

MINUTES OF A PUBLIC MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

The **Planning Committee** of the Board of Directors of the Regional Transportation Authority met in public session on **Thursday, March 2, 2006**, at 8:30 a.m., in Suite 1550, 175 West Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Illinois, pursuant to notice.

Committee Chairman Fred T.L. Norris presided.

ROLL CALL

Present: Carole L. Brown
Dwight A. Magalis
Mary M. McDonald
Fred T.L. Norris
Patrick V. Riley, Jr.
Rev. Addie L. Wyatt

Others: Armando Gomez, Sr.
Michael Rosenberg
Douglas M. Troiani
RTA Chairman Jim Reilly

Reading and approval of minutes from the public session held on February 2, 2006

Director McDonald moved, and Director Riley seconded approval of the minutes from the public session held on February 2, 2006. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

6 Ayes Directors Brown, Magalis, McDonald, Norris, Riley and Wyatt

Ordinance authorizing the extension of Federal §5307 Combined with §5340 Urbanized Area and §5309 (m)(2)(B) (previously as (m)(1)(A)) Fixed Guideway Modernization Funding Allocation Agreements between Northeastern Illinois and Northwestern Indiana

Ordinance authorizing the execution of Federal §5307 combined with and §5340 Urbanized Area Combined Funding Allocation Agreement between Northeastern Illinois and Southeastern Wisconsin

Ms. Vida Morkunas, RTA Manager of Capital Grants presented these two items in one presentation. Ms. Morkunas began by explaining that in addition to the funds made available to urbanized areas under §5307, the UZA receives funds authorized in SAFETEA-LU for the new §5340, Growing States and High Density States. For urbanized areas, the federal Formula funds are awarded directly to the UZA, and therefore, an allocation mechanisms between Illinois and Indiana; and Illinois and Wisconsin is required prior to the release of §5307 and/or §5340 funds by the FTA. These federally mandated agreements serve as the basis for the allocation of §5307 combined with §5340 and Section 5309 federal funds appropriated to the Chicago, Illinois, Northwestern Indiana, and Southeastern Wisconsin urbanized areas.

She then explained that the first proposed ordinance authorizes the extension of a federal Urbanized Area (§5307 combined with §5340) funding allocation agreements between the RTA and the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC), and a Fixed Guideway Modernization (§5309) funding allocation agreement among the RTA, NIRPC and Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), for an additional Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) ending September 30, 2006. The RTA will initiate discussions shortly with NIRPC and NICTD to negotiated agreements for the remainder of SAFETEA-LU (2007-2009). We are confident that the new agreements will be finalized in time for the next allocation of federal funds in the 2007 federal budget. Furthermore, even though a separate formula calculation is used nationally to generate the apportionment amount for §5340, it was agreed that for 2006, the §5307 formula will be applied to divide funds between the RTA and NIRPC.

The second proposed ordinance authorizes the Executive Director to execute a federal §5307 and §5340 Urbanized Area combined funding allocation agreement between the RTA and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) for FFY 2006-2009. The proposed Letter of Understanding (LOU) employs a multi-year, formula-based methodology to be in effect for the life of SAFETEA-LU (2006-2009) with an amendment provision should certain federal or local conditions change.

The split of funds is based on the same allocation methodology as in the past years. The resulting allocation amounts are similar to previous years.

Committee Chairman Norris requested leave of the Committee to take both ordinances in one vote. The Committee concurred by voice vote. Director Magalis then moved, and Director McDonald seconded recommendation of the two proposed ordinances to the Board for approval.

The motion carried by the following leave for last unanimous roll call vote:

6 Ayes Directors Brown, Magalis, McDonald, Norris, Riley, and Wyatt

Ordinance amending the 2006-2010 Capital Marks and Program

Ms. Morkunas reported that the proposed amendment includes two actions: revisions to the Capital Marks to reflect federal and local funding source changes, and adjustments to Metra's and Pace's Capital Programs to conform to the revised marks.

The *Federal Register* detailing the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2006 federal transit appropriations was published on February 3, 2006. These funding apportionments reflect a one percent across-the-board rescission required in the FFY 2006 Department of Defense, Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, which was signed into law on December 30, 2005. The federal funding sources under the SAFETEA-LU authorization could be divided into five broad categories. One of these categories is the formula programs. The RTA receives federal formula funds from §5307 Urbanized Area Formula and two new programs under SAFETEA-LU: §5340, Growing States and High Density States, and §5339, Alternative Analysis. Growing States funds are based on future (2015) population estimates. We do not receive any High Density States funds; only the seven highest density states qualify for this funding.

The Job Access and Reverse Commute Program, commonly called JARC, is designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from jobs. Another new program under SAFETEA-LU, the New Freedom Program, provides funds for public transportation services beyond what is required in the ADA. Funds for these programs are allocated to the urbanized area. The amount available for the RTA program will be determined after a regional strategy is developed.

The Capital Investment category includes New Starts, Small Starts, Fixed Guideway Modernization, and Bus and Bus Facility funds. New Start funds are for the construction of fixed guideway systems. Small Start funds, a new program under SAFETEA-LU, are used for the construction of fixed guideway and bus corridor improvements where the total budgets will be less than \$250 million and federal Small Start funds for the project will be less than \$75 million. Fixed Guideway Modernization funds are used for capital projects to maintain, modernize or improve fixed guideway systems. Bus and Bus Facility funds are for the acquisition of buses and for bus related facilities such as maintenance facilities, transfer facilities and bus-related equipment.

The Planning category includes programs for metropolitan and statewide planning. The Research and University Research Centers category includes the Transit Cooperative Research program, the National Transit Institute, and various university research centers.

The Flexible and Other Federal category include programs such as CMAQ funds and Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds. These are legislatively specified funds that may be used either for transit or highway purposes. A local area can choose to use certain Federal surface transportation funds based on local planning priorities, not on a restrictive definition of program eligibility. Other funding includes non-FTA sources such as funds from the Department of Homeland Security.

Ms. Morkunas then pointed out the difference between the initial estimates in September and the proposed 2006 federal funding levels. The total RTA estimated regional allocation for §5307 and §5340 Formula funding decreased by \$3 million to \$200.4 million. The §5309 Fixed Guideway Modernization funding decreased by \$4.8 million and now equals \$141.6 million. Similarly, the §5309 New Start funding allocation was \$1.6 million less than the September estimates. The CTA will receive \$39.2 million for the capacity expansion of the Brown Line in place of the estimated \$40 million. Also, funding for the Douglas Branch reconstruction was \$1.3 million less than outlined in the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA). In addition, the CTA received \$2.0 million for three potential New Start projects: the Yellow Line extension to the Old Orchard Shopping Center, the Circle Line, and the Ogden Avenue Corridor. Metra received \$1.3 million less than anticipated for their three existing New Start projects. The §5309 Bus funding totaling \$3.8 million reflects 2006 earmarks in the federal funding appropriation for the CTA, Metra and Pace. Also, Metra received \$1.2 million for an alternative analysis for the Burlington Northern Santa Fe expansion study (§5339).

Regarding Federal Flexible funding, Metra is requesting to increase their 2006 CMAQ funding by \$3.6 million associated with earmarked funding for a parking garage in Geneva; and the CTA is requesting to increase the STP funds by \$0.7 million.

The originally planned amount of \$169.2 million to be transferred to operations has now been reduced because Pace received \$625,500 less in §5307 funding that originally anticipated. Since Pace received less in §5307 funding, the amount available for transfer to the operating program was reduced by the corresponding amount. Pace's operating budget will be adjusted in the future to deal with this change.

Metra is requesting to increase local community funding by \$1.1 million, and their Service Board funds by \$481,000. Further, Metra is requesting to reduce its de-obligated IDOT Bond funds by \$341,000 reserved for local match due to the reduction of its federal New Start funds.

In order to conform to the revised marks, Metra is proposing various reprogramming actions including the addition of three projects, the deletion of one project, and budget revisions. The added projects totaling \$9.2 million, include \$7.5 million for locomotive and commuter car enhancements, \$1.2 million for planning and engineering services for the extension of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Line, and \$547,200 to expand parking at the Joliet Station on the Rock Island Line. The budget revisions include \$5.3 million for the construction of a parking deck serving the Geneva Station on the Union Pacific West Line. With this amendment, Metra's Capital Program will be in balance with the proposed Capital Program Marks.

Similarly, Pace is proposing various reprogramming actions including the addition of five new projects, budget revisions and funding source changes. The added projects totaling \$1.1 million from FTA Bus funding are to initiate Transit Signal Priority (TSP) projects for five corridors. Funding for these projects represent development costs, and the implementation of these projects could result in future New Start funding.

Director Brown questioned the point of the CTA exceeding their capital marks by \$3.4 million more than what the CTA board passed in terms of its capital program. Ms. Morkunas explained that this is primarily due to a timing issue because the CTA was not able to get their amendment passed prior to the RTA's mailing. She added this is all due to reductions of the federal new start funding, and that's what the \$3.4 million reflects.

Director Brown followed by asking for an explanation for the CTA's program being \$81 million higher than the capital marks that are being considered. Ms. Morkunas responded that per a conversation with CTA staff, the CTA will be bringing an amendment to their next board meeting that will balance out their capital program. The out-year numbers are mostly due to the finance charges that were increased. The CTA has provided new calculations for those funds, so the overall program should balance when the CTA brings their program in with the amendment next month.

Director Riley moved, and Director McDonald seconded recommendation of the proposed ordinance to the Board for approval.

The motion carried by the following leave for last unanimous roll call vote:

5 Ayes Directors Magalis, McDonald, Norris, Riley and Wyatt

1 Present Director Brown

Report on the New Lenox Station Area Plan

Mr. Stephen E. Schlickman, RTA Executive Director introduced Mayor Michael Smith of the Village of New Lenox. He pointed out that Mayor Smith is on the NIPC board and its president from 2002-2005, he is on the new Regional Planning Board, a Metra Board member, president of the Will County Governmental League, and is also on the local advisory committee for I-355.

Mr. John DeLaurentiis, RTA Deputy Executive Director of Planning provided some background information on the relationship between the RTA and the Village of New Lenox. With the RTAP Program in its seventh year, the RTA has been able to bring back to the committee follow-up reports on the results of this program periodically, and highlight the value of our extensive transit network. We have seen some remarkable private investment in and around transit from these projects. Recent presentations by the Mayors of Skokie, Elmhurst, and Blue Island highlighted very successful retrofit projects, where transit supportive redevelopment is typically more difficult, time consuming and costly. New Lenox is different, because it represents one of those rare instances where we can plan for land use and transportation planning.

Mr. DeLaurentiis then touched on the various projects involving New Lenox. There are the existing interstate I-80 corridor and the Rock Island District Line; the tollway's 355 extension from Bolingbrook and Metra's extension of the Southwest Service to Manhattan, which are both underway, and eventually, the southern leg of the STAR Line, from O'Hare Airport, which is part of our northwest corridor study. The plan, which was completed last March, is serving not only the intended purpose, but also as a regional, and a national model of coordinated transportation and land use planning.

Mayor Smith highlighted completed and planned activities in New Lenox. New Lenox is at the confluence of five major corridors. Access is the key to everything, and transportation is ultimately, what provides good growth. New Lenox has greenfield sites to develop, which could make it a model not only for transit-oriented development in Northeastern Illinois but throughout the country. New Lenox did some land use acreage studies and some topography research to see how it would work and basically came up with a framework plan for land uses on a 222-acre site where the new Southwest Service station is being located. Through the grant process and the RTAP, New Lenox did a complete market analysis and then a conceptual drawing of what that development may look like some day. They also looked at how the traffic would flow not only from a vehicle position but also pedestrian-wise since what we were trying to do is get cars off the road through the whole process. They then developed 12 principles that the Village adopted formally as a Board, looking at design, diversity and densities. This process with the grant really allowed us to educate our board. The Rock Island site had a small triangular piece of land that was a very difficult development. As we were going through this site, a lot of developers began to get excited about transit-oriented development and the idea that the Village was changing some of its ideas as far as densities. We held a public hearing on this particular proposal for the 17-acre site, and there was not one negative comment made through the whole process. Immediately adjacent to the site, a development has already started that picks up on the transit-oriented design. It's commercial, and we are bringing in single family, stand-alone villas and coach houses that are architecturally designed to bring in young professionals and empty nesters, tying in the pedestrian concept. New Lenox is clustering job centers away from these areas. With the RTAP, we started looking at getting the reverse commuters from the trains that are coming into the community. We are looking at all of the service providers to make a link with Pace. We are looking at several different concepts, up to the north end of town where commercial development is taking place.

Mayor Smith concluded his remarks by stating that New Lenox possibly would not have gotten any of these developments underway without the grant from the RTA. He expressed his appreciation for the assistance provided by the RTA.

RTA Chairman Reilly commented that this really is a model of what needs to happen. He pointed out that we cannot dictate where people live, but we can create conditions in which they will cluster together. However, it has to be planned. Otherwise, you could build another suburban station with a huge parking lot, and you wouldn't have accomplished very much.

Committee Chairman Norris added that hearing the personal testimonies are very enlightening. Mayor Smith replied that it's nice to see such immediate results after all the planning.

Update on Rail~Volution Chicago 2006

Mr. Schlickman began by stating that it is an honor for Chicago to be hosting the 2006 Rail~Volution conference, which is one of the best transit and planning conference activities he has ever attended. This conference is an excellent opportunity for the RTA to highlight the great work that we have been doing here in Chicago, particularly through our Planning Department and the RTAP Program, in encouraging this type of planning in Chicago.

Mr. DeLaurentiis explained that Rail~Volution started as a set of advocacy seminars in 1989, and was primarily intended to provide a forum that engages the public to build collaborative and diverse coalitions. The organization started in Portland, Oregon in relation to some light rail and other rail projects. Rail~Volution is a nationally recognized expert in the field. Mr. DeLaurentiis pointed out that he is the RTA representative on the Rail~Volution National Steering Committee, which is made up of representatives of partner and affiliate organizations in transit. It includes all of the funding, planning and development organizations and agencies public and private across the country.

He then explained why the Steering Committee selected Chicago for the 2006 conference. Chicago is the transportation hub of the US, the second largest system in the U.S., and not only known for its transit network, but also for innovative transit planning. Certainly, the success we have had with new start projects in the region is another draw from across the country. With the RTAP Program, we have a real foundation for bringing the experts in from across the country to see what we have done and to share their experiences with what they have done to bring this conference to a location that is pretty much known for its planning. There is an official host committee, which is made up of all the representatives in the region including all of the transit operators. The host Committee of the Urban Transportation Center, which is housed at the University of Illinois, is chaired by the Executive Director of Metra, Phil Pagano. There is a Regional Steering Committee. There are individuals from virtually every sector in the region, banking, business, development, planning, the government heading up the committees.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the public session of the Planning Committee, Director Riley moved, and Director McDonald seconded that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried by the following voice vote:

6 Ayes Directors Brown, Magalis, McDonald, Norris, Riley and Wyatt

The meeting ended at 9:10 a.m.

Audrey MacLennan

AUDREY MACLENNAN
Secretary of the Authority