5307 and Section 5340 Combined Capital and Planning Funds," and resolution 06-09 titled, "A Resolution Endorsing Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority, as a 'Designated Recipient' of Section 5307 and Section 5340 Combined Capital and Planning Funds."

H. Update on FY 2007-2012 TIP Development

Ms. Dixon thanked all the agencies and their staffs for their cooperation in sending in modeled project information. TIP staff is working with all of the local implementers and IDOT to include the earmarked high priority projects in the FY 07-12 TIP. The CATS staff is working diligently along with the implementers to have the TIP accurately reflect the programming occurring within the region. Ms. Dixon said that the call for exempt projects and modeled project financial information will go out at the end of March. The financial information submitted must be consistent with the completion years submitted for the modeled projects. She concluded her report, noting that the FY 07-12 TIP is scheduled to be considered along with the 2030 RTP Update for approval at the Policy Committee's October 12 meeting.

I. Illinois Comprehensive Highway Safety Program

Mr. Blankenhorn introduced Ms. Priscilla Tobias of the Illinois Department of Transportation. Ms. Tobias presented to the Committee the fundamentals of the Department's Comprehensive Highway Safety Program (CHSP). She explained how a key component to the CHSP is its comprehensiveness

incorporating the “4 E’s” of highway safety: Engineering, Enforcement, Education and Emergency Medical Services.

Ten emphasis areas were chosen that would assist in achieving the overall goal of reducing highway deaths to less than 1,000 per year. Last year there were 98 fewer fatalities than the year before. The ten emphasis areas are: alcohol and other impaired driving; driver behavior and awareness; highway-railroad grade crossings; information systems for decision making; intersections; large trucks; roadway departure; safety belts / occupant protection; vulnerable users; and, work zones.

Ms. Tobias emphasized that we should be doing safety conscious planning and not just doing “safety projects.” Every project should address safety. She described a situation in Peoria County where the MPO became involved and developed its own local comprehensive safety plan. It was noted that different regions will have different safety problems. For Chicago, pedestrian safety was identified as a critical issue. There will be a “safety summit” sometime this coming summer, probably in June or July.

Several questions and comments from Committee members highlighted the special problems faced by certain segments of the population, particularly the young drivers and the elderly; the use of various criteria in targeting locations with significant safety problems; and how this is not just a state issue, but also a local and MPO problem since over half of the fatalities are on the local system.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business for the Committee.

V. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2006 in the Sears Tower, 8th Floor, Chicago, Illinois at 10:00 a.m.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donald P. Kopec
Secretary