



I-290

Corridor Advisory Group and Task Force (CAG/TF)

Meeting #7 Summary

December 2, 2010

Summary

The seventh combined CAG/TF meeting for the I-290 Phase I Study was held on December 2, 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 December 2, 2010 CAG/TF Meeting #7, an E-invitation was created. The invitation was sent out to all CAG and TF members on November 23, 2010 with meeting materials attached. A previous, Save the Date email, was sent on November 4, 2010. The meeting was attended by 35 people. The following CAG/TF members were in attendance.

1. Tim Gillian – Village of Forest Park
2. Luann Hamilton – CDOT
3. Bill Lenski – RTA
4. David Pope – Village of Oak Park
5. John Loper – DuPage County
6. Tonita LeShore – Village of Bellwood
7. Robert Vance – CTA
8. James Harper – CTA
9. Amy Welk – CTA
10. Michael Bolton – Pace
11. JoEllen Charlton – Village of Forest Park
12. Rob Cole – Village of Oak Park
13. Peter Fahrenwald – RTA
14. Rich Hazlett – CDOT
15. Rick Kuner – Citizens for Appropriate Transportation
16. Mark Pitstick – RTA
17. Richard Newton – CTA
18. Neil Adams – Oak Park Park District
19. Claire Bozic – CMAP
20. Chris DiPalma – FHWA
21. Henry Guerriero – ISTHA
22. Phyllis Logan – 29th Ward



23. Gary Neubieser – Concordia Cemetery
24. Ryan Richter – Metra
25. Lori Sommers – Village of Maywood
26. Tammy Wierciak – West Central Municipal Conference
27. Zerria Clark – CTA
28. Tom Barwin – Village of Oak Park
29. Sandy Lentz – Friends of Oak Park Conservatory
30. Fred Brandstrader – Cap the Ike
31. Laura Perna – IDNR
32. Chris Byars – FHWA
33. John Hedges – Village of Oak Park Trustee
34. Russell Wajda – Village of Hillside
35. David Moehring – Village of Oak Park Resident

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

- Recap CAG/TF #6
- Purpose and Need Discussion
- Initial Alternatives Development Process
- Transportation Alternatives Workshop

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 #6.

Purpose and Need Discussion –

An updated version of the Purpose and Need Summary was sent to all CAG and TF members on November 24, 2010. The updated Purpose and Need summary document has been expanded from the original outline to include more detail and supporting exhibits. There was also additional information provided regarding joint planning opportunities. Comments on the updated Purpose and Need were as follows:

Comment: I am happy to see that joint planning is identified in the Purpose and Need even if not a specific need point. Who will be in charge of working with State and Federal agencies to capture grants to construct as many improvements to the environment as possible? For example, there are a lot of dollars out there for bikeways and sidewalks. We should make sure that municipalities are informed that there are opportunities out there for these grants and then we need to work with them to obtain the grant money. CMAP may be a good resource for this information.

Re: A Financial Plan is required by the FHWA to identify funding methods and funding schedules. The State and Federal agencies will work together to identify the funding strategies necessary to construct the proposed improvements.

Comment: In terms of joint planning, how is it that study area highways have undergone very detailed analysis and that transit hasn't been looked at. At what point will the agencies begin their technical work? It appears that a lot of additional work is needed to bring the transit analysis to the point where it will be equal with what has already been performed on the roadway side. How can we deem them equal when there has not been equal analysis performed on the transit side. We can't evaluate them equally at this point.

Re: A detailed transit analysis was performed in the Public Transit Existing Conditions Technical Memorandum as part of the Existing Transportation Systems Performance Report. The project Study Team has reviewed the operational characteristics of the transit lines regarding frequency of service within the study area. These reports are online on www.eisenhowerexpressway.com. The transit providers, who have been operating in the study area for years, are the experts regarding the existing operational characteristics of their facilities. They are active CAG/TF members and the Department is working closely with them in regards to this study. When a specific transit alternative has been put on the table, IDOT will work closely with the transit agencies and stakeholders regarding evaluation. As part of the modeling process, we can also look at how we are able to shift travel to transit.

Initial Alternatives Development –

The steps of the Study Process were identified including the subject of today's workshop - the Initial Round of Alternatives development and evaluation. This round specifically evaluates single mode alternatives with a fatal flaw screening and a Purpose and Need test. The fatal flaw screening is intended to eliminate alternatives based on the presence of fatal flaws such as alternatives that identify only localized minor improvements, include severe impacts or do not satisfy any project purpose and need factor. The Purpose and Need test identifies the travel benefits of the alternatives when compared to the Purpose and Need points including; Improve Local and Regional Travel, Improve Safety for All Users, Improve Modal Connections & Opportunities and Improve facility Condition/Design. Single modes are evaluated because it allows for an initial definition of the alternative, represents the alternatives in their simplest form to understand performance, and gives basic information on whether the alternative would be effective as a combination alternative.

Comment: What is a Single Mode? What is meant by Single Mode Travel Benefit?

Re: A Single Mode describes an alternative that contains a single transportation form and is able to stand on its own. For example, a highway or a transit line are both examples of single modes. Single Mode Travel Benefit refers to the travel improvement resulting from the potential implementation of a single mode alternative based on the results derived from the CMAP model. The model provides results compared to the 2040 no-build baseline. The travel benefits are defined as how effective the alternative is in addressing the transportation needs and deficiencies within the corridor.



Comment: When we build in the integration of transportation and land use, we can impact the future of transportation within the corridor using “Smart Growth.” We need to define the optimal land use for the future. Maywood plans for development at the 1st Avenue interchange and Bellwood has plans for infill development at 25th Avenue. Will this potential development be factored in?

Re: We will tailor the transportation to the land use so that they are consistent. We will look at this in further detail when we evaluate alternatives. Land use changes are also incorporated in the CMAP 2040 Plan.

Comment: It is important that CMAP is present to answer questions on the 2040 Plan in relation to land use.

Re: CMAP is involved in the CAG/TF, and can advise on the land use elements of the 2040 Plan if we have any questions.

Comment: The Purpose and Need test seems to have a very heavy transportation skew and nothing is there for land use.

Re: Land Use is an underlying assumption throughout the study process.

Comment: If it is not in the Purpose and Need, where does environmental/cultural impact fall under all of this?

Re: Looking at the process flow chart on slide 6 (the chevron diagram), the transportation problems are identified first, then Purpose and Need, followed by Alternatives Development and Evaluation. As we move along the flow chart steps, the level of alternatives analysis will increase in detail. The impacts of alternatives are determined during the alternatives screening process which includes the environmental impacts of alternatives.

Comment: Are there other evaluation criteria besides the Purpose and Need test?

Re: As we have presented previously, costs, community impacts, and environmental impacts will be factored in later. Purpose and Need establishes the initial criteria.

Comment: As I understand the process, in order to ultimately compare multimodal alternatives, we will need to start with and test single mode alternatives.

Re: This is correct.

Comment: I have looked at 500 pages of highway LOS calculations as included in the Roadway Operations Technical Memorandum Appendix. There is an equal evaluation process for transit, an NCHRP Report, - you need an equivalent level of detail. IDOT has completed many Environmental Impact Statements before and, therefore, should understand that at some point you need to look at the operations – no equivalent study on the transit side. The easiest way is to simply follow the process and an answer is created. Other agencies are out there, it is harder to go the joint planning route but it is worth it.



Re: A transit equivalent of the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) does not exist. We have the ridership numbers and we can compare them in terms of person trip within the study area. The NCHRP – Quality Service Manual looks at headways and boardings but is not equivalent to the HCM. We can look at the Blue Line and understand the entire operating characteristics but this would not facilitate a transit solution.

POST MEETING NOTE

Subsequent to the meeting further clarification of the transit manual was discussed. The report referenced in the comment was identified as "Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual, 2nd Edition," Transit Cooperative Research Program, published by the Transportation Research Board, 2003. IDOT's Project Study Team includes Parsons Brinckerhoff which coauthored the Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual (TCQSM). Unlike the Highway Capacity Manual, which is used by nearly every state DOT and most local jurisdictions to evaluate roadway Level of Service (LOS), the Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual (TCQSM) does not set quality of service or capacity policies for transit. Most transit agencies in the country use their own transit service standards, although they may often incorporate certain procedures from the TCQSM into their own service standards. Furthermore, CTA and Pace use their own agency service standards, and not the TCQSM, to assess the performance of their services. Both agencies continuously monitor performance and conduct periodic assessments of their services (for example, Pace conducts quarterly system wide performance assessments).

The Existing Roadway Operations Technical Memorandum, prepared as part of the Existing Transportation System Performance Report, documents the traffic congestion and level of service that both affects autos and buses in the study area. This roadway operations analysis along with the Public Transit Existing Conditions analysis and Cook-DuPage Corridor Study provide a good overall picture of public transit needs in the study area. On p. 35 of the Public Transit Existing Conditions Technical Memorandum, there is a discussion on the a.m. peak hour ridership of the Forest Park Branch of the Blue Line. The report states that, "The average passenger load in that hour was 1,825 passengers which equals an average per car of 25 passengers. This works out to a load factor of 0.56, indicating that there is considerable excess capacity under the present operating conditions."

The Project Study Group will be evaluating transit alternatives based on the results of our 2040 plan modeling which is a more desirable methodology for understanding the effectiveness of transit alternatives in terms of providing transportation benefit within the study area and the region in general. Our 2040 plan modeling efforts will include identification of the total ridership for the rail transit alternatives and the proportion of the transit mode shift that occurs with the alternatives. This is a better measure of the transit alternative performance than LOS and allows comparison between travel modes. Joint planning efforts with the agencies can provide information on the LOS based on their formulas and experience. This could be of value in a comparative situation with specific transit alternatives.



Comment: There is a funding program specifically for highways; there is no equivalent transit program to speak of. Transit is in a competitive situation with all transit projects across the country. We need to find a way to come up with funding for a transit solution in this corridor. The more that can be developed for the role of transit in terms of reducing congestion and pollution, then maybe there would be a way to come up with a local funding source.

Re: The other part of the answer is that we will not be able to change the federal funding formula as an outcome of this study. However, we can explore innovative financing as part of the project financial plan.

Comment: The CTA Orange Line was built in lieu of the Cross town Expressway. If there was a top flight plan for improvement, then funding could be coordinated.

Re: Funding for the Cross town Expressway was not utilized for this transit project but was reallocated to other highway projects.

Comment: Air quality is not in compliance in Chicago, and if we don't move people to transit then air quality will continue to decline. Start to look at quality of life whether you are a resident or a politician. We need to take a leadership position on this project.

Re: We will work through the process that is in place and look at things we can measure.

Comment: The CTA Blue Line operations are also dictated by the line to O'Hare Airport rather than the Study Area. Estimates for ridership comparisons indicate that there are 2.5 to 2.6 riders on the O'Hare Branch for each rider on the Forest Park Branch. Perhaps drop the price on the Forest Park Branch or use congestion pricing to increase ridership on the Forest Park Branch.

Re: The utilization of the transit alternatives will be modeled during the evaluation of alternatives and this information will be reported to the CAG/TF members.

Comment: The study should evaluate the usage of buses in this corridor. Bus access to the transit stations is not there currently. The Blue Line capacity is there on the O'Hare Branch. Need to connect the Blue Line on the Forest Park Branch to a location that would generate increased ridership numbers. Congestion pricing opportunities are there as well.

Re: This would be part of the combination alternatives.

Comment: Please verify that your task is to look at the best performing solutions and then look at cost later.

Re: Correct. In the end though, we will still want to reconstruct the roadway based on deteriorated condition of the bridges and base pavement layers.

Comment: What role will IDOT play in securing funding for the transit aspects of the project?



Re: It is difficult to say at this point what the funding need will be without evaluation of the alternatives. IDOT will support Agency funding efforts to the extent that it can.

Comment: Senator Durbin had a bill to secure money for implementation for the 2040 Plan. Need to leverage political plan to secure funding. Need to bring the ability for the leaders to contact the politicians.

Re: We need to create a plan first and then enlist support.

POST MEETING NOTE:

More detail on the Senator Durbin bill is described as follows: The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded a \$4,250,000 Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) to help advance its GO TO 2040 community planning initiative. The funding will give GO TO 2040 more resources to achieve their goal of helping the nearly 300 communities around Chicago create and implement a comprehensive plan for a sustainable future.

This funding is part of HUD's \$100 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant program. The program supports regional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments in a manner that allows local governments and planning agencies to revitalize local economies, improve social equity, reduce energy use, and increase public health.

Comment: There is a need to reemphasize the Blue Line to reuse existing facilities. We have an under capacity rail facility and an over capacity roadway. We need more attention on the use of this under capacity facility. There is nothing in the documents to suggest that this underutilization exists.

Re: For whatever reason the ridership is not there. This could be a function of connectivity, convenience, trip length, and many other factors. In addition, it needs to be emphasized that this is not the only transit option in the corridor.

Comment: The point that was being made on the transit operations and the O'Hare branch utilization. There is no way that Forest Park and Oak Park are going to generate the same ridership as O'Hare Airport. Is there a way to connect the line to significant driver trip origins and destinations? Also, connect to the PACE systems for access to DuPage areas where transit trips could be developed. At the end of the day, how do we look at transportation benefits that allow us to connect to areas where the driver demands are? Suggest CAG/TF members think about how we comment on the draft Purpose and Need. You also mentioned being able to develop mode shift analysis, if we are trying to change trip length, etc. Does the analysis give us the ability to look at development opportunities that give us the ability to change land use?

Re: The alternatives will be evaluated in a manner that determines their effectiveness in meeting the needs of the study area. Whether the alternative connects to those trip origins and destinations should



be reflected in the outcome of the analysis. To answer the second question, the study will investigate land use changes within the corridor that support transportation modes.

Comment: Do the single mode alternatives need to address all the Purpose and Need points? How could a transit alternative address, “Improve Facility Condition/Design?”

Re: We need to see how the alternatives perform. Some alternatives will serve some Purpose and Need points better than others. Alternatives will not meet all of the needs equally. Highway/Bridge facility condition will likely be addressed regardless of whether study area capacity is improved.

Comment: How do we take into consideration Environmental Justice?

Re: Purpose and Need is not the place for Environmental Justice. We will follow FHWA/NEPA guidance.

POST MEETING NOTE:

The strategy to solicit input from disadvantaged communities, and all communities within the corridor is similar - use the principles of the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process to open a dialogue with the communities and stakeholders along the route to develop a plan that satisfies the stakeholder needs within the corridor. The Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP) provides the framework for this dialogue including mechanisms for understanding stakeholder’s key issues and concerns and methodologies for involving stakeholders in the decision-making process.

As identified in IDOT’s CSS policies, stakeholder involvement is critical to project success. For the I-290 Phase I Study, the Project Study Group (PSG) has sought input from all communities, including those with large minority populations, on multiple occasions including: the initial and second round One on One Meetings, Community Context Audit, Environmental Inventory Map, seven CAG/TF Meetings (to date) and Public Meetings. In particular, the CAG/TF membership includes Chicago aldermen from wards 24, 28 and 29. Phyllis Logan has been a regular participant in the CAG/TF meetings representing the 29th Ward. In addition, a separate Public Meeting was held in the Austin Community for State Representative LaShawn Ford, who represents House District 8 in the Illinois General Assembly. In addition, our Existing Transportation System Performance (ETSP) Report provides information with respect to minority communities in the study area, beginning on page 8.

The process for identifying stakeholder issues and concerns will likely continue through the alternatives development and analysis. While we feel that we have a robust level of input thus far, undoubtedly there will be additional issues that will likely surface in the future. In addition, the Transit Agencies, who are an integral part of the stakeholder involvement activities, have studied the corridor with respect to their facilities for decades and their understanding of the needs of minority communities in their service areas adds greatly to the project’s study context. IDOT has been working with the Transit Agencies in defining the corridor needs and deficiencies and will continue to coordinate the alternatives development and analysis with them as the Study progresses.



Comment: Job accessibility is not the same for all areas. How, in the screening process, do you have things set up to measure the results for this item and others that are similar?

Re: We may not be able to measure or address all of the varied needs at the same point in the process.

Transportation Alternatives Workshop –

The purpose of this workshop was to identify a range of initial transportation alternatives that address Purpose and Need. The meeting attendees were given the opportunity to identify single transportation modes and locations, and also to identify connection points for these modes. The CAG/TF members were emailed a Transportation Toolbox Booklet with the formal invite. This booklet will be a resource throughout the alternatives process for transportation mode examples. The CAG/TF members were instructed to use the study and regional area maps to draw single mode alternatives, and submit to the study group for further evaluation. All submissions are due by December 13, 2010.

Comment: To clarify, the Cook DuPage Study did not propose the Blue Line extension along the Prairie Path as shown on the presentation example. All of the land use is based on the Blue Line being in the “trench.” (Presentation slide showing example alternative submission of Blue Line extension along the Prairie Path)

Re: This is just an example. All alternatives will be on the table in this exercise.

Comment: If we have an idea of a high speed bus on a managed lane is that one or more than one option?

Re: We can get into more detail later once the alternative is submitted. The Project Study Team can also fill in the option to identify the accompanying related improvements.

Comment: Are you going to do testing on just what is recommended or improve alternatives to get the full benefit?

Re: The Project Study Team will perform some adjustments to the alternatives, as needed, so that they can be tested sufficiently. To make sure that this process maintains the intent of the original recommendation, all alternatives will be available for CAG/TF member comment.

Comment: Concerning the submittal of transit lines on the worksheets, I am assuming that the team will add definition concerning service characteristics, is that correct?

Re: Yes, detail will be added. To the extent that you can, provide these now, but in the end we may have to bring in the assumptions.

Comment: The Cook DuPage Study had a number of alternatives. Those should be included in this study.

Re: Write in the Cook DuPage Study alternatives and they will be studied under this Phase I study.

POST MEETING NOTE



Subsequent to the CAG/TF Meeting, it was noted that the Cook DuPage Study did not identify specific alignments or station locations in the Options Feasibility Study. These elements are necessary for the Cook DuPage Study alternatives to be completely evaluated. The Options Feasibility Study included the following elements of the Mainline System recommendation:

1. I-290 BRT and I-290 HOV,
2. Blue Line Extension to Oakbrook,
3. I-290 BRT, HOV and Blueline Extension to 1st Avenue

The final step in the Cook DuPage Study, the System Analysis, was not completed. The purpose of the System Analysis was to refine, evaluate and prioritize the major capital improvements.

Comment: Can amenities be recorded on the alternatives worksheets such as modal connections and associated improvements?

Re: We will record those comments but they cannot be modeled in the single modes evaluation. They will be useful later in the study.

Comment: Can we take the worksheets home?

Re: Yes, and there is no limit on the number of alternatives that are submitted. The deadline for the submittal of the alternatives is December 13, 2010. This allows the Project Study Team time to assemble the full range of the single mode alternatives prior to the next CAG/TF meeting.

Comment: If you wanted to show dedicated rail, but didn't know the type, how should you indicate that?

Re: Just write that comment in and the Project Study Team will incorporate that comment into the alternative.

Comment: What about sidewalks and bike route connections?

Re: This cannot be modeled, but are included in the study as Purpose and Need points. Please submit any recommendations for pedestrian and bicycle improvements and they will be considered in the future.