



I-290
Corridor Advisory Group and Task Force (CAG/TF)
Meeting #11 Summary
September 29, 2011

The eleventh combined CAG/TF meeting for the I-290 Phase I Study was held on September 29, 2011 at the Carleton Hotel of Oak Park, 1110 Pleasant St., Oak Park, IL 60302 from 9:00 am to 11:00 am. The Meeting Agenda is included with this summary.

To announce the September 29, 2011 CAG/TF Meeting #11, an E-invitation was created. The invitation was sent out to all CAG and TF members on September 15, 2011. A previous, Save the Date email, was sent on August 24, 2011. The meeting was attended by 38 people. The following CAG/TF members were in attendance:

1. Neil Adams – Oak Park Park District
2. Claire Bozic – CMAP
3. Chris Byars – FHWA
4. Lenny Cannata – West Central Municipal Conference
5. JoEllen Charlton – Village of Forest Park
6. Rob Cole – Village of Oak Park
7. Greg Dreyer – ISTHA
8. Peter Fahrenwald – RTA
9. Tim Gillian – Village of Forest Park
10. Andrea Green – Friends of Oak Park Conservatory
11. Rick Kuner – Citizens for Appropriate Transportation
12. William Lenski – RTA
13. Phyllis Logan – 29th Ward, Community Advisor
14. John Loper – DuPage County
15. Brenda McGruder – CDOT
16. David Moehring – Oak Park Resident
17. Ruth Meyers – Active Transportation Alliance
18. Gary Neubieser – Concordia Cemetery
19. Kevin O'Malley – CTA
20. Laura Perna – IDNR
21. Mark Pitstick – RTA
22. President David Pope – Village of Oak Park
23. Theresa Powell – Village of Oak Park
24. Ryan Richter – Metra
25. Lorraine Snorden – PACE
26. Lori Sommers – Maywood



27. Mike Sturino – IRTBA
28. Robert Vance – CTA
29. Russ Wajda – Village of Hillside
30. Amy Welk – IDOT
31. Robert Andrews – URS Corp
32. Hugo Jacobo – CNT
33. Bill Dwyer – Pioneer Press
34. Brenna Conway – Active Transportation Alliance
35. Joanne O'Mara – Oak Park Resident
36. Viktor Schrader – Oak Park Development Corporation
37. John Murlenberg – Oak Park Resident
38. Barbara Drummel – Oak Park Resident

The meeting included a PowerPoint presentation (see attached) with the following agenda topics:

- Introductions
- CAG/TF Meeting Format
- Recap Meeting #10
- Single Mode Alternatives Evaluation (Continued)
- Tolling/HOT Lane Legislation
- Combined Alternatives Discussion
- Next Steps

During the presentation, CAG/TF members were invited to comment, ask questions, and provide input. Their comments are arranged in accordance with the presentation topics and are as follows below.

Introductions:

Due to the large number of new attendees at this CAG/TF meeting, everyone was asked to introduce themselves and which agency they are representing.

CAG/TF Meeting Format:

Based upon stakeholder comments regarding the availability of materials, the format of the CAG/TF meetings was reviewed. New materials are presented in detail at CAG/TF meetings with opportunities for questions and discussions taking place throughout the meeting. After the Meeting, the CAG/TF members are asked to take the presentation and meeting handouts home having approximately two months to complete their review. During this time, if questions and comments come up they can be submitted to IDOT for a response or brought up at the next meeting where the discussion will continue.

There were no comments on the CAG/TF meeting format.



CAG/TF #10 Recap:

At CAG/TF #10, a summary of Public Meeting #2 was presented. The Project Study Group began the discussion of Round 1 Screening of Alternatives which included only the single mode alternatives process, the alternatives to be evaluated and not evaluated, and the initial single mode evaluation results.

There were no comments on the CAG/TF #10 Recap.

Single Mode Alternatives Evaluation:

The results of the Round 1 Screening were split into two sections: transit and highway alternatives. The alternatives were evaluated on how well they addressed the identified needs when compared to the 2040 No-Build Scenario. The importance of the results is a relative comparison between the tested alternatives in each need category. A results summary was distributed highlighting the top four alternatives in each need category. The number of times an alternative placed in the top four for each need category was tabulated for comparison.

Transit Alternatives Summary: There are nine total single mode transit alternatives evaluated that include Blue Line extension (HRT), Express Bus, and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Overall, the transit alternatives' benefits are: an improvement in access to jobs from the study area, some improvement in regional congestion and safety, up to 11,600 auto person trip diversions, and an improvement in transit travel times. However, the transit alternatives do not improve I-290 travel performance versus the 2040 Baseline alternative. There is no change in volume-capacity ratio, average speeds, travel times, and hours of congestion. The reason for this is that the transit market is smaller and narrower than the auto market, there is an existing well established transit network in study area, and a mode shift to transit is insufficient to offset demand. Other conclusions from the single mode transit evaluations are: the Blue Line Extension and the BRT Alternatives are the best transportation performers, a Blue Line extension to Mannheim may be more cost effective than longer extensions based on the ridership numbers, the Blue Line conversion to BRT has capacity issues, and express bus alternatives have minor local travel and job accessibility improvements.

Comment: On Slide 24, in comparison to the other transit alternatives it appears that the CTA rail accommodates the greatest number of riders per vehicle, and the cost per rider is probably lower than the other modes. Wouldn't this be a strong case for the CTA Rail Alternative?

Re: The agencies look at cost effectiveness and the return on fare box in addition to ridership.

Comment: What is the federal subsidy for roads versus rail transit?

Re: Funds collected from gasoline taxes are distributed for both highway and transit uses. Transit agencies use the New Starts program and the highway agencies use the Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) program to determine the funding distributions for their projects. We will need to look at construction costs in more detail as well as operating costs.



Comment: What is IDOT’s ultimate goal in this study? Do they want to get people off of the road?

Re: IDOT wants to develop an alternative that improves local and regional travel, access to jobs, modal connections and opportunities, safety for all users, and facility deficiencies. Part of the process is to find an alternative that does all of these things with the least impacts to the communities along the corridor.

Comment: It appears that the Blue Line extension may not be a feasible alternative because of its high operating costs with agencies that are currently strapped for cash.

Re: The NEPA process does not include a lack of funding as a fatal flaw in the evaluation of alternatives.

Comment: Does the improvement in travel time just refer to the highway alternatives? How would the transit travel time improve if you had to transfer?

Re: Yes, the improvement in travel time is just for the highway users. Transfers are being factored into the comparison of transit alternatives. Additional transfers affect the decisions of riders in the desirability of certain modes and are factored into the model assumptions.

Comment: If you were to take out the CTA Blue Line for BRT, does this mean that you will not take any of the CTA right-of-way to use for highways?

Re: No right-of-way will be taken from the CTA to use for the highway. The space would be a dedicated transit corridor.

Comment: Does the \$1 Billion figure to bring the CTA to state of good repair refer to the study area only or the entire Blue Line?

Re: The approximate estimate to bring the entire CTA System to state of good repair is \$10 Billion. To bring the CTA Blue Line, within the study area, into a state of good repair would be estimated in the 100’s of millions, and up to a billion from the medical campus to Forest Park.

Comment: It appears that improving capacity on I-290 is an automatic benefit to transportation. However, it is not an improvement because of the health impacts to the communities. We should be trying to make rail transit more convenient and accessible because it’s better for our health. Look at overall impact of cars on health.

Re: The CMAP GoTo2040 Plan takes an unprecedented look at the health factors at a regional level. I-290 serves as a gateway between the city and suburbs because of the large amounts of trips that currently use the highway from the western suburbs and the loop. The cost of travel is also included in the GoTo2040 Plan along with where people live and work.

Comment: The roads get most of the funding. We can shift this by providing more buses and transit so that people will change where they work and live.

Re: The CMAP GoTo2040 Plan also looks at this. We are talking about more than just work trips. Both people and goods (via trucks) need to travel through the corridor efficiently.



Comment: Do the Blue Line alternatives assume an upgrading of the entire existing system? Part of the ridership problem is the Blue Line is old infrastructure.

Re: At this point in the process we have not yet gone into that much detail. We are currently assuming certain operating characteristics, and modeling the performance of the Blue Line extension based on this. Later on in the alternatives evaluation, we will look further into these details.

Comment: Is the percentage of work trips split 80% auto and 20% transit the same as for the current condition?

Re: Yes, this split is relatively the same with the new alternatives.

Comment: How do the 11,600 new transit trips (shown on the Transit Alternatives Summary slide 15) compare to the total highway trips?

Re: It is a very small percentage because there are approximately 200,000 daily highway trips.

Comment: What is the preferred split between transit and highway?

Re: There is no target for a split between modes. We are trying to identify the alternatives that provide the greatest amount of person throughput that can reasonably be expected to occur as determined through the modeling process. There are lots of other factors that will affect the final decision, including cost, environment, safety, stakeholder involvement, etc.

Comment: What is overall rail versus highway maintenance cost?

Re: This is not a competition between highway and rail. The solution needs to be how the modes best work together.

Comment: Pollution comes from congestion not from the roadway. Emissions come from the bottleneck section in Oak Park; increasing throughput along the corridor would help this. The motor fuel tax is a user fee that is diverted to transit making it a true subsidy and not a tax. The Highway users pay a user fee.

Comment: On Slide 20, where is the western edge of the red area which shows the origin of transit riders?

Re: That is the general area of the Forest Park Transit station.

Comment: The figure on the right side of the slide (Travel Market – Traditional Commute Trip Origins slide 20) is a roadmap for sprawl. The transit figure shows more concentrated economic development.

Re: The map does not depict sprawl, given that the areas being served by I-290 are already developed.

Comment: IDOT stated that the communities need to be providing feedback on an optimal outcome for development.

Re: Each community will look at opportunities and make improvements to existing developed areas.



Comment: Do these transit alternatives envision linkages? If the alternative for a Blue Line extension ends at Mannheim Road how will users get there?

Re: Yes, we are considering this. The red arrows shown on the map (Slide 12) indicate assumptions for upgraded bus feeder service to the stations. There will also be park and ride access.

Comment: Does the Blue Line extension to Mannheim Road include the J Line?

Re: J Line was not included in the model because it is not in the fiscally constrained CMAP 2040 Plan. Some of the associated bus improvements were included though.

Highway Alternatives Summary: There are eleven total single mode highway alternatives including additional general purpose add lane, HOV lanes with 2+ and 3+ ridership, HOT lanes, and Toll lanes. In general the highway alternatives show the best improvement to I-290 regarding local and regional travel. The HOV and HOT lanes had the best overall performance with the HOV lane having the best performance in both regional travel and job accessibility. The Toll and HOT lane had the best regional truck performance with the Toll being the worst in arterial performance. The general purpose add lane has the best improvement in study area peak period arterial performance.

Comment: Aren't you increasing congestion in the general purpose lanes under the HOV/HOT lane alternative?

Re: Some travel improvement is realized in the general purpose lanes under the HOV/HOT alternative, approximately 10%, as shown on slide 35.

Comment: Is there national experience to show that HOV 3+ lanes actually work? I just do not believe that people in the United States are likely to share cars.

Re: Typically agencies will start with a HOV 2+ and then switch to HOV 3+, and if there too much usage with 3+ then they switch to tolling alternatives. There are lots of successful HOV projects around the country. Managed lanes are an emerging technology in this country.

Post Meeting Note: From the managed lane presentation at the July 2010 CAG/TF Meeting #5, some successful examples of HOV/HOT projects are SR 167 in Seattle, I-25 in Denver, I-15 FasTrak in San Diego, and I-394 MnPASS Express Lanes.

Comment: On the topic of the general purpose lane traffic reduction, does that 8% come from carpoolers that are already in the 2+ category?

Re: Yes, there is a mode choice in the model so there is a switch that can occur.

Comment: If space is being created on the highway we must assume that there is no switch from the arterials.

Re: There will still be an 8% reduction even if traffic is diverted off of the arterials because it is a managed situation on the expressway.



Comment: Are there any plans to widen I-94 ramps or any other roadways in association with this project? What happens when all of these cars enter other expressways?

Re: Because this is a mature corridor. We will be better managing the existing congestion in a different more effective arrangement. This project will not create a significant new set of trips.

Comment: If the daily volumes for the HOV lanes are 43,700 riders (see Slide 35), will there be increased congestion on the general purpose lanes diverting from the managed lanes and the arterials?

Re: Because we are currently not managing the traffic, the HOV lanes have the exact opposite effect. There is a 40% travel time savings in the managed lanes and 10% savings in the mainline. Some of the traffic is diverted from the three general purpose lanes into the single managed lane. This alternative changes the mix of traffic and adds capacity.

Comment: Wouldn't the areas East and West of the study area also see increased congestion?

Re: We have scenarios that would also convert some of the general purpose lanes east and west of the study area into HOV lanes, but these areas are already highly developed and a significant number of new trips are not anticipated, so we do not anticipate any significant change in congestion.

Comment: On Slide 31, when you look at performance scores some of the differences are very small. My guess is that the assumptions may not be correct or the differences are so small that it could be random error in the model.

Re: As explained at the July 27th CAG/TF meeting, the scoring of alternatives by counting the number of top four performers is an indicator of how well the single mode alternatives perform relative to each other. The focus is not on the absolute values, but on the relative comparison of the alternatives performance. Back-up information with the preliminary results for each measure was provided for further review by the CAG/TF.

Comment: There seems to be a lot of questions at these meetings, and it takes a significant amount of time to get the answers through letters and emails. My suggestion is to email the frequently asked questions to the CAG/TF members after the meeting or put them on the website.

Re: CAG/TF meetings summaries have been posted for all of the CGA/TF meetings. We will work on providing more timely responses to CAG/TF questions.

Comment: Why are there not any costs in the alternatives?

Re: Costs will be included as part of the process. The first step is to evaluate the performance of the alternative, and if it adequately addresses the Purpose and Need, we will look further into the details of the alternative. These details include cost, environmental factors, impacts to communities, stakeholder concerns, etc.

Comment: On slide 35, shifting the traffic and resulting efficiency makes it all work better. People passing through the corridor would see a benefit. The part that I am not sure about the model is the



induced demand that occurs because people are willing to tolerate congestion. If we see a decrease in travel time then there will be a certain number of people that will reach their tolerance threshold and will come back to the expressway.

Re: The model is calibrated for the 2040 traffic conditions and takes into consideration many years of experience in the region and nationally. All of the human factors that you mentioned are also included in the model. The model tries to take into account changes in modes and routes. The opportunities to make huge changes in development are very limited.

IDOT suggests that we have a working group discussion to help the group better understand the model, and discuss any issues.

Post Meeting Note: At the end of the next CAG/TF meeting, tentatively set for 12/1/11, IDOT and CMAP will give a brief presentation on the modeling process, and will be available to answer any additional questions.

Tolling/HOT lane legislation

The Project Study Group has been doing research on different legislation regarding federal funding for HOV/HOT/Toll lanes. A summary was presented at this time. There are four federal programs and one state program that may be utilized for the purpose of financing such an alternative. Existing General Purpose lanes may be converted to an HOV lane. Tolling on new lanes and an HOV to HOT lane conversion are both under separate specific programs. There is a limited program to convert all of a I-290 to a toll facility where only 1 of 3 spots is currently available. There is new state legislation which allows IDOT and Tollway to enter into Public-Private Partnerships (P-3). The Project Study Group is currently researching the General Purpose Lane to Toll/HOT lane conversion. The Federal SAFTEA-LU reauthorization is anticipated in early 2012.

There were no comments on the Tolling/HOT lane legislation.

Combined Alternatives Discussion

At this time the 10 Initial Combination Alternatives were presented and discussed. The combination alternatives were assembled based on: agency and stakeholder input to date, single mode evaluation results, and a combination of expressway with transit modes. Transit was defined as High Capacity Transit (HCT) in the initial combination alternatives to avoid confusion with multiple alternatives at this time. HCT encompassed both a Blue Line extension and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alternative. Each combination alternative has an expressway and a transit component. The Expressway options are general purpose add lane, HOV lanes, HOT lanes, and Tolling, and the Transit options are Express Bus and HCT. It is assumed that some express bus routes will be a part of all combination alternatives, and share the expressway facilities. Also, the HCT extension will only go to Mannheim in this round because single mode results show the majority of performance improvements are achieved out to Mannheim Rd. The initial combination alternatives are: general purpose add lane and express bus; general purpose add lane, HCT, and express bus; HOV lane and express bus; HOV lane, HCT, and express bus; HOT lane and



express bus; HOT lane, HCT, and express bus; Toll and express bus; Toll, HCT, and express bus; HOT, Toll, and express bus; and HOT, Toll, HCT, and express bus.

IDOT noted that the combination alternatives were developed on the basis of operational characteristics, physical constraints, and travel market served. IDOT will follow up with the CAG/TF to provide a document that describes the factors utilized in the determination of the combinations.

Comment: How and when do you study the environmental impacts and what weight do you give them?

Re: As noted in past meetings, and displayed on the “chevron” diagram, environmental impacts are determined as part of the overall study process. We need to first evaluate whether an alternative adequately meets the Purpose and Need. For those alternatives carried forward: social, environmental, and economic impacts will be measured along with cost benefits. Substantial engineering detail is required to measure some environmental impacts.

Comment: Cost and Operations require more detail, but are you too far away to look at utility concerns?

Re: Yes, we need more detail for that discussion.

Comment: Will the Environmental Impact Statement look at the environmental impacts of the alternative as a whole or will the combination alternatives be subdivided?

Re: These impacts are typically looked at as a whole.

Comment: Which alternatives were selected as being the most compatible? You could have hundreds of different combinations. It does not appear that you picked the top performing single mode alternatives for the combinations.

Re: These are not just the best performing single mode alternatives. We also need to look more at how the combination performs as a whole and as well as what makes sense from a compatibility standpoint. There could be slightly different variations for all of the combination alternatives.

Comment: After you have combination alternatives you may need to go back and adjust the limits. What are your end points for HCT analysis?

Re: For the transit alternatives, we are providing general performance characteristics, and are modeling what works best. Transit agencies may revisit the alternatives through a formal alternatives analysis as part of their formal process. We are putting out the framework, and will need the transit agencies help to sort out the details.

Comment: The Village of Hillside still strongly opposes any elevated rail through the village. Your plans still show this alternative. We have plans into IDOT to reconstruct Butterfield Road. You would have to buy homes on both sides of this, and it is unacceptable. Shouldn't this be a fatal flaw?



Re: Alternatives are continually being evaluated across all round one criteria including fatal flaw analysis. The final disposition of many of the single mode alternatives is close to reaching a conclusion along with those that will continue to form combination alternatives. IDOT will include stakeholder input into this evaluation.

Comment: I have a concern with using HCT instead of separate Blue Line and BRT. Each transit system has its own unique benefits and challenges.

Re: Transit was initially defined as High Capacity Transit (HCT) in the initial combination alternatives to avoid confusion with multiple alternatives at this time. HCT encompassed both Blue Line and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alternatives. Upcoming analysis will distinguish between the best performing transit modes. It will ultimately be the transit agencies that determine the characteristics of the transit components based on a New Starts Analysis.

Comment: Shouldn't the terminus for the HCT options be at Oak Brook because this was a key endpoint in the Cook DuPage corridor study?

Re: We have modeled this end point but our current analysis shows that most of the ridership benefit occurs with an extension out to Mannheim Road. Additional transportation benefit is realized in an extension to Oak Brook but the cost benefit may not be realized.

Comment: Isn't the goal of this study to move people from downtown to the western suburbs? If so, then all of these studies have missed the mark. The western suburbs want alternative transit modes. This evaluation has not included the benefits on convenience and speed. I would want a place to park my car and get downtown in ten to fifteen minutes or less. I would like to see this modeled. People will not take transit if it involves transfers.

Re: Transfers are included in the model. We will investigate an express option for the transit along the Blue Line. It should be noted that this is a transit rich corridor and Metra currently provides express service. Commuters have options for express transit to the City.

Comment: How exclusive is this list? Can we revisit the limits again?

Re: We will work with the CAG/TF to refine the combinations.

Next Steps

The next CAG/TF meeting will be in December. This presentation will include the complete single mode alternative evaluations, fully developed range of combination alternatives, and initial combination mode alternative results.