



DRAFT MINUTES

November 16, 2010

1:00 – 3:15 p.m.

IDOT Headquarters, 2300 S. Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, Illinois 62701

I. ROLL CALL

Board: Cameron Moore, Champaign County Regional Planning Commission; Terry Kohlbus, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission; Steve Ernst, Rockford Metropolitan For Planning; Norm Sims, Springfield Area Transportation Study; Randy Blankenhorn, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning; Jerry Blair, East-West Gateway Council of Government; Bob Soltau, State Line Area Transportation Study; Mark Smith, Decatur Area Transportation Study. *Teleconference:* Gena McCullough, Bi-State Regional Planning Commission, Jennifer Sicks, Bloomington, Brian Dickson, Dekalb Area Transportation Study.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Moore entertained a motion to approve the minutes of September 28, 2010. Mr. Ernst motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Blair. All members voted aye.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Kohlbus presented financial reports to the Council. Mr. Mark Smith motioned to accept the financial papers and seconded by Mr. Ernst. All members voting aye.

IV. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

NARC BRIEFING

Mrs. Baxevanis from NARC briefed members regarding the change in leadership at the House of Representatives and it's potential impact to MPOs. With the change in the House, there may be some changes in tax reform as well as earmarks. She also provided a few draft recommendations from the bipartisan commission to reduce the national debt. Chairman Mica will be the new Chairman of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee. She further indicated MPOs should be aware of possible budget concerns as well as the national debt. With regard to climate change, there is some indication that Senators feel that this can be done through legislation and not regulation. She further anticipated that the next two years federal spending restrictions and perhaps even future cuts may be woven into a major theme in the next Congressional assembly.

She anticipates transportation policy reform will not happen until after the 2012 election with a possible two-year extension with minor policy changes with upfront monies. Director Ingersoll asked about existing earmarks if there is a clean transportation extension. Members asked NARC about the status of various federal legislation proposals. She responded with the lame duck session she does not anticipate much movement until the new Congress starts in January. She further reminded members about the NARC conference in Washington, D.C. NARC is updating their 2011 policy and will be available shortly. Chairman Moore reminded members Mr. Blankenhorn and Mr. Kohlbus serve on the NARC Executive Committee. Vice Chairman Blankenhorn expressed his appreciation for IDOT's past efforts to maintain the statewide membership to NARC.

STATE METROPOLITAN PLANNING FUNDS (RURAL ALLOCATIONS)

Chairman Moore discussed the rural allocations to regional planning agencies from the comprehensive regional planning funds. Mr. Sherman indicated of the \$250,000 available, IDOT is looking at how best to distribute these funds. Funds could be distributed by population or through a competitive process by soliciting planning proposals. There will be no match required for the funds and it

has to be transportation related. Members discussed several possibilities for IDOT to consider as well as reaching out to the Illinois Association of Regional Councils for input. Treasurer Kohlbus further indicated it can ignite planning agencies to become visionary about how to use the funds it would be advantageous to the community.

IDOT FALL PLANNING CONFERENCE

Chairman Moore indicated IDOTs would like ILMPOAC to get more involved in acquiring the appropriate topics and speakers to the conference with some consultation with IDOT. ILARC was brought in to ensure that rural partners also benefitted from the conference. Mr. Sherman further indicated they are concerned with the substance of the technical topics and the interpersonal relationship on developing the conference is important; not just who is checking in attendees, etc. Treasurer Kohlbus suggested a policy webinar and invite IDOT to address local MPO board members at once. Mr. Sims seconded the idea with a policy track during the conference. Ms. Stitt indicated no site has been selected at this time. Chairman Moore, Gordon Smith, Mr. Ernst, Mr. Sims and Ms. Sicks all expressed interest in joining a IDOTFPC working group to go forward with these ideas and locations.

V. STAFF REPORT

Ms. Perales presented the October UWP report to members and plans to add more audio files from various conferences, meetings, etc. She informed members she is working with FHWA for the December training session from the US Census Bureau. Chairman Moore recommended members review the report since it provides accountability of how staff spends time on a monthly basis.

STATUS OF BONDS

Mr. Ingersoll stated that they have the appropriations but not the authorization to sell bonds. Basically, it is project specific in the Capitol bill and they go down to the Governor's office to get released. There was an issue with the first \$100 million since it was not project specific. There is \$500 million total but there is concern over a lawsuit on the video gaming expansion in Illinois. A major concern is the revenue stream to support the debt service. Ms. Woodworth stated there are no pending immediate sales on transportation bonds but there is a healthy balance at this time. She further explained the differences between A, B and D bonds. Due to time constraints members were asked to submit their questions to IDOT staff for follow up regarding bonds. More significantly, how big is the hole going to be since some bonds are not able to float due to the status of video gaming expansion in Illinois as a revenue stream to float some of the bonds. Mr. Blankenhorn recommended a 20-30 minute agenda item of how bonds work in Illinois at the next board meeting. Chairman Moore requested Secretary Hannig be invited to the next board meeting for further discussion on how transportation is financed in Illinois.

Treasurer Kohlbus asked what IDOT is saying to the Governor about what his long-term transportation policy should be? Mr. Sherman responded that IDOT is proactive since they have projects that put people to work. Mr. Blankenhorn often reminds people IDOT is not a highway agency but you have a significant responsibility as a multi-modal agency. We will be managing for stability – not for decline. IDOT is preparing a transition document for the Governor. Chairman Moore warned that we adopt the mentality that we've given up. He further stated, if we adopt that mentality that we didn't invest in our future now than generations to come will have to pay for it. Mr. Sims clarified that operating on brute force principals of solving our problems with more money is not coming into fruition. CMAP originally had 30 projects in their plan but reduced it to 5 due to fiscal constraints. Mr. Blankenhorn caution you cannot have livability if you do not have choices.

Mr. Skosey acknowledged innovative creative approaches are needed and agencies can spend the money smarter by putting together indexes. Mr. Sims recommended a briefing paper from the ILMPO. Treasurer Kohlbus indicated ILMPO members can best put together a paper about the future of transportation in Illinois. Mr. Ernst stated that many who have major transit projects have started in 1999

and it is a 15-20 year process. He further stated you can't always expand highways and you cannot have livability without choices.

Mr. Gordon Smith recommended a statewide strategic transportation policy goals and objectives paper for the Governor and Secretary Hannig. Treasurer Kohlbus added another aspect about the future of transportation in Illinois is preparing a contingency plan if something happens overseas to dramatically increase gasoline prices. Communities saw a 10% increase in transit ridership when gas hit nearly \$4 a gallon. Mr. Ingersoll provided an example of Great Britain and their cost for fuel has forced them economically to push transit in their country. Mr. Mark Smith stated that not every community is blessed with population growth movement and based on all the economic data available and reasonable expectations for funding, some of the smaller communities will be hard pressed to maintain what they have and will probably not be enough money to do major projects. Chairman Moore stated that every port in this country is at capacity. The answer is not to stop spending but have to find a way to spend it differently and spend it smarter and even find new revenue streams.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was presented to the board.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Ms. Perales introduced Mr. Skosey from the Metropolitan Planning Council. Mr. Skosey stated PPPs is a term that most agencies will get used to moving forward but not just leasing existing infrastructure but to bring in new revenues. In 2010, MPC worked with enabling legislation to engage PPPs for any project. This legislation was eventually the foundation for the Illiana Expressway bill. We are talking about public dollars leveraging private dollars. PPP should not just be a funding mechanism but treated as a hybrid approach to funding. The goal is to build, design, maintain and operate a new transportation facility with public entities having a role in this process. There still would be a lease agreement with a public entity to have pre-determined time period to operate the facility. There is a growing interest for passage of the bill.

Vice Chairman Blankenhorn stated the Western O'Hare bypass is a good example of PPP public dollars. Mr. Ingersoll stated that there is not enough public dollars to build most major transportation expansions but public dollars are needed for phase I of many projects. Mr. Skosey stated a key component to PPPs was a strong provision that projects had to be within an MPO plan. Mr. Blair asked about financial oversight and their only experience was the downtown bridge and sometimes the numbers were inflated. Mr. Skosey responded the practice of PPPs is pretty well established and Australia has been doing it for decades and recommended a lot of good legal counsel due to the size of the documents with maintenance provisions, schedule of maintenance and financial forecasts for the PPP.

Treasurer Kohlbus further stated there is much more opportunity to do a customizable PPP with the private sector pushing tolls and not the public entity. Sometimes the private sector can handle certain responsibilities than the public sector. Mr. Sherman asked how do you best move forward is on the Illiana Expressway so you can get the traffic to really generate revenues to sustain the system. Mr. Skosey advised one of the PPP allows you to do is offload some of the risk of the investment or free up public dollars where is more certain of a return and let the private sector take the risk of a less certain return. The bill is the first step to allow those conversations to occur and if the projects are not identified – they have to go back to the General Assembly for approval with the potential of provisions. Mr. Soltau recommended a training session on PPP and Mr. Sims stated it would be perfect for a fall planning conference topic.

US CENSUS BUREAU PROCESS

Ms. McCullough briefed members on the ILMPO letter to the US Census Bureau regarding census bureau designations. Ms. Perales worked with Danville and Beloit MPO to submit comments. The recommendations are as follows: 1) the federal government establish a Task Force of relevant agencies to identify and address the negative consequences that would result before the implementation of the changes recommended through the NPRM, 2) the 250,000 populations threshold be chosen for splitting agglomerations, 3) maintaining the 2 1/2 mile jump distance, instead of reducing it to 1 1/2 miles jumps and 4) keeping group quarters to 1500 plus included in the count, and not raising the threshold to 2500. She requested a motion to submit the letter to the US Census Bureau. Mr. Soltau advised that down the road, it could potentially impact other MPOs. Members discussed the process. Chairman Moore entertained a motion to approve the letter. Mr. Mark Smith motioned to accept the letter, seconded by Mr. Soltau. No further discussion. All members voting aye.

AIR QUALITY DECISION

Ms. McCullough stated the EPA has extended the ozone threshold deadline to sometime in December. They are still evaluating the political climate. She has been hearing that of the 60 to 70 ppb – it may be the upper limit of 70 ppb would be the highest the scientific community advises to project human health. Mr. Soltau asked if there would be any new nonattainment areas in Illinois? Ms. McCullough a couple may fall into nonattainment if it falls to 70 ppb.

OTHER BUSINESS

Treasurer Kohbluss requested a motion to submit a letter Senator Durbin and volunteer to put together to go to D.C. to lobby to move these dollars from Wisconsin to Illinois. Chairman Moore stated that a common message would be great. Vice Chairman Blankenhorn that the letter should go directly to Secretary LaHood with a 'cc' to the congressional delegation. Treasurer Kohlbus made a motion and seconded by Vice Chairman Blankenhorn. Mr. Ernst requested a statement that the first priority is to restore the Chicago to Minneapolis line through the Rockford – Dubuque route. Mr. Blankenhorn the first priority is to keep the monies within the Midwest states prioritized in the Midwest Rail Initiative.

Vice Chairman Blankenhorn asked IDOT whether NARC dues are considered for the upcoming year. Mr. Sherman stated that it is within the IDOT budget but they are considering cuts and a final decision will be made shortly to keep the statewide membership to AMPO and NARC. Mr. Sherman commended MPOs for their recent responses to their survey regarding IDOT's Bureau of Urban Program Planning.

IX. CALENDAR

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 18.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Moore entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Blankenhorn motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Blair. Chairman Moore adjourned the meeting at 3:13 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Marta Perales

In attendance:

Others: Gordon Smith, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning; FHWA, Jon-Paul Kohler and Betsy Tracy; IDOT, Chuck Ingersoll, Susan Stitt, Keith Sherman, and Joanne Woodworth. *Teleconference:* Shannon Baxevanis, National Association of Regional Councils.