

Technical Planning Committee

Tuesday, November 10, 2020

Minutes

This meeting was convened as an electronic meeting, pursuant to Governor Holcomb's Executive Order 20-04 and 20-09, extended by Executive Order 20-47. All persons were meeting remotely on a Google Meet platform that allowed for real time interaction and supported the public's ability to observe and record the proceedings. When the agenda item was provided for public comment, this was supported as well. A roll call was taken to motion and approve the agenda items.

Kevin Breitzke called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Committee members present were Kevin Breitzke (Porter County), Steve King (Merrillville), Mark O'Dell (Chesterton), Frank Rivera (East Chicago), Dean Button (Hammond), David Wright (GPTC), George Topoll (Union Township), Blossom Mabon (Lake Co. Comm. Services), Beth West (La Porte TransPorte), Michael Griffin, Kay Nelson (FORUM) and Kelly Wenger (NICTD).

Staff present were Mitch Barloga, Eman Ibrahim, Ty Warner, Kathy Luther, Scott Weber, Kevin Polette, Candice Eklund, Charles Bradsky, Peter Kimball, and Flor Baum.

The September 8, 2020 meeting minutes were approved on motion by George Topoll and second by Steve King.

Public Comments

No public comments to announce.

Planning

Eman Ibrahim and Scott Weber presented on the E-Commerce in Northwest Indiana report, Resolution 20-27, which deals with the rapidly changing retail landscape on land-uses and our transportation network. The E-Commerce report is part of the 2050 Plan implementation. e-commerce directly impacts the transportation network, projecting a 40% expansion in urban freight by 2050. An analysis of a shift toward automated vehicles (AV) was conducted. AV trucks help receive congestion. AV trucks will be able to dramatically shorten following distances between other vehicles, increasing road capacity. AV trucks can also improve safety by eliminating human error. Urban logistics of transportation will be impacted with further expansion of e-commerce, changing roadway system use and needs. Land use and retail will also be impacted by e-Commerce in The Region. Shopping trips have decreased by 12% between 2014 to 2018. Large retail stores are being vacated and these vacant retail spaces need a plan to be repurposed. However, E-commerce is also a good opportunity for job increase and to improve the economy. Northwestern Indiana is within the 100-mile radius of the nearest regional fulfillment market. The Region also has a freight hub and interstate system that links east to west. Examples of repurposed retail space were presented. The committee is mindful that retail space is usually rented and the building space either needs to be sold or subsidized. Data was collected to capture e-commerce accessibility. NIRPC staff defined criteria to develop a potential location for an e-commerce facility. This includes proximity to airports, railroad stations, and manufacturing hubs. Additional criteria encompass utilities availability, as well as locations of minimum environmental impact.

On motion by George Topoll and second by Frank Rivera, the committee will recommend Resolution 20-27 to The Commission.

Kathy Luther presented on the UPWP 2021-2022 Amendment #3, Resolution 20-28. Federal transportation fund expenses contracted to NIRPC must be adopted into the current UPWP to be reimbursed. The primary focus is on purchasing equipment and software that can improve our function going forward with the match that has been freed up for NIRPC. A balance of \$648,549.24 in Congestion Management and Air Quality, PI/5307 and Surface Transportation Block Grant funds remain in NIRPC's open IDOT purchase orders. \$3,0000 is being carried forward

of STBG for the R-TIP contract, \$86,243.26 from CMAQ for extended advertising contracts through the summer and into the fall for ozone and air quality information, as well as the bike map application which was delayed.

\$8,000 will go towards the purchase of placard trail counters for US bicycle routes.

On motion by Frank Rivera and second by Michael Griffin the TPC approved Resolution 20-28 to be recommended to The Commission.

Programming

Charles Bradsky presented on the request for a scope and program change for The City of Hammond (Des # 1601145; Marquette Greenway Trail). The multi-use trail will be changed to a Complete Streets. \$1.2M of CMAQ construction (CN) funds and \$540K in Right of Way (ROW) funds are being requested to be moved from Marquette Greenway Trail to Hohman Ave Phase 2 Complete Streets. The initial project would follow the North bank of the Grand Calumet River, scoring very well in terms of funding. However there has been recent reflection to reconsider the location because it travels closer to a newly constructed sewer overflow basin of the wastewater treatment facility plant. This would not be a pleasant experience using the multi-use trail. The City of Hammond would commit to a street trail connector project, using local funds to be able to make this connection. This project would be supplementing the Phase 2 project of Hohman Ave.

On motion by Mark O'Dell and second by George Topoll the TPC approved the request for The City of Hammond to change the scope and program.

Topical Committee Reports

Mitch Barloga spoke on the Ped, Pedal, and Paddle Committee (3PC). The first round of the NOFA applications was productive regarding the 13 submissions of Multi-Use Trails and/or Complete Streets; over \$18M requested. Charles spoke on NOFA applications. Nearly \$123M worth of applications were received. Group one submitted 47 applications (Lake and Porter County). Group two submitted 4 applications (La Porte County).

Reports and Planning Partners

David Wright presented on the Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC) Electric Bus and Bus Manufacturer on the Project. Electric bus market is growing exponentially in the USA. In 2014, 140 electric busses were in service. In 2019, the number of busses increased to 650 busses in service. There are many benefits of having electric busses in Northwest Indiana. Utility costs average \$7,978 per year, and fuel saving average \$15,918 per year. Replacing diesel powered vehicles with cleaner energy alternatives reduces emissions. In July of 2019, with the help of South Shore Clean Cities, The GPTC received funding for four buses through Indiana's Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust Fund. Gillig will be the transit bus manufacturer and is the leading US manufacturer of transit buses. They have lower excess inventory needed. The bus specifications are as follows: 35-40 feet in length, 120-140 miles on a single charge, Wi-Fi enabled, equipped with bike racks, ADA accessible with auto-stop announcements, and convenient battery access. The bus costs will be \$3,452,564 (\$2762,051 in Federal funds, \$690,513 in VW funds, and \$0 GPTC). The charger costs will be \$134,000-\$268,000 for GPTC.

Other Business, Staff Announcements and Upcoming Meetings

Announcements and upcoming dates were shared with the committee.

Upcoming meetings were announced.

Next Meeting

The next Technical Planning Committee (TPC) meeting is slated for Tuesday, February 9, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. at the NIRPC offices.

The meeting concluded at 11:51 a.m.