

MEETING MINUTES

Blue-Ribbon Commission on Transportation Infrastructure
Funding and Policy
Commission Meeting | December 17, 2024 | 10:30am – 12:30pm

Commission Members Present	Commission Members Absent
Chair – Secretary Omer Osman	Representative C.D. Davidsmeyer
Commissioner Laura Calderon	Senator Don DeWitte
Commissioner Romaine Brown	Representative Marcus Evans Jr.
Commissioner Eileen Chin	Representative Dave Fowler
Commissioner Jacquelyn Grimshaw	Senator Ram Villivalam
Representative Michael Kelly	
Commissioner Thomas Kotarac	
Commissioner Duana Love	
Senator Laura Murphy	
Commissioner Marc Poulos	
Representative Ryan Spain	

Staff Attendees Present	Representing
Holly Bieneman	Illinois Department of Transportation
Sophie Blumenstein	Illinois Department of Transportation
Ellen Bruce	Illinois Department of Transportation
John Donovan	Illinois Department of Transportation
Kristen Fulscher	Illinois Department of Transportation
Aaron Gold-Stein	Illinois Department of Transportation
Jeremy LaMarche	Illinois Department of Transportation
Michael Vanderhoof	Illinois Department of Transportation
Janel Veile	Illinois Department of Transportation

Other Attendees Present	Representing
Berenice Alvarez	Morreale Communications
Diane Bustamante	Morreale Communications
Mary McIlvain	Morreale Communications
Bryan Bungo	KPMG
Ted Hamer	KPMG
Alex Rothman	KPMG
Katharine McSteen	Metro Strategies Group
Tammy Wierciak	Metro Strategies Group
Rocco Zuccherro	Metro Strategies Group
Ashlyn Deakin-Sodwoski	DBP Team

Overview of Meeting

I. Introductions

Commission Chair Secretary Omer Osman called the meeting to order. Following Chair Osman’s introduction, a roll call was conducted. With 10 Commissioners present, the quorum was met. One Commissioner joined the meeting part way through the meeting making the final meeting count 11 Commissioners present.

II. Approval of Minutes – November 20, 2024

Chair Osman introduced the November meeting minutes for approval. Chair Osman motioned to approve the minutes. A motion was made to approve the minutes and seconded. The motion passed. All voted in favor, and the motion was passed with no objections.

III. Future Trends Memo

Director Holly Bieneman led the discussion on the future trends memo. As part of the long-range transportation planning process, memos are produced as part of background information to be included in the report. Ongoing and future trends and considerations include safety, equity, climate, technology, travel demands and inflation.

Safety: There has been a rise in crashes and fatalities, especially among non-vehicular road users. This has resulted in increased funding for safety improvements and a federal push for a more systematic safety approach.

Equity: Addressing equity issues, especially racial equity, is a central focus. There is an emphasis on expanding policy and investments at the state and federal levels.

Climate: There is an increasing demand for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and focusing on ensuring the system is adaptable to climate change. There has been increased funding available, such as the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program. Developing tools and how they are integrated and used to prioritize projects will be continued.

Technology: There is a growth in electrification vehicles, both passenger and commercial, vehicle technologies and machine learning. The related initiatives will have implications for system funding and opportunities to leverage technology to make better decisions about operating, planning and funding systems.

Travel Demands: There is an aging population, a shift in personal travel patterns, and growing freight demands. Understanding travel demands after the pandemic and changes in system usage and capacity needs is essential.

Inflation: Inflation has affected the Department of Transportation, especially in the cost of construction materials. It can have significant impacts on operating budgets.

Commissioner Murphy noted that the changing structure of what were once truck routes that are now communities, churches, and parks, is a consideration that should be addressed.

Director Bieneman noted its consideration and importance in making the facility work for those who use it.

IV. Ethics Training

Bureau Chief Ellen Bruce led a discussion regarding required training for Commission members, including ethics and sexual harassment and discrimination prevention, which encompasses diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, LGBTQIA+, and Executive Order 2021-16.

The Open Meetings Act applies to the Commission and ensures that discussions are conducted openly as a public body. Commission members must complete training on the Act. Bureau Chief Bruce provided a brief overview of the Freedom of Information Act.

V. BRC Technical Support – Workplan and Expectations

The consultant team, KPMG, provided a brief overview of the team and project objectives previously presented at the November meeting.

The report, which will be submitted to the General Assembly, includes background information on the project’s objectives, completed activities, data, findings, and recommendations, recommended pilot programs to test alternatives and the minority and individual views of task force members.

KPMG also presented a high-level preliminary work plan, including components like governance and operations, funding and financing, labor, equipment, and materials. Over the coming months, KPMG plans to meet with Commission members individually and conduct stakeholder outreach. The report development will be conducted in the spring and summer.

The one-on-one meetings with Commission members are planned for January and will aim to be in-person to the extent possible. Discussion topics will include the Commission's desired outcomes, priority areas for analysis, and recommendations for stakeholders to engage.

Next steps include scheduling the one-on-one meetings, developing and issuing an information request list, beginning data collection and analysis, and creating a stakeholder engagement plan.

Commissioner Love noted that the report outline does not specify where stakeholder input will be incorporated. The KPMG team noted that stakeholder input will be included in the report.

Commissioner Love also inquired whether the work plan schedule considers the legislative calendar. The KPMG team confirmed they are working with Director Bieneman and the department to align the schedule with the legislative calendar.

Commissioner Kotarac suggested that for stakeholder interviews, Chair Osman and past secretaries be interviewed, and the findings be presented anonymously to the Commission, highlighting trends from a past leadership perspective.

Commissioner Kotarac emphasized that the Commission has expressed a desire to move beyond exploring options and focus on making concrete recommendations, which will play a significant role in the one-on-one discussions with KPMG.

Additionally, he suggested including "quick hits" – actions that the Commission can implement.

VI. Review 2025 Commission Calendar

The 2025 Commission calendar was supplied to the Commission with the agenda prior to the meeting. The Commission members reviewed the 2025 calendar.

VII. New Business

The meeting was opened to new business. No new business was discussed.

VIII. Public Comment

The meeting was opened to public comment. No public comments were made.

IX. Next meeting

The next Commission meeting is Tuesday, January 14th.

X. Adjournment

The Commissioners wished Chair Osman congratulations on his retirement.

A motion was made to adjourn and seconded. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.