I-290
Corridor Advisory Group and Task Force (CAG/TF)
Meeting #17 Summary
September 4, 2013

The seventeenth combined CAG/TF meeting for the I-290 Phase I Study was held on September 4, 2013 at the Carleton Hotel of Oak Park, 1110 Pleasant St., Oak Park, IL 60302 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. The Meeting Agenda is included with this summary.

To announce the September 4, 2013 CAG/TF Meeting #17, an E-invitation was created. The invitation was sent out to all CAG and TF members on August 16, 2013. A previous, Save the Date email, was sent on July 26, 2013. The meeting was attended by 29 people. The following CAG/TF members were in attendance:

1. President Anan Abu-Taleb – Village of Oak Park
2. Michael Bolton – Pace
3. Claire Bozic – Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
4. Fred Brandstrader – Cap the Ike
5. Chris Byars – Federal Highway Administration
6. Lenny Cannata – West Central Municipal Conference
7. Rob Cole – Village of Oak Pak
8. Peter Fahrenwald – Regional Transit Authority
9. Janine Farzin – Chicago Transit Authority
10. Tim Gillian – Village of Forest Park
11. Andrea Green – Friends of Oak Park Conservatory
12. Henry Guerriero – Illinois State Toll Highway Authority
13. Jeffrey Sriver – Chicago Department of Transportation
14. Rick Kuner – Citizens for Appropriate Transportation
15. Tam Kutzmark – DuPage County Mayors and Managers
16. Phyllis Logan – 29th Ward, Community Advisor
17. Eileen Lynch – Senator Harmon's Office
18. Mike McLaughlin – Chicago Transit Authority
19. David Moehring – Resident – Oak Park
20. Teresa Powell – Village of Oak Park
21. Brenda Smith – 29th Ward
22. Angela Smith – Village of Maywood
23. David Myers – Village of Maywood
24. Mike Sturino – IRTBA
25. Tammy Wierciak – West Central Municipal Conference
26. Rocco Zucchero – Illinois State Toll Highway Authority

27. Josephine Bellalta – Resident – Oak Park
28. John MacManus – Resident – Oak Park
29. Joanna Klonsky – JKU Strategies

The meeting included a PowerPoint presentation with the following agenda topics:

- Recap of CAG/TF Meeting #16
- CTA Blue Line Vision Study Update
- Geometrics Overview
- Air Quality Overview
- Aesthetics Overview
- HSM & Bike and Pedestrian Safety
- Next Steps/Public Meeting #3 Preview
- Geometric Exhibit Review

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.

Recap of CAG/TF Meeting #16

At the previous CAG/TF Meeting, the following topics were presented: Round 2 Comments and Wrap Up; 4 advancing alternatives; CTA Blue Line Vision Study Update; Next Steps; and a Bicycle/Pedestrian Workshop. The summary of the workshop shows that CAG/TF members would like: improved connections to parks, hospitals and over bridges; additional Divvy bike locations; improved safety at interchanges; and improved signage. Suggested concepts from the Bicycle/Pedestrian workshop will be considered as geometry is developed, and stakeholder and agency coordination advances.

There were no comments on the Recap of CAG/TF Meeting #16.

CTA Blue Line Feasibility/Vision Study Update

The CTA gave an update on the progress of their Blue Line Feasibility/Vision Study. They reported that the final draft of the Existing Conditions Assessment and Transit Market Analysis are under review. Also, the station prototype concept access alternatives are under review, and the conceptual service pattern analysis is also in development.

There were no comments on the CTA Blue Line Feasibility/Vision Study Update.

Geometrics Overview

Alternatives development is following the NEPA process and consists of three rounds. The first step was to identify and develop initial single mode alternatives from over 600 stakeholder suggested alternatives and enhancements. Round 1 began with the development and evaluation of 22 single mode alternatives. Round 2 consisted of development and evaluation of 12 combination mode alternatives. In

addition to the No Action alternative, Round 3 evaluation will include adding detail to the four remaining alternatives which will be carried forward for detailed environmental evaluation and documentation in the DEIS. The detailed design and geometry is required for DEIS evaluation of alternatives which will include: footprint impact evaluation; environmental resources; air and noise evaluations; and cost estimates.

The design of the alternatives is following the established standards of: American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO - http://www.transportation.org/Pages/Default.aspx); IDOT Bureau of Design and Environment (BDE - http://www.dot.state.il.us/desenv/bdemanual.html); Pace (http://www.pacebus.com/guidelines/Pace_Design_Guidelines.pdf); Chicago Transit Authority (CTA – Infrastructure Design Criteria Manual), and The American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-way Association (AREMA -https://www.arema.org/publications/index.aspx). These design standards consider: facility type, design vehicle, and design speed for the various transportation modes. The design will also follow NEPA and CSS processes, similar to other aspects of the study, when evaluating and documenting any direct and indirect impacts in the study area. The design will be flexible to avoid/minimize impacts. The concepts presented at this CAG Meeting were guided by stakeholder input and community context and are still preliminary and subject to further study and refinement.

In terms of the scope of improvements that are necessary to implement these alternatives, there are two distinct sections; a full reconstruction section and a restriping section. The expressway and bridges will be fully reconstructed from the I-88/I-290 merge to near Kostner Avenue. Full reconstruction is required to accommodate the additional expressway lanes and new interchanges. In the existing eight-lane section from Kostner Avenue to Racine Avenue, only restriping is required to accommodate the managed lane concepts. Reconstruction of overhead bridges east of Cicero Avenue will be studied and handled by a separate study.

Interchange concepts – The interchange concept development was initially presented at CAG/TF #13 on March 15, 2012. The concept development started with existing design review and stakeholder identification of existing deficiencies and constraints. Initial concepts were then developed and presented at individual stakeholder coordination meetings and at the CAG/TF #14 interchange workshop. Through this process, preferred concepts at each interchange were selected for further development and evaluation. The following summarizes the selected interchange concepts:

25th Avenue – Diverging Diamond Interchange

- Most efficient operations (LOS A and B) of tested interchanges
- Consolidates all ramp movements at 25th Avenue
- Good pedestrian accommodations
- Opportunity to accommodate transit extension connection
- Locally preferred concept
- Additional ROW needed: in the NE quadrant from the Bellwood School District 88, building currently vacant and coordination is in progress.

1st Avenue – Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI)

- Compact design minimizes impacts
- One signal controls entire intersection
- Eliminates through movement to frontage road
- Improved operations (LOS B and C)
- Provides for left-turn storage
- More ramp storage = improved green time on 1st Avenue
- Locally preferred concept
- Additional ROW needed: in the NE quadrant from ComEd and Eisenhower Tower.

Comment: Has truck traffic along 1st Avenue been taken into consideration? Has truck traffic been included in the analysis?
Re: The inclusion of all vehicle types has been included in the interchange analysis. Trucks were manually counted in the field and included in the LOS calculation.

Comment: Cutting off the frontage roads will take away people's ability to cross over on the frontage roads. People are using the frontage roads to avoid the expressway, and this has become a problem for local travel.
Re: The proposed interchange and frontage road connection concept was coordinated with the communities and is intended to eliminate expressway cut-through traffic in the neighborhoods (an issue raised by the communities), and keep expressway traffic on the expressway. Traffic progression on 1st Avenue will be greatly improved and will allow for improved circulation and access to the expressway. However, the project team will continue to coordinate these issues during evaluation round #3 with stakeholders.

Comment: Did you take into account the train crossing near Lake Street? Traffic gets caught there at rush hour and then a platoon of vehicles is released and gets to interchange at the same time.
Re: We will take this into consideration as we further develop interchange geometrics.

Comment: Could you also mention pedestrian facilities at 1st Avenue during your discussions?
Re: There are pedestrian improvements associated with the 1st Avenue interchange and at all crossings. The CTA is working with IDOT on where pedestrians would be concentrated near the new or existing stations.

Comment: How is IDOT proposing to reduce northbound traffic on the 1st Avenue bridge over I-290? This concept seems to be putting more traffic on 1st Avenue.
Re: The overall improvements are being driven by existing conditions, including the heavy traffic on 1st Avenue. These interchange concepts provide a more efficient flow, accommodate turning vehicles and storage and ultimately provide better operations. There will be only one traffic signal at 1st Avenue with the conceptual SPUI design.

17th and 9th Avenue Slip Ramps

- 17th Avenue Ramps to remain with the improvements to 25th and 1st Avenues
- Longer ramps will be constructed to improve safety
- Meet current design standards
- Provide auxiliary lane connection to 1st Avenue

Comment: Did you take into any consideration any business access before closing the ramps?
Re: Yes, we talked to Village of Broadview and they wished to maintain the ramps at 17th Avenue to maintain the existing access to the commercial district at Cermak Road. We will continue to coordinate this issue with stakeholders.

Comment: What was the purpose of the original ramp design?
Re: When the expressway opened in the 1950's design standards were very new; also the daily traffic volume when the expressway first opened was only 45,000 vehicles. Today, much more is known about the relationship between safety and design.

Comment: Is there any thought about the trucks on 25th Avenue? We need to coordinate the trucks on both 25th and 1st. These are main truck routes, and what will be the additional improvements on those routes?
Re: We have accounted for the movements of large trucks along the cross-streets and at the interchanges. These interchange concepts are designed to provide better truck accommodations and focus truck movements to designated routes.

Des Plaines Avenue – ½ Diamond Interchange

- Maintains existing ramp configuration
- Improved signing and striping
- Wider sidewalk and path connection over I-290 to park
- Potential bus viaduct connection
- Locally preferred concept

Comment: (Directed to the CTA), will your study potentially change the Forest Park station concept?
Re: Assume station concepts are where they are for now. Potential future adjustments to the station will be integrated.

Comment: It is important for Pace to have improved access to the Forest Park facility. Pace is pleased to hear what is being proposed at 5th Avenue near the CTA Station there. If we can find a way to resolve the access to the Forest Park Station, we will be set for the next 30 years. There are a lot of business potential taking people from Forest Park to jobs in the Northwest suburbs.
Re: Comments are noted. The transit working group is developing a concept which would allow direct access from the Des Plaines overpass into a bus lane.

Comment: Where will the bus access be to the I-290 mainline? Is the extension shown in the median?
Re: Yes, IDOT will make provisions for the accommodation of a high capacity transit (bus or rail) in the expressway median. The extension has the potential to be bus first then rail. Bus access to the median area would be from I-290 and I-88 at the west end and then terminating near Des Plaines Avenue at the east end to access the Blue Line Forest Park station.

Harlem Avenue – Modified SPUI

- Ramps re-configured to enter and exit on right side but transitioning to the middle to connect to Harlem Avenue at the existing intersection location.
- Additional ramp storage permits better signal timing
- Pedestrian refuge islands between ramps
- Improved/wider sidewalks – ADA accessible
- Improved bus and pedestrian connections to transit
- No ROW impacts (stays within existing footprint)
- Accommodates one or two CTA head stations

Comment: Bus stops can be dangerous when constructed like that right turn lane with bus in it heading northbound at Harlem. How far away is the train station from the bus?
Re: Turning vehicles will be stopped behind the bus. The train station head house is about 20-25 feet away. There may be an opportunity to provide a bus turnout here and potential for bus queue jump as well. We will work with transit providers to optimize the positioning of buses near the CTA stations.

Comment: If the Ramps are stacked over the highway. How much higher will the new ramp be compared to the existing ramp?
Re: We will provide more detail on the ramp heights to help stakeholders visualize this situation. We are currently working on cross-sections for every 50 to 100 feet. Because the ramps must travel over the mainline lanes, vertical clearances may be higher in some places.

Comment: Since a lot of people are complaining about the height of the new ramps, can the mainline highway be lowered?
Re: This is something we are considering, but we need to look more in depth at the drainage and the railroad needs in order to determine its feasibility. Currently, there is one pipe that drains the entire expressway, CTA, and CSX, and we need to analyze the effects of lowering the roadway in more detail.

Austin Boulevard – Modified SPUI

- Ramps re-configured to enter and exit on right side but transitioning to the middle to connect to Austin Avenue at the existing intersection location.
- Additional ramp storage permits better signal timing
- Pedestrian refuge islands between ramps
- Improved/wider sidewalks – ADA accessible

- Improved bus and pedestrian connections to transit
- No ROW impacts (stays within existing footprint)
- Accommodates one or two CTA head stations

Comment: Will the right turning vehicles have to stop for pedestrians?
Re: Yes, according to the signage, when pedestrians are present. There is also an option for a no turn on red, but the goal is to not queue traffic if no pedestrians are present.

Comment: There are concerns about personal safety with a pedestrian underpass. Suggest that you discuss this with the Oak Park police.
Re: We have heard similar concerns during recent local coordination, and will continue to evaluate safety improvements as we move forward in the process.

Comment: Of the goals listed on the slide, pedestrians should get the highest priority.
Re: The interchange layouts place a very high priority on pedestrian and transit access.

Comment: Is the 56% safety improvement with a pedestrian island based strictly on literature? Does it take into consideration if there is already one there?
Re: This is based upon before/after studies, and a crash modification factor that can be found at http://www.cmfclearinghouse.org/. The existing pedestrian island at Harlem is so small it is not a good example of a pedestrian refuge island.

Comment: Have you shown these renderings to the Friends of the Park? It seems that if you are expanding the park you would want to show that in bold. This rendering is deceiving.
Re: We have sent this information to FOTP. We will make sure to emphasize what the dark green strips in the rendering mean in the future. The proposed improvements do not encroach on Park property and the mainline shifts away from the Park boundary.

Austin Boulevard/Central Avenue – Stacked Ramps

- Grade separate ramps
- Utilize existing cross-road and mainline elevation differences
- Central Avenue ramps enter/exit I-290 under Austin Boulevard Ramps
- Eliminates ramp weaving conflict
- Stays within existing ROW

Comment: Does this concept stay within the existing ROW footprint?
Re: Yes.

Comment: Since traffic is now at eye level, Friends of the Parks would be interested in knowing the new height.
Re: We will also coordinate this through the Friends of Parks at a future meeting.

Comment: Is there a way you could put a new dog park at the infield area of the SE quadrant of Central Avenue? Oak Park is losing a current Dog Park, and would really appreciate it.
Re: We will look into this further, and discuss with the Village.

Central Avenue – Conventional Diamond Interchange

- Maintains existing interchange configuration
- Improved lane channelization and lane markings
- Improved signal operations
- Improved mainline ramp connections

Laramie and Cicero Avenue – Reverse Diamond with U-turns/Slip Ramps

- Ramp directions reconfigured – off ramps followed by on-ramps
- Eliminates mainline ramp weaving
- Weave between ramps relocated onto low speed/low volume frontage roads
- Frontage road U-turns added as left turn bypass lanes
- Improved operations
- Improved sidewalks
- Improved transit access
- Accommodates CTA station on one or both sides

Comment: Have there been any discussions with the County regarding the Courthouse at 1st Avenue and their plans for a new parking garage?
Re: We will follow up with the County regarding the courthouse. If a significant new traffic generator is proposed, beyond the existing traffic at this location, then we want to be informed.

Comment: The west side VA Hospital is closing and moving to Hines in Maywood. Has this been considered?
Re: This is already a well developed corridor and based on future traffic, as determined by population and employment, we do not anticipate the hospital moving to cause a distinct traffic shift. We will investigate further as we coordinate the 1st Avenue geometric improvements.

Comment: The Ninth Avenue interchange should be left open. This seems like a better choice.
Re: Based on the area's needs we plan to configure the 1st and 25th Avenues to operate much better. The Ninth Avenue traffic would use these locations. However, we will continue to coordinate this with stakeholders.

Non-Interchange Cross Streets – Exhibits were on display at this meeting because stakeholder input is still sought for these crossings. The goals of these designs are to accommodate future transit extension, improve horizontal and vertical geometry where needed, and to improve bicycle/pedestrian environment for north-south connectivity.

Cross Streets over Freight Railroad – These include the bridges between Des Plaines Avenue and Austin Boulevard. There are several design challenges with these overhead bridges including substandard crossroad profiles and existing vertical clearances over the railroad. The project study team is working on a range of solutions to these problems and freight railroad coordination is in progress.

Air Quality Analysis Approach: In context of the NEPA process, the air quality analysis is not used to select an alternative, but used to identify impacts. In order to identify impacts, advanced design information and "build" alternative traffic volumes are required. Out of the six criteria pollutants set by USEPA for the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), only two are of concern for this transportation project, particulate matter and carbon monoxide. In the Chicagoland area the following counties are in non-attainment for the annual particulate matter standard: Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will Counties. For monitoring this project, there is a carbon monoxide monitoring station located near Laramie, north of 22nd Ave. This site has seen an 80 percent drop in carbon monoxide since 1990, and is consistently below the NAAQS.

For projects of air quality concern, there are several different methods to measure the effects on the environment. A COSIM analysis is used for signalized intersections. The MOVES model determines particulate emissions with input factors of fleet composition, fuel supply, traffic volumes, and acceleration/braking/idle percentages. The MOVES model output determines the pollutant level. There is also air dispersion modeling. The critical inputs of an air dispersion model are the receptors, pollutant levels, geography, and weather data. The modeling results are shown for the build condition, focusing on the worst-case receptors.

In terms of climate change, the national standard seeks to reduce greenhouse gases. We do know that better traffic flow equals fewer greenhouse gases. This is a global problem with a local solution. Any decrease in fuel use decreases greenhouse gas output.

Comment: Why was there a big decrease from 2007 to 2010?
Re: The industries in the area have changed. Several large factories have lost business. It was not just the trucks serving the industry, but the industry itself was a large polluter.

Comment: What about the Environmental Justice communities nearby? How are disproportionate impacts to low income being taken into account?
Re: The model is non-discriminating, it will find the worst case scenario wherever it is. Then, we look at the impacts and make sure we are not impacting low income communities.

Comment: Did you show maps earlier on in the study that actually showed air quality improving in the study area with the build condition?
Re: This may have been much earlier on and possibly related to background pollutant levels, but the air quality analysis is just beginning for the finalist alternatives.

Comment: Shouldn't we be looking at how well a plan improves the air quality in the study area?
Re: The air quality analysis is not a measuring tool.

Comment: How many state DOT projects has your firm done in the last five years? And in those projects, how many of those have the air quality improved?
Re: This firm is prequalified to perform air quality analysis, and all projects are somewhat different.

Comment: In reference to the receptor grid, is it an x, y, z grid, an imaginary grid, or at a school?
Re: The receptor grid is on an x, y, z grid and is large enough to include all important things, such as a school.

Comment: Is the roadway a line in the grid?
Re: Yes, the MOVES Model would determine emission levels along that line. It is a line source.

Comment: There have been Ozone Action Days over the past two weeks.
Re: This is an attainment area for ozone so it is not being studied.

Comment: Any expressway option that you pick has to be better than the no-build.
Re: If a project exceeds the NAAQS, or is worse than the equivalent no-build receptor (s), then you have to adjust the project to improve its performance.

Comment: In general, when will we hear about the noise analysis?
Re: Next CAG meeting will have a noise presentation.

General Aesthetics Introduction: Aesthetic treatments along roadways can integrate visual and physical factors, and may provide local, social and cultural context. Aesthetics to be considered at an expressway level provide a consistent theme along mainline. Local street level aesthetics can be community oriented and may vary somewhat by community. Aesthetic treatments may include: walls, lighting, railings, fences, bicycle racks, benches, landscaping, public art, surface finishes, signals, and signs. The State and Federal guidelines will consider safety, constructability, feasibility, maintenance responsibilities, and cost participation requirements. Community and stakeholder coordination on design aesthetics began with the context audits in 2009. Follow up meetings will be planned after this meeting after the communities have had the opportunity to review today's meeting materials and the interchange concepts. CTA coordination will also happen to integrate station design.

Comment: How far are you reaching into the community for these aesthetic treatments especially in the City of Chicago?
Re: In general, we will be looking within the vicinity of the mainline footprint. Also, if there something that already exists, it can be carried forward or it can be used establish some new standard in that particular area.

Comment: What will it cost the communities if the improvements go far away from the expressway footprint?
Re: If it is a project cost, then the project cost would cover it. In other cases, there is local cost participation required for certain elements of a project, as well as local maintenance.

Comment: Who is the questionnaire targeting and when do you want it back?
Re: Village staff and other interested parties. One month would be appreciated.

Comment: Are you going to send the questionnaires to the politicians?
Re: Yes, we will email them out or drop them off at upcoming one-on-one meetings.

Highway Safety Manual (HSM): The HSM is a quantitative approach based on national research. It is a predictive model that is based on empirical/observed data and addresses crash experience and fluctuations. The HSM measures effectiveness of individual treatments and the overall design, which considers the combined effect of individual treatments. The HSM works by evaluating the existing condition using baseline traffic volumes, existing roadway configuration, and available crash history. The existing conditions analysis is a robust analysis of baseline condition, and provides a point of comparison for alternatives. Then the user then creates and tests alternatives based on proposed traffic volumes and roadway configurations. In the end, predicted crashes can be compared to the baseline.

Pedestrian safety: Along the I-290 corridor the study team will use the HSM to measure the effectiveness of pedestrian treatments at or near the interchanges. Examples of these treatments and their effectiveness are as follows:

- Countdown signals: These provide information regarding the amount of time remaining to safely cross the street and are easily understood.
- Pushbutton treatments: These allow pedestrians to notify intent to cross street by pushing a button to request that signal phasing be called.
- Bicycle/Shared Use Paths: These off road facilities provide defined locations suitable for bicycles and pedestrians near roadways.
- ADA Improvements: Detectable warning tiles are textured surfaces to notify the visually impaired. Wheelchair ramps involve a smooth transition from sidewalk to roadway.
- Driveway Improvement: These improvements can include closing, restricting to right-in/right-out, reducing radii, narrowing, and providing medians.

- Pedestrian Refuge Islands: These raised barrier medians provide a place between two vehicular lanes of traffic. Pedestrians can wait here for a suitable gap. This divides crossing length into shorter lengths, and the pedestrians can see turning traffic and drivers can clearly see pedestrians.
- High Visibility Pavement Markings: These delineate crossing areas, guide and inform pedestrians, and alert motorists of the presence or potential for pedestrian interaction.
- No Turn on Red: These signs are used to prohibit certain movements at intersections and driveways.
- Lighting: This can enhance security and provides safety and comfort for both pedestrians and motorists. Lighting can also improve ability for motorists to see pedestrians.
- School Routes: This includes adult crossing guards, proper use of signs/markings, child supervision, and work with local agencies.

There were no comments on the HSM.

Next Steps: Public Meeting #3 will be held on October 7th and 8th, 2013, and CAG/TF #18 is anticipated for December 2013/January 2014. The topics for Public Meeting #3 include Purpose and Need, Alternatives Evaluation, Concept Layout, and the CTA Vision Study. The format will be Open House with a Question and Answer portion in the middle.

Comment: Will both of the Public Meeting's be identical?
Re: Yes, you will only need to attend one.

Comment: Will the work force diversity representatives be there?
Re: Yes, we will make sure to get your information, and send to the contacts. There will also be technical training program representatives there. The technical training program is free, and there will be more than enough time to get proper training before construction would begin.

Corridor Geometric Review: a 100 scale, 80-foot long color roll plot of the overall preliminary concept corridor geometrics was provided for stakeholder review after the presentation. The preliminary concept included the current mainline, cross-road, and interchange concepts reviewed during the presentation. Attendees were invited to review the concepts, ask questions, and provide feedback/notes directly on the exhibit.