

## MEETING NOTES

IL Route 53/120 Blue Ribbon Advisory Council

Meeting #2, October 17, 2011, Lake County Central Permit Facility

The meeting was called to order by Kristi Lafleur at 2:05 p.m.

Ms. Lafleur talked through the agenda items. She indicated that following the presentations, the three working groups would convene and meet for approximately 30 minutes. The Advisory Council would then reconvene for a summary of the working group meetings. Ms. Lafleur then introduced the Co-Chairs David Stolman and George Ranney.

Mr. Stolman welcomed everyone and asked the Advisory Council members to introduce themselves.

Mr. Stolman moved to agenda item #2 for approval of the meeting #1 summary and approval of the language revisions in the guiding principles. **Both the meeting summary and the revised language in the guiding principles were unanimously approved by the Council.**

Mr. Ranney asked the Council members to keep in mind the questions that need to be answered as the process moves forward. Mr. Ranney then introduced Mr. Kamran Khan from Wilbur Smith and Associates.

Mr. Khan made a PowerPoint presentation on Pricing and Finance.

- Mr. Khan indicated in his presentation that highway construction in the U.S. has traditionally been funded using motor fuel taxes. In recent years however, the collection of motor fuel taxes has not kept up with the revenue needs for highway construction. This is due in part to the increase in fuel efficiency of today's automobiles. He also indicated that the current trend is a movement toward user fees as a revenue source.

- 50% of the new freeway centerline miles in the last 10 years opened as toll facilities.
- The current toll rate on the Illinois Tollway system is an average of 3 cents/mile, one of the lowest in the U.S. Even with the recently approved increase in the toll rate to 6 cents/mile it will remain among the lowest in the nation.
- There is a movement toward differential toll pricing to reflect travel demand.
- Value capture resulting from the increased land values of adjacent properties is a possible financing mechanism.

There was discussion of the Colorado and southern California highway examples provided in the presentation. Both were constructed in the 1990's and each had fairly high start-up costs. Each benefitted from some value capture that was authorized through legislation. One was able to recapture its start-up costs while the other failed to meet its revenue goals and has continually raised its toll rate.

There was discussion of the financial viability of stand-alone toll roads versus system expansions. Mr. Khan indicated that there is less risk associated with an expansion to an existing, regional system. There was discussion of the Elgin/O'Hare project, noting that it might not work as a stand-alone project. Mr. Khan indicated that the region benefits from a system wide financial approach.

Mr. Matt Maloney from CMAP was introduced to make a presentation on parkways. He presented a series of slides depicting various highways dating from the 1930's to the current day.

There was discussion about the example parkways, including their traffic capacity, truck volumes and if any were toll facilities. Staff indicated that none were toll roads, and capacity/truck volume information could be collected. There continued to be discussion about the opportunity for a unique design, and how truck traffic is one aspect to be considered.

Mr. Jeff Heilstedt from AECOM was introduced to make a presentation on roadway concepts. He suggested that there are multiple possibilities for the design of the facility, and discussed several aspects of the design that the working groups should consider. He presented depictions of several highway cross-sections that can be constructed within a 300-foot right-of-way. He also presented slides depicting a number of interchange configurations both traditional and innovative in nature. It was suggested that regardless of the interchange type, it is likely that the 300-foot right-of-way would be exceeded at these locations.

Following the roadway concepts presentation, the Advisory Council members were instructed to break out to their respective working groups. Before doing so Mr. Ranney instructed the members think about their expectations, to look at the opportunities as well as the challenges, and to think about any information that may be needed. Mr. Ranney then instructed the chairs of each working group to select one spokesperson to summarize the results of the discussion when the full council reconvened.

## **WORKING GROUP BREAK-OUT SESSIONS**

### **Mobility and Finance Working Group**

The group began by identifying the challenges when considering mobility and finance. They included:

- How do you build an affordable highway that will meet the mobility needs?
- Where will the revenue come from to build the road unless the Tollway is willing to raise tolls across the system?
- There needs to be a realistic assessment of the capacity to raise tolls?
- We need an estimate of cost. (It was noted that the \$2.2 billion estimate developed in the past was for an 8-lane facility).

- We must define what we want to build. We need to have some idea of what the road will look like. (It was noted that the Design & Land Use working group will consider design options)
- Can some of the cost of the project come from sales tax collected by Lake County?
- Is there consensus that this highway needs to be built? Are there other alternatives? (It was noted that other roads will be improved whether or not 53 is built)
- Can we build the facility with tolls alone?
- We need to develop a menu of revenue options. Several possibilities were suggested, including:
  - Commitment to raise tolls on the existing system
  - Very high tolls on Route 53
  - Willingness to raise tolls on the Tri-State
  - Willingness to charge tolls on Route 53 in Cook County
  - Gas tax in Lake County
  - Value capture
  - Federal transportation funds
  - State transportation funds
- This process is different from the Elgin/O'Hare experience where the Tollway already knew what was going to be built.
- The demographics at the north end of the corridor include those who are the least able to afford higher tolls. It is an equity issue.
- Whatever we decide to build needs to be sustainable and meet the needs of projected traffic and growth.

Mr. Ranney summarized the data needs of the Finance and Mobility Working Group as:

- Baseline network improvements status and performance
- Analysis of what can be built and funded
- Menu of revenue options
- Growth and traffic projections based on various options

## Design and Land Use Working Group

1. The group began with discussion of the information needed to ultimately make a recommendation to the full committee on the design and land use for the corridor.
  - a. Different build options for different “zones”
    - i. Lower speed/smaller footprint in densely populated areas
    - ii. Higher speed/larger footprint in more rural areas
    - iii. Based on land use of surrounding area
  - b. Minimum access points
    - i. Is there a minimum/maximum spacing for access
  - c. Land use details – section by section
    - i. Existing and Projected
  - d. What is the purpose of the road
    - i. Type of trip
      1. Truck use?
    - ii. Long distance travel – design for through traffic or local access/mobility
    - iii. Minimum/maximum number of lanes
    - iv. High speed versus lower speed
  - e. What will be the cost to the user
    - i. Money
    - ii. Time
    - iii. Convenience
  - f. Origin-Destination information
  - g. Growth – how much growth in Lake County should this road accommodate
  - h. Traffic Volume projections to determination of level of service
  - i. How can improvements address environmental issues and still be cost effective
2. The group discussed agenda items for the November 7 meeting
  - a. Land use details (CMAP)
    - i. Divide land use into “zones”

- ii. Provide information on business type/location and other major anchors
  - b. Overall map with initial determination of roadway design concept per section (CMAP and AECOM)
    - i. Based on existing and future land use
    - ii. Consideration given to results of Route 120 study
    - iii. Based on historic issues with 53 improvement
    - iv. Based on RECORDED alignment where ROW has been purchased
    - v. Based on environmental sensitivity known at this time
    - vi. Utilize original LCTIP interchanges as a starting point
  - c. Initial determination of suggested interchanges/access points (AECOM)
- 3. The group suggested that all information for the meeting will follow CMAP policy and be distributed to participants no later than one week before the meeting. Participants are asked to review material provided in preparation for the meeting.

### **Environment and Sustainability Working Group**

- 1. Defining scope of the Working Group's charge (broad view)
  - a. Proposed placement and construction of road
    - i. Minimize negative impacts (start with Hippocratic Oath "First, do no harm")
      - 1. Particular attention to water
      - 2. Particular attention to ecosystems and vegetative communities
      - 3. Particular attention to wildlife (including all the lower order families)
      - 4. Impact on existing communities

The group is interested in quantifying the so-called "costs of doing nothing." Namely, they would like to estimate the environmental impacts of worsening congestion on the existing

arterial system. According to CMAP staffers, the existing Lake County TIP (Draft EIS) should get at this issue.

- b. Opportunities for innovation
  - i. Road materials
  - ii. Road design
    - 1. For aesthetics
    - 2. For natural resource protection
    - 3. For multi-modal facilitation
    - 4. For reduced energy use
  - iii. Road construction techniques to minimize use of anything outside footprint of road itself
  - iv. Funding additional land protection to offset road and stimulated development

The group is interested in some of the road's broader environmental impacts, such as integration of transit and overall effect on travel behavior, as well as its relationship with smart growth principles (i.e. using the facility as a tool to manage development).

- 2. Future operations of road
- 3. Defining a set of standards to measure "environment and sustainability" performance of any proposal
  - a. Use I-LAST as a model framework (not constrained just to I-LAST)

Mike Sturino from IRTBA recommended the group use the [Illinois Livable and Sustainable Transportation \(I-LAST\)](#) rating system for the project. I-LAST provides a comprehensive checklist of best practices to reduce the environmental impact of road construction and operations.

The group also expressed interest in using 53/120 as leverage for additional conservation of open space. The group also expressed interest in strong aesthetic principles, along the lines of other context-sensitive case studies.

4. Information Needs:

Stage 1:

1. I-LAST manual as example of organizing framework
2. Maps showing corridor and adjoining environmentally sensitive areas e.g.
  - a. Wetlands (and hydric soils)
  - b. Prairies
  - c. Corridors
  - d. Roosting / Nesting sites
  - e. Drainage ways
  - f. Protected areas (private, municipal, county, state)
3. Prior EIS studies

Stage 2: ?

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Upon reconvening, the full Council was given a brief summary of the discussions that occurred within each of the working groups. Mr. Stolman opened the meeting for public comment. One person suggested that the Council needs to factor in the cost of doing nothing. Mr. Stolman wrapped up the meeting by reviewing the schedule of upcoming meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.