

STAR LINE STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, June 17, 2004

10:00 a.m.

I. Call to Order

Steering Committee Chairman Mayor Bill McLeod welcomed everyone to Hoffman Estates.

II. Alternatives Analysis Update (Parsons Brinkerhoff Contract)

Phil Pagano, Executive Director of Metra, stated that Parsons Brinkerhoff (PB) had been hired by Metra to do the Alternatives Analysis required by FTA. PB was hired at a recent Metra Board meeting and will begin work soon. Metra will also be hiring additional consultants to perform the Ridership Analysis, providing a management program for Metra, work on a 20-year Capital Analysis as well as the required Environmental Study. Each of these consultants will be working on the STAR Line as well as the three other New Start proposals for federal funding. (The four New Start projects include two new projects, and two extensions/expansions of existing service). Metra has packaged the consultants together for consistency reasons as well as for cost savings as there will be efficiencies in their working on each of the New Start proposals. He anticipates that the Metra Board will approve the additional consultant contracts in August. In addition, a marketing firm has been hired to assist Metra in promoting these projects.

Mr. Pagano will be meeting with PB in the next couple of weeks to kick off their work and the Prairie Stone segment (transition from north/south to east/west) will be one of the first items to be discussed, with a subsequent meeting with the Village of Hoffman Estates and the adjacent landowners.

Regarding the Federal Transportation Bill, Mr. Pagano indicated that each of the four Metra projects are listed in the bill. At this time, it looks like the bill will not be approved by Congress nor signed by the President until after the election. As Metra was not looking for federal funding this year, this will not delay the New Start projects. Mr. Pagano clarified that in meetings with FTA last week in Washington D.C., the STAR Line remains a single, 55-mile project and has the support of Speaker Hastert's office.

U. S. Representative Phil Crane is very supportive of the project, is happy to assist with its approval and funding, and he is a member of one of the key sub-committees for funding this project. Also discussed with FTA were creative funding options.

Mayor McLeod inquired as to whether each of the four projects would proceed simultaneously. Mr. Pagano responded that they would proceed simultaneously, but some might be further ahead as the study proceeds. A local representative from FTA asked if Metra was working with FTA regarding the modeling and whether or not the

marketing firm would be working on the public participation portions of the overall study. Mr. Pagano responded affirmatively to both questions. There was a question regarding the timeframe for the consultant to complete the Alternatives Analysis work. Mr. Pagano responded that it should require 12 to 18 months for the new alignment projects, and perhaps eight months for the two service upgrade projects.

III. Northwest Tollway

Mr. Pagano stated that meetings with the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority have occurred. RTA hired CTE, the Tollway's consultant, to look at the STAR Line alignment along the Northwest Tollway. No fatal flaws were found as right-of-way and median alignments were studied. In the next phase of work, ideally, CTE and PB would work together to proceed forward.

Larry Bury of the Northwest Municipal Conference inquired as to whether or not there were issues discovered regarding the existing bridges over the Tollway. Mr. Pagano responded that the single deck car envisioned for the STAR Line could pass underneath the existing bridges with adequate clearance. Mr. Pagano indicated that if the Tollway adds lanes, then there could be changes to the preliminary design. He stated that Metra might consider single tracking in certain segments to address issues with bridges. This could provide a cost savings without reducing service. Ray Rummel, representing Elk Grove Village, inquired as to Metra's comfort level with eastern O'Hare access. Mr. Pagano indicated that access from the east or west would both work. There is a plan to extend the existing people mover to the North Central station and this could also provide service for the STAR Line. He continued by stating that the consultant would likely study both options and wait for an O'Hare decision. Arlene Mulder, Mayor of Arlington Heights, asked if it would be possible to serve both the east and west sides of O'Hare. Mr. Pagano restated that they would plan for both.

IV. Sub-Committee Reports

Barbara Hayskar, Director of the Prairie Stone TMA, reported on the Business Leadership Committee. The Committee has met once and Darcy Davidsmeyer from Motorola has agreed to chair the Committee. However, before they begin their work, they want to know what exactly they can do to advance the STAR Line proposal. They have asked about benchmarks. For example, should they be contacting all companies with greater than 500 employees? They would like to meet with the consultants to discuss benchmarks and how they can most effectively assist with STAR Line implementation. They have begun identifying companies that currently participate in the shuttle bus programs as these may be receptive to a rail transit option. It is their desire to get the business community actively involved as opposed to just informing the business community about the STAR Line.

Mayor Mulder asked if this was a new business group or an expansion of the old Northwest Tollway Business Leaders Group. Mr. Bury responded that it was his understanding that the old group would be integrated into a new Business Leaders Group.

Mayor Mulder added that it was important that hospitals and education facilities were included.

Mr. Bury requested that a meeting with Metra and PB be scheduled as soon as possible to facilitate this subcommittee's work. Mr. Pagano agreed.

V. Sub-Committee Updates

Mr. Bury indicated that there had not been much activity among the various sub-committees pending the selection of Metra's consultant.

Mr. Bury also reported that the EJ&E Land Use Study was continuing and that S. B. Friedman met with the southeastern Cook County communities last week and would be meeting with the Lake County communities next week. It is noted that meetings with the communities along the proposed STAR Line that is co-terminus with the EJ&E, were held last fall.

VI. Invoicing

Mr. Bury indicated that Mr. Schlickman's involvement has been minimal this year and he did not foresee a need to invoice communities until some time in 2005.

VII. Other Business

None

VIII. Next Meeting

The tentative date identified (September 16, 2004) may conflict with the IML meetings. Mr. Bury will look at other possible dates for the next meeting. It was noted that earlier in the meeting, Metra indicated that they would be holding a meeting in August to introduce all of the consultants and their respective scopes of work.

The meeting was adjourned.