I-290 Eisenhower Expressway Phase I Study

Corridor Advisory Group and Task Force (CAG/TF) Meeting # 5 Summary

July 22, 2010

Summary

The fifth combined CAG/TF meeting for the I-290 Phase I Study was held on July 22, 2010 at the Carleton Hotel of Oak Park, 1110 Pleasant St., Oak Park, IL 60302 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. The Meeting Agenda is included with this summary.

To announce the July 22, 2010 CAG/TF Meeting #5, an E-invitation was created. The invitation was sent on July 10, 2010 to all CAG and TF members. A previous, Save the Date email, was sent on June 2, 2010. In addition to the E-invitation, a link was emailed to all CAG and TF members with the supporting reports to the Existing Transportation System Performance Report on July 20, 2010. The meeting was attended by 30 people. The following CAG/TF members were in attendance:

1. Lou Arrigoni – Bellwood
2. Michael Bolton – PACE
3. David Boulanger – Oak Park Township
4. Lenny Cannata – West Central Municipal Conference
5. Bill Darr – Bellwood
6. Christopher DiPalma – FHWA
7. Henry Guerriero – Illinois State Toll Highway Authority
8. Luann Hamilton – CDOT
9. Rich Hazlett – CDOT
10. Don Kopec – CMAP
11. John Kos – DuPage County DOT
12. Rick Kuner – Citizens for Appropriate Transportation
13. Tam Kutzmark – DuPage County Mayors and Managers
14. William Lenski – RTA
15. David Moehring – Oak Park Resident
16. Laura Perna – IDNR
17. Mark Pitstick – RTA
18. President David Pope –Oak Park
19. Teresa Powell – Oak Park
20. Leanne Redden – RTA
21. Ryan Richter – METRA
22. Robert Schillerstrom – DuPage County
23. Lori Sommers – Maywood
24. Mike Sturino – IRTBA
25. Robert Vance – CTA
26. Norm West – US EPA

27. Tammy Wierciak – West Central Municipal Conference
28. Chris Byars – FHWA
29. LaToya Price-Childs – IRTBA
30. Amy Welk - IDOT

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

- Recap CAG/TF Meeting #4
- Technical Analysis Findings – Highway Safety and Operations
- Purpose and Need
- Transportation Toolbox Presentations
- Next Steps

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

There were no questions or comments concerning the recap from CAG/TF Meeting #4.

Technical Analysis Findings – Highway Safety and Operations: The remainder of the technical analysis findings was presented to the group. This involved in depth look at the crash analysis and the factors that lead to the high number of crashes at specific locations within the project limits.

Comment: Was there any increase in the crash rates due to the sun effects which would be problematic eastbound in the morning and westbound in the afternoon?
Re: We reviewed the crash information at the time of day when the sun would be on the proper latitude. There was no direct correlation between crashes and location of sun. Instead, crashes were linked to the higher directional peak traffic volume flows. The volume affects may have obscured crashes caused by reduced visibility due to the bright sunlight.

Comment: Were there more crashes in the morning or evening?
Re: There were more crashes in the EB direction in the morning and in the WB direction in the afternoon.

Comment: Were there pedestrian crashes on I-290?
Re: Yes, these were likely due to pedestrians standing outside of their vehicles in a breakdown condition. *(As a post meeting note, the Project Study Group will investigate the individual pedestrian crashes on the I-290 and report the results back to the CAG/TF.)*

Comment: Do the mainline crashes include the crashes that occurred on the ramps?
Re: The ramp crashes are separately recorded and are not included in the mainline crash totals.

Comment: When you say "narrow shoulders" do you mean on the south side of the expressway? Re: Shoulders are narrow on both sides of the expressway but definitely narrow beneath the Austin Avenue structure.

Comment: What does LOS F mean?
Re: This is how highways are measured in terms of traffic operations with LOS F being the most congested.

Comment: Was the crash severity greater on the Eisenhower than the other comparative facilities?
Re: We will have to look into comparative and statewide statistics, and provide an answer in the future. *(As a post meeting note, the Project Study Group will investigate the comparative crash severity for the other routes and report the results back to the CAG/TF.)*

Comment: Is the Eisenhower the mostly highly used expressway?
Re: No, the Dan Ryan has the most traffic. After the reconstruction on the Dan Ryan, the crash rate was reduced by 40%.

Comment: Where does the Crash Analysis end? Does it include the Circle Interchange?
Re: No. The Crash Analysis goes from Racine to the I-294 Interchange. Crashes at the Circle Interchange would have to be compared to other interchanges for comparative crash rates. It is just a Mainline Analysis.

Comment: Aren't we just moving crashes farther down towards the Post Office?
Re: No, we would not agree with that statement. Crashes at the Circle interchange are affected by traffic volumes and operations on I-290 as well as I-90/94.

Comment: It would be helpful to look at the crash rates on the immediately adjacent parallel streets such as Harrison and Garfield to determine the effects of shifting traffic off of these parallel roadways.
Re: We have this crash information and can use it as a baseline condition.

Comment: It appears that there are 3 factors which contribute to crashes, vehicle design, roadway design, and people. If we can only design the road, how can we address the other factors?
Re: Roadway design deals with alternatives, but the 4E's; Engineering, Enforcement, Education and EMS response are all factors in reduction in crash volume and severity.

Comment: Can't we drive down crash rates by getting people out of their cars?
Re: We will look at this during the alternatives phase. We can't eliminate all crashes.

Comment: To reduce crashes off peak, where vehicle speed is a factor, consider reducing the number of lanes or providing narrower lanes to slow vehicles down.
Re: We would prefer not to introduce physical constraints into the roadway environment that may cause crashes.

Comment: Can we do a crash analysis for CTA, METRA, and PACE buses?
Re: If these modes were involved in a vehicular crash then they will be taken into account in our crash analysis. It is not appropriate to do a completely separate analysis.

Comment: What is the western terminus of the operations analysis? We would like to see the queue of vehicles at the west end similar to the east end exhibit.
Re: An exhibit showing the western end of the queue has been prepared and attached to this meeting summary

Comment: How has the traffic operations changed since Hillside was constructed?
Re: The Hillside Project addressed a very severe weaving condition on I-88 approaching I-290. The elimination of this weave saved 20 minutes for I-88 users.

Comment: Kostner Bridge, narrow mainline shoulders and sun glare slows down traffic on I-290 at Kostner. Therefore, the 4 mile back up is not necessarily entirely due to the lane drop. There are intermittent backups in between.
Re: Operations analysis showed that the backup is almost entirely the result of the congestion resulting from the lane reduction. However, some individual congestion locations may occur as the roadway operations deteriorate.

Comment: If part of the goal is to drive down the 2.21 crashes/mvm rate and if one of the future alternatives is mode shift onto buses or PACE transit, do we assume that the crash data is zero for those modes?
Re: The crash reduction would be based on demand reduction instead of mode crash determination. Just a reminder, there are no alternatives that make the number of crashes zero.

Comment: How does cell phone usage change overall crash rates?
Re: This type of thing has not been studied in the past. There is not a larger crash rate - just a shift in the causes of crashes.

Comment: Is there a correlation between congestion and cell phone usage? For example, when people are sitting in traffic they are more likely to use their cell phones.
Re: We do not have specific data on this and will have to use national experience.

Comment: What does the 17 hr congestion number represent?
Re: For the purpose of our study, we identified congestion Level of Service (LOS) D and E. We looked at traffic volumes on the expressway and determined the level of service based on the volumes and the number of travel lanes. Based on this analysis, it was determined that the expressway is at LOS D or worse 17 hrs per day.

Comment: Where does the traffic count information come from?
Re: The traffic information comes from monitoring stations in the corridor including the Transportation Service Center in Oak Park. (At East Ave and 5th Ave., basically the middle of the study area and the east end of the study area)

Comment: Concerning the Harlem WB hotspot, what is behind the cause?
Re: Additional congestion, merging vehicles and geometric issues such as narrow shoulders are likely contributors.

Comment: The presenter mentioned that there are more crashes going EB in the morning and WB in the afternoon. This would coincide with sun glare due to the rising and setting sun.
Re: We will review and provide additional information as available in the crash reports.

Purpose and Need: A discussion of the Initial Needs of the corridor and the corresponding Needs Summary points were presented to the group. These slides will be distributed to the CAG/TF members for their comments via email on July 26, 2010.The stakeholders will have 30 days to comment.

Comment: On slide 40, improve modal connections and opportunities. There is no slide on modal opportunities.
Re: The development of modal opportunities will be part of alternative discussion. You can help us when you receive the outline and can include this comment on your mark up.

Comment: As we go through this process, how far do we extend the influence of air and noise?
Re: There is a distance to evaluate noise beyond which noise evaluation and noise wall effectiveness are not pertinent. We may be extending alternatives analysis beyond the rectangle that encompasses the Eisenhower.

Comment: While looking at air quality, IDOT should look at the entire region including Wisconsin and Indiana.

Comment: On slide 32 we did not hit on fostering smart growth. Where do we pick that up in defining the purpose and need statement?

Re: An element of the smart growth concept is looking at each community's goals and objectives and then matching it up with the transportation system. It is a difficult concept to measure but it represents opportunities as well.

Comment: On slide 35 under reverse commute options and concerning communities where car ownership is limited, transit opportunities will look good to them. Maywood does not have strong transit so it may look better for economic development investments. Then it would look better for their community.
Re: Targets should come from community's goals and objectives.

Comment: What are we looking at as far as growth in accordance with GoTo 2040? In other words, does GoTo 2040 show far western suburban growth and what is the Build versus No-Build affect on growth?
Re: We will review the GoTo 2040 Plan when it comes out. However, the 2030 Plan revealed that there was no change in accessibility in the corridor with Plan improvement removed. As a result, growth is not expected to be significant and should stay very flat.

Comment: It does not make sense that western growth would not occur due to an improvement to I-290.
Re: The I-290 corridor is very mature and the only new growth that the model shows is within existing developed areas. Modeling will continue in the alternatives phase of the Study.

Comment: Since Chicago is not in compliance with USEPA and also emitting greenhouse gases, what is the Chicago region going to do about climate change? You are changing air quality and altering ecosystems. All greenhouse gases have an effect on the environment.
Re: Air quality has to meet conformity requirements and we are working with the USEPA and FHWA.

Comment: The way multi modal feeds into the needs summary points to present the foundation for the needs. I see in the initial needs discussion slides a lot of references to the need for transit access but I don't see references to how this corridor will be used to develop new transit service alternatives. Do we want to keep this door open? Don't see it enough in the need summary points? How could it be articulated?
Re: Provide comments on the Purpose and Need outline. The outline will be sent directly to the CAG members in a few days.

Comment: Under technical findings, condition of road and track, why aren't track improvements shown on the need summary points.
Re: Reconstruction of I-290 and related transit facilities could be a future alternative. Provide these types of edits to help us develop the need points.

Comment: You talk about reverse commute; does that specifically mean that it (Blue Line) will be extended? How many reverse commuters do the transit ideas accommodate and then what are the impacts? If the transit lines don't already get there, then how do we know that the jobs are there?
Re: The Purpose and Need Outline shouldn't prescribe any specific solutions. Forecasting will be required to determine the available markets.

Comment: Traditional commuters should have the option of getting on fixed rail or bus transit. This should have high importance.
Re: Enter this information into the outline when you receive it.

Comment: How far can we go with IDOT when this is built in 2016 or 2018? Wind turbines, pavement heat, encapsulate co2, capture pump station - is there a part of this study that could be used to incorporate these types of ideas?
Re: We don't know at this time how the process will incorporate new developing technologies.

The next CAG/TF meeting will be held on September 23.

Transportation Toolbox Presentations: There were three different presentations that gave the group an overview of transportation solutions that could be taken into account on this project. These presentations included one on Safety, Managed Lanes, and Transit.

Safety presented by Jeff Shaw, FHWA.

Comment: How do we collect information on distracted driving?
Re: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) study used 100 cars with recording equipment to view driver behavior. Google - NHTSA and naturalistic to view results.

Comment: We should reference the decline in accidents and causes when we are looking at investments and allocation of dollars.
Re: Use of seat belts goes to outreach – goes to people in the corridor and how we message the improvements.

Comment: Congestion often determined by how quickly the tow trucks get to the crashes. What is being done to improve this?
Re: There are National Incident Management (minutemen) goals for how quickly they are removed.

Comment: How about the law enforcement piece in relationship to improving safety?
Re: They are part of the equation when it comes to reducing crashes.

Comment: Information seems dated considering source for slide 2 identified as Treat 1980.
Re: Slide is illustrative. 92% of the population is using seat belts. The weakest links are the drivers.

Managed Lanes presented by Chuck Fuhs, Parsons Brinckerhoff.

Comment: Concerning the bus HOV lane in Boston moving 34,000 people per hour, how many traffic lanes would be needed to move the equivalent amount of people?
Re: Approximately 17 lanes in each direction at 2000 vph/lane.

Comment: Does the rail car in the slide represent a ½ a rail car?
Re: Yes 100 people per rail car.

Comment: Bus on shoulders, is that a managed lane?
Re: Yes, it is a conditional use facility in a specific operational situation under a certain threshold of speed. Often these are used in short sections between ramps, etc. There is the Bus on shoulders study.

Comment: Is the cost of enforcement part of the overall cost?
Re: Yes, it is part of the HOT concept and is an operational cost

Comment: When looking at the locations where HOV/HOT is being used, is it only in situations where we don't already have transit in place?
Re: HOV/HOT can be used to feed into existing rail stations. There are wonderful examples where bus transit feeds into existing rail transit.

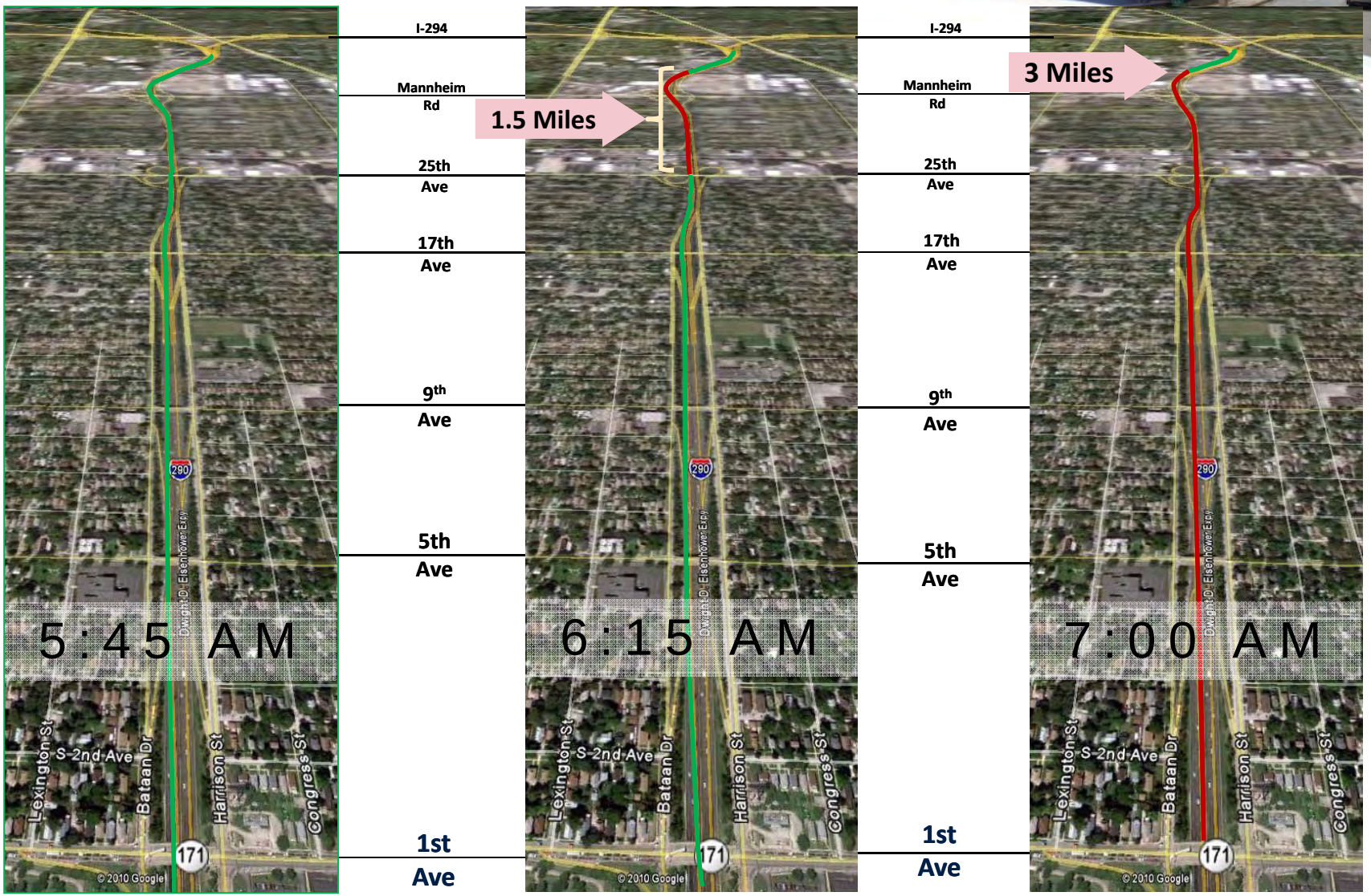
Transit presented by Joe DiJohn and Siim Soot, University of Illinois, Chicago.

Comment: Do PACE buses travel in HOV lanes?
Re: No because there are none available in the region.

Comment: How much money would be necessary for a similar study being done for the highway for transit? Isn't this process necessary for federal money?
Re: It would be necessary to show the demand. This is already a very transit rich corridor. In order to extend to Oak Brook would need appropriate ridership numbers. It would also be necessary to reach out to the communities to determine their need.

Comment: What percentage of state funds go to transit? And what percentage goes to Highways?
Re: We will Research this question further. *(As a post meeting note, the Project Study Group will investigate transit funding splits and report the results back to the CAG/TF.)*

EB Mainline Congestion
West of 1st Avenue



Illinois Department of Transportation

Eisenhower expressway