

## Meeting Report

### Listening Session for Greenways + Blueways 2020

May 27, 2015

#### LaPorte County Solid Waste & Water Conservation Office, 6:00-8:00

In anticipation of the creation of the Greenways + Blueways 2020 Plan, an update of the 2007 Greenways & Blueways Plan and the 2010 Ped & Pedal Plan, a series of listening sessions were held throughout the region. The goal of these listening sessions were to gather public input to help shape the plan as the planning process moves forward.

Prior to the public comment period, notice was given to NIRPC's stakeholders and the local media that the public comment period was to commence, and the list of meetings was included. The information was also posted on the NIRPC website. PSAs were sent to local broadcast media and NIRPC social media outlets were used to provide further notice.

A presentation was created for the series of meetings. The presentation was given at each meeting, with questions, comments, and discussion encouraged throughout the meeting. The presentation was followed by a mapping exercise where attendees could note the places where they saw opportunities and challenges. Comment cards were provided as well as information on how to provide comments after the meeting. This information was also provided at the end of the presentation. Attendees were informed that their comments would be included in a comment report that would include staff responses at the end of the process and that the report would be publicly available.

Of the three meeting participants, two filled out the participant survey. The demographic results were as follows:

- Race
  - Caucasian: 2
- Age
  - 25-34: 1
  - 45-54: 1
- No respondents identified as a person with a disability.

Summary of comments received:

*Comments included suggestions of various trail connections within and between communities, as well as between communities and natural areas. Potential water trails were also identified. Policy implications, such as the Waters of the United States Act, were discussed.*

Issues identified and recommendations provided:

- **Issue:** Natural areas and agrotourism destinations within LaPorte County as well as communities need non-motorized connections
  - **Recommendation:** Potential bike corridors need to be identified and prioritized to reflect the needed connections. The priority level of current regional priority corridors must also be re-evaluated.

- **Issue:** LaPorte County has several potential water trails
  - **Recommendation:** Evaluate the priority level of previously identified water trails and assess the potential of others to be added.

## Meeting Report

### Listening Session for Greenways + Blueways 2020

June 4, 2015

Munster Town Hall, 6:00-8:00

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A presentation was created for the series of meetings. The presentation was given at each meeting, with questions, comments, and discussion encouraged throughout the meeting. The presentation was followed by a mapping exercise where attendees could note the places where they saw opportunities and challenges. Comment cards were provided as well as information on how to provide comments after the meeting. This information was also provided at the end of the presentation. Attendees were informed that their comments would be included in a comment report that would include staff responses at the end of the process and that the report would be publicly available.

Of the twelve meeting participants, three filled out the participant survey. The demographic results were as follows:

- Race
  - Caucasian: 3
- Age
  - 25-34: 1
  - 65 years or older: 2
- One respondent identified as a person with a disability.

Summary of comments received:

*Several comments focused on connections between and within communities, as well as across the state line into Illinois. Suggestions were given on potential bike trail corridors. Comments were received on more facilities for trails Commenters also offered information on potential water trails and potential water trail access points.*

Issues identified and recommendations provided:

- **Issue:** Short distances separate several key corridors
  - **Recommendation:** Prioritize connections to bridge these gaps and allow for connections between trail corridors

- **Issue:** Regional trail corridors could use more comfort facilities such as restrooms and water fountains
  - **Recommendation:** Work with entities responsible for the trails and any related facilities to evaluate possible solutions.
- **Issue:** There are several potential launch site that could be added for current and proposed water trails, but many are on private property.
  - **Recommendation:** Work with property owners to see if agreements can be reached to allow greater access along our current and proposed water trails.

## Meeting Report

### Listening Session for Greenways + Blueways 2020

June 16, 2015

Crown Point Public Library, 5:30-7:30

In anticipation of the creation of the Greenways + Blueways 2020 Plan, an update of the 2007 Greenways & Blueways Plan and the 2010 Ped & Pedal Plan, a series of listening sessions were held throughout the region. The goal of these listening sessions were to gather public input to help shape the plan as the planning process moves forward.

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Of the three meeting participants, none filled out the participant survey, yielding no demographic results.

Summary of comments received:

*Lowell is looking to create trail connections within town, with the eventual goal of connecting out of town to Cedar Lake, Crown Point, and Lake Dalecarlia. Maintenance of existing trails needs to be considered as well. Waterways proposed for water trails need to be considered in terms of when users can paddle on them since some are seasonal.*

Issues identified and recommendations provided:

- **Issue:** Existing trails have some maintenance issues
  - **Recommendation:** Continued maintenance must be considered and planned for as trails are added to the system
- **Issue:** Some proposed water trails are not always usable for paddlers
  - **Recommendation:** Do more detailed evaluation of potential corridors and consider a seasonal designation

## Meeting Report

### Listening Session for Greenways + Blueways 2020

June 23, 2015

Woodson Branch, Gary Public Library, 3:00-5:00

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Of the four meeting participants, one filled out the participant survey. The demographic results were as follows:

- Race
  - Caucasian: 1
- Age
  - 55-64: 1
- The respondent did not identify as a person with a disability.

Summary of comments received:

*Aetna, Emerson, and Miller are all adjacent neighborhoods that are disconnected because of major barriers such as I-65 and US 12/20. This also prevents the rest of the city from being able to access Lake Michigan. Non-motorized infrastructure needs to be built within and to these areas. There is potential in the elevated rail line and a revived push to implement Gary Green Link. Advocates are needed both within and outside of government to get implementation of plans like Gary Green Link going again.*

Issues identified and recommendations provided:

- **Issue:** There are significant barriers that prevent connections between neighborhoods
  - **Recommendation:** Find ways to build infrastructure that creates safe connections
- **Issue:** Advocacy needed at all levels to put plans into action
  - **Recommendation:** Work with partners and the community to make plans a reality

## Meeting Report

### Listening Session for Greenways + Blueways 2020

June 18, 2015

Valparaiso City Hall, 6:00-8:00

In anticipation of the creation of the Greenways + Blueways 2020 Plan, an update of the 2007 Greenways & Blueways Plan and the 2010 Ped & Pedal Plan, a series of listening sessions were held throughout the region. The goal of these listening sessions were to gather public input to help shape the plan as the planning process moves forward.

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Of the four meeting participants, one filled out the participant survey. The demographic results were as follows:

- Race
  - Caucasian: 1
- Age
  - 65 years or older: 1
- The respondent did not identify as a person with a disability.

Summary of comments received:

*Porter County needs more regional trail connections, including getting the Dunes-Kankakee Trail down to Valparaiso. Valparaiso has a good network within the city, but no connections out of it. Northern Porter County needs connections with Southern Porter County. There needs to be better marketing of the bicycling facilities we do have as well as the needs that remain.*

Issues identified and recommendations provided:

- **Issue:** Better trail connections both within Porter County and to the region as a whole
  - **Recommendation:** Create north-south connections within the county, get more regional trails to move into and connect with Porter County's trails.
- **Issue:** Better marketing of current infrastructure and need for more

- **Recommendation:** Maps, social media, and videos to bring awareness and a consideration of all users to create a broader appeal

## Meeting Report

### Listening Session for Greenways + Blueways 2020

June 24, 2015

#### Construction Advancement Foundation, Portage, 4:00-6:00

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Of the five meeting participants, two filled out the participant survey. One respondent did not complete the demographic information. The demographic results were as follows:

- Race
  - Caucasian: 1
- Age
  - 65 years or older: 1
- The respondent did not identify as a person with a disability.

Summary of comments received:

*Better signage is needed throughout the regional trail network. The abandoned elevated rail line in Gary has great potential as a trail link. Land and water trails hold great tourism potential for the region. Better connections are needed between regional trails, but easy connections do not exist because of barriers/safety issues. Some potential water trails have only one or two barriers to being used.*

Issues identified and recommendations provided:

- **Issue:** Land and water trails hold great tourism potential.
  - **Recommendation:** Greater promotion of regional trail system and what it connects
- **Issue:** Barriers prevent better land and water trail connections.
  - **Recommendation:** Creative solutions and advocacy needed to make these more difficult connections a reality.