



POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

October 14, 2004

The meeting was held at the Chicago Area Transportation Study, Cunningham-Williams Conference Room, 300 West Adams Street, Chicago, Illinois. Vice-Chairman d'Escoto called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Those present at the meeting were:

POLICY COMMITTEE

Miguel d'Escoto (Vice Chairman)
Randy Blankenhorn

Marty Buehler

John Case
Tom Cuculich
Bruce Gould

Jack Groner

Wally Kos

John McCarthy
Ed Paesel

Mike Payette
Leann Redden

R. Reed

Thomas Rickert

Jeff Schielke
Norman R. Stoner
Michael Tryon
Paula Thibeault

Chicago Department of Transportation
Illinois Department of Transportation
(Representing Timothy Martin)

Lake County
(Representing Suzi Schmidt)

Pace
DuPage County
Will County

(Representing Sheldon C. Latz)

Metra
(Representing Jeffrey Ladd)

Cook County
(Representing James Eldridge, Jr.)

Private Transportation Providers
Northern Illinois Planning Commission
(Representing Rae Rupp-Srch)

Class One Railroads
Illinois State Toll Highway Authority
(Representing Marilyn Johnson)

Federal Transit Administration
(Representing Joel Ettinger)

Kane County
(Representing Michael McCoy)

Council of Mayors
Federal Highway Administration
McHenry County
Regional Transportation Authority

Transportation Operators, Planning Officials and Municipal Staff

Vanessa Adams	FTA
Linda Bolte	NIPC
Ralph Coglianese	NIPC
Ken Dallmeyer	NIRPC
Bob Dean	DMMC
Neil D. Ferrari	IDOT/DPT
Brian Gebhardt	SSMMA
Jennie Grobe	WCGL
Luann Hamilton	CDOT
Lori Heringa	NIPC
Jon-Paul Kohler	FHWA
Joe Korpalski	McHenry County
Hugh O'Hara	WCML
Mark Pitstick	RTA
Jennifer Prosisc	METRA
Mike Rogers	IEPA
T. J. Ross	PACE
Gordon Smith	IDOT-OPP
Ron Thomas	NIPC

Other

Jim LaBelle	Chicago Metropolis 2020
Jacky Grimshaw	CNT
Jan Metzger	CNT

Staff

Aristide E. Biciunas
John Allen, Patricia Berry, Jon Hallas, Craig Heither, Bill Kiley, Mark Thomas,
Thomas Vick, Kermit Wies

OLD BUSINESS

A. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of June 10, 2004 were approved on a motion made by Ms. Thibeault and seconded by Mr. Groner.

B. Council of Mayor's Report

Mayor Schielke reported that the Council of Mayors Executive Committee met on October 4, 2004 with all 11 subregional councils in attendance. There was a brief update on the status of a new federal transportation bill, i.e. the 8-month extension to TEA-21 and continuing resolution for funding through November 20th. The Committee approved FY 2005 to 2009 interim STP marks, which will be modified for any corrections to councils' past expenditure balances and for Congressional and State appropriations impacts. The Mayors also approved a letter be sent to the US Inspector General regarding encouraging a rigorous audit of FRA regarding Highway-Rail Grade Crossing safety.

Ms. Diane O'Keefe, the new District Engineer for IDOT District One, told the committee of staff shortages and potential delays. She said they will continue to do the best they can to keep projects moving. Several mayors complimented her on the professionalism and hard work of her staff. NIPC Executive Director, Ron Thomas gave an overview on Common Ground and a preview of the 2040 Regional Framework Plan.

There was an update from the Jurisdictional Transfer Policy Subcommittee which stated that they plan to work with IDOT to draft a policy that the municipalities and IDOT could agree upon. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for December 6, 2004.

C. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Biciunas introduced the topic of safety as a key element of national and regional policy. All transportation planning and implementing agencies view improving traveler safety as a high priority. U.S. DOT has identified transportation safety for special emphasis in the transportation planning process. U.S. DOT has also recommended that CATS give emphasis to issues related to safety in the plan, including the development of specific pedestrian goals and objectives.

He also announced that next Thursday (October 21, 2004) staff will be holding a Shared Path 2030 Planning Information Forum on Safety Conscious Planning, and invited all to participate. CATS defines Safety Conscious Planning as a comprehensive, system-wide, multimodal, proactive process that better integrates safety into surface transportation decision making.

Mr. Biciunas reported that over the last couple of weeks there have been general discussions on the state budget problems as they affect the region. All agencies have staff shortages including CATS. He reported that prior to the early retirement program last year 57 of the 58 authorized positions were filled. At present, the agency has 43 full-time employees. Of the 57, seven were members of the management team, now we have two remaining on the team. To cover our

commitments and responsibilities, we have depended heavily on our hands-on senior supervisors to fill this gap.

He thanked all the division heads that have stepped forward and supported our work program and our implementing agencies without much management guidance or interference.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Nominating Committee for the office of Vice Chairman

Mayor Schielke reported that the Nominating Committee recommended Commissioner d'Escoto be elected to serve another term. He placed Commissioner d'Escoto's name in nomination and with a second from Mr. Paesel moved that nominations be closed. The Committee closed the nominations and elected Commissioner d'Escoto as Vice-Chairman.

B. Proposed FY 2005 CMAQ Program

Mr. Patronsky referred to the agenda, which included a description of the proposed FY 2005 CMAQ program. The program is comprised of 67 projects totaling \$91 million in federal funds. The proposed program was the subject of a comment period in August. The CMAQ Project Selection Committee reviewed and responded to comments received and recommended approval to the Work Program Committee. The Work Program Committee has recommended Policy Committee approval.

Mr. Ross inquired about the impact of the CMAQ program on overall air quality goals for the region. After some discussion, Mr. d'Escoto asked Mr. Patronsky to prepare a memorandum on the subject.

On a motion by Mr. Buehler, seconded by Mr. Groner, the proposed FY 2005 CMAQ program was approved.

C. Functional Classification of Roadways in Northeast Illinois

Mr. Walczak reported that the 2000 census enlarged the boundaries of the Urbanized Areas within the CATS planning area and an update to the functional classification of roadways was undertaken. IDOT worked closely with the Planning Liaisons and Councils in the collar counties where revisions were necessitated by the change from rural to urban classification. Revisions were also made to ensure that logical termini for existing routes were established. He noted that all of the affected Councils have acted on the changes in their areas, and the Council of Mayors Executive Committee approved the updated classifications at its October 4th meeting.

Mr. Walczak also noted that the functional classification of individual roadways can be changed at any time subject to IDOT and FHWA review. Maps showing the new designations were displayed in the CATS conference room. Commissioner d'Escoto asked who keeps track of the region's current classification system. Mr. Blankenhorn responded that IDOT's Office of Programming and Planning maintains the files.

On a motion by Mr. Buehler, seconded by Mr. Tryon, the Policy Committee approved Resolution 04-09 endorsing the updated functional classification of roadways for northeastern Illinois.

D. Self-Certification of the Planning Process

Ms. Dixon explained that on an annual basis, the MPO is required to certify that the planning process is meeting federal requirements. Northeastern Illinois' transportation planning process is thoroughly documented in the Unified Work Program, the Transportation Improvement Program, the Regional Transportation Plan and numerous publications developed by the CATS committees, subcommittees, task forces and working groups. Ms. Dixon noted that the Work Program Committee recommends Policy Committee certification of the planning process. On a motion by Mr. Groner, seconded by Ms. Thibeault the committee unanimously approved Resolution 04-10 certifying the planning process.

E. Illinois EPA's Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance Program

At the June Policy Committee meeting, Mr. Mark Thomas presented a staff analysis of different funding options to pay for the Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance (I&M) Program. The analysis was based on vehicle registration information from the Illinois Secretary of State. Chairman Martin requested that staff prepare summary tables that clarified options on splitting the program costs between annual registration fees and biennial test fees to cover a \$54 million dollar program.

Mr. Thomas summarized the findings of the revised analysis. A biennial test fee of \$29 or an annual additional registration fee of \$14.50 for the 3.76 million vehicles currently subject to the I&M program would fully fund a \$54 million program. The program could also be funded by a combination of the two fees.

If an annual registration fee was also applied to new vehicles in the I&M program area (vehicles in their first four model years), an additional 1.75 million vehicles would be included, and an annual fee of \$10 would cover the cost of the program. Vehicles are not required to begin inspection until their fourth model

year, so this group includes vehicles that will eventually be subject to the I&M program in the near future.

Mr. Blankenhorn stated that it is important for IDOT to look at the options available, given the short time frame. One important factor will be keeping the annual vehicle registration fee in-line with those in surrounding states. Secretary Martin is looking to the Policy Committee to help provide leadership and commitment from the local level on this issue. He and IEPA Director Cipriano have been working together on this issue. He noted that CMAQ funding will no longer be available to fund operation of the program, which leaves three options: a fee system, the use of roadway funds or another general revenue source. A recommendation will be needed by the spring legislative session.

Mr. Thomas stated that staff had surveyed 20 states with enhanced I&M programs similar to the one in Illinois. Fourteen of the states use test fees to pay for the program; two states use registration fees to cover the state's administrative costs and test fees to pay the contractor; and the remaining four states, including Indiana and Wisconsin, use general revenue, Motor Fuel Taxes and toll revenues to fund the programs.

There was general support for implementing an annual registration fee. Concern was raised that imposing a test fee would add to the cost of the program because the contractor would need to collect it. There was also concern that a test fee would inequitably focus the fees on poorer motorists and those that drive older vehicles. Mr. Paesel raised a concern about the total cost being implemented through a registration fee and how it would compare to fees in neighboring states.

Mr. Rogers stated that the IEPA was talking with contractors about different I&M program options and would be putting the next contract out for competitive bid. Mayor Schielke noted that the mayors felt some meaningful reductions in the program cost could be gained from the competitive bidding process.

Mr. Kos asked about the possibility of combining the I&M program with the diesel vehicle safety inspections that IDOT performs. Mr. Rogers felt that would add a level of complexity as the two programs perform different roles.

Mr. d'Escoto stated that it is important to find a funding mechanism for this program because it improves the environment and helps the region in reaching attainment. He also noted the importance of spreading the cost of the program around so that it is not borne by only some of those affected. He requested that members consider the funding alternatives and be prepared to support a mechanism at the next meeting.

Mr. Cuculich suggested that the Policy Committee recommend that the Secretary of State collect the fee rather than suggesting the annual registration fee be raised to cover the program.

F. CATS/NIPC Ad Hoc Committees

Mr. Blankenhorn began the discussion on the work done at the joint meetings of the NIPC and CATS ad hoc committees. Each agency has distinct responsibilities defined by authorizing legislation in NIPC's case and the Policy Committee by-laws in CATS' case. The CATS and NIPC committees met jointly several times and a final report was included in the Policy Committee mailing.

He noted that the report reflects the fact that the agencies collaborate extensively. While there may be some minor long term financial savings to be had by combining the agencies, the real question is whether better planning would result.

There were no recommendations on alternative structures for a merged agency because such was not included in the Policy Committee's charge to the ad hoc committee. It was stated several times that although there are always opportunities for improving things, it is important to recognize the distinctive nature and charge of each agency and the successful outcomes of the transportation plans and programs. It is important, too, to retain NIPC's important focus on housing, water resources and other non-transportation issues.

Mr. Paesel said that he saw the discussions to date as only a first step. He would like to see the CATS Policy Committee work with IDOT and NIPC on governance issues. That is what the legislators need in order not to operate in a vacuum. The NIPC Commissioners feel strongly that governance should be part of the discussion and the joint meetings of the ad hoc committees should continue.

Mr. Cuculich said that the work was well done. He noted that Secretary Martin has been asking for direction on governance. Mr. Tryon said that a shared resources agency might work best. He noted that there is strength in independence and that that strength should not be risked by consolidating. He said it is essential for IDOT to indicate how the agency or agencies will be funded. Mr. Blankenhorn said that funding is only one part of the question. Should the ad hoc committees be talking about structure or should that be a question for the legislators?

Ms. Thibeault asked for a cautionary approach. She said that legal aspects need to be reviewed. Would any proposed new agency result in a governance structure complying with the regulatory requirements for MPO designation, or would re-designation be required? Mr. Paesel asked for direction from the Policy Committee to the ad hoc committee to continue working and go further into the issues under discussion. Mr. Groner asked where the final report would go. Mr. Blankenhorn said the report has been mailed to the legislators and the ad hoc committee's work is done. Legislative hearings begin tomorrow.

Mr. d'Escoto requested that Mr. Blankenhorn ask Secretary Martin to set an agenda for any further work of the ad hoc committee and to schedule further meetings if appropriate. Mr. Blankenhorn agreed.

G. Illinois State Toll Highway Authority Long Range Capital Plan

Ms. Redden provided the Committee with a detailed look at ISTHA's recently released long-range plan and then invited discussion. Mr. Buehler asked about connections with IDOT's system. Ms. Redden responded that the tollway is working with IDOT to assure continuity of improvements. It's likely that that some sections will be rolled into one contract and then the tollway will be reimbursed by the State. ISTHA is also coordinating with WISDOT.

Mr. Tryon asked about potential access points in McHenry County. There is an annual interchange program, but no specifics. Ms. Redden agreed that the plan does not get into interchange specifics. ISTHA plans on doing a comprehensive evaluation of all interchanges. A consultant is on board and the study will begin soon to look at impacts on local, county and state routes.

Ms. Grimshaw said she was happy to see changes and asked about the timeline for improvements. Ms. Redden said that a full project list is available and noted that it is very front loaded. Most construction of the open lane tolling will occur within the next five years. The tollway is working with IDOT and other agencies to assure as smooth a program as possible. Open lane tolling work will be done in such a way that capacity is maintained. Shoulders will be used to carry some traffic. Of course there will be some construction delays, but the work will be done so that it will be at least 30-35 years before construction work impedes commuters again.

Mr. Tryon asked about coordinated toll collection through a universal I-Pass. Ms. Redden replied that ISTHA is working with the Skyway and Indiana and has joined the east coast consortium of EZ Pass. This has been a very welcome occurrence for trucking firms. Ms. Redden noted that project summaries as well as an executive summary of the tollway plan are available at its Web site.

H. Report on the *Shared Path 2030* Plan Development Process

Mr. Wies reviewed the Shared Path 2030 executive debriefing report prepared by Mr. Kopec. A cover memo indicated that many concerns with the efficacy of the 2030 RTP could be remedied by strengthening the financial and capital project prioritization methods used in the plan development process. Mr. d'Escoto requested that the RTP Committee review the executive de-briefing and give their comments. Several committee members agreed that this was appropriate giving the complexity of the recommendations. Mr. Blankenhorn added that the Policy Committee should consider it appropriate to provide broad guidance to the RTP Committee regarding the recommendations in the report.

I. Common Ground

Mr. Ron Thomas announced that NIPC released their new document, "Common Ground: A Preview of the 2040 Regional Framework Plan" on September 29. This Plan will shape land-use planning for years to come in the region's six counties. He gave a short presentation and displayed a map highlighting the implications for land use and transportation planning in the region. The Common Ground Plan is scheduled for release this winter and adoption mid-2005. He anticipates providing CATS with a socioeconomic scenario reflecting the Common Ground framework in time for consideration of the 2030 RTP update.

J. FY 2005-2009 TIP Development and the 8-Hour Ozone Standard

Ms. Berry reviewed the development of the schedule for conformity for the eight-hour standard. The deadline for conformity is June 15, 2005. The deadline for the TIP update is October, 2005 and the TIP Procedures Committee (TPC) at its July 30 meeting decided that a conformity-neutral TIP update done concurrently with the conformity would be in order. The update schedule is predicated on there being no changes to non-exempt project information included in the travel demand networks. TPC Chair Groner emphasized that no new non-exempt projects may be added.

At its September meeting, the Work Program Committee considered the TPC's recommendation and directed staff to work with our federal partners to ascertain the minimum time frame between Policy Committee approval and federal action. Ms. Berry said that work continues and no action is necessary today, but it might be necessary to have a special Policy Committee meeting.

She noted that a memo was sent to all implementing agencies on September 29 and staff has discussed the schedule with each agency on a one-on-one basis. No agency has indicated that it requires changes to projects beyond the parameters outlined in the memo. Federal or state action could change the situation if major new projects are funded.

Staff will move forward with work on conforming the RTP and the TIP for the eight-hour standard on an expedited basis. Mr. d'Escoto asked Policy Committee members to save June 2 as a possible meeting date.

K. Implication of the 2000 Census in Northeastern Illinois: New Metropolitan Area Boundary

Ms. Berry reported on activities related to the update of the metropolitan planning area (MPA) boundary for northeastern Illinois. A meeting with Kendall and Grundy County officials was held in September. The role of the CATS Policy Committee as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the role of CATS staff and the subregional planning staff were discussed. Federal requirements for the Unified Work Program, Transportation Improvement Program and Regional Transportation Plan as well as the implications of the region's non-attainment status were addressed. The urbanized area designated by the 2000 Census, the nonattainment area, the existing MPA and alternative MPA boundaries as discussed by the Work Program Committee were described.

Ms. Berry said that Mayor Schielke had participated in the MPA meeting, describing the Council of Mayors and providing insight on the CATS process. Mayor Schielke discussed with the Policy Committee the tremendous growth occurring in the southwest part of the region. He said that significant urbanization is occurring and some adjustments are absolutely necessary. Commissioner Paesel also participated in the meeting and noted that the possibility of all of Kendall County becoming part of the CATS planning area was discussed.

Ms. Berry said that many of the questions raised related to STP and UWP funding. CATS and IDOT staff have worked on responses to all of the questions raised. Discussion of the varying growth philosophies among and between the current and potential CATS membership occurred.

Next steps include producing funding estimates, meeting with municipalities, developing a proposal for the expansion of the MPA, discussing the proposal with the affected Counties, the Council of Mayors and the Work Program Committee, and returning to the Policy Committee with a recommendation to forward to the Governor.

OTHER BUSINESS

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2005.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aristide E. Biciunas
Secretary