



MEETING MINUTES

Illinois High-Speed Rail Commission
Meeting | October 12, 2023

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 option available

Meeting Date and Time:

Thursday, October 12, 2023

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 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*
- Senator Don DeWitte – Senate
- Michael P. Dunn Jr. – Region I Planning Council
- Robert Guy, III – SMART-TD*
- Richard Harnish – High-Speed Rail Alliance
- Raymond Lai – McLean County Regional Planning Commission
- Alternate for Representative Martin J. Moylan – House of Representatives
- Jason Osborn – Illinois Department of Transportation
- Cassandra Rouse – Illinois State Highway Toll Authority
- Senator Steve Stadelman – Senate
- Brian Shanahan – Transportation Communications Union*
- P.S. Sriraj – University of Illinois Chicago
- Brian Vercruysse – Illinois Commerce Commission*
- Bogdan Vitas Jr. – Illinois Municipal League
- James Wild – East-West Gateway Council of Governments

Commission Members Not in Attendance:

- Representative of Chicago Department of Transportation

Non-Commission Member Attendees:

- Shane Cullen – Illinois Department of Transportation*
- Aaron Gold-Stein – Illinois Department of Transportation
- Amanda 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*
- Berenice Alvarez – Morreale Communications*
- Diane Bustamante – Morreale Communications*
- Mary McIlvain – Morreale Communications*
- Charles Quandel – Quandel Consultants*
- Julia Hiatt – Quandel Consultants*
- Peter Williams – Quandel Consultants*
- Roger Huff*
- Alan Mammoser
- David Phillips

OVERVIEW OF MEETING

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Commission Chairman Jim Derwinski began the meeting. The meeting started with a roll call of commission members present virtually and in person. The Commission did not meet the minimum number of members present in-person to conduct official decisions that required a formal vote.

II. MINUTES APPROVAL

The meeting minutes are not approved due to not meeting quorum to conduct a vote. This agenda item will be moved to the next meeting.

III. MEETING SCHEDULE

Chairman Derwinski requested a change to the proposed meeting schedule for next year. The two conflicting dates are Wednesday, June 12, 2024, and Wednesday, December 11, 2024. Chairman Derwinski proposed to move these proposed meeting dates to Tuesday, June 11, 2024, and Tuesday, December 10, 2024.

He asked if other Commission members had any conflicts with the suggested dates.

Virtual Commission members will receive the materials through email.

The Commission members present did not oppose the request. Chairman Derwinski asked if Commission members must pass this item or if it is a work in progress.

Ms. Amanda Lundeen from the Illinois Department of Transportation stated that the meeting schedule would require a vote.

The meeting schedule will be circulated and rediscussed at the next Commission meeting and posted on the website once passed.

IV. BY-LAWS DISCUSSION

Chairman Derwinski moved the discussion of the revised Commission by-laws to the next meeting in November. The Commission was welcomed to provide further comments and feedback.

Mr. Michael Vanderhoof from the Illinois Department of Transportation asked if the materials from today's meeting could be shared with the public. The Commission members discussed this. Chairman Derwinski stressed the importance of transparency in the Commission's work. The agenda, meeting schedule and by-laws are drafts. These materials can be shared as such. Regarding the meeting minutes, they don't have the draft watermarked and will be posted to the website once approved.

V. MISSION STATEMENT DISCUSSION

Vice-Chairman Tim Butler led the mission statement discussion. Chairman Derwinski stated that the mission statement reflects the statute's core mission. Commissioner Richard Harnish agreed with the mission statement.

The commission members agreed that there would be a vote for the mission statement, and it be formally adopted.

Commissioner Bogdan Vitas Jr. stated that the mission statement was well done. Commissioner Erin Aleman agreed with the Commission member's sentiments. The mission statement will be voted on at the next Commission meeting where a voting quorum is present.

VI. COMMISSION WORK PLAN

Charles Quandel and Peter Williams from Quandel Consultants presented the HSR Commission scope, feasibility analyses on specific corridors, routing considerations, and feeder networks.

Mr. Quandel offered the state of California as an example of HSR trains using Median. He emphasized it would require close coordination between IDOT and CDOT regarding highway construction.

Mr. Vanderhoof provided an overview of the role of Quandel Consultants. IDOT drafted a general scope of work, and Quandel presented today the basics of the scope of work. IDOT will work with Quandel to finalize the scope of the work, and Quandel will submit a cost estimate. Mr. Vanderhoof emphasized the importance of presenting the scope of work to the Commission and seeking input from the Commission.

Commissioner Jason Osborn from the Illinois Department of Transportation discussed the routing considerations and the Commission's focus.

Commissioner Harnish stated that the Chicago to St. Louis route provides a basis for connections and provides the foundation of the statewide plan. He said the first step would be establishing the goal (perhaps two and a half hours at most) and then discuss the five cities in between. He expressed concern about the I-55 corridor feasibility study.

Chairman Derwinski refers to the legislation and the Commission's responsibilities. Chairman Derwinski stated that it would be beneficial if Commissioner Osborn and Mr. Vanderhoof coordinated with Quandel on the scope of work.

Mr. Vanderhoof emphasized the importance of talking with Quandel about the scope of work and defining the terminology included.

Commissioner Harnish spoke about the value of connectivity with highly frequent trains and the framework of that connection.

Mr. Quandel emphasized that the high-level studies are less focused on the engineering side and more focused on the planning side. He spoke about the importance of ridership and the return-on-investment analysis. Mr. Quandel discussed further the network feeders.

Commissioner Harnish stated that Champaign needs to be considered, specifically the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Commissioner P.S. Sriraj stated that he would like to see the skeleton framework for how High – Speed Rail will look in Illinois, and it will help inform the spine.

Vice-Chairman Butler referenced the legislation and the communities involved. He emphasized that the legislation guides what should be in the scope.

The commission members further discussed the spine, feeder networks, and the return on investment. Members also discussed the legislation and the Commission's charge.

Quandel Consultants presented the proposed deliverables and action items. Mr. Williams provided further context to the presentation.

Commissioner Vitas asked in the chat if someone could recirculate the studies. Ms. Janel Veile from the Illinois Department of Transportation shared the link to the previous studies.

An attendee asked Quandel Consultants to explain how the Illinois studies could be incorporated into the scope of this Commission. Mr. Quandel spoke about the rail needs assessment and accessibility.

Commissioner Raymond Lai asked if the Bloomington-Normal station is included and asked if studies can be updated as they are outdated, and a lot has changed since then.

Mr. Quandel stated that Bloomington-Normal was a part of it, and they did not discount stations.

According to the U of I study, Commissioner Harnish stated that there are three potential options for the spine.

Mr. Quandel asked if Quandel Consultants could meet with members of IDOT staff to finalize the scope. The Commission discussed small group meeting rules. Commissioners Harnish and Osborn expressed interest in being present in those discussions.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

The meeting was open to public comment.

Mr. Roger Huff, advocate of transit and passenger rail service, provided three main points.

1. The Commission work product and the mission statement should reflect a statewide plan. He expressed concern that the scope of work presented is narrowing it down [to specific communities].
2. He expressed a need to talk about Chicago, specifically Chicago O'Hare Airport. He believes there should be passenger trains through O'Hare to accommodate air-to-rail transfers.
3. He expressed the importance of the term frequent in frequent intercity passenger rail service. The Right-of-Way must be separate from the highway-rail crossing and freight railroad network. He spoke about land banking for airports.

Mr. David Phillips commented on the U of I study and how the grade separation process has changed since then. He referenced the FRA study and how it is market-based and includes no engineering.

VIII. ADJOURN

The Commission welcomed newly appointed Commission member Bogdan Vitas Jr. from the Illinois Municipal League. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

IX. ACTION ITEMS

- Chairman Derwinski noted which Commission members could attend the next proposed meeting on November 8th. About nine Commissioners are available to participate in the next meeting in person.
- Morreale Communications will send a poll to gauge how many members can attend in person.
- The minutes approval, meeting schedule, and By-Law discussion will take place at the next meeting.
- Commission members should submit any remaining feedback or comments for the By-Laws.
- Ms. Lundeen will confirm the requirements for small group meetings and a quorum.
- The Commission will confirm a replacement for Ms. Gia Biagi from CDOT.