

# MEETING MINUTES

Blue-Ribbon Commission on Transportation Infrastructure Funding and Policy  
 Commission Meeting | August 11, 2023 | 9:00am – 10:00am

<b>Commission Members Present</b>	<b>Commission Members Absent</b>
Chair - Secretary Omer M. Osman	Commissioner Roymayne Brown
Commissioner Laura Calderon	Representative C.D. Davidsmeyer
Senator Don DeWitte	Representative Dale Fowler
Representative Marcus Evans Jr	Representative Michael Kelly
Commissioner Jacquelyne D. Grimshaw	Representative Mike Marron
Commissioner Thomas Kotarac	
Commissioner Duana Love	
Senator Laura Murphy	
Commissioner Marc Poulos	
Senator Ram Villivalam	

<b>Other Attendees Present</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Travis Dunn	CDM Smith
Jesse Elam	Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways
Veton Hasku	Office of Senator Ram Villivalam
Asabea Kirkland	Morreale Communications
Mary McIlvain	Morreale Communications
Chloe Meek	Morreale Communications
Jacquelyn Murdock	CDM Smith

<b>Staff Attendees Present</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Holly Bieneman	Illinois Department of Transportation
Shane Cullen	Illinois Department of Transportation

Matt McAnarney	Illinois Department of Transportation
Jeremy LaMarche	Illinois Department of Transportation
Michael Vanderhoof	Illinois Department of Transportation
Janel Veile	Illinois Department of Transportation

**Overview of Meeting**

**I. Introductions**

Commission Chair Omer Osman began the hybrid in-person and virtual meeting by reviewing the agenda for the meeting.

Following Chair Osman’s introduction, Ms. Holly Bieneman took roll call. With ten Commissioners present, quorum was met.

**II. Approval of Minutes – July 27, 2023**

Chair Osman introduced the July meeting minutes for approval. Commissioner Poulos moved to approve the July minutes. Commissioner Love seconded the motion.

Ms. Bieneman facilitated the vote to approve the July 27, 2023 meeting minutes.

- 10 – ayes
- 0 – nays

The motion to approve the minutes was passed.

**III. Consultant Scope**

Chair Osman discussed wanting the meeting to focus on the comments received yesterday. He asked Senator Villivalam to address the comments.

Senator Villivalam apologized for the comments on short notice and stated the comments are important to what we’re trying to accomplish. Senator Villivalam said the legislative intent of this commission is to be as forward-thinking as possible and to bring up the information you all compiled, so we can be innovative and creative on how the team is delivering to residents of Illinois. He stated the goal is to be helpful in achieving the General Assembly and Governor goals in delivering projects.

Senator Villivalam opened the floor up to other Commission members if they had comments.

Chair Osman asked if there are any comments from the commission.

Commissioner Grimshaw agreed with Senator Villivalam's comments. She stated if IDOT does business as usual, there is no need for the commission. She said it’s an opportunity for everyone to think differently to develop recommendations for policy and how to spend the funds.

Commissioner Poulos shared he went through the scope of the Long Range Transportation Plan. He believed there are several things that can be more in-depth in addition to the original scope. He wasn't convinced that using the LRTP through CDM Smith is enough. Commissioner Poulos agreed with Senator Villivalam. He believed everyone is saying this is an opportunity to look at other states and countries for inspiration and different approaches. Even internally, we have county transportation offices, CDOT, Tollway system. Commissioner Paulos shared that when doing the Capital Bill in 2018/2019, the challenge was getting more minority participation in building trades. The team came up with Illinois Works Program, which was modeled after a Tollway project.

Senator Murphy echoed the comments being said. Senator Murphy said the intent of the General Assembly was to develop an innovative plan, and maybe the General Assembly is remiss for having too short of a timeframe, which can get extended. She stated if the commission needs more time, it can happen because everyone would want to do it once and right. Senator Murphy voiced a desire for the commission to broaden its scope.

Senator Donald DeWitte asked a question on the Blue Ribbon Commission comments submitted by Senator Villivalam. He believed all the comments are spot on concerning the mission of the task force. He said the Commission wants to do a deep dive into how the industry is doing business as it relates to IDOT. He said there was one line item in the list of comments that raised his attention. In the third section, regarding the opportunity to discuss a variety of topics in depth, the first line addresses the de-carbonization issue, a major goal of the Governor and many members of the General Assembly. Senator DeWitte stated the Commission should be careful about politicizing the process. He shared the argument regarding the I-55 project approved last year as a classic example. Some others think it will exacerbate carbon emissions, and others think it will reduce the emissions. Senator DeWitte said to be careful not to politicize the process.

State Representative Marcus C. Evans, Jr. added the Commission is named Blue Ribbon because we're looking for innovation and the future. He said IDOT is overworked and underpaid, but to change, we need innovation. Representative Evans agreed with Senator Murphy that if more time is needed, that's okay. He said let's make it Blue Ribbon, lead the country in innovation, and grow IDOT to what it should be.

Deputy Secretary Jeremy LaMarche agreed with the previous comments. He thought the independent consultant can help navigate these issues by bringing best practices globally, objective data, and facilitating the conversation. Deputy Secretary LaMarche said the consultant can build on IDOT's work and the LRTP is the base of knowledge. He believed independence and time are key.

Chair Osman said he appreciated the comments and the intent of them. He stated the focus of these meetings is to understand the Commission's intent and the procurement of the consultant, which can be helpful to cut down the timeframe. Chair Osman clarified that IDOT wants to be helpful and not duplicate work. He doesn't want the perception of the Department to be business as usual.

Senator Villivalam said those points are well taken. He stated there is a fine line between duplication and having an independent review. Senator Villivalam said the first section discussed having independence and being separate from IDOT. He restated that if the Commission needs more time, it can be re-addressed. He emphasized having this commission be independent and separate is important. Senator Villivalam opened the floor for comments.

Commissioner Tom Kotarac said there is broad consensus that there needs to be a move to an independent consultant and what the next step is to make that happen.

Senator Villivalam said that's spot on. He asked if Chair Osman has thoughts on how the Commission can be helpful.

Deputy Secretary LaMarche said that there's a need for an independent consultant and wants to move expeditiously to acquire.

Chair Osman asked if CDM Smith will be excluded. He believed there's information that they can provide that does not lead us into a policy discussion. He said CDM Smith can be helpful while discussing the scope of the outside consultant.

Ms. Bieneman said CDM Smith will be working on LRTP and the memos. She stated that the Commission can continue working on the scope for the third party to take those technical memos, facilitate a conversation with the Commission, and make recommendations. Ms. Bieneman said if the intent of the third party is to research and provide technical memos, it will have to coordinate those efforts with the LRTP.

Commissioner Kotarac said that's a doable thing to use the base of knowledge the LRTP has. There will be a good amount of data analysis and compilation to help guide the Commission to a policy discussion.

Commissioner Poulos asked what the timeline is on the LRTP through CDM Smith.

Ms. Bieneman answered they're waiting to finalize the scope.

Commissioner Poulos followed up by asking how long for a final product.

Mr. Vanderhoof from IDOT answers the technical memos done in a 6-8 month timeframe. He said the LRTP will be from this date to 20 months from that. Mr. Vanderhoof stated he will request approval to move ahead with the scope of work. The policy pieces have been removed from the requests from previous meetings.

Ms. Bieneman suggested next steps would be identifying the technical memos and bringing the Commission to help direct the scope for the independent consultant.

Commissioner Laura Calderon asked if the Commission has to wait for the technical memos before developing the scope for independent consultants.

Ms. Bieneman answered the topics would need to be identified first.

Commissioner Poulos added that a lot of the CDM Smith scope contract pairs down some of the elementary subtexts. He thought this Commission is looking for a more in-depth approach. Commissioner Poulos said CDM Smith will give the baseline

information needed, but the independent consultant will look more in-depth. The Commission is taking it a step further on what is politically feasible. He believed the Commission has a lot of knowledge that will take the analysis of what CDM Smith and independent consultants would provide. Commissioner Poulos said it will require everyone to commit to spending the time to go through all this information.

Chair Osman said while the technical memos and baseline information can be provided by CDM, the team should be working on the RFI/RFP for what the outside independent consultant should be doing. He stated the RFI has to be clear, so there will not be an overlap with what CDM Smith is working on. Chair Osman said the team will need to discuss the budget and timeline, which will be critical, then do the procurement through RFI. He shared another way of doing this within the Department through a Secretary selection if the Department of Transportation deems it necessary to select someone without going through the normal procurement process. He said the Secretary selection has rarely been used.

Commissioner Kotarac said the base of the language that came from the General Assembly focuses on innovation, which begins now with the work in the LRTP. He shared there has been precedent from the Tollway when they had a large capital plan had a steering committee similar to the Blue Ribbon Commission. He said the timing is key and the investment is worth it.

Ms. Bieneman said the next steps are identifying the scope to procure. She offered for any Commission members to help develop the scope with IDOT. Commissioner Love is interested in supporting.

Chair Osman said it would be his preference for the Commission to chime in.

Commissioner Poulos said he would like to help.

Chair Osman asked if Senator Villivalam has any comments.

Senator Villivalam asked if Ms. Bieneman can give a specific timeline.

Ms. Bieneman said, at the minimum, it would take six months to procure from identification of scope to selection. She said it takes a month to develop a scope. Then depending on the procurement method along with the type of firm selected, the process can take a month to 6 or 12 months. Ms. Bieneman stated a minimum of a month for scope, six months to procure, and a month to negotiate a contract.

Chair Osman asked if it'll be possible to ascertain the approximate costs while developing the scope.

Ms. Bieneman answered yes.

Commissioner Grimshaw volunteered to help with the scope.

Commissioner Calderon volunteered to help with the scope.

Chair Osman said the marching orders are set with Ms. Bieneman leading the team and the Commissioners assisting.

Senator Villivalam added there is a veto session in October and November. He said the notion of the timeline we're discussing prolongs it, but if there are any changes to be made on costs or timeline constraints, have it on the Commission's radar with the upcoming Veto Session.

**IV. New Business**

Chair Osman asked if there is any new business to discuss.

*The meeting adjourned at 9:52 a.m.*