

DRAFT MINUTES  
I-290/Eisenhower Citizens Committee  
Oak Park Village Hall Council Chambers  
December 3, 2002

Present: Lawrence Christmas, Chair; Members Karen Baldwin, Ron Burke, Mark Johnson, Kevin Kell, Collette Lueck, Peter Morava, Phil Rock and David Sokol

Also

Present: Peter Dame, VMO Staff Liaison

Absent: Marion Kessy, Sandra Kupelian and Nancy Rodriguez

**Call to Order**

With a quorum present, Chair Christmas called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

On a motion by made by David Sokol and seconded by Ron Burke, the minutes of the October 3, 2002 meeting were approved as recorded.

**Chairperson Comments**

Chair Christmas shared information on what has transpired since the last meeting. He stated that he, along with President Trapani, Carl Swenson, Village Manager and Pete Dame of the VMO, met informally with Michael Shiffer, Vice President of the CTA's Planning. Shiffer discussed how the proposed CTA Circle Line would realign the route of the Douglas Branch of the Blue Line to a separate line and would make it independent of the Forest Park Branch of the Blue Line. The Circle Line would circle the Loop and then head west, cross over the Eisenhower center right of way, and then head to the Douglas Line. This would allow for double the frequency of trips on the Blue Line. This Circle Line connects all of the other el and Metra lines into the city. It does not require a significant capital investment. According to Mr. Shiffer, extending the Blue Line is not necessarily contingent on the decision about proposed HOV lanes as it could be done using other right-of-way. He was also interested in exploring the extension of the Blue Line, but was not definitive on how far west the line would go. Rail yard capacity would be necessary to facilitate movement/storage of the cars.

Regarding the proposed CTA extensions, Mr. Dame stated that Mr. Shiffer said that generally it is not the practice of the CTA to prioritize any one line, but rather let the priorities “bubble up from the bottom.” Chair Christmas noted that he feels the CTA staff favorite is the proposed Circle Line. Regarding the Northwest Corridor Study, complaints have been received from some northwest mayors as to the length of time the study is taking, as the study falls under the purview of numerous entities.

## **Business**

### **Finalize Impact Study**

Mr. Dame stated that we have been working on this study for the past six months, and that the comments from the last meeting have been incorporated into the Impact Study. Further comments on that revised draft circulated by email have also been included. Footnotes, tabs, references are still to be added. Chair Christmas stated this would be the last chance to make comments and observations. Mr. Sokol was pleased that the redundancy has been removed. Mr. Burke had additional suggestions concerning air quality impacts, specifically using Wisconsin data rather than Illinois data. Localized health problems were also an issue he had not yet had time to submit the information he mentioned at the previous meeting, but would do so within the next week.

Mr. Sokol brought up a minor point in that by the time this study is forwarded, stating the Gunderson Historic District was designated in 2002, it will have become fact.

Mr. Johnson commented on the grant Oak Park recently received from the Illinois Tomorrow program to investigate the feasibility of capping the expressway. According to Mr. Johnson, the language indicates this mitigation measure should be thoroughly investigated and studied, and he questioned who specifically would be making this investigation. Mr. Dame responded that whatever the end result of the project – whether rebuilt or expanded – we think they should incorporate the construction of a cap into their final plans for the highway. It is not known how the highway or a cap would be paid for yet, but as a mitigation measure the cap could in large part become a part of the highway project’s overall costs. We anticipate more information and an update by the February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting from the group of citizens collecting information about capping projects.

It was the consensus of the committee to finalize the Impact Study. Mr. Dame explained that the study would be forwarded with a cover letter from President Trapani explaining the enclosed study is a detailed analysis of the potential effects on the expansion of the expressway which has been compiled by our citizen’s advisory committee, and to suggest they look at alternatives to highway expansion. The

Impact Study will be forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration, the Illinois Department of Transportation and the governor elect's transition team.

Mr. Burke then commented on the capping study, noting that while there is a potential to mitigate air quality, we should not let this study "consume us," but rather to stay focused on our goals. Mr. Burke complemented the Village on obtaining the grant.

### Development of Additional Alternatives to Highway Expansion

Chair Christmas began a discussion on further developing possible alternatives for the forthcoming West Corridor Study that RTA will conduct on transit options for the I-290/I-88 corridor, at IDOT's request. Four alternatives have been cited by the Village to date: extension of the Blue Line from Forest Park to Lisle, expanding capacity on the Metra's West Line, the construction of a single HOV lane, and an enhanced bus rapid transit Pace bus service from the end of the Douglas Line westbound on Cermak Road to Downers Grove. Mr. Dame stated that all these alternatives, except for the single lane HOV, have been presented to CATS, but now we would like to broaden the discussion on alternatives to be prepared for RTA's corridor study. Chair Christmas asked that the capping issue not be a topic of discussion, but rather look at other operational methods. In summary, ideas generated include:

- ?? Enhancing the Pace bus and parking proposal near the Multi-Modal Transit Center; with enough parking, this would provide a good tax base for both Oak Park and River Forest and impact economic development and would encourage the use of transit alternatives here. This model could be applied elsewhere.
- ?? Looping the Blue Line to link with the Green Line;
- ?? Developing parking along the corridor east of Hillside; would need to identify parcels of land for either park and ride or parking only;
- ?? HOV toll lanes;
- ?? Connecting the I-290 to the I-55 at Western using old RR ROW as proposed in the 2010 Plan; this would be good for reverse commute;
- ?? Instead of HOV lanes through Oak Park, build a dedicated bus rapid transit line on I-88 and I-290 from Downers Grove ending at Forest Park and feeding into the Blue Line.
- ?? Alternatives similar to those the RTA investigated for the NW Corridor study including light rail.

Ms. Baldwin questioned whether the Blue Line would split into express service or would it become a stopping extension. Chair Christmas responded that this is unknown at the moment.

Mr. Dame will compile a list of these alternatives and other alternatives for review and further discussion at the next meeting. Chair Christmas concluded that this would not be a final list, but rather a work in progress.

### Other Updates

Mr. Dame reported that the RTA has not begun their study; they have not met to discuss the scope but are about to get rolling. Mr. Dame indicated that timelines have not been set yet for how this study will be integrated into IDOT's Phase I study.

As part of the 2030 RTP process, CATS has designated both the I-290/I-88 West corridor and the Northwest Corridor study special status, which gives those two corridors additional attention. The amount of additional analysis to be done on these corridors is unknown, but extra data will be produced as to how the regional alternatives modeled will impact these two corridors.

Mr. Kell questioned if the Village has heard if IDOT will be getting out a purpose and needs statement for the project. Mr. Dame indicated that he was told today by IDOT that their engineering for this project is "on hold" until the RTA's study gets further along. Specifically, until RTA's planned market analysis / travel demand analysis is done which is likely to be the first step of the RTA study, IDOT will not develop a purpose and need statement.

### Public Comment

Rick Kuner suggested additional alternatives for use by DuPage County residents:

- ?? Metra's Burlington Northern triple track line to Aurora;
- ?? Milwaukee Line north of Oak Park which has a stop on Oak Park Avenue.
- ?? Combinations of alternatives

He stated the CATS 2020 plan authorization ends the fall of 2003; the 2030 plan needs to be in place by that time. He stated there is contradiction between IDOT pushing Phase I engineering on HOV lanes, while there is a multi-modal study which could come up with an alternative that does not include HOV lanes.

Fred Brandstrader suggested using the tollway oasis concept for park and ride as an alternative. He reported that the capping group is researching the project and will meet again this month; they are working on a presentation for the February meeting.

He also reported on the plans for the 100 year anniversary of the Burnham Plan in 2009. He is a member of the executive planning committee, and suggested

incorporating the capping in any planning/discussions in the Burnham celebration. As he becomes more involved, he will forward information.

**Next Meeting Date**

Chair Christmas announced the next meeting date of February 4, 2003, and wished all members a happy holiday season.

**Adjournment**

Chair Christmas declared the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda K. Fojtik, Recorder