

MINUTES

COMMUTER RAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY TASK FORCE

AUGUST 15, 2006

IN ATTENDANCE:

TASK FORCE MEMBER AGENCIES

Aroma Park – Mike Grimsley

Bourbonnais – Frank Koehler

Bradley – Mayor Kent

Illinois Department of Transportation – Chuck Abraham, Chuck Kadlec

Kankakee – no attendee

Kankakee County – Sam Nicholos

Manteno – Craig Blanchette

Monee – Henry May

Peotone – George Gray

Will County – Colin Duesing

OTHERS PRESENT

Mike Van Mill, Mike Lammey, Sarah Billadeau, Erik Rayman and Dave Bergdahl, Kankakee County; Dennis Gary, Gary Foyle and Larry McClellan, Earth Tech; Laura McElroy, Herald; and Mary Baskerville, Journal

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Nicholos called the meeting to order at 2:34 P.M.

MINUTES

Mr. Koehler moved approval of the April 18, 2006 Minutes, and Mr. May seconded. Unanimous vote.

CONSULTANT PRESENTATION

Mr. Gary from Earth Tech made a presentation including the following items:

- Project Name Change
Mr. Gary stated that a new name for the project is suggested – Kankakee County Commuter Transit Feasibility Study, Phase II (KACOT-II). He stated that this name change reflects the broad range of options that will need to be studied in Phase II, not just the commuter rail, and it will be more likely to be viewed more favorably as a mode-neutral (i.e. non-biased) project by the FTA. Mr. May moved approval of the name change, and Mr. Grimsley seconded. The vote was unanimous.

- **Amtrak’s New Service**
Mr. Gary stated that new service was being added to the Amtrak line through Kankakee. Mr. May gave some operational details of that service, and gave some historical background for the service addition.
- **Project Overview**
Mr. Gary gave the future meeting schedule for the Task Force, and what subjects will be covered at which meeting. He also reviewed the 11 project tasks, and outlined the initial priority given each task, along with the project lead and initial budget for the task.
- **Task 7, Local Cost Share**
Mr. Gary explained the capital costs and operating costs developed as the result of the Phase I study, and explained the implications of those costs on local governments, in terms of what they would be expected to be responsible for. Mr. Koehler stated that the implications of local financing, in terms of tax, should be explained to the local units of government throughout the study. He stated that the study should develop one board that would overlook the operations, and be responsible for the tax issue.

Mr. Gray pointed out that the communities in Will County already are members of the RTA, and already participate in a tax for transportation. He stated that those communities that already pay the tax would encourage METRA to develop transportation facilities in Will County.
- **Task 8, Public Education/Outreach**
Mr. Gary gave an overview of the purposes of this important part of the study, and introduced Mr. McClellan, their subcontractor for Public Education/Outreach. Mr. McClellan discussed the strategy of “casting the net” to get to the broadest group of local organizations and interested citizens, and the methodology to do so. He passed out a form and asked for assistance from Task Force members in identifying potential members of that group. He discussed the forums that will be available to gain input, including Town Meetings, newsletters, and online input and feedback via a project website. He showed examples of websites developed in the past.
- **Communications Technology**
Mr. Gary asked the members of the Task Force how they wanted the consultant to communicate with them. He gave suggestions, and discussion was held on the subject. Mr. Gary stated that they would attempt a form of communication, and asked that the Task Force communicate if the method was successful.
- **SAFETEA-LU Funding**
Mr. Gary discussed the various rail projects in the Chicago area that are in various phases of current development.
- **Current Action Items**
Mr. Gary stated that a number of items would be studied early in the study process:
 - The potential station changes in Manteno and Monee

- The MED yard facility being planned by METRA
- Contact with the CN to discuss line capacity analysis and other issues
- Contact with CATS (now CMAP) to discuss ridership projections
- Issues dealing with the South Suburban Airport
- The “ring around the collar” community rail issue and legislation

Mr. Lammey referred the Task Force to the Project Budget, which is extremely fluid, and is Task Order oriented. He briefed the Task Force on the four Task Orders which had already been released.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Nicholos stated that the next meeting of the Task Force would be on October 17, 2006, and will be held in Aroma Park. He stated that the meeting on December 12 will be held in Bourbonnais.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Grimsley moved adjournment, and Mr. Koehler seconded. Chairman Nicholos adjourned the meeting at 4:07 P.M.