



CHICAGO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

UWP Committee Tier II Working Group

Meeting Minutes

January 17, 2006

The meeting was called to order at 9:37 at the Chicago Area Transportation Study, Cook Cunningham-Williams Conference Room, 233 South Wacker Drive, Suite 800, Chicago, Illinois. Those present at the meeting were:

Unified Work Program Committee Members

Illinois Department of Transportation	Gordon Smith, <i>Chair</i>
Chicago Department of Transportation	David Seglin
Chicago Transit Authority	David Simmons, Jim Richmond*
Council of Mayors	Dan Podgorski
Counties	Thomas Rickert
Federal Highway Administration	Chris DiPalma
Metra	Thomas Weaver*
NIPC	Ralph Coglianesse, Linda Bolte*
Pace	Lorraine Snorden, Tom Radak*
Regional Transportation Authority	Mark Pitstick, Patty Mangano*
CATS	Patricia Berry

* Alternate Member

Interested Parties

Illinois Department of Transportation	Carl Mikyska
Southwest Council of Mayors	Vicky Smith

CATS Staff

Janet Bright
Parry Frank
Craig Heither

1. Introductions

Introductions followed the opening and Carl Mikyska was introduced as a staff member to assist the UWP committee. Members were asked to submit tier II projects to both Carl Mikyska and Craig Heither.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The tier II working group deferred approval of the meeting minutes to the full committee which is scheduled to meet February 21.

3. Review and Discussion of Work Program Committee's UWP Action

Mr. Smith gave an overview of the discussions to date by both the WPC and Policy committees. He had presented the three scenarios discussed by the UWP and WPC committees with the Policy Committee and they asked for a briefing on the tier II discussions at their March meeting. The Policy Committee discussed the various levels of activities classified as core in the three scenarios and the fact that the scenario recommended by the UWP and Work Program Committees was the one with the highest level of core funding. Policy Committee members agreed with Mr. Smith that the level of activity required for MPO certification is probably less than that identified in the selected core scenario for 2007. It was recognized that the region is going through a transition from programming UWP funds primarily through an allocation method and is at least headed in the right direction.

Mr. Seglin and Mr. Rickert said that the Work Program Committee's position is that in the future the projects and funding levels identified as core should be more like the first and third scenario. The WPC discussion indicated that many felt that scenario two was too liberal in its definition of core projects and funding levels.

Discussion concluded and Chairman Smith announced that Mr. Rickert is the new county representative on the UWP committee.

4. Review of UWP Emphasis Areas

Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) was developed as an emphasis area based on RTP Committee discussion. Mr. Seglin questioned what CSS means to each agency. Since there are several different definitions of CSS, Mr. Seglin asked that the work group work from a common definition. He asked Mr. DiPalma if USDOT had a definition that could be used by the work group. Mr. DiPalma stated that FHWA does not have a specific definition but does have several publications that describe CSS and that he could provide those materials to the work group. The work group discussed several potential project topics and their relation to CSS.

Mr. Smith noted that planning for seniors and disabled was raised at the Work Program Committee meeting. He said that work in that area could be covered under emphasis areas 1, 2 and 7. Mr. Pitstick asked about the meaning of area 2, Support for Major Capital Recommendations. Mr. Weaver said some work covered by that emphasis area may not be on major capital recommendations, it could be work done ahead of the NEPA process. Ms. Bolte said it would include work that CATS staff is doing for Metra and CTA on their new start projects.

Mr. Coglianese said the nine emphasis areas are a good start, but we may need to do a better job defining what the nine areas are. Mr. Pitstick noted that if examples are used to pinpoint each emphasis area, we may end up pigeon holing, but it could also help. Mr. Rickert said the current descriptions do not close the door to any particular project and the work group should not get overly definitive prior to submission of the proposals. Mr. Coglianese said that if the UWP committee is going to grade projects on emphasis areas, yet leave the definitions vague it will be more of a challenge. Mr. Smith agreed with Mr. Pitstick that the working group doesn't want to pigeon hole and should be open for the competitive process.

Mr. Seglin said there may be good projects which don't fall into an emphasis area but should be funded. Mr. Weaver agreed. He said that with the discussion of the core

proposals, it was appropriate to be concerned with whether a proposal fit the definition of core, but the tier II process is to look at all the proposals and determine which projects will be most useful to the region. The discussion continued and Ms. Bolte suggested that since all the members of the work group are seasoned professionals, we can confidently use our professional judgment to reach a final program that meets the needs of the region.

5. Discussion of Tier II Selection Process

Mr. Smith asked if another working group should be organized to go over project submittals in a similar fashion to the Tier I selection process. Ms. Snorden commented that it could narrow down the projects and be a time-effective approach. Inclusion on the working group was discussed and all members wanted to be on the working group. Mr. Seglin said that being the case, the full UWP Committee might as well meet. Mr. Smith agreed and noted that Mr. Heither and Mr. Mikyska will organize the project submittals into a manageable set of information for the committee.

Mr. Heither reviewed the schedule with the group, pointing out that project submittals would be distributed on February 7 and the next meeting of the UWP Committee is scheduled for February 21. A review of the major events followed and discussion led to how projects should be listed for review by member agencies. It was agreed that projects should be sorted by agency, emphasis area and project type.

Ms. Snorden asked about the public's opportunity to comment and review the proposals. Mr. Heither said public notice is provided via the Illinois State Clearinghouse and NIPC's A-95 review. Mr. Smith asked if it is the group's recommendation to include a public comment period. Ms. Snorden said public involvement is critical. Ms. Bolte said NIPC's notification includes a huge group. Mr. Smith suggested we could make the UWP proposals available on the CATS website. Ms. Berry agreed, saying notice could be included in the "announcements" section of the website. Mr. Smith asked about discussing the UWP with the Public Involvement Task Force. Ms. Bright noted that the PITF is not scheduled to meet until March. Mr. Pitstick said he found the proposal acceptable and noted that it would be similar to what is provided for the CMAQ proposals—they're out there and available to the public.

Ms. Snorden then asked about how the funding for each of the agencies will be determined. Mr. Seglin answered that a recommendation is established through negotiations at the UWP committee. Mr. Smith noted that the 2007 mark will be between \$15 and \$18 million.

Mr. Rickert asked if Mr. Smith was going to contact the PITF about posting the UWP proposals on the website. Mr. Smith said he would contact the Chair of the PITF and let her know the UWP Committee's intention. If the PITF should meet prior to March, we can go to them, or else, if desired, an e-mail to the members could be distributed. Mr. Rickert noted that posting the proposals on the website goes beyond what we've done in the past. The work group agreed that comments received would be shared with the Work Program Committee when a fiscally-constrained program is submitted.

Mr. Seglin asked if anything needed to be put forward to the Regional Planning Board, as they are to be the single point of contact for all public information. Mr. Smith said the chair of the Public Involvement Committee has already reached out to the RPB.

Mr. Pitstick suggested the work group get to the meat of the project selection process and expressed his desire to focus on project merits and not on the dollars associated with each project, at least initially. Discussion followed on different approaches to show support of projects through a variety of voting and commenting methods. Mr. Weaver asked about commenting on projects and pointed out the potential volume of comments for each committee member to review which would reduce the effectiveness of making comments. Mr. Weaver suggested that meaningful comments will get to the root of everyone's thoughts and asked that members refrain from making comments such as "sounds good". Mr. Smith said members should indicate which projects from others will impact their work. Mr. Seglin agreed, saying that in order for the comments to be useful, they must be specific about how a project helps and how it relates to other work.

Mayor Podgorski suggested that projects be reviewed without dollar amounts so that the focus would be on the project merits. He hoped this would generate discussion about the value of each project. The committee agreed whole heartedly that this would be a good approach and directed staff to distribute the proposals to committee members without disclosing dollar amounts.

6. Other Business

No other business was brought to the working group.

7. Next Meeting

The full UWP Committee is scheduled to meet February 21 at 9:30 AM in the combined offices of CATS and NIPC. On a motion by Mr. Rickert, seconded by Mr. Weaver the working group adjourned at 10:58 a.m.