



Rockford Metropolitan Agency For Planning

POLICY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, February 25, 2010

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor Fred Brereton, City of Belvidere; Mayor Lawrence Morrissey, City of Rockford; Mayor Tom Strickland, Village of Machesney Park; Dan Jacobson, City of Loves Park; Steve Chapman, Winnebago County; Kris Tobin, Illinois Department of Transportation-District 2.

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:** Boone County.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Steve Ernst, Michael Maddox, Michael Hren, RMAP staff; Rich Lundin, Boone County Highway; Joe Vanderwerff, Winnebago County Highway; Curtis Jones, IDOT; Thomas Bona, Rockford Register Star.

**1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND REPRESENTATION:** Meeting was called to order by Mayor Brereton with a quorum present at 1:24 P.M.

**2. COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 28, 2010 RMAP POLICY MEETING MINUTES:** Motion to approve minutes by City of Rockford, seconded by IDOT. Motion carried unanimously.

**4. RMAP FY 2010 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT;  
RESOLUTION 2010-02:** Mr. Ernst stated that RMTD & IDOT seek amendments to the TIP. He explained that the IDOT request is in anticipation of a job's bill (new stimulus) program. The state would like to ensure that projects are ready to go if the new bill requires a short timeframe for funds to be obligated. The RMTD Amendment is for the East Side Transfer Center, which has received additional funding. Mr. Ernst went on to explain that the amendment was designed with an Appendix A and an Appendix B because following the Technical Committee meeting RMAP received guidance from Springfield that amendments concerning the potential new stimulus bill should be separated out in the event that such a bill does not happen, so that it is easier to not process those amendments. The IDOT projects are for US 20; (a) the westbound US 20 ramp to I-90 at Harrison Avenue and (b) US-20 from I-90 to East of Farmington Way in Belvidere. Both are resurfacing projects. Mr. Ernst explained that the additional funding for RMTD was from the TIGGER program and did not involve additional local dollars.

Motion to approve Resolution 2010-02 by City of Rockford, seconded by Village of Machesney Park with a roll call vote:

Ayes: IDOT; Winnebago County; Village of Machesney Park; City of Rockford; City of Loves Park; City of Belvidere

Nays: -0-

Motion carried unanimously.

**5. FEDERAL FUNDING DISCUSSION:** Mr. Ernst explained that the U.S. Senate had passed the “Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment” Act, and had moved that bill to conference committee, which mirrors the House Bill that was approved several months ago. There remain differences between the two, but as the Senate has acted, Mr. Ernst feels that the chances of a second stimulus coming to pass are much better than before. Mr. Ernst added that the two versions of the bill treat the extension of the current Highway Act differently, and that an extension of SAFETEA-LU would probably be included in the final legislation. Guidance from FHWA and IDOT indicates that the region will likely receive a similar amount to ARRA, which was \$6.1 million for the region. Additionally it is possible that the rescission of STP dollars might be restored, which would help move the Harrison Avenue project along.

Mayor Morrissey stated in light of the recent announcements both positive and negative regarding rail that he would like to explore the idea of those dollars helping to support our need to build rail stations. He further asked about the timing of those needs, when the engineering would need to be done, and could the money be used for engineering. Mr. Ernst explained that the window of opportunity is a two year window that has been floating for some time because the bonding for the Illinois State Capital Program has not happened yet. He added that the best information available at this time is that the window would start in the summer of 2010. In that scenario, the timing for the stations would be the summer/fall of 2012. There was considerable discussion about the timeframe and work effort to make the rail stations construction-ready. The NICTI consultants have suggested a 4-5 month effort would be required for the platform, parking lot and shelter. Mayor Brereton indicated that Belvidere could be ready within that timeframe. At this time it is understood that the \$60 million from the State Capital Program cannot be used for station development or station engineering/architecture fees. Mr. Ernst noted that in the coming months, the Policy Committee will have some decisions on how to proceed. The construction estimate from the NICTI project for a basic platform and shelter and a 150-car parking lot was \$1.5-2.0 million. Mayor Brereton asked if the map Mr. Ernst had been working on had that many stalls. Mr. Ernst replied that it came close.

There was discussion on the TIGER grant awards and a review of the criteria which seemed to be the most important for success. The majority of projects had non-federal dollars to match TIGER; few were awarded 100% of the total project costs. The criteria to prioritize projects in economically distressed communities did not seem to be as important. According to the USDOT approximately 60% of the TIGER awards were made in economically distressed communities. There was additional discussion about the broadband and NSP programs from ARRA. The region is formulating submittal documents for 2<sup>nd</sup> rounds. Lastly, there was discussion concerning federal guidance to prioritize regional applications rather than individual cities or counties. Based on discussions with other MPOs in Illinois it appears that regional applications fared worse than individual applications and may provide a more viable strategy for certain 2<sup>nd</sup> round applications.

## **6. PROGRESS REPORTS:**

**6.1 NICTI Alternative Analysis:** The region still awaits formal comments from the FTA regarding the environmental documentation. It is hoped that they will be forthcoming soon.

**6.2 RMTD East Side Transfer Center:** No report.

**6.3 Regional Fiber Optic and Broadband:** Already covered under item 5 on the agenda.

**6.4 RMAP Regional Freight Study:** No report.

**6.5 RMAP Mobility Subcommittee:** Mr. Ernst has asked the Mobility Subcommittee to do some research and partner with workforce development agencies on how to bring New Urban Circulator projects to the region. Mr. Jacobson noted that they had been approached along with RMTD by Illinois Growth Enterprises. They have an issue providing transportation to their second shift workforce, which lets out between midnight and 1 A.M. Currently riders are using a

taxi service and some are in transit for 2.5 hours. They are looking to partner with other service agencies that may have need for a paratransit vehicle at other times of the day. The Mobility Subcommittee has been asked to help coordinate that effort. There may be opportunities between the JARC/New Freedom Funds, and RMTD expressed that they would assist in providing a paratransit vehicle or work with IDOT to come up with the money if there could be a shared resource, but could not provide fixed-route bus service at 2 A.M.

**6.6 Housing, Human Services & Workforce Development Committee:** Mayor Morrissey reported that he has been working with the private sector as well as the public sector and having some early discussions with housing, human services and workforce providers along with schools. They are looking to explore the opportunity for a community-wide strategy effort. Mayor Morrissey indicated that it was important to take the WIA regulations and compartmentalize them without letting the Federal and State Law govern the work. He added that if the only money that is being used is Federal money, it limits the scope of the work. Mayor Morrissey noted that one of the challenges is to get all of the specific plans in the region to conform to a broader strategy from both a policy level and a technical level. He stated that he feels this will get the region to work towards a one-plan policy that meets the goals of livability and sustainability. Mayor Morrissey suggested a retreat to work on some of these issues, and to invite some other players at a Policy level.

Mr. Ernst pointed out that there is a new livability initiative in which the DOT, EPA and HUD have partnered to fund programs that blend transportation, housing, the environment and workforce together. He noted that RMAP had been contacted by the University of Illinois at Chicago to offer grant writing assistance. Additionally he suggested that the development of metrics for community health and success would be advantageous for the region.

**6.7 Stormwater / Drainage Subcommittee:** No report.

**6.8 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs):** The RAEDC and Growth Dimensions have met with the Boone County Board to discuss the creation of the Economic Development District, and are scheduled to meet with Winnebago County shortly. Draft agreements and resolutions are being circulated.

**6.9 IL 173:** Mayor Strickland reported that they are meeting with IDOT to further refine the schedule and project scope components. He asked that the item remain on future agendas until the project is more-well defined and a construction schedule is prepared.

## **7. OTHER BUSINESS:**

Mr. Ernst discussed the schedule for the RMAP open houses regarding the 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan. He encouraged all to attend if possible. He stated that he expects a great deal of comment on passenger rail and the state of good repair for existing transportation assets in the region. A draft of sustainability policies will also be available for public comment prior to discussion at the technical and policy levels of the MPO.

Mayor Morrissey expressed his desire for a retreat to discuss policy goals and values after the initial public comment process. The Policy asked for a tentative retreat schedule from staff with particular attention to dates when the General Assembly is not in session.

Mr. Ernst noted that the Tollway had provided a 2010 construction update, and that the main projects involved the I-90 and I-88 bridges over the Fox River.

**8. ADJOURNMENT:** As there was no further business, Mayor Brereton entertained a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by the City of Rockford, and seconded by the Village of Machesney Park. Approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 2:18 P.M.