

MINUTES

COMMUTER RAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY TASK FORCE

OCTOBER 19, 2004

IN ATTENDANCE:

TASK FORCE MEMBER AGENCIES

Aroma Park – Mayor Grimsley

Bourbonnais – Gary Preston

Bradley – Mayor Balthazor

Illinois Department of Transportation – Chuck Kadlec, Amy Welk

Kankakee – no attendee

Kankakee County – Sam Nicholos

Manteno – Jeff Jarvis

Monee – Mike Grubermann

Peotone – George Gray

Will County – Colin Duesing, Jamy Lyne

OTHERS PRESENT

Stan James, Mike Van Mill, Mike Lammey and Dave Bergdahl, Kankakee County; Dennis Gary and Ron Juvinall, PB; Nancy Rance, EDA; Brian Gebhardt, South Suburban Mayors and Managers; Bob and Sharon Jensen; Lee Provost, Daily Journal; and Laura McElroy, Herald.

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Jarvis welcomed the group to the Village of Manteno, and the meeting was called to order at 2:30 P.M.

MINUTES

Mr. Duesing moved that the Minutes of the July 20, 2004 meeting be approved, and Mr. Jarvis seconded. Unanimous vote.

SOUTH EAST SERVICE

Mr. Gebhardt reported on the progress of the South East Service study, and stated that the study is outside Metra's typical scope of work. He stated that the study has as additional areas of study the land use around potential station sites. He stated that the issue of local financing of the facilities required is being studied. He stated that the project is planned for a December completion date.

CONSULTANT PRESENTATION – DRAFT REPORT

Mr. Gary from Parsons Brinckerhoff made a presentation on the progress of the study to date, including the release of the Draft Report. He stated that this Feasibility Study has conducted no negotiations with either Metra or the CN, so that all of the data and conclusions contained were the result of data collection, brainstorming, and discussions of concepts of personnel from Parsons Brinckerhoff. He further stated that the calculations in the document were rough order of magnitude calculations.

Mr. Gary discussed the relationship of the Feasibility Study to further studies in the process, and discussed in particular the Metra Rail Corridor Evaluation Process, and the FTA (Federal Transit Administration) “New Start” Process. Mr. Gary also discussed the contents of the Appendices of the Draft Report.

Mr. Gary discussed the status of the Project Schedule, and reviewed the meetings held thus far, and the proposed final meeting in December. He also discussed the structure of the Draft Report, and discussed the milestones to Project Completion, to include the following:

- November 19 – receive all comments from Task Force
- December 21 (later changed to December 14) – Task Force meeting #6
- December 31 – receive all dissenting opinion letters
- January 14 – Final Report

Mr. Gary then discussed the alternatives that were available for this study, including the CREATE study which began after the Kankakee County Feasibility Study began. He discussed the four motive power alternatives, as well.

Mayor Grimsley asked if the ridership projections had included the rising price of gasoline as part of the calculations. Mr. Gary responded that the projections were based on the 2000 census data, so that the conditions that existed at that time would be those under which the projections had been made.

Mr. Gary discussed the evaluation of alternatives, showing the station sites that were considered, and the station sites that were recommended. He presented the Evaluation Matrix, in which a number of criteria were evaluated by each of a number of potential alternatives. He discussed the potential Chicago service (Randolph Street, LaSalle Street) alternatives, and the relative motive power alternatives available for each.

Mr. Jensen asked about the diesel multiple unit (DMU) train design and service. Mr. Juvinal referred to the website for coloradorailcar.com, the only North American manufacturer of the vehicles. Mr. Gebhardt stated that Metra was considering DMU service on the South East Service. Mr. Gray asked about the DMU operation, and Mr. Gary stated that DMUs could run in single or multiple car lengths, and that each car could have a diesel engine mounted underneath the car.

Mr. Gary stated that the recommendations of the study were a Minimum Operable Segment (MOS) recommendation for the extension of the commuter rail service to Manteno, and a Full Build Out recommendation to exit 308 in Kankakee, and that both alternatives were feasible.

Mr. Gary stated that a number of future developments have positive impacts on the extension of commuter rail service southward on the existing Canadian National Railroad line. These were:

- South Suburban Airport (SSA)
- Midwest High Speed Rail (HSR) Service
- Metra's new South East Service (SES) line
- Metra's new STAR line

Mr. Gary discussed the next step in the process, which includes a computer model of ridership, environmental impacts, site studies, refined cost estimates, and a computer simulation of line capacity analysis. Mr. Gary also stated that a discussion of what transit agency will run the service should take place during this phase.

Mr. Provost stated that the entire study process has been described as taking 10 years. He asked when the next phase of the study would begin. Mr. Lammey stated that the application process would begin upon the closure of the Feasibility Study.

Mr. James stated that the report has an estimated time from Kankakee to Chicago of 89 minutes, and wondered if this length of time would be an issue to ridership. Mr. Gary replied that the standard in the commuter rail industry is a 90-minute maximum commute.

Ms. Jensen stated that she was a former commuter from Richton Park to Chicago, and stated that a number of the riders she met were from the Kankakee County area. Mr. Grubermann stated that previous studies of parked cars in the University Park lot showed that 20% were from the Kankakee area.

Ms. Jensen asked about station safety, based upon the increased number of train-pedestrian fatalities that have occurred in the recent past. Mr. Gary stated that the Metra station design required grade crossing separation (unless there is an existing at-grade crossing), either by tunnel or by overpass, and that each station would have a fence prohibiting pedestrian crossing of the railroad tracks.

Mr. Gray asked about the consequences of a DMU vehicle crash in a downtown area, and Mr. Gary stated that a CMU car would be built to standards to travel with freight trains, and the result would be the same as a freight train/vehicle crash.

Mr. Jensen asked about the environmental issue of housing and development around train stations. Mr. Gary stated that Metra requires a 20-acre parking lot for stations, and that transit-oriented development (TOD) has been a priority for recent station development.

Mr. Bergdahl asked about the cost for only double tracking for both MOS and FBO options, and Mr. Juvinal stated that a rough estimate would be \$80 million for double tracking for the MOS option, and \$160 million for double tracking for the FBO option.

Mr. James stated that the Canadian National owns the right-of-way, and would receive benefit from the actions recommended in the study, as would Amtrak. He asked if the CN would be assessed part of the cost, as well. Mr. Gary stated that the railroads would

benefit, but would state that they could run their operations just as well with the system in place now.

Chairman Nicholas stated that Mr. Gary will be leaving Parsons Brinckerhoff on November 1, and thanked him for the relationship that had been developed on the Feasibility Study, and for his hard work on the study.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Nicholas stated that the next meeting would be on December 14, 2004, at 2:30 P.M. Mr. Gray volunteered Peotone as the site of the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Jarvis moved adjournment, and Mr. Duesing seconded. Unanimous vote. Chairman Nicholas adjourned the meeting at 3:55 P.M.