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of Transportation

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December 20, 2013

Mr. David Uran, Chairman
Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission
6100 Southport Road
Portage, IN 46368

Dear Chairman Uran:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducted a certification review of the transportation planning process for the Northwestern Indiana metropolitan planning area which included an on-site visit on June 18-20, 2013. The review focused on the cooperative planning process as conducted by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC), the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC), and the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD).

The review was performed in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303, which requires an assessment of the transportation planning process for all metropolitan areas with a population of 200,000 or greater. The objective of a certification review is to determine whether the transportation planning process meets or substantially meets the Federal transportation planning requirements outlined in 23 C.F.R. 450.300.

Please find the enclosed copy of the *Certification Review of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission – December 2013*. The NIRPC is the designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Northwestern Indiana metropolitan planning area. This report is being transmitted concurrently to the MPO, INDOT, GPTC and NICTD.

Subject to addressing the corrective action and reporting the progress in implementing the recommendations cited in this report, the FHWA and FTA find that NIRPC, INDOT, GPTC and NICTD are following a transportation planning process which complies with the federal planning requirements in 23 U.S.C. 134(k)(5) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k)(5).

The federal review team would like to thank the MPO staff for their responses to the advance questionnaire and for assisting in the identification of a venue for the public meeting.

If you have any questions regarding the planning review, please feel free to call Joyce Newland of FHWA, at (317) 226-5353 or Reginald Arkell of FTA, at (312) 886-3704.

Sincerely,



Marisol Simón
Regional Administrator
FTA Region 5

Sincerely,



Richard J. Marquis
Division Administrator
FHWA Indiana Division

cc by email:

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Program Review

Federal Highway
Administration

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Planning Certification Review of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission

December 2013

FINAL REPORT

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Executive Summary

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducted a certification review of the transportation planning process carried out by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC), Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC), and other planning partners. The review included a desk audit of NIRPC's planning documents and an on-site visit on June 18-19, 2013.

NIRPC is the designated "Metropolitan Planning Organization" (MPO) covering the counties of Lake and Porter, including the Indiana portion of the Chicago IL-IN urbanized area (UZA), and La Porte which includes the Michigan City-La Porte IN UZA. FHWA and FTA are required to jointly evaluate the planning process for each urbanized area over 200,000 in population at least every four years to ensure compliance with Federal planning requirements.

Subject to reporting progress in addressing the corrective actions and recommendations cited in this report, the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration find NIRPC, INDOT, GPTC and NICTD are following a transportation planning process which complies with the federal planning requirements in 23 U.S.C. 134(k)(5) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k)(5).

Corrective Action: NIRPC must update the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture per 23 CFR 940.9 within one year of the date of this report. An updated ITS Architecture is needed to guide the deployment of ITS in the region. An updated plan will serve as input for the next Transportation Plan update and individual project systems engineering analysis.

Recommendation 1: NIRPC is encouraged to consider how it may meet the provision in Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) that requires representation by providers of public transportation on the MPO Board.

Recommendation 2: The planning agreement between NIRPC, Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and the public transit operators should be updated to include procedures for the annual listing of obligated projects, how INDOT and NIRPC self-certify their planning process, and timelines for review and approval processes. The partners are encouraged to consider in the agreement the provisions of MAP-21 regarding establishing performance measures and targets in the planning process.

Recommendation 3: In accordance with 23 CFR 350.322(f)(10), it is recommended that NIRPC include the following in the next update of the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP): local and state revenue estimates by source for transit, and; more thorough rationale of the inflation rate used for revenue and cost estimates to reflect year of expenditure dollars.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that NIRPC coordinate with INDOT and the transit operators to identify, collect data, and set targets for comprehensive, multi-modal performance measures pursuant to the planning factors in the next update of its MTP.

Recommendation 5: The FHWA/FTA federal review team recommends NIRPC develop a five year model improvement plan that outlines a short and mid-term technical process that will maintain –and enhance - the agency’s technical methods and modeling capabilities. The document should establish a strategic direction for the agency as it considers resource constraints, training needs, and partnerships with peer agencies as a means of leveraging existing modeling resources. This plan could then be used to help inform an optimal allocation of resources in the UPWP.

Recommendation 6: It is recommended that NIRPC work more closely with the State to identify and address freight concerns. Interstates 65 and 80 are nationally significant freight corridors and the MPO and State can help to improve freight safety and mobility by working together to understand and identify priorities with local freight stakeholders.

Recommendation 7: It is recommended that NIRPC improve transparency to the public in the transportation improvement program (TIP) and annual agreements with the Chicago Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) to demonstrate how transit funding suballocations at both the state and operator levels are determined pursuant to the planning requirements. The methodologies and performance measures should be clearly identified based on the MTP goals/objectives and planning factors identified at 23 CFR 450.306.

Recommendation 8: It is recommended that NIRPC update the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan by re-evaluating transit gaps, needs, priorities, and the project selection process as the Regional Bus Authority is no longer in existence and the MPO is now a designated recipient for Section 5310 funds.

Recommendation 9: It is recommended that NIRPC promptly post complete TIP documents on its web site to improve transparency. Additionally, NIRPC should work with INDOT to learn how to enter the MPO’s transportation improvement program (TIP) information into INDOT’s new electronic state transportation improvement program (STIP) format. NIRPC will use this process in the near future to enter amendments. In the next TIP, NIRPC must insert a column into its TIP showing the estimated cost left to complete projects.

Recommendation 10: In accordance with the *United States Department of Transportation Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations*, NIRPC is encouraged to expand its collection of data on nonmotorized travel, set mode share targets, and measure

performance.

Recommendation 11: NIRPC should consider the following actions to help improve the transparency of its public involvement process. A peer exchange with another Indiana MPO to acquire “best practices” for possible implementation may also be helpful.

1. The updated public participation plan should identify the process for soliciting involvement, suggestions and recommendations received during its development, and clarify how input was considered for the final product.
2. Annual reporting should include actions taken by the MPO to obtain public comments about the planning process. This should include a summary of the individual activities and comments received, and an analysis of the impact of the input on decision-making.

Best planning practices are recognized in the commendations below:

Commendation 1: NIRPC is commended for receiving the American Planning Association’s 2013 Daniel Burnham Award for its 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan (CRP). The CRP serves as a model for other MPOs in conducting scenario planning in addition to coordinating land use and transportation planning. NIRPC’s efforts demonstrate that an MTP can guide sustainable development through proactive planning using assumptions that differ from previous growth patterns.

Commendation 2: NIRPC is praised for its collaborative planning efforts that have led to construction of recreational trails in addition to integration of bicycle and pedestrian elements into roadway projects.

Commendation 3: NIRPC is praised for its Environmental Justice analysis in the 2040 CRP. The methodology comparing accessibility and travel times to determine disproportionate benefits and burdens on protected populations is exemplary and a model for other MPOs.

Commendation 4: The federal review team compliments the MPO for its efforts to work cooperatively with both the State DOT and Federal Highway Administration to better understand Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. By helping both INDOT and FHWA to ensure communities develop and have ADA transition plans, the MPO has demonstrated a commitment to improving the current status of ADA compliance in the region. It also provides a tangible example of how the MPO operates to support its Nondiscrimination Self-Certification associated with their TIP.

Purpose and Objective

Pursuant to 23 United States Code 134(k)(5) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k)(5), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in Transportation Management Areas (TMA) at least every four years.¹ In general, the planning certification reviews consist of three primary activities: review of planning products (in advance of and during the site visit), a site visit, and preparation of a report that summarizes the review and presents findings. The reviews focus on compliance with Federal regulations, challenges, successes, and experiences of the cooperative relationship between the MPO, State DOT and transit operators in the conduct of the metropolitan planning process.

23 CFR 450.328(a) states;

“The FHWA and the FTA shall jointly find that each metropolitan TIP is consistent with the metropolitan transportation plan produced by the continuing and comprehensive transportation process carried on cooperatively by the MPO(s), the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303. This finding shall be based on the self-certification statement submitted by the State and MPO under Sec. 450.334, a review of the metropolitan transportation plan by the FHWA and the FTA, and upon other reviews as deemed necessary by the FHWA and the FTA.”

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and NIRPC are able to utilize the documentation from this review to affirm the required USDOT planning certification is current, and to support the self-certification statement that must be included with the next 4-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Scope and Methodology

This certification review focuses on compliance with Federal regulations, challenges, successes, and experiences of the cooperative relationship between NIRPC, INDOT, Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC) and Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) in the conduct of the metropolitan planning process. This certification review is only one of several methods used to assess the quality and compliance of the NIRPC’s metropolitan planning process. Other activities provide both FHWA and FTA an opportunity to comment on the planning process, including attendance at Policy/Technical committee meetings, and USDOT approval of the NIRPC unified planning work

¹ A TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the U.S. Census, with a population of over 200,000. There are 153 TMA's in the U.S. based on the 2000 Census.

program (UPWP), and USDOT issuance of the air quality conformity finding for the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) and TIP. While the certification review report itself may not fully document those many intermediate and ongoing checkpoints, the “Findings” of the certification review, in fact, are based upon the cumulative findings of the entire review effort.

In preparation for the site visit, a written request was sent to NIRPC seeking information on recent and ongoing current planning processes and projects. The MPO provided responses which can be found in Appendix 1. This report provides the regulatory framework, current status, key findings, and recommendations for the following subject areas:

- Metropolitan Planning Organization Structure
- Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries
- Metropolitan Planning Agreements
- Unified Planning Work Program
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Congestion Management Process
- Intelligent Transportation System Architecture
- Travel Demand Model
- Freight
- Air Quality
- Transit
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning
- Transportation Improvement Program
- Annual Listing of Obligated Projects
- Public Participation Process
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act
- Environmental Justice
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Planning Factors/Livability
- Safety
- Security
- MAP-21 Planning Requirements
- Financial Billing Review
- Disposition of Last Planning Review Findings

The Federal Review Team constituted the following persons:

Joyce Newland, FHWA Indiana Division
Jay DuMontelle, FHWA Indiana Division
Pamela Davis, FHWA Division
Reginald Arkell, FTA Region 5
Victor Austin, FTA Office of Planning and Environment
Anthony Greep, FTA Region 5 (not at onsite review)

Anthony Maietta, EPA Region 5 (not at onsite review)

The following individuals participated in the Certification Review:

Tyson Warner, NIRPC

Steve Strains, NIRPC

Mitch Barloga, NIRPC

Bill Brown, NIRPC

Gary Evers, NIRPC

Belinda Petroskey, NIRPC

Eman Ibrahim, NIRPC

Kevin Garcia, NIRPC

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Lisa Shrader, Indiana Department of Transportation

Daryl Lampkins, Gary PTC

David Wright, Gary PTC

Joseph Crnkovich, NICTD

Jerry Siska, North Township

The majority of the site visit consisted of discussions with staff from NIRPC, INDOT, and the transit agencies. FHWA and FTA would like to express appreciation to the NIRPC staff for their responses to the advance questionnaire and contributions to the on-site portion of the review.

Observations and Findings

Each section is outlined in the following format:

- The statutory requirement is given for the basis of each element,
- A summary of the current status based on ongoing contacts, review of planning products throughout the year, input provided in the discussions with the staff, and
- Findings of the review team on the adequacy of the process, and corrective actions, recommendations, and commendations as appropriate.

Metropolitan Planning Organization Structure

Requirement: 23 CFR 450.310 Metropolitan planning organization designation and redesignation. *(d) Each MPO that serves a TMA, when designated or redesignated under this section, shall consist of local elected officials, officials of public agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation in the metropolitan planning area, and appropriate State transportation officials.*

Status: The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) is a regional council of local governments serving the citizens of three counties; Lake, Porter, and LaPorte located in the northwestern corner of the State of Indiana. The Northwest Indiana region is part of the U.S. Census Bureau's Chicago Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The legislation under which NIRPC operates is contained within Indiana Code Title 36, Article VII, Chapter 7. NIRPC operates as a cooperative of local governments within the Tri-County area and is currently comprised of fifty-three members. There are forty-one cities and towns and forty-four townships within the NIRPC planning area with a population of approximately 770,000 and encompassing 1,520 square miles.

NIRPC is also the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for northwestern Indiana and responsible, together with state departments of transportation and public transit operators, for carrying out the transportation planning process for urbanized areas.

The NIRPC Commission itself serves as the MPO Policy Committee. By Indiana State Law (P.L. 165-2003, and as amended by P.L. 2-2007), the members of the Commission include a representative of each municipality, appointed by the mayor in the case of cities, and by the town council in the case of towns. By law, a voting member of the Commission must be an elected official. In addition, each county is represented by a member of the county commission, a member of the county council and the county surveyor. The State law also provides for representation of two townships in Porter County. The Governor of Indiana also appoints one member. In addition, ex-officio non-voting membership is provided to transit operators and the INDOT LaPorte District Deputy Commissioner. The

2010 Census did not impact the membership for the planning process, as all local units of government were already represented.

The Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) serves as the transportation technical advisory committee. The TPC, where policy formation occurs, reports to the Commission. All transportation planning matters come to the TPC before they are brought to the Commission. The members of the TPC include technical staff representatives of many municipalities, counties, and transit operators, INDOT, FHWA, FTA, CMAP, South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, as well as advocacy groups, including South Shore Trails. The Gary/Chicago International Airport and the Port of Indiana also have membership on the TPC.

NIRPC has an experienced staff of planners and administrators to conduct transportation planning for the metropolitan planning area. NIRPC has twenty-seven full time employees that carry out the transportation planning activities for the region. Appendix 1 shows the NIRPC staff organization structure and management functions.

Finding: The current structure of NIRPC meets the requirements of Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). While US DOT continues to encourage transit representation on the Commission, it is acknowledged that a cooperative process has been established where transit operators and INDOT (as non-voting members) can fully participate in discussions and that decisions reflect a regional consensus. The FHWA/FTA federal review team finds that the MPO meets the federal planning requirements found in 23 CFR 450.310.

Recommendation 1: NIRPC is encouraged to consider how it may meet the provision in MAP-21 that requires representation by providers of public transportation on the MPO Board.

MPO Planning Area Boundary

Requirement: 23 CFR 450.312 Metropolitan planning area boundaries. (a) *The boundaries of a metropolitan planning area (MPA) shall be determined by agreement between the MPO and the Governor. At a minimum, the MPA boundaries shall encompass the entire existing urbanized area (as defined by the Bureau of the Census) plus the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within a 20-year forecast period for the metropolitan transportation plan.*

Status: The metropolitan planning area boundary encompasses all of Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties and was approved in 1994. In that same year

LaPorte County was added to the planning boundary (though it had been part of NIRPC since 1979) and the MPA boundary has not changed since 1994. The MPA (unchanged) and urbanized area boundary (UAB) for the Northwestern Indiana Tri-county region covered by NIRPC has been adjusted for the 2010 Census and was approved on January 29, 2013. The MPA cannot be expanded further as NIRPC's jurisdiction is set by state statute to the three-county area.

Finding: The FHWA/FTA federal review team finds that NIRPC meets the federal planning requirements found in 23 CFR.312.

Metropolitan Planning Agreements

Requirement: 23 CFR 450.314 Metropolitan planning agreements. (a) *The MPO, the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. These responsibilities shall be clearly identified in written agreements among the MPO, the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) serving the MPA.*

Status: There is a signed agreement for implementation of the urban transportation planning process dated in October 2008 between the NIRPC, operators of public transportation, INDOT and IDEM. The agreement is more than four years old and should be updated to include additional detail on roles, responsibilities and procedures for the annual listing of obligated projects to meet the requirements of 23 CFR 450.322. The agreement should also specify how INDOT and NIRPC self-certify their planning process to meet the requirements of 23 CFR 450.334.

NIRPC indicated that preliminary discussions have taken place to update the agreement. However the process has been delayed as INDOT is considering a standard agreement between the State and each MPO.

Finding: A planning agreement has been approved by NIRPC, the INDOT and transit partners, and the MPO is therefore found to be compliant. The federal review team believe the agreement could however be improved by including more specificity of responsibilities and timelines between the MPO, the State DOT and the transit operators.

The federal review team encourages the MPO to work with the Indiana MPO Council and INDOT to update the Indiana MPO Handbook. This document has been useful in the past to provide both clarity and consistency in planning processes in Indiana. This would help this MPO and others to clarify who the MPO should work with at the State DOT to complete the various planning products required in federal regulations. It would also provide the timelines for product delivery that currently are not clear and which are discussed and appear

to be revised annually at the MPO Council meetings, held with the INDOT.

It should be noted that the USDOT STIP approval letter, dated July 11, 2013, reiterated that INDOT has a continuing Corrective Action on its planning procedures, which includes the updates of the Planning Agreements with the MPO.

Recommendation 2: The planning agreement between NIRPC, INDOT and the public transit operators should be updated to include procedures for the annual listing of obligated projects, how INDOT and NIRPC self-certify their planning processes, and timelines for review and approval processes. The partners are encouraged to consider in the agreement provisions of MAP-21 regarding establishing performance measures and targets in the planning process.

Unified Planning Work Program

Requirement: 23 CFR 450.308 Funding for transportation planning and unified planning work programs. *(b) Metropolitan transportation planning activities performed with funds provided under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 shall be documented in a unified planning work program (UPWP) or simplified statement of work in accordance with the provisions of this section and 23 CFR part 420.*

Status: NIRPC has adopted a two-year UPWP cycle. The UPWP reviewed at the time of the site visit covered July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013.

Finding: The FHWA/FTA federal review team finds that NIRPC meets the federal planning requirements found in 23 CFR 450.308. Following the recommendation from the previous review in 2010, NIRPC has included federal and local funding levels as well as assigned staff in the detailed write-ups for each work element, making it easier to recognize the amount of effort needed for the work element when projects are reviewed and for the general public interested in knowing what activities NIRPC is undertaking. NIRPC is encouraged to continue this practice for all subsequent updates.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Requirement: Based upon 23 CFR 450.300 and 23 CFR 450.322, MPOs are required to develop a metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) addressing a minimum twenty-year planning horizon. The MTP is required to be consistent with current and forecasted transportation/land use conditions and trends to appropriately project transportation demand of persons and goods. The Plan shall include strategies and actions that lead to the preservation and development of an integrated multimodal transportation system with improved performance.

The MTP shall include existing and proposed transportation facilities (including major roadways, transit, multimodal and intermodal facilities, pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities, and intermodal connectors) that should function as an integrated transportation system...Operational and management strategies shall be included to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods. Strategies shall be outlined to preserve the existing and projected transportation system.

The MTP is to be fiscally constrained to demonstrate that implementation is feasible based upon reliable funding sources. The financial plan shall contain system-level estimates of cost and revenue sources reasonably expected to be available.

After December 11, 2007, all amendments and updates to financial information in the MTP are required to be shown in “year-of-expenditure” amounts, and not in current dollars.

At either a policy or project level, the MTP shall include a discussion of the potential environmental mitigation activities and locations to carry out these activities. The discussion shall be developed in consultation with environmental and historic resource agencies to coordinate the MTP with plans and inventories of those agencies.

The MTP is to be updated every four years in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas and every five years in attainment areas to ensure its consistency with changes in land-use, demographic, and transportation characteristics.

Status: In June 2011, NIRPC approved a new MTP, *2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan* (CRP), and the associated conformity determination. The CRP is innovative as it integrates principles from the USDOT-HUD-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities and focuses on the land use and transportation interrelationship. In particular, the CRP highlights its focus on revitalizing the largest cities in the region through infill development. Consensus for the plan was developed through scenario planning and an extensive public participation effort.

The CRP contains goals and objectives presented as vision themes for the following elements: economy; education; environmental protection; livability; revitalization of urban cores; accessibility; environmental justice; and government coordination. There is a description of the planning process and public involvement that occurred during development of the CRP. The demographics analysis identifies continuing and substantive increases in racial diversity and aging of the population. NIRPC is forecasting a population increase of about

170,000 or 22 percent from 2010 to 2040 with about 75 percent to occur in Lake County. The CRP seeks to address a population loss of about 100,000 from Gary, Hammond and East Chicago over the past 30 years to southern areas of the region due in part to large job losses in the industrial sector.

Analysis in the CRP demonstrates that, generally, housing in the region appears to be affordable for most households. However, when costs are combined with transportation, much of the area is unaffordable to a majority of the geographic region. The CRP shows that much of this is due to the rapid spread of low density housing, much of it in unincorporated areas.

The CRP contains a substantial transportation section with goals and objectives focusing on a multi-modal system that is safe, secure, and accessible. Other elements include using the CMP to optimize system efficiency, maintaining the existing system, and improving public transportation, among others. The CRP also outlines the planning factors which the MPO professes are inter-woven into the planning process. The CRP projects that 2040 daily VMT will be 29,075,354 (per capita 11,268) based on the chosen assumptions and vision of the plan. This is roughly a three percent increase from the per capita 2009 UZA VMT and about a 10 percent reduction from the 2011 per capita three-county VMT.

The CRP identifies major existing and proposed transportation facilities and contains a section on *Financial Capacity & Projections*. The financial component of the CRP contains system-level estimates of costs/revenues, and their sources, that are expected to be available for roads and transit. The CRP states that figures are shown in year of expenditure amounts. However, an inflation rate of 2.49 percent is only used for a table listing capacity expansion projects. An inflation rate of zero is used for the overall system level projections of revenues and expenses. There is not any substantive explanation on the reasonableness of these rates. The CRP projects systemwide transportation expenses of about \$6.6B through the planning horizon. This includes the following approximate amounts by funding source: \$2.2B local for highways; \$589 MPO controlled federal for roads and CMAQ; \$2.1B INDOT state and federal for highways; and \$1.7B total for transit.

The CRP identifies a significant funding shortfall to maintain all of the region's roads during the period. Revenues are quantified for MPO-controlled federal highway and transit funding in addition to local highway funding. There is general discussion on the local funding challenges in a separate transit section of the CRP. However, there are not any quantified non-federal revenue projections for transit in the CRP.

An Environmental Consultation Team (ECT) was assembled for the CRP to identify environmental mitigation activities at the policy/strategic planning level. The ECT activities included review of existing conservation plans and identification of specific environmental elements to be addressed for particular

transportation projects. These projects included capacity expansion, intersection improvements, bridges, and road repairs involving culverts. There is an environmental mitigation section in the appendix of the CRP to guide local planning authorities. This section contains several maps of environmental features in the region. Guidance from several land and water resource management plans is summarized with links to more detailed information.

The CRP transportation section also contains segments on crash analysis, the CMP, highways, transit, project selection, high-speed rail, freight, aviation, maritime, non-motorized, environmental justice, and financial analysis. CRP project selection is facilitated through a scoring system which addresses the plan's goals and objectives, particularly safety concerns as identified from the crash data.

Execution of the CRP is ongoing through NIRPC's Pathway to 2040 Implementation Committee which encourages local governments to incorporate supportive land use planning. In addition, NIRPC is sub-allocating funding to local authorities for planning projects that support the CRP. The CRP identifies a number of multi-modal performance measures and is in the process of developing methods to closely monitor them.

Finding: The federal review team finds the MPO's MTP is substantially compliant with the federal requirements of 23 CFR 450.322.

Recommendation 3: In accordance with 23 CFR 350.322(f)(10), it is recommended that NIRPC include the following in the next update of the MTP: local and state revenue estimates by source for transit, and; more thorough rationale of the inflation rate used for revenue and cost estimates to reflect year of expenditure dollars.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that NIRPC coordinate with INDOT and the transit operators to identify, collect data, and set targets for comprehensive, multi-modal performance measures pursuant to the planning factors in the next update of its MTP.

Commendation 1: NIRPC is commended for receiving the American Planning Association's 2013 Daniel Burnham Award for its CRP. The CRP serves as a model for other MPOs in conducting scenario planning in addition to coordinating land use and transportation planning. NIRPC's efforts demonstrate that an MTP can guide sustainable development through proactive planning using assumptions that differ from previous growth patterns.

Congestion Management Process

Requirement: 23 CFR 450.320 requires implementation of a congestion management process (CMP) through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies. These must include methods/measures to collect data, monitor and evaluate multimodal transportation system performance, and to determine the effectiveness of implemented actions. In non-attainment areas federal funds may not be programmed for any project that will result in a significant increase in the carrying capacity of single occupancy vehicles unless the project is modeled, demonstrates air quality conformity, and is addressed in a compliant CMP. The process should consider evaluation of strategies such as growth management, congestion pricing, and public transportation improvements among others as appropriate.

Status: The 2009 certification review found that NIRPC was not adequately conducting a CMP in accordance with the regulations and cited a corrective action. Specifically, NIRPC was given one year to establish a CMP subcommittee, define regional transportation networks, identify performance measures/data sources, and monitor strategy effectiveness. The new CMP was required to be completed by the MPO prior to adoption of the CRP in June 2011. NIRPC formed a CMP committee in May 2009 and formally adopted the CMP in June 2011.

The CRP contains a summary of the CMP with the complete document located in the appendix. The CMP provides some discussion of congestion pricing feasibility for central business districts. The CMP notes there is congestion pricing for trucks by time of day on the Illinois Tollway and could be considered for the Indiana Toll Road. However, other options are dismissed as infeasible or of little value for northwest Indiana without any significant in-depth discussion.

The CMP outlines 12 steps in its CMP to address the aforementioned requirements specified in the last certification review. Established metrics have been established for highways, safety, transit, and VMT/VHT. Roadway LOS is mapped for major roadways based on 2008 data and for 2040, although it is unclear if the latter is based on implementation of the CRP.

There are several travel demand management or reduction strategies in the CMP with assumptions made on the expected reductions in traffic volume. The CMP also contains several asset management, ITS, transit, and growth management strategies along with assumptions on the amount of capacity that could be added with each one. The only travel demand management technique that is implemented consists of the regional rideshare program operated by Pace which has about 300 registered users from northwest Indiana. The primary operational improvements implemented from the CMP consist of access management and intersection strategies.

Local planning authorities requesting federal transportation funds through NIRPC are required to complete a CMP evaluation form identifying the project scope, funding, location, and travel demand strategies considered. NIRPC reviews the form and completes existing performance measures related to V/C ratios, average speeds, LOS, changes in VMT, and any additional travel demand management strategies that should be considered. NIRPC scores the projects as outlined in the CMP. In December 2010 to April 2011, NIRPC performed a CMP evaluation for a total of 29 roadway expansion projects proposed for the CRP. Most of the projects passed the CMP and were included in the CRP while four did not pass.

In August 2012, NIRPC posted on its web site a two-page general overview of existing/proposed tolling in northwest Indiana relating to the Indiana Toll Road (I-90), Borman Expressway (I-80/94), and Cline Avenue toll bridge. The discussion included brief consideration of truck tolling, high-occupancy tolls (HOT), parking fees, tolling other areas, in addition to the positive/negative impacts.

On July 19, 2012, via formal letter, FHWA and FTA found that NIRPC had made sufficient progress in completing the required CMP tasks and lifted the corrective action. However, the correspondence reiterated concerns as to how certain strategies are considered and implemented. Accordingly, it was recommended in the letter that NIRPC could include in-depth discussion, analysis, and quantification of the impacts of particular strategies such as:

- Adding new performance measures such as Average Speed along major highways, Mode Share (including transit and non-motorized trips), emissions, and household transportation expenditures.
- Identifying benefits to drivers businesses, and transportation system revenues from congestion pricing at a corridor level; and
- Procedures necessary to establish congestion pricing, including challenges and barriers (i.e. lack of state authorizing legislation/local authority/political will/public acceptance, etc.), and plans to address them.

Finding: NIRPC's CMP is minimally compliant with 23 CFR 350.320. The Chicago IL-IN UZA is one of the most congested regions in the country and as such may be a viable region to implement congestion pricing. NIRPC should work with INDOT and the Chicago MPO to identify and consider corridors that may support implementation of congestion pricing. If these options are not viable, then some explanation of those findings should be summarized and made a part of the CMP.

Intelligent Transportation Systems

Requirement: ITS projects shall conform to the National ITS Architecture and standards per 23 CFR 940. Conformance with the National ITS Architecture is interpreted to mean the use of the National ITS Architecture to develop a regional ITS architecture, and the subsequent adherence of all ITS projects to that regional ITS architecture. A regional ITS architecture shall be developed to guide the development of ITS projects and programs and be consistent with ITS strategies and projects contained in applicable transportation plans. All ITS projects funded with highway trust funds shall be based on a systems engineering analysis.

Status: NIRPC completed an initial ITS Architecture for the Northwestern Indiana region in July of 2005. Little or no maintenance of the ITS Architecture has been completed. There has not been a major update with stakeholder input to date. There is a requirement for the ITS Architecture to be maintained as needs evolve within the region. In general, minor updating should be ongoing or periodic as projects are implemented or modified. Major updates are generally scheduled in a timeframe that will allow for use of the ITS Architecture in the Transportation Plan updates.

The existing ITS Architecture was developed using the software application Turbo Architecture Version 2.0. The software had been update several times with new features, capabilities and nomenclature. The current version is Turbo Architecture Version 7.0. The architecture is based on the National ITS Architecture Version 5.0 which has since been updated to Version 7.0. The current version has new user services and more ITS implementations. NIRPC committed to completing an update to its ITS Architecture after the 2009 Certification review in preparation for the next Transportation Plan development.

The FHWA Indiana Division worked to assist NIRPC by hosting a “Quick Starting Your Regional ITS Architecture Update” workshop and a ITS Turbo software refresher training in January 2012. As part of the workshop the National ITS Architecture Development Team completed an assessment of the Northwestern Indiana architecture. The assessment identified weaknesses in the architecture. No measurable progress has been made on an update to the ITS Architecture since the workshop.

Finding: The FHWA/FTA federal review team was not satisfied with the lack of an ITS Architecture update. The team requires NIRPC to update the ITS Architecture for the Northwestern Indiana region to be in compliance with the requirement to maintain a current architecture per 23 CFR 940.9. The process to update the plan needs to include updated stakeholder input, status of projects, functional requirements, architecture flows, identification of standards and identification of projects for implementation. Finally the update needs to include a procedure for maintaining the architecture.

Corrective Action: NIRPC must update the ITS Architecture per 23 CFR 940.9 within one year of the date of this report. An updated ITS Architecture is needed to guide the deployment of ITS in the region. An updated plan will serve as input for the next Transportation Plan update and individual project systems engineering analysis.

Travel Demand Model

Requirements: 40 CFR 93.122 includes minimum specifications for travel models used to forecast vehicle activity for regional emission analyses in certain air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas. These minimum specifications apply only to metropolitan planning areas with an urbanized area population over 200,000 and that are also serious, severe or extreme ozone or serious carbon monoxide non-attainment areas. All other nonattainment or maintenance areas must continue to meet the minimum specifications for travel models established in the Conformity Rule to the extent that those procedures have been the previous practice of the MPO.

Status: A review of NIRPC's travel forecasting procedures conducted for the 2009 certification review identified several areas that warranted further attention. NIRPC was encouraged to disseminate information from a recently completed home interview survey (conducted in 2008) in order to sufficiently calibrate and validate the regional travel model. Additional recommendations were made that focused on the inclusion of enhanced network and trip geography for those zones outside of the NIRPC "core area", as well as the adoption of enhancements to the regional mode choice model produces for a major transit investment study.

Although NIRPC has not made progress toward recalibrating regional models using 2008 survey results, CMAP has incorporated the survey results into the regional transportation network model. NIRPC elected to forgo committing resources toward an entirely new regional travel model and opted instead to evaluate the feasibility of incorporating the NIRPC origin-destination survey results into its existing model in the short-term and to adopt geographic portions of the CMAP model in the long-term. The augmented CMAP model contains richer network and zonal geography than currently represented in the NIRPC regional model, providing a more robust platform for evaluating interregional and long-distance travel. According to NIRPC, approximately one-third of all travel begins or ends outside of the NIRPC region.

The agency is currently undergoing succession planning due to the departure of the agency's long-time modeler. A new modeler was recently hired. That individual will be responsible for leading NIRPC's model development and application activities. One item under consideration is the adoption of new software that will provide greater consistency with INDOT and regional planning

partners in Indiana. The agency is encouraged to coordinate with planning partners to better understand any resource, staffing, and technical implications associated with the adoption of new models or software. The development of a model development work plan (discussed below) would help match needs with resources, and help establish an overall direction for modeling and analysis in Northwest Indiana. NIRPC should transition from the current regional model to one based on CMAP's model platform, or transition to a format better equipped to perform air quality analyses such as Transcad-format that INDOT and the other Indiana MPOs use.

Finding: The FHWA/FTA federal review team finds that the NIRPC has met the requirements of 40 CFR 93.122

Recommendation 5: The FHWA/FTA federal review team recommends NIRPC develop a five year model improvement plan that outlines a short and mid-term technical process that will maintain –and enhance - the agency's technical methods and modeling capabilities. The document should establish a strategic direction for the agency as it considers resource constraints, training needs, and partnerships with peer agencies as a means of leveraging existing modeling resources. This plan could then be used to help inform an optimal allocation of resources in the UPWP.

Freight

Requirement: In accordance with 23 CFR 450.306, the planning process should improve freight accessibility, mobility and connectivity between modes.

Status: The MPO and review team discussed the challenges of how to engage the variety of different freight stakeholders. Having a single freight representative for a sector that includes a diversity of shippers, receivers, trucking firms, railroads and even logistics businesses may not always be adequate. It would also be helpful to more formally coordinate freight activities with the INDOT Freight Office.

Some potential activities to complete in cooperation with INDOT include: a presentation to the MPO policy board on the State's new Intermodal Freight & Mobility Plan and the State's efforts to identify "freight projects" for increased federal participation.

The MPO could also ask local businesses such as UPS and/or Federal Express to identify areas where their vehicles encounter problems during a specific week. The approach would ask drivers to highlight bottleneck areas or concerns encountered during a single week. This would help identify and communicate the concerns for these freight stakeholders, and provide important data for the

MPO and State to understand the local freight movements. This may also suggest how to measure the efficiency of freight movements in the region.

Recommendation 6: It is recommended that NIRPC work more closely with the State to identify and address freight concerns. Interstates 65 and 80 are nationally significant freight corridors and the MPO and State can help to improve freight safety and mobility by working together to understand and identify priorities with local freight stakeholders.

Air Quality

Requirement: The Clean Air Act of 1990 set specific requirements for non-attainment and maintenance areas. An agreement is required between the MPO and the designated agency responsible for air quality planning describing their respective roles and responsibilities. In TMAs designated as nonattainment areas the following are required:

- Federal funds may not be programmed for a project that results in a significant increase in carrying capacity for single occupancy vehicles (SOVs), unless the project results from a Congestion Management Process (CMP) meeting requirements of 23 CFR 450.320 (d) and (e).
- A new air quality conformity determination is required for any new or amended TIP or Long Range Transportation Plan [(23 CFR 450.326 (a) and 23 CFR 450.322(l)].

Per 40 CFR 93, FHWA and FTA jointly make conformity determinations within air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas to ensure that Federal actions conform to the "purpose" of State Implementation Plans (SIPs). The transportation conformity process is intended to ensure that transportation plans, programs, and projects will not create new violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS); increase the frequency or severity of existing NAAQS violations; or delay the attainment of the NAAQS in designated nonattainment (or maintenance) areas.

FHWA has also issued Final CMAQ Guidance that was distributed on November 17, 2008.

Status: On July 20, 2012, pursuant to the 2008 8-hour ozone standard and revocation of the 1997 8-hour ozone standard, Lake and Porter Counties were redesignated as marginal nonattainment areas and LaPorte County was reclassified as an attainment area. Lake and Porter are also classified as a maintenance area for the pollutant PM_{2.5}. The USDOT found the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan and the FY 2012-2015 TIP to conform on July 27, 2011. NIRPC has developed a 2014-2017 TIP and the associated air quality

analysis. During the preparation of this report, the associated air quality conformity analysis for the 2040 CRP and the FY 2014-2017 TIP was found to conform on September 25, 2013.

Finding: The FHWA/FTA federal review team finds the process used by the NIRPC to be in compliance with conformity requirements.

Transit

Requirement: 23 CFR 450.300(a) states: *...the MPO designated for each urbanized area is to carry out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process...* 23 CFR 450.306(a)(6) states: *The metropolitan transportation planning process shall...enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes...* 23 CFR 450.324(j) states: *...Section 5307 Urbanized Area funds cannot be suballocated to individual jurisdictions or modes solely by pre-determined percentages...* 23 CFR 450.306(g) states: *Preparation of the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan (HSTP), as required by 49 USC 5310, 5316, and 5317 should be synchronized and consistent with the metropolitan transportation planning process.*

Status: There are a number of transit operators in the three-county area covered by NIRPC. Lake and Porter Counties in Indiana are part of the Chicago IL-IN UZA. Generally, funding sub-allocations between Illinois and Indiana are based on FTA's allocation formulas for each of the categories of funding pursuant to annual agreements between the RTA and NIRPC. Similarly, sub-allocations between NIRPC, NICTD and GPTC are based on FTA's allocation formulas and/or needs for the pertinent categories of funding pursuant to annual agreements between the operators. Funds in the La Porte UZA are split between Michigan City Transit and La Porte Transport pursuant to an agreement. NICTD also receives Section 5307 and 5309 funds from the South Bend, IN-MI UZA pursuant to agreements with the South Bend Public Transportation Corporation (TRANSPO) and Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG). The split proportions between the states and operators in northwest Indiana vary as they are based on National Transit Database (NTD) statistics/performance measures for the previous year. NIRPC staff attests that this methodology has historically been acceptable to these agencies as a rational basis to address public transportation needs in each of the areas. The TIP and aforementioned agreements do not provide extensive details regarding the methodologies used for the funding suballocations.

NIRPC coordinates with the transit operators in northwest Indiana to develop project selection scoring criteria linked to the goals and objectives of the MTP. The operators submit their project proposals which are then evaluated, scored and ranked by NIRPC. The MPO selects the projects for implementation based

upon the ratings and available funding determined from the aforementioned sub-allocations. NIRPC is a designated/direct recipient and passes funds to seven agencies: East Chicago Transit; North Township of Lake County Dial-A-Ride; City of La Porte; City of Valparaiso; South Lake County Community Services; Opportunity Enterprises; and the Porter County Aging and Community Services. A more in-depth description of transit operators in northwest Indiana is in Appendix 3.

Agencies receiving Section 5310 funding according to 2012 Indiana Annual Report and FTA records include: Lake County - South Lake County Community Services, ARC Bridges; Porter County - Opportunity Enterprises; La Porte County – La Porte County Comprehensive Mental Health Council; Michiana Resources; Parents and Friends, Inc. There are not any agencies in the three-county area receiving Section 5311 funding.

In February 2009, NIRPC completed a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan). The Coordinated Plan identifies transit needs, gaps and strategies documented and updated in the 2007 MTP that were developed through/from two efforts. The first is the 2006 RBA Needs Analysis and Strategic Plan. The second is the 2007 LaPorte County Feasibility Study on Consolidated Human Services Public Demand Response Transit. The Coordinated Plan states that the major barrier to proceeding with implementation of improved and expanded public transit, particularly demand response, is the lack of a regional or county-wide dedicated source of local funding. This has been a continual concern since 1999.

In recent years, NIRPC has used New Freedom funds to support operating assistance for the South Lake County Community Services and the Porter County Aging and Community Services. GPTC has used JARC funds primarily for operating assistance to support new transit service in addition to mobility management and training. NIRPC has not updated the Coordinated Plan but expects to soon as they are now a designated recipient for Section 5310 funding.

Finding: Transit planning is integrated into the metropolitan transportation planning process and there is coordination between staffs of NIRPC and transit providers. NICTD continues to provide valuable commuting services to Chicago for the traditional population centers in the northern tri-county areas of northwest Indiana. Other fixed route and demand response service throughout NIRPC's coverage area provides minimal service to Gary, East Chicago, Hammond and a few other smaller population centers. Non-fixed route ADA paratransit services are provided within at least one-quarter mile of fixed routes. Given the constraint of dispersed land uses, the transportation providers in both UZAs coordinate and work together in an effort to facilitate efficient and unduplicated service. However, inadequate levels of local funding and regional connectivity are significant shortcomings.

Appendix 3 contains an in-depth analysis of transit performance in northwest Indiana. Based on the analysis, transit travel in the service area, including work-related trips, is quite small for the level of population in the area. As a result, there is not any semblance of modal balance and residents experience higher than optimal household transportation costs. Consequently, for trips within northwest Indiana, it does not appear that transit is a viable transportation choice outside of transit-dependent populations. Some of the causes follow:

- Weighted or perceived population density index² in the UZA is prohibitively low and continues to decline.
- Lack of dominant commercial/retail and other job centers such as a central business district with substantial square footage or employment densities to support transit.
- Transit-supportive land uses are not required or seriously considered during real estate planning and development.
- Newly developed and exurban areas have lower levels of roadway connectivity in comparison to older and more urban areas.

NIRPC conducted scenario planning in developing their 2040 CRP which resulted in a vision of directing a significant amount of population to the traditional urban centers. Assuming successful implementation of this element, transit services and ridership should improve. NIRPC is encouraged to continue focusing on its current efforts to improve integration of land use planning and growth management into the transportation planning process. It is also recommended that NIRPC continue its focus on performance measures to quantify expected and realized improvements to transportation system modal balance, transit usage, and overall socioeconomic conditions as the MTP is implemented. See the Metropolitan Planning Agreements and MTP sections for formal recommendations on performance measures. A summary of research conducted on the impacts of land use on travel behavior is available in chapter 15, Land Use and Site Design, of the *Transit Cooperative Research Program, Report 95*, sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration. This document is available at the following website:

http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_95c15.pdf.

The Coordinated Plan was developed with involvement by appropriate transportation providers, stakeholders, and the public. The plan identifies the transportation providers and outlines details of existing services. The plan also evaluates the adequacy of those services for disadvantaged populations and those with special needs. The plan provides strategies or activities to address transport deficiencies such as gaps and duplication of services. The requirements for the Coordinated Plan have thus been satisfied.

² See the article, *What Density Doesn't Tell Us About Sprawl* by Eric Eidlin, available via the following link for a discussion on perceived population densities and population gradient indexes: <http://www.uctc.net/access/37/access37sprawl.pdf>.

Recommendation 7: It is recommended that NIRPC improve transparency to the public in the transportation improvement program (TIP) and annual agreements with the Chicago Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) to demonstrate how transit funding suballocations at both the state and operator levels are determined pursuant to the planning requirements. The methodologies and performance measures should be clearly identified based on the MTP goals/objectives and planning factors identified at 23 CFR 450.306.

Recommendation 8: It is recommended that NIRPC update the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan by re-evaluating transit gaps, needs, priorities, and the project selection process as the Regional Bus Authority is no longer in existence and the MPO is now a designated recipient for Section 5310 funds.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning

Requirement: 23 CFR 450.300(a) states that the metropolitan planning process, particularly MTPs [23 CFR 450.322(f)(8)] and TIPs [23 CFR 450.324(c)], shall include accessible pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities as part of the intermodal transportation system for the metropolitan planning area.

Status: NIRPC's 2040 CRP contains a section on nonmotorized transportation outlining the progress made in creating bicycle and pedestrian pathways and recommendations for the future. NIRPC and the Openlands project collaborated in creating the Northwest Indiana Blueways and Greenways Plan in 2008. This plan identifies linear pathways and waterways targeted for preservation and is a resource for local authorities when considering open space needs. In 2011, NIRPC adopted its 2010 Ped & Pedal Plan which is an update to a previous plan developed in 2005. These plans came about after NIRPC established a Transportation Enhancement Committee in 2009. The 2010 Ped & Paddle Plan identifies bicycle and pedestrian travel goals and objectives, existing routes, areas for future pathways, best practices, and strategies for implementation. A NIRPC Ped, Pedal & Paddle Committee meets monthly to shape regional policy.

In 2010, NIRPC approved a resolution requiring all federally funded roadway project sponsors to consider incorporating Complete Streets design standards. NIRPC resources include guidelines for design and regional case studies to help local authorities integrate high-quality bicycle and pedestrian-friendly elements into projects. The MPO promotes policies for Safe Routes to School and snow removal from non-motorized pathways. NIRPC analyzes Census data on bicycle and pedestrian trips in the 2040 CRP.

Finding: NIRPC's planning process complies with 23 CFR 450.300(a), 23 CFR 450.322(f)(8), and 23 CFR 450.324(c).

Recommendation 10: In accordance with the *United States Department of Transportation Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations*, NIRPC is encouraged to expand its collection of data on nonmotorized travel, set mode share targets, and measure performance.

Commendation 2: NIRPC is praised for its collaborative planning efforts that have led to construction of recreational trails in addition to integration of bicycle and pedestrian elements into roadway projects.

Transportation Improvement Program

Requirement: 23 CFR 450.324 requires the MPO, in cooperation with the State and public transportation operators, to develop a financially constrained TIP that is consistent with the MTP. The TIP shall be developed every four years and contain a sufficiently detailed listing of projects to be funded based on cost and revenue estimates in “year of expenditure dollars.” The MPO must identify the criteria for prioritizing projects in the TIP and have an approved process for making changes in the document.

Pursuant to 23 CFR 350.316, prior to approval, the TIP must be available for adequate public review which, for nonattainment TMAs, includes one formal public meeting. The TIP must provide a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of significant written and oral comments received from the public.

FHWA and FTA must jointly find the TIP to be based on a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation process. Only after an MPO TIP is amended into the STIP, can federal funds for projects be authorized.

Status: The FY 2012-2015 TIP was in effect at the time of the planning certification review. NIRPC initially made the FY 2014-2017 TIP available for public review and comment during July 1 - August 2, 2013. FHWA noted in its review of the TIP documentation that NIRPC had neglected to put out for public review the amendments to the 2040 CRP which were listed in its Air Quality Conformity Analysis. In order for USDOT to make a conformity finding, the FY 2014-2017 TIP must be consistent with the 2040 CRP. Additionally, NIRPC received a complaint that a public meeting was not held on the TIP. Due to these issues, NIRPC reset the timeline for the TIP with the public comment period ending August 23, 2013.

On July 26, 2013, NIRPC issued an Open House Notice on amendments to the 2040 CRP, air quality analysis, and FY 2014-2017 TIP, which included transit projects. Three separate meetings on the TIP were held at different locations. Two of these meetings focused on transit projects in the TIP. The comment period for the TIP transit projects occurred from August 16 - September 17, 2013.

NIRPC's Full Commission adopted the FY 2014-2017 TIP by resolution on August 29, 2013 and the transit amendment to the TIP on September 19, 2013.

NIRPC's FY 2014-2017 TIP was found to conform to the 2040 CRP and was incorporated by reference into INDOT's FY 2014-2017 STIP on September 25, 2013. Pursuant to the MPO public participation plan adopted in September 2007, NIRPC solicited comment for both TIPs via notification to the media and its established outreach contacts in addition to public meetings. Both of the aforementioned TIPS are posted on NIRPC's web site by section of the document. The introduction for each TIP references Appendix B Public Participation which includes the public comments received and evaluated by NIRPC. Appendix B for the FY 2012-2015 TIP was not posted on the NIRPC web site. Appendix B for the FY 2014-2017 TIP was put on the web site several weeks after other sections of the document were posted.

NIRPC followed its outline for the TIP's development (Appendix 4). Project selection for the TIP is carried out by groups of stakeholders by funding groups, such as Surface Transportation Program, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality, Transportation Enhancement funds, etc.

INDOT has begun producing the STIP in an electronic format and plans to have the MPOs enter their TIPs directly into the new format. Projects listed in NIRPC's TIP need to list the project's total cost. Sometimes a project will not be completed in the timeframe of the TIP. NIRPC needs to add a column entitled "Estimated Cost Left to Complete Project" to reflect the project's overall continuance.

Finding: The FHWA/FTA federal review team finds the NIRPC meets the federal requirements of 23 CFR 450.324 for the development and content of the TIP.

Recommendation 9: It is recommended that NIRPC promptly post complete TIP documents on its web site to improve transparency. Additionally, NIRPC should work with INDOT to understand how to enter the MPO's TIP information into INDOT's new electronic STIP format. NIRPC will use this process in the near future to enter amendments. In the next TIP, NIRPC must insert a column into its TIP showing the estimated cost left to complete projects.

Annual Listing of Obligated Projects

Requirement: 23 CFR 450.332 requires the State, the MPO and public transportation operators to cooperatively develop a listing of projects for which Federal funds under 23 USC or 49 USC Chapter 53 have been obligated in the previous program year. The listing must include all federally-funded projects authorized or revised to increase obligations in the preceding program year and, at a minimum, the following should be made available for each project:

- The amount of funds requested in the TIP
- Federal funding obligated during the preceding year
- Federal funding remaining and available for subsequent years
- Sufficient description to identify the project or phase
- Identification of the agencies responsible for carrying out the project or phase

Status: NIRPC has improved their coordination with INDOT and operators of public transportation to obtain information on projects obligated during the previous program year, which is the State fiscal year (July-June). The MPO strives to post the information on their internet web site within 90 days of June 30th.

Finding: NIRPC is in compliance with 23 CFR 450.332.

Self Certification

Requirement: Self Certification of the metropolitan planning process, at least once every four years, is required under 23 CFR 450.334. The State and MPO must certify to FHWA and FTA that the metropolitan planning process is addressing the major issues facing the area and is being conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements.

Status: The MPO completed their last self-certification in August 2013 and included it with the FY 2014-2017 TIP.

Finding: While the self-certification provided is compliant, it was clear from discussion with the federal review team that this is an activity element that needs clarification and refinement. The review team recommends a self-certification procedure be prepared or updated by the INDOT with the MPO to clarify what constitutes a MPO's self certification compliant with 23 CFR 450.334. This procedure could either be included in planning agreements with MPOs or in an updated Indiana MPO handbook.

Public Participation Process

Requirement: Requirements for public involvement are found in 23 CFR 450.316. The MPO shall develop the public participation plan (PPP), MTP and TIP in consultation with a broad array of interested parties. The PPP shall describe procedures for: adequate notice, access and time to review and comment on the proposed MTP/TIP; visualization techniques to describe MTPs/TIPs; electronic availability of information; holding public meetings in convenient/accessible locations; demonstrating consideration of public

comments on MTPs and TIPs; and seeking out and considering the needs of those underserved by existing transportation systems. Final MTPs/TIPs shall include a summary, analysis and report of disposition of all significant comments received on the draft versions of these documents.

Status: NIRPC adopted the current PPP in September 2007. The PPP was developed through the efforts of a Public Participation Task Force consisting of 18 stakeholders and citizens in addition to NIRPC staff. This PPP has been used by NIRPC for development of all plans including the 2040 CRP, TIP, amendments and other activities such as the Marquette Plan, Watershed Management Plan, and its “Ped & Pedal Plan.” The PPP identifies NIRPC’s: public participation process; stakeholders; goals and objectives; document comment periods/forms; procedures for document changes; electronic media; print media/press release procedures; mailings/flyers procedures; other public outreach; public outreach evaluation standards; and definition of significant comments plus procedures to address them.

Public meeting and planning processes notifications are accomplished primarily through media releases and emails but includes U.S. mail upon request. NIRPC administrative staff maintains the mailing lists. NIRPC professes that they have several mailing lists including one with more than 230 planning partner contacts. The MPO states there are times when public participants will not provide contact information so they can be added to mailing lists. NIRPC provides public notification through its recently updated web site and new Twitter, Facebook and YouTube postings. NIRPC uses visualization techniques including an extensive array of GIS and non-GIS maps and photographs on the web site and in their planning documents. The PPP outlines NIRPC’s policy to provide documentation in alternate formats upon request.

NIRPC summarizes public comments and documents responses and provides them to the pertinent MPO committees prior to decision-making. The comments and feedback are provided either as an appendix to the related planning product or in a separate document. The MTP outlines the public involvement that occurred throughout development of the document. The TIPs were released for public review and comment.

In January 2012, NIRPC began development of the updated PPP through the formation of a Task Force. Public review of the new draft PPP began in October 2012 and consisted of one meeting in each county and an additional one in northern Lake County. Comments from participants were integrated into the new draft PPP. On July 2 and 17, 2013, NIRPC held additional workshops/meetings to review and modify the new draft PPP after concerns were raised that the public was not adequately involved in the process. Additional meetings were held to refine the document. The new PPP has not yet been approved.

In the fall of 2006, NIRPC, INDOT, Gary PTC, Hammond Transit Services, and

East Chicago Public Transit agreed to terms on a class action lawsuit by Everybody Counts, Inc., an advocacy organization for Independent living, which alleged the defendants were in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. An October 12, 2006 Order by the United States District Court, Northern District of Indiana, Hammond Division effective for eight years requires the defendants to ensure public participation procedures and transit services are sufficient to meet the needs of the region, specifically the disabled community.

In accordance with the Order and Consent Decrees, INDOT is required to conduct annual compliance reviews of NIRPC regarding the use of planning funds pursuant to 49 USC 5303. Additionally, NIRPC must coordinate with a third-party contractor for ongoing and annual reviews of sub-recipient transit operations to ensure services and equipment meet overall and ADA-compliant sufficiency thresholds. Further, NIRPC must establish an on-going mechanism for adequate participation by disabled persons in the evaluation of transportation services. This includes holding annual public hearings with sufficient public notice and accessibility in addition to providing necessary auxiliary aids and interpretive services. The transit operators must also meet requirements for ADA-compliant transit service quality and sufficiency.

In coordination with NIRPC, the review team held public meetings to solicit input on the transportation planning process in northwest Indiana. The meetings were held on June 18th, 2013 at NIRPC from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM and at Indiana University Northwest in Gary on June 19th, 2013 from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. There were no substantive comments made during the June 18th meeting.

There were a number of comments made at the June 19th meeting alleging long-term inadequacies of NIRPC's public outreach and violations of the Court Order and Consent Decrees. These included: insufficient/untimely public notifications; non-integration of public input into planning products; lack of responses to comments at public meetings; and a perceived lack of recognition by officials of the need to expand transit services. Two persons that attended the June 19th public meeting also sent letters to FHWA and FTA reiterating these comments. One of these letters was submitted with records on the latest PPP development efforts and outlined concerns about the sufficiency of public involvement and input for this document.

The review team also received responses by email from a representative of the City of Valparaiso and two citizens. In sum, these particular respondents praised NIRPC in a number of areas including: professionalism; technical assistance; non-motorized transportation planning; mapping; Complete Streets, Safe Routes to School, public input/awareness outreach efforts.

Finding: NIRPC's existing PPP and public outreach minimally meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450.316. The MPO implements its existing PPP to provide citizens and stakeholders with reasonable opportunities for involvement

in the metropolitan planning process. Public notice and access to information on transportation issues includes visualization techniques and is provided via accessible formats/locations and the internet. NIRPC is engaged with the public in efforts to address the effectiveness of current procedures through development of a new PPP.

FHWA and FTA did not find it clear from both the MTP and TIPs posted on NIRPC's web site if there were significant written/oral comments that had been received on these documents. It was therefore not easy for the public to see how comments were received and then addressed in these planning products. A summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments is required under 23 CFR 450.316 (a)(2), which states:

(a)(2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.

Consequently, recommendations in the TIP section and below are provided.

Recommendation 11: NIRPC should consider the following actions to help improve the transparency of its public involvement process. A peer exchange with another Indiana MPO to acquire "best practices" for possible implementation may also be helpful.

1. The updated public participation plan should identify the process for soliciting involvement, suggestions and recommendations received during its development, and clarify how input was considered for the final product.
2. Annual reporting should include actions taken by the MPO to obtain public comments about the planning process. This should include a summary of the individual activities and comments, and an analysis of the impact on decision-making.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and Environmental Justice

Requirement: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states:

"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Title VI bars intentional discrimination as well as disparate impact discrimination (e.g., neutral policy or practice that has the effect of a disparate impact on protected groups).

Title 23 further requires FHWA and FTA to certify that the "planning process . . . is being conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements of . . . Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance executed by each State under 23 U.S.C 324 and 29 U.S.C. 794." The Title VI assurance executed by each State adds sex and physical handicap to characteristics protected against discrimination.

Requirement: The Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, dated February 11, 1994, amplifies Title VI by providing that "each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations." As metropolitan and statewide planning activities are conducted with FHWA funds, products of the planning process should demonstrate compliance with the spirit of the Executive Order. The appropriate time for FHWA and FTA to ensure compliance with Title VI and EJ in the planning process is during the quadrennial certification review.

Status: NIRPC formally responded to the 2009 certification review Environmental Justice corrective action via correspondence dated October 28, 2010 (Appendix 6). In cooperation with FHWA and FTA, NIRPC held Environmental Justice workshops and received related training in mid-2010. Focus was on identifying NIRPC's role in fulfilling the Environmental Justice Executive Order including methodologies for inclusive planning in addition to avoiding, minimizing and mitigating disproportionate impacts to protected populations. NIRPC hired a public participation and outreach coordinator. An Environmental Justice working group was formed to provide ongoing assistance in developing the 2040 CRP. NIRPC's correspondence also outlined its public outreach efforts at various events within the region and through interviews by the media.

NIRPC's 2040 CRP contains a chapter on Environmental Justice documenting numerous public meetings and workshops conducted during development of the plan from December 2008 through October 2010. These included workshops to obtain input on three scenarios (2010 existing, 2040 constrained, 2040 unconstrained) under consideration. NIRPC used its travel demand model for each scenario considering different assumptions for population and employment by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ).

NIRPC Environmental Justice analysis consisted of three parts: defining environmental justice populations; developing performance measures; and comparing scenarios. Minority and low-income populations were identified from Census data and assigned by TAZ. Large concentrations of these populations were mapped together with major destinations and transportation networks. Census employment data was assigned by TAZ. NIRPC identified 11 performance measures to be used for each of the three scenarios. The metrics compare proximity and travel times to amenities for the identified protected population areas with all inhabitants for each scenario. There are separate driving and transit bar charts for each performance measure. Each chart compares the travel time or accessibility for each scenario by poverty/non-poverty and minority/non-minority.

Generally, the 2040 CRP concludes and the analysis shows that protected populations will receive benefits and will not experience disproportionate burdens from either the 2040 constrained or unconstrained scenarios. However, in the cases of travel time to major retail/shopping and other non-commuting purposes, protected populations will not receive as much transit travel time reductions as the non-poverty and non-minority areas. The 2040 CRP states that for major retail the problem is due to spatial mismatches and not transportation. It should be noted that auto commute travel times for all populations increase under both 2040 scenarios. The TIP project selection process includes scoring criteria related to “number of EJ zones served” and “accessibility of EJ areas.”

NIRPC’s documented Title VI complaint process is posted on its web site.

Findings: NIRPC is in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898.

Commendation 3: NIRPC is praised for its Environmental Justice analysis in the 2040 CRP. The methodology comparing accessibility and travel times to determine disproportionate benefits and burdens on protected populations is exemplary and a model for other MPOs.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Requirement: Public rights-of-way and facilities are required to be accessible to persons with disabilities through the following statutes:

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC §794) 49 CFR Part 27 and
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) (42 USC §§12131-12164) - 28 CFR Part 35.

These statutes prohibit public agencies from discriminating against persons with

disabilities by excluding them from services, programs, or activities. Pedestrian access for persons with disabilities to the agency's streets and sidewalks must be provided, whenever a pedestrian facility exists. FHWA has the responsibility to ensure ADA compliance in the public right-of-way and on projects using federal-aid highway funds.

The ADA requires public agencies with more than 50 employees to conduct a self-evaluation of their current services, policies, and practices that do not meet ADA requirements. The public agency must develop a "transition plan" which must include a schedule for providing required accessibility upgrades, including curb ramps for walkways (28 CFR §35.150(d)).

Transition plans should have been completed by January 26, 1992, and the deadline for completing the required accessibility upgrades listed in the transition plan was January 26, 1995. The ADA transition plan and its identified needs should be integrated into the MPO's TIP and State DOT's STIP program documents. For more information, see the USDOT Accessibility webpage at the following website:

http://www.dot.gov/citizen_services/disability/disability.html.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC §794) 49 CFR Part 27 also requires recipients of Federal funds (regardless of the number of people they may employ) to evaluate their current policies and practices, to identify shortcomings in regards to accessibility, to begin modifying those shortcomings, to take appropriate remedial actions, and establish a system for periodic review and updating the remediation plan.

The MPO provides a Nondiscrimination Self-Certification with any TIP it submits. NIRPC's Self-Certification notes that its members also do not discriminate in program delivery. To help address this, the MPO has worked with both the State DOT and FHWA to improve the awareness of these requirements and identify ways to help ensure ADA is not overlooked as projects in the public right-of-way are designed and built. NIRPC has taken steps to help assure that member communities have viable ADA Transition Plans in place.

Status: INDOT and FHWA have been working to improve awareness and compliance with the requirements for communities to have "transition plans." This is a requirement to receive federal funding.

Over the past 18 months, INDOT and FHWA have made presentations statewide reminding local communities of this requirement, and offering technical assistance to help cities, towns and counties to develop and as appropriate, update their transition plans.

NIRPC was one of the first metropolitan regions to host INDOT and FHWA by providing both a venue and inviting communities within its jurisdiction to attend a

workshop on ADA transition plans. The MPO then continued to contact communities to remind them of these requirements, offer technical assistance, and to ensure they had up-to-date ADA transition plans.

INDOT and NIRPC recently coordinated efforts to identify and work with communities in northwest Indiana, that were not reporting the status of their ADA transition plans, to help bring them into compliance. NIRPC notes that all 27 communities requiring a transition plan have now completed their plans. NIRPC subsequently began assisting local communities with fewer than the 50 employee threshold in developing their plans.

Finding: The FHWA/FTA federal review team finds that the NIRPC meets the federal requirements to have Transition Plans as required under the ADA.

Commendation 4: The federal review team compliments the MPO for its efforts to work cooperatively with both the State DOT and FHWA to better understand ADA requirements. By helping both INDOT and FHWA to ensure communities develop and have ADA transition plans, the MPO has demonstrated a commitment to improving the current status of ADA compliance in the region. It also provides a tangible example of how the MPO operates to support its Nondiscrimination Self-Certification associated with their TIP.

Planning Factors/Livability

Requirement: Federal regulations at 23 CFR 450.306 and 450.318 define the scope of the metropolitan transportation planning process and the relationship of corridor and other subarea planning studies to the metropolitan planning process and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements.

Current federal law found in MAP-21 established environmental sustainability as a national goal and continues the following eight planning factors in 23 CFR 450.306(a) that must be explicitly considered and reflected in the planning process products.

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Increase the safety of the transportation system.
- Increase the security of the transportation system.
- Increase the accessibility and mobility for people and freight.
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
- Promote efficient system management and operation.

- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

In June 2009, DOT, HUD and the EPA joined together to form the Partnership for Sustainable Communities (www.sustainablecommunities.gov). Six livability principles have been established through this collaboration and are listed below. Compliance is voluntary.

- Provide more transportation choices - Reduce transportation costs, dependence on foreign oil, and emissions.
- Promote equitable, affordable housing – Expand location and energy-efficient housing to reduce the combined costs of housing and transportation.
- Enhance economic competitiveness – Improve accessibility to employment, education, and community amenities.
- Support existing communities – Revitalize neighborhoods and increase the efficiency of public works investments through transit-oriented development, mixed land uses and land recycling.
- Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.
- Value communities and neighborhoods – Enhance the unique characteristics, imaginability and walkability of the built environment.

Status: The planning factors identified in federal legislation are included in the planning products of the MPO. NIRPC’s planning process provides consideration of projects and strategies that address each of the factors. The factors form the basis of the goals in the MTP, TIP and UPWP.

The review team analyzed key metrics in an effort to quantify NIRPC’s progress in achieving goals and objectives related to the planning factors and Partnership for Sustainable Communities principles. Data and analysis is in Table 4 and the narrative below.

	Population and Land Use						Roads, Income and Economic Efficiency							
	Std. Pop. Density (Chicago IN UZA)	Std. Pop. Density (Mich.City/ LaPorte UZA)	Wtd. Pop. Density (Chicago IN UZA)	Wtd. Pop. Density (Mich.City/ LaPorte UZA)	UZA Density Gradient (Chicago IN UZA)	Density Gradient (Mich.City/ LaPorte UZA)	UZA Per Capita VMT (Lake,Porter)	UZA Per Capita VMT (LaPorte)	MSA Per Capita VMT (Lake,Porter)	MSA Per Capita VMT (LaPorte)	MSA Per Capita Income (Lake,Porter)	MSA Per Capita Income (LaPorte)	MSA Per Capita Income/VMT Ratio (Lake, Porter)	MSA Per Capita Income/VMT Ratio (LaPorte)
2000	2,068	1,992	3,029	2,057	1.46	1.03	9,542	NA	10,314	13,612	\$27,820	\$24,782	2.70	1.82
R5 Rank (hi-low)	42/88	47/88	29/88	68/88	30/88	73/88	9/74	NA	37/76	2/76	38/76	65/76	70/76	74/76
2010	1,839	1,695	2,742	1,814	1.49	1.07	11,832	11,935	9,073	12,892	\$35,312	\$30,010	3.89	2.33
R5 Rank (hi-low)	45/88	62/88	31/88	71/88	24/88	68/88	6/83	4/83	58/76	5/76	37/76	68/76	25/76	76/76
Change	-229	-297	-287	-243	0.03	0.04	2,290	NA	-1,241	-720	\$7,492	\$5,228	1.19	0.51
R5 Avg. 00'	2,116		2,928		1.35		7,610		10,262		\$28,238		2.82	
R5 Avg. 10'	1,944		2,688		1.34		8,594		10,167		\$35,200		3.56	
R5 Change	-172		-240		-0.01		984		-95		\$6,962		0.74	

Notes: UZA population and square miles obtained via the Census at http://www2.census.gov/geo/ua/ua_list_all.txt. UZA VMT obtained from FHWA the Office of Highway Policy Information, Highway Statistics Series, Highway Statistics 2010 (2009 data) and 2000 (1999 data) (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics/2010/hm71.cfm>) as available for each UZA. MSA VMT obtained from state DOTs. Chicago UZA and Chicago MSA data only include Indiana Lake and Porter Counties. Per capita personal income obtained from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (www.bea.gov).

According to Census statistics, the respective population densities of the Indiana portion of the Chicago, IL-IN UZA and the Michigan City-LaPorte, IN UZA declined from about 2,068 to 1,839 and 1,992 to 1,694 per square mile during the 2000 to 2010 period. Respective perceived or weighted population density

during the same period dropped from 3,029 to 2,742 and 2,057 to 1,814 per square mile over this time. This metric is very important as it both measures density at the Census tract level and weights it by the proportion of population in that tract. The measure indicates the level of population clustering and has a much stronger correlation to transit ridership than traditional population density.³

The northwestern Indiana density declines were larger than the average decreases during 2000-2010 for the 88 UZAs in the FTA Region 5 area (Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin). Weighted densities for the Indiana portion of the Chicago, IL-IN UZA remain above the Region 5 average, however, this metric is well below the average for the Michigan City-LaPorte, IN UZA. Comparable relationships for both UZAs are reflected in the density gradient metric, which measures the ratio of weighted population density to standard density.

FHWA per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT) statistics for the years 2000 (1999 data) to 2010 (2009 data) show that the Indiana portion of the Chicago, IL-IN UZA experienced an increase of 24 percent to 11,832. This moved the Indiana portion of the Chicago, IL-IN UZA from ninth to sixth highest for per capita VMT in Region 5 with available data. The Michigan City-LaPorte, IN UZA had the fourth highest per capita VMT for Region 5 in 2010.⁴ Data from INDOT showed per capita VMT declining in the Lake and Porter Counties portion of the Chicago, IL-IN-WI MSA about 12 percent to 9,073 from 2000-2010 which is below the 2010 MSA average change of all 76 MSAs measured in Region 5. The Michigan City-LaPorte, IN MSA per capita VMT change was smaller but the 2010 metric was 12,892 which is 5th highest in Region 5.

Economic productivity and efficiency can be measured at the per capita level for MSAs in terms of both gross regional product (GRP) and personal income ratios with VMT.⁵ Calculations were not done for GRP as the Chicago, IL-IN-WI MSA metric is unavailable for just the Indiana portion. Higher numeric ratios are indicative of communities that reduce inefficiencies through urban design resulting in better accessibility, lower energy consumption and decreased travel demand. For both 2000 and 2010, the Chicago, IL-IN-WI MSA (Indiana portion) per capita personal income/VMT ratios were comparable to the Region 5 MSA averages and improved in ranking. However, the Michigan City-LaPorte, IN MSA levels in this metric compare very poorly against the Region 5 MSAs (last for 2010).

³ See the article, *What Density Doesn't Tell Us About Sprawl* by Eric Eidlin, available via the following link for a discussion on perceived population densities and population gradient indexes: <http://www.uctc.net/access/37/access37sprawl.pdf>.

⁴ Urbanized area VMT data was obtained for UZAs from the FHWA Office of Highway Policy Information, Highway Statistics Series, Highway Statistics 2010 (2009 data) and 2000 (1999 data) (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics/2010/hm71.cfm>) as available for each UZA. Per capita VMT is calculated based upon the 2010 UZA population. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Highway Vehicle Miles Traveled, 2000, 2009: http://www.bts.gov/publications/state_transportation_statistics/state_transportation_statistics_2010/html/table_05_03.html.

⁵ Per capita gross regional product and per capita personal income obtained from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) regional accounts available at www.bea.gov.

Per capita VMT for all areas of the United States was 9,620 in 2009. Indiana had the seventh highest per capita VMT at 11,930 for this period. The respective Indiana portion of the Chicago, IL-IN UZA and the Michigan City-LaPorte, IN UZA had the thirteenth and second highest per capita VMT of the 16 UZAs in Indiana.⁶ Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) data for the Indiana portion of the Chicago, IL-IN MSA shows that per capita income has been on a declining trend from a high of 101 percent of the U.S. metric in 1969 to a low of 84 percent in 2009 (<http://www.bea.gov/regional/index.htm>). There was some improvement in 2010-2011.⁷

Finding: The MPO is satisfactorily addressing the eight planning factors of SAFETEA-LU and MAP-21 pursuant to 23 CFR 450.306(a). NIRPC has set the foundation to improve coordination of transportation and land use to improve environmental sustainability and livability through the 2040 CRP and Livable Centers Initiative. The challenge is to implement measurable improvements throughout the long-term planning horizon. The loss of wealth-building employment is certainly a significant factor in the performance of some cited metrics. However, dispersed development patterns are likely contributors to rising per capita VMT, reduced economic efficiency, lower personal incomes, and possible reductions in overall quality of life. Inherently, the collective land use and transportation policy choices by local authorities in the past appear to be constraining multimodal transportation system performance.

The recent recession and economic conditions have made it imperative that local governments coordinate effectively to base decisions on factors that can demonstrate maximum value from investments. Accordingly, MAP-21 has significant focus on performance-driven/outcome-based planning and requires that MPOs eventually utilize core metrics for the following: highway conditions; transit state of good repair; highway safety; transit safety; congestion; freight movement; and environmental sustainability.

The aforementioned analysis in this section and Appendix 3, Transit Operating and Performance Analysis, is provided as examples of performance measures that could be used by the MPO pursuant to the MAP-21 environmental sustainability element. These and other metrics below can be of great value in improving implementation of planning goals and objectives through both project selection and monitoring of outcomes. The UPWP, MTP, TIP and other products could use the metrics to demonstrate how the planning process and documents are quantitatively improving outcomes. See *Recommendation 2* in the Metropolitan Planning Agreements section, *Recommendation 4* in the MTP section, and *Recommendation 7* in the Transit section.

⁶ FHWA Office of Highway Policy Information, Highway Statistics Series, Highway Statistics 2010 (2009 VMT data and 2010 Census population data)

⁷ Data obtained from the Bureau of Economic Analysis web site, www.bea.gov.

Examples of performance measures and techniques are listed below.

- National Transit Database (NTD) Statistics [(transit ridership, farebox recovery ratios, etc.)](www.ntdprogram.gov)]
- Transit Accessibility (% households and employment within ¼ - ½ mile of transit)
- Mode Share including transit and non-motorized trips [(pedestrian and bicycling) (<http://www.dot.gov/affairs/2010/bicycle-ped.html>) (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ctpp/dataproduct.htm>)]
- Per Capita VMT (INDOT)(<http://www.in.gov/indot/2469.htm>)
- Travel Time and Distance ([http://knowledge.fhwa.dot.gov/tam/aashto.nsf/All+Documents/9AB1BE44BF4B783F852577B300494BBE/\\$FILE/Measuring%20Urban%20Transportation%20Performance.pdf](http://knowledge.fhwa.dot.gov/tam/aashto.nsf/All+Documents/9AB1BE44BF4B783F852577B300494BBE/$FILE/Measuring%20Urban%20Transportation%20Performance.pdf))
- Roadway and Sidewalk Connectivity Indexes [(Link/Node Ratio, Intersection Density, etc.) (<http://www.enhancements.org/download/trb/trb2004/TRB2004-001550.pdf>)]
- Entropy Index [(land use diversity mix)(www.walkscore.com)]
- Population and Employment Densities / Central Business District Square Footage (Perceived Densities and Density Gradient Index) (http://www.uctc.net/access/37/access37_sprawl.shtml)
- Affordability Index [(Housing + Transportation Costs/Income) (<http://www.cnt.org/tcd/ht>)]
- Dissimilarity Index [(level of racial integration) (http://www.censuscope.org/us/s40/p75000/chart_dissimilarity.html)]
- Income/Education Disparity by Race; Percentage Population Below Poverty
- Per Capita Income or Wealth Index [(area weighted per capita income compared to U.S. level)(data available to compute Wealth Index via www.bea.gov)].

Safety

Requirement: Federal statute 23 USC 134 (h)(1)(B) requires the MPO to consider safety of the transportation system and its users, within the metropolitan planning process, the MTP, and TIP. This process should be collaborative, data-driven and comprehensive. The planning partners should incorporate safety into all aspects of the transportation planning process.

Efforts should address safety solutions in Engineering (infrastructure improvements), Enforcement (red light running, speed limits), Education (bicycle-pedestrian education, youth alcohol awareness), and Emergency Services (incident management, emergency access to incident locations). These four categories are commonly referred to as the “Four-E’s” of safety.

SAFETEA-LU established a core safety program called the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) (23 U.S.C. 148), which introduced a mandate for Strategic Highway Safety Plans (SHSPs). A SHSP is a statewide coordinated safety plan that provides a comprehensive framework for reducing highway fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. Metropolitan and statewide transportation planners must be an integral part of the SHSP process.

The metropolitan transportation planning process should be consistent with the SHSP, and other transit safety and security planning and review processes, plans and programs as appropriate (23 CFR 450.306 (h)). MPOs are encouraged to outline a safety element in the MTP that incorporates or summarizes the priorities, goals, countermeasures, or projects for the Metropolitan Planning Area contained in the SHSP. This should include, as appropriate, emergency relief and disaster preparedness plans, strategies and policies that support homeland security and safeguard the personal security of all motorized and non-motorized users [23 CFR 450.322 (h)].

Status: NIRPC has programmed an element in its FY 2013-2014 UPWP to identify safety deficiencies along with recommendations for improvements including low-cost maintenance items, such as signage and pavement markings, or possibly high-cost capital improvements, such as reconstruction with added turning lanes. The MPO plans to develop a safety management system that includes annual collection and monitoring of crash information in addition to data geo-coding in GIS. NIRPC's safety management program will support each of the 13 emphasis areas of the Indiana SHSP. NIRPC will provide an annual crash summary report to all jurisdictions.

Finding: The review team finds NIRPC is at the early stages of developing a regional approach to safety planning and is meeting the safety requirements of the federal planning regulations. NIRPC should encourage its LPAs and local police to conduct roadway safety audits (RSAs) to address the safety concerns, and where appropriate, develop the scope of work for an intersection improvement project. The results of this systematic regional approach should be used to develop a program of Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) projects.

Security

Requirement: Pursuant to 23 CFR 450.306, the planning process should provide for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will "increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users".

Status: In a year-long effort, NIRPC collaborated with the Indiana Homeland Security, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) Polis Center, and the Lake and Porter County Emergency Management Offices in development of a multi hazard mitigation plan for Lake and Porter Counties. The plan was adopted by the counties and municipalities for these areas in 2010. NIRPC is a long-time member of the Lake County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). A mutual aid pact developed by NIRPC in collaboration with the counties of Lake, Porter, LaPorte, Jasper and Newton has been in existence since 2003.

Finding: NIRPC meets the federal requirements relating to security. The MPO incorporates security into the transportation planning process and coordinates with the appropriate security agencies.

MAP-21 Planning Requirements

Requirement: MAP-21, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (P.L. 112-141), was signed into law by President Obama on July 6, 2012, and funds surface transportation programs at more than \$105 billion for fiscal years (FY) 2013 and 2014. MAP-21 built on previous legislative efforts and provided new emphasis on certain initiatives. MAP-21 creates a streamlined, performance-based, and multimodal program to address the many challenges facing the U.S. transportation system. These challenges include improving safety, maintaining infrastructure condition, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency of the system and freight movement, protecting the environment, and reducing delays in project delivery. In MAP-21, the metropolitan and statewide transportation planning processes are continued and enhanced to incorporate performance goals, measures, and targets into the process of identifying needed transportation improvements and project selection. MAP-21 establishes national performance goals for Federal highway and public transportation programs:

- **Safety**—To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.
- **Infrastructure condition**—To maintain transportation infrastructure asset systems in a state of good repair.
- **Congestion reduction**—To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the NHS.
- **System reliability**—To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system.
- **Freight movement and economic vitality**—To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development.

- **Environmental sustainability**—To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
- **Reduced project delivery delays**—To reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies' work practices.

Status: The Secretary, in consultation with States, MPOs, public transportation operators, and other stakeholders, will establish performance measures for pavement conditions and the Interstate and NHS, bridge conditions, injuries and fatalities, traffic congestion, on-road mobile source emissions, and freight movement, in addition to transit state of good repair and safety. States, MPOs, and transit operators will set performance targets in support of those measures. State plans and MTPs will describe how program and project selection will help achieve the targets.

Financial Billing Review

Requirement: FHWA is required to annually evaluate internal controls for itself and recipients of federal-aid highway funding as part of the Financial Integrity Review & Evaluation (FIRE) program. This directive is governed by additional directives including:

- The Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA) of 1982 requires Federal agencies to continuously review and improve their internal control systems.
- The Cash Management Improvement Act of 1990 requires Federal agencies to improve their processes for transferring funds to the States.
- Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-123, Management's Responsibility for Internal Control, requires Federal managers to (1) implement cost-effective internal control, (2) assess the adequacy of internal controls in Federal programs and operations, (3) assess and document internal control over financial reporting, (4) identify needed improvements, (5) take corrective actions, and (6) report annually on internal control through management assurance statements.
- OMB Circular A-127, Financial Management Systems, requires each Federal agency to conduct appropriate reviews of its financial management systems.
- OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations, establishes responsibilities and requirements for complying with the Single Audit Act of 1984 and the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996.

Based upon this, the FHWA Indiana Division has incorporated the review of MPO

billings into its MPO certification process, to ensure MPOs are properly managing federal funds and as necessary, to provide additional technical assistance by the FHWA Division Finance Team.

Status: The billing selected for review was for the period January 1, 2013 through March, 31st, 2013. From this billing, there were 27 job elements from which to select that listed charges for work completed. The normal methodology followed by the FHWA Finance staff for conducting billing reviews involves randomly selecting line items (in this case, job elements) at random from a particular billing.

When selecting line items from which to work, the person(s) conducting the review have the latitude to “judgmentally” select a line item if that person, in his/her professional judgment, feels there is something unique about that item they feel warrants further review.

The job elements selected were as follows:

Job Element #2047 Intelligent Transportation Systems

Job element #2508 AQ Public ED

Job Element #2507 AQ Diesel Catalyst

Job elements 2507 and 2508 are CMAQ projects and are listed under NIRPC Programs as job element 2532 on the FY 2013 Summary List of Projects and Budgets of the UPWP.

Two of the above three elements had the Direct Labor charges reviewed. This involved tracing one or two payroll logs provided by NIRPC for each element to check for accuracy and completeness, as well as check the fringe and indirect calculations which are based on the direct labor charge.

The third element was a billing for contract labor. The contract and invoice were reviewed for accuracy.

The review was conducted by FHWA Indiana Division Financial Specialist, Pamela Davis. Documentation was provided by staff for the payments sampled. Payroll calculations upon initial review were unclear, however, explanations were provided by NIRPC’s Chief Accountant.

Finding: All calculations for payroll receipts and invoices were found to be accurate and complete.

Disposition of 2009 Findings

The report documenting the previous transportation planning certification review findings was issued on October 2, 2009. FTA and FHWA certified the planning process and issued two corrective actions and delivered twelve recommendations for improvements to the planning process. The Review Team notes the status of the corrective action and the recommendations as follows:

Corrective Action: In order to meet the minimum requirements of 23 CFR 450.320, the region must establish a congestion management process that contains the elements defined in the requirements portion of this section. Specifically, USDOT advises that the following steps be taken to meet these requirements:

- Establish a congestion management subcommittee, consisting of representatives from at least the following entities:
 - State DOT (INDOT LaPorte District and Headquarters)
 - MPO (NIRPC)
 - County highway departments or equivalent agency (Lake, Porter, LaPorte)
 - City highway departments or equivalent agency (Gary, Hammond, others)
 - Transit Operator (NICTD, Regional Bus Authority, others)
 - Private bus operators (Greyhound, etc.)
 - Regional freight operators, if available (truck and rail)
 - Emergency responders, if available (police, fire, ambulance)
- Determine performance measures
 - Highway performance measures (V/C, travel times, travel speeds, Level of Service, etc.)
 - Transit performance measures (on-time %, passenger boarding counts, etc.)
 - Mode-neutral performance measures (benefit/cost, person throughput, hours of delay, customer satisfaction)
 - Non-recurring performance measures (crash statistics, incident response time, etc.)
 - Other regionally-specific performance measures – to be determined from available data
- Identify data sources
 - Intelligent Transportation Systems (CCTV cameras, traffic loops, enhanced traffic signals)

Finding: NIRPC's follow-up actions to the corrective action are documented in the CMP section of this report and in NIRPC's correspondence to FHWA and FTA, dated October 28, 2010 (Appendix 6). The corrective action has been resolved.

Corrective Action: The FHWA/FTA federal review team finds the MPO's compliance with the EJ Executive Order to be a corrective action. This decision is warranted due to the need for additional EJ analysis to be conducted during the current 2040 Plan update cycle and based on verbal and written comments received at our meeting with the public. Several serious concerns with the metropolitan planning process were identified by stakeholders. Two workshops on EJ and Transportation Planning should be scheduled; one with affected stakeholders and one with NIRPC staff and planning partners. FHWA and FTA can be instrumental in working with NIRPC to plan these opportunities for training and dialogue. Also, work activities underway to update the Long Range Transportation Plan should be amended to add several analytical tasks to identify and document a fair distribution of benefits and burdens to all segments of the regional community through implementation of the Plan. These tasks can be developed as action items from the workshops and will occur prior to November 1, 2010.

Finding: NIRPC's follow-up actions to the corrective action are documented in the EJ section of this report and in NIRPC's correspondence to FHWA and FTA, dated October 28, 2010 (Appendix 6). The corrective action has been resolved.

Recommendation: INDOT and the MPO Council update the Indiana MPO Handbook (<http://indianampo.com/index.htm>) to reflect INDOT's 2005 reorganization and to clarify the INDOT process for the coordination and review of planning documents.

Finding: The INDOT Cooperative Operations Manual, dated August 16, 2012, is posted on the Indiana MPO web site. This recommendation has been satisfied.

Recommendation: For future UPWP documents NIRPC should also include the costs for each work element along with who will perform the work with the work element description. This would make it much easier to recognize the amount of effort needed for the work element when projects are being reviewed and for the general public interested in knowing what the activities of NIRPC include. This recommendation is consistent with UPWP documents of MPOs across the country.

Finding: NIRPC includes costs for each work element in the UPWP. This recommendation has been satisfied.

Recommendation: The federal review team offers the following items for action over the next few years: Data driven performance measures are needed for all program efforts. The MPO should cooperatively develop and adopt system-wide performance measures. The region-wide performance measure(s) should cover all modes (highway, transit, freight/multimodal) of transportation within the region. The measures can then be used in development and future transportation plans, and prioritization of projects.

Finding: NIRPC has developed multi-modal performance measures as part of their CMP. A similar recommendation is carried over to the current review to build upon this effort.

Recommendation: The use of an annual inflation rate of 2% to adjust the costs for projects in developing the LRTP needs to be re-examined to determine if this amount is appropriate.

Finding: NIRPC used an inflation rate of 2.49% in the 2040 CRP for their highway expansion projects. The review team recognizes the difficulty in determining the appropriate rate given the economic climate in recent years. A recommendation is made in the current review for NIRPC to more thoroughly explain the inflation factor for non-highway expansion related expenses and revenues in the MTP.

Recommendation: The review team recommends the Financial Plan be simplified to make the sources of local, state and federal funding more clear and easier to understand for the public. In addition, to be consistent with purposes of the State, the same fiscal year used by the State is recommended to help coordinate the evaluation of fiscal constraint by the FHWA, and DOT

Finding: This new MTP does not list estimated local revenue amounts by source for transit. This discrepancy is included in the 2013 review, Recommendation 3.

Recommendation: An updated ITS Architecture is needed before the development of the next Long Range Transportation Plan so it can serve as input into the plan. The ITS architecture update should coincide with NIRPC's efforts to implement the CMP. ITS can be a critical component in data gathering, as well as congestion mitigation, and directly supports the purpose of the CMP.

Finding: This recommendation has not been addressed and is cited as a corrective action in the current review.

Recommendation: As a region with one of the most significant truck corridors in the United States, it would be useful for the MPO to work closely with the State to identify and address freight in a more cooperative manner. For example, the MPO could collaborate with the State to identify freight priorities with local freight stakeholders using INDOT's Intermodal Freight & Mobility Plan as a starting point for both agencies, to identify and prioritize freight activities in the region.

Finding: NIRPC has collaborated with Conexus Indiana to develop regional priority freight projects for inclusion in the State Freight Plan. INDOT has representation on NIRPC's RailVISION group and the at-grade crossing study. INDOT and NIRPC have collaborated on freight issues for the Illiana Expressway and Indiana Gateway projects. This finding has been satisfied.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the MPO further refine specific elements of their TIP prioritization process, specifically the environmental justice factor in the prioritization process for all project categories. For the expansion capacity projects, a congestion management process element in the scoring needs to be integrated into the TIP prioritization process.

Finding: Environmental Justice and the CMP are now beneficial elements in the TIP project scoring process for all projects. This recommendation has been satisfied.

Recommendation: For future program years, NIRPC must work with INDOT and the transit operators to ensure that the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects is completed within 90 days from the end of the program year.

Finding: NIRPC completes the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects annually and attests that it is made available for public review within the time allotment. This recommendation has been satisfied.

Recommendation: Internal controls should be strengthened to provide more detailed descriptions in supporting documentation for payments; payments should also be approved in all cases by more than one person. Finally, a payment should never be approved by the recipient. Payments should always be backed up with documentation, e.g., receipts, etc.

Finding: NIRPC's policy is now to attach all pertinent supporting documents with details to payment claims such as cash receipts and postage reports. This recommendation has been satisfied.

Recommendation: FHWA advises INDOT to collaborate with NIRPC and other MPOs to set procurement policy and procedures using federal funds. NIRPC's current procedures created for FTA procurements could be edited for use with FHWA funds.

The CMAQ grant agreement can be refined and used as a model for purchase of goods. Once any procurement procedures are finalized, INDOT needs to formally approve that the procedures meet the federal requirements.

Recommendation: NIRPC should review its members' LPA procurement processes and implement a monitoring program for the CMAQ funded vehicles and equipment. INDOT needs to establish how the INDOT will provide oversight of procurements by the MPOs and any other LPAs they assist which use FHWA funds.

Finding: NIRPC has implemented a monitoring program for CMAQ-funded vehicles and equipment. This recommendation has been satisfied.

Conclusion

Subject to reporting progress in addressing the corrective action and recommendations cited in this report, the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration find NIRPC, INDOT, GPTC and NICTD are following a transportation planning process which complies with the federal planning requirements in 23 U.S.C. 134(k)(5) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k)(5).

Appendix 1

**2013 FHWA/FTA PLANNING CERTIFICATION REVIEW
ADVANCED MATERIALS QUESTIONNAIRE**

NIRPC RESPONSES

Study Area Designation, Organizational Structure, Boundaries and Agreements

1. Have the UAB and MPA been adjusted for the 2010 Census? What is the date of the last NIRPC and Governor approvals for the UAB? For the MPA? Have the revised maps been submitted to both FHWA and FTA? Do plan updates consider expanding the MPA to incorporate new areas expected to be urbanized in the next 20 years?

***Response:** Yes. The adjusted UAB and MPA (un-changed) boundaries were approved on Tuesday, January 29th, 2013. The Metropolitan Area Boundary, which includes all of Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties, was approved in 1994. That is the year that LaPorte County was added to the planning boundary, though it had been part of NIRPC since 1979. The planning boundary has not changed.*

(Have the revised maps been submitted to both FHWA and FTA?) Yes.

No; the current MPA boundary is large enough to accommodate any growth in the urbanized area that will occur within 20 years.

2. Who are the member agencies of the NIRPC Policy Committee? Who are the member agencies of the NIRPC Technical Committee? Discuss the impacts thus far of inclusion of new members into the NIRPC planning process resulting from Census 2010. Are any implementing agencies not members of the MPO or policy board? Are any operators of major modes of transportation not members of the MPO or policy board? What is the voting structure of the MPO? One vote per member? Vote by population weight? Combination? Are all jurisdictions within the UAB represented on the Policy Committee? Please provide a copy of the bylaws that govern the Executive Committee, Full Commission and the Transportation Policy Committee.

***Response:** The Commission itself serves as the MPO Policy Committee. By Indiana State Law (P.L. 165-2003, and as amended by P.L. 2-2007), the members of the Commission include a representative of each municipality, appointed by the mayor in the case of cities, and by the town council in the case of towns. The representative must be an elected official, but not necessarily an official of that municipality. (A mayor or town council could appoint a county or state elected official to serve on their behalf, as long as that official resides within their municipality.) In addition, each county is represented by a member of the county commission, a member of the county council and the county surveyor. The State law also provides for representation of two townships in Porter County. The Governor of Indiana also appoints one member. In addition, ex-officio membership is provided to a representative of the fixed route transit operators and to the INDOT LaPorte District Deputy Commissioner.*

The Transportation Policy Committee serves as the transportation technical advisory committee. The members of the TPC include technical staff representatives of many municipalities, counties, and transit operators, INDOT, FHWA, FTA, CMAP, South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, as well as advocacy groups, including South Shore Trails. The Gary/Chicago International Airport and the Port of Indiana also have membership on the TPC.

The 2010 Census did not impact the membership for the planning process, as all local units of government were already represented.

(Are any implementing agencies not members of the MPO or policy board?) Yes, there are some. Not all operators of public transportation are represented on the board.

(Are any operators of major modes of transportation not members of the MPO or policy board?) Yes. Currently, NICTD is the transit operator that serves as a non-voting member of the board.

In most cases, the actions of NIRPC are decided by a voice vote. Occasionally, a roll-call vote is taken. At any meeting of the Full Commission, upon a motion by a member with a second by another member, the weighted voting process can be undertaken. In this circumstance, the votes of municipalities, counties and the two townships are weighted by their share of population. The county council and county commission each represent one half of the unincorporated area population and in the case of Porter County, they represent one half of the unincorporated population outside the two member townships. The county surveyors, governor's appointee and non-voting members are not included in weighted voting.

(Are all jurisdictions within the UAB represented on the Policy Committee?) Yes, all cities, towns and counties are on the board. In addition, two townships in Porter County are members.

The bylaws that govern the Executive Board and Full Commission are contained in P.L. 165-2003, and as amended by P.L. 2-2007. The Transportation Policy Committee does not have bylaws.

3. Discuss the organizational structure of the NIRPC staff. To what degree is the MPO process supported by staff activities of member agencies?

Response:

Please also see the attached NIRPC Staff Organizational Structure Chart.

The answer to the second question is that a NIRPC Senior Planner is the Executive Director of the Kankakee River Basin Development Commission. The answer to the first question is found below. The organizational structure and functions of the NIRPC staff is as follows:

NIRPC STAFF ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS

OVERALL AGENCY MANAGEMENT

PROGRAM AREAS:

- MAINTAIN COMMISSION RELATIONS
- OVERSEE ALL PROGRAM FUNCTIONS
- ESTABLISH INTERNAL POLICY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

TYSON WARNER **Reports to Commission**

STAFF REPORTING TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

ALLEN HAMMOND	<i>DBE Officer (Collateral Duty)</i>
ANGIE HAYES	<i>Director of Finance & Administration</i>
CAROLYN BROWN	<i>Receptionist</i>
MARY THORNE	<i>Planning Secretary/ Interim Executive Assistant</i>
KATHY LUTHER	<i>Director of Environmental Management</i>
JODY MELTON	<i>Executive Director of Kankakee River Basin Commission/ NIRPC Senior Planner</i>
STEVE STRAINS	<i>Deputy Director/ Director of Planning</i>

REGIONAL PLANNING

PLANNING AREAS:LONG-RANGE PLANNING

- UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION
- PROGRAMMING & PROJECT SELECTION & MONITORING
- OUTREACH, PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION
- TRANSIT PLANNING
- LAND USE PLANNING
- NON-MOTORIZED PLANNING
- TRAVEL DEMAND FORECAST MODELING
- AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY
- DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS
- DEMOGRAPHICS & POPULATION FORECASTS
- CONGESTION MANAGEMENT
- ITS SYSTEMS
- SAFETY & SECURITY
- GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS
- FREIGHT PLANNING
- ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLANNING

DEPARTMENT HEAD:

STEVE STRAINS *Deputy Director / Director of Planning*

STAFF REPORTING TO *DEPUTY DIRECTOR /DIRECTOR OF PLANNING*:

BELINDA PETROSKEY	<i>Transit Planner</i>
EMAN IBRAHIM	<i>Planning Manager</i>
GABRIELLE BICIUNAS	<i>Long-Range Planner</i>
GARY EVERS	<i>Transportation Projects Manager</i>
JACK ESKIN	<i>Regional Planner</i>
KEVIN GARCIA	<i>Data Resources Planner</i>
MARY THORNE	<i>Planning Secretary/ Interim Executive</i>
<i>Assistant</i>	
MITCH BARLOGA	<i>Non-Motorized and Greenways Planner, and as of 7/1/13 Transportation Planning Manager</i>
SARAH GEINOSKY	<i>GIS Analyst</i>
TERRELL WADDELL	<i>Transportation Data Specialist</i>
STEPHEN SOSTARIC	<i>Regional Planner/ and as of 7/1/13 Public Involvement & Communications Coordinator</i>
BILL BROWN (retiring 6/30/13)	<i>Transportation Planning Manager</i>

ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

PROGRAM AREAS:

- AIR QUALITY
- Public Education/Outreach
- Permitting Evaluation
- Alternative Fuels, Diesel Fuels
- WATERSHED QUALITY
 - a. Regional Watershed Planning
 - b. Water Usage
 - c. Storm Water Public Education
 - d. Lake Watershed Academy
- NATURAL RESOURCES:
 - a. Chicago Wilderness
 - b. Purdue Planning with Power

DEPARTMENT HEAD:

KATHY LUTHER: *Director of Environmental Management*

STAFF REPORTING TO DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT:

AMANDA PEREGRINE	<i>Environmental Educator</i>
MEREDITH STILWELL	<i>Environmental Secretary / Web Coordinator</i>
JOE EXL	<i>Water Resources Senior Planner</i>

REGIONAL PROGRAMS

PROGRAM AREAS:

- PARTNER AGENCY SUPPORT
- LOCAL PLANNING SUPPORT
- REGIONAL COORDINATION

**JODY MELTON Executive Director of Kankakee River Basin Commission
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

PROGRAM AREAS:

- FINANCE & ACCOUNTING
- SUBGRANTEE OVERSIGHT
- GRAPHICS & DOCUMENTS

DEPARTMENT HEAD:

ANGIE HAYES:

Director of Finance and Administration

STAFF REPORTING TO DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION:

ALLEN HAMMOND	<i>Transit Program Compliance Officer</i>
KELLY WEGNER	<i>Chief Accountant /Partner Agency Accountant</i>
CONNIE BOOS	<i>Accounts Payable Manager</i>
BOB NIEZGODSKI	<i>Procurement Coordinator</i>
GAIL PARKS	<i>Payroll Manager</i>
JOHN SMITH	<i>Production Manager</i>

NIRPC BOARD

04/10/2013 2013 NIRPC APPOINTMENTS

APPOINTING AUTHORITY

MEMBER

LAKE COUNTY

Lake County Commissioners	Roosevelt Allen, Jr., Executive Board
Lake County Council	Christine Cid
Lake County Surveyor	George Van Til
Mayor of Crown Point	David Uran, Chairman
Mayor of East Chicago	Anthony Copeland, Executive Board
Mayor of Gary	Karen Freeman-Wilson
Mayor of Hammond	Thomas M. McDermott, Jr.
Mayor of Hobart	Brian Snedecor, Vice-Chairman
Mayor of Lake Station	Keith Soderquist
Mayor of Whiting	Joseph M. Stahura
Merrillville Town Council	Shawn M. Pettit
Munster Town Council	David F. Shafer
Griffith Town Council	Stan Dobosz
Highland Town Council	Michael Griffin
Schererville Town Council	Tom Schmitt
Dyer Town Council	Jeff Dekker
Cedar Lake Town Council	Robert Carnahan
Lowell Town Council	Donald Parker
Winfield Town Council	James Simmons
New Chicago Town Council	Pamela Richard
St. John Town Council	Michael Forbes
Schneider Town Council	Richard Ludlow

PORTER COUNTY

Porter County Commissioners	Nancy Adams, Executive Board
Porter County Council	Jim Polarek
Porter County Surveyor	Kevin Breitzke
Mayor of Portage	Jim Snyder
Mayor of Valparaiso	H. Jonathan Costas
Chesterton Town Council	James G. Ton, Secretary
Hebron Town Council	Don Ensign, Executive Board
Porter Town Council	Greg Stinson
Kouts Town Council	James Murphy
Ogden Dunes Town Council	Tom Clouser
Burns Harbor Town Council	Jeff Freeze
Beverly Shores Town Council	Geof Benson
Dune Acres Town Council	John Sullivan
Pines Town Council	George Adey
Porter Township Trustee	Edward Morales
Union Township Trustee	Anthony Pampalone

LAPORTE COUNTY

LaPorte County Commissioners	Dave Decker, Executive Board
LaPorte County Council	Rich Mrozinski
LaPorte County Surveyor	Anthony Hendricks
Mayor of Michigan City	Richard Murphy
Mayor of LaPorte	Blair Milo, Treasurer
Long Beach Town Council	Bob Schaefer, Executive Board
Kingsford Heights Town Council	Rosalie Jacobs
Michiana Shores Town Council	Patrick Margraf
Trail Creek Town Council	John Bayler
Wanatah Town Council	Diane Noll
Kingsbury Town Council	Mark Ritter
LaCrosse Town Council	vacant
Pottawattomie Park Town Council	vacant
Westville Town Council	vacant

4. What official cooperative agreements or memoranda of understanding identifying planning responsibilities have been established among NIRPC, INDOT, public transit providers/operators, air quality agencies or other agencies involved in the planning process? Please attach these documents to your response packet.

Response: 1) Agreement for Implementation of the Urban Transportation Planning Process in 2008 between NIRPC, Operators of Public Transportation, IDEM & INDOT; 2) The Wingspread Regional Accord in November, 2008 between NIRPC, CMAP, SWRPC & SWMPC; 3) Cooperative Agreement for Coordination in April, 2009 between CMAP, NIRPC, IDOT & INDOT; 4) Cooperative Accord for Coordination in July, 2006 between NIRPC & SWMPC

5. Are agreements final, signed, and in effect? Are they appropriate and current? Are updates being developed or contemplated? If so, what changes are planned? Do the parties to the metropolitan planning process actually adhere to the processes identified in the agreements?

Response: All documents are final, signed and in effect. All are appropriate but not current. Preliminary discussions have taken place regarding #1 and #4 listed in the answer to question 4. NIRPC has been ready since early 2013 to meet with INDOT and the transit operators to begin review and suggest updates to INDOT, and was told by INDOT staff to hold off, as INDOT is considering a standard agreement among the State and each Indiana MPO. The agreement seems to cover a lot of the ways that the parties cooperate in the planning process. There should be a discussion about implementation specifics. Regarding the cooperative accord with SWMPC, staff of both agencies has had preliminary discussions about an update.

6. Discuss organizational challenges and opportunities that are anticipated during the planning horizon.

Response: NIRPC is established and organized to continue to be an effective, responsive MPO as it carries out the metropolitan transportation planning process with its partners. Given the requirements of MAP-21 and the annual Planning Emphasis Areas from FHWA-IN, more is expected of MPOs by the federal government with no additional and actually shrinking federal planning revenue. It is a difficult challenge, but NIRPC has maintained enough staff to cover the required planning tasks.

NIRPC has historically maintained an environmental department with diverse assortment of grant and contract funding. This has benefited the ability of NIRPC to maintain staff capacity for technical and agency coordinating aspects of Planning and Environmental Linkages without over-burdening the transportation planning budget. Some funding sources historically utilized by the department have recently experienced decline, introduced scope restrictions, or increased matching fund requirements. This will present an ongoing challenge as all federal dollars are likely to become more competitive in the future.

Opportunities currently anticipated to offset these challenges include the announcement of a US EPA Federal Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund grant to a regional partnership coalition of the Regional Development Authority and NIRPC. In addition, NIRPC staff is continuing to pursue highly competitive watershed planning grants from Indiana Department of Environmental Management. Watershed planning represents an excellent opportunity to integrate environmental mitigation planning activities from transportation with local agency partners.

UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

7. What is the process to develop and prioritize the work items in the UPWP? How are the State and public transit agencies involved in UPWP development? How is

freight, non-motorized, bicycle, pedestrian and other modal interests involved in the development of the UPWP?

Response: *Nearly all of the UPWP tasks are continuing, ongoing, typical MPO activities that meet the federal planning requirements. The State, transit operators and other interests are present at Transportation Policy Committee meetings for UPWP development discussions and are presented with a draft for action. What drives the UPWP ranges from what is required and prescriptive to what is advisory or just appropriate planning practice. Most significant influences in the development and prioritization of the UPWP are:*

- *The Surface Transportation Program authorization act, which was SAFETEA-LU until 2013, and the new Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21).*
- *The Clean Air Act and its amendments*
- *Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs): Emphasis Areas are issued periodically in one form or another by the U.S. DOT, often through notices in the Federal Register or directives from FHWA-IN.*
- *2009 Planning Certification Review recommendations.*
- *NIRPC Vision and Strategic Directions.*
- *The 2040 Comprehensive Plan Vision, Goals, and Implementation Strategies: The Plan identifies goals, policies and projects. Implementation of the Plan is largely through the Transportation Improvement Program, and some follow-up studies and collaborative planning. The majority of UPWP activities relate to the current long-range planning focus.*
- *The six livability principals of the Sustainable Communities Partnership by HUD, DOT, and EPA*

The current two-year UPWP includes a statement at the end of narrative project descriptions indicating which, if any of the NIRPC Vision and Strategic Directions and/or SAFETEA-LU Planning Factors is addressed. U.S. DOT's Planning Emphasis Areas have evolved from the legislation's Planning Factors.

The UPWP lists all transportation activities funded with state and federal and local funds that includes FHWA – PL, STP and CMAQ, and with FTA – Sections 5303 and 5307, local share. INDOT, FHWA-IN and FTA-Region 5 staff oversees and approves development and amendments of the UPWP. An update agreement was developed in 2008 through a cooperative process among the MPO, INDOT, IDEM and operators of public transportation that include roles and responsibilities of every agency. It can be found in in the UPWP appendices section.

The current UPWP 2013-2014 includes unique work activities that are related to freight planning, non-motorized transportation, and transit planning.

8. How do the activities in the UPWP relate to both the planning factors and the goals and priorities identified in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)? Does the UPWP provide for the development and monitoring of performance measures that relate to the MTP's goals and objectives? If so, what are those measures?

Response: See the answer to question 7 for the answer to the first question in #8.

Each major planning task of the UPWP for FY 2014 includes performance measures / indicators that have been identified before in the 2040 Plan. These performance measures will be considered, if possible and based on availability of data, to monitor the progress of implementation of the 2040 plan. The use of performance measures is necessary for transparency and accountability in plan implementation activities. They provide the means to show progress and impact of plan implementation.

9. Are required elements, (e.g. all transportation planning and transportation-related air quality planning activities, regardless of funding source) included? How are non-federally funded studies identified?

Response: *All required elements are included in the UPWP. The UPWP lists all transportation activities funded with FHWA – PL, STP and CMAQ, and with FTA – Sections 5303 and 5307, local share resources. It includes not only transportation, but regional environmental planning and programs, regional economic development planning, and regional land use planning. The UPWP also includes major transportation planning projects being done by others.*

The non-federally funded studies are identified under NIRPC Programs in the UPWP. These programs are usually funded through foundations, local organizations, or businesses.

10. Does the UPWP provide for funding for the professional development of the MPO staff? If so, how?

Response: *Yes. For the last 6-7 years all NIRPC staff have had the opportunity for professional development though the availability of a “Staff Development” budget. It has been and is currently a total of \$18,000 annually and the source is local funds.*

11. In the current UPWP, are all Federal fiscal resources budgeted that are available for planning? For the past two years, have all the fiscal resources been spent? Is there a running balance of Federal planning funds? If so, what is the average balance? Are there ongoing issues concerning over or under budgeting Federal planning funds?

Response: *Yes all available federal planning funds are budgeted in the UPWP.*

FTA Funds

There’s no running balance for FTA funds since all monies are drawn until spent. The City of Valparaiso has two planning projects using FTA planning funds in the UPWP that have just recently been amended into a FTA grant and become available for spending. It’s the policy of the Commission to use all available FTA planning funds prior to spending new FTA grant funds. Therefore, we do not consider these funds as carryover. Any FTA planning funds that would lapse would be deobligated and included in a new project.

PL Funds

The Commission has had a running balance in the PL funds for 2011 and 2012. Their average is \$112,000.

With regard to ongoing issues:

FTA Funds

The budget includes projects for communities within the Commission's planning area that are required to be included in the UPWP. The Commission has no control over when these projects are started or finished. FTA planning projects are based on costs that are at least one year old before they are available in a grant for spending.

PL Funds

The PL budgeting had an overall reduction in salaries and personnel services fringe benefit expenditures. This was primarily due to attrition, as staff resigned and were not replaced or replaced at lower salaries. These savings were offset somewhat when those staff that accepted additional duties were given a two merit step increase.

12. How is the status of planning activities tracked and reported to interested parties (e.g. summary of previous year's activities and accomplishments included in the current UPWP)?

Response: *Every January, a "Year in Review" is compiled and published in conjunction with NIRPC's quarterly newsletter, the regional view. The newsletter is quarterly in order to coincide with the quarterly meetings of NIRPC's Full Commission. The newsletter is distributed as paper copies during these commission meetings. The paper copies are also available in the information racks in the lobby of the NIRPC building. The newsletter is primarily distributed electronically via the NIRPC website, email, and on NIRPC's Facebook page.*

NIRPC is continually working to expand and improve its media presence (both social media and traditional media), with a page on Facebook and a YouTube page as well. NIRPC recently added Twitter. The goal of NIRPC's social media presence is to make NIRPC a hub of planning information for the region. Staff routinely issues news releases and regularly appears in local media, including public television, radio, and in guest columns in local newspapers. These appearances help to spread the word of specific initiatives and activities that the agency is conducting outside of the regular news coverage the agency receives during the course of its usual monthly schedule of meetings. NIRPC continues to look for opportunities to meet with groups, organizations, and local governments to discuss planning issues and opportunities for participation.

13. Data from the Census Bureau shows the Indiana portion of the Chicago, IL-IN UZA with population density of 3,162 per square mile in 1960, 2,068 in 2000, and 1,839 in 2010. According to FHWA, Indiana DOT, and Census data, both the Indiana portions

of the Chicago, IL-IN UZA and Chicago MSA experienced per capita VMT increases of about 20 percent over about the past 10 years. Per Census data, the transit share of commuting to work in the counties of Lake, Porter and LaPorte was roughly 10% in 1960 and about 2.5% in 2000 and 2010. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) data shows per capita personal income in the Gary Metro Division of the Chicago MSA as comparable to the U.S. in the 1970s before beginning a generally downward trend with the lowest levels in the last several years. Please interpret these statistics in detail, explain how they reflect on the success of the planning process, and what the MPO is doing to address them.

Response: Decreasing Densities: *As occurred in the rest of the country after the end of World War II, northwest Indiana saw the population shift from the cities in the north end of Lake County to the open land to the south, and east to Porter County. There the American dream of a single family home with a yard was achievable, especially with the well-paying labor jobs in steel. Today the vibrant communities of Crown Point, Dyer, St. John, Schererville, Merrillville, Chesterton, Portage, and Valparaiso are peopled with the descendants of the early immigrants who came to work in the mills on the shore of Lake Michigan. As long as the mills were making steel, the region prospered. Even with the first shift of people from north to south, the steady availability of high-paid labor jobs remained an attraction and people continued to move to the cities.*

Even as population density (distinct from actual population growth) in Northwest Indiana has steadily declined since 1960, per capita commuter vehicle miles have continued to increase, which reflects:

- *The general improvement of per capita incomes that, over the half-century 1960-2010, has encouraged suburban home and automobile ownership*
- *The continuing effects of suburban expansion and loss of population in the Lake County urban core (with a concomitant increase in commuting distances)*
- *Exodus from the region's industrial cities begins slowly in the mid-1950s, with completion of the interstate highway system and converting farmland to housing development*
- *The outflow accelerates in the 1960s through the 1980s, with a mixture of racism and fear causing white flight from the urban core communities into the close in communities and rural towns*
- *The failure of regional public mass transport (including a recent rapid deterioration in the availability and quality of services) to respond to these changes and compete successfully with commuting by personal automobile.*
- *1980s and 1990s see dozens of industries in the region either shrink or close.*
- *Pullman-Standard, Blaw-Knox, Budd Company, American Steel Foundries, Rand-McNally, ANCO, Whirlpool, Allis-Chalmers and more lock their gates and leave the area; thousands of additional jobs evaporate in a decade*
- *Over 35,000 steel jobs disappear*
- *Inland Steel employment drops from 24,000 in 1981 to 11,000 in 1992*
- *US Steel Gary Works employment drops from 26,7000 in 1979 to 7,850 in 1992*
- *LTV drops from 11,000 in 1960 to 3,500 in 1993*

- *Steel production in the region is at an all-time high employing tens of thousands less people*
- *A large growth industry in the region is health care*
- *Lower wage service sector jobs have taken over the higher paying blue collar jobs that were once so readily available in the region*

Technological advances in heavy manufacturing have significantly reduced the number of total jobs in the area, especially in denser urban core communities. As the number of jobs has diminished, workers and families have responded by (a) moving out of the area to find work elsewhere, (b) sending high school and college graduates to relocate for work outside the core communities, and (c) [for the remaining populace] by traveling greater distances outside the urban areas to find employment. The first two trends help to reduce the density of the households (reflected also in the increasing average age of remaining residents in the UZA), and the last trend significantly increases the miles driven commuting to work. About 30% or more all workers in Northwest Indiana now work in Illinois and 40,000 or 50,000 of the region's residents go into Illinois for work whereas only 7,000 or 8,000 workers from Illinois come into Northwest Indiana.

As seen around the country during the 80's and 90's, the jobs that replaced industrial employment did not provide the level of wages that facilitated a healthy and growing economy region-wide. The per capita wage comparisons demonstrate the shift in regional employment from steel mill union man to mall security cop paid minimum wage. The continuing decline in per capita income demonstrates the difficulty the urban communities still face in trying to attract new employers who pay living wages. The new jobs that were and are being created are outside of the urbanized area, and not easily accessible to urban residents.

There has been the movement of industrial, specifically freight rail related jobs within the United States: Union Tank had three U.S. plants. In 2008, it closed its East Chicago plant and shifted the remainder of its tank building capacity to Louisiana and Texas. East Chicago had older technology and strong union presence; so 450 jobs were lost to Northwest Indiana. Soon thereafter, the company leveled its Railroad Avenue production facility and office buildings to avoid property taxes.

Workers commute farther. East Chicago was developed between 1890 and 1930. Historically, the City could be described as an industrial park which allowed workers to live within its boundaries. This was quite in contrast to the Port of Indiana and steel plants in Burns Harbor, which were designed in the 1950s and 1960s with the assumption that workers would drive to work. Today East Chicago has a huge number of rental vacancies because worker flats are much less in demand. Failure to maintain much of this rental housing has resulted in a growing municipal demolition list and the failure to renovate and rent a number of buildings with from six to twenty units. The loss of housing demand has

brought down the population of East Chicago from 47,000 in 1970 to less than 30,000 in 2010.

For various reasons Northwest Indiana has failed to attract and grow the number and density of job producing businesses that generate higher wages. As union based manufacturing has eroded, the local jobs being created generally pay less than those that were lost. Although sociological and educational attainment factors play a role in this shift, the absence of good transportation alternatives is likely a negative competitive factor as well.

The UZA lacks transportation alternatives for automobile use, particularly the lack of fixed-route bus service outside the old urban core. As younger families have relocated to newer areas outside the older, established areas, the lack of public transportation alternatives means that nearly 100% of the transportation usage for these individuals will be by personal vehicle. In other words, an increasing percentage of households in the UZA area must drive everywhere to get where they want to go, and they are located in less dense areas that require them to drive farther to various destinations. Driving more and driving farther has increased vehicle miles of travel and energy consumption. Automobile use during the last 50 years has been driven by cheap energy prices and large public subsidies for road infrastructure, thus limiting the impact of full absorption cost pricing for vehicle drivers and diminishing the relative attractiveness and apparent cost competitiveness of public transportation alternatives that are not similarly subsidized.

The South Shore Line provides quality service to Chicago during peak and non-peak travel times. Yet, it is a limited service option that is inadequate or inconvenient for a large portion of the population that does not work in the Loop.

As for the change in transit share of trips, it too relates to the development patterns experienced nationally after World War II. Not only did former city dwellers buy homes in the “country”, they also bought a new family car so dad could continue to work in the mill, or get to the train to go to Chicago, even walking to the train station. The Gary Railways Company operated a regional bus transit system in Lake and Porter Counties until 1972. Faced with a declining ridership from the outlying areas, and the lack of a funding commitment from the communities who received service, the company was disbanded and reformed to the Gary Public Transit Corporation (GPTC). Service was reduced to the civil city limits. People living as far south as Crown Point and as far east as Portage no longer had access to public transit. Currently, the lack of committed local share stymies the growth of public transit. The political climate of Indiana is not supportive of public transit enough to create local taxes to provide local matching funds.

How does the development of northwest Indiana reflect on the success of the planning process? If viewed from the perspective of the development of the rest

of the United States from 1948 to until the introduction of the word “sustainable”, the planning process served the region fairly well. Created in 1967, NIRPC came along at a time when the development patterns to the south in Lake County and east into Porter County, were well established. Access to the still job-rich north drove early decisions as seen by the investments in Cline Avenue, US 41, Indianapolis Blvd., Calumet Avenue, and SR 49.

From the perspective of roads, airports, ports, bike paths, and the commuter train, the success of the development of a quality transportation system is evident. From the perspective of public transit, NIRPC continues to make the case for a regional system that connects communities as well as people to jobs and services. The issue is one of local taxing authority. NIRPC does not have the authority to impose taxes, or to mandate the creation and funding of a regional transit system. Under the current structure in Indiana, a municipality may form a public transportation authority and dedicate a share of local property taxes to support it. NIRPC continues to work with the transit operators and affected stakeholders to maximize the available resources and extend public transit services to the broadest extent possible.

What can the MPO do to address the ongoing issues that continue to devastate the urban north? *The MPO continues to work for the improvement of public transit. The 2040 CRP establishes policies in support of sustainable development and urban redevelopment that are forming the basis for project selection and programming of federal transportation funds. Implementation of the plan is ongoing through interactions with the region’s community planners, developers and local plan commissions. Best practices in sustainable development are promoted using presentations and training in a variety of areas, which impact development decisions, including watershed protection, cost of sprawl, infrastructure investments, and walkable communities. The MPO supported the creation of an active pedestrian and bike path coalition that has inspired the development of over 100 miles of commuting and recreational trails in Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties, implementing the NIRPC Ped, Pedal and Paddle Plan portion of the 2040 CRP. The coalition has expanded to include development of water trails as well.*

The long range plan policies clearly delineate the requirements for any new highway facilities, with priority given to maintaining the existing road infrastructure.

One of the areas that NIRPC has continued to work on to address the urban decline of our core communities is brownfield redevelopment. During the late 1990s and beginning of this century, NIRPC was an integral part of the Northwest Indiana Brownfield Redevelopment Project, a pilot project to advance brownfield redevelopment in Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago, which unfortunately ended when the initial grant dollars ran out. Since 2010 NIRPC has partnered with the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority and the cities of Gary,

Hammond, and East Chicago in efforts to create a regional brownfield coalition. Efforts have paid off in 2013 with the announcement by USEPA of an \$800,000 Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund grant for the Coalition.

Sources: NIRPC staff, Calumet College of Saint Joseph, Indiana University Northwest, Purdue University Calumet.

14. How has NIRPC demonstrated response to the annual Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs) that the FHWA Indiana Division in coordination with the Indiana Department of Transportation issues? What is the status of NIRPC's quarterly project tracking process, working with the Local Public Agencies on the Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plans, and integrating Red Flag Investigations as part of the Planning and Environmental Linkages initiative?

***Response:** Over the years, NIRPC has included all elements of the federal Planning Emphasis Areas in the UPWP as soon as assignments could be made, resources allocated and task descriptions prepared.*

Regarding the quarterly project tracking process, NIRPC designed its Pre-Letting and Post-Letting Project Tracking System in late 2010 and began implementing the quarterly reporting process aspects in mid-2011. The written process was expanded in September 2012 to incorporate change order policies and processing. Face-to-face visits with LPA's began in January 2013. ERC certification tracking is ongoing.

Total project cost information in the TIP is updated when these changes occur; however additional MPO funds for the project (if any) are assigned just prior to or immediately following a letting.

NIRPC and the LaPorte District Office also jointly schedule and participate in Early Coordination and Scoping Meetings for new projects.

In 2011 NIRPC began providing guidance and assistance to LPA's in developing ADA Transition Plans. This effort continued throughout 2012. In 2013 NIRPC will assist LPA's with fewer than 50 employees in developing their own plans.

Red Flag Investigations (RFI) are completed by NIRPC's Senior Water Resource Planner, who attended an INDOT Red Flag Investigation training workshop in April, 2012 to learn how to use this planning tool. Currently RFIs are completed by NIRPC in response to the early coordination transportation project letters that it receives. NIRPC uses a spreadsheet to track project and response information. Occasionally early coordination letters are received by NIRPC in which an RFI has already been completed a consultant. NIRPC still reviews/checks these projects using INDOT's RFI GIS map service maintained on state GIS server. This information is augmented with local or more current information if available. If an RFI has been completed by a consultant and NIRPC finds it to be

accurate with the information available no response is given. If there are discrepancies or if no RFI has been previously conducted a response letter is drafted and provided to NIRPC's Environmental Program Director for signature. NIRPC is currently trying to figure out how to better capture potential projects earlier in the process to be of greater value and service to local communities and transportation planners.

CORRIDOR STUDIES

15. Briefly describe some of the significant sub-area or corridor studies in the NIRPC metropolitan area since the last federal certification review. Has NIRPC used the Congestion Mitigation Process in tandem with these corridor studies?

Response: *The corridor studies include:*

1. *The Illiana Corridor, a proposed interstate highway linking I-55 and I-65, running between Cedar Lake and Lowell. INDOT and IDOT are the lead agencies, with Parsons Brinkerhoff as the lead consultant.*
2. *US-6 and US-30 studies have focused on overlay zoning to achieve better land use and connectivity in these heavily traveled and continually developing corridors. Porter County is the lead agency for the US-6 study in anticipation of the growth in traffic and development around the new Porter Memorial Hospital, while the City of Valparaiso is the lead agency on the US-30 study.*
3. *Developing a Porter County Airport Vicinity comprehensive plan focused on transportation, land use, and economic development in the area around the Porter County Municipal Airport. Porter County is the lead agency.*
4. *Extending Oak Street in Schererville from Kennedy Avenue to Indianapolis Boulevard, which will include a either an at-grade or grade-separated crossing of the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks. The Town of Schererville, as the lead agency, will select a consultant to perform a scoping report.*
5. *Development of a scoping report to document purpose and need, alternatives, and budgetary costs of future improvements to 109th Avenue in Winfield.*

The congestion management process is being used in the evaluation of the Illiana Corridor. The 109th Avenue study will also use the CMP. The US-6, US-30, Oak Street and Porter County Airport study have not used the CMP.

16. Are sub-area and corridor studies conducted in a manner so that environmental and planning decisions and analyses may be carried through to the project development and environmental review processes? If so, provide examples and discuss benefits and costs of such activities.

Response: *Since the last certification review, NIRPC has not directly prepared any sub-area or corridor studies. However, a number of local-sponsored plans*

have emerged, and NIRPC has partnered closely with the plan consultants on calibrating their work to mirror regional plans already in effect. NIRPC is often represented on a corridor project steering committee. The end result has greatly aided NIRPC's planning reach into these communities, and has promoted sound, multi-modal strategies within targeted corridors for redevelopment.

The Illiana Corridor Study is primarily an environmental assessment, leading to a Record of Decision. It is led by the States of Illinois and Indiana. The Corridor Study has to give serious consideration to the vision, goals, objectives and principles of the NIRPC 2040 CRP.

In 2009, Porter County conducted a Corridor Plan for several of the major roads, federal and state highways connecting communities in their jurisdiction including: Meridian Road; Indiana 2, 8, 49, 130, and 149; US 6, US 30, and US 231. This study identified and mapped the environmental, historic, and cultural resources, and other NEPA effected attributes within a half mile of the road. The planning process also engaged and documented federal and state regulatory and land holding agencies and stakeholders in the process. The planning project appears to provide a similar level of information as a NEPA scoping process and could provide baseline information to be carried forward into future project development within corridor study areas.

17. Is there a process in place to evaluate past performance (efficient and effective funds use) of UPWP projects/work elements? If so, please provide documentation of this process and its results. Does past performance affect your agency's decision to include updated versions of a project in the new program?

Response: *The vast majority of tasks in the UPWP are what is required of a Metropolitan Planning Organization. There is no formal performance evaluation system. Projects are updated to include what is necessary to accomplish the work and meet the planning requirements.*

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS – GENERAL

18. Discuss how NIRPC has addressed each of the corrective actions and recommendations from the 2009 Transportation Planning Certification Review. What has been implemented from the recommendations made in the 2009 FHWA-FTA Certification Review report? What has not, and why?

Response: *Each of the corrective actions and recommendations were thoroughly addressed, implemented and advanced as part of the transportation portion of the Comprehensive Regional Plan. The federal agencies received detailed reports on how the two corrective actions were dealt with and satisfied, which lead to the planning process being fully certified, so it is not repeated here.*

NIRPC addressed both the Congestion Management Process and Environmental Justice corrective actions thoroughly during the development of the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan, and continues to emphasize those areas today.

To address the Environmental Justice corrective action, NIRPC hosted two workshops with EJ stakeholders, NIRPC staff, and planning partners. NIRPC also developed and performed a detailed EJ benefits and burdens analysis as part of the 2040 CRP. In addition to meeting the recommendations of the FHWA/FTA Federal Review team and the planning regulations, NIRPC took a deliberate and strategic approach to incorporate EJ into all aspects of the 2040 CRP. NIRPC programmed EJ into the 2011 UPWP, hired a public outreach coordinator to broaden outreach and deepen relationships with EJ communities in the region, improved spatial tools and providing EJ training for staff, and provided opportunities through workshops and “town hall” meetings to increase participation in the planning process among EJ communities. The culmination of the 2040 CRP was the adoption of a preferred scenario that focuses efforts on revitalizing “urban core” communities, the majority of which are EJ communities. Since the plan’s adoption, NIRPC has convened an Urban Core Subcommittee that meets quarterly to work on implementing the 2040 CRP, with a special emphasis on reinvigorating these communities.

For greater detail about NIRPC’s efforts to address the two corrective actions, please refer to “Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission’s Actions in Response to the Corrective Actions from the 2009 Certification Review”, submitted to FTA and FHWA on October 28, 2010. Pertaining to recommendations of the 2009 Certification Review (p.42-43):

- NIRPC includes costs for each work element in the UPWP;*
- NIRPC is currently developing data-driven performance measures. As guidance from the Federal Government becomes clearer, so will these performance measures;*
- NIRPC has addressed the former use of 2% inflation rate in the LRTP;*
- NIRPC has adjusted the Financial Plan to meet the recommendations;*
- NIRPC is updating its’ ITS Architecture;*
- NIRPC has collaborated with Conexus Indiana to develop regional priority freight projects for inclusion in the State Freight Plan. INDOT has representation on NIRPC’s RailVISION group and the at-grade crossing study, and INDOT and NIRPC have engaged in freight discussions on the Illiana Expressway and Indiana Gateway projects;*
- NIRPC now factors EJ into project scoring for the TIP (projects benefitting EJ areas receive higher marks);*
- NIRPC attaches all detailed documents such as petty cash receipts and postage reports to payment claims;*
- NIRPC has implemented a monitoring program for CMAQ-funded vehicles and equipment.*

19. Discuss examples of any MPO efforts to promote communication and engage in regular coordination with adjacent regions on transportation issues and MPO products and activities. Also discuss any efforts to engage and coordinate with other agencies including resource agencies and land use governing agencies.

Response: *There are numerous examples of communication and engagement with adjacent regions. See the answer to questions 4 and 5 that explain current agreements with neighboring and stakeholder organizations. As a part of those relationships, NIRPC is a member of the Transportation Committee of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and of the South Suburban (Chicago area) Mayors and Managers Transportation Committee. CMAP and SSMMA are members of NIRPC's Transportation Policy Committee. There is a lot of communication and information sharing that takes place between the agencies every month. The directors of the four MPOs that are part of the Wingspread Regional Accord meet quarterly to discuss planning issues.*

Another example of coordination with adjacent regions relates to non-motorized transportation. NIRPC has fostered a strong partnership with stakeholders in both Illinois and Michigan. Many communities in the NIRPC region border the south Chicago suburbs, and a number of bi-state trail connections will be opened within the next three years. Both states have worked with NIRPC on the route of the Marquette Greenway – a three-state initiative running from the south side of Chicago to New Buffalo, MI.

NIRRPC has working relationships with other regional councils of government and metropolitan planning organizations through the Indiana Association of Regional Councils and the Indiana MPO Council.

Relative to land use governing agencies, cities, towns and counties make land use decisions and each entity in the three-county region is a member of NIRPC. Many participate regularly on NIRPC's technical committees.

20. How is NIRPC involved in regional land use planning and decision making? Describe in detail how this involvement has facilitated land use plans and physical design that is conducive to a modally balanced transport system that maximizes efficiency, accessibility, and connectivity. Is there any land use or economic initiatives on the horizon that will significantly impact the planning process in the region?

Response: *NIRPC's involvement in land use is to place local choices in a broader regional framework and to influence decision makers for the improved quality-of-life for the region as a whole. NIRPC provides the regional framework in which local decisions should be made. Within this Comprehensive Regional Plan context, local governments' land use and zoning authority remains the privilege and right of local governments. NIRPC established a Land Use Committee to concentrate on regional land use planning that is predicated on a growing concern of regional sustainability by stakeholders and the need to focus on development from a regional perspective. The committee facilitates planning*

processes and partnerships that build links between jurisdictional boundaries. The current UPWP further describes NIRPC's land use activities.

NIRPC developed the 2010 existing land-use inventory for the region from the three counties and the 41 municipalities. Data was collected and developed into GIS files based on available information from local communities and counties. To better compare land use across the region, communities' land-use data was consolidated into 16 regional categories. This data helped in developing the Growth and Revitalization Vision that was developed through the CRP's scenario-planning process. The regional land use element is a critical component of the region's economic development strategy that seeks to build on Northwest Indiana's strengths and overcome its weaknesses. The many interconnected actions called for in the land use element serve to focus resources in a manner that enables the region to be economically competitive and successful as a whole. Concepts of urban growth, development, conservation, transit and directed infrastructure when properly guided create an investment framework that builds communities and strengthens regional economies.

One of the main strategies for land use planning is to create livable centers. The development of Livable Centers within the Growth & Infill areas is fundamental to achieving the preferred regional efficient strategy for land use, transportation and environmental stewardship in Northwest Indiana. See Chapter One in the 2040 CRP for more details regarding land use strategies and Chapter Six for implementation.

The implementation measures included in NIRPC's adopted regional plan are expected to have land use impacts and local governments use the CRP and other plans as guides for decisions. Over time an influence will be able to be seen. Some impacts are evident already with regard to the implementation of the Marquette Plan and the Greenways and Blueways Plan. Other NIRPC plans include, for example the Sensible Tools Handbook for Indiana, and the, Livable Centers Initiatives (LCI), and Creating Livable Communities (CLC) funding program. Implementation of the Marquette Plan can and already has already capitalized on green space linkages, improved infrastructure, redevelopment, and lakefront access. It establishes a series of achievable short-term demonstration projects for each community along the Lake Michigan shoreline guided by a compelling long-term vision intended to change and unite the many stakeholders in the region. The CLC support community-based transportation/ land use projects that bring vitality to downtown areas, neighborhoods, transit station areas, commercial cores, and transit corridors. The program is designed to account for rising energy prices, climate change, reduced infrastructure funds, and land use – with a goal of more efficiently using existing infrastructure, and reducing vehicle miles traveled, emissions, energy use, and personal transportation costs.

21. How does NIRPC evaluate the overall effectiveness of its planning processes and procedures? What kind of cost-benefit analysis is performed?

***Response:** NIRPC has, from time-to-time answered questions about the value of regional transportation planning by listing numerous planned and programmed projects that have been implemented. Publishing an annual list of projects is one way to indicate the value of metropolitan area transportation planning in the region. No formal cost-benefit analysis is performed. NIRPC would be interested in a cost-benefit analysis that is used by a similar size MPO, which provides meaningful information about the value of the planning process.*

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP)

22. Page II-24 of the CRP identifies a 12/16/10 environmental consultation process scoping meeting. Apart from this page, please identify other documentation of this meeting identifying the participants, input received. What plans, maps, and inventories from other agencies have been considered relative to the NIRPC TP?

***Response:** Appendix C, pages 100-139, of the CRP further elaborates on environmental mitigation and consultation process relative to the NIRPC transportation portion of the CRP. Scoping meeting participants included representatives from the USACE-Chicago District, FHWA-Indianapolis District, USFWS, IDEM, IDNR, INDOT, and the Lake County Parks Department. Other federal, state, and local agencies invited and included in email communications included EPA, NPS-Indiana Dunes, NRCS, and county surveyors.*

State and regional conservation and restoration plans considered include:

- *Indiana Wetlands Conservation Plan*
- *Indiana Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy*
- *Indiana Statewide Forest Assessment & Strategy*
- *Indiana Coastal & Estuarine Land Conservation Program Plan*
- *Indiana Nonpoint Source Management Plan*
- *Local Watershed Management Plans*

The common environmental (focus) issues identified through the consultation processes include:

- *Wetlands*
- *Lakes and streams*
- *Indiana waters designated for special protection*
- *Forestlands*
- *ETR and high quality natural communities*
- *Managed lands*
- *Cultural resources*

23. Have the MPO, FTA and FHWA determined conformity in accordance with the CAAA and EPA regulations?

Response: *Yes. The dates of the most recent conformity determinations by FTA and FHWA are July 27, 2011 (2040 CRP) and January 10, 2012 (amendment).*

24. The scenario planning process resulted in a hybrid of the Livable Centers and Urban Core Regeneration/Infill blended with elements of the Local Plans Scenario to form the Growth and Revitalization Vision (Intro-10). Is there other publically available documentation of the scenario planning effort that can be provided? How did NIRPC secure cooperation/buy-in from the LPAs in this vision?

Response: *Please see attachment #24 for additional response.*

Yes. The NIRPC Scenarios Report 8-20-10.pdf file is included.

As a result of a stakeholder driven process, NIRPC came up with the hybrid scenario to incorporate the equally balanced input from stakeholders, which eventually led to the Growth and Revitalization Vision Map. NIRPC staff, with the assistance of a consultant, presented the results of the scenario analysis and the results of public participation to the Full Commission in October 2010. The Growth and Revitalization Vision was approved with nearly unanimous support. The LPAs were engaged in the process or at least included and informed during the development of the 2040 CRP. Efforts continue to secure understanding and buy-in through meeting with city, town and county councils and plan commissions to inform them of the details of the CRP and encourage them to make land use and development decisions that support the CRP vision, goals, objectives, principles and strategies. The work of the Pathway to 2040 implementation committee is dedicated to encouraging plan implementation.

25. According to the CRP, the region expects to grow by 170,000 people and 80,000 jobs. From Figures 1.2/1.22 and narrative on page II-7, it appears this determination is a prediction based on past trends. How was this decided to be the preferred level of population growth that was most beneficial to the region? Given the declining per capita personal income trends of the region one might question the value of particular levels of population growth.

Response: *The prior transportation plans used forecasts that were provided by the State of Indiana. The population growths in those forecasts were quite modest (roughly 4% over the 20-year forecast period). In the past few years, two major project studies were undertaken: the Illiana Corridor Study by INDOT and the Westlake Rail Study by NICTD. Both of those studies revisited the forecasts, and pointed out that by 2007, the region had exceeded the 2030 horizon forecast. The two studies, with independent teams and methodologies identified the higher target populations. The Indiana Department of Transportation agreed that the higher target population should be used.*

26. Pages II-6 to II-8 of the CRP project 2040 daily VMT of 29,075,354. Based on 365 days and forecasted 2040 population of 941,815 this equates to per capita VMT of 11,268. Is the travel demand methodology displayed based on the chosen assumptions and vision of the plan? This is roughly a 3 percent increase from the per capita 2009

UZA VMT and about a 10 percent reduction from the 2011 per capita three-county VMT levels cited previously. Please comment on the projected success of the plan based on this data.

Response: *Yes. The primary themes of the plan are revitalization of the urban core communities, livable centers and compact development. These themes are intended to minimize the growth of VMT, by encouraging shorter travel distances and making more trips by non-motorized modes.*

27. Pages I-56 and II-100/II-101 of the CRP lists performance measures/Indicators. To what extent has NIRPC been reporting on and monitoring these measures? Are they available on the web site or through periodic reports? If not, please provide any developed data and analysis in this area since the CRP was completed.

Response: *Most of the indicators rely on data sources that become available with limited frequency (i.e. every 5-10 years). As data become available, NIRPC will develop methods to track and report on these indicators.*

28. Page II-11 states that NIRPC led an effort with District 1 Homeland Security County Directors to develop a mutual aid pact. Please provide details in terms of when this occurred, a description of the activities/resulting product, and follow-up activities.

Response: *In 2003 NIRPC appointed NIRPC members Mayor Robert Patrick of East Chicago and LaPorte County EMA Director Paul Young to co-chair an effort to create a mutual aid pact for the Northwestern Indiana counties of Jasper, Lake, LaPorte, Newton and Porter Counties. The endeavor began with a briefing for public officials at the Porter County Expo in January of 2003. Working with the Indiana Office of Homeland Security a series of meetings between county officials created a mutual aid pact with protocol establishing procedures for mutual aid within jurisdictions.*

The document was completed and signed by all 5 counties' Board of County Commissioners and by each county's Emergency Management Director on September 30, 2003.

29. Please also discuss any other involvement by the MPO in regional infrastructure security planning in addition to emergency relief and disaster preparedness planning.

Response: *In 2010 NIRPC partnered with Indiana Homeland Security, IUPUI's Polis Center and the Lake and Porter County Emergency Management Offices to create a multi hazard mitigation plan for Lake and Porter Counties. It was a yearlong process in which county and municipal officials gathered in 5 to 7 meetings to prepare an overall plan for addressing hazard mitigation in each of the counties. The plans were published in Lake County in September 2010 and Porter County in January 2011. The plan was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of each county and by the municipal governments in each county.*

NIRPC also has a seat on the Lake County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). The LEPC is responsible for creating and submitting an emergency response plan to the State Emergency Response Commission. The purpose of

developing an emergency plan is to prepare emergency response agencies for the special demand which a hazardous materials incident places on them. Jody Melton of the NIRPC staff has filled that position since 1995.

30. The safety section on pages II-12 to II-15 provides crash data collected by NIRPC. How does the plan seek to reduce the number of crashes?

Response: *The plan seeks to reduce the number of crashes by focusing on the “Four E’s”: Engineering, Education, Enforcement, and Emergency Services. Engineering is probably the easiest of the “Four E’s” for NIRPC to implement, as NIRPC can most easily fund engineering solutions through its current funding streams. On page C-166 of the 2040 CRP, the remaining three E’s are addressed in the following way:*

Education

- *Set up an extensive media campaign for Northwest Indiana directed toward issues such as impaired driving, distracted driving, aggressive driving, weather conditions and rural roads. That can be achieved by creating banners, bumper stickers, billboards and other means to promote safety.*
- *Conduct a safety event that can be targeted toward occupant protection, elimination of distractions while driving and elimination of aggressive driving.*
- *Participate in training and educational events in rural communities in Northwest Indiana in an effort to maximize communication within the rural areas.*

Enforcement

- *NIRPC will develop and participate in training courses through the state for local law enforcement responders regarding issues affecting transportation safety and traffic control.*
- *NIRPC will support law enforcement campaigns targeted to specific locations, driver behaviors and travel seasons.*

Emergency Services

- *NIRPC will support the region’s effort to improve crash management through appropriate enforcement, emergency response, roadside assistance and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) techniques.*

31. On pages II-19 to II-20 of the CRP, it is stated that some expansion projects passed the CMP but did not meet the goals and objectives. These projects were allowed due to a surplus of funding. Please identify these projects and describe how they did not meet the goals and objectives. Identify the alternatives considered for this funding.

Response: *The plan identifies four projects that passed the CMP, were found inconsistent with the Plan, but eventually included in the plan. NIRPC identified a dollar amount that it felt the region could spend on capacity expansion projects for the 2040 CRP. NIRPC received fewer proposals for capacity expansion projects than it had expected, largely due to the lack the commitment of local share by cash-strapped local governments. Given the fact that the projects passed CMP and there was enough money identified for the expansion projects, it was difficult to turn these projects down.*

#5 LaPorte Economic Development Corridor (NE Quadrant)

This project would require too much land to construct and its path through would involve the loss of significant number of trees. It is adjacent to the UZA. Given its high cost (\$60-80 million) it is unlikely to be built.

#6 Merrillville 101st Ave

This project will add travel lanes to a road surrounded by agricultural land. It is located within a transitioning area within the UZA and will eventually be needed.

#10 Valparaiso Division Rd

This project was found to promote sprawl and conversion of land use from rural to urban. It is the UZA's southern boundary in Valparaiso. As with the Merrillville project, the area is gradually transitioning to suburban residential and improvement of this roadway will eventually be needed.

#17 INDOT SR 2 at I-65 ATL

This project will contribute to accelerated urban-type development in a rural setting. This project had already been selected for funding by INDOT and is now open to traffic.

32. Pages II-26 and II-27 shows the project selection scoring system. Is this used for transit projects to compete for FHWA funding? If not, why not? Was the 12/21/10 solicitation for all projects or just road projects?

Response: *The 12/21/10 solicitation for capacity-increasing projects was not modal-specific. There were two significant transit proposals received: NICTD's West Lake Service and Gary's Broadway Rapid Transit Service.*

33. What proportion of FHWA funding goes to road expansion projects pursuant to the MTP?

Response: *There is no specified, overall percentage goal or target specified in the Plan. The Plan (p. II-80) requires that investment priority be given to preserving and maintaining the existing transportation network.*

34. Has the MPO conducted a travel survey? If so, please provide details on the results and use of the information.

Response: *Yes, the last travel survey was conducted in 2007 and 2008. An evaluation was performed on the 2007-2008 travel survey. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning has incorporated the survey results into the regional transportation network model that NIRPC will begin using in 2013. The travel survey was presented at the annual Indiana MPO Conference in South Bend on October 8, 2008 and to the Transportation Policy Committee on October 14, 2008. The survey database files with supporting documentation were posted on the NIRPC website, and provided to various agencies and student teams working on transportation issues. There was no formal report. The results were not used in the NIRPC modeling process due to limited staff expertise for*

modification of the model procedures. A consultant contract would have been needed for such changes in the context of a major model overhaul. After discussions, NIRPC elected to forgo the model overhaul and eventually transition to the use of the CMAP model, which did use the results of the travel survey.

35. Has the MPO used or plan on using the FHWA INVEST voluntary, internet-based tool enabling State, regional and local transportation agencies to evaluate the sustainability of their transportation plans, projects and programs? Will it be used to develop the next TP or to educate the Policy Board? Please explain.

Response: *No, we have not used INVEST. We need to know more about INVEST before making a commitment to use it. Please arrange a meeting or training seminar where we could learn about it.*

36. How was NIRPC engaged in the development of the Indiana State Transportation Plan?

Response: *NIRPC is peripherally involved in the development of the State's plan. There is no current, formal connection between NIRPC and the State's plan, although NIRPC involved INDOT in the development of the 2040 CRP, so there is some synergy between NIRPC and INDOT. NIRPC is informed of the annual public input meeting at the LaPorte District office, attends and stays somewhat informed about INDOT's long-range plan. There was closer involvement between NIRPC and INDOT when the State's plan was project-specific.*

37. Pages II-12 to II-15 of the CRP outlines NIRPC's analysis of crash data. How does NIRPC use this information to guide or prioritize transportation investments in the TP and the TIP? What specific safety studies or activities have been conducted in the region?

Response: *The crash data on pages II-12 to II-15 provides a snapshot of the number of crashes both overall and by specific mode. This data was used to help evaluate where "hot spots" might be, and what corridors experienced the highest crash rates. This data was also used to determine the most common causes of crashes. This analysis provided NIRPC with the top 25 corridors with the highest crash rates for each county in the NIRPC region: Lake, Porter, and LaPorte. The tables for the top 25 corridors can be found in Appendix C, pages C-148 to C-150. In its most recent call for Highway Safety Improvement Projects, NIRPC, in conjunction with stakeholders, developed a project selection process that leaned heavily on both the Comprehensive Regional Plan's information as well as the Indiana Department of Transportation's Highway Safety Improvement Program Local Project Selection Guidance document. One of the key elements of the selection process was the addition of bonus values added to the Benefit/Cost Ratio for projects that addressed safety improvements in one of the top 25 corridors and/or one of the top ten locations for specific crash types, if that crash type was to be specifically addressed. This was done to help prioritize projects that were submitted for corridors that the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan proved to be unsafe.*

In March, 2013 NIRPC solicited projects to apply for HSIP funding. This funding was available to all three counties in the NIRPC region (Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties). By early April, a project selection meeting was held, and as of late May, NIRPC is still working with INDOT on getting these projects submitted for eligibility. Due to the way the TIP cycle falls, this is the first time since the adoption of the 2040 CRP in 2011 that NIRPC's safety analysis in the 2040 CRP will be applied to actual constructed projects. However, staff has continually monitored safety issues in the region as well as assisted with LPA requests for safety data.

38. Discuss any relevant coordination between NIRPC and INDOT in regards to the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). Does NIRPC coordinate any efforts concerning local agency applications to the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)? Is the planning process consistent with the SHSP?

***Response:** In 2013 NIRPC, using INDOT's 2010 Highway Safety Improvement Program Local Project Selection Guidance document, developed an HSIP project selection process and coordinated local HSIP applications for Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties. This included convening stakeholders to hear presentations from staff regarding the process and INDOT's safety priorities. An application and selection process was then developed from the ground up that was consistent with INDOT's eligibility guidelines. Staff and stakeholders then convened at the end of the solicitation period, making initial project reviews and recommending projects for selection and submission to INDOT for eligibility.*

In developing its safety plan, NIRPC started with INDOT's SHSP and worked to create a more localized version for Northwest Indiana. The emphasis areas proposed by INDOT in the SHSP are used, along with the "Four E's" (Engineering, Education, Enforcement, and Emergency Services) to create a safety framework for the plan that is consistent with the SHSP. An overview of this is provided on page C-140 of the 2040 CRP.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

39. Pages II-86 to II-95 provide details on the financial aspects of the TP. How does the CRP transparently demonstrate to the public that both the plan and the capacity expansion projects selected for inclusion in the plan on page II-28 are fiscally constrained?

***Response:** Projected INDOT revenues & expenses are shown on Table II.15 (page II-87). Projected local revenues are disclosed on Table II.15 (page II-89). Projected federal surface transportation revenues are disclosed on Table II.17 (page II-91). There is no table, however, that brings these revenues together and strikes a grand total—although this grand total (\$6.6 billion over the life of the plan) is disclosed in the final paragraph on page II-86.*

Financial information for each of the selected capacity-increasing projects (from Page II-28) is disclosed on page II-95. The text on page II-28 states that “the projects were scored using the projects selection criteria and compared with expected future revenues to maintain financial constraint.” However, there is no discussion, statement, or demonstration of the process used to determine fiscal constraint within the text of the Chapter on Financial Capacity and Projections (pages II-86 through II-95). It was intended that the cost of the projects listed on pages II-28 and II-95 be paid for, in part, with federal funds identified in the “Expansion” column on Table II.17 (page II-91). The total shown there (for Highways), \$147,048,530 was used as the constrained limit for these types of projects.

40. Page II-88, Local Financial Summary, discusses the significant funding shortfall to mill and resurface a large proportion of the region’s roadways. Discuss the expected impact in terms of the possibility of converting roads from pavement to gravel, closing roads, or operating them in very poor condition.

Response: *A similar question was posed by the U.S. EPA Region V and the NW Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA). RDA has engaged a consultant to explore options to mothball, remove, or convert infrastructure.*

The City of Gary is working with the Harris School of Public Policy Studies at the University of Chicago in conducting an inventory of all property within the City of Gary. The City will use the data to assist it in the deployment of services and in the infrastructure investment (or disinvestment) process. Gary is using the City of Detroit’s Local Data program.

41. Is it correct that table II.15 on page II-89 of the CRP is only for local funding estimates of roads costs and revenues and does not include federal funds?

Response: *Yes, that is correct.*

42. Page II-90 of the CRP shows a table of projected public transit revenue for the planning horizon. However, it is labeled as an expenses table. Is the table representing estimated costs, revenues or both? How were the numbers in this table developed/projected? If these are just estimated revenues, where are the estimated costs for transit?

Response: *That wording in the Plan is a mistake, which will be corrected in the web version of the Plan. Table II.16 on page II-90 of the plan shows projected public transit operating and capital expenses (needs) over the life of the plan (not revenue). The source of the baseline numbers in this table were the most recent (2009) annual reports filed with INDOT. Reasonably expected federal revenue is shown in Table II.17 on page II-91.*

43. Were inflation rate factors (year of expenditure) used in developing this plan? If so, what inflation rate factors were used? When amending the TP or the TIP, how is fiscal constraint ensured?

Response: *With one exception, there were no inflation factors used for expense and revenue projections in the plan. The exception was the capacity expansion projects listed on page II-95. An annual inflation factor of 2.49% was applied to those projects.*

Regarding fiscal constraint, if a project is added to the Plan that the sponsor indicates will use MPO federal funds, a check will be made to ensure that the cost of any new project, when added to the total cost of all pre-existing projects, will not cause the new total to exceed the projected amount of federal funds projected to be available over the life of the plan.

For TIP amendments, running balances are maintained for each federal funding category. A spreadsheet is maintained for each MPO funding category—each affected spreadsheet is updated following a TIP change made via administrative modification or formal amendment.

44. What financial assumptions were used in developing the TP? Have there been any subsequent updates of the TP? If so, were the validity of the assumptions reviewed?

Response: *We assumed that funding at all levels would be constant, that the Highway Trust Fund would remain the primary source of federal aid for transit and highway projects, and that the funding programs under SAFETEA-LU would be reauthorized.*

Since its adoption in June 2011, the TP has been amended only one time—to add one capacity expansion project (funded with a FHWA earmark). The validity of our assumptions was not tested then. However, since then, MAP-21 was enacted, the 2013 Indiana General Assembly provided permanent, increased funding for local roadway preservation and maintenance, and Lake County enacted a 1.5% income tax with a portion of the proceeds earmarked for local transportation projects (including transit).

45. Discuss any current or future innovative finance strategies for the area.

Response: *Acknowledging the changing landscape of infrastructure finance within the United States, NIRPC's staff has begun to research new strategies for supporting projects in the region. One such strategy is TIFIA (Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act). Staff has participated in US DOT webinars on TIFIA, and is currently evaluating the feasibility of using TIFIA funding on bridge projects, as part of a regional at-grade crossing study that the agency is undertaking. Staff has also participated in webinars on public-private partnerships, and researched different forms of bond financing (TIF, revenue, etc.) that can help municipalities drive infrastructure finance projects. On the environmental planning side, NIRPC and the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority recently won an \$800,000 EPA grant to implement a Northwest Indiana Revolving Loan Fund for brownfield redevelopment. These funds could potentially go towards cargo-oriented development projects on brownfields sites, an opportunity that will be expanded upon in Question 100. The*

agency also assists in the operation of a revolving loan fund that focuses on economic development in LaPorte County.

AIR QUALITY

46. In light of the need to use EPA's new on-road emission model, the Motor Vehicle Simulator (MOVES), what is status to update the motor vehicle emission budgets with the MOVES model to ensure that future conformity determinations can be made for the area? How NIRPC worked with the Interagency Consultation Group to accomplish this update?

Response: *The draft budgets have been published in the Federal Register, as a direct final notice. The comment period on the draft budgets concludes on June 14. If there are no adverse comments, the budgets go into effect on July 15.*

NIRPC has provided technical input to the process, including running the transportation network model and formatting the output as needed by the TransCAD post-processor. NIRPC also participated in the interagency consultation group meetings that were hosted by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, and reviewed draft materials.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

47. How is the TIP developed? What is the project selection process? How are project prioritized? What process is used to ensure that projects can utilize the federal funds in the year for which they are programmed?

Response: *The TIP development process is largely carried out by groups of stakeholder committees. Stakeholder committees are maintained for highways, transit, Congestion, Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), Bicycle/Pedestrian, and Highway Safety. Meetings are open to the public. Meeting notices are posted on the NIRPC Website and mailed to transportation stakeholders. Each committee reviews and reaches consensus upon the project selection criteria and relevant selection policies to be used in the selection process. Each stakeholder committee reviews results of the project application process and recommends a list of projects to be selected for funding. Recommendations are acted on by NIRPC's Transportation Policy Committee and the NIRPC Commission/ Executive Board. INDOT maintains a separate project development process for its projects.*

48. How and when do the transit operators, INDOT and local public agencies (LPAs) provide information about available and anticipated financial resources for the TIP to NIRPC?

Response: *For transit operators we ask for financial information as a part of their response to a solicitation for projects. For INDOT and LPA's, we obtain this information during the development of the financial plan for the TIP.*

49. Is the TIP fiscally constrained? How is that determination made?
Response: *Yes. Constraint is achieved when the projected expenses do not exceed the projected revenue. Constraint is calculated for each category of federal aid.*

50. How successfully does the TIP serve as a management tool for implementing the MTP?

Response: *The TIP is most effective as a short-range financial management tool. It is not that helpful in implementing projects over a long-term period of time (e.g., beyond five years).*

51. How are project cost estimates determined? What is the process for amending the TIP? Does NIRPC have a definition and process for “administrative modification” in any way to differentiate between minor revisions to the TIP and those major revisions that require an amendment? Does NIRPC have an emergency amendment process? What is the process for the public to comment on the amendments?

Response: *Estimates of cost are provided by project implementers. All projects within the first two years of the TIP are considered to be fully funded and should require no changes prior to fund obligation (unless Congress changes something). Projects are related to the long-range plan because the TIP selection criteria support the goals and objectives of the 2040 CRP.*

TIP Amendments. The process for amending the TIP is being changed in NIRPC’s new (draft) Public Participation Plan. The number of days certain kinds of amendments will be available for public review and comment is specified in the draft Public Participation Plan. Three types of changes are described in that Plan: Minor and Major TIP Amendments, Emergency TIP Amendments, and Administrative Modifications. Each is described as follows:

Minor Standard Amendments: Minor amendments add new or delete existing air quality-exempt projects, add federal funds to air quality-exempt projects already in the TIP that are funded entirely with non-federal funds, make changes in project termini (increases in length up to one-half mile) for air quality-exempt projects, minor changes in design concept or scope (with no additional travel lanes) for air quality-exempt projects).

Minor standard amendments require ICG review, a public review and comment period of one calendar week (or five business days) prior to final action by the NIRPC Board, and re-determination of fiscal constraint.

Major Standard Amendments: Major amendments make changes (increases in length of over one-half mile) in project termini (the starting and ending point of the project) for air quality-exempt projects, major changes in design concept or scope (with no additional travel lanes) for air quality-exempt projects, or involve the addition of a new phase to any air quality non-exempt project already in the Conformity Determination and TIP.

Major standard amendments require ICG review (and a conformity consultation call when the amendment involves a non-exempt project), a public review and comment period of 30 calendar days prior to final action by the NIRPC Board, and re-determination of fiscal constraint.

Amendments that add new air quality non-exempt projects to the TIP will be processed only when the project is listed in the then-current Conformity Determination.

Emergency Administrative Amendments: In rare instances NIRPC's Executive Director may make a TIP amendment via a letter to INDOT. These amendments will only be made after the Executive Director, upon the recommendation of the NIRPC Transportation Projects Manager (and others, if necessary), concludes that a delay in adding the project to the TIP through the standard amendment process would either: 1) adversely affect public well-being or safety, or 2) result in the lapse or loss of federal funds to the region. The Executive Director has the discretion to make or not make the amendment.

Administrative Modifications: The Public Participation Plan defines an Administrative Modification as follows: An administrative modification revises a project already in the TIP. Changes made in this manner are not subjected to a public comment period, not reviewed by the Transportation Policy Committee, and not formally adopted by the NIRPC Board.

Public Comment on TIP Amendments: There are two types of public comment periods for TIP amendments: Major amendments require a 30-day comment period and Minor amendments require a seven-day comment period. The public may issue comments to NIRPC via any means available to that person, including in-person, telephone, via US Postal Service mail, e-mail, Facebook or other social media. In the new Public Participation Plan, the receipt of one comment automatically triggers a comment review and response process that completely documents how the comment was considered.

52. What is the process for ensuring that the projects in the TIP are consistent with TP?

Response: *The TIP is a major tool to implement the long-range plan. Projects are first classified as either preservation/maintenance or capacity-increasing. An air quality finding (exempt/non-exempt) is made for each project. All preservation/maintenance projects are by their nature considered to be consistent with the TP. All capacity-increasing or non-exempt projects proposed for inclusion are checked to see if they are regionally significant, have cleared our CMP (if applicable), and are discreetly listed in the TP. Non-Exempt, capacity-increasing projects are not listed in the TIP if they are not already in the TP. The TIP scoring system is directly related to the 2040 CRP's goals and objectives. Therefore, projects in the TIP have long-range plan support.*

53. Does the MPO have an agreed to formal process to select projects from the second, third and fourth year of the TIP?
Response: No. Projects are first selected for funding as a precursor to being included in the TIP. They are positioned by year in the TIP in accordance with their implementation schedule and available federal funding.
54. Were comments received on your current TIP and how were those comments addressed and documented in the TIP?
Response: No, the current TIP was adopted at the same time that the Comprehensive Regional Plan (CRP) was adopted. Comments were received on the Plan but not on the TIP.
55. In preparation for the next TIP, how is NIRPC linking Planning and Environment from the MTP to the TIP? Is the Red Flag Investigation methodology being used?
Response: New projects have been handed off by TIP staff in the Planning Department to Environmental staff for the Red Flag review. Currently NIRPC is working on digitizing the TIP projects into our GIS database. Projects will be screened in the Red Flag Investigation methodology provided by INDOT if they do not appear to meet categorical exclusions listed in CFR 23§ 771.117. Some projects may also be analyzed if they have potential to impact the focus issues identified by agencies during scoping for the environmental mitigation and consultation process scoping meeting.
- NIRPC Environmental Department is still struggling to identify the point in transportation project development process in which Red Flag Investigation services will be of the greatest value to all. Typically, by the time a project is in the TIP significant environmental scoping has already occurred in order to budget project. Staff often finds themselves being in a position to review the Red Flag report provided by consultants of the LPA. In addition, some resource agencies have become confused by our attempts to participate in established early coordination processes.*

PUBLIC OUTREACH

56. What is the status of NIRPC's participation plan update? Who participated in its development? When was the current participation plan adopted? Was a 45-day comment period provided before the process was revised and adopted? How large is your public participant mailing/email list?
Response: The update of the 2007 Plan, adopted on September 20, 2007, has been in development since January 2012. Meetings were held early in the process with a Task Force to develop the Public Participation Plan's goals and objectives. The public review began in early October, 2012 and after two extensions lasted until April 2, which totaled 174 days. During the comment period four meetings were held, one in each county and an additional meeting in northern Lake County to present the draft Plan and hear comments. Comments

from Everybody Counts Center for Independent Living provided several comments, which were helpful and instrumental in causing changes to an early draft, which improved the Plan draft. It has not been adopted yet, as it will undergo another round of review based on comments made to the NIRPC Executive Board at its May 23 meeting.

There are hundreds of people on NIRPCs various mailing lists. Some months ago as part of a presentation NIRPC gave to a large meeting in Gary, NIRPC staff developed a list of the planning Partners with which it has been working over about the last 5 years. The list is fairly current and likely incomplete, and includes over 230 organizations and government entities. It is included as an attachment.

Stanhope Consulting was hired to develop most of the Plan. The NIRPC Transportation Projects Manager developed a portion of Chapter Two (MPO Public Participation Requirements) and all of Chapter Three (Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Revisions Amendments and Administrative Modifications). Other NIRPC staff contributed to the development of the Plan.

A list of NIRPC Partners is attached.

57. How does the MPO conduct adequate public notice of public involvement activities and opportunities for public review at key decision-making points? How is the process managed and updated to meet the changing needs of communicating with the public and their expectations for active involvement? How is public access provided to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and TIPs? Are matters related to federally-aided programs considered in open public meetings?

***Response:** The Public Participation Plan calls for notifying and involving the public in new plans and TIPs and in amendments to those products. During the development of the current plan, which is the Comprehensive Regional Plan, NIRPC provided frequent and abundant opportunities throughout the 2 ½ year process for active engagement by members of the public. The 45+ day comment period also produced a lot of significant comments, which were all recorded and answered. The draft of the Public Participation Plan includes new measures for reaching out to the public, such as social media, which the staff can discuss during the field review. So much relevant information can now be found on NIRPC's new and improved website. Most NIRPC meetings are open public meetings and publicized as such. Some focused stakeholder and local staff to NIRPC staff meetings are not announced to the public because they are of a technical nature.*

***Conduct Adequate Public Notice/Opportunities for Review at Key Points** NIRPC provides public notice through media notices, public service announcements, web site meeting calendar, and announcements at monthly policy board and stakeholder meetings. Notices of regularly scheduled meetings are sent out 10 days in advance. Notices of formal public hearings are done 30 days*

in advance of the hearing. Meeting notices are done primarily by email; however a mailing list is used for those who wish to receive mailed notices.

Management of Process and Communications Tools

The process maintaining the MPO notification lists is managed by the MPO administrative staff with input from MPO planning staff on needed changes. Since the last planning certification review, NIRPC has established a social media presence that includes Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter and totally redone the agency's web page to reflect current styles and updated user features. NIRPC can now be found where today's public expects to find access to and the ability to communicate with the MPO. Staff emails are included on the website. The home page for each major document identifies the responsible staff person to contact.

Public Access to Policy and Technical Information

Access is provided through multiple channels. Information may be found on the NIRPC website, and in planning documents that identify the sources of technical and policy support. The technical and/or policy documentation may be included in an appendix or exist as a separate document. Information relating to current planning initiatives is also made available at monthly meetings of the MPO, and repeated at NIRPC Board meetings.

Public Discussion of Federal Aid Funds

Information related to FHWA, FTA, Federal Rail, and other sources of federal transportation funding and programming is routinely provided and issues are routinely discussed every month at the NIRPC Transportation Policy Committee meetings, and the monthly executive or full commission meetings of the Board of Commissioners.

58. How does the public participation process demonstrate explicit consideration and responsiveness to public input received during the planning and program development process? Specifically, in what instances have comments raised through public participation resulted in changes to policy, plans, programs or projects? What kind of feedback does the public receive on the proposals and questions they put forward?

Response: *An example of explicit consideration of public input was the development of the Comprehensive Regional Plan during its 2 ½ year development. Each comment received during the comment period was carefully reviewed, considered and a response was generated and shared as a major product of the planning process. During meetings the public receive immediate feedback, often educating a conversation. Regarding feedback, NIRPC response to comments and input is documented and made available either as an appendix to the related plan, or as a separate document. The public is advised of the availability of responses and they are posted on the web site.*

The new, proposed Public Participation Plan requires a Public Comment Summary Report each time public comments are requested. It specifically lists or summarizes comments from the public on the plan or program, and if a change is made in the plan or program, it identifies the change. The new public participation process requires that the responsible NIRPC committee review each

comment received, classify it as either significant or not significant, develop a Public Comment Summary Report that identifies each comment and how it was considered by the staff, and indicate if there is a need to modify the document that was exposed to public comment. The Public Comment Summary Report must be reviewed by the appropriate NIRPC policy committee and received by the NIRPC Board prior to their taking action on the document itself. In that way the board should be making an informed decision. The Public Comment Summary Report is required to be included in the final printed version of the Long Range Transportation plan, TIP, and Conformity Determination.

The new Public Participation Plan also implements the requirement at 450.316(a)(vi) that NIRPC document, consider, and respond to any public input received at any time during the development of the long range transportation plan and/or TIP outside of a public comment period.

Demonstration of Consideration of and Responsiveness to Public Input and Feedback

Implementation of the process is documented during the planning projects requiring public participation. The most recent long range plan development saw the most detailed documentation of the most elaborate and costly participation effort ever used by NIRPC. It is clear from the beginning of the development of the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan to the end that the public's opinions, preferences, and priorities were driving the Plan's direction. The 2040 CRP was adopted unanimously by the NIRPC Board in June, 2011. The Plan's goals and objectives formed the basis for the project selection criteria used to develop the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

More recently, in the development and public review of the draft 2013 Public Participation Plan, comments received resulted in major edits to the draft Plan and a second and third extension to original 45-day comment period. The final revised document was to be adopted by the NIRPC Board in May. However, it was delayed at the request of the disability group Everybody Counts Center for Independent Loving. They believed their input to the plan was ignored (even though they provided several comments, which were helpful and instrumental in causing changes to an early draft, which improved the Plan). They requested a delay to which the Board agreed. As of this writing, some members of the NIRPC Board will meet with representatives from the organization to discuss the Plan and their remaining concerns.

59. Discuss efforts to make NIRPC information and documents available in electronically accessible formats.

Response: *Since the last planning certification review, NIRPC has established a social media presence that includes Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter and has totally redone the agency's web page to reflect current styles and updated user features. NIRPC can now be found where today's public expects to find access to, and the ability to communicate with, the MPO. Staff emails are included on*

the website. The home page for each major document identifies the responsible staff person to contact. NIRPC has also made improvements in accessibility by offering a choice of format in which to view or print a document.

NIRPC ensures that in order for our information and documents to be fully accessible, the information is also accessible in electronic format. The following issues are addressed in this section.

NIRPC ensures that all documentation is available upon request in alternate formats. Alternate formats are defined as formats usable by people with disabilities and may include, but are not limited to, Braille, large print, recorded audio, and accessible internet programming or coding languages. Except as provided below, this provision does not require alternate formats of documentation that is not provided by the agency to other users of technology. NIRPC requires that agencies supply end-users with information about accessibility or compatibility features that are built into a product, upon request. This provision is consistent with the Telecommunications Act Accessibility Guidelines.

NIRPC also requires transit subrecipients must be capable of accommodating the communications needs of persons with disabilities. For example, a subrecipient may need to communicate through the Indiana Relay System. The subrecipient must also be familiar with the Indiana Relay System and such features important to people with disabilities. This provision is consistent with the Telecommunications Act Accessibility Guidelines.

60. What visualization techniques have been used to aid the public in understanding the TP, TIP, and supporting studies? Are there other techniques being considered to implement or enhance the planning process?

Response:

Visualization Techniques

During the development of the 2040 CRP, NIRPC conducted intensive data collection to develop the land use, transportation and environmental assets maps using GIS. Most of the data is publicly available, and the CRP is a strong model for organizing this vast amount of data to inform planning decisions. These maps are already being used by local governments and other organizations. In order to present choices to the public and ensure informed decisions, NIRPC developed future growth scenarios using CommunityViz software, which were ranked through keypad polling during a series of public meetings. This methodology struck a balance between expert analysis and public involvement and allowed for informed, public-driven priority-setting through images and not just words. NIRPC used the scenario-planning process approach to arrive at the 2040 Plan's Growth and Revitalization Vision. CommunityViz brought enhanced understanding to the planning process about a vision of the future.

For the first time, NIRPC produced a video of its long-range plan. The purpose is to expand its capacity to reach the public with the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan. The video is on You Tube, and can also be accessed through the NIRPC web site. Other techniques being considered include web casting some of MPO, Board and/or stakeholder meetings. Funding to support the needed technical network for webcasting is being explored.

The “Whatever Happened to that Project?” document that provides the annual listing of transportation projects includes maps and photographs, which allows people to locate and view projects that have been implemented in part, thorough the MPO planning and programming process.

61. What is considered effective public participation? What review and evaluation processes do you use for the public participation process? What is its cycle or period of review? Who internally and externally, including the public, is involved with this review and evaluation?

Response: *What it is: Effective participation is realized when interested people give of their time and efforts to engage in the decision-making process. Effective public participation is when people are informed and are kept informed, so they can understand planning issues, opportunities and solutions. Effective public participation is when people provide feedback to planners and are listened to. Effective public participation is when planners work directly with the public throughout the planning process to ensure that the public’s concerns and aspirations are understood and considered as decisions are made.*

The new, proposed Public Participation Plan includes a chapter on external and internal evaluation of the public participation process. It provides for a follow-up for meetings and workshops. For external evaluation, a meeting report is to be provided within a month of an event. It will be posted on the NIRPC website and sent to people who were invited, attended and other interested parties. The report will include the meeting/workshop goals, agenda, meeting design, outreach approach, any voting feedback highlights, actions and other items. For internal evaluation, public outreach form is provided for staff to complete after every public meeting to record demographic information, to answer questions on outreach activities and techniques used, how the public input influenced the process and what could be done to improve public involvement in the future. Also see the answer to question 58 on explicit consideration and responsiveness to the public.

SELF CERTIFICATION

62. What process/procedures are used to self-certify the planning process? How is it documented? Discuss the content of the NIRPC self-certification. How do you track these requirements and your agency’s ability to meet them?

Response: NIRPC staff has worked with INDOT staff over the years to develop a suitable self-certification form. The executed certification form is included in new UPWP's, TIP's, and Plans. No special attention is paid to the process. It is annually announced at TPC meetings that NIRPC has self-certified that the planning process is compliant with those federal statutes.

Over many years NIRPC annually self-certified the planning process by reporting to the Transportation Policy Committee and signing the appropriate form and sending it to INDOT who signed and returned it. A few years ago INDOT staff said that submitting an annual self-certification was not necessary; rather include the signed form with a new Transportation Improvement Program. Nothing has ever been heard from the federal planning agencies relative to the self-certification, except a passing reference at Planning Certification Reviews. It seems that the every four year Planning Certification Reviews are comprehensive and thorough, that the self-certification has virtually become a mere bureaucratic exercise. There is not a "tracking" of the requirements, but in knowing what the requirements are, which are basic to an MPO planning process, NIRPC staff understands what is necessary to accomplish the work and remain compliant.

TITLE VI AND RELATED REQUIREMENTS

63. What Title VI protected populations are found in the metropolitan area? Where are they located? Please discuss in detail how disparate impacts, unintended consequences, or cumulative impacts of transportation projects are determined. Please state any that have been identified.

Response: Sizable Title VI populations are found almost exclusively in the "urban core" communities identified in the 2040 CRP (East Chicago, Hammond, Gary, and Michigan City), as well as in some areas of Griffith and Merrillville. These areas can be seen on the map on page II-65 of the CRP. The map was used as a basis for the EJ benefits and burdens analysis, which discusses in detail the potential impacts of transportation projects in the CRP on Title VI and low-income populations. Of 22 measures analyzed for these projects, just one – "percent of population within 20 minutes of a major retail center b transit" – showed disparate impacts on Title VI populations. The conclusion of staff was that this disparate impact may be due more to the lack of retail outlets in EJ communities than to a lack of adequate transportation. Most of the measures analyzed showed greater benefits for Title VI populations than for non-Title VI populations.

64. How are persons traditionally underserved by transportation systems such as low-income, minorities, or limited English proficiency persons actively sought out for involvement in the planning process? Describe your efforts to reach and involve low income, minority, disabled and populations during the public involvement/participation process.

Response: Please see the environmental justice portion of the answer to question 18, which helps to answer this question.

When NIRPC hosts public meetings on a milestone in the planning process, typically meetings are held in each of the three counties, and always in one of the urban core communities in north Lake County, such as East Chicago, Gary or Hammond. As part of the development of the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan, NIRPC engaged a public outreach and involvement consultant with ties to local community organizations and leadership in an effort to engage people who traditionally do not participate in the regional planning process. NIRPC also invited some minority leadership to be involved in the development of the 2040 Plan, with limited success.

65. Does NIRPC have an Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan? Has NIRPC drafted a Limited English Proficiency Plan? Do meeting formats encourage participation by minorities or people with disabilities? How do you accomplish this?

Response: *NIRPC is not required to complete an American with Disabilities Act Transition Plan. Meeting formats are accessible to people with disabilities, though offering information in alternate formats and offering communication assistance if requested in advance. In addition, meeting locations, including any public meetings outside of NIRPC, must be accessible to people with disabilities by meeting the basic, required accessibility features listed in the new draft Public Participation Plan.*

Limited English Proficiency Strategy – NIRPC receives federal financial assistance from the US Department of Transportation (US DOT). For this reason it is subject to the US DOT's Limited English Proficiency Guidance, issued on December 14, 2005. NIRPC has elected to not prepare a formal Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan, but has, however, completed the Four Factor Analysis suggested in the guidance. This documentation can be found in our most recent Title VI Recertification which was submitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in May of 2011. If the federal agencies are interested in the details, NIRPC can describe The Four Factor Analysis during the field review and the number of people served.

NIRPC has three basic divisions which offer services to outside entities. These are: 1) Planning & Technical Assistance; 2) Public Transit Grants Management, Oversight, Procurement, and Technical Assistance; and 3) Environmental Programs. NIRPC also passes FTA public transit funds through to seven public transit operators in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties.

The Public Transit Grants division, among other things, passes FTA funds through to seven (7) public transit operators in the three county areas. A separate LEP analysis was not prepared for these operators. The two operators serving identified LEP areas have long acknowledged the need for and developed second

language schedules and rider guides, and other service information. These operators include East Chicago Transit, and North Township Dial-a-Ride. Demographic data for Northwest Indiana shows a significant concentration of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons in ten census tracts in northern Lake County. One of these is in Gary, which is outside of the area covered by NIRPC's transit subrecipients but within the area of the region's other services (Planning and Environmental Programs).

The public is involved in the transportation planning process through purposeful, intentional interactions (such as open houses, focus groups, and other venues) established with the intent of obtaining thoughts, ideas, comments, and suggestions regarding a vision of the future. These events are usually held in conjunction with a long range transportation plan development (every four years) and transportation improvement program development (every two years). There is also a Transportation Policy Committee that meets monthly at which topics of interest, including plan, program and policy issues are considered & recommended for approval by the NIRPC Board.

Public Transit Grants Management, Oversight, Procurement, and Technical Assistance: Low Frequency

This function within NIRPC is responsible for all post-grant activities associated with FTA grants. Until recently, there was no contact at all with the public. Beginning in 2007, NIRPC began implementing portions of a consent decree from United States District Court for Northern Indiana (Hammond Division) between itself and Everybody Counts Center for Independent Living, Inc. regarding oversight of subrecipient compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. An annual public hearing is conducted to hear comments from the public on service-related issues with NIRPC's seven subrecipient transit operators.

The cost of developing written materials in multiple languages has not been explored. However, given the low encounter rates discussed earlier, it is likely that a large scale production of written documents, such as transportation plans, transportation improvement programs, and air quality conformity determinations within the metropolitan planning division would be expensive. In these instances the cost of translating these documents would likely not be cost-effective. There is no need for non-English versions of documents produced by the grant administration and subgrantee oversight /procurement division. A possible exception is the translation of materials associated with the annual hearing required under the consent decree. The environmental education program does not generate any significant planning studies and related documents. It already produces some Spanish-language materials that are intended for direct distribution to the public in northern Lake Counties.

Conclusion

The low number of LEP persons accessing services in the past, the low frequency at which LEP persons encounter NIRPC's services, and the insignificant value of our services to the daily lives of people all seem to indicate that only very limited

measures are needed to address needs of the LEP (primarily Spanish-speaking) population.

Regarding metropolitan planning, when NIRPC communicates with the public regarding an opportunity for anyone to participate in, comment on, or provide input to, some effort is needed to communicate with LEP persons so that their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions may be heard and understood. Upon-request, up to 48 hours before a transportation outreach event, a staff person fluent in Spanish will be assigned to attend the outreach event and translate comments made in Spanish. If a staff person is not available a translator will be hired.

There is no need for grant administration, oversight, and procurement program-related materials to be translated, except as those which pertain to the annual hearing required under the consent decree. The notice of the hearing should be translated into Spanish and disseminated to organizations that service low income, Spanish speaking persons. Upon-request, up to 48 hours before a hearing, a staff person fluent in Spanish will be assigned to attend the hearing and translate comments made in Spanish. If a staff person is not available a translator will be hired.

The number of encounters with LEP populations is higher in the environmental department than other NIRPC divisions. There is a need for bilingual environmental education materials in locations where there is a significant Spanish-speaking population. Due to this the Environmental Division has and will continue to translate core educational materials into Spanish and distribute these materials in these areas. Materials include an asthma awareness guide, a watershed protection booklet, and a Citizens Guide to the MS4 Program.

66. Are minority and diverse language media appropriately included in all notification processes for public meetings or public review of agency documents? How is this handled?

Response: *The Crusader newspaper, which is a minority publication, is on the list of media that receive NIRPC information. The Crusader Newspaper Group consists of two weekly newspapers in Illinois and Indiana featuring news, commentary and life style reporting geared toward the African American community. The Chicago Crusader and Gary Crusader are circulated in twenty-three Chicago communities recognized as predominantly African American. NIRPC staff has appeared on a Spanish-based radio program and continue to maintain contact with the staff there.*

67. Has there been appropriate contact with minority groups or leaders to identify information needs and planning/programming issues of concern? Describe your efforts.

Response: *There was a concerted effort to involve minority groups and leaders to directly participate in the development of the 2040 Plan through membership in the Plan's Steering Committee. Interest by some key people in participating in the Committee faded quickly and disappeared. NIRPC considered it an*

opportunity that was squandered by the people who could have been important contributors. Opportunities continue to be offered to those key people to be engaged in the planning process. Interest and participation by many other key people was sustained by those people and their contributions to the planning process were valuable.

68. Is technical information available in formats and at places and times conducive to review by minorities? How is this handled?

Response: *The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission provides technical information in alternate formats on its website. This information can be reviewed by all individuals including minorities. No special accommodation is attempted. Information is readily available to all people regardless of race.*

69. Does the MPO have any active or previously resolved Title VI complaints?

Response: *NIRPC does not have any active or previously resolved or unresolved Title VI Complaints in 2010 – 2012.*

70. Does the Public Participation Plan include a specific and separate strategy for engaging low-income and minority populations? Is there a process to evaluate effectiveness of public involvement, including success at engaging low-income and minority residents? How is this process carried out?

Response: *There is no specific, separate strategy. The new, proposed Public Participation Plan includes a chapter on external and internal evaluation of the public participation process. It provides for a follow-up for meetings and workshops. For external evaluation, a meeting report is to be provided within a month of an event. It will be posted on the NIRPC website and sent to people who were invited, attended and other interested parties. The report will include the meeting/workshop goals, agenda, meeting design, outreach approach, any voting feedback highlights, actions and other items. For internal evaluation, a public outreach form is provided for staff to complete after every public meeting to record demographic information, to answer questions on outreach activities and techniques used, how the public input influenced the process and what could be done to improve public involvement in the future. The draft Public Participation Plan embraces diversity, encouraging it at meetings because it enriches the conversation and results.*

71. What are the measures used to verify that the multi-modal access and mobility performance improvements in the TP and TIP comply with Title VI?

Response: *NIRPC analyzed 11 accessibility and mobility performance measures for the EJ benefits and burdens analysis for the CRP, which can be found on page II-65. The analysis concluded that EJ communities would either benefit or have no undue burdens placed upon them by the transportation projects in the CRP. (For a detailed description of the EJ benefits and burdens analysis and results, please refer to pages II-64 to II-77 of the CRP.)*

CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS

72. Discuss the NIRPC congestion management process (CMP) and how it has been fully integrated into the overall metropolitan planning process. Describe the area, network and modes covered by the CMP. What is the rationale for these decisions? Are there plans to expand? Has the CMP been effective? Has it been updated? How is this process and its effectiveness documented? What monitoring systems are being developed to provide a framework for additional effectiveness evaluation? How are the ITS deployments in the region used to collect data for the CMP? If no ITS deployments exist, what CMP data needs could be filled by ITS deployments (see also the section titled “Intelligent Transportation Systems”)?

Response: The CMP was developed and implemented in conjunction with the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan (CRP), with final adoption coming in June, 2011. The CMP is included in NIRPC’s 2040 CRP, both as a summary in the main body of the plan (pp. II-16 to II-22) and in full as part of the plan’s appendix (pp. C-2 to C-99). As part of the process of developing the CMP, a committee was formed in order to integrate the CMP into the CRP’s project selection process. To this end, the CMP was used when selecting projects to be included in NIRPC’s 2040 CRP. Additionally, any future projects that require capacity expansion must demonstrate that they have passed NIRPC’s CMP before being allowed to be added to the TIP.

The area the CMP applies to is the NIRPC region, consisting of Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties. The modes analyzed by the CMP are the arterial roadways and NICTD’s South Shore Line commuter rail service.

The CMP calls for a multi-modal process. By analyzing highways, auto, truck, and bus traffic can all be analyzed since they all share the same roadways. The South Shore Line commuter service is highlighted as the region’s only rail transit service provider.

There are not currently plans to expand the CMP at this time, which was adopted as part of the 2040 CRP in mid-2011. It has not been updated since then, but will be reviewed and updated as part of the next long-range plan development cycle.

Regarding the effectiveness of the CMP, more attention is being paid to it by NIRPC and its stakeholders. It is a better understood part of the planning process, especially in relation to proposed capacity-increasing projects.

The CMP is included in NIRPC’s 2040 CRP, both as a summary in the main body of the plan (pp. II-16 to II-22) and in full as part of the plan’s appendix (pp. C-2 to C-99). Its effectiveness is measured against the CMP objectives found on pages C-10 to C-12 of NIRPC’s 2040 CRP.

Given the lack of funding for new monitoring systems, there are no developments of new monitoring systems.

ITS deployments are not yet being used to collect data for the CMP as the architecture is currently in the process of being updated and funding restraints act to prevent such deployments by local entities.

A CMP data need that could be fulfilled by an ITS deployment is the more efficient and effective collection and analysis of travel time data. While NIRPC currently uses the “floating car” system, more automated systems, such as devices that track Bluetooth signals, hold more potential to provide a clearer and more comprehensive picture in a more efficient way should the funding ever become available for equipment.

73. What kind of interaction with local transit, freight, and traffic system operators, etc. has been established? Do these partners share data, performance measures, etc. and do they contribute strategies toward solving regional congestion problems?

Response: *What kind of interaction with local transit, freight, and traffic system operators, etc. has been established?*

- *Most of the most congested corridors that require monitoring are arterials (state highways and expressways) that are primarily managed by INDOT, meaning that INDOT is an important partner in relieving congestion in Northwest Indiana.*
- *Local municipalities manage collectors and local roads, and some offer bus transit as well. In addition to being partners for their roadway, municipalities also provide access to any required data regarding the transit agency as well.*
- *NICTD, the operator of the South Shore Line commuter rail line, provides service that plays an important role in reducing congestion by providing alternative transportation.*
- *Freight operators, specifically freight railroads, and NIRPC have partnered to form a group called RailVISION, with a key focus being making major at-grade railroad crossings grade separated.*

These partners do share data, performance measures and other operational information as needed. These partners also contribute to discussions regarding congestion management strategies and alternatives during NIRPC’s Transportation Policy Committee meetings.

74. How are needed operational improvements solicited from the system operators? How are these proposed operational improvements programmed into the TIP?

Response: *The full menu of congestion mitigation strategies are provided to system operators. In order to consider any capacity expansion projects, operators must prove that the operational improvements have been included and incorporated into projects.*

Projects with design features intended to minimize future traffic congestion are part of the mix of projects programmed. The roundabout projects are examples of congestion reduction projects that are programmed.

75. What kinds of data are being collected? Describe how the data is used to measure transportation system performance, identify the causes of congestion, develop and evaluate alternatives, and prioritize/schedule solutions.

Response: *NIRPC has been collecting travel time data on regional corridors that were identified as part of the development of the CMP.*

The data is meant for eventual use for the purposes of the TIP project review and ranking and fund allocation. This data can also be used to compose maps that visually represent travel time.

76. What procedures connect the CMP evaluations and products to the metropolitan planning process (UPWP, MTP, corridor studies, conformity and TIP development)? How does CMP affect the programming of projects? What CMP strategies are being implemented and how are they integrated with those resulting from other elements of the metropolitan planning process? Please provide examples of how and when the CMP has affected the planning process in the region.

Response: *The CMP was adopted as part of the 2040 CRP in 2011. Congestion management is also an item of the UPWP. Additionally, any project proposed for the TIP must be supported by the 2040 CRP, and, if the project involves capacity expansion, it must “pass” the CMP analysis.*

CMP affects the programming of projects because in order for any capacity expansion project to be programmed into the TIP, it must pass the CMP.

The primary CMP strategy being implemented through the 2040 Plan is growth management. The development of livable centers and compact growth are intended to reduce congestion across the region.

As part of the 2040 CRP, the CMP has a direct influence on the planning process in the region. While it has not yet been applied to any projects in the newest TIP cycle, the CMP principles were applied to the projects that proposed to be included in the 2040 CRP. In order to be included in the CRP, it was required that they support the strategies and principles of CMP.

77. What multimodal performance measures has NIRPC established to monitor the transportation system management in the region? How and when were these performance measures developed? Are the performance measures based on actual data or modeled data?

Response: *NIRPC’s multimodal performance measures are part of the CMP and can be found in the 2040 CRP on pages C-12 to C-16. They are:*

- *Highway Performance Measures*
 - *Volume/Capacity (V/C) Ratio*

- *Travel Time & Travel Time Index*
- *Average Speed*
- *Delay*
- *Safety Performance Measures*
 - *Crash Rate*
 - *Average Incident Clearance Time*
- *Transit Performance Measures*
 - *Load Factor*
 - *On-Time Performance*
 - *Passenger trips per Vehicle Revenue Hour and Mile*
 - *Vehicle Revenue Hours/Per Capita*
- *Other Performance Measures*
 - *Customer Satisfaction*
 - *Vehicle Miles Traveled/Vehicle Hours Traveled*

These performance measures were developed as part of the overall development of the CMP, which coincided with the development of NIRPC's 2040 CRP. Initially selected by NIRPC staff, they were discussed and approved by the Congestion Management Subcommittee.

Due to the variety of factors that they cover, some performance measures are based on actual data, and some are based on modeled data. Which one is used is highly dependent upon the type of data needed and the data sources available.

78. Does the planning process include a CMP that meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450.320? What assurances are there that the MTP incorporates travel demand and operational management strategies, and that necessary demand reduction and operational management commitments are made for new SOV projects? What is the process for adding SOV capacity? Is there documentation of the SOV analysis? Identify transportation demand management (TDM) techniques that have been or will be considered and implemented to reduce travel demand (see CMP section).

Response: *The planning process includes a CMP that meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450.320, which is "Congestion management process in transportation management areas." It was part of the 2040 CRP that was adopted in June, 2011. FHWA and FTA found that NIRPC had met the necessary requirements to remove the conditional certification and jointly acted on July 23, 2012 to fully certify the transportation planning process in Northwest Indiana, finding it consistent with the federal planning requirements.*

SOV capacity increases are considered for inclusion in the MTP and TIP only after the project has been evaluated with respect to the CMP. The CMP process is a prerequisite for any consideration.

The SOV analysis is documented in the CMP section of the 2040 CRP, beginning on page C-2.

Step 9 of NIRPC’s Step-by-Step Process (p. C-7 in the CRP), “Identify/Evaluate Strategies – The congested areas of the region have been identified and strategies evaluated for their potential impact on congestion relief. A criterion for evaluating the potential strategies is selected. The key here is to follow the process and only recommend implementation of an expansion of the roadway system if necessary. Categories for strategies include:

- *Demand Management*
- *Access Management*
- *Intelligent Transportation Systems*
- *Transit Service*
- *Growth Management*
- *Adding Capacity as a Last Resort”*

TDM techniques that have been identified in NIRPC’s 2040 CRP (pp. C-51 to C-53) include:

- *Telecommuting Promotion*
- *Flex Work Schedule Promotion*
- *Carpool and Vanpool Promotion*
- *School Pool Promotion*
- *Alternative Travel Mode Incentives*
- *Alternative Travel Mode Events*

79. How are TDM and operational improvements recommended by the CMP implemented? Please cite examples.

Response: *The implementation of travel demand management is accomplished through the regional rideshare program, operated by PACE, which has approximately 300 registered users from northwest Indiana. This includes carpool and vanpool services. Operational improvements are primarily implemented using access management and intersection improvements.*

Operational Improvements have been designed into one capacity-expansion project to manage access. The 93rd Avenue extension project in Merrillville project restricts access to a single intersection along the length of the new lanes. Though not recommended by the CMP, many of our communities are implementing roundabouts as a congestion management operational improvement strategy.

LIST OF OBLIGATED PROJECTS

80. What is the process for conveying information on annual obligations to the MPO by the recipient grantee agencies?

Response: *NIRPC asks, via e-mail, each of three external FTA grantees (NICTD, Michigan City, and Gary PTC) to supply the obligation information to*

us. They send us the requested data—usually in the form of pdf files or printouts from TEAM.

81. Is an annual list of projects for which federal funds have been obligated published or otherwise made available for public review within 90 days of the end of the program year? Does it include bicycle-pedestrian projects? Please provide a copy of the most recent edition of this document.

Response: *We attempt to release the annual list of projects (ALOP) as early as possible following the receipt of all data. In 2012 there was an approximate 90-day publication delay caused by the delay in receiving data from one transit operator and the resignation of the staff person responsible for producing the ALOP.*

The ALOP separately identifies stand-alone bicycle-pedestrian projects. A copy of the State Fiscal Year 2012 report is enclosed.

ITS PLANNING AND COORDINATION

82. How is the planning/consideration of ITS being mainstreamed and incorporated into the overall planning process? (MTP, TIP, UWP)

- How are you using your ITS Architecture to support the MTP?
- How are ITS related strategies or projects described in an MTP?
- How are you using your ITS Architecture to support your Congestion Management Process?
- Are you using your ITS architecture to support Freight planning?
- Are you using your ITS architecture to support Operations planning?
- How do you list/identify ITS projects in your TIP?
- Do you have ITS activities in you UPWP?

Response: *Currently ITS is not being incorporated in a meaningful way into the planning process, but as part of the current ITS architecture update, NIRPC plans to develop methods for doing so.*

- *How are you using your ITS Architecture to support the MTP? We are not.*
- *How are ITS related strategies or projects described in an MTP? They are not.*
- *How are you using your ITS Architecture to support your Congestion Management Process? We are not.*
- *Are you using your ITS architecture to support Freight planning? No.*
- *Are you using your ITS architecture to support Operations planning? No.*
- *How do you list/identify ITS projects in your TIP? ITS projects are identified in the TIP by “ITS Project”.*
- *Do you have ITS activities in you UPWP? ITS is in the UPWP under code 2047, which describes the work necessary to update and maintain the ITS Architecture. Activities include forming a stakeholder committee, defining projects, and updating the ITS Plan.*

83. Who participated in the creation of the regional architecture? When was the architecture last updated, and when is it scheduled to be reviewed/updated again? What ITS measures from this architecture have been or are being implemented?

Response: *Stakeholders from local municipalities, public transit agencies, FHWA, INDOT, and NIRPC participated as members of the Task Force.*

The architecture was last updated in 2005; the ITS architecture is currently being updated and will be complete by the end of 2013.

The most significant ITS project that has been implemented since the creation of the architecture is the Borman Expressway Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS). Other ITS projects that were planned as of the adoption date of the architecture will be reviewed during the architecture's update to determine if they have been implemented or not.

84. How is ITS being used to answer questions that were not asked?

Response: It is not, as this number was left blank. This may be a good time to refill one's coffee mug before continuing.

TRANSIT AND NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

85. In as much detail as possible, please describe the planning processes involved in determining the FTA Section 5307 and 5309 formula sub-allocations between both the states and transit operators. To what extent does this change from year to year?

Response: *The allocations between the states are based on formulas using NTD and Census data that are published with the fiscal year apportionment notices. For Illinois and Northwest Indiana, these formulas yield the splits for Sec. 5307, 5339, 5337, and 5310-New Freedom.*

At the local level, the operators determine priorities and funding levels for each, based on the current long range plan. After the adoption of the most recent plan, the 2040 CRP, the operators are reviewing and revising the criteria to be consistent with the goals and objectives of the CRP. A delay was experienced in completing this work because of the uncertain circumstances surrounding the future of the Regional Bus Authority. The revised criteria and project selection process are expected to be completed and a new TIP solicitation issued by June 1.

The allocations change annually to reflect the federal appropriations. How much is allocated to each priority is also changed to reflect appropriation levels. The priorities do not change from year to year, only when a new plan is done.

86. How are the state and transit operator(s) involved in the MPO's overall planning and Project Development Process (PDP)?

Response: *The Transit Operators Round Table and the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) have served as the primary conduit for operator participation in the overall MPO planning and project development processes. Transit operators all have seats on the TPC and participate with highway, freight, air and water transportation interests, as well as trail and environmental interests. INDOT public transit staff and FTA staff are included in the Roundtable meetings, but rarely participate. Travel restrictions or limitations make it difficult to attend and participate at NIRPC, although conference calling is an option.*

87. NIRPC completed a coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan in 2007. What is the update cycle of this plan? Please describe past activities to update this plan. How were these updated planning efforts coordinated with the region's transit providers as well as other providers of transportation, including private entities? What benefits have occurred over the past four year as result from this plan?

Response: *An update cycle has not been established. The ceiling for operating dollars out of Section 5310/New Freedom was reached with the two projects originally identified in the New Freedom selection process as specified in the original Plan. The remaining funds for capital projects will be programmed at a later date.*

Past activities to update – the Plan has not been updated

Benefits over the past four years – the New Freedom funds received to date have been supporting two projects that increased the availability of public transit to the disability community in South Lake County and Porter County. The South Lake project increased access to jobs and social services for persons with disabilities in partnership with the ARC Bridges of Northwest Indiana. The Porter County project expanded hours of service into the evening to facilitate jobs access by independently-living persons with disabilities.

The Jobs Access Reverse Commute funds have been used by the Gary Public Transportation Corporation to improve jobs access for low-income and travel training to use the public system for clients of ARC Bridges moving into non-subsidized employment.

88. Please describe the project selection process pursuant to the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.

Response: *(An excerpt from the Plan): “A call for projects for funding under the JARC and New Freedom programs will be issued by the MPO after consultation with the public and human services transit providers. The Coordinated Plan and the priorities it identifies serve as the basis for the project selection criteria.”*

Criteria:

“Proposed projects will be ranked based on the total score received after application of the following criteria:

1. Responsiveness to the priority the project proposes to address 25 points
2. Demonstrates coordination - 20 points
3. Evidence of local financial support - 30 points
4. Includes partnership(s) between (among) providers - 15 points
5. Accesses funds from other federal agencies or programs - 10 BONUS POINTS”

89. Please describe recent and planned changes for the coordinated public transit-human services transportation planning process based on changes in MAP-21.

Response: *No changes have been made. As MAP -21 limited the amount of operating assistance, there is no room for a new operating project. The two existing services selected for funding under the Coordinated Plan are on-going. The Plan will need to be updated to provide for priorities among other capital projects. This is the first fiscal year for NIRPC to be a recipient of Section 5310 funds. It is anticipated that NIRPC will conduct a coordinated planning process update to accommodate selection of capital only projects among the non-public human services providers.*

90. Page II-36 of the CRP identifies planned improvements to the transit systems in LaPorte County, including a shared call center/dispatch operations center. Please provide an update of these activities.

Response: *The City of LaPorte, the lead agency for the shared call/dispatch project, is preparing to implement the service. A cooperative agreement has been signed by the City and its new partner, the City of Michigan City. Cooperation between the operators will result in periodic service between the two cities. This service has long been identified as a major need in LaPorte County.*

91. Please provide an update of past plans to expand NICTD commuter rail to areas south of the existing South Shore service area.

Response: *The expansion of commuter rail has stalled in terms of next steps. While the feasibility in terms of density of development in the project corridor is still open for debate, the lack of local funding commitments for construction and long term operating subsidy has halted all activity. Without the State of Indiana and local operating subsidy support, it is unlikely that additional expansion will occur.*

92. To what extent is Transit Oriented Development (TOD) integrated into the transportation/land use planning processes? How is the MPO and its planning partners developing plans and projects that facilitate good transit performance?

Response: *Transit oriented development is part of what makes a vibrant, livable center, which is a concept highly prominent in the 2040 CRP. The 2040 Regional Transit Vision, outlined in the Transportation Chapter of the CRP, identifies a regional transit framework for a system of transit-supported centers, including TOD around existing South Shore Stations, along the West Lake Corridor and at regional bus and multimodal hubs. Some planning for TOD already has been accomplished. Transit Oriented Development around existing South Shore*

Stations is a key recommendation of the Marquette Plan. Municipalities including Portage, Munster and Valparaiso have TOD plans, and NICTD is studying the realignment of the South Shore through Michigan City.

NIRPC with NICTD encourages the development of a regional South Shore Corridor TOD Study to develop context-appropriate strategies for creating a network of transit-oriented places and sites that integrate different functions and activities within easy access of transit.

The MPO and its partners participate in on-going consultations on a regular basis through a variety of monthly or quarterly meetings and activities revolving around the implementation of the 2040 plan, the development of a new FY 2014-2017 TIP, the development of new project selection criteria to reflect the 2040 plan policies and priorities, the updating of the UPWP, and the initiation of discussions with the transit operators on how to identify, incorporate and utilize the performance measures required by MAP -21.

93. Are transit user surveys performed? If so, when was the last one and can you highlight any key findings? How is the information used to improve transit performance?

Response: *NIRPC does not provide transit, so it does not directly survey transit riders. From time-to-time the operators of public transit survey their passengers, which NICTD did in April, 2013. Results are not yet available, and when they are NICTD will be invited to share a summary with the Transportation Policy Committee at a meeting.*

94. To what extent will operators use FTA funds for operating assistance now that this activity is eligible using FY2013 funds?

Response: *This applies to only 2 local operators, GPTC and East Chicago. East Chicago opted not to take advantage of the operating assistance, GPTC opted to use theirs.*

95. Please describe transit-related performance metrics data collected and monitored by NIRPC and the transit operators.

Response: *As all of the operators participate in the NTD reporting process. NIRPC's oversight staff receives the quarterly vehicle usage reports from the NTD reports turned in by the sub-grantees. Annual ridership data is collected from the NTD web site. The vehicle usage information is used to determine eligibility of replacement vehicle projects for programming in the TIP. Ridership data is used to monitor annual system-wide performance. Identification of performance metrics, as required under MAP-21, will be pursued as soon as the FTA regulations containing the program guidance are published this fall.*

96. How are transit needs integrated into the land development process?

Response: *NIRPC supports Livable Centers that promote regional connectivity between Livable Centers, including being supportive of public transportation. The new CLC program focuses on improving land development around transit facilities. It promotes improving streets within each Livable Center to facilitate*

safe and comfortable use of transit vehicles, even if public transportation is not yet provided. This includes planning for transit stop locations and providing appropriate amenities at current and potential future transit stops, such as benches and shelters. In several Livable Centers, TOD opportunities will be facilitated to mutually support transit investments.

97. NICTD's ridership has been steady over the years. However, RBA service was terminated in 2012 and Gary PTCs overall ridership has dropped from about 2.3 million in 1999 to a low of about 661,000 in 2011. How does this reflect on the success of the transportation planning process? Is the CRP realistic in attempting to reverse this trend?

Response: *The demise of the Regional Bus Authority in mid-2012 and the loss of its service and the ridership decline of Gary PTC have nothing to do with the transportation planning process. It has everything to do with a lack of a dedicated source of multi-community funding to support a regional system. It also had to do with the political unpopularity of imposing new taxes on citizens. However that changed in Lake County in May 2013 when the Lake County Council did vote to impose a 1.5% income tax on those who live and work in Lake County. The next step is winning the political fight to dedicate some of those proceeds to creating and supporting a regional bus system. However, to date no elected county councilmen, county commissioners, nor local mayors have stepped up to lead the push to dedicate some of the proceeds to a county-wide or regional transit system. The CRP calls for a regional system of public transportation, which is a realistic goal for which NIRPC will continue to advocate.*

98. How are freight shippers and transit users given the opportunity to comment on the TP, TIP, and other MPO products? What opportunities do private enterprises, including private transit providers, have to participate in the planning process? Do you identify and consider goods movement issues in the planning process?

Response: *Transportation stakeholders, including private enterprises and private transit providers, are routinely notified of opportunities to comment on the plan, TIP, and other MPO products. The MPO maintains an extensive email list of stakeholders that is used for all planning and meeting notice activities. The same list is used to solicit participation on task forces or advisory committees overseeing a planning process.*

FREIGHT – MOVEMENT OF GOODS

99. On 8/30/10, Cambridge Systematics completed a NIRPC Freight Study. Please elaborate on NIRPC's subsequent freight-planning activities and process changes pursuant to the recommendations in that report.

Response: *Since the completion of the NIRPC Freight Study, the agency's focus on freight has expanded beyond simply the area of safety and grade crossings to a more comprehensive view of where Northwest Indiana sits within the global trade network and how freight can be a driver for economic revitalization within the region. Since the study's completion, NIRPC has devoted a full-time staff member*

to serve as the technical lead on freight planning (formerly Thomas Vander Woude, currently Jack Eskin). This role has engaged in analysis, data collection, stakeholder outreach, ongoing training, and report development around the issues of freight infrastructure enhancement and freight –related economic development. All of this work has been illustrated in the expanded freight recommendations of the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan (see question 100). Through all of this work, NIRPC is meeting Recommendations 6.1 & 6.3 of its freight study, “Integration of Freight into the Comprehensive Planning Process” and “Next Steps.”

Meeting Recommendation 6.2 of the Freight Plan, “Consideration of Freight in Project Selection Criteria for the TIP,” arterials that experience over 500 semis daily now have increased priority in the selection process.

100. Pages II-54 to II-55 of the CRP outline freight plan policies and recommendations, many of which were based on a December 2010 freight visioning workshop. Please describe NIRPC’s activities to implement these since the plan was completed.

***Response:** Underlined below are the recommendation areas for freight transportation in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Included are updates for how the agency is undertaking the implementation of these recommendations.*

At-Grade Crossings

For the last year, NIRPC staff has worked with the region’s communities, railroad operators, Purdue University Calumet, INDOT, and the Rail VISION Working Group to identify the highest priority at-grade railroad/highway crossings in Northwest Indiana. Currently, staff is in the process of completing its analysis of the benefits and costs (as well as the feasibility) of separating these crossings, in the expanded Northwest Indiana Regional At-Grade Crossing Study. A draft of this study is set for completion by the end of June. After the completion of this study, ongoing work on these crossings will be undertaken through staff support to the concerned communities, railroads and agencies.

Logistics & Intermodal Development

Following the completion of the regional at-grade crossing study, the primary focus of NIRPC’s freight work will be the initiation of a study on opportunities for intermodal development or related logistics facilities within Northwest Indiana. Conversations with freight operators and communities have already begun to shape the focus of the study, and there is consensus among the Rail VISION Working Group that identifying opportunities for freight-related economic development is a top priority. The initial stages of this study should commence fall 2013.

Freight Corridor Planning & Cargo –Oriented Development

Through NIRPC’s Comprehensive Plan and 2010 Freight Study, primary rail and truck corridors have previously been identified, and in collaboration with the Transportation, Distribution & Logistics Committee (a group composed of freight

operators and economic development officials), NIRPC staff has aided in the identification of rail-served sites throughout the region. This inventory is still in its infant stages, but will pick up significantly with the initiation of a regional logistics and intermodal study. A primary focus of this will be opportunities for cargo-oriented development on vacant sites in the region's urban core communities. Over the last 20 years, freight facilities have moved out to large suburban greenfield sites, drawing investment and development away from urban areas. Having identified logistics development as a major economic development opportunity on brownfield sites, NIRPC's staff plans not only to make a cargo-oriented development analysis a major component of its regional logistics and intermodal study, but also to target rail-served brownfield sites as potential recipients of brownfield redevelopment funds, through the newly formed revolving loan fund that it will jointly operate with the RDA.

Land Use Planning around Freight Facilities

Through the agency's Livable Centers Initiative, NIRPC has been in the process of identifying primary community centers and neighborhoods throughout the region. In the urban core cities, like East Chicago, Gary, and Hammond, dense community units exist adjacent to major freight infrastructure, a throwback to the days when workers would walk to their industrial jobs from their homes. Freight development and freight activity in close proximity to where people live obviously create potential environmental justice concerns, and with that in mind, NIRPC plans to expand upon its Livable Centers work to include land use best practices for communities surrounded by freight facilities. Staff has held conversations with researchers from the University of Wisconsin, and other institutions that are exploring this topic, and our agency plans to make this an area of focus in the near future. No calendar has been established yet for this study.

Improvement Heavy Duty Truck Route

NIRPC has worked alongside INDOT on the improvement of the Heavy Duty Truck Routes that move through Northwest Indiana, to Michigan and Illinois. Informal recommendations have been made on the extension of the westbound truck route to connect with Brainerd Avenue in Illinois.

Modal Shift to Reduce Truck Volume

Trucking remains the dominant mode for freight transport in Northwest Indiana, as with the rest of the country. With that in mind though, aside from the road improvement and highway expansion projects in NIRPC's TIP, the majority of the technical freight work NIRPC does is multimodal, rail, water, and air, with the understanding that strengthening those modes helps Northwest Indiana (and the country) meet its sustainability goals. In turn, planning for a shift in modes is implicit in our freight work, and will be evident in the upcoming Logistics & Intermodal study, through its focus on rail-served sites, enhancement of the region's ports, and logistics development around the Gary-Chicago Airport.

101. An April 12, 2012 NWI RAIL VISION At-Grade Rail Crossing Study discusses monthly meetings of public/private rail transportation partners to improve held since June 2011 to address rail issues. Please describe the group's activities and accomplishments since this report. Has this group been considered as a venue to resolve the dispute over the NICTD Michigan City realignment locally preferred alternative? If so, please elaborate.

Response: *The Rail VISION Working Group meets quarterly to discuss rail-related issues. The group is largely composed of representatives from the region's communities, railroad operators, Purdue University Calumet, INDOT, and NICTD. Recently, the group has mostly focused on at-grade crossings, but in future meetings, there will be an increased focus on freight-related economic development. The group's accomplishments since Spring 2012 have been primarily serving as a guiding committee in the development of the At-Grade Crossing study, and as a connection point between freight research undertaken at NIRPC, and crossing visualization projects that have been created at Purdue University Calumet. The Rail VISION Group will also play an important role in development of the Logistics and Intermodal Study.*

The Rail VISION Working Group is not the proper forum for debating the NICTD realignment. The Working Group has really taken shape as a way to discuss opportunities around freight expansion and freight infrastructure enhancement, and so passenger rail (while related) is not the primary point of concern drawing in the group's stakeholders. Simply put, the Rail VISION Group just does not have the right stakeholders at the table to serve as a forum for that debate, and to make it the forum for that debate could potentially take the group's purpose off course. The City of Michigan City and NICTD have engaged in many discussions and held public meetings on the matter, and those have served as better forums for getting to the heart of the realignment debate. NIRPC does not need to intervene or mediate the issue.

102. Please discuss other NIRPC freight planning activities not covered in the aforementioned documents and responses related to:

- Collection of regional goods movement flow data for rail, trucking, water.
- Data analysis through established performance measures.
- Identification of key goods movement facilities, transportation infrastructure, investment, and policy needs of the goods movement community in the areas of air cargo, port, trucking & rail.
- Continuing collaboration with the private sector and local communities.

Response:

Collection of regional goods movement flow data for rail, trucking, water NIRPC maintains an annually updated archive of commodity flow data from US DOT. Specific studies like the At-Grade Crossing Report, have served as additional opportunities for targeted data collection on an as-needed basis, for such data points as gate-down time and vacant rail-served site acreage.

- *Data analysis through established performance measures.*

NIRPC maintains an annually updated archive of data points that serve as its performance measures. They are as follows:

- *Trains per day through grade-crossings*
- *Gate down time at grade crossings*
- *Number of fatal crashes involving heavy trucks*
- *Vehicle classification by time of day, percent of trucks off-peak*
- *Average speeds on freight significant highways*
- *Average peak and off-peak travel time for trucks in freight significant corridors*
- *Tonnage shipped through NWI ports, including total tons, domestic, foreign, imports, and exports*
- *Number of Businesses and Employment in Freight Generating Industries, including Agriculture, Construction, Manufacturing, Mineral Extraction, Utilities, Transportation and Warehousing and Wholesale Trade*
- *Percent of Mode Share for freight*
- *Air Cargo Summary Data for Gary/Chicago International Airport: Tons Emplaned (Originating and Terminating)*
- *Number of Public Highway-Grade Crossings*

Analysis of these performance measures will be updated on an annual basis.

- *Identification of key goods movement facilities, transportation infrastructure, investment, and policy needs of the goods movement community in the areas of air cargo, port, trucking & rail.*

Identification of freight assets and policy needs within Northwest Indiana was a major part of the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan. An expanded analysis of assets and needs will play a major role in the upcoming Logistics & Intermodal Study.

- *Continuing collaboration with the private sector and local communities.*

The Rail VISION Working Group, continued collaboration with the Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics Group, and ongoing technical assistance to the community will serve as the primary areas for collaboration with stakeholders.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

103. Please describe NIRPC's efforts in implementing any of the planning activities outlined in the March 11, 2010, *United States Department of Transportation Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations* (http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/overview/policy_accom.cfm).

Response: *NIRPC has been recognized as a leader advancing non-motorized transportation as a legitimate option for everyday commuting needs. The USDOT's policy statement mirrors NIRPC's plan to integrate bicycle and pedestrian use to better the overall health of our population, reduce our dependence on automobiles and help clean our environment.*

Specifically, NIRPC addresses the following USDOT recommended activities:

- *Considering walking and bicycling as equals with other transportation modes. For nearly a decade NIRPC has strategically advanced policies to aid in our vision to create a “non-motorized transportation culture” in the NW Indiana region. NIRPC has set out to accomplish this bold initiative through planning linked with federal funding from a number of sources. These include TAP, TE, CMAQ and STP monies where available. The result has seen the number of trail miles increase exponentially where 130+ miles currently exist in all three NIRPC regional counties.*

In addition to off-road paved trails, NIRPC has employed a comprehensive strategy to create safe and accessible non-motorized routes throughout all communities. The cornerstone work of this initiative involved the adoption of a Complete Streets Policy in 2010, which asks that projects funded with NIRPC-attributable monies design transportation corridors that accommodate all intended users. This policy has resulted in new language for Complete Streets compliance being integrated into funding applications, as well as NIRPC’s recent 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Additional efforts in creating an environment for non-motorized travel has including advancing Safe Routes to School Policies at several elementary schools, and the publication of a bicycling and walking map free to the public. This latter product has become an extremely popular item requested from people around the region plus from other parts of the country visiting the NIRPC region.

- *Ensuring that there are transportation choices for people of all ages and abilities, especially children. NIRPC continues to be a leader in educating Safe Routes to School policies which promote bicycling and walking habits at an early age. A number of strategies have been promoted in this area, most prominently “walking school busses” which engage parental involvement.*

Regarding the balance of the regional population, NIRPC promotes strategies to communities that advance safe connections via sidewalks and at intersections. NIRPC ensures that new projects funded with federal monies employ safety measures that accommodate all ages and abilities. NIRPC has also engaged regional stakeholders to abide by designs standards mandated in the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). ADA Compliance reports have strongly pursued by NIRPC staff and nearly all of the 41 cities in towns in the NIRPC region have submitted plans. Many of these same communities have also begun construction work with curb ramps and signal beacons at intersections.

- *Going beyond minimum design standards.*

Since the adoption of the 2005 Ped & Pedal Plan, NIRPC has strived to promote best practices for non-motorized transportation design. A premiere example of this commitment was the adoption of a Complete Streets Policy in 2010, followed by standardized design guidelines in 2013. Combined these documents provide clear direction for community engagement on a number of Complete Streets strategies tailored to their particular urban or rural contexts.

- *Integrating bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on new, rehabilitated, and limited-access bridges.*

Over the last three years, NIRPC has been able to engage two communities to work with the state DOT (INDOT) on redesigning their bridges to allow for a separated bicycle and pedestrian lane. In both cases INDOT complied and provided three bridge facilities with a non-motorized travel lane walled-off from motorized vehicles. These special lanes are to be connected with citywide and regional trails which now assure the traveling public a safe means to access their destinations.

- *Collecting data on walking and biking trips.*

NIRPC still relies heavily on data reported in the 2002 Indiana Trails Study. Since at this time the regional trail network has more than doubled, including the number of people using the facilities. Also improved are accesses on local streets and the number of destinations providing safe bicycle parking. NIRPC recognizes the need to undertake a new survey, and will pursue this when staffing and funding levels allow.

- *Setting mode share targets for walking and bicycling and tracking them over time.*

Again, NIRPC desires to undertake such research when resources allow.

- *Removing snow from sidewalks and shared-use paths.*

NIRPC actively engages communities to maintain pathways during winter via plowing. Several communities have already engaged such a policy. NIRPC may employ penalties to future grant applications for those communities who do not comply with these federal mandates.

- *Improving non-motorized facilities during maintenance projects.*

The NIRPC Complete Streets Policy remains a critical factor to encourage communities to improve current non-motorized facilities, as well as integrating additional measures, during maintenance projects. A growing practice is “road diets” in a handful of communities where four-lane roadways are narrowed to three, with the allowance of a striped bicycle lane on either side. NIRPC already mandates new sidewalks be installed on reconstructed roadway projects using federal funds.

104. Page II-56 of the CRP identifies the 2010 *Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan*, *Complete Streets Guidelines*, and the 2008 *Northwest Indiana Blueways and*

Greenways Plan. Describe MPO activities that have occurred since completion of the CRP and these other plans to implement the various recommendations.

Response: *Primary work since the adoptions of these plans/policies has been to engage the regional stakeholders with implementation strategies. A major effort has been afforded to promote Complete Streets design standards so as to guide local sponsors with best practices in this field. To this end NIRPC will be adopting a design manual which exhaustively outlines design options for a number of urban and rural contexts. The manual provides a bevy of context-oriented solutions depending on land use and current travel capacities.*

Furthering the promotion of non-motorized routes, NIRPC released the Greenways & Blueways Map in 2012. This document provides a first-ever outline of both land and water trails in NW Indiana, and roughly 10 miles of the Chicago south suburban region. All trails, both bicycling and walking, are outlined in detail – including road routes suitable for safe traveling. The map serves as both an informative document, and one to spur additional action by those communities who desire to link into the network. It has proved to be NIRPC’s most popular product.

On the blueway, or water trails front, NIRPC partners directly with the NW Indiana Paddling Association on efforts to open up a number of routes in the region. Primary work has focused on Lake Michigan (sea kayaking) and the Kankakee Rivers. NIRPC has worked with ArcelorMittal USA Foundation on the creation and placement of interpretive signs and maps at all launch locations along these two water bodies. Robust efforts are underway for localized water routes in a number of communities.

105. How does the MPO coordinate the various jurisdictions’ plans into their overall plan?

Response: *NIRPC engages a group of regional stakeholders in a monthly dialogue at their Ped, Pedal and Paddle Committee (3PC) meetings. The 3PC has served as the hub of regional non-motorized planning and visioning for nearly 20 years, and has served as the vanguard for the rapid expansion of trail miles in the region. At these meetings a number of top community officials in both the parks and recreation and engineering departments regularly engage one another on implementing best practices. NIRPC also engages stakeholders in other key committees to spread the word and be encouraging of non-motorized design in all of their local planning efforts.*

The results have been very successful with a number of new local plans directly mentioning NIRPC’s 2010 Ped & Pedal Plan and Greenways & Blueways Plan as the foundation for their work. In many local plans major regional trail corridors have been highlighted so as to directly tie back to the efforts NIRPC is promoting.

106. Discuss the selection and prioritization process for bicycle and pedestrian

projects.

Response: *Since the advent of ISTEA in 1991, NIRPC has developed one of the most respected methodologies for selecting non-motorized projects for federal funding. In the late 1990's, NIRPC began to employ a policy of funding only those projects that advance regional connectivity. At this time a Regional Priority Trails Corridor Map (RPTCM) was developed which outlined a number of routes with various levels of priority based on a number of factors such as adjacent population and employment centers. Over the years this map has expanded extensively where over 30 corridors have been identified with roughly 500 miles planned for off-road trail development.*

Two of these routes have been classified as "Visionary Corridors" which mirrors those said corridors in the 2006 Indiana State Trails Plan. These two include the national American Discovery Trail network, and the Marquette Greenway which would connect Chicago to New Buffalo, MI.

The RPTCM represents the foundational planning element when selecting new trail projects for funding at NIRPC. Beyond the map applicants are also encouraged, via a points-based system, to overmatch above the standard 20%, identify partnerships, and build trails where people will be able to use them for both recreation and utilitarian needs. There are also bonus points for "progressive planning" such as ordinances that mandate green space, or trails with new developments.

Regarding smaller scale projects such as sidewalks and intersections, NIRPC has engaged regional stakeholders to apply for Safe Routes to School and HSIP monies. These projects are also vetted before the 3PC before they are released for final ranking.

107. How are pedestrian needs factored into large projects?

Response: *NIRPC Surface Transportation Program (STP) represents funding for large-scale transportation projects. Inherent within the application process are a number of questions outlining a local sponsor's commitment to ensure safe pedestrian movements throughout their project scopes. To this end NIRPC requires that new sidewalks are considered for reconstruction projects, and that crosswalks and ped-countdown signals be installed at intersections, which compliment ADA-mandated elements such as curb ramps.*

Further coordination has taken place with INDOT on projects along state roads. In many cases their projects provide critical non-motorized connectivity, and to this end nearly all new INDOT projects involve a strong measure of design for safe pedestrian movement and accessibility along busy state highways.

MAP-21

108. FHWA and FTA rulemaking pursuant to MAP-21 is ongoing. To what extent has NIRPC made preparations to address new planning requirements based on the available guidance issued by FHWA and FTA at this time? In particular, what are the MPO's plans to integrate performance-based planning into its processes and coordinate with its planning partners in relation to the seven national goals (safety, infrastructure condition, congestion reduction, system reliability, freight movement and economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and reduced project delivery delays)?

***Response:** NIRPC understands that performance-based planning and programming is required, and has done some research from U.S. DOT and some MPO sources about what this could mean. Federal guidebooks are being developed that will serve as practical resources for states, transit operators and MPOs. A published timeline from another MPO advised that national rulemaking would be from October 1, 2012 to April 1, 2014, followed by state level target-setting until April 1, 2015, followed by MPO target-setting until October 1, 2015. Performance measures will have to be connected to the goals and objectives of the long-range plan and target-setting. It will be a data-driven process, which will involve the cooperation and participation of the project implementing stakeholders. Some other part of the planning process may have to be diminished or diluted for NIRPC to accomplish all that is required relative to performance measures, unless additional resources can be found. This answer does not cover how all seven national goals will be considered, because the requirement is new and has not been fully developed by the US DOT through guidance. Eventually, NIRPC will address each of the national goals. Following is an explanation of progress to date.*

NIRPC planned in advance and included performance measures in the CRP. Each major planning task of the UPWP for FY 2014 includes performance measures / indicators that have been identified in the 2040 Plan. These performance measures will be considered, if possible and based on availability of data, to monitor the progress of implementation of the 2040 plan. The use of performance measures is necessary for transparency and accountability in plan implementation activities. They provide the means to show progress and impact of plan implementation. Performance measures were developed to cover the elements of land use, population, land development overtime, safety, congestion management, freight, transit, and environmental sustainability.

In regards to reduction of project delivery delays, part of this effort has been prepared by NIRPC using the Red Flag review. New projects have been handed off by TIP staff to Environmental staff for the Red Flag review. Currently NIRPC is working on digitizing the TIP projects into our GIS database. Projects will be screened in the Red Flag Investigation methodology provided by INDOT if they do not appear to meet categorical exclusions listed in CFR 23§ 771.117. Some projects may also be analyzed if they have potential to impact the focus issues identified by agencies during scoping for the environmental mitigation and

consultation process scoping meeting. The other part of this effort has to be controlled by federal and state agencies in which bureaucracy causing a significant delay to deliver projects on time.

Every four years One Region (a merger of the Quality of Life Council with the group “One Region, One Vision”) collects and analyzes data and publishes a report of regional indicators. The indicators provide an objective assessment of the conditions in ten categories (People, Economy, Environment, Transportation, Education, Health, Public Safety, Housing, Culture, and Government) considered to be primary gauges of the quality of life in Northwest Indiana. NIRPC is becoming more closely associated with the project and is forging a closer partnership with One Region for the next iteration, planned for 2016. Preliminary discussions between NIRPC and One Region have been held with the goal of syncing regional indicators in the next report iteration with the performance measures indicated in the NIRPC 2040 CRP. This organizational collaboration will help ensure that regional plan goals, including those impacting transportation strategies and investments, are making progress in measurable ways that are important to NIRPC’s regional partners.

Appendix 2

ON-SITE REVIEW AGENDA
Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission
FHWA/FTA Metropolitan Planning Process Certification Review
June 18-20, 2013

Tuesday June 18th

9:00am- Welcome and Introductions

9:10am-10:00am Status of 2009 NIRPC Planning Certification Review Corrective Actions and Recommendations – *Arkell/Newland*

10:00am-10:45pm- Organization Structure, Board Composition, and Planning Area Boundaries – *Austin*

10:45am-11:30am- Planning Agreements- *Newland*

11:30am-1:00 pm Lunch

1:00pm-4:00pm Planning Activities Discussion

- Unified Planning Work Program-*Greep*
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan-*Arkell*
- Transportation Improvement Program- *DuMontelle*
- Congestion Management Process- *Pihl*
- Annual Listing of Obligated Projects-*Newland*

5:00pm-7:00pm- USDOT meeting with public, local officials, and special interest groups at NIRPC's office

Wednesday June 19th

9:00-11:30am- Planning Activities Discussion

- Public Participation Plan – *Maietta*
- Environmental Justice - *Arkell*
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act - *Arkell*
- American with Disabilities Act- *Greep*
- Multimodal Activities-*Arkell*
- Metropolitan Planning Factors/PEA's/Livability-*Greep/Arkell*
- Air Quality/CMAQ-*Maietta/Newland*
- Status of Freight and Safety Planning-*DuMontelle*
- MAP-21 – *Austin*

11:30am- 12:30pm- (FHWA/FTA Working Lunch to discuss findings)

1:00pm-3:00pm USDOT meeting with public, local officials, and special interest groups at Indiana University Northwest, Savannah Center Building, Bruce Bergland Auditorium, 33rd Avenue and Broadway, Gary, Indiana.

Thursday June 20th

9:00am- FHWA/FTA Presentation of tentative findings at NIRPC Executive Board meeting.

Appendix 3

Transit Operating and Performance Analysis

Various National Transit database (NTD) and Indiana Public Transit Annual Report statistics were analyzed by the review team. The data reviewed consisted of the following performance measures for the period 2002-2011: total ridership; per capita ridership; farebox recovery rates; trips per vehicle revenue mile; operating subsidies per trip; and operating expenditures per vehicle revenue mile. A synopsis of the analysis and comparable systems nationally is provided in Table 1 and the narrative below.

TABLE 1 - INDIANA PORTION OF CHICAGO UZA TRANSIT STATISTICS (2002-2011 RANGES)												
	Ridership (Millions of Riders)	Trend	Per Capita Ridership	Trend	Farebox Recovery Rate	Trend	Trips Per Revenue Mile	Trend	Operating Subsidies Per Trip	Trend	Operating Exp. Per Vehicle Rev. Mile	Trend
NICTD	3.59-4.25	Rise	3.70-4.43	Rise	43-52%	Drop	1.07-1.25	Drop	\$3.95-\$6.45	Rise	\$9.49-\$12.29	Stable
GARY PTC	0.66-1.52	Drop	5.43-14.79	Drop	11-15%	Drop	0.74-1.61	Drop	\$4.41-\$8.77	Rise	\$6.51-\$9.51	Rise
Fixed Bus	0.65-1.51	Drop	6.30-14.74	Drop	12-13%	Drop	0.77-1.67	Drop	\$4.29-\$8.43	Rise	\$6.51-\$9.56	Rise
Paratransit	0.006-0.012	Rise	0.06-0.16	Rise	6-8%	Drop	0.15-0.27	Rise	\$23.78-\$52.41	Rise	\$6.31-\$8.62	Stable
E. Chicago	0.22-0.30	Drop	9.16-6.78	Drop	0.0%	NA	1.09-1.35	Rise	\$3.81-\$6.11	Rise	\$4.14-\$7.48	Rise
Hammond	0.20-0.43	Drop	2.38-5.16	Drop	5-19%	Drop	0.36-0.83	Drop	\$3.96-\$13.30	Rise	\$3.84-\$5.49	Rise
Michigan City	0.14-0.21	Drop	4.43-6.26	Drop	8-11%	Drop	0.53-0.77	Drop	\$4.21-\$7.89	Rise	\$3.35-4.59	Stable
LaPorte	0.06-0.03	Drop	1.48-2.61	Drop	17-22%	Drop	0.28-0.39	Drop	\$6.78-\$13.82	Rise	\$3.15-\$4.76	Stable
NIRPC	0.11-0.21	Drop	0.23-0.49	Drop	12-42%	Drop	0.12-0.16	Drop	\$7.84-\$16.94	Rise	\$2.00-\$2.64	Stable
Valparaiso	0.08-0.13	Rise	3.00-4.12	Rise	8.8-25.1%	Rise	0.26-0.45	Rise	\$7.92-\$14.45	Rise	\$4.95-\$4.24	Stable
<i>National Avg.</i>					23-28%		2.03-2.31		\$1.93-\$3.14		\$5.53-\$8.46	
<i>Fixed Bus</i>					25-30%		2.70-2.80		\$1.68-2.62		\$6.25-\$10.00	
<i>Paratransit</i>					7-11%		0.13-0.16		\$16.74-\$30.42		\$2.71-\$4.46	

Notes: Statistics are from: National Transit Database (www.ntdprogram.gov) for NICTD and Gary PTC; and the Indiana Public Transit Annual Reports (<http://www.in.gov/indot/2826.htm>) for all other operators. E. Chicago, Hammond, Michigan City, and Valparaiso are combined fixed-route and paratransit statistics. LaPorte and NIRPC are demand response-only systems.

NICTD provides fixed-route commuter railroad service from South Bend to Chicago. NICTD provides service 7 days a week to 12 stations in northwest Indiana and eight stations in Chicago. From Table 1, NICTD's total/per capita ridership dropped in 2010 and 2011 but has exhibited a rising trend from 2002-2011. Three of the other four metrics for NICTD show a declining performance trend during the period. During 2011-2013, NICTD used an \$800,000 TIGER II planning grant to evaluate alternatives for realigning its track in Michigan City to minimize conflicts with traffic and improve travel times. Completion of this planning effort was delayed due to difficulties of NICTD and the City of Michigan City to reach consensus on the locally preferred alternative (LPA) and its specific configuration. The final study report was issued in October 2013. The LPA selected is the Central Corridor Alignment with the following attributes: upgrades to the existing 10th and 11th Street corridor with double track, high-level boarding, and closing of several of street/track crossings.

In recent years, NICTD and the City of Gary have been considering consolidation of the Gary Metro Center and Miller stations. The purpose is to improve travel times, attract riders through a location near an expressway exit, and to promote transit-oriented development. In March 2013, USEPA in concert with the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, began providing planning assistance for the Gary Northside Redevelopment Project which includes consideration of the new consolidated NICTD station. In April 2013, NICTD and Gary Airport

officials began to implement enhancements for connecting stations serving passengers for both modes using an FTA grant awarded in 2010. In December 2012, USEPA in concert with HUD and FTA held a Michigan City Community Sustainability Workshop. The goal of the workshop was to educate local officials on opportunities for environmental improvements, economic redevelopment, and societal benefits through coordinated delivery of services and federal funding.

GPTC provides fixed route and demand response service. The fixed routes consist of five entirely within the city of Gary and five that cover a regional area and connect to a number of surrounding communities. According to the NTD, GPTC operates 14 fixed route and 3 demand response vehicles covering a service area of about 38 square miles and a population of about 100,000. Service is provided daily with the exception of Sundays and connects to Pace, CTA, East Chicago Transit and the South Shore Line. Paratransit coverage includes three-fourths of a mile on either side of the fixed-route system. Statistical analysis for the 2002-2011 period shows that GPTC's total ridership has dropped fairly consistently from a high of about 1.5M in 2004 to a low of 666,000 in 2011. The other GPTC metrics in Table 1 also show declining performance with the exception of paratransit.

East Chicago Transit (ECT) provides three fixed routes and complementary demand response service all entirely within the municipality. According to the NTD, ECT operates 4 fixed route and 1 demand response vehicles covering a service area of about 11 square miles and a population of about 34,000. Service is provided daily with the exception of Sundays and connects to Pace, CTA, East Chicago Transit and the South Shore Line. Paratransit coverage includes three-fourths of a mile on either side of the fixed-route system. With the exception of trips per revenue mile, ECT metrics in Table 1 show trends of declining performance.

The Hammond Transit System (HTS) had provided four fixed routes within the municipality and one route connecting neighboring areas as late as 2009. According to 2009 NTD information, ECT operated 11 fixed route and 11 demand response vehicles covering a service area of about 25 square miles and a population of about 83,000. The Regional Bus Authority (RBA) subsequently assumed control of operations and operated these and other routes with support from the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) until funding was terminated on June 30, 2012. According to 2009 NTD information, the RBA operated 19 fixed route vehicles, 2 commuter buses, and 9 demand response vehicles covering a service area of about 44 square miles and a population of about 142,000. All of the statistical trends for HTS in Table 1 show substantive declines in performance.

The North Township of Lake County Dial-A-Ride (NTLCDR) provides free curb-to-curb demand response service within its jurisdictional area Monday through Friday. According to the NTD, NTLCDR operates 3 demand response vehicles

covering a service area of about 51 square miles and a population of about 163,000. On September 18, 2012, NTLCDR received CMAQ funds in the amount of \$1.785M for expanded operating assistance and \$135,000 for two additional vehicles to increase service and help fill the gap left by the demise of the RBA. According to Table 1, performance has generally shown declining trends for most of the metrics. Of note is that total ridership was down by about 46 percent in 2011 from a high in 2006.

Michigan City Transit (MCT) provides four fixed routes and complementary demand response service (Dial-A-Ride) all entirely within the municipality. According to the Indiana Transit Annual Report for 2012, MCT operates 9 vehicles serving a population of about 33,000. Service is provided daily with the exception of Sundays. Paratransit coverage includes three-fourths of a mile on either side of the fixed-route system. NIRPC assists MCT with their FTA grants. According to Table 1, performance for MCT has generally shown declining trends for most of the metrics. Of note is that total ridership was down by about 32 percent in 2011 from a high in 2006.

The City of La Porte TransPort provides demand response service within the municipality and a one-quarter mile fringe area. According to the Indiana Transit Annual Report for 2012, TransPort operates 8 vehicles serving a population of about 22,000. Service is provided daily with the exception of Sundays. Paratransit coverage includes three-fourths of a mile on either side of the fixed-route system. According to Table 1, performance for TransPort has generally shown declining trends for most of the metrics. Of note is that total ridership was down by about 43 percent in 2010 from a high in 2002.

The City of Valparaiso Transit System provides five deviated fixed routes via its V-Line service within the municipality boundaries. One of the routes connects to the South Shore Line. The City also provides express service to downtown Chicago via ChicaGoDash. According to the Indiana Transit Annual Report for 2011, MCT operates 11 vehicles serving a population of about 33,000 seven days per week. Service only began in 2009 but, according to Table 1, improvement trends are evident for most of the metrics.

U.S. Census Bureau historical transit commute share data is summarized in Table 2 by area of residence.⁸ Generally, commuting by transit in northwest Indiana area in recent years is comparable or above the averages for Indiana but below that of the U.S. averages and the Chicago area. Of note is that transit commute share in the Indiana portion of the Chicago area was about 29 percent of the Illinois portion in 1960. The Indiana share dropped to about 22 percent according to the 2006-2010 American Community Survey (ACS).

⁸ Census Transportation Planning Package (CTTP): Data available via <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ctpp/index.htm>, and <http://ctpp.transportation.org/Pages/profiles.aspx> for 2000-2010. Census 1960 Decennial data available via www.census.gov.

	Chicago (IL only) MSA	Gary (IN only) MSA	Lake County	Porter County	LaPorte County	Indiana	U.S.
2006-10 ACS	12.3%	2.7%	3.4%	1.6%	0.9	1.0%	4.9%
2000 Census		2.4%	3.1%	1.3%	0.9	1.1%	4.6%
1960 Census	31.9%	9.1%					18.7%(MSA)

2006-10 American Community Survey B08301 Means of Transportation to work via American Fact Finder (www.census.gov).
2000 Census: Census Transportation Planning Package:
(http://download.ctpp.transportation.org/profiles_2012/transport_profiles.html.)

2010 Census data shows the following population totals: Indiana portion of the Chicago, IL-IN UZA with 589,492; and the Michigan City-LaPorte, IN-MI with 66,025; for a total of 655,517. This total ranks as the 69th largest UZA not including the Illinois portion.⁹ Table 3 below shows GPTC rankings for various metrics against other transit agencies in the U.S.¹⁰ Based on population, except for passenger miles, all of the northwest Indiana performance rankings are below expectations which is reflective of the relatively low transit ridership.

Chicago UZA (IN portion) and LaPorte, IN-MI UZA	Population	Vehicles Operated Maximum Service	Vehicles Available for Max. Service	Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles (000)	Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours (000s)	Unlinked Passenger Trips (000s)	Passenger Miles (000s)
Totals	655,517	168	236	6,245	125	5,331	110,005
Ranking	69	122	113	108	125	132	58

⁹ Census data available via http://www2.census.gov/geo/ua/ua_list_all.txt.

¹⁰ 2011 APTA Public Transportation Fact Book, Appendix B, Table 13 Agency Total All Modes Combined: Index (2009 Data); and Table 15 UZA Total All Modes Combined: Index (2009 Data). Data available via: http://www.apt.com/resources/statistics/Documents/FactBook/2011_Fact_Book_Appendix_B.pdf.

Appendix 4

NIRPC
State Fiscal Year 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program
Tentative Schedule
November 2012

New 2014-2017 TIP Development

January/February 2013	Stakeholder Meetings to Review, Adjust STP & HSIP Project Selection Systems, including criteria.
Late February 2013	Issue Solicitation for FHWA STP Groups I & II and HSIP.
Late March 2013	Project Submission Deadline
Early April 2013	Select Projects
Mid-April 2013	Submit draft list of projects to ICG for review
May 2013	Release Draft TIP for 30 Day Comment Period
June 2013	Adopt New 2014-2017 TIP

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5/25*

2013 Lake-Porter CMAQ Solicitation

April 2013	Stakeholder Meetings to Review, Adjust CMAQ Project Selection Systems, including criteria.
Early May 2013	Issue Solicitation for CMAQ (Lake-Porter Only).
Early June 2013	Project Submission Deadline
Late June 2013	Select Projects
Late July 2013	Submit New Projects for CMAQ Eligibility Determination

FTA Section 5307 & 5310 Solicitation will occur in mid-2013 or later.

Appendix 5



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Federal Transit Administration
Region V
200 West Adams St., Suite 320
Chicago, IL 60606-5253

Federal Highway Administration
IN Division
575 N. Pennsylvania St., Rm 254
Indianapolis, IN 46204-1576

Public Meeting Notice

The public has an opportunity to provide comments to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) representatives in two open meetings concerning the transportation planning process in the Northwestern Indiana areas of Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties. The meetings are scheduled as follows:

Times:	5:00pm-7:00pm	1:00pm-3:00pm
Dates:	June 18, 2013	June 19, 2013
Locations:	Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission 6100 Southport Road Portage, IN 46368	Indiana University Northwest Savannah Center Building Bruce Bergland Auditorium 33rd Avenue and Broadway Gary, IN 46408

These public meetings are part of a review that will assess compliance with regulations pertaining to the transportation planning process conducted by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC), the Indiana Department of Transportation, Gary Public Transportation Corporation, Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District, and other planning partners.

If you are unable to attend the meeting, please address your comments to:

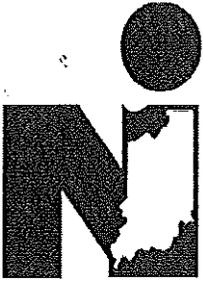
Joyce Newland
Federal Highway Administration
Indiana Division
575 N. Pennsylvania Street, Room 254
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Joyce.Newland@dot.gov

Or

Reginald Arkell
Federal Transit Administration
Region V
200 West Adams, Suite 320
Chicago, IL 60606-5253
Reginald.Arkell@dot.gov

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids for services should contact NIRPC at:
Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission
6100 Southport Road
Portage, IN 46368; 219-763-6060

Appendix 6



**NORTHWESTERN INDIANA
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

Together We Make The Difference

6100 Southport Road Portage, Indiana 46368

Fax Messages

(219) 763-6060
(219) 762-1653

On the Internet

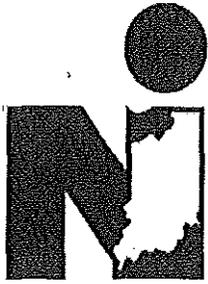
www.nirpc.org

E-mail Messages

nirpc@nirpc.org

**NORTHWEST INDIANA REGIONAL
PLANNING COMMISSION'S
ACTIONS IN RESPONSE
TO THE
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS FROM THE
2009 CERTIFICATION REVIEW**

October 28, 2010



NORTHWESTERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Together We Make The Difference

6100 Southport Road Portage, Indiana 46368

Fax Messages (219) 763-6060
(219) 762-1653

On the Internet www.nirpc.org
E-mail Messages nirpc@nirpc.org

October 28, 2010

Marisol R. Simon
Regional administrator
FTA Region V
200 W Adams St, Suite 320
Chicago, IL 60606-5253

Robert F. Tally, Jr., P.E.
Division Administrator
FHWA Indiana Division
575 N Pennsylvania St, Room 254
Indianapolis, IN 46204-1576

Dear Ms. Simon and Mr. Tally,

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) hereby transmits documentation in support of our work in the past year in response to the two corrective actions identified in the 2009 Certification Review. In the review report of October 2, 2009, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration found that the transportation planning process conducted by NIRPC was conditionally approved, subject to the completion of two corrective actions. They were: Implementation of a congestion management process (CMP); and Compliance with Environmental Justice (EJ) Executive Order 12898.

The federal review team recommended the following schedule for CMP implementation:

<i>Within two months of issuance of this review:</i>	<i>Identify CMP committee members and committee officially formed within MPO framework.</i>
<i>Within six months of issuance of this review:</i>	<i>Identify and report three to five performance measures, along with the data sources necessary for the regional CMP.</i>
<i>By November 1, 2010:</i>	<i>Complete a review of projects included in the current TIP.</i>

Substantial advancement has been made to implement a CMP, progress which is documented in an attached report. The CMP will be completed prior to the adoption of the NIRPC Comprehensive Regional Plan (CRP) for 2040, upon which we expect Commission action in April, 2011. Through the guidance of a Congestion Management Subcommittee, the various elements of a compliant CMP have been accomplished and continue.

Section 450.320(d) of the Final Rule on Statewide Transportation Planning and Metropolitan Transportation Planning requires Transportation Management Areas that are designated as nonattainment for ozone or carbon monoxide to address through a congestion management process any project that would result in a significant increase in the carrying capacity for single occupant vehicles (SOVs). Section 450.320(e) of the Final Rule requires TMAs that are designated as nonattainment for ozone or carbon monoxide to complete an analysis of reasonable travel demand management and operational management strategies as alternatives for such SOV projects. The Northwestern Indiana region is not currently designated as nonattainment for ozone or for carbon monoxide. These requirements of the Final Rule *do* not currently apply to the Northwestern Indiana region. We anticipate that within the next year, the nonattainment designation will apply to Northwestern Indiana, and we are committed to complete the required analysis for all SOV projects proposed for inclusion in the 2040 plan and TIP.

Regarding Environmental Justice, the FHWA/FTA Federal Review team stated:

Two workshops on EJ and Transportation Planning should be scheduled; one with affected stakeholders and one with NIRPC staff and planning partners. FHWA and FTA can be instrumental in working with NIRPC to plan these opportunities for training and dialogue. Also, work activities underway to update the Long Range Transportation Plan would be amended to add several analytical tasks to identify and document a fair distribution of benefits and burdens to all segments of the regional community through implementation of the Plan. These tasks can be developed as action items from the workshops and will occur prior to November 1, 2010.

Extensive progress has been made to bring NIRPC in compliance with the EJ Executive Order. EJ workshops were held with members of the public (affected stakeholders) and with NIRPC staff and planning partners. Based on that training, NIRPC has done a Benefits and Burdens analysis to see how various scenarios of development patterns perform. This analysis continues as the CRP advances toward completion. Given the considerable EJ training, in addition to the continuing dialogue, community outreach and public engagement in the CRP process, the consideration of EJ in the planning process has progressed and has been enriched.

Marisol R. Simon and Robert F. Tally
October 28, 2010
Page 3.

I trust that you will find NIRPC in compliance with both the CMP and EJ Executive Order. We look forward to your review of the attached documents, and continuing discussions with your staffs that participated in the 2009 Certification Review. They and other members of the federal review team have been especially helpful during the past year through training and guidance. I understand that a meeting or conference call may follow to discuss the information that we are transmitting. Please contact Steve Strains, Deputy Director/ Director of Planning to arrange for that.

Sincerely yours,

John A. Swanson
Executive Director

Enclosure

Cc:
Joyce Newland, FHWA
Reggie Arkell, FTA
Mike McPhillips, INDOT
David Werner, FTA
Jerry Halperin, INDOT

SUMMARY OF NIRPC'S ACTIONS IN RESPONSE
TO THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS FROM THE
2009 CERTIFICATION REVIEW
October 28, 2010

A. CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS (CMP)

In October 2009 NIRPC received a corrective action requiring the refining of the agencies' congestion management process. In the past 12 months, NIRPC has responded to these requests by completing the actions listed below.

Congestion Management Subcommittee

On May 1, 2009, the Congestion Management Subcommittee was formed. This subcommittee features many government officials and stakeholders from Northwest Indiana and meets on a monthly basis. The attendance typically averages 15 attendees per meeting. The subcommittee has guided the CMP.

Performance Measures

On June 8, 2010, the performance measures for the congestion management process were adopted by the congestion management subcommittee. A total of 11 performance measures were adopted and cover highway, transit, safety and mode neutral criteria. The criteria are instrumental in determining where congestion is located within the region and evaluating expansion projects in the TIP.

Data Sources

Many of NIRPC's data sources have already been identified. NIRPC receives real time travel time data from INDOT on I-80/94 and I-65. The traffic count data comes from both NIRPC and INDOT counts. Ridership data and other statistics for northwest Indiana's transit systems is available from the transit operating agencies such as NICTD, East Chicago, Gary, Valparaiso, Michigan City and the Regional Bus Authority. NIRPC's current modeled data monitors the transportation network between now and 2040 and is scenario based. A Travel Time data collection system began in April 2010. The travel time data collection has been taking place along designated regional arterials and so far has identified some congested corridors. This has enabled NIRPC to use more performance measures to evaluate certain corridors. Data gathering is ongoing.

Regional Transportation Networks

NIRPC's geographic scope was defined early in the implementation of the congestion management process. The geographic scope for NIRPC's congestion management process is Lake, Porter and La Porte Counties.

The system scope and congestion management network for NIRPC includes any roadways that are designated as arterials or expressways. The function class designation for these roadways varies based on the type of data available (Travel Time and V/C vs.

V/C ratio only) for each link. The rail and bus lines from local transit agencies including, East Chicago, Gary, Michigan City, La Porte, Valparaiso, and the Regional Bus Authority are also included in the system scope.

Workshops

Staff members attended several congestion management workshops over the past year including two FHWA sponsored workshops that was conducted by Brian Betlyon and Ben Williams. The first workshop was an all day workshop that took place at Indianapolis in November 2009. The second workshop was a webinar that regional stakeholders were allowed to listen in on as well. This webinar took place in March of 2010.

Corridors

We currently collect travel time data on 69 corridors within the region. Once these corridors are complete, NIRPC will have actual travel time data that will determine where congestion is located at within our region.

Link Between CRP and CMP

The congestion management performance measures will be used to determine the congestion roadways in relation to the CRP. Projects will be selected for the CRP based on the congestion management analysis for the projects that will be solicited. Projects that don't pass the congestion management evaluation will not appear in the CRP.

TIP Project Analysis

NIRPC has reviewed capacity expansion projects that are in the current 2009-2013 TIP. The thoroughness of the review of the expansion projects depends on the type of construction proposed. For example; a new interchange will be reviewed more thoroughly than a structure replacement project. There is a quantitative, subjective and alternative analysis section on the review forms for expansion projects, but minor projects may be exempt from some of these sections. Now that the review has been completed, the TIP evaluation will be considered a "dry run" or model for future TIP analysis will soon be used to evaluate new projects that will be solicited for the next 2014-2018 TIP. Documentation of the analysis of expansion projects in the current TIP has been finalized and sent by November 1.

TIP Project Analysis

NIRPC has reviewed capacity expansion projects that are in the current 2009-2013 TIP. The thoroughness of the review of the expansion projects depends on the type of construction proposed. For example; a new interchange will be reviewed more thoroughly than a structure replacement project. There is a quantitative, subjective and alternative analysis section on the review forms for expansion projects, but minor projects may be exempt from some of these sections. Once completed, this TIP evaluation, considered a "dry run" or model for future TIP analysis, will soon be used to evaluate new projects that will be solicited for the next 2014-2018 TIP. Documentation of the analysis of expansion projects in the current TIP will be finalized and sent by November I.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ)

NIRPC's approach to the corrective action was both strategic and deliberate. The agency's 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan (2040 CRP) document will outline how to achieve the region's vision. The following provides strategic approaches to achieve the goals set out in the 2009 Certification Review. The core principles of environmental justice are embedded in the CRP Plan's vision statement, a set of goals and objectives to achieve the vision, and a preferred scenario that in-grains those principles in implementable strategies.

The deliberative approach looked at NIRPC's capacity and took steps to incorporate a deeper commitment to achieving these principles by:

- Programming Environmental Justice tasks into the Agency's 2011 Unified Planning Work Program
- Hiring a Public Participation & Outreach Coordinator with the responsibility to broaden outreach to the region and deepen the relationships needed to achieve that goal
- Improving the spatial tools within NIRPC and providing training for staff to improve the quantitative analysis of how investments impact minority and low-income communities
- Providing opportunities to partner with the community through workshops, deliberative town hall meetings that increases the community's capacity to engage with the planning that impacts their lives

The strategic approach focused on the 2040 Plan. This plan is characterized by two key principles:

1. An unprecedented level of public involvement – including innovative uses of technology to engage a diverse regional population
2. An expanded planning scope – integrating transportation, economic development, environmental management, land use and social equity.

Unprecedented Public Involvement

Major public participation milestones include:

Forum on the Future of Northwest Indiana, December 2008: A day long, 500-person, public visioning event held at the Radisson in Merrillville. Attendance was geographically and demographically representative of the region as a whole. Results were used to develop a vision statement, goals and objectives and priorities that have guided the development of the CRP.

"INvision" Northwest Indiana: a vibrant, revitalized, accessible and united region. Stretching from the treasured shores of Lake Michigan to the historic banks of the Kankakee River and committed to an ethic of sustainability

A united region – Celebrating our diversity, we work together as a community across racial, ethnic, political, and cultural lines for the good of the region

Goal Setting Workshops, May – June 2009: Six public workshops held throughout the region to validate the vision statement and generate ideas for plan goals and objectives. 2040 CRP Goals and Objectives are structured around Vision themes. Examples of key priorities identified in the Goals and Objectives are:

Revitalization:

- revitalized core cities and downtowns
- clean air and water
- reduced flooding

Accessibility:

- improved transportation safety;
- greater transportation options
- reduced congestion
- improved mobility for people and freight
- reduced health impacts from transportation

Unity:

- working regionally
- promoting environmental justice
- efficient and coordinated local governments

Sub-regional Cluster Workshops, September – October 2009: Five public workshops held throughout the region. On table-sized maps of their counties, attendees mapped out a physical framework for the future using a palette of *Centers, Corridors* and *Green Areas*: regional population and employment growth centers, major transportation improvements, and natural resource conservation areas.

INDiscussions, Ongoing: Meetings with small groups of stakeholders around the region, *e.g.*: city planners, urban core representatives, community and religious groups, town and city councils.

Regional Scenarios Stakeholder Workshop and Public Outreach meetings September – October 2010: Eight public meetings held throughout the region to garner feedback on the scenarios and to "select" a preferred scenario.

About Scenarios

A major component of the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan planning process is the development of alternative scenarios. In the CRP process, each scenario paints a different picture of Northwest Indiana by the year 2040. NIRPC developed four scenarios, each based on a different set of assumptions about the future that reflect existing policy and/or the vision, goals and priorities that were expressed by citizens during extensive public workshops.

Trends

The Trends scenario envisions a future where long-time and current regional development patterns continue unchanged into the future.

Local Plans

The Local Plans scenario envisions a future where the regional distribution of population and employment is consistent with the full build-out of local municipal and county land use plans.

Livable Centers

The Livable Centers scenario envisions a future where the majority of population and employment growth is concentrated within the Northwest Indiana's 41 cities and towns and less development has occurred in outlying unincorporated areas. This scenario intensifies growth within "livable center" locations, which are mixed-use (civic, commercial, residential, etc.) activity centers in each municipality that are served by existing utility infrastructure and the roadway network and have the potential to be well served by public transportation. This pattern is largely based upon the work completed at the five Sub-regional Cluster Workshops in the fall 2009.

Urban Core Regeneration/ Infill

The Urban Core scenario envisions a future where a proportionately higher percentage of population and employment growth occurs in the urban core communities including Gary, Hammond, East Chicago and Michigan City. This scenario is a reversal of current trends: instead of expanding outward into rural areas, emphasis is placed on infill development and sustainable redevelopment of the northern urban communities, where there is multimodal transportation connectivity, existing infrastructure and vacant land. In general, development tends to be higher density and mixed-use in character.

Note: The Infill Scenario looks at revitalizing the core communities that are also Environmental Justice Communities.

Scenario Construction and Analysis

To build and evaluate each scenario, NIRPC staff and the HNTB consultant team used computer software called CommunityViz. By entering geographic data (maps) and assumptions about growth and development into ConuniversityViz, the user can calculate key "indicators," for each scenario. Indicators are a means of measuring how closely the scenarios line up with our goals and a standard by which to judge their relative merits. In addition to the ConuniversityViz analysis, each scenario was analyzed with NIRPC's transportation demand model to evaluate transportation and air quality impacts. This allows for a side-by-side comparison of alternatives to determine how well each scenario meets the CRP's goals for a vibrant, revitalized, accessible, and united region.

Selecting a Preferred Scenario

Throughout the months of September and October 2010, NIRPC held a series of eight outreach meetings in locations around the region to ask the public for feedback on the scenarios and to select the "preferred scenario" for Northwest Indiana. These meetings were held in Kouts, East Chicago*, Gary*, Cedar Lake, Portage, Michigan City*, Hammond* and La Porte. At each meeting, a brief overview of NIRPC was given, as well as the purpose in developing the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan, the planning process to date and the importance of the vision statement and goals and objectives. An explanation of the four scenarios was presented, followed by discussion and consensus of

a preferred scenario. Participants were then asked to identify projects, strategies and policies in order to implement the selected scenario.

Note: * The four identified are environmental justice communities, other communities to cover the region and any areas that have higher poverty populations

Results from the eight Outreach meetings:

Recommended Preferred Scenario were Hybrids of the four Scenarios

1. Combination of Livable Centers and Infill
2. Combination of Plans** and Infill*

Note: * Land Use Committee

** Plans with a population cap, employment cap, constraints on infrastructure development in unincorporated areas, and prohibiting development in environmentally sensitive areas.

The **deliberative approach** looked at the people we serve and how to forge a better relationship, partnership and community capacity.

Build Trust with Passionate and Committed Leaders and Increase Community Capacity

NIRPC has embarked on building on the existing relationships and developing new relationships with stakeholders from varying sectors: the business community, the civic community, the faith-based community, advocacy and activist groups, and communities that are not aware of NIRPC's mission.

Two Environmental Justice workshops were designed for community residents and NIRPC staff. Over the course of two days in April, more than 100 people joined NIRPC in downtown Gary' to learn how to strengthen the connections between environmental justice (EJ) and regional planning. NIRPC and its partners developed the workshops in response to the corrective action identified in NIRPC's 2009 federal certification review.

NIRPC, in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), held a series of EJ workshops on April 16 and 17 at the Gary Buffet and Grill. Attendees included local students, residents and leaders, NIRPC Commissioners and staff from State and Federal Agencies. Sessions focused on clarifying the definition of EJ, identifying NIRPC's role in fulfilling the EJ Executive Order and enhancing NIRPC's capacity to conduct an open and inclusive planning process and to avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations. Additional staff training via webinar, which included some INDOT staff, was held on June 9, 2010.

The EJ workshops were an opportunity to advance the 2040 CRP and Northwest Indiana to a new level. As an outcome from the workshops, an EJ working group was formed to provide ongoing assistance and stakeholder participation for the 2040 Comprehensive

Regional Plan. Co-chairs, from the workshop, were appointed to represent the African-American and Latino communities.

Indiscussions, a facilitated and participatory community-meeting format was started in spring of 2010. Community groups invited NIRPC staff to present and deliberate about any regional or local issue that interests them and how regional planning impacts community life.

Summer 2010 Public Involvement found NIRPC staff at county and community fairs, festivals, farmers markets and baseball games to share information about NIRPC's Mission. These opportunities allowed staff to handout thousands of informational flyers and NIRPC literature and talk to attendees that would not likely know or hear about the Agency and it's work. Environmental Justice and Rural Communities were the focus.

NIRPC has maximized its Public Information opportunities with interview spots both on radio and television. Several interviews have been done to share information, expand to a broader listening and viewing audience, and to recruit participants to attend 2040 CRP planning meetings, all targeted to the four EJ communities.. Interviews were also done in Spanish, hosted by Latin Media (attendees of the EJ workshop) with an audience of Gary, East Chicago, and Hammond.

A business and civic leader was appointed as co-chair of the EJ Working Group and was also appointed to the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Planning Steering Committee. The EJ Working Group now has co-chairs at the decision making table to bring issues to NIRPC and back to the community.

The Public's Influence in Outreach and Scenario selection:

- The EJ Working Group members provided assistance in Outreach, handed out and mailed hundreds of invitations on NIRPC's behalf to attend scenario selection meetings in the community
- The discussions and exercises at all eight workshops focused on the future of the entire region. Revitalizing the urban core communities was the predominant topic for participants (urban core communities are also EJ communities) but added that all communities should be livable and planned well. Community Workshops recommended combining scenarios to create a hybrid. Livable Centers and Infill (which gets to race and anyone living in povelly) was the recommended scenario from all workshops

NIRPC has done an initial Benefits and Burdens analysis to see how various indicators perform. This analysis will be refined as staff receives direction from the NIRPC Board regarding The Preferred Scenario.



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Federal Transit Administration Federal Highway Administration
Region V Indiana Division
200 West Adams St., Suite 320 575 N. Pennsylvania St., Rm 254
Chicago, IL 60606-5253 Indianapolis, IN 46204-1576

July 23, 2012

Mr. John Swanson
Executive Director
Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission
6100 Southport Road
Portage, IN 46368

Mr. Michael Cline
Commissioner
Indiana Department of Transportation
100 N. Senate Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Sirs:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducted a planning certification review of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) in 2009 pursuant to 23 CFR 450.334(b). The review documented the findings in a report and cover letter, dated October 3, 2011. There were two corrective actions that have remained unresolved: 1) development of a Congestion Management Process (CMP) in compliance with 23 CFR 450.320, and 2) creation and implementation of an Environmental Justice (EJ) policy pursuant to Executive Order 12898 and the U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT) Order on Environmental Justice issued in 1997.

FHWA and FTA have monitored NIRPC's progress in resolving the corrective actions. NIRPC has made improvements to the CMP in terms of integrating the procedures into its planning and project selection processes. CMP issues raised by FHWA/FTA were discussed with NIRPC representatives during a June 14, 2011 conference call. NIRPC responded with a revised CMP and in a June 16, 2011 point-by-point email on the changes made to the document. FHWA and FTA appreciate the response. The revised CMP is now located in an appendix of the newly completed 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan (2040 Plan).

23 CFR 450.320(c)(4)(i) states that growth management and congestion pricing should be appropriately considered in the CMP. 23 CFR 450.320(e) states that TMAs in nonattainment for ozone or carbon monoxide shall provide an appropriate analysis of reasonable (including multimodal) travel demand reduction and operational management strategies. Therefore, FHWA and FTA reiterate their comments that the rationale in the CMP needs to demonstrate how particular strategies are considered. This could include in-depth discussion, analysis, and quantification of the impacts such as:

- Adding new Performance Measures such as: Average Speed along major highways; Mode Share (including transit and non-motorized trips); Emissions; Household Transportation Expenditures.
- Identifying benefits to drivers, businesses, and transportation system revenues from congestion pricing at a corridor level;
- Procedures necessary to establish congestion pricing, including challenges and barriers (i.e. lack of state authorizing legislation/local authority/political will/public acceptance, etc.), and plans to address them.

NIRPC's updated EJ policies, procedures and analysis are located in the Transportation section of the 2040 Plan. This includes an overview of the public participation process, identification of low income/minority populations and their locations, areas of transportation projects, and a number of performance measures. Three different growth and project implementation scenarios are examined. The metrics relate mainly to the proximity of protected populations to employment and amenities in addition to travel times.

The MPO concludes that implementation of the 2040 Plan will not impose disproportionate burdens or benefits. FHWA and FTA recommend NIRPC include a performance measure for income disparity by race. This will help to improve the identification of unintended consequences to low income and minority populations from both transportation and land use decisions over time.

FHWA and FTA find that NIRPC has met the necessary requirements to remove the conditional certification imposed on the MPO pursuant to the 2009 planning certification review. As of the date of this letter, FHWA and FTA jointly act to fully certify the transportation planning process of this region. The metropolitan transportation planning process for NIRPC is consistent with the federal planning requirements in 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(5) and 49 U.S.C. 1607.

The transportation planning process is an iterative and evolving methodology to address mobility and accessibility needs of the community. This includes the CMP and EJ components. FHWA and FTA expect that NIRPC will strive to improve in these areas in accordance with the aforementioned recommendations. Therefore, NIRPC will document its progress and compliance with the CMP and EJ provisions in the UPWP quarterly reports.

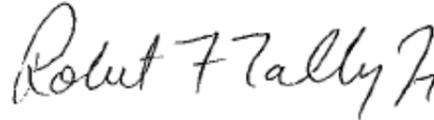
Please coordinate further with Joyce Newland of FHWA at 317-226-5353 and Reginald Arkell of FTA at 312-886-3704. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Marisol R. Simón
Regional Administrator
FTA Region 5

Sincerely,



Robert F. Tally Jr., P.E.
Division Administrator
FHWA Indiana Division

cc: via electronic copy
Joyce Newland, FHWA
Reginald Arkell, FTA
Steve Strains, NIRPC
Jim Stark, INDOT
Troy Woodruff, INDOT
Audra Blasdel, INDOT
Bob Alderman, INDOT
Larry Buckel, INDOT