



I-290

Corridor Advisory Group and Task Force (CAG/TF)

Meeting #8 Summary

January 27, 2011

The eighth combined CAG/TF meeting for the I-290 Phase I Study was held on January 27, 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 January 27, 2011 CAG/TF Meeting #8, an E-invitation was created. The invitation was sent out to all CAG and TF members on January 20, 2011. A previous, Save the Date email, was sent on December 28, 2010. The meeting was attended by 35 people. The following CAG/TF members were in attendance.

1. Neil Adams – Oak Park Park District
2. Tom Barwin – Village of Oak Park
3. Fred Brandstrader – Cap the Ike
4. Chris Byars – FHWA
5. Lenny Cannata – West Central Municipal Conference
6. JoEllen Charlton – Village of Forest Park
7. Rob Cole – Village of Oak Park
8. Christopher DiPalma – FHWA
9. Tim Gillian – Village of Forest Park
10. Henry Guerriero – Illinois State Toll Highway Authority
11. Rich Hazlett – CDOT
12. Don Kopec – CMAP
13. John Kos – DuPage County DOT
14. Rick Kuner – Citizens for Appropriate Transportation
15. Tam Kutzmark – DuPage County Mayors and Managers
16. William Lenski – Regional Transportation Authority
17. Sandy Lentz – Friends of Oak Park Conservatory
18. Phyllis Logan – 29th Ward, Community Advisor
19. David Moehring – Oak Park Resident
20. Gary Neubieser – Concordia Cemetery
21. Kevin O'Malley – Chicago Transit Authority
22. Laura Perna – IDNR
23. Mark Pitstick – RTA
24. President David Pope – Village of Oak Park
25. Teresa Powell – Village of Oak Park



26. LaToya Price Childs – IRTBA
27. Ryan Richter – Metra
28. Lori Sommers – Village of Maywood
29. Robert Vance – Chicago Transit Authority
30. Stephen Vaughn – Cook County Highway Department
31. Amy Welk – IDOT
32. Tammy Wierciak – West Central Municipal Conference
33. John Hedges – Village of Oak Park Trustee
34. Andrea Hoyt – DuPage County Forest Preserve
35. Tom Radak – PACE

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

- Recap CAG/TF #7
- Purpose and Need – Full Draft
- Initial Alternatives Summary
- Typical Section Review
- 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.

There were no questions or comments during the **Recap from CAG/TF Meeting #7.**

Purpose and Need – Full Draft

An update on the development of the Purpose and Need was presented. The Project Study Team is currently working to expand the current document into a full draft that will be available for distribution prior to the next CAG/TF meeting. CAG/TF comments on the current document have been received and they will be reviewed and incorporated into the full draft as appropriate. The Purpose and Need will be the first chapter of the Environmental Impact Statement.

There were no questions or comments concerning the Purpose and Need presentation.

Initial Alternatives Summary

The purpose of the first part of the Initial Alternatives Summary was to present the CAG/TF members with the range of alternatives that have been submitted for this Study. The alternatives include those that were submitted during Public Meeting #1 and during the Transportation Alternatives Workshop in December. Over 170 suggested alternatives have been submitted by the CAG/TF members, Transportation Agencies and other stakeholders. The suggested alternatives were separated into the following categories by the Project Study Team: Heavy Rail Transit (HRT), Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Commuter Rail, Automated Guideway Transit/Light Rail Transit (AGT/LRT), Local and Express Bus,



Expressway Improvements, Managed Lanes , Arterial Improvements, Traffic Management (TSM/TDM/ITS/ATM), Non-Motorized, and Other.

Comment: Was congestion pricing on all highway lanes incorporated in the suggested alternatives summary?

Re: Yes, the managed lanes alternatives include congestion pricing for all lanes of travel.

Comment: Can you add congestion pricing to the existing lanes without adding a lane?

Re: The HOT alternative will be modeled with a scenario that includes converting the existing lanes to HOT and not adding an additional or new HOT lane.

Comment: The J Line tied into the I-290 corridor is not shown as a BRT suggestion.

Re: We will look into this suggestion. We will include all of the I-290 Mainline Corridor Alternatives identified in the Cook-DuPage Corridor Study.

Comment: Have you included BRT out to Yorktown, not just to Oakbrook?

Re: Yes this is included and is shown on the BRT exhibit. We will include all of the I-290 Mainline Corridor Alternatives identified in the Cook-DuPage Corridor Study.

Comment: Including the BRT to Loyola Medical School and Hospital along Roosevelt Road is a good idea.

Re: Alternatives involving arterial improvements are also being modeled.

Comment: What is Automated Guideway Transit (AGT)?

Re: Automated Guideway Transportation facilities are public or private transportation systems consisting of automatically operated rubber tired or steel-wheeled vehicles, usually in 1 to 4 car train sets, along a fixed guideway. These systems vary widely in form and function and include people movers, monorails, and personal rapid transit. They are fully automated, driverless, and grade separated. The system can be designed to operate on a fixed schedule or on demand. Electric propulsion is generally used. (FROM TRANSPORTATION TOOL BOX BOOKLET)

The purpose of the second part of the Initial Alternatives Summary was to introduce and discuss the Alternatives Development and Evaluation process. We are still in the First Round of developing and screening the Single Mode Alternatives and are preparing to model the alternatives and evaluate them against the Purpose and Need. Preparation for travel modeling includes identifying the suggested alternatives that can be modeled, consolidating similar alternatives, modeling representative alternatives, and transportation agency coordination. Based on the suggested alternatives, the Project Study Team developed a preliminary list of alternatives for travel modeling and these were presented for discussion.



Comment: The Prairie Path does not seem like a viable alternative because it crosses over so many different streets and is currently owned by the DNR. There would be too many impacts with this alternative.

Re: This alternative is to be evaluated as an elevated section to prevent numerous grade crossings.

Comment: A Blue Line Extension to Yorktown was included in the Cook Dupage Corridor Study. Why is this not included on the preliminary list of alternatives?

Re: This is a preliminary list of suggested alternatives. All of the I-290 Corridor alternatives from the Cook DuPage Corridor Study will be included in the alternatives evaluation.

Comment: Will the local model include Park and Ride stops for the transit alternatives, and what would be the locations for these stops? This would be an important way to show people moving from cars to trains.

Re: We will come up with reasonable solutions for the modeling and then work with agencies. Also, feeder bus service would be incorporated.

Comment: Where are we in the fatal flaw screening?

Re: We are at the beginning of this process. The first step will be to place the footprint on the alternative's alignment and determine associated impacts to identify fatal flaws, if they exist.

Comment: Where do we talk about specific end location of a blue line extension in Oakbrook?

Re: We don't know specific details of the alternatives yet but during the development and testing of the Blue Line alternative, we will determine the best performing configuration. This includes the most favorable endpoint from an operations and feasibility standpoint.

Comment: Would the Prairie Path be eliminated with a public transit alternative?

Re: No, The transit line would be elevated. See Slide 41 on p. 21 of the handout for the conceptual typical section.

Comment: The Village of Maywood is planting community gardens located near the Prairie Path. This must be taken into account.

Re: Impacts to the Prairie Path and the surrounding areas will be determined during the alternatives screening.

Comment: There was an article in the paper that said IDOT will be eliminating the left hand ramps? Is this a done deal?

Re: No, the alternatives and related details are under development. Therefore, no decisions have been made relative to the left hand ramps. There were a lot of inaccuracies in that report - including that the Study was completed. A corrected article was issued in the next Wednesday's edition of the paper that addressed some of the inaccuracies.



Comment: Do exhibits exist of a schematic showing a highway layout with no left hand ramps?

Re: No exhibits or models of this schematic have been created. We are just getting started with this process.

Comment: The HOV/HOT lanes concept shows an added lane, not just the use of existing lanes. Would this include the conversion of one existing lane east of Cicero Avenue into a managed lane operation?

Re: We will have different models. One of the models will show existing lanes as HOV/HOT lanes and another one will show an HOV/HOT lane added. This will all be sketched out further. There are lots of different options to consider.

Comment: Where does the study of the environmental impacts of these alternatives come into play?

Re: As shown on the "chevron" diagram, the process begins with addressing transportation factors, and any environmental flaws. After the Purpose and Need Test, environmental factors are brought into the evaluation.

Comment: The Purpose and Need test would benefit from future land use implications. I want to go on record saying that the Purpose and Need should incorporate regional planning.

Re: The modeling of alternatives utilizes the CMAP Regional model and, as a result, CMAP's land use component is incorporated into the alternatives evaluation. Supportive land use changes, within the context of the alternatives, will be incorporated where they could reasonably be expected to develop. It should be recognized that wholesale changes in land use may be impractical in densely populated urban environments as occur in much of the I-290 corridor. There would certainly be limitations to any redefinition of land use and in the end supportive land uses may not develop. Therefore, it is impractical to measure the performance of an alternative based on how it affects land use characteristics.

Comment: IDOT has said that they will make the final decision. A critical role in this decision making is evaluating the purpose and need with respect to regional planning and economic development.

Re: The regional planning component of the alternatives evaluation is incorporated through the CMAP model and forecasts. The model is one of the measuring tools for determining the performance of an alternative within a regional context that goes beyond the study area boundaries. Regional jobs growth is also part of the model and it encompasses jobs growth throughout the entire region.

Comment: The language in the Purpose and Need implies a transportation approach. We need to focus more on transportation to jobs. We would also benefit from having language in the Purpose and Need that refers specifically to creating jobs in the corridor associated with the land use topic.

Re: The Purpose and Need includes "Improve Access to Employment" as a need point. This need point covers the workers that originate within the study area as well as those that pass through the corridor to regional employment centers. This is a need point that can be measured. The existing transportation



infrastructure in the corridor can facilitate the creation of jobs in vacant or redeveloping areas. Auto, bus and rail transit and freight rail are all present for future jobs growth.

Comment: The Purpose and Need should include the improvement of quality of life.

Re: The Purpose and Need document as consistent with NEPA, must focus on the types of transportation factors that can be measured.

Comment: How is the High Speed Rail Station, which is proposed at the Post Office, being factored into the model for this study? If it is in the 2040 Plan it should be included.

Re: High Speed Rail is really an intercity connection. The intention is to take people away from large generators, like airports. Our study area is a different market. There is more local travel and different types of commuters. However, "Improve Modal Connections and Opportunities" is a component of the Purpose and Need and a regional High Speed Rail Station would be a desirable connection for local and regional transportation connecting to the study area.

Comment: How are existing conditions going to be considered in the Purpose and Need?

Re: There is an extensive existing conditions document that identified the I-290 pavement and bridges are in a deteriorated condition. The Division of Highways will be reconstructing I-290 to address these needs. We will use the NEPA process to figure out what other improvements are to be included with the reconstruction of the expressway. Condition assessments related to other transportation facilities has also been documented. Addressing the needs of these other facilities, in conjunction with the I-290 project, will be addressed in coordination with those service providers.

Comment: This is a multimodal corridor, and when I look at the work that has been done, it seems that the alternative is going towards a highway solution. Shouldn't we include multimodal existing conditions in the Purpose and Need?

Re: The driving force behind the study is the I-290 pavement and bridge condition. We will use joint planning with the transit agencies to come up with an appropriate solution that encompasses the other transportation facilities in the corridor.

Comment: On Slide 27, what do the brightly colored thermometers represent?

Re: The thermometers are symbolic to show that things can be measured and some options work better than others.

Comment: With the alternatives development, are we limited to current technology in our model? Or, are we capable of bringing in burgeoning technologies from around the world?

Re: From a modeling aspect this may not make a lot of difference, but we will follow up with what the model is capable of. The travel model can address new technology modes in terms of representing their travel time (in-vehicle and out-of-vehicle) and user cost (fares, tolls, parking costs, etc.) characteristics.



Comment: How would different alternatives (like HOV/HOT) affect current transit ridership? How do we take this into consideration?

Re: The model can take into account diversions from transit and this is a measure of alternatives relative to each other. We will also follow up with the transit agencies to determine if there are service overlaps between alternatives that may affect ridership and viability.

Comment: There is High Speed Rail, and then there is Express Trains. I want to make sure that the concept of express is included in the alternatives so that the modeling doesn't look at every train stopping at every stop.

Re: We will work with transit agencies to get an estimate of travel times and work to optimize alternatives performance. This could also impact the footprint if additional tracks are necessary to run express trains.

Comment: Why can't CTA do what they do with the Purple Line to Evanston? No need to reinvent the wheel with express trains.

Re (from CTA): We are working with the Project Study Team on these "skip stop" issues.

Typical Section Review

The first part of the Typical Section review illustrated the existing typical sections throughout the study area. These typical sections included the Existing I-290 Mainline, Existing Arterials, Existing Minor Cross Streets, and the Existing Prairie Path. The purpose was to assist the CAG/TF members with the development of engineering aspects of alternatives.

Comment: What is the IDOT minimum lane width?

Re: It is 12 ft on highways, and some arterials can be 10 ft or 11 ft wide.

Comment: On Slide 31, in reference to the Typical Section through Hillside, are there 15 lanes including the frontage road?

Re: Yes, the typical section varies up to 15 lanes with the inclusion of the auxiliary C-D road.

Comment: What is the difference between frontage road and local road?

Re: Frontage Roads are used for connecting interchanges and are typically one way operation. Local Roads are used more for local circulation and are typically two way operations.

Comment: Is the grading accurately depicted in the cross sections?

Re: Yes. In general, the non paved areas are shown as sloping towards the mainline away from the frontage roads that are higher in elevation.

Comment: Have you been in contact with the local railroad (CSX)?

Re: Yes we have been reaching out. They should be assist us with coordination because we all share the corridor.



Comment: Have they been invited to the meetings?

Re: Yes, but they have not attended.

Comment: The CSX tracks are not utilized because of the inadequate vertical clearances. Could we use these tracks for another purpose?

Re: There may be opportunities here but we need to coordinate this issue with the CSX Railroad.

Comment: Don't the freight lines typically own the rail that the commuter trains run on?

Re: Yes mostly, although Metra owns a line that freight rail also runs on.

Comment: Slide 37, does this typical section represent the roads that cross over I-290?

Re: Yes.

Comment: Can you add the Home Avenue Bridge Typical Section?

Re: We will add this to the presentation. Home and Lavergne are the only bridges with 10 ft wide bike and pedestrian accommodations.

Comment: It is difficult to see the dimensions, in the future could you make the font larger?

Re: Yes, we will make these corrections for the next presentation.

Comment: Is the Prairie Path right of way consistent with your typical sections on Slide 39?

Re: In general the path itself is consistent with the slides, but the overall width varies. As the path goes farther North, there is more commercial and residential development.

Comment: There are water lines that cross I-290. Has any work been done to locate the existing utilities? If so, is there a map that shows the information collected.

Re: We have been collecting existing utility information throughout the entire study and we are developing a utilities file. We will print out this information on a map and have it for you at the next meeting.

The Second part of the Typical Section Review was to present conceptual typical sections based on the suggested alternatives. These concepts included a typical section of HRT, BRT, Highway Managed Lanes, Arterial Improvements, Bicycle Lanes, Minor Crossroads and Frontage Roads.

Comment: Does the transit typical section shown on slide 41 represent the Austin Station? The Austin station has additional area for a third track. Can you provide a typical section for a third track with a full ADA station so that we can understand the overall needs?

Re: The typical section does not show that exact location. We will provide this section so that everyone can understand the desirable width for a three track rail line with a station platform.



Comment: Is Long term maintenance considered when evaluating different types of CTA tracks? Is an elevated facility more expensive to maintain than a ground level facility?

Re: We are not at this point yet, but this will be included in our analysis. If all other considerations are equal, then maintenance needs are then considered.

Comment: The maintenance of highway pavement is very expensive. According to a CMAP report it is on the order of 5 million dollars per mile over the lifetime of the pavement. These costs should be considered from a sustainability standpoint.

Re: Agree, that these will be considered for alternatives.

Comment: Does IDOT have any general guidelines for shared lanes and off road bicycle facilities?

Re: Yes, this is in the Bureau of Design and Environment (BDE) Manual Chapter 17.

Comment: The Prairie Path has environmental issues associated with it. If it is planned to be extended into the city, and may be near transit lines and development, a horizontal separation will be needed. Also, consider a green corridor that extends into the city, not just a path.

Next Steps

The Next Steps include: the completion of a Full Draft Purpose and Need; Public Meeting #2, which will be held on May 18, 2011; presentation of the single mode evaluation results; and identifying and evaluating combination alternatives.

Comment: At what point do we start looking at the environment?

Re: As a first step and across a broad range of alternatives, potential impacts to major environmental features will be reviewed. More detailed environmental review occurs after the combination alternatives are assembled and can fully be evaluated as Draft Environmental Impact Statement alternatives carried forward.

Comment: What can the CAG/TF members evaluate?

Re: The Project Study Team needs comments on the Draft Purpose and Need, alternatives evaluation criteria, and the initial range of alternatives.

Comment: Who is in charge of the green space along the corridor? IDOT needs to stop mowing grass. This is a waste of time, energy, and money. It would be more beneficial to plant indigenous species that do not need so much maintenance.

Re: Gateway Green is the organization that sets up corporate sponsorship to maintain the green space.

Comment: Maywood needs more maintenance in their section of the corridor. There is a lot of garbage and debris build up.

Re: We will inform our maintenance staff.



Comment: Does the CMAP model look at the current ridership on CTA and METRA? It appears that the numbers are down this year.

Re: We look at the 2040 numbers for modeling, not the present numbers. Our consultant does separate modeling, but uses the same assumptions as CMAP.

The CAG/TF members were asked to Save the Date for the next meeting on March 22, 2011 at the Carleton Hotel of Oak Park.