



DRAFT MARQUETTE PLAN AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

After extensive input from elected and appointed public officials, stakeholders and the general public in Porter and La Porte Counties, a draft of the Marquette Plan – Phase II has been released for review and comment by all interested parties.

The purpose of the Marquette Plan – Phase II is to create a unified vision for the Lake Michigan shoreline areas from the City of Portage to the Michigan – Indiana border in La Porte County. Town hall meetings were conducted in June, September, and November which drew hundreds of residents to share their views on the future of the lakefront areas. The consulting team of JJR, SEH, J.F. New and Cambridge Systematic also met with city and town councils in the study area, as well as with environmental and civic organizations and major industries. Extensive input was also sought on the future uses of and strategies for improving the U.S. Highway 12 and 20 corridors in Porter County.

A common theme throughout the planning process has been that an appropriate balance had to be reached between environmental, commerce and community interests. "When scenarios were presented for discussion based on these three areas of concern, the feedback we received was that the plan should integrate them, with the strongest emphasis placed on preserving and enhancing the natural environment," said John

Swanson, NIRPC's Executive Director.

The draft plan contains a series of recommendations in the areas of green infrastructure, transportation, community development and economic development. Among the recommendations contained in the draft plan are:

- Improve Lake Michigan's water quality through effective watershed management planning and the development of a regional wastewater management system.
- Protect environmentally sensitive and high-quality natural areas with strategies



targeted for private as well as public and institutional landowners.

- Increase public access to the lake.
- Develop a visitor management plan, which will direct tourists to public lakefront areas, while respecting the interests and needs of residents.
- Complete the development of a connecting system of bikeways and trails, including a trail extending

from the Illinois to the Michigan state lines.

- Implement a system of marked, safe and accessible water trails on Lake Michigan, Trail Creek and other navigable waterways.
- Beautify prominent transportation corridors in the area, including U.S. 12 and 20
- Provide designated truck routes to the Port of Indiana and industrial areas in order to create a more scenic corridor for U.S. 12.
- Implement an access management plan for U.S. 20 in order to improve safety and traffic flow.

For further information about the plan, Please consult the NIRPC website at www.nirpc.org

Comments may be submitted to

nirpc@nirpc.org or to the NIRPC office.

You may also wish to contact either Gregg Calpino, the JJR Project Director, at 312/641-0510 or John Swanson of NIRPC at 219/763-6060.

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EMPC is the Place to Be!

To be one of the first to get key information on the important environmental and natural resource topics affecting our region, the NIRPC Environmental Management and Policy Committee is the place to be. In addition to featured presentations on state Great Lakes Compact legislation, effectiveness of beach safety notification procedures, and water permit renewals, the attendees at the November meeting were the first to learn publicly of the details of the new Title 5 Air Permit Application submitted to IDEM by the BP America facility in Whiting. The new permit is required due to the \$3.8 billion modernization project that is being

undertaken there. According to Dan Sajkowski, Whiting Refinery Manager, the new permit limits will continue the trend of lower air emissions. The new limits will represent a 7% reduction in criteria pollutant emissions from 2006 levels, which is in addition to the 68% reductions that have been achieved since 2001. Reductions in carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, and nitrogen oxides are all estimated to decrease, in spite of an increase in production capacity of 620 million gallons per year. Despite the overall decrease in pollutant emissions, in particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, and lead emissions

will increase with the new permit. NIRPC is pleased that BP recognized that the EMPC was a critical group to receive this important information firsthand directly from them. The EMPC will continue to provide members and guests with balanced information on current topics. The December 6th meeting will feature presentations from IDEM on the current water discharge permitting procedures and Save the Dunes Council on public participation opportunities in these processes. NIRPC's proposed greenways and Blueways plan will also be presented for consideration.

NUMBERS



Hispanic Population Growth Continues

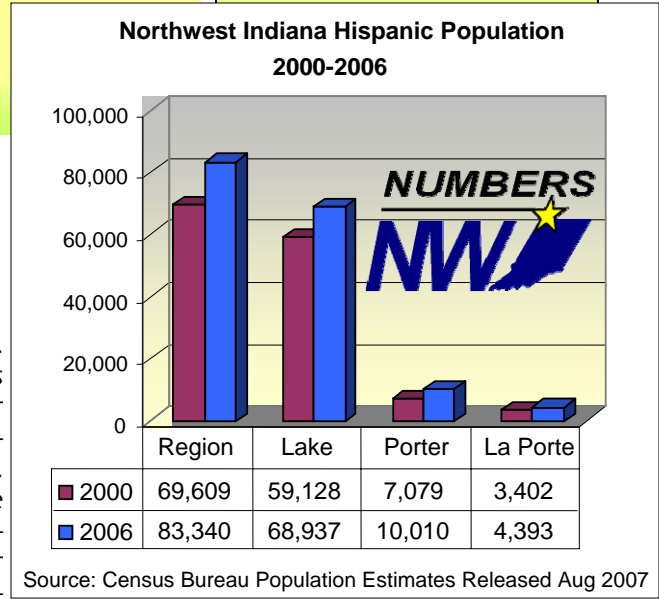
- 19.7% Region Hispanic Growth 2000-06
- 58.8% of 23,318 Region Population Increase 2000-06
- 10.9% of Region 2006 Population - 764,786
- 13.9% of Lake - 494,202
- 6.3% of Porter - 160,105
- 4.0% of La Porte - 110,479

Communities Participate in Local Update of Census Addresses

Communities across Northwest Indiana are registering to participate in the Census 2010 Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program. LUCA enables local units of governments a one time opportunity to review and edit the Census address list of housing units and group quarters in their jurisdictions as well as update features on their Census maps. A complete count in 2010 depends on an accurate address list, as missed housing units result in lost population for a decade of revenue distribution and data for decision making. NIRPC held two technical training workshops covering the LUCA process and completion of the address list review, housing unit count review and map revisions. Important areas where communities need to focus include new construction, annexation areas, multiple units at one address, building conversions, apartment and condominium addresses, and



group quarters. Communities registering for LUCA by November 19, 2007 have the full 120 day review period for the LUCA program. The final day to register for LUCA participation with a shortened review period is December 31, 2007 as completed local review materials are to be submitted by April, 2008. Census Bureau review, feedback and address canvassing continues until January, 2010.



Transit & Global Climate Change

by Dennis Rittenmeyer, president, RBA



On December 7, 2007, the Quality of Life Council will hold its next quarterly meeting. The topic for this meeting is Global Climate Change.

Since the environment is one of the eleven "indicators," the Quality of Life Council has been monitoring this important issue that deserves our attention. While all of us have perceptions of how the climate is changing, we understand intellectually that such changes take an extended period of time and are generally imperceptible to humans. Thus, it is important to consider

the scientifically established facts and respond to them as appropriate.

The Regional Bus Authority (RBA) is pleased to participate in this important conference, for we believe there are several contributions we can make in addressing these climate changes. First, most certainly, an improved, coordinated, and efficient public transportation system will encourage citizens to use public transportation in lieu of their own personal vehicles. As the region pursues extended rail, linking rail and bus together, will only have added benefits for the environment.

Second, the acquisition of public transit vehicles, through a public bidding process, would provide the opportunity to acquire energy-efficient vehicles, help-

ing to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels that have historically polluted our environment. Third, an integrated and coordinated public transportation system, with its own vehicles, would provide the opportunity for the acquisition of environmentally sensitive fuels, thereby further reducing the emission of greenhouse gases and other pollutants.

Improved public transit is not the answer to all of our problems in Northwest Indiana. It is, however, a partial answer to many of them



NIRPC Wins an Indiana MPO

Award for Sensible Tools Handbook

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission received the 2007 Outstanding Indiana MPO Planning Project Award for the *Sensible Tools Handbook for Indiana*. The Sensible Tools Handbook for Indiana is a guidebook to the implementation of principles of Sensible Growth in Indiana. The Handbook is designed to serve as a road map for the State of Indiana and its communities that have recognized the need for sensible growth, but were not clear on how this could be accomplished. It is the first handbook in Indiana to provide tools for local officials to make sensible decisions about land use and development using innovative

checklists of questions and a scoring technique. It is intended to serve as a reader, reference source, and handbook for public officials, professionals and citizens interested in applying principles of good planning and sensible growth in their communities. It emphasizes best practices to show where the various policies, programs, and projects have been successfully implemented. The user of this Handbook will be able to become familiar with the basic principles of Sensible Growth, to assess the need to update a comprehensive plan, to prepare a plan for sensible growth, or to make sound decisions about future growth.

MS4 Partnership and NIRPC conduct watershed survey

This past August, the Northwest Indiana MS4 Community Partnership contracted with ETC Institute to conduct a regional water quality survey. The objective of the survey was to gather baseline information on the perceptions of water resources, current lawn and home care practices, and the willingness to take action to reduce water pollution. Some of the key findings of the survey are:

- Only 6% surveyed state that they live in a watershed; whereas 22% state that they don't live near a watershed.
- 45% surveyed believe that industrial facility discharges are the major

contributors to water pollution; whereas only 5% believed that it is due to storm water.



**NORTHWEST
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MS4
COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIP**

- 50% believe that the way they maintain their home does not affect water quality
- 80% surveyed give drinking water

as one of the top three reasons they value the water resources in their community.

- There was a high willingness to take actions to reduce water pollution including 90% willing to dispose of hazardous waste on a collection day

The results from the report will help prioritize educational efforts of the partnership. The initial focus may be on the term "watershed" with its link to drinking water and on the effects of individual actions on water quality. The full report is available by contacting NIRPC.



Greenways & Blueways Plan Heading for Adoption

As the end of 2007 approaches, staffs from NIRPC and the Openlands Project from Chicago are putting the finishing touches on the *Northwest Indiana Regional Greenways & Blueways Plan* (G&B Plan). This planning effort has been ongoing since a grant was received from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation in 2005.

The basis for the development of the G&B Plan began in 2005 with a series of interviews with stakeholders involved in local land use decisions. Several individuals were also sought out to provide valuable insight into their experiences in land conservation and policy.

Since the G&B Plan represented the first detailed analysis of potential water trail routes in the region, a series of field trips were undertaken by the planning staff to judge the suitability of the region's waterways. In all, over a dozen potential routes were canoed with varying results.

The research phase of the plan's development took well over a year to complete. In the fall of 2006, an "Opportunities Map" was unveiled during a series of open houses throughout the region. This map draws no hard lines where greenways are to develop, but leaves open the possibility to develop anywhere land would be available and bring together for habitat connectivity. When one looks upon the Opportunities Map, one will discover right away the vast amounts of parcels in private ownership - thus the importance of keying in on these oft-forgotten stakeholders to help effectuate this complex regional framework.

After much consideration, the planning staff arrived at eight major stakeholder groups that would be responsible for carrying forward the recommendations in the G&B Plan. These are being called the "Greenways Eight" and include:

- Local & County Jurisdictions
- Private Property Owners
- Corporate Property Owners
- Land Trusts & Advocacy Groups
- Linear Corridor Owners
- Land Developers
- Federal, State & Regional Agencies
- Institutions of Education



Taken together, these eight represent all people – no matter how large or small their role in the process.

Within the plan, over a dozen case studies are highlighted which specifically target each of the eight stakeholder groups and how the case study came together to bring these projects to fruition. Since a key goal of the plan is to foster partnerships, these case studies aim to educate and inspire future conservation efforts.

In order to adequately present the entire family of assistance options available to each of the eight stakeholders, a series of matrices have been created that detail funding, education and training resources. Many granting opportunities do exist in addition to partnering with not-for-profits and securing conservation easements to protect valuable habitat for perpetuity. In addition, a literal "smorgasbord" of education and training are available for all stakeholders and is duly noted in

these matrices.

Since the G&B Plan aims to involve people at all levels of interest, a particular focus was afforded to the layout of the final planning document. Whereas typical plans spread out pages upon pages of dry text and complicated policy statements, the G&B Plan aims to keep the reader involved throughout the entire document. To accomplish this goal, over a quarter of the plan's budget has been allocated to the hiring of a graphics design and marketing firm - AC Incorporated out of Valparaiso.

An intense period of plan development ensued soon after AC Inc. was hired. The result was the development of the preliminary draft document. The draft plan and mapping documents were downloaded to the NIRPC website, and a series of public open houses took place in mid-November in Lake, Porter & La Porte Counties. Based on comments received from the Open Houses and online, staff prepared the Final Draft for review by the Environmental Management Policy Committee (EMPC) for their December 6th meeting, with the goal of a recommendation for final adoption by the NIRPC Executive Board on December 13th. Once adopted, the plan will be prepared for public distribution which will include a large map with the plan's executive summary by February of 2008.

Concurrent with the plan's final printing will be the creation of a Greenways & Blueways website. This online resource will lead users to their areas of interest depending on where they fall on the Greenways Eight stakeholder list.

All questions and comments regarding the *Greenways & Blueways Plan* should be directed to Mitch Barloga at NIRPC, the plan's Project Manager. He can be reached at (219) 763-6060 or mbarloga@nirpc.org. To view the plan in its entirety, please visit the NIRPC website —www.nirpc.org.

Four Elected to NIRPC Board

Four new members were added to NIRPC's Executive Board at the September and October Full Commissions meeting.

NIRPC's Executive Board was expanded from eight to eleven members on July 1, 2007, following the passage and enactment of an amendment to the Commission's enabling legislation. This measure was introduced by Rep. Chet Dobis of Merrillville on behalf of the Commission in order to increase the representation on the board by one elected official from each of the three counties. A quorum of six



Highland Clerk-Treasurer
Michael Griffin

board members will now be needed in order for it to act on behalf of the full commission in those months when the latter body doesn't meet. The immediate past chair of the Commission will also serve on the Executive Board in an *ex officio*, non-voting capacity.

The new members added to the Executive Board were Michael Bucko, Michael Griffin, and Stephen Mockler.

Michael Bucko rejoined NIRPC this past year as the representative of the Porter County Council. He previously served as a Region VI representative from NIRPC on the Executive Board of the National Association of Regional Councils. He is the current Vice Chair of NIRPC's Economic Development Committee and also serves on the Legislative Affairs Committee.

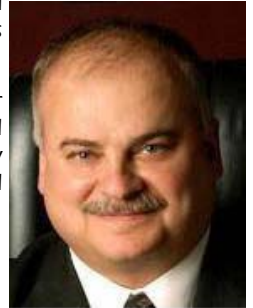
Michael Griffin is the Clerk-Treasurer for the Town of Highland. He is the current chair of NIRPC's Economic Development Committee and is a member of the Legislative Affairs Committee. Michael is also actively involved in the Indiana

Association of Cities and Towns.

Steve Mockler is the Clerk-Treasurer for the Town of Wanatah. He is an active member of both the Commission's Finance and Personnel Committee and Economic Development Committee.

At the October 25 full Commission meeting, Joe Stahura was elected to serve as NIRPC's Vice Chair. Joe will complete the unexpired term of Crown Point Mayor Dan Klein, who recently resigned his position on the Executive Board. Joe is the Mayor of Whiting and also chairs NIRPC's Towns and Smaller Cities Council.

The terms of all four members extend through the January 2008 full Commission meeting.



Whiting Mayor
Joe Stahura

NIRPC Calendar of Events

December

- 6** Environmental Management Policy Committee
@NIRPC Auditorium— 9am
- 7** Quality of Life Council Quarterly Meeting
@Purdue North Central— 8:30-11am
- 11** Transportation Policy Committee Meeting
@NIRPC Auditorium— 9am
- 13** Finance and Personnel Committee Meeting
@NIRPC Boardroom— 8am
- 13** Executive Board Meeting
@NIRPC Auditorium— 9am

January

- 3** Environmental Management Policy Committee
@NIRPC Auditorium— 9am
- 8** Transportation Policy Committee Meeting
@NIRPC Auditorium— 9am
- 24** Finance and Personnel Committee Meeting
@NIRPC Boardroom— 8am
- 24** Executive Board Meeting
@NIRPC Auditorium— 9am