



## Surface Transportation Committee

Lake Michigan Room

YouTube Recording:

<https://youtu.be/uzEDWucKxx8?si=6Bsv3HMcfOHOApCH>

August 29, 2023

### Minutes

Kevin Breitzke called the Surface Transportation Committee (STC) meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and introductions.

In attendance were Kevin Breitzke, Gerald Swets (St. John), Mark O'Dell (Chesterton), Dean Button (Hammond), Jeff Huet (Schererville), David Wright (GPTC), George Topoll (Union Township), and Angela Strotman (DCI).

NIRPC staff present were Scott Weber, Tom Vander Woude, Kevin Polette, and Flor Baum.

On motion by Gerald Swets, second by Dean Button, the STC voted to approve the 2023 minutes as presented.

There were no public comments.

### **Transformational Projects and Federal Discretionary Grant Awards Updates**

Dean Button and Jeff Huet spoke on transformational projects and federal discretionary grant awards updates. The City of Hammond's Governor's Parkway Railroad Overpass Project was awarded \$7M by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) grant for construction. The new grade separation of Governors Parkway over Norfolk Southern Railroad corridor, beginning from 173rd Street to 169th Street, along Parrish Avenue. will eliminate two points where local roads intersect with railroad tracks. Delays have been through the NEPA process. Currently, there is ongoing communication regarding the FRA wanting to reevaluate the NEPA document under their standards. Letting is slated for the fall of 2024. Consultant procurement will model INDOTs procedures. The Town of Schererville was awarded \$8.4M for a railroad overpass on Kennedy Av, which is Ph I of the project to extend the road south to US 30. NEPA was approved by the time Schererville got the federal rail. There are plans to take some of the fill needed for the project from Hartsdale Pond (county-owned and adjacent to the project) as part of a regulated drain. Schererville went through the economic engineering process for a bridge submittal that was estimated to cost \$9M (pre Covid) for the Trax project. However, the cost of the project is now expected to cost \$18M. A TIP was set up in 2000 for the Kennedy Corridor. The cost of the bridge is 3x the cost that was originally expected. Ph I, II, and III will be funded. However, financing may be required for Ph IV. Scott announced that the Reconnecting Communities Grant award deadline is September 28. For more information, please contact Scott at [sweber@nirpc.org](mailto:sweber@nirpc.org).

### **E-commerce in NW Indiana Phase 2 Projects Updates**

Scott spoke on e-commerce in NW Indiana Ph II Projects Updates. Ph I was a project for the E-commerce in NWI report and was adopted by the Commission in 2020. It is a regional plan about how the Region can best prepare for investments in e-commerce. Ph II is looking more at the local level for e-commerce preparedness. NIRPC staff looked at e-commerce trends and impacts on land use, transportation network, and traffic. Local impact analysis on urban land use planning and freight movement were also taken into consideration. Additional project outcomes looked at potential locations for warehouses and distribution centers and travel demand around existing and future e-commerce facilities. NIRPC staff came up with a set of recommendations to NWI municipalities on how best to anticipate e-commerce impacts, mitigate their effects, and benefit



