



## **Policy Committee Meeting Minutes October 13, 2005**

The meeting was held at the Chicago Area Transportation Study, Cunningham-Williams Conference Room, 300 West Adams Street, Chicago, Illinois. Those present at the meeting were:

### **POLICY COMMITTEE**

**Tim Martin (Chairman)**  
**Marty Buehler**

**Tom Cuculich**  
**Paul Fish**  
**Don Gismondi**  
**Bruce Gould**

**Luann Hamilton**  
**Robert Hann**

**Ken Koehler**  
**Wally Kos**

**Karen McConnaughay**  
**Ed Paesel**  
**Leann Redden**  
**T. J. Ross**

**Jeff Schielke**  
**Steve Schlickman**  
**Norman R. Stoner**

**Illinois Department of Transportation**  
**Lake County**

(Representing Suzi Schmidt)

**DuPage County**

**Chicago Transit Authority**

**Federal Transit Administration**

**Will County**

(Representing Sheldon C. Latz)

**Chicago Department of Transportation**

**Private Transportation Providers**

(Representing John McCarthy)

**McHenry County**

**Cook County**

(Representing James Eldridge, Jr.)

**Kane County**

**Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission**

**Illinois State Toll Highway Authority**

**Pace**

(Representing John Case)

**Council of Mayors**

**Regional Transportation Authority**

**Federal Highway Administration**

**Visitors**

Marcus Arnold	SSMMA
Randy Blankenhorn	IDOT-OP&P
Linda Bolte	NIPC
Jay Ciavarella	RTA
Chris DiPalma	FHWA
Joe Heinrich	SSMMA
Jim LaBelle	Chicago Metropolis 2020
William Lachman	RTA
Jan Metzger	CNT
Feroz Nathani	McDonough Associates.
Hugh O’Hara	WCGL
Holly Ostidick	McHenry County
Bob Pilat	Village of Niles
Mark Pitstick	RTA
Andy Plummer	RTA
Tom Rickert	Kane County
Mike Rogers	IEPA
David Seglin	CDOT
Gordon Smith	IDOT
Jason Tai	IDOT

**Staff**

Don Kopec  
Bill Kiley, Mark Thomas  
Claire Bozic, Teri Dixon, Jon Hallas, Russell Pietrowiak,  
Ross Patronskey, Patricia Tinnelle

***I. CALL TO ORDER***

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am by Chairman Martin.

***II. OLD BUSINESS***

**A. Approval of Minutes for June 9, 2005.**

On a motion by Mayor Schielke, seconded by Mr. Cuculich, the minutes of the meeting on June 9, 2005 were approved.

**B. Council of Mayors Report**

Mayor Schielke reported the Council of Mayors Executive Committee met on September 26<sup>th</sup>. The committee elected two new vice-chairman; Mayor Arlene Mulder of Arlington Heights and Mayor Dan Podgorski, of Lansing.

The Mayor stated the Committee approved provisional STP programming marks for fiscal years 2006 through 2012. The mayors discussed the shortfall in state appropriations which will limit the number of projects that can be let in the spring and are hopeful that working with IDOT and the Legislature that this problem can be addressed for state fiscal year 2007.

There were updates on several other items: The proposed changes to the UWP process, SAFETEA-LU, and the status of appointments to the Regional Planning Board.

He also stated Mayors were named to participate in discussions with the City of Chicago on the STP program under SAFETEA-LU.

Regarding the Council of Mayor's STP Program, the June letting had eleven Council projects totaling \$16 million, the August letting had 5 projects totaling \$26 million and the September letting had 3 projects totaling \$2.4 million. Looking forward, the November letting has 8 projects with an estimated cost of approximately \$12.9 million. The total cost of these four lettings may be close to using all of our state appropriation for SFY 2006. So it looks like we may have a lean winter and spring.

He informed the next meeting of the Executive Committee is planned for late November or early December.

### **C. Executive Director's Report**

Mr. Kopec began by informing the Committee that Kermit Wies of the CATS staff was in Denver at AMPO's annual conference where he was receiving an award for Outstanding Professional Achievement in Metropolitan Transportation Planning for his work leading the Shared Path 2030 effort. Mr. Kopec extended this thanks to Kermit and all the CATS staff for their outstanding efforts.

He also noted that Patricia Berry was away at the Executive Director's meeting for Illinois MPOs. This meeting is part of the Fall Planning Conference beginning Thursday afternoon. He encouraged everyone to take advantage of the conference's Chicago location and attend.

Mr. Kopec informed the Committee that CATS recently sponsored two workshops addressing pedestrian facilities. The workshops were attended by over 80 individuals and underscore the region's commitment to both the senior and disabled and bicycle and pedestrian communities.

He announced that consultants have been selected for both the Household Travel Survey and for a series of 8 to 10 workshops in the region focusing on improving walkability and bikeability with an emphasis on safety. Finally, he

noted that with the recent rise in gasoline prices, the registrations to the Rideshare program have increased 25% over last year, and details are being worked out to allow northwest Indiana to utilize CATS rideshare database and software.

**D. U.S. DOT Certification Review of the Metropolitan Planning Process for the Northeastern Illinois Planning Area**

Mr. Stoner and Mr. Gismondi briefed the Committee on the results of the Certification Review conducted last July and August. The final document is not complete, but will be distributed when available. Mr. Stoner noted that the review went very well. There are no corrective actions and nine recommendations. Some areas also received commendations such as ITS, air quality, consultation and CMS. Some of the topics covered by the recommendations include reviewing current agreements and by-laws, tracking of products developed as part of the UWP, a more explicit review of the planning factors, and a system to track the response to public comments.

Mr. Martin asked US DOT if there were any other examples of a UWP Achievements Database in other metropolitan areas. Mr. DiPalma did not give a specific example but suggested that there is a lot of good work that is being accomplished and there needs to be a public information piece as part of a good public outreach effort. Also, UWP achievements will not necessarily come in a database format. Mr. Stoner suggested that the information tool would help the region understand successful planning efforts and those that are not successful, and would provide a basis for future UWP programming.

Mr. Kopec agreed to distribute the report to members when it is available.

**III. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Nominating Committee for the Office of Vice-Chairman**

Mr. Martin appointed Ms. Heramb of the City of Chicago, Mr. Kos of Cook County and Mr. Ross of Pace to the Nominating Committee. He asked them to provide a recommendation for Vice-Chair at the next meeting.

**B. SAFETEA-LU – Implications for Metropolitan Planning**

Mr. Kopec referred to a handout of slides for his presentation and emphasized he would focus on what SAFETEA-LU meant for metropolitan planning in northeastern Illinois. There are many other changes in the legislation that do not impact metropolitan planning that he would not cover. He began by noting the changes to the planning factors, the content of the Regional Transportation Plan, the financial plan, consultation, participation by interested parties, the need for a participation plan, public participation methods, plan, TIP and

certification schedules and the congestion management process. He then explained that these changes would not impact the plan development process currently underway. The law permits current plan development cycles to continue under TEA-21 requirements. With the region scheduled to update its plan by November of 2006, this would be the best option. The following plan update in 2010 would contain all the new requirements of SAFETEA-LU.

Regarding funding level changes, Mr. Kopec noted the national average increases in highway, transit and planning funding. He cautioned that these figures should not be taken literally and other factors could significantly alter the final amounts that the region will be receiving. Mr. Martin then explained that given rescissions by Congress, the impact of high priority projects on the minimum guarantee, obligation ceilings and the increase in planning funds, the increase in highway funding will simply be keeping up with inflation. The situation for transit is even worse. He cautioned everyone not to expect any huge increases in their programs.

Mr. Kopec concluded by noting the programmatic changes. Several new programs were introduced including a separate Highway Safety Program, a New Freedom Initiative program, a Safe Routes to School Program and a Real-time System Management Information Program. Programs with some changes included the CMAQ Program and the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program.

### **C. FY 2007 Unified Work Program Procedures**

Mr. Smith requested approval of the Unified Work Program procedures and schedule for the development of the FY 2007 program. Last year the Policy Committee approved the UWP emphasis areas, and after the development of the Core 07 UWP this fall, the UWP Committee will be requesting approval for this year's emphasis areas. The core program is designed to address what it takes to operate the MPO identifying efforts that must be funded on an annual basis. The core program will be assessed against the 07 UWP mark, and remaining funds will be distributed through a competitive selection process focusing on approved emphasis areas.

Mr. Martin asked if there would be a set-aside for the core program. Mr. Blankenhorn described the core program as an activity based effort focusing on needs. Mr. Martin also asked if there would be a UWP Performance Matrix. Mr. Blankenhorn described the performance matrix as being tied to the monitoring effort that was discussed earlier in the MPO Certification item. Mr. Paesel asked if the UWP Committee had considered the merging of CATS and NIPC staff. Mr. Smith responded by saying that the core elements effort is activities based and would therefore apply to either current or future staffing arrangements. The UWP Committee has discussed, and is prepared to respond to the planned changes. On a motion by Mayor Schielke and seconded by Ms. Hamilton the FY 2007 UWP process and schedule was approved unanimously.

#### **D. TEA-21 Committee**

Mr. Martin asked that the TEA-21 Committee be reactivated and be renamed the SAFETEA-LU Committee. Members include IDOT as the Chair, a representative of the counties, the City of Chicago, the RTA and the Council of Mayors. He asked that they address the new and changed elements of the transportation legislation. Mr. Martin also noted some of the challenges of the future that the committee should be aware of. With the Highway Trust Fund expected to have a zero balance at the end of SAFETEA-LU, there needs to be some discussion of long term funding strategies. And the region needs to coordinate our activities with what is happening in Washington. On a motion by Mayor Schielke, seconded by Mr. Cuculich the Committee was reactivated.

#### **E. Status of Implementing the Regional Planning Act**

Mr. Kopec brought the Committee up to date on several activities related to the Regional Planning Act. The initial meeting of the Board is scheduled for October 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 here at CATS offices. The move to the Sears Tower is proceeding and on schedule. He emphasized that CATS and NIPC will be moving in as one agency as much as possible, not two separate agencies occupying the same floor. NIPC should be moving near Thanksgiving while CATS will be moving by the end of the year. The next meeting of this Committee will take place in the Sears Tower.

#### **F. Appointment to the Regional Planning Board**

Mr. Martin noted that the CATS Policy Committee needed to have a representative on the new Regional Planning Board. Mayor Schielke nominated Mr. Schlickman from the RTA. Mr. Cuculich seconded the nomination which passed unanimously. Mr. Schlickman thanked the Committee and emphasized that he would be representing the entire Policy Committee, not just the RTA. He also noted that this appointment should benefit the strategic planning effort that they are just beginning.

#### **G. Transit Use Campaign**

Mr. Martin noted that with the upcoming construction season and the high cost of gasoline, the time was right to make a concerted push to persuade travelers to take advantage of the transit system. Mr. Kopec stated that the recommendation is to add a project to the proposed CMAQ program that would be considered in the next agenda item. The project would be for \$1 million federal and be used for media outreach. Mr. Schlickman felt this would have the added advantage of establishing our credibility with the legislature in the

event the region seeks additional funding from the state. The discussion covered who would be involved with and leading the project, the need to be inclusive of the private sector, to take advantage of existing resources, particularly APTA's PT<sup>2</sup> program, and make sure this was a creative campaign not only to get people on transit but to increase transit overall. On a motion by Mr. Martin, seconded by Mr. Schlickman, the Committee agreed to include this project in the proposed FY 06 CMAQ Program.

## **H. FY 2006 CMAQ Program**

Mr. Patronsky introduced the CMAQ program for FY 2006, which was being recommended to the Policy Committee by the Work Program Committee, after being developed by the CMAQ Project Selection Committee.

Mr. Patronsky said that the proposed program had been released for public comment by the Work Program Committee at its August 12, 2005 meeting. The CMAQ Project Selection Committee reviewed the comments and recommended the attached program to the Work Program Committee.

Mr. Patronsky then noted that the proposed program contained 77 projects with the project just added in the previous agenda item, totaling just under \$106,000,000 in federal funding. He also noted that the FY 2006 federal appropriation was still pending.

Mr. Patronsky said that if the Policy Committee approves the program, it will be forwarded to the U.S. DOT for an eligibility determination. Upon completion of the determination, sponsors will be notified to proceed.

Mr. Patronsky concluded that the FY 2007 call for proposal will begin in December.

Following a motion by Mayor Schielke, seconded by Ms. Redden, the Policy Committee approved the FY 2006 program of CMAQ projects.

## **I. Finding of Plan and Program Conformity to the PM<sub>2.5</sub> Standard**

Mr. Patronsky reported that the draft *Transportation Conformity Analysis for the PM<sub>2.5</sub> and 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards* had been released for public comment on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005, following the Work Program Committee's authorization for its release. At that time, the document was posted on the CATS web site, and notification of the comment period was mailed to all parties on the CATS mailing list.

Mr. Patronsky continued that staff had drafted a response to the comment received in cooperation with the Consultation Team. The Work Program Committee had concurred in the response and recommended that the Policy Committee make a finding of conformity.

Mr. Patronsky noted that the federal agencies will need to make a conformity determination for the entire non-attainment area, which includes both northeastern Illinois and northwest Indiana. He said that NIRPC currently anticipates submitting their portion of the analysis to their Executive Board in December, which will allow adequate time for a federal review before the April 5, 2006 deadline.

Mr. Patronsky said that if the Policy Committee makes a finding of conformity for the 2030 RTP and FY 05 – 09 TIP, the finding and documentation will be forwarded to the federal agencies for their review and approval.

Following a motion by Mayor Schielke, seconded by Ms. Hamilton, the Policy Committee adopted resolution 05-18 titled, “A Resolution Finding the 2005 – 2009 Transportation Improvement Program and the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan for Northeastern Illinois in Conformity with the Provisions of the 8-Hour Ozone and Fine Particulate Matter National Ambient Air Quality Standards.”

## **J. Regional Paratransit Plan**

Jay Ciavarella from the RTA informed the Committee that the RTA was in the process of developing a ADA Paratransit plan which needs to be submitted to the FTA by January 1<sup>st</sup> of 2006.

He also stated that a committee consisting of CTA, PACE, RTA, CATS, and IDOT had begun meeting regularly to work on this plan. The current schedule is for the plan to be developed over this month, then presented at 4 public hearings that are scheduled for early November. During the second half of November, the plan would be revised to incorporate public comments and then presented to the MPO for their approval. Because of the timing of the CATS Policy Committee it is requested that the Committee authorize the Work Program Committee to act in their behalf and consider the plan at their December meeting. All of this stems from a new law that was signed over the summer which designated PACE as the region’s ADA Paratransit operator. PACE is to take over direct control of all ADA Paratransit public transit trips on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006. It is anticipated that there will still be some details to work out between the time that the plan is submitted to the FTA and the time PACE takes over

Mr. Ross noted that there are actually two programs addressing paratransit in the region. The first is designed to meet the ADA requirement of providing complementary service for qualified individuals within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile of fixed route transit service. The second generally deals with the Pace service area and is supported by individual villages and counties.

On a motion by Mr. Buehler, seconded by Mr. Paesel the Work Program Committee was authorized to act on behalf of the Policy Committee regarding the approval of the Regional Paratransit Plan.

## **K. RTA Financial Capacity Report**

William Lachman of the RTA noted that his agency is required to prepare an annual financial capacity analysis by the FTA. The analysis must demonstrate that there will be sufficient local revenue capable of covering operation expenditures to warrant further federal investment in the region.

This year's financial capacity analysis examines RTA and Service Board financial and operational data from 2000 through 2004 and projections from 2005 through 2009.

In 2004, the system-wide recovery ratio exceeded the required recovery ratio of 50% by more than five percentage points. Local sales tax, the primary source of public funding for the RTA, continues to account for more than two-thirds of non-operating revenue.

From 2000 to 2004 ridership fell approximately 2.5%, while sales tax revenues have increased at an average annual rate of only 1.0%. In 2004, decreased unemployment contributed to a 3.2% increase in sales tax revenue and a 0.2% increase in ridership, the first ridership gain since 2001.

In 2005, volatile fuel prices and declining unemployment contributed to further increases in both ridership and sales tax revenue. July YTD ridership was 3.1% greater than prior year, reflecting increases at each of the Service Boards. July YTD preliminary sales tax revenue exceeded prior year by 3.6%. Although higher gasoline prices have contributed to increases in both sales tax receipts and rider ship, the increase in fare box revenue of \$7.6 million during the first half of 2005 fell far short \$17.4 million increase in fuel expense during the same period.

The 2004 financial capacity analysis projects ridership and passenger revenue to increase at compound average annual rates of 1.7% and 1.2%, respectively, through 2009.

We recommend that the committee approve the RTA financial capacity analysis.

On a motion by Mayor Schielke, seconded by Mr. Schlickman, the RTA Financial Capacity Report was approved.

## **IV. OTHER BUSINESS**

## **V. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for January 12, 2006 in the Sears Tower, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Chicago, Illinois at 10:00 a.m.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Donald P. Kopec  
Secretary