



MEETING MINUTES

Illinois High-Speed Rail Commission
Meeting | July 25, 2024

Location:

IDOT Headquarters, 2300 S. Dirksen Parkway, Room 347, Springfield, IL 62764

IDOT Office of Intermodal Project Implementation, 69 W. Washington Street, Suite 2100,
Chicago, IL 60602

Virtual Webex Webinar Meeting

Meeting Date and Time:

Thursday, July 25, 2024

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Attendance:

Commission Member Attendees:

**Asterisk indicates attendance in-person*

- Erin Aleman – Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning*
- Tim Butler – Illinois Railroad Association*
- James Derwinski – Commuter Rail Board*
- Robert Guy, III – SMART-TD*
- Richard Harnish – High Speed Rail Alliance*
- Raymond Lai – McLean County Regional Planning Commission*
- Jason Osborn – Illinois Department of Transportation*
- Cassandra Rouse – Illinois State Highway Toll Authority
- Brian Shanahan – Transportation Communications Union*
- P.S. Sriraj – University of Illinois Chicago*
- Bogdan Vitas Jr. – Illinois Municipal League

Commission Members Not in Attendance:

- Senator Don DeWitte – Senate
- Karl P. Gnadt – Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District
- Michael Paul Dunn Jr. – Region I Planning Council
- Representative Martin J. Moylan – House
- Bria Scudder – State of Illinois
- Senator Steve Stadelman – Senate

- Brian Vercruysse – Illinois Commerce Commission
- James Wild – East-West Gateway Council of Governments

Non-Commission Member Attendees:

- Holly Bieneman – Illinois Department of Transportation*
- Aaron Gold-Stein– Illinois Department of Transportation*
- Amanada Lundeen– Illinois Department of Transportation
- Hannah Martin – Illinois Department of Transportation
- Elliot Ramos – Illinois Department of Transportation*
- DeAnna Smith – Illinois Department of Transportation*
- Michael Vanderhoof – Illinois Department of Transportation
- Janel Veile – Illinois Department of Transportation*
- Julie Reschke – Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
- Melanie Johnson – Quandel Consultants
- Julia Hiatt – Quandel Consultants*
- Charles Quandel – Quandel Consultants*
- Janet Henderson – Images*
- Wendy Abrams – Morreale Communications
- Berenice Alvarez – Morreale Communications*
- Diane Bustamante – Morreale Communications*
- Mary McIlvain – Morreale Communications*
- Roger Huff*
- Michael Lynch
- Alan Mammoser

OVERVIEW OF MEETING

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Commission Chairman Jim Derwinski began the meeting at 10:30 a.m. The meeting proceeded with a roll call of Commission members. With nine Commission members present in-person at either the Chicago or Springfield Illinois Department of Transportation offices, a quorum was not confirmed. A quorum is met when ten Commissioners are present in person. In addition to in-person attendees, there were two Commissioners present in the virtual meeting room.

II. MINUTES APPROVAL

The May 30, 2024 Commission meeting minutes are not reviewed during this meeting due to not meeting quorum to conduct a vote. This agenda item will be moved to the next meeting.

III. DISCUSSION OF COMMISSION ALTERNATES

Chairman Derwinski asked the Commissioners to provide the Commission with an alternate via email. The alternate would be present in cases of scheduling conflicts.

IV. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SUPPORT UPDATE

Quandel Consultants, with the Illinois Department of Transportation, will provide the Commission with technical assistance.

Charles Quandel from Quandel Consultants introduced the team.

Melanie Johnson from Quandel Consultants provided the Commission with an overview of the study track and program management track, which feature key tasks and milestones.

Purpose & Need

The first step is to draft the purpose and need, which will synthesize input from the two workshops the Commission took part in (January and February 2024) to define the specific needs, goals, and objectives and identify data that needs to be collected to support those needs.

Conducting Market Research

This task will look at existing market conditions to identify what's missing and what can be improved. In addition to preparing a methodology, travel demand trends will begin to be identified.

Reviewing Current and Previous Studies

Current and previous studies will be requested from the Illinois Department of Transportation and others. The technical content and relevant information to the Commission's work will be reviewed.

Route Option Analysis

Identifying the route options is critical. Routes will begin to be identified and defined as needed based on purpose, need, and market analysis. Quandel Consultants will coordinate with study teams to request studies.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Janet Henderson from Images and the team will prepare the stakeholder engagement plan, which will include a list of stakeholders, agencies, and contacts to be engaged with and the various outreach methods throughout the study. Additionally, project branding will be created, including colors and logos, for the Commission to review.

At the next commission meeting, Quandel Consultants will present the need statement, provide updates on the market analysis, review previous and current studies and discuss route alignments. They will also present a high-level overview of the stakeholder engagement plan. Once the Illinois Department of Transportation reviews the plan, it will be presented in full to the Commission at the following meeting, along with branding options.

Quandel Consultants will submit tasks and documents to the Illinois Department of Transportation for review. Once the review is complete, they will present it to the Commission at large for comment at the following meeting.

Commissioner Rouse asked if, at the next meeting, the Commission could provide additional stakeholders to engage and be a part of the engagement plan before the Illinois Department of Transportation reviews.

Ms. Henderson confirmed that the Commission is welcome to send stakeholders who should be engaged and can be included as the plan is drafted. Otherwise, there will be an opportunity to review, comment on, and revise the plan.

Chairman Derwinski and the Commission discussed the communication process between the consulting team and the Commission.

Commissioner Aleman said it would be helpful to circulate the PowerPoint presentation to the Commission promptly after the meetings.

Ms. Johnson stated that the Commission can receive a follow-up email with a PDF of the PowerPoint presentation and action items.

Chairman Derwinski stated that it would be helpful to provide the Commissioners with the types of stakeholders they want to engage.

Ms. Johnson stated that identifying stakeholder groups will be part of the stakeholder engagement plan and will be asking the Commission to comment and review.

Chairman Derwinski emphasized that the material should be sent to the Commission beforehand to allow time for review before the meeting.

Commissioner Vitas asked Ms. Johnson if the synthesized analysis of current and previous studies would be presented at the following meeting.

Ms. Johnson stated that the end goal is to synthesize, look for current trends and overarching needs, and perform technical analysis. At the next meeting, the update will discuss the progress made with collecting the studies including what has been received.

Commissioner Guy asked if the FRA Midwest plan, announced a couple of years ago in conjunction with the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC), would be part of that.

Ms. Johnson stated absolutely. There is a list of studies included in the scope of work that will be looked at, but if Commissioners have additional resources, they will send a request to the Commission.

Commissioner Harnish stated that the purpose and need statement provides the foundation and asked how the Commission can provide input.

Ms. Johnson stated that the input from the initial workshops will be summarized, with the data being worked towards, and asked for comment.

Commissioner Harnish asked if it was discussed that this is part of a broader network that goes into Detroit, Minneapolis, Kansas City, etc.

Ms. Johnson confirmed that it was.

Commissioner Harnish asked if the Illinois Department of Transportation has the background data files on the University of Illinois study.

Commissioner Osborn confirmed.

Commissioner Harnish expressed interest in participating in the discussions for the purpose and need statement.

Chairman Derwinski asked Ms. Johnson what type of input will be asked of the Commission. Will a draft be presented, feedback provided, and discussion followed, or will it be a smaller group that will deliberate in advance?

Ms. Johnson stated that an internal communication plan will be drafted detailing the touchpoints for input.

Commissioner Harnish expressed excitement for the work ahead. Chairman Derwinski echoed the excitement.

V. OVERVIEW OF CREATE, TRANSIT CAPITAL AND INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL PROJECTS

Commissioner Osborn and Elliot Ramos from the Illinois Department of Transportation presented an overview of CREATE, Transit Capital and Intercity Passenger Rail projects.

CREATE

CREATE will invest in critically needed improvements to increase the efficiency of the region's passenger and freight rail infrastructure. CREATE is more than just projects. It's about partnerships, which contributes to its significance.

The 75th Street CIP encompasses several projects linked logistically and environmentally.

The Commission discussed electrification in the state.

Intercity Passenger Rail

Before the Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) Program, a grant was awarded for a Chicago Terminal Study. The grant has been set aside since the development of the Corridor ID Program. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) approved different routes coming into Chicago for \$400,000 studies. The routes can be seen as individual studies, but when it comes to the Chicago terminal, it becomes hard to identify one path without considering all of the implications of the terminal.

The FRA awarded three corridors to the Illinois Department of Transportation: Chicago to St. Louis, Chicago to Carbondale, and Quad Cities. St. Louis and Carbondale are obligated with the FRA and are in the early stages of providing the initial documentation for the project management plan.

An attendee asked how the Chicago to St. Louis Corridor ID ties into the Commission's work.

Mr. Ramos stated that the Illinois Department of Transportation is evaluating ways to improve the intercity passenger rail service, essentially a 110-mph line from Chicago to St. Louis, and opportunities to improve the schedule and at the forefront looking for ways add frequencies.

An attendee asked if the framework for these is 110 mph. It was confirmed.

Commissioner Osborn stated that the intercity passenger rail services are looked at in terms of state sponsored.

The Quad Cities Illinois Passenger Rail Service Expansion will continue to be worked on. The legislature dedicated \$100 million to Chicago to Carbondale, but it has not been spent yet on the corridor. Metra was selected as an operator for the Chicago to Rockford Passenger Rail, and the project was submitted for a Corridor ID but was not successful.

The work done as a commission will also help build a broader framework for prioritizing rail in the Midwest.

Chicago to St. Louis HSR Elwood to Braidwood Double Track (Midwin) will shave off 19 minutes of travel time and improve the schedule.

Joint equipment procurement with the state of California for fleet expansion was conducted. The equipment is being manufactured in Sacramento and delivered.

Amtrak- South of the Lake study is being led by Amtrak, FRA, and the states that feed into Chicago to identify potential routes into Chicago, all in coordination with host railroads

The Metra Rock Island Improvements (RI3) will increase the capacity of transit operations and work to fulfill passenger and freight corridors.

Chairman Derwinski emphasized that the information provided, and studies tie into the Commission's work.

Commissioner Osborn emphasized the importance of having a plan and how it ultimately guides investments.

The Commission further discussed what entails the Commission's work.

Transit Capital

Transit Capital projects include the Clybourn Station, UP-N Bridges, CTA Red Line Extension, CTA Damen Street Station, CTA Red – Purple Line Modernization and CTA Your New Blue.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

VII. 2024 COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE

Chairman Derwinski reviewed the Commission meeting schedule.

- Monday, August 26th, 10:30am – 12:30pm
- Monday, September 23rd, 10:30am – 12:30pm
- Monday, October 21st, 10:30am – 12:30pm
- Monday, December 16th, 10:30am – 12:30pm

**The Commission will not meet in November*

VIII. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

IX. ACTION ITEMS

No action items were identified.