



## **I-290 Eisenhower Expressway Phase I Study**

### **Corridor Advisory Group and Task Force (CAG/TF) Meeting # 6 Summary**

**September 23, 2010**

#### **Summary**

The sixth combined CAG/TF meeting for the I-290 Phase I Study was held on September 23, 2010 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 23, 2010 CAG/TF Meeting #6, an E-invitation was created. The invitation was sent out on September 15, 2010 to all CAG and TF members. A previous, Save the Date email, was sent on August 25, 2010. The meeting was attended by 28 people. The following CAG/TF members were in attendance.

1. Tom Barwin – Oak Park
2. John Beissel – Cook County Highway Department
3. Michael Bolton – PACE
4. Claire Bozic – CMAP
5. Fred Brandstrader – Cap the Ike
6. JoEllen Charlton – Forest Park
7. Rob Cole – Oak Park
8. Bill Darr – Bellwood
9. Christopher DiPalma - FHWA
10. Tim Gillian – Forest Park
11. Mike Grandy – Oak Park Park District
12. Henry Guerriero – ISTHA
13. Rich Hazlett – CDOT
14. John Kos – DuPage County DOT
15. Rick Kuner – Citizens for Appropriate Transportation
16. William Lenski – RTA
17. Phyllis Logan – 29<sup>th</sup> Ward
18. David Moehring – Oak Park
19. Gary Neubieser – Concordia Cemetery
20. Laura Perna – IDNR
21. Mark Pitstick – RTA



22. LaToya Price-Childs – IRTBA
23. Ryan Richter – METRA
24. Lori Sommers – Maywood
25. Robert Vance – CTA
26. Russ Wajda – Hillside
27. Amy Welk – IDOT
28. Norm West – USEPA

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

- Recap CAG/TF #5
- Purpose and Need Outline – The Revised Needs Summary Points Handout was distributed at the meeting. The handout displayed the Needs Summary Points revisions resulting from the Stakeholder comments.
- Alternatives Development Process – A flow chart of the Draft Alternatives Travel Benefit and Environmental Screening Process was distributed to the CAG members. The chart displayed the steps to developing single mode alternatives, assembling combination alternatives and then the process for screening and refining the alternatives.
- Transportation Benefit Evaluation Measures – Handouts describing how the transportation benefits of the alternatives will be measured were distributed to the CAG members. Benefits identified included; Improve Local and Regional Travel, Improve Safety for All Users, Improve Modal Opportunities and Connections and Improve Facility Condition/Design. The handout materials also included the identification of measurement tools to be employed in measuring consequences or impacts of alternatives. Measurement tools identified included; Environmental Impact Screening, Socio-Economic, Environmental Justice, Natural Resources, Noise and Vibration, Air Quality, Cultural Resources/Special Lands, Hazardous/Special Waste, Indirect and Cumulative Impacts and Agricultural Impacts.
- Next Steps
- Environmental Inventory Map Workshop – Roll plots of the Focused Study Area were provided to Stakeholders for their use in identifying environmental constraints and opportunities. Roll plots displayed locations of environmental resources and concerns – including Parks, Churches, Floodplains, Cemeteries and Historic features.

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.

There were no questions or comments concerning the recap from CAG/TF Meeting #5.



Purpose and Need Outline – After the last meeting on July 22, 2010, an Outline of the Purpose and Need was distributed to all CAG and TF members. They were asked to submit their comments and concerns. An overview of the comments that were received, and how they were incorporated into the Purpose and Need outline was presented to the group. Comments on the Purpose and Need outline presentation were as follows:

**Comment: Has there been any direct feedback from the stakeholders regarding land impacts and land use planning from the Needs Summary Points?**

Re: As part of the alternatives analysis process and further development of the Purpose and Need we will look at how various transportation improvements can serve land use opportunities.

**Comment: Within context of this study, is there something in the alternatives analysis that is going to identify some land use issues or zoning issues that can be incorporated in order to make suburban communities more transit friendly?**

Re: Basic transit evaluation considers zoning and land use planning, and this will be a relatively complex issue, as operating characteristics for transit alternatives are developed.

**Comment: In the 1960's and 1970's development patterns included Corporate Campuses in Oakbrook which are very difficult to serve by transit, and communities were not looking to increase density in most areas. Suggest we manage expectations on what the scope of this project turns out to be. The recommendations must be something that can actually be completed. If there are 50 years of history stacked against an alternative the result may not be realistic. Decide what things the project can do and what it can't**

Re: We agree, and will continue to check in on this process as the project develops, and will make sure that the basic concepts fit together with planned land use.

**Comment: There is some confusion on why transit comments are categorized as non transportation related. It appears that transit needs are being brushed aside and making this a highway project that will mitigate transit when it is impacted. There needs to be a higher priority on transit.**

Re: We should have labeled this another way. As noted on Slide #8, non transportation, in this case, means that this comment was an evaluation criteria or a solution. In addition, transit is not being brushed aside. The "modal connections" portion of the Purpose and Need is very transit oriented. The entire underlying land use issue needs to be considered when evaluating transit improvements. Transit is a complex issue, and we can't assign highway users to transit in our modeling.

**Comment: Congestion is a Purpose and Need Measure. Why isn't mode share increase a need when alleviating congestion is a need?**

Re: Mode Share is a goal rather than a need. As evaluation criteria, we can determine what the highest mode share is that can reasonably be achieved.



**Comment: Why was community cohesion removed?**

Re: It is an evaluation criterion. It is a way that alternatives will be measured.

**Comment: Can we introduce renewable energy and green infrastructure as a foundation for Purpose and Need? Also, need to add a summary point about climate change.**

Re: This would be more of an evaluation criteria in the alternatives evaluation, and if it is to be used, it will need to follow the NEPA process.

**Comment: Did the Project Study Group (IDOT, PB, Images) add additional issues that the stakeholders missed?**

Re: Nothing additional has been added that was not shared with this group. We have developed a solid foundation through the CAG/TF membership.

**Comment: Climate Change is becoming an issue in the federal grant process. How is this project and the NEPA process affected? What evaluation measures are there for greenhouse gases?**

Re: The USEPA is working on the MOVES model which will eventually come into the process. Right now we are waiting for direction from FHWA regarding how to implement this new policy.

**Comment: If the Purpose and Need is a basis for formulating alternatives and evaluating them, shouldn't evaluation criteria be included in the Purpose and Need. It seems contradictory to say Purpose and Need is used in evaluation, and then say there are evaluation criteria.**

Re: Purpose and Need is the initial threshold, and this is based upon transportation needs, per FHWA guidance. We are trying to solve a transportation problem. Lots of ideas will be included in single mode evaluation. Then we move on to assemble combination alternatives, and further evaluate them using the full range of evaluation criteria.

**Comment: This outline looks like a tiering process where it will be easier to knock out the bad alternatives. Understand that combination alternatives are harder to evaluate in the federal process.**

Re: There will be an initial screening process to identify fatal flaws. The next step will be to evaluate single mode alternatives against the Purpose and Need, then assemble combination alternatives for further evaluation.

**Comment: The challenge with this process will be evaluating a complex problem with a solution that people can understand. There is already confusion with the different modes and analysis of combination alternatives.**

Re: The alternatives analysis will start with an evaluation of single mode alternatives measured against the Purpose and Need. Later, combination alternatives will be formulated and evaluated using a combination of travel performance, impacts, costs, and stakeholder input.

**Comment: Based on research, the Purpose and Need can incorporate non transportation needs. Other studies have done this in the past.**



Re: Please provide an example to the Project Study Group along with your comments regarding the Needs Summary Points.

**Comment: When you discuss Facility Condition/Design, why is there no mention of the Blue Line?**

Re: IDOT and the CTA will need to work together on this issue. The responsibility for long term maintenance and capital improvement is with the CTA. A good example of how joint planning works is the Dan Ryan reconstruction project. CTA used the Dan Ryan highway project as an opportunity to address their capital needs in a separate but coordinated project. By placing the facilities condition issues in the Purpose and Need, it would imply that IDOT – Division of Highways will be reconstructing the blue line regardless. However, project alternatives will drive the extent of any work on the blue line and clarify agency responsibilities.

**Comment: Isn't it (Blue Line condition) still a need?**

Re: Yes, but depending upon the alternatives, it may be IDOT, CTA, or both agencies involvement.

**Comment: Why is there no mention of environmental impacts in the purpose statement?**

Re: We are following the federal NEPA process and format. Environmental impacts are addressed in the subsequent process steps.

**Comment: For the parallel facilities there is concern that the Purpose and Need language is a barrier to considering needs outside the I-290 highway. It appears that you are compartmentalizing the CTA by labeling it as non transportation. We also need to look at high speed rail in the corridor.**

Re: We don't know what the build alternatives will be yet. All reasonable alternatives and modes will be considered.

**Comment: The purpose statement is good, but what is meant by "the proposed action."**

Re: This is a generic description of the project that will be determined by the EIS process.

**Comment: It appears that the "Non-Transportation Needs" category in the comments received slide is misunderstood since some of the comments relate to transportation. Suggest that this category be reworded.**

Re: Agree, will clarify for future events.

Alternatives Development Process – The overall study process was presented to the group with specific detail on the alternatives development stage. The alternatives development stage includes initial alternatives development and evaluation, alternatives development carried forward, and finalist alternatives.

Initial Alternatives Development:

- Establish transportation performance criteria
- Identify existing environmental constraints and opportunities



- Identify Range of transportation technologies
- Develop Initial Alternatives
- Compare transportation benefits of alternatives – eliminate underperforming alternatives

Alternatives Carried Forward:

- Assemble multi modal alternatives
- Refine transportation features
- Assess right-of-way and environmental impacts – eliminate higher impact alternatives

Finalist Alternatives:

- Refine transportation features
- Refine right of way footprint
- Perform detailed environmental analysis & review
- Develop cost estimates
- Evaluate performance, impacts, and costs
- Develop detailed mitigation plans
- Prepare and circulate Draft EIS – host public hearing
- Address all DEIS comments

Also, multimodal solutions were explained in greater detail with relation to the alternatives development process.

**Comment: Do you look at long term maintenance? I have concerns about an inexpensive solution's initial cost vs. their higher long term maintenance costs. I would like to see more concrete vs. asphalt.**

Re: Maintenance and Operations are not typically addressed in the NEPA process. There is not a separate item for looking at the long term maintenance.

**Comment: On Slide 22, add bullet that will identify funding and grant opportunities.**

Re: Will be addressed in the Project Management Plan and the Financial Plan. This is a federal requirement for Major Projects, which are projects with a total cost over \$500 million.

**Comment: In terms of the overall process schedule, have specific dates been put with all of the project milestones?**

Re: We are working on fine-tuning the schedule. It is anticipated that the alternatives development process will be taken through much of 2011. In the next CAG/TF meeting, there will be an opportunity to begin sketching alternatives. Then it is anticipated we will have a Public Meeting in early 2011 to present initial alternatives to the public for comment.



**Comment: In terms of cost estimates and funding. We are not talking about a level playing field. Highway funding is formulaic, and transit funding is competitive. When we prepare a significant transit project proposal it competes against all transit projects in the United States. We need to define expectations in this study. The 2040 plan has been very good in bringing forth discussion on constrained and unconstrained projects. A good example and possible solution for this issue is the New York MTA which developed a regional capital funding plan.**

Re: We acknowledge your comment, and will further research the New York MTA's capital funding plan.

Transportation Benefit Measures – Based upon the Purpose and Need Outline, the group was presented with the method that each specific need point will be measured in the alternatives evaluation process. A handout was also provided to give a more detailed overview of the performance metrics, and the entire evaluation process.

**Comment: Based on the fact that the CMAP 2040 plan will be coming out soon. At what point do you go back through and reanalyze?**

Re: We will look at the changes from the 2030 to 2040 plan, and determine the sensitivity of project data to the plan changes. The needs have already been identified in 2010.

Environmental Evaluation Measures – The process of obtaining environmental information, and evaluating alternatives based upon environmental factors was presented to the group. The process of obtaining environmental information involves a GIS level environmental screening and a detailed environmental study.

The following is a list of environmental factors used to evaluate alternatives:

- General – provides general information about alternatives
- Socio-Economic – provides socio-economic projections for alternatives, based on 2040 baseline comparison.
- Environmental Justice – provides information on any disproportionate impacts of alternatives to low income/minority populations.
- Natural Resources – provides information on impacts of alternatives to natural resources, including protected resources.
- Agricultural Resources – provides information on impacts of alternatives to agricultural resources and operations.
- Noise and Vibration – provides projections of changes in noise and vibration for the alternatives, based on 2040 baseline comparison. Also, determines eligibility for mitigation.
- Air Quality – provides projections of changes in air quality alternatives, based on 2040 baseline comparison. Also, determines conformance with air quality standards.
- Cultural Resources/Special Lands - provides impacts of alternatives to protected cultural resources. "Special Lands" include public parks, nature preserves, and forest preserves. These impacts are governed by 4(f), 6(f), and Section 106 policies.



- Hazardous/Special Waste – provides impacts of alternatives to properties that contain or might contain regulated substances that are potentially hazardous to workers and the general public.
- Indirect and Cumulative Impacts – reasonably foreseeable impacts caused by the project outside its immediate area (Indirect). Reasonably total of impacts caused by many actions, including the project (Cumulative).

A handout was also provided to give a more detailed overview of the impact metrics, and the entire evaluation process.

**Comment: Where do cemeteries fall within the environmental impacts protection? Are they specifically protected under 4(f) and Section 106?**

Re: Cemeteries are not federally protected under 4(f) and Section 106 unless they fall into the public lands or historical protection parts of the law. Public sentiment is well defined and impacts are heavily discouraged. Cemeteries are still considered a “special land” by IDOT.

**Comment: What does CERCLIS stand for?**

Re: CERCLIS (Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Information System) is a database used by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to track activities conducted under its Superfund program. Superfund is the federal government's program to clean up the nation's uncontrolled hazardous waste sites.

**Comment: What is the 2040 Baseline relative to Noise?**

Re: We will use 2040 Build and 2040 No Build Traffic in the noise model when evaluating traffic noise.

**Comment: If we assume the noise impacts will be greater in 2040 people will expect mitigation. What is the threshold for providing it?**

Re: We will look at 2040 Build and the 2040 No Build Conditions. The existing conditions may already be over the threshold. If the traffic is doubled it does not necessarily mean that the noise is doubled. This is a nonlinear relationship. The effectiveness of a barrier is reduced the further the receptor is from the traffic. We will address this issue during the alternatives evaluation phase of the study.

**Comment: Why are other natural resources, like wetlands, not forecasted on the same 2040 basis as other environmental items?**

Re: Natural Resources are measured as they exist in the present time. Noise, air, etc. are impacts calibrated on today's information and adjusted for projected changes due to socioeconomic and traffic changes. These types of changes do not affect natural resources in the same way.

**Comment: Could we study Greenhouse Gases even though the final guidance is not out yet?**

Re: The regulations should be finalized by the time we enter into that phase of the project.



**Comment: Chicago does not meet air quality standards for particulates and ozone. Can we go beyond NEPA to look at health effects? The costs to public health are not included but they should be taken into account.**

Re: We will follow federal guidance.

**Comment: The EPA is working hard to come up with a plan to put a cost to health ailments that are associated with air quality.**

Re: We will continue to monitor any developments in this area.

Next Steps – The next steps to be presented to the group are a draft Purpose and Need document, expanded evaluation measures, and to hold an initial alternatives workshop.

Environmental Inventory Map – The group was given an opportunity to identify constraints and opportunities by marking up a large aerial map. Notes and comments by the CAG/TF members will be added to the Environmental Inventory Map. In addition, any opportunities labeled on the plans will be used during alternatives development.