

Illinois Route 53/120 Project
Finance Committee Meeting #6
Roll Call June 30, 2014
Meeting Minutes issued by Lake County

PRESENT

NAME

REPRESENTING

| | | |
|---------|------------------------------|---|
| Present | Chris Meister | Co-Chair |
| Present | Doug Whitley | Co-Chair |
| Present | Aaron Lawlor | Lake County |
| Present | George Ranney | Co-Chair, BRAC |
| Present | Charles Witherington-Perkins | Village of Arlington Heights |
| Present | Jeffrey Braiman | Village of Buffalo Grove |
| | | Village of Grayslake |
| Present | Stephen Park | Village of Gurnee |
| Present | Linda Soto | Village of Hainesville |
| Present | Joseph Mancino | Village of Hawthorn Woods |
| Present | Mike Talbett | Village of Kildeer |
| Present | Tom Poynton | Village of Lake Zurich |
| | | Village of Lakemoor |
| Present | Heather Rowe | Village of Libertyville |
| Present | David Lothspeich | Village of Long Grove |
| Present | Steve Lentz | Village of Mundelein |
| | | Village of Palatine |
| Present | Tom Rooney | Village of Rolling Meadows |
| Present | George Monaco | Village of Round Lake |
| | | Village of Round Lake Park |
| Present | Dave Brown | Village of Vernon Hills |
| Present | Burnell Russell | Village of Volo |
| | | Village of Wauconda |
| Present | Wayne Motley | City of Waukegan |
| Present | John Yonan | Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways |
| Present | Jim Heisler | McHenry County |
| | | Metropolis Strategies |
| Present | David Stolman | BRAC Founding Co-Chair |
| Present | Brad Leibov | Liberty Prairie Foundation |
| Present | Michael Stevens | Lake County Partners |
| | | Lake County Transportation Alliance |
| Present | Rachel Barry | Representing Illinois State Senator Althoff |
| Present | Tony Small via phone | Illinois Department of Transportation |
| | | Federal Highway Administration |

General Business

Call to Order, Roll Call and Approval of Meeting Minutes

On a motion by **Stephen Park (SP)**, seconded by **Tom Poynton (TP)**, the meeting minutes from May 8, 2014 were unanimously approved. **Doug Whitley (DW)** stated that the June meeting was scheduled earlier to discuss feedback from the Illinois Tollway Board of Directors and to present the Committee with information on the costs associated with the innovations proposed by the Illinois Route 53/120 Blue Ribbon Advisory Council (BRAC). The Tollway Board suggested that the local contribution was a key component because there was a clear distinction between the typical Tollway design and the Illinois 53/120 Project, but no percentage of local contribution was targeted, **DW** said. If the highway is different than other Tollway facilities, the Board asked what those incremental costs are. They identified these costs as anything above and beyond a traditional Tollway and a good starting point for a sufficient local contribution. The Board also asked about the user survey data, but **DW** said the survey results are not available yet. **SP** asked if any innovations discussed for Illinois Route 53/120 could become standard for the Tollway. **DW** responded that it was not discussed, but the Board acknowledged this was only a "halftime report."

Aaron Lawlor (AL) said the meeting with the Tollway Board was constructive, but emphasized the need for local leaders to re-educate the Tollway Board on the nuances of the project and innovative BRAC features that built consensus for the project. **AL** said Illinois Route 53/120 represents a new way of approaching infrastructure projects. **AL** then provided an overview for the day's agenda, noting that today's meeting would largely be informational and focused on the cost and benefits of the BRAC recommendations. Recognizing a desire by the Committee to start engaging in discussion, he noted that this information would lead into the next meeting where a lot more discussion and dialogue is planned to take place.

George Ranney (GR) discussed how he reversed his decades of opposition to the project until the BRAC formed and demanded the road adapt to the community, environmental setting and rich natural resources of Lake County. He said unless the BRAC garnered support among the group, they could not move forward even if the majority of the county favored the road. He noted that many of the 26 out of 28 BRAC members who supported the project were environmental leaders. He cautioned however that consensus was fragile. **GR** stressed that the BRAC innovations were interrelated and part of the process, and not incremental add-ons. **GR** said the purpose of the Finance Committee is to examine how to fund the project, while allowing the engineers to determine the best practices. He introduced **Mike Sands (MS)**, chair of the BRAC Environmental Working Group.

MS said the BRAC was challenged with meeting a broad range of expectations in a short period of time for many engineering issues along the corridor. During the process, they created a set of design and performance standards. The 13 design standards addressed transportation design issues, community concerns around noise and fragmentation and the impact on natural resources. Rather than specify how the engineers should solve specific problems, they assembled a set of 15 performance standards, consisting of resource protection and enhancement, impact mitigation and quality assurance, and transportation issues and community issues that gave the engineers flexibility in a limited setting. Given the need to address longer term impacts and unintended consequences, the BRAC called for an \$81 million stewardship fund that budgets for 750 acres of land restoration and protection, minimizes fragmentation, maintains integrity of wetland ecosystems and partners with environmental groups and organizations to lend consultation outside the scope or authority of the Tollway or IDOT. Building a road

attuned to Lake County comes with future costs, and a fund commits to meeting those costs, **MS** said. He introduced **Mike Matkovic (MM)** of Christopher B. Burke Engineering Ltd. to present the preliminary cost analysis.

MM explained the total project cost is estimated at \$2.87 billion, including all-in implementation of BRAC recommendations escalated to 2020 dollars. The cost of the BRAC innovations is estimated at \$450-\$600 million, approximately 16-20 percent of the total cost. The BRAC innovations fall into three categories: roadway design innovations, environmental mitigation and the stewardship fund. These costs are relative to a typical Tollway project and based on comparison to the engineering Plans of Record from 2001. A full update on the cost of the BRAC innovations will be provided at the next Finance Committee meeting. **MM** said they will continue to refine engineering with scope and cost efficiencies while also meeting the BRAC objectives. **MM** discussed three examples to illustrate the nature of future cost refinement: depressed roadway sections, elevated roadway sections and wetland mitigation..

Questions and Answers

Chris Meister (CM) recapped the committee on its work over the first six meetings and talked about the second half requiring a smaller group format to examine cost refinements and BRAC objectives. The future meetings will elicit more discussion among the committee instead of guest speakers, so the group can begin providing recommendations that represent local ownership. **DW** said today's meeting was an important reminder of the BRAC's work and opportunity to provide the Tollway Board input. He then asked for more information regarding the 750 acres of land restoration and protection identified through the stewardship fund. **MS** said that the 750 acres included unprotected land in need of restoration, off-site wetland complexes and upland buffer areas critical to those wetlands, because if a road is built to the edge of a wetland the entire wetland is destroyed. **MS** said some local wetlands manage flood water but rank poorly in biodiversity. The stewardship fund will improve water quality and storage. **MS** said a project of this scale has a larger impact extending beyond right-of-way.

Linda Soto, (LS) asked whether local communities would be consulted on changes made to the BRAC recommendations, especially in terms of the elevated roadways. **MM** said the study's intention was to review the recommendations with the authors of the BRAC report. He said there is an opportunity to shorten the elevated roadway. **LS** said eliminating the elevated roadway raises concern about connectivity and sound. **AL** said as these recommendations continue to be analyzed, communities should be briefed. **Joseph Mancino (JM)** said his community wants to be engaged because the proposed elevated road goes directly through a residential area that is one of the most pristine areas of his town.

Steve Lentz (SL) asked if the local contribution is what they eliminate from the \$450-\$600 million in BRAC innovations. **DW** said he could not get that answer from the Tollway Board. He said the Board's response was to keep working to identify the innovations and costs. **AL** interjected that the environmental stewardship fund is not up for negotiation, and if eliminated, the project will go away. Depressed roadways, on the other hand, are enhancements that could be further scrutinized.

Jeffrey Braiman (JB) said Lake County should not pay for the amenities unique to Lake County. He said these were conditions of the roadway and not amenities. **JB** said it was the Tollway Board's responsibility to give the Finance Committee more direction and requested their presence at future meetings. **GR** said he met last week with Tollway Executive Director Kristi Lafleur and learned that the project would not be discussed before the Tollway Board for several months, or until the Finance

Committee has done more work. He said the Tollway Board members, who provided the feedback, were a committee that had not been fully briefed on the project and the BRAC. **GR** said it was the Finance Committee's job to advance the BRAC report, an integrated proposal of how the road can and should be built, based on previous innovations from around the world. **DW** said this Finance Committee is an advisory panel to the Tollway Board and the Committee is expected to do the heavy lifting.

CM suggested that communities put their specific concerns in writing regarding the refinements. **JM** said the communities cannot comment on refinements without knowing what is refined. **MM** said there are potential incremental cost savings based on limits, not changes in height or width. **MM** said the BRAC estimates were best guess figures, and now the feasibility study is drilling down for efficiencies.

Heather Rowe (HR) asked whether the Tollway Board had any response to congestion pricing and toll indexing outside of Lake County, and rebuilding and widening the existing Illinois Route 53. **Rocco Zuccherro (RZ)**, of the Illinois Tollway, clarified that the existing Route 53 was not discussed by the Tollway Board and must first be discussed by the Finance Committee. He said the Board felt that adding tolls on the existing Tollway is not necessarily a local contribution. Historically, toll revenues have not been viewed by the Tollway Board as part of the local contribution. **RZ** said a toll was implemented on the existing Elgin O'Hare Western Access roadway, but in addition, there is also a local contribution.

Stephen Park (SP) asked if the study was looking at the full array of interconnected costs because the wetland mitigation work is impacted by the elevated and depressed roadways. **MS** said these impacts were all being assessed from a macro level. **MM** said they are assuming a full right-of-way wetland impact because they have no detail to assume otherwise.

Mike Talbett (MT) asked about the importance of the user survey to the Board. **Aimee Lee (ALee)**, of the Tollway, said there were questions from the Board regarding the speed limit, based upon public comments about building and investing in a facility with a 45 mph limit. They were curious if the survey shed any insight. She said the results of the survey will be shown to the Committee at a future meeting.

Brad Leibov (BL) commented that he views the situation as the start of a negotiation. The Committee does not necessarily have to pay 16-20 percent, but over the next few months the feasibility analysis will refine those costs and the Committee will have an opportunity to return with a refined percentage. It must first investigate what those costs are. **DW** said there are costs unique to the project, so the questions are what the local contribution is and what counts as a local contribution. **BL** said there is a cost to build a house, a cost to build a house in Lake County and a cost to build a house in Lake County with recommendations, and that could be the new standard to build in the future. If the Committee decides through cost refinement that the innovations equate to a certain amount, the committee has the ability to argue why the innovations matter and meet the Tollway part of the way.

Wayne Motley (WM) asked about the potential TIF district area, to which **CM** responded that it had not been determined. **WM** referenced Illinois Senate Bill 509 allowing transfer from one TIF district to another if the TIF districts are not contiguous.

Charles Witherington-Perkins (CWP) said funding options, like rebuilding and widening existing Illinois Route 53, should be discussed with surrounding communities in Cook County. **AL** said he would like to organize a few smaller group meetings to discuss the funding options. **DW** said they want to meet with Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and IDOT to discuss their perspectives on the project.

David Lothspeich (DL) asked for more clarity regarding the phrase “relative to a traditional Tollway project,” and how the Tollway approaches a baseline project compared to other agencies and what makes the Tollway standards unique. **MM** said the Tollway understands the incredible number of high quality resources in Lake County and the Tollway is responsive to unique project settings. The Tollway has an obligation to address those resources through its own standards and in complying with wetland mitigation, for example, the Tollway must meet regulatory agency requirements, but the BRAC innovations take it to another level. **RZ** said the Tollway generally follows the same rules and regulations as IDOT, and follows federal, state and county regulations. The additional BRAC requirements were the basis for consensus. The wetland mitigation ratio, for example, was increased from 3.5:1 to 5:1. The federal threshold for noise, for example, is 67 decibels, but on the Illinois 53/120 Project, the BRAC has requested limiting it to 60 decibels. **MS** said the engineering Plans of Record are dated, and does not meet requirements for community support, and this is not a traditional highway project. **DW** stated that technology, materials and processes have changed, and this should be considered when making recommendations in the final report to the Tollway Board.

George Monaco (GM) criticized Tollway construction policies, stating that the Tollway traditionally takes the less expensive route in approaching noise and lighting. **GM** said the Committee should study how the Tollway standard applies to each community on the corridor. **AL** said as long as they maintain the standards created in the BRAC report on noise and light pollution, they should not have problems, because the BRAC enhancements warrant higher standards. **GR** said it is important that the Finance Committee is clear on what it wants. That is why the standards are important. The issue is not what a traditional Tollway project is, but rather what Lake County and the Finance Committee wants, and if it is not in accordance with the BRAC, then consensus will fall apart.

SP asked to confirm the time of the next meeting on July 29. **ALee** said it is tentatively scheduled for 2:30 p.m., but an email will go out to Finance Committee members with a confirmed time. <Note: Since then, the July 29 meeting time has been confirmed for 2:00 p.m.>

Public Comment

Rob Sherman, of Buffalo Grove, conveyed three points. (1) At the Tollway Board meeting, it was stated that there should be a capital cost reduction and the local contribution should cover all the amenities beyond the standard build. (2) The Illinois General Assembly overwhelmingly passed Senate Bill 2015 that states all interstate highways and roadways of the Illinois Tollway shall be 70 mph. Thus the 45 mph option will no longer exist. (3) In order to pay for the project, the Tollway should merge toll rates. Every mile on the system should be tolled the same.

On a motion by **SP**, seconded by **MT**, the meeting was officially adjourned at 11:55 a.m.