

MEETING NOTES

IL Route 53/120 Blue Ribbon Advisory Council

Meeting 1, September 12, 2011, Lake County Central Permit Facility

The meeting was called to order by Kristi Lafleur at 2:07 p.m.

Ms. Lafleur described the process and the Council's role. She said that Governor Quinn wants to pursue transportation improvements that promote economic development. She briefly talked about today's meeting agenda and how this will be a new approach for evaluating the project. She indicated that the questions about IL 53/120 that need to be answered by the Council are 1) Should the Toll Highway Authority build it? 2) What should it look like? and 3) How do we pay for it?

ISTHA Director Bill Morris interjected that most of the Tollway Board members have committed to support the consensus decision, if such is achieved, of the Blue Ribbon Advisory Council.

Ms. Lafleur introduced the Co-chairs of the Council: David Stolman, Chairman of the Lake County Board, and George Ranney, Chairman of Prairie Holdings Corporation.

Mr. Stolman welcomed those present to the Lake County Permit Facility. Mr. Stolman described how the Permit Facility is an example of an innovative building in terms of work flow, structure and environment sensitivity. Mr. Stolman stated his support for the Central Lake County Corridor project and his hope that the Council will achieve consensus and the project can move forward.

Mr. Ranney stated that he has not supported the project over the years but feels that this is the process to consider a new approach to arrive at a reasonable conclusion. Mr. Ranney expressed 1) his confidence in the Tollway staff and their ability to facilitate the process; 2) he believes they will be able to provide innovative solutions to the design and financing challenges; and, 3) his confidence that the process will result in innovative ways to connect roadways and adjacent land use. Mr. Ranney also said that he is looking forward to having CMAP as a partner in this process. Mr. Ranney then introduced Randy Blankenhorn, Executive Director of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Mr. Blankenhorn stated that he is looking forward to taking a new approach to implementing a regional capital project. He went on to say that prior regional transportation plans often contained 30 to 35 capital projects, none of which were ever implemented. The 2040 regional plan adopted last October contains only 5 fiscally constrained capital projects, one of which is the Central Lake County Corridor which when modeled as part of the 2040 roadway network outperformed the others in terms of congestion relief. CMAP and the region are looking forward to an innovative approach to the implementation of this project as a 21st century urban highway.

Self-introductions followed with each Council member giving a brief description of their respective affiliations.

Mr. Ranney then briefed the members on the Council's responsibilities:

- Alternates have been officially designated for some of the mayoral representatives. These alternates will have voting privileges.
- Other members may designate alternates but they will not have voting privileges nor may they participate in Council discussions. They may only voice their opinions during the time set aside for public comment.
- Communications will be accomplished electronically and will be coordinated through Michelle Graham.

Mr. Ranney stated as a disclosure that he and his wife currently hold interest in property shown to be in the path of the project.

Mr. Stolman presented a list of seven draft guiding principles to be used by the Council in evaluating the project. (See attached meeting materials)

Jacky Grimshaw stated that Principle number 2 should include a reference to preserving or enhancing the environment.

Mr. Stolman asked the Council members if there was any objection to this change to Principle number 2. There was no objection.

Howard Learner suggested adding the language "to the extent" after the word "concepts" in Principle number 3.

Mr. Stolman asked the Council members if there was any objection to adding this language. There was no objection.

Mary Sue Barrett suggested adding the words “and accessibility” after the word “mobility” in Principle number 1.

Mr. Stolman asked the Council members if there was any objection to the suggested language change. There was no objection.

Mayor Mulder stated that she would like to see the words innovation or innovative stressed in one of the principles even though it is implied throughout the process. A general discussion ensued as to where these terms should be inserted or whether an eighth principle should be added.

George Ranney suggested that perhaps staff could draft language that could be considered before the end of the meeting. (Proposed language related to innovation was not ready in time but will be available for consideration at the next Council meeting.)

Tollway Director Morris stated the obvious need to pay for whatever the project turns out to be, e.g. a smaller footprint, multi-modal accommodations, etc. There needs to be equity for both users and non-users of the facility. He also emphasized the need for the Council to reach a strong consensus; more than a simple majority, but a general agreement on one report to submit to the Tollway Board of Directors.

Mr. Ranney said that congestion pricing provides a means to address these issues and the Council needs to consider these topics as part of their deliberations.

Mr. Ranney presented the Council with information on and membership of the three working groups. Mr. Ranney asked if there were any comments regarding the working group structure. There were no comments. (See meeting materials) He indicated that members contact Michelle Graham if they want to change working group assignments.

Mr. Stolman presented the Council with a draft work meeting schedule. Members were instructed to contact Michelle Graham with any conflicts.

Senator Link suggested that the full Council should meet every month rather than every other month.

Kristi Lafleur indicated that additional meetings of the full Council may be scheduled as needed. She suggested that the bulk of the work will be done in the working groups and it may be more likely that additional working group meetings may be required.

Some members indicated that they will not be available to meet on certain dates on the schedule. It was asked if it will be possible to participate in working group meetings via conference call if necessary. Michelle Graham and Kristi LaFleur will tweak the schedule to accommodate members to the extent possible.

Mr. Ranney introduced Rocco Zucherro of the ISTHA and Matt Maloney of CMAP to give the Council members a brief historical perspective on previous work that has been done on the central Lake County Corridor. Rocco presented a slide that gave the timeline on the project starting in 1962 with the Route 53 project appearing in the first regional transportation plan prepared by the Chicago Area Transportation Study to the recently adopted Move Illinois capital program. (See meeting materials)

Rocco then described a number of previous studies which taken together constitute a comprehensive understanding of the corridor. He stated that there have been numerous arterial improvements within the study area that have been implemented over the past decades. He also indicated that approximately 60 to 70 percent of the right-of-way for the project has been either purchased or reserved by IDOT.

Rocco then presented a series of slides depicting various segments of the proposed alignment. Each slide depicted an alignment area approximately 300 feet in width. Rocco reviewed the various environmental, engineering and land acquisition challenges associated with each segment.

Kathy Ryg requested a list of the completed arterial improvements that Rocco referred to in his presentation.

Mary Sue Barrett inquired about economic development opportunities within the broader corridor.

Matt Maloney informed the Council about the Central Lake County Corridor and its relationship to the CMAP Go To 2040 Plan. It is one of only five constrained capital projects in the plan. It ranked the highest among the capital projects in relieving congestion and improving mobility in the region. The Go To 2040 Plan envisions the implementation of the Central Lake County Corridor as a 21st century urban highway built on a smaller footprint to minimize its impact on landscape. It also provides a unique opportunity to increase the region's commitment to public transit.

Mr. Stolman summarized the next steps in the process.

Mayor Mulder inquired as to whether any consideration has been given to depressing sections or all of the proposed roadway.

Mr. Stolman indicated that this is the type of issue that will be addressed in the working groups.

Chairman Koehler of McHenry County stated that McHenry County is firmly in support of this project from both a transportation and an economic development standpoint. He indicated that a direct connection with US Route 12 is important.

Mayor Knigge asked if the project will connect with Route 12.

Rocco Zucherro indicated that as currently proposed it does not connect with 12.

Kristi Lafleur indicated that everything is on the table regarding possible connections and project limits.

Director Morris asked about the segment of Route 53 between I 90 and Lake Cook Road. Will it remain a freeway in Cook County and a toll facility in Lake County?

George Ranney indicated that this is another issue to be addressed by the Council.

Eve Lee as a member of the public asked how the Council will be able to reach a consensus decision without the Villages of Grayslake and Mundelein at the table.

Mr. Stolman responded by saying that the mayors on the Council were not intended to represent individual municipalities. The five mayors on the Council represent agencies and larger constituencies such as the Lake and Northwest Cook Councils of Mayors, the Northwest Municipal Conference, the Lake County Municipal League and the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission.

The meeting adjourned at 4:09 p.m.