

Minutes of the Transportation Committee

The Transportation Committee of the McLean County Board met on Tuesday, May 4, 2010 at 8:00 a.m. in Room 404, Government Center, 115 East Washington Street, Bloomington, Illinois.

Members Present: Chairman Hoselton, Members Black, Caisley, Cavallini, Soeldner and McIntyre

Members Absent: None

Other Members Present: None

Staff Members Present: Mr. Terry Lindberg, County Administrator, Mr. Bill Wasson, Assistant County Administrator, Ms. Diana Hospelhorn, Recording Secretary

Department Heads Present: Mr. Eric Schmitt, County Engineer

Others Present: Mr. Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer, Ms. Connie Johnson, Deputy County Auditor, Mr. Paul Russell, Director of Regional Planning Commission, Ms. Jennifer Sicks, Transportation Planner, Regional Planning Commission

Chairman Hoselton called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. He stated that the first item for action is approval of the minutes from the April 6, 2010 meeting.

Motion by Caisley / Cavallini to recommend approval of the minutes from the April 6, 2010 meeting of the Transportation Committee.
Motion carried.

Chairman Hoselton asked the Committee to review the bills for April 30, 2010. The prepaid and fund total for April 30, 2010 is \$511,044.8.

Mr. Caisley asked if the payment to Hampton, Lenzini, & Renwick, Inc (HLR) is for bridge inspection. Mr. Eric Schmitt, County Engineer, responded that part of the payment is for bridge inspection and part is for bridge design.

Mr. Black questioned the rental costs. Mr. Schmitt explained that the Department rented a tree trimmer. Several trees throughout the County were trimmed or cut down. The cost of owning the equipment is not justified.

Motion by Soeldner / Black to recommend
payment of the April 30, 2010 bills and
as submitted by the County Auditor.
Motion carried

Chairman Hoselton stated that the first Item for Action is the Local Agency Agreement for Federal Participation, Sec 10-00400-00-SG – Rural Sign Upgrade Program for the County, Townships, and Municipalities.

Mr. Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer, explained that the Rural Sign Upgrade Program is changing out all the regulatory and warning signs which are 15-20 years old. An inventory was taken and a price determined. He advised that this agreement with Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is signed by all 30 Townships and 14 Municipalities that are participating. Within one year of receiving the signs the Townships and Municipalities will be responsible for putting them up according to the manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

Mr. Eric Schmitt, County Engineer, added that the Rural Sign Upgrade Program is funded 90% Federal dollars and 10% State dollars. The Local Agency money is for the County's purchase of addition signs. Due to the quantity of signs being purchased the costs are lower than usual.

Mr. Stokes noted that the project to install the signs will begin this fall.

Mr. Soeldner asked if the Department sees any problem in the payment process with the State of Illinois. Mr. Schmitt responded that the 90% funding is coming from the Federal Highway Administration. Once the County Board approves the letting bids, we will receive the 90%, \$432,639. The 10%, \$48,071 is reimbursed from the State once the signs go up. He stated that the State money comes out of the Road Fund. The County has experienced no delays in payment from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

Mr. Caisley questioned if the Town of Normal will have an opportunity to participate in this program independently. Mr. Schmitt explained that there were four municipalities that were not eligible for the Rural Sign Upgrade Program, the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, Village of Downs and the Village of Towanda. The Rural Sign Upgrade Program is for municipalities with a population under 5,000. Villages and municipalities within the urban planning area are also not eligible for the Rural Sign Upgrade Program.

Mr. Schmitt pointed out that the Rural Sign Upgrade Program is in its 5th year in Illinois. The number of companies bidding has increased and sign prices have decreased 30%-40% from the cost prior to the program.

Mr. Caisley asked if the County designated where the signs were to be placed for the Townships. Mr. Schmitt stated that the County does give the Townships and Municipalities guidelines; however they do not mark where the signs are to be placed.

Mr. Black wanted to clarify that the County's cost of \$9,200 was in the Fiscal Year 2010 Budget. Mr. Schmitt responded that the expense was in the budget and pointed out that the County's budget for sign replacement is \$25,000. The County has used \$5,000 - \$6,000 of that budget.

Mr. Schmitt informed the Committee that the Rural Sign Upgrade Program is a sign replacement program that is part of the Retro Reflectivity Program. The County Highway Department has a process in place to inspect County signs for retro reflectivity once a year. After the Rural Sign Upgrade Program, all of the County's signs will have been upgraded to high intensity. Every year the County replaces 400-600 signs. The deadline to have all Township and Municipality regulatory and warning signs replaced is 2012. Mr. Stokes added that the total number of regulatory and warning signs in the Townships, Municipalities and the County is 14,000.

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Motion by Soeldner / Black to recommend approval of the Local Agency Agreement for Federal Participation, Sec 10-00400-00-SG – Rural Sign Upgrade Program for the County, Townships, and Municipalities.
Motion Carried.

Chairman Hoselton advised that the next Items for Action are the Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) Resolution, the Matching Tax Resolution and the County Highway Tax Resolution for the improvement of Gillum Road.

Mr. Schmitt stated that this project is in the 2010 budget to resurface the Gillum Road from the Kickapoo Creek Bridge to Route 136, 4.5 miles. TARP funding has been applied for. If the TARP funding is received, the project will go to a July 1st letting. If the funding is not received, the project letting will be the end of May. The County's allotment of Motor Fuel Tax Funds for the construction and engineering of the Gillum Road project is \$713,000.00

Motion by Caisley / McIntyre to recommend approval of the Gillum Road-Sec 10-00071-01-RS MFT (Motor Fuel Tax) Resolution.
Motion carried.

Mr. Schmitt continued with the Matching Fund Resolution for the improvement of the Gillum Road. He noted that the appropriated amount of \$957,000.00 will come from the County Matching Tax.

Motion by Caisley / McIntyre to recommend approval of the Gillum Road-Sec 10-00071-01-RS Matching Tax Resolution.
Motion carried.

Mr. Schmitt advised that the appropriated amount of \$30,000.00 will come from the County Highway Fund for the Gillum Road resurfacing project.

Motion by Caisley / McIntyre to recommend approval of the Gillum Road-Sec 10-00071-01-RS County Highway Fund Resolution.
Motion carried.

Chairman Hoselton informed the Committee that the next item to be presented to the Committee for action is the 2010 Danvers Township Joint Culvert Bridge Petition.

Mr. Schmitt stated that this culvert is located on 1950 North Road and just west of 250 East. The existing 4X4 box culvert will be replaced with twin 48 inch culverts. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$12,000.00. The County's share of the project is \$6,000.00.

Motion by Scott / Cavallini to recommend approval of 2010 Danvers Township Joint Culvert Bridge Petition.
Motion carried.

Chairman Hoselton informed the Committee that the next items to be presented are Items of Information. The first item for information is the Project Summary for the Towanda Overpass, Sec 05-00071-04-RS.

Mr. Schmitt reported that this project is nearly completed; both lanes are open to traffic. He stated clean-up work, seeding and other miscellaneous items remain. A final punch list meeting is scheduled for Friday.

Chairman Hoselton asked if the Engineering Department has made an estimate on the number of work days for this project. Mr. Schmitt added that according to the IDOT spec book you cannot charge any work days from November 30th through May 1st. Coming into this year there were 15 days left. The contractor started in late February and worked March and April to complete the project. The Department has just started to charge work days. He pointed out that more work was completed this spring than last year.

Chairman Hoselton suggested that the contractor be advised that the County is disappointed in their performance on this project.

Mr. Caisley stated that he agrees about the contractor's poor performance in terms of timeliness, however, the end result has been a good quality project.

Mr. Schmitt distributed the Stormwater Education and Public Program for Bloomington-Normal First Quarter 2010 Report. He pointed out the Ecology Action Center has completed the following tasks as part of the Stormwater Education and Public Participation program:

- Education Programs
- Informational Events and Presentations
- Yard Smart Program
- Other effort – Participation in Community forums and programs

Mr. Terry Lindberg, County Administrator stated that in an effort to update the Committee on the history of the East Side Corridor, Paul Russell, Jennifer Sicks and Eric Schmitt have put together a presentation. He reminded the Committee that the East Side Corridor Phase I Study is funded out of a \$31 billion dollar Capital bill passed in May, 2009 by the State. \$11.5 million of this is State sources. State sources are funded by selling bonds. The bond holder's investment is what will pay the County's local share. Mr. Lindberg advised that once we have a contract, during the duration of the project, monthly bills will be submitted to the Highway Department. Once those bills are paid a copy of the check is sent to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Typical payment history from IDOT is 3-4 weeks. Because it is a bonded project, we can be confident that we will receive the money.

Mr. Lindberg introduced Mr. Paul Russell, Director of Regional Planning Commission, to begin the presentation.

Mr. Russell advised the Committee of the presentation overview:

- Project History – Paul Russell
- Feasibility Study – Paul Russell
- Corridor Study – Jennifer Sicks
- Moving Forward – Eric Schmitt

Mr. Russell advised that the concept for an East Side Highway connecting Interstate 55 and Interstate 74 on the east side of Bloomington-Normal first appeared in 1994. The plan recommended a study to determine if a major transportation facility would be needed on the east side. If so, what type of facility should be built, where should it be located and would it be feasible to build? He stated that this led to the Feasibility Study from 1999-2002. The Feasibility Study concluded that there was a need for a controlled access highway. The study looked at alternative corridors and recommended the next phase, which was the Corridor Study. The Corridor Study supported the findings of the Feasibility Study. The study left open the possibility of building something less than an interstate highway and narrowed down the alternatives to a 500 foot wide corridor. Mr. Russell presented maps outlining the recommendations from the studies.

Ms. Jennifer Sicks, Transportation Planner, Regional Planning Commission, continued with the Corridor Study. She noted that following the Feasibility Study, because of the increasing development on the east side including Towanda-Barnes Road the corridor recommendation was revised. In 2004 the County, the City of Bloomington and the Town of Normal, moved forward with the next phase. A Joint Resolution demanded a comprehensive review of the options including the no-build option. This new study focused on identifying a preferred corridor

from the alternatives as well as any new possibilities. Ms. Sicks noted that the study was conducted by Clark-Dietz for more than two years. A critical element in the success of the Corridor Study was the use of the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process. This new approach to involve the public in transportation projects and to ensure that the project works in the community was a first for a local project in the State of Illinois. The Citizens' Advisory Group was formed to review the study findings, assess performance and evaluate the impact on the community. Ms Sicks advised that the process also included the Project Study Group, consisting of local and agency staff, which provided feedback to the study team. The Policy Committee, a group of elected officials, provided policy guidance and kept their respective governments apprised of the study process and the results. She stated that as the project moved forward numerous corridor variations were analyzed. Their findings and recommendations were presented for evaluation and comment. The conclusion of the Corridor Study was the recommended corridor. Ms. Sicks presented maps, pointing out the four primary alternatives and the location of the recommended corridor. The corridor recommended provides better access in and out of the east side starting with interstate connections to Towanda-Barnes Road and then the construction of the center section to accommodate the traffic volume. She pointed out that it is encouraging to note that the final recommendation from the Corridor Study is consistent with the recommendation from the Feasibility Study. Mrs. Sicks stated that the recommendation does not specify the type of roadway.

Mr. Schmitt stated that the funding to move forward was part of the 2009 Capital Bill. The consultant selection for the Environmental/Alignment Study, which is expected to take place 2010-2014, is currently in process. Involved in the consultant selection was the City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, the Regional Planning Commission and McLean County. The Federal Highway Administration and IDOT served as advisors. Clark-Dietz has been selected and we are now in contract negotiation. He advised that the Environmental/Alignment Study is a comprehensive evaluation of environmental issues and will look at the recommended corridors in more detail and find a final alternative for the alignment of the project. The final alignment must pass all the tests required by the EPA for the project to receive federal funding. Mr. Schmitt stated that after we have the final selected alignment, we can proceed in one of two ways depending upon the available funding:

- Design - 2014
- Land Acquisition – 2014-to be determined
- Construction – to-be-determined –responds to development and funding

Mr. Schmitt advised that the project will be built in sections, starting with the connections to Towanda-Barnes Road. As the need continues and the funds become available, we will continue with the middle section of the recommended alignment. He referred to the time line noting that planning started in 1999 and continues to 2020. We are currently about half-way through the process. The Environmental/Alignment Study will expand on the CSS process with a Citizen's Working Group and Focus Working Groups. Also, there will be greater stakeholder participation, involving agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Agriculture, U.S. Fish and Wild Life Service and the Army Corp of Engineers. Mr. Schmitt noted that we are nearing step 18 of a 44 step process. He asked if the Committee had any questions.

Mr. Black asked if we had any idea the type of road it would be. Mr. Schmitt responded that at this time we do not know the type of road it will be. If the road is an interstate facility it will be a State owned facility. This would be the best alternative for the local governments.

Mr. Schmitt advised that as the community continues to grow there will be a need for this highway or some type of facility. We are moving forward and trying to plan before the area becomes developed.

Mr. Lindberg pointed out that the new road would probably be a limited access facility. He compared the possibility to Route 51 as it runs south between Bloomington and Decatur. Mr. Schmitt stated that one of the key features of this roadway is to move traffic in a quicker manner than Towanda-Barnes Road does. Towanda-Barnes has stop lights every mile with entrances. These things slow down the flow of traffic. Either the 51 south or the interstate type of roadway will move the traffic in a much more efficient manner

Mr. Soeldner asked if the largest share of the budget will be spent on the tie-in connections to the interstates. He asked if the railroad will be involved at Towanda. Mr. Schmitt stated an overpass will probably go over the railroad and tie into the interstate. Most of the expense will be spent on the interstate connections

Mr. McIntyre stated that on Route 51 south you can drive from south Bloomington to Clinton before you come to a stoplight. The crossroad intersections are county intersections, except Heyworth which is an interchange. The difference here is the arteries that run east and west have a heavier traffic flow, which will require stop lights or interchanges. Mr. McIntyre believes that the project will need to be a combination of types of road. He noted that there is coming a time when Towanda-Barnes will be over capacity for traffic flow. What will happen when the connectors are tied into Towanda-Barnes Road? He stated that the most important step of this phase is to get the Federal funding.

Mr. Lindberg advised that how the project is phased will be dictated by the availability of Federal funds.

Mr. McIntyre questioned if each phase is going to require another study. Mr. Schmitt responded that once the phase I study is completed the project continues to phase II which is the final design plan. Mr. Lindberg stated that by 2011 or 2012 we should know what funds will be available through the Highway Bill.

Mr. Schmitt addressed the question concerning the flow of traffic on Towanda-Barnes Road. He stated that, with the connections to the interstate, you are eliminating the bottlenecks in Towanda and Downs.

Mr. McIntyre asked for an explanation of the impact on the community. Ms. Sicks referred to a map showing the impact on the expansion of the community as a result of the construction of the corridor.

Mr. Black asked if the studies showed any negative effect on the businesses on the west side of Bloomington. As a result of this project, there is increased access on the west side, just not as significantly as on the east side.

Mr. Caisley asked Ms. Sicks if there are any statutory bases for protection of a Centennial Farm vs. any other farm. Ms. Sicks stated that the Citizen's Advisory Group voiced concerns for farming operations that have been in place with families for a very long time. The State does recognize Centennial Farms as a special entity. There is a designation for Centennial Farms in the state preservation code; however Ms. Sicks stated that she is not sure it is statutory. Any farming residence is a concern of the study.

Mr. McIntyre pointed out that as the project continues, we will see County Zoning issues.

Mr. Russell stated that growth is coming to the community and the corridor is needed to serve that growth.

Mr. Soeldner thanked Ms. Sicks, Mr. Russell and Mr. Schmitt for the presentation. He stated that it was very informative. Mr. Schmitt noted that as part of the negotiation, the contractor will make presentations to the County Board or the Land Use and Development Committee twice a year.

Mr. Schmitt stated that last year during the FY 2010 budget process, equipment rental was discussed. He pointed out that \$10,000 was allotted for the rental of a

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crusher to screen the material stock piled. The cost for the rental of the equipment was \$5,630. He advised that the County produced approximately 6,400 tons of material used for shoulder work. This saved the County \$52,000. The County covered 32 miles of shoulder with the crushed stock pile.

Mr. Schmitt informed the Committee that because of the protected species of mussels at the Anchor Bridge, the project has been pushed back to 2011.

Chairman Hoselton asked if there was any other business to come before the Committee. Hearing none, he adjourned the meeting at 9:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Hospelhorn
Recording Secretary