



## **Board Meeting**

September 21, 2009 – 1:00 p.m.

DoubleTree Hotel – 100 Brickyard – Bloomington, Illinois

### **I. ROLL CALL**

*Board:* Cameron Moore, Champaign County Regional Planning Commission; Randy Blankenhorn, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning; Terry Kohlbuss, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Norm Sims, Springfield Area Transportation Study; Jerry Blair, East-West Gateway Council of Governments; Steve Ernst, Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning; Paul Russell, McLean County Regional Planning; Denise Bulat, Bi-State Regional Commission; Mark Smith, Decatur Area Transportation Study; and Mike Lammey, Kankakee Area Transportation Study. *Teleconference:* DeKalb-Sycamore Area Transportation Study; Joel Maurer, Brian Dickson and Steve Manny; *Others:* Gordon Smith, Chicago Metropolitan Agency For Planning; Maggie Martino, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission; IDOT, Les Nunes, Curtis Jones, Tom Kelso and Jim Stack; Kelly Murray, Illinois Association of Regional Councils; and Marta Perales, Illinois MPO Advisory Council.

### **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Moore entertained a motion to approve the minutes of May 21, 2009. Ms. Sims motioned to accept the minutes, seconded by Mr. Blair. All voted aye.

### **III. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Mr. Moore entertained a motion to approve the financial statements as presented. All materials are available through the MPO website and links in the email meeting notices are sent in an effort to reduce printing costs. Mr. Sims motioned to accept the financial papers. Mr. Blair seconded the motion. All members voting aye. Mr. Moore introduced Kelly Murray, the Executive Director of the Illinois Association of Regional Councils who is responsible for producing the financial statements.

### **IV. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Mr. Moore informed members there are ongoing discussions with IDOT to extend funding for the MPO Advisory Council for another year and there should be final decision within the next month or two.

### **V. STAFF REPORT**

Ms Perales informed the board she is preparing a UWP review and update to be submitted to the IDOT. Her activities included attending a one day conference in the Chicago area, the Metropolitan Planning Council roundtable on rail and their annual luncheon featuring USDOT, USEPA and USHUD. She also attended a Great Lakes Regional Council organizational development meeting in Chicago, along with Mr. Blankenhorn & Mr. Kohlbuss. Mr. Kohlbuss stated there will be additional research done to completely and clearly flush out the primary issues. Mr. Sims asked if there was someone from the Great Lakes Commission, an existing compact interstate commission. Mr. Moore stated there may be reluctance to create a new organization if their needs can be met with an existing organization. Ms. Perales will send the follow up memo and list of agencies attending the meeting.

Mr. Moore asked if there has been any discussion about a tax increase during Veto Session. She informed members that the original forecast for a tax vote was January due to the political cycle in Illinois. Mr. Ernst expressed his concern regarding Senator Dodd's sustainability legislation and the prospect of future funding cuts since funding will now be competitive. Mr. Blankenhorn responded that the legislation is included in the HUD budget for next year. He further indicated that at the MPC luncheon, there was a policy forum between USDOT, USHUD and USEPA. Mr. Moore asked if members would be interested

in a conference call with NARC within the next week or two. He requested NARC be contacted for a follow up discussion on federal legislation. Mr. Nunes also stated that someone from NARC will be present at the IDOT fall planning conference.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

### COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL PLANNING FUNDS (CRP), NEXT STEPS

Mr. Blankenhorn stated how effective the group has been communicating the status of the restoration of these funds. Based on his recent conversations with Northeastern Illinois legislators, most assumed the CRP funds were restored in the state budget. The Governor's office has indicated they are supportive of including the CRPF language into the draft proposal for the FY11 budget. The Governor's office inquired if the CRP funds could come out of the Road Fund, instead of the General Revenue Fund. MPOs have flexibility with GRF to do comprehensive regional planning but are limited to transportation planning from the Road Fund. Mr. Blankenhorn encouraged downstate MPOs to meet with the Governor's office soon since the General Assembly perceives this is a Chicago problem, even though this is a statewide program.

Mr. Sims expressed the need for the State to make some commitment to planning of some rigorous nature. The agency formerly known as DECO spent millions of dollars they didn't need to spend if there had better planning at the local and regional level. Communities would have been better prepared for projects that were forthcoming. If this is important, you ought to be advancing the agenda. The CRP funds were not tied to a particular need. Federal legislation is trying to bring things back together in a comprehensive nature of these various tasks that we are charged with.

Board members were in consensus in getting the CRP funds reprogrammed and reestablished. Ms. Murray indicated a supplemental budget will be considered in January. There will most likely not be an opportunity during veto session. She advised members not let the issue lapse; because once the funds have lapsed for a year or two, it may never come back. Her experience at the county organization indicates that once the fund is lost for more than two years, it usually falls by the way side.

Mr. Blankenhorn stated the Governor's office is looking into appropriating a small portion of the funds as a show of good faith. He further stated the process is continuous with possible personnel changes next year. Mr. Sims affirmed that the target is a supplementary budget and asked members to consider where the CRP funds can be derived since there is no consistent funding source tied to regional planning in the State. In doing so, the CRP funds will not compete against other state priorities. Mr. Kohlbus stated as planners there should be a plan moving forward strategically to deal with this issue. Mr. Smith informed members that CMAP has submitted the issue with the Illinois Municipal League and asked members to support the outreach to IML since local mayors would be asking about their support. Ms. Murray informed members that ILARC will also be developing a strategy on the issue over the next 30 days. Mr. Moore indicated the strategy should be fully developed by early January in an effort to tie into the supplementary budget.

### MPO ADVISORY COUNCIL DUES

Mr. Sims wondered if the MPO Advisory Council was linked to the CRP funds and with varying budgetary concerns, what value does the organization bring? Mr. Moore stated, of the 14 MPOs, at least 11 or 12 have paid dues this year. Mr. Blankenhorn expressed his concern that CMAP is paying 18,000 towards dues and requested further consideration for a fair dues structure to provide real cost sharing. Mr. Moore stated there was a group that put together the funding structure and there were two other dues scenarios discussed. He asked members for further discussion.

Mr. Blankenhorn suggested CMAP pays a third, TMAs pay a third and MPOs under 100,000 pay a third. Mr. Kohlbus stated that there enough value and potential in the organization that he is willing to pay higher dues. Mr. Moore indicated under the scenario their dues would increase from \$250 to \$800 a year. Mr. Ernst expressed that it is important enough to continue since they are not represented by ILARC.

Mr. Sims asked what the larger agenda is for next year. Mr. Moore indicated there is a UWP and the first year was organizational in nature; but year two would be more technical in nature with training opportunities. Ms. Bulat stated that there are quarterly meetings at no cost to MPOs in Iowa. With dues going to national organizations, they may need to consider withdrawing if there are limited funds available for membership. Mr. Moore indicated the Executive Board, staff and Ms. Murray will work together to review the due structure.

Mr. Kohlbus asked how items can be added to the UWP. Mr. Moore asked staff to send a link of the UWP to members inviting comments and welcomed their suggestions and feedback on the UWP with a draft revision for FY2010-2011.

#### MPO PRIORITIES FOR REAUTHORIZATION OF SAFETEA-LU

Mr. Ernst was concerned about the Dodd legislation and where reauthorization will move in the future. He asked is there some value to the MPOs taking a formal position on the principles of reauthorization. He has some serious concerns regarding the 500,000 population threshold proposed by the Brookins Institute. Mr. Moore stated the Obama requested the 18 month extension to provide more linkages between transportation, land use planning and economic development.

He further stated CMAP approved their principles for reauthorization and suggested ILMPOAC review the principles. He advised ILMPOAC may have more impact through a national association. Mr. Blankenhorn informed members their September 9, 2009 board meeting packet has principles but also a summary of 6 or 7 different national groups. Mr. Moore requested staff send the link to members.

Mr. Moore further stated Chairman Oberstar and the Obama administration have vastly different ideas on where they want to go with transportation reauthorization. It should be an interesting process but our voice should be heard in some fashion. He recommended the board review a draft at the next meeting of recommended principles. Mr. Kohlbus suggested that the board can adopt the principles and recommended also taking the principles back to their individual board.

Mr. Sims sent a letter to Valerie Jarrett, that the President stated one of the best jobs for the future is an urban planner, than why does the Obama administration not put more money into planning. Those jobs will not be there if the federal government does not support those jobs. When federal legislation moves in the future, there should be a set aside specifically for that purpose. He reiterated the need for an agenda for when the federal transportation legislation moves.

Mr. Blankenhorn informed members of a meeting immediately after the MPC luncheon. Derrick Douglas, the Director of Office of Urban Affairs said, 'federal investment will be driven by good regional planning.' The federal government is looking for flexibility, alternatives to funding and getting rid of silos. They discussed a reverse RFP for regions to solve their problems and provide the resources; instead of separate applications to the EPA, HUD and DOT. In essence, what are the problems we want to solve and how the federal government can play a partnership role; and how can we measure success? At this point, we need to say what makes regional agencies work. He further stated he down played money for planning but additional dollars for implementation.

### REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT ZONES (RII)

Mr. Moore briefed members on the concept of RII zones. This idea originated with the Ohio/Indiana/Kentucky COG approximately 4 years ago. They are looking for the Illinois MPO Advisory Council to support the legislation. Mr. Kohlbus asked for clarification about the tax credit or deduction. Mr. Moore responded it would be a tax deduction. Mr. Ernst asked if there were any other mechanism that is allowed. Mr. Moore responded it provides an incentive to encourage private investments. Mr. Kohlbus motioned to support the proposal and seconded by Mr. Blankenhorn. Mr. Ernst asked who designate the zones. Mr. Moore responded, the MPOs and RPCs would designate the zones and it could be a specific corridor. Ms. Bulat asked if they have to approve the project. Mr. Moore responded they would only need to approve that the project is eligible for the tax deduction. In some respects, it is not much different than making a contribution to a local charity and they give you a receipt of the value of the contribution. All members voting aye.

### OPTIONS TO THE MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS PORTION OF MPO PLANS

Mr. Nunes participated in a MPO Technical Committee meeting and an item that came up is how IDOT can provide guidance in the Maintenance & Operations of MPO plans. A consultant provided some technical assistance shortly after SAFETEA-LU was passed. Since the meeting, he had seen a presentation by Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates (BLA) and he thought that there was an element that their product does that could probably help. Their product is not endorsed by IDOT but it is a good product to review. BLA presented a pavement management plan for MPOs to consider. Mr. Kohlbus asked if county engineers been notified of this product. BLA indicated their response was good, most are receptive and have an expressed an interest in pursuing it next year. Ms. Bulat indicated Iowa DOT uses a consultant with a similar system and notifies MPOs when they are in the area and it provides some level of coordination. Most of the Iowa DOT bought into the system to rate the roads.

### RESCISSIONS

Mr. Blankenhorn stated there is \$300 million in rescissions for Illinois and he has numerous conversations with the congressional delegation. Senator Durbin called CMAP and asked they reach out to their national partners on this issue and there is legislation that is being crafted. He recommended that MPOs contact their congressional delegation via telephone and not letters. Mr. Moore believes there is a reasonable chance that the rescissions would be rescinded. Mr. Nunes indicated that the legislation is out of the Senate.

Mr. Nunes presented a letter to board members from IDOT Secretary Hannig to US Secretary LaHood regarding the impact of rescissions in Illinois. The next couple of weeks will be crucial in the budget season to make phone calls. Mr. Ernst states that the rescissions are based on monies they have not received fully yet. Mr. Kohlbus questioned the unobligated balances and they expect an \$800,000 hit. Mr. Nunes responded, FHWA makes the final decisions regarding rescission for each MPO. Mr. Blankenhorn stated that CMAP has \$31 worth of unobligated funds for the State which is almost a whole year's worth of programs. Mr. Kohlbus expressed his concerned that there was a 20% rescission built into the law with the passage of SAFETEA-LU. Mr. Moore responded it was meant for the local government to spend the money in a timely manner.

Ms. Bulat asked how the federal government is going to replenish the Trust Fund. Mr. Blankenhorn responded that that's why there will be an extension of SAFETEA-LU because Chairman Oberstar cannot fund the bill he wants. Mr. Moore stated there is a bunch of different proposals and all of them make sense. There may be a combination of new revenue sources in the future instead of the dedicated motor fuel tax which has not been raised since 1983.

Mr. Ernst informed members RMAP is meeting next week and questioned if they need to revise the TIP or to submit the TIP the way it currently is. Mr. Moore suggested that they pass the TIP as it currently is.

#### YEARLY IMPROVEMENT TRANSPORTATION PLANS

Mr. Nunes asked members to consider a two year TIP because of the some of the timing issues, instead of one year TIP. Mr. Moore stated it would be help Champaign. Mr. Kohlbus stated that the FHWA may have a problem with increased amendments. Ms. Bulat stated they may stick to an annual because they are a bi-state MPO. Mr. Nunes wanted to get feedback on the suggestion, not to necessarily for the board to vote. There will be further discussion at the next meeting on this topic.

#### FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION MAPS

The MPO Technical Committee wanted clarification whether the district office or central office will be handling this item. Mr. Nunes requested the item be tabled for discussion. Mr. Moore requested staff facilitate a meeting with the MPO Technical Committee Chair and Henry Judy at IDOT.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Nunes stated, the Safe Routes to School program and Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program were announced recently. In the last few days, TIGGER programs from Bloomington, Champaign, Rockford, Rock Island, Springfield, and St Clair County were announced. These are all projects that need to get into the TIP as soon as possible. He reminded members to make hotel reservations by September 23 to acquire the special \$149 rate. The conference website is [www.illinoisfpc.com](http://www.illinoisfpc.com). Mr. Kohlbus stated that there was some stimulus monies for ITEP, does that imply that there is more funds coming. Mr. Nunes confirmed that there are additional monies to be announced later from the regular ITEP program.

Mr. Kohlbus asked for additional discussion regarding CRP funds. He asked whether there will be some additional support from IDOT for a stop gap. Mr. Nunes indicated that there is some discussion for IDOT to provide 10% of the local match for federal planning dollars. Mr. Moore stated that may or may not be a benefit since local officials may perceive that the state's match would discount a local match and they may rescind their local match. He further stated he does not want to undermine our efforts to restoration of the CRP funds. The CRP funds provided flexibility while a local match would not necessarily provide flexibility that is needed for regional planning efforts.

#### **IX. CALENDAR**

The next meeting is scheduled for the morning of October 15, 2009. It will be either at the Allerton Hotel or CMAP headquarters in Chicago.

#### **X. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Moore entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Russell motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Blair. Mr. Moore adjourned the meeting at 3:16 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Marta Perales