

Working Group Meeting Notes

IL Route 53/120 Blue Ribbon Advisory Council

Mobility & Finance Group, November 7, 2011 (1:00-2:30 pm)

Design & Land Use Group, November 7, 2011 (2:30-3:00 pm)

Environment & Sustainability Group, November 14, 2011 (2-3:30 pm)

The three Working Groups of the Route 53/120 Blue Ribbon Advisory Council met for the first time in November, 2011. The following table provides an overview of the key topics discussed by each group in November.

Mobility & Finance	Design & Land Use	Environment & Sustainability
<i>How much traffic and revenue would different scenarios generate? What problems are we trying to solve? What trips do we want to accommodate?</i>	<i>What is the purpose of the proposed road? How does current and desired future land use inform the potential design for 53/120?</i>	<i>What are the environmental issues & constraints? How should we measure success?</i>

All meetings began with a statement from the Illinois Tollway concerning the Council process. Rocco Zucchero stated that the Council's work is a deliberative process, adding that there are no pre-conceived notions about what this project should be or what it should look like. Rocco noted that the November meetings were an opportunity to define the purpose and need for the project, and begin to establish criteria for evaluating different roadway options.

Additionally, all group meetings in November began with a presentation from CMAP that addressed background information on previous studies, the status of other arterial improvements in Lake County, and a review of the LCTIP and the Route 120 Unified Vision processes. Highlights from the reports include:

- Both the LCTIP and the 120 processes evaluated multiple alternatives.
- Multiple roadway segments included in the LCTIP baseline network are either completed, under construction or in some phase of design.
- Maps were shown to illustrate of the high level of congestion in Lake County, as well as the population and employment growth in Lake County from 1990-2010.
- Past studies concluded that the Route 53 extension and improvements in the IL 120 corridor are needed.
- Baseline arterial improvements have proceeded but these do not eliminate the need for an improvement in the 53/120 Corridor.
- Lake County is growing and will continue to grow and the road provides a crucial link between people and jobs.

- The alignment is largely defined but questions about roadway character and environmental considerations remain.
- GO TO 2040 envisions a “modern boulevard” approach.

From this point forward, the meeting agendas diverged to address each groups' specific area of interest. A individual meeting summary for each group follows.

Mobility & Finance Working Group

Mr. Barry Burton of Lake County was introduced. He provided an overview of travel forecast basics, explaining the process involved in estimating how much traffic a new roadway might attract. He described the three-step process as follows:

- Understand the current traffic (what happens at Lake Cook Road?)
- Introduce scenarios (what if there were other options?)
- Establish criteria (what do we want to achieve?)

Mr. Stolman indicated that the project will complement other improvements being implemented in Lake County. He stated that we are looking at the smallest footprint necessary to accommodate 2040 traffic. He then asked Mr. Zuccherro to elaborate on the first two steps in the travel forecast process.

Mr. Zuccherro began with a slide depicting 2009 average daily total traffic volumes for existing Route 53 at Lake Cook Road, along with those for various state routes in Lake County. He indicated that there are almost 104,000 daily vehicles at Route 53 and Lake Cook Road. He added that there is strong travel demand in Lake County both north-south and east-west.

Mr. Zuccherro then introduced three scenarios: an expressway, a tolled highway and a tolled boulevard. He stressed that the scenarios were not intended to be recommendations – but rather “ends of the spectrum and a middle option” for comparison purposes only. He noted that 2040 revenue estimates were gross, and did not account for operations and maintenance costs.

Scenario	Expressway	Tolled Highway	Tolled Boulevard
Features	Highest speed. Attracts most traffic. Inconsistent with Council's principles.	High speed. Attracts 30% less traffic than expressway.	Low speed. Attracts 50% less traffic than expressway
Expected annual revenue (Millions)	None	\$125 - \$175	\$50 - \$75
Speed	65	65	45
IL-53 Lanes	6	6	4
IL-120 Lanes	4	4	4
Trucks Allowed?	Yes	Yes	No

Mr. Zuccherro indicated that the revenue assumptions are based on passenger vehicles being tolled at \$0.20 per mile. He stated that this assumption is based on an average of rates for new toll facilities in the country and it is the rate that will be used for the Elgin/O'Hare facility.

The group moved on to a discussion of potential criteria to use in evaluating the mobility and finance aspects of a roadway option. Mr. Ranney said that there are a myriad of details that need to be discussed, and he and Mr. Stolman welcomed the group's comments. Following is a summary of the discussion.

- CMAP envisions more compact growth in the future than has occurred in the past.
- Are six lanes in the case of the freeway scenario sufficient, or will it be congested on opening day?
- There could be congestion, even with six lanes.
- Would projected revenue be enough to support the debt service?
- We're too early in the process to know about finance. We need to define the mobility solution first, develop a high-level cost estimate, and then consider financing.
- We need to determine what we can afford.
- We need to talk to the other implementing highway agencies for their input. Mr. Pete Harmet of IDOT described the agency's vision for the state corridors. He listed the limitations and challenges confronting IDOT and their ability to implement capacity improvements: IL 176 and IL 21 through Libertyville, etc.
- How many people are leaving or entering Lake County for employment?
- CMAP anticipates 40% population and 50% job growth region wide by 2040, and can provide details about current employment.
- Regardless of whether or not the 53 extension is built, travel demand needs will have to be met. There are significant obstructions to improving state roads.
- How much of the forecast travel demand would be accommodated by each of the three scenarios presented?
- Tollway staff can provide this information.
- Could a transit component that can be added? Mr. Blankenhorn indicated that the Land Use and Design Working Group will be addressing this.
- What is the percentage of commercial traffic in the corridor, how much of it is local and how much is through?
- Mr. Blankenhorn offered that CMAP may be able to provide some data on commercial traffic.
- Congestion pricing may be an important criterion to consider.
- You don't want to build something that is congested on the day that it opens.

- If it is congested on opening day there will be available capacity somewhere in the network.

The group then discussed possible criteria for evaluating roadway options. The list included:

- Most compatible with transit
- Impact on commercial traffic
- Community character
- Environmental impacts
- Economics and financing
- Congestion pricing
- User benefit
- Does not prohibit economic development
- Operates with x% of congestion, x% of the time
- Consistency with County and State plans/connectivity to local road system.

Mr. Stolman and Mr. Ranney suggested that staff use these topics as a starting point for developing more detailed criteria.

The Mobility & Finance meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Design & Land Use Working Group

This meeting began as noted above, with a statement from the Tollway, and a presentation from CMAP that addressed background information on previous studies, the status of other arterial improvements in Lake County, and a review of the LCTIP and the Route 120 Unified Vision processes.

Mr. Blankenhorn indicated that there is an abundance of information to use in the Group's deliberations. He called upon Ms. Schuh to characterize the existing land use in the project corridor.

Ms. Schuh indicated that the existing land uses along the north-south portion of the corridor are predominantly residential with small pockets of vacant/agricultural. Communities along the western terminus of 120 are capitalizing on the access for non-residential uses.

Mr. Blankenhorn asked the elected officials in the Working Group to comment on the existing land use information as presented. Are we supporting growth appropriately?

- Mayor Mulder was concerned about municipalities retaining their land use controls.
- Mayor Rockingham said that there are many variables to consider.
- Mayor Rodriguez stated that no one size fits all.

Mr. Blankenhorn asked the group to consider the results that we are trying to achieve. He indicated that CMAP can produce a map that depicts the proposed land uses from the municipal comprehensive plans in the corridor.

It was suggested that the 120 Unified Vision be used as a starting point.

It was also noted that the municipalities that participated in the 120 Unified Vision process strongly supported their comprehensive plans. It was suggested that the Working Group protect the predominantly residential character along the north-south portion of the corridor and promote economic development land uses along the east-west alignment. One member asked if any origin and destination studies were available. Mr. Blankenhorn suggested that CMAP can provide O&D information.

Mr. Blankenhorn asked the Working Group to focus on the roadway purpose and design. What are we trying to accomplish? Group comments follow:

- We need to have something compatible with existing land uses.
- Consider how we look at demographics and access to jobs.
- Consider transit opportunities and equity of access.
- Consider how to avoid wetlands and not compromise ground water quality.
- Focus on quality of life issues, noise, etc.
- Provide mobility in a way that is least destructive to the environment and community character.
- We need to know what the options and costs are.
- Innovation is important. Would hate to have people 25 years from now ask what we were thinking.
- Need input from transit providers
- Transit options are probably going to be limited to rubber tires – provides more options and flexibility.
- Can parts of the road be depressed?
- Depressing the road could be an option.

Mr. Blankenhorn asked the Working Group to say what they want to see modeled. He suggested:

- 4-lane parkway with transit on one side or the other
- 4-lane with bus on shoulder
- Accommodations for bike/pedestrian travel

- Park and rides
- Commercial traffic parameters: yes, no or not during rush hour

Ms. Redden offered RTA staff assistance to provide transit modeling.

The Working Group meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Environment & Sustainability Working Group

This meeting began as noted above, with a statement from the Tollway, and a presentation from CMAP that addressed background information on previous studies, the status of other arterial improvements in Lake County, and a review of the LCTIP and the Route 120 Unified Vision processes.

Mr. Jesse Elam from CMAP was introduced. Mr. Elam gave an overview of the environmental features and constraints within the study corridor. He indicated that the LCTIP identified 92 acres of wetland impacts. Six ADID wetlands would be crossed by the alignment, and there would be some flood plain encroachments.

It was suggested that more information would be needed on environmental impacts and existing water quality. Also noted was the need to consider air quality and impacts associated with traffic congestion, as well as impacts to sensitive agricultural lands – especially from the use of road salt.

Mr. Sands suggested that there will be both construction and operational impacts associated with the roadway. He went on to say that the group needs a set of metrics to evaluate the various impacts. Mr. Sands introduced Mr. Sturino who commented on the Illinois-Livable and Sustainable Transportation Rating System and Guide (I-LAST).

Mr. Sturino suggested that the I-LAST scorecard categories coincide with the working groups' priorities, and introduced Pete Mesha of White & Company to provide an overview of the I-LAST rating system (which he did).

Mr. Sands indicated that there is the opportunity to leverage the investment in this project in the entire corridor. For example, wetlands are either overregulated or just regulated; we can do better. The challenge is making this something that is beautiful. The I-LAST metrics are for minimization rather than enhancement.

Other comments from the group included the following:

- This is not the first controversial roadway project. There is a great opportunity to do something innovative.
- The goal is not to minimize environmental impacts but to enhance the environment.
- The cost is comparable to build in an environmentally sensitive manner.
- The I-LAST metrics provide a starting point.
- The challenge of I-LAST is to put it into a context that we can use. We need to set our goals high. The task at hand is to enhance the environment and simultaneously address the mobility questions.
- We need to look at different roadway scenarios.
- Should the road encourage economic development? If so, what kind?
- We should be looking for economic development especially in the 120 part of the corridor.

Mr. Zuccherro reiterated the need to define what problem the roadway is trying to solve.

Mr. Sands asked the group to:

- Think about and define what the road is for
- Define your proactive vision of what you want to see built
- Spend some time with the I-LAST manual
- Identify any entity that compliments this process
- Participate and attend the other working groups' meetings

Mr. Sands indicated that the next meeting is a combined meeting of the Advisory Council on December 12 at 2:00 p.m.

During the public comment period of the meeting a person suggested that the group needs to also address the second task in the working group's title: sustainability.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.