



MINUTES

February 11, 2009 – 2:00 p.m.

IDOT Executive Conference Room, 2300 S. Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, IL 62764

I. ROLL CALL

Board: Randy Blankehorn, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Terry Kohlbuss, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Brian Dickson, DeKalb-Sycamore Area Transportation Study; Norm Sims, Springfield Area Transportation Study; and Mike VanMill, Kankakee Area Transportation Study. *Teleconference:* Cameron Moore, Champaign County Regional Planning Commission; Chandra Ravada, Dubuque Metro Area Transportation Study; Jennifer Sicks, McLean County Regional Planning, Gena McCullough, Bi-State Regional Commission; Jerry Blair, East-West Gateway Council of Governments, Steve Ernst, Rockford Agency for Planning. *Others:* FHWA, John Donovan, John Paul Kohler and JD Stevenson; IDOT, Tom Kelso, Leigh Ann Lareau, Darrell Lewis, Les Nunes, Dick Smith, Jim Stack and Betsy Tracy; Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Transportation Study, Maggie Martino and Lindsay Wallace; East-West Gateway Council of Governments, Les Sterman; Linda Wheeland, Springfield Area Transportation Study; JonPaul Diipla, Rockford Agency for Planning and Marta Perales, IL MPO Advisory Council.

II. AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA)

Mr. Smith, Director of Planning & Programming at IDOT informed those in attendance that he will meet with Secretary Sees and staff early next week to discuss the conference report. Chairman Oberstar requested DOT's to provide accountability for the process, even though it is not in the legislation. A summary of the House bill, Senate Bill and the Conference Report will be on the IDOT website, as soon as it is available. Mr. Kohler of FHWA emphasized the importance of the MPO's to provide extreme accountability and transparency and reporting of where the monies go. He went on further to state that the deadlines are for obligating funds within a certain timeline, it is just a minimum and the goal is to the monies under contract as soon as possible.

Mr. Nunes provided MPOs with three useful links to IDOT, FHWA and FTA. He stated it is likely that state projects will be processed in the first wave of funding, with local projects in the second wave of funding. However, some local projects will go in the first wave of funding. Mr. Sims stated that demand for projects exceeds supply of funds and would like to know which local projects are priorities. Mr. Nunes indicated that the projects have to be shovel-ready. Mr. Kohler responded that the critical projects may go first. Mr. Kohlbuss asked about the language, will 50% need to be contractually obligated in 75 days? Mr. Blankenhorn stated that if the House bill prevails, than MPOs will have a problem. Mr. Kohlbuss indicated that they would like to get an answer as soon as possible what the distribution will be among the MPOs.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Mr. Nunes stated there will be a lot of emphasis on the transparency. He also informed those in attendance that the federal government will take over on the transit side. Mr. Kohlbuss asked whether reporting funds can be created with a small percentage from planning funds. Mr. Smith questioned whether this will meet their intent of the language. He asked how many people are going to be employed as a result of the reporting requirements or will they use existing staff? Mr. Moore asked what other MPOs are doing in Illinois. Mr. Sterman stated that the real question is the local governments and

whether they prepared to really move these projects within the necessary timeframe? They have no problem hiring a consultant to help with the reporting requirements and absorbing the cost.

Mr. Blankehorn stated CMAP has five full time people on stimulus issues and they do not want to use moneys for planning when it should go to construction. Statewide planning and research monies should qualify to hire a consultant to provide technical support in this venture. Mr. Kohlbus stated that MPOs are asked to spend moneys in a process that is highly expedited and accountable with no additional resources in doing so. Mr. Kohler indicated SPR funds are available, and he requested that MPOs try to avoid using their capital funds for reporting requirements. Mr. Russell indicated that Bloomington MPO is prepared to absorb the cost. Mr. Moore indicated they have one full time person since late November working on the stimulus. Mr. Kohlbus asked if using our SPR funds is needed and wondered if they could get a consensus view on using those funds. The MPO Advisory Council will make a formal written request to IDOT.

Mr. Soltau indicated that the contract will reveal how many jobs will be created as a result of the project. Mr. Smith responded that information has to be in bid contract and it may not be a part of extra money. He further stated, the only question is how quickly they could get the money to the MPOs, and it could not be used for anything done prior to the funding availability. IDOT is willing to look into the issue. Mr. Nunes asked whether a local match would come from the MPO Advisory Council? Mr. Smith responded that IDOT needs to know from each MPO a ball park figure for a consultant. He further asked that the distribution be somewhat equitable and requested MPO's provide a number by the end of the week. Ms. McCullough asked about the reporting requirement. Mr. Kohler indicated that the last question on the FHWA Q&A document covered reporting and it is question#46. He asked MPO's to review the answer.

APRIL LETTING

Mr. Nunes asked which MPO's has the ability to have a meeting to amend TIP's for the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act? DeKalb MPO has a 45 day notice. Kankakee has a meeting 02/24. In the Quad Cities, they can have a meeting after a 7 day public notice, as well as Springfield. Mr. Smith states a special meeting can be conducted after a 48 hour notice. Mr. Sims asked what the MPO's can do to expedite the process. Mr. Smith indicated they will send an email to the MPOs about the process guidelines.

Mr. Kohlbus further asked if the MPOs are expediting environmental rules. FHWA response is no. Mr. Kohlbus asked what the MPOs should be saying to our local folks about what the IDOT district offices will do something to get something faster than normally would in terms of a late April letting. How do you want us to characterize what we should expect from the IDOT district offices? Mr. Kohlbus asked for an email sent out to the MPOs and the IDOT districts to be forwarded to the local entities as a proper expectation of the process. IDOT and FHWA will prepare a summary.

Mr. Smith briefly mentioned projects of national and regional significance. Mr. Blankehorn asked if 75 days was a realistic goal and wondered if they can they re-designate or could some of those resources be moved? Mr. Kohlbus wondered if an executive order from the Governor's office for movement of the projects would be beneficial.

ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATION

Mr. Nunes stated another tool is the ability to make an administrative modification. Mr. Kohler confirmed that MPOs can make these specific adjustments. Ms. McCullough asked if switch out for the federal dollars, can this be interpreted as an amendment. Mr. Kohler confirmed that it would be interpreted as an amendment. According to the [FHWA Q&A](#), MPOs can make an administrative modification, since the funding source will also be changed to economic recovery. Mr. Donovan

indicated that we need copies for your modifications because when it comes to authorization, they will be looking for documentation within the TIP. Ms. McCullough asked if a project is not listed at all, it would be listed as an amendment.

Ms. Mautino asked if the funding is moved, will they be obligated at some time. Mr. Smith stated you will have immense pressure to fill that hole and encouraged MPOs to reprogram. Mr. Moore asked if the MPOs can get that language out and available through an email to MPOs. He wants to be able to start time-lining. What do we have to do to move a project? What is the timeline? What is the public comment process? The answers to these questions would be very helpful.

Mr. Blankehorn stated that the CMAP website also has information about the stimulus package with nearly daily updates. Mr. Smith stated the transportation bill may be 500-600 pages and contains 37 pages for transportation projects. IDOT will prepare a synopsis of the conference language as soon as the conference report is available with about a half day turn around.

Mr. Blankehorn asked if this will be considered STP money. Mr. Smith indicated this would be federal economic monies. Could I use STP fund for this? If yes, than you can utilize it. Enhancement of the CMAQ funds, what would MPOs role be in this?

JOB CREATION MEASUREMENT

Mr. Kohlbuss asked about the criteria for job creation in the project selection. Mr. Kohler indicated that it is related to the type of project. Mr. Kohlbuss choose your projects, and job maintenance. Mr. Obsterstar wants the number of people on the job by the classification and what are you paying them. In some cases, you may be down to putting an individual salary.

Mr. Moore stated there is a very generic formula that exists that is spread throughout for job classification. Mr. Sims asked about running those numbers and just an impact of what the monies will be. Mr. Blankenhorn stated that FHWA had something under development. Mr. Moore further pointed out that anytime public dollars go into economic development projects, this will be part of the requirement.

Mr. Nunes stated you should be programming what last year's marks for STU, that is what you should be reporting your local regions at 100% federal funding. You should be working with your local metro managers, and in the future with STIP, local mass transit authorities. There has to be full coordination here. We are trying to get more specification on that end and you must be in constant contact with your metro managers. Mr. Smith from Decatur MPO asked about last year's programming marks. Mr. Nunes provided a scenario for MPOs to consider.

III. RESCISSION DISCUSSION

Mr. Blankehorn stated there is a national pressure to deal with planning funds. He went on further to state, some of CMAPs partners across the country are laying off staff at 12-15%. Mr. Nunes indicated that rescissions will not impact MPOs this year. Mr. Kohlbuss says there are two competing notions to consider, the first notion that Congress is giving additional moneys, but the second notion is to take it away through rescissions. He asked whether MPOs should consider rescission language. Mr. Smith of IDOT indicated the problem is that the federal government is spending money they don't have at this time. He used Katrina relief as an example. Mr. Kohlbuss stated that with the President, Secretary of Transportation and Chief of Staff from Illinois, he feels that the IL MPO Advisory Council should exercise some leadership about this issue.

Mr. Blankenhorn indicated that we need to take some philosophical position on rescissions. Whether we win the battle or not, we need to take a position on this issue. Currently, he is more worried about construction money versus the rescission impacts. Mr. Smith expects a 2009 rescission after there is a 2009 budget.

IV. CALENDAR

Mr. Moore reminded members there is a board meeting on February 26, 2009 in Springfield at 1:00 p.m.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Kohlbus appreciates the ability to speak with IDOT and FHWA in regards to issues related to MPO's. Mr. Smith recommended more regular meetings and he would be able to attend, as long he is informed. Mr. Soltau asked for more participation from district engineers in the MPO meetings since it would be beneficial for them to participate in the discussion.

Mr. Nunes indicated a final list of projects for the April 3rd letting will be released soon.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Moore adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Marta Perales