

MINUTES

COMMUTER RAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY TASK FORCE

FEBRUARY 15, 2005

IN ATTENDANCE:

TASK FORCE MEMBER AGENCIES

Aroma Park – Mike Grimsley

Bourbonnais – Frank Koehler

Bradley – no attendee

Illinois Department of Transportation – Chuck Abraham, Chuck Kadlec

Kankakee – Tim Schmidt

Kankakee County – Sam Nicholos

Manteno – Jeff Jarvis, Paul Nicholson

Monee – Mike Grubermann

Peotone – George Gray

Will County – no attendee

OTHERS PRESENT

Mike Van Mill, Mike Lammey and Dave Bergdahl, Kankakee County; Ron Shimizu and Rich Juvinal, PB; Nancy Rance, EDA; Brian Gebhardt, South Suburban Mayors and Managers; Maurice and Audrey Soucie; Glenn Grider; Bridgett Stratton, Russell Publications; Lee Provost, Daily Journal; and Laura McElroy, Herald.

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Gray welcomed the group to the Village of Peotone, and the meeting was called to order at 2:33 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Nicholos asked if there were public comments, and there were none.

MINUTES

Mr. Jarvis moved that the Minutes of the October 19, 2004 meeting be approved, and Mr. Gray seconded. Unanimous vote.

SOUTH EAST SERVICE

Mr. Gebhardt reported that the Calumet Corridor Planning Council has approved the draft of the Land Use and Local Financing Study, and that Metra has begun their Alternatives

Analysis of the Southeast Service. He stated that Metra is finalizing the Scope of the Study, and is close to having a formal kick-off meeting for the project.

Mr. Gebhardt stated that Metra is also compiling their request for federal funding, and is combining the proposed Southeast Service with the proposed extension of electric service to the South Suburban Airport, and is calling the combined alternative the “South Suburban Initiative”.

Chairman Nicholos asked if the two projects are being combined because there is a better chance of funding both at the federal level, and Mr. Gebhardt responded that he believed that was the case. He stated that this was in response to Congressman Jackson’s request for federal consideration of rail service to the South Suburban Airport.

Mr. Gray asked how the proposed service to the South Suburban Airport would interact with the Feasibility Study of service on the Canadian National line into Kankakee County. Mr. Gebhardt stated that the proposal for combined service into the South Suburban Airport contained in the Feasibility Study for the extension of service to Kankakee County is a possible alternative for service.

Mr. Jarvis asked if this combined funding request for service to the South Suburban Airport and the Southeast Service would be a positive influence to the possibility of the extension of commuter rail service to Kankakee County. Mr. Juvinall stated that the information is so new that it is difficult to assess impacts yet. He stated that the combined request would build a significant portion of what has been proposed in the report, and would be a positive influence in that regard, especially the costs of the extension of the electric service to the South Suburban Airport. He stated that the Canadian National would wish for the extended electric service to be separate from their freight operations.

CONSULTANT PRESENTATION – FINAL REPORT

Mr. Juvinall gave a presentation on the final report for the Feasibility Study. He discussed the Project Status and Schedule, concluding that the project is slightly behind the original schedule. He stated that final comments could be received as late as March 4, 2005.

Mr. Juvinall summarized the results of the Feasibility Study, dealing with the issues that had been investigated. He stated that there had been no negotiations with either the Canadian National Railroad or Metra on the study. He stated that the ridership and capital cost estimates were of a rough order of magnitude, and that these estimates needed to be refined in later stated of the study.

Mr. Juvinall stated that four motive power options had been explored, diesel-electric hauled coaches, electric multiple-units, dual mode hauled coaches, and diesel multiple-units. He stated that the most likely form of power for a service extension to Kankakee County would be the diesel multiple-unit, due to the flexibility of the power mode.

Mr. Juvinall stated that the results of the study were that the service extension is feasible. He stated that six station stops have been identified as feasible:

- Monee (at Industrial Drive)

- Peotone (at Wilmington Road)
- Manteno (at 10000 N. Road)
- Bourbonnais (at St. George Road)
- Bradley (at Brookmont Boulevard)
- Kankakee (at the existing Amtrak station, and at Exit 308)

Mr. Juvinall stated that the service is feasible and viable in either its Full Build Out (FBO) mode all the way to a stop at Exit 308, or in a Minimum Operable Segment (MOS) mode to a stop at Manteno. He gave the potential stations, length of service line, and preliminary capital costs for either option.

Mr. Juvinall stated that each option would have:

- five round trips of service daily
- would require double tracking for their length of the Canadian National tracks
- a new yard and maintenance facility would be required under either option
- both options gave a revenue recovery ratio between 60% to 80%, either of which are greater than the Metra 55% goal.

Mr. Juvinall stated that comments had been received on the draft report from the communities of Bourbonnais, Manteno, and Monee, from Will and Kankakee Counties, and from the Illinois Department of Transportation. He stated that all comments have been included as Reference 58 in Appendix 1, and have been added as Appendix 11. He stated that comments seeking to correct and clarify content of the report have been made.

Mr. Juvinall stated that two comments are significant to be brought to the Task Force for discussion. He stated that the comment from the Village of Manteno was for a change in station location to an undetermined location farther north than 10000 N. Road. He stated that the comment from the Village of Bourbonnais was to request a change in the MOS to a location at St. George Road.

Mr. Juvinall stated a concern of the study which was to propose service extension as close as possible to the communities within Kankakee County to attract new ridership from Kankakee County. He stated the issue of still essentially remaining within the existing 6-County RTA District to minimize the likelihood of funding support requirements from Kankakee County.

Mr. Koehler questioned ending the MOS option at Manteno, rather than the extension to Bourbonnais, since that station had been identified as the one with the highest individual station potential ridership. Mr. Schmidt stated that his preference would obviously be for the FBO option with service to Kankakee. Chairman Nicholos stated his preference for the FBO, bringing service to the downtown Kankakee area. He also stated that the Phase II could further refine the recommendations. Mr. Abraham indicated that the MOS option is required as a part of a Phase I Feasibility Study.

Mr. Juvinall stated that the next actions to be taken are a Phase II Study, which would include:

- Update the Phase I Study assumptions
- Ridership Estimates (simulation)

- Environmental Impacts (as needed)
- Site Studies (detailed interlockings, etc.)
- Refined Cost Estimates (as needed)
- Line Capacity Analysis (simulation)

Mr. Juvinall stated that the Federal Transit Administration studies follow. Those studies would include:

- Alternatives Analysis
- Environmental Study (EIS or EA)
- Preliminary Engineering
- Final Engineering

Mr. Juvinall stated that the study had been enjoyable for the staff of Parsons Brinckerhoff, and thanked the members of the Task Force for their cooperation.

Mr. Schmidt moved approval of the final Report, and passing the approved report on to the Planning, Zoning and Agriculture Committee of the Kankakee County Board. Mr. Grubermann seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. Koehler moved authorization of a Phase II application, pending Kankakee County approval, and Mr. Schmidt seconded. Chairman Nicholas called for a roll call vote.

- Aroma Park – Mr. Grimsley – aye
- Bourbonnais – Mr. Koehler – aye
- Bradley – no attendee
- Kankakee – Mr. Schmidt – aye
- Kankakee County – Chairman Nicholas – aye
- Manteno – Mr. Jarvis – aye
- Monee – Mr. Grubermann – aye
- Peotone – Mr. Gray – aye
- Will County – no attendee

Chairman Nicholas declared that the motion passed.

Mr. Lammey stated that Resolutions had been received from the Villages of Manteno and Monee, and from Will County, and that these will be included in Appendix 11 of the report. Mr. Juvinall stated that all Resolutions received before the final printing of the report will be included in the report.

PRESS QUESTIONS

Mr. Provost asked the cost estimate for a Phase II study, and Mr. Lammey stated that he had been informed that \$250,000 was a ballpark estimate. Mr. Provost asked for a time frame for the Phase II application, and Mr. Lammey stated that the application would begin as soon as possible.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Nicholas stated that the next meeting would be on May 17, 2005, at 2:30 P.M. Mr. Koehler volunteered Bourbonnais as the site of the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Grubermann moved adjournment, and Mr. Grimsley seconded. Unanimous vote.
Chairman Nicholas adjourned the meeting at 4:03 P.M.