

**Transportation Policy Committee Meeting**  
Construction Advancement Foundation Training Center  
6050 Southport Road, Portage  
January 12, 2016  
MINUTES

**Members Present**

Joe Simonetto, Joe Crnkovich, Mark O'Dell, Claudia Taylor, David Wright, Taylor Wegrzyn, Bruce Spires, Dean Button, Mitch Bishop, Bruce Lindner, George Topoll and Mike Yacullo.

**Guests**

Justin Mount, Jill Murr, Jami Erdmann, Jake Dammarell, Mark Gordish, Jarvis Jointer, Jared Huss, James Mandon, Ron Wiedeman, Ismail Attallah, Dennis Cobb, Karen Lee, K-Todd Behling, Shelli Dell, Salvatore Dibernardo, Nick Barbknecht and Chris Moore.

**NIRPC Staff**

Mitch Barloga, Gabrielle Biciunas, James Winters, Gary Evers, Steve Strains, Sarah Geinosky, Eman Ibrahim, Amanda Pollard, Stephen Sostaric and Mary Thorne.

**1. Call to Order, Opening and Announcements**

- a) Joe Simonetto called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions. A moment of silence was held in remembrance of NIRPC Commissioner Roosevelt Allen, Jr.
- b) The INDOT voluntary participation survey was available for attendees to fill out.
- c) On a motion by Bruce Spires and a second by Mark O'Dell, the minutes of the December 8, 2015 meeting were approved as submitted.

**2. Presentation:** Mitch Barloga presented on Complete Streets and Health. NIRPC staff met with members of the American Heart Association (AHA) on October 24 to discuss Complete Streets Policies and health benefits to bicyclists and pedestrians. Lowell and LaPorte have adopted the policy and other communities are considering adopting the policy as well. The AHA, in partnership with NIRPC, wants to join the coalition consisting of AARP and other organizations to promote the policy. It is noteworthy that a health organization is working at our side. For more information, go to [smartgrowthamerica.org](http://smartgrowthamerica.org).

**3. Planning**

- a) Mitch Barloga gave an update on the trails wayfinding guide which will direct Local Public Agencies (LPAs) with a standard for trail signage. He will be working with the municipalities on the design. The new bike map is coming out this year as well. NICTD is a sponsor.
- b) Eman Ibrahim gave an update on the Regional Corridors Study. She named the 23 segments originally identified in Phase 1. Development of the segments would improve connectivity, congestion and travel times. The proposed Willowcreek Road extension would improve connectivity but would also increase congestion in the Portage downtown area. The 101<sup>st</sup> Street segment was eliminated by the City of Crown Point, and was replaced with the Delaware and Randolph Street segment. There are now 22 identified gaps. Phase 2 will establish criteria which will determine regional priority segments as well as Complete

Streets elements. In addition to Eman, other staff involved are Gabrielle Biciunas, Scott Weber and Joe Exl. The next stakeholder meeting will be held on February 5 at 9 a.m. in the Dune Room at NIRPC.

- c) Eman Ibrahim said the Marquette Action Plan Kickoff will look at parcels of land, data, and what defines public access. Five problems were identified which will be examined: (1) insure public access and redevelopment will happen along with industry and infrastructure, (2) identify land where public access and transformation is feasible and clarify kinds of public access, (3) identify strategies and accommodate all forms of public access (4) identify funding sources and (5) identify ways to overcome any impact industry and development would have on potential lakefront tourism. Staff also includes Sarah Geinosky, James Winters and Gabrielle Biciunas and will work with the committee.

#### **4. Programming**

- a) Gary Evers presented Amendment #10 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program adding 9 new INDOT projects and project phases for surface reinforcement treatments in Hebron, Crown Point and Merrillville; install pavement markings and signs throughout the LaPorte District and repair damaged overhead sign structures on the Borman near Munster. On a motion by Joe Crnkovich and a second by Bruce Lindner, the committee voted to recommend Amendment #10 to the NIRPC Commission for adoption.
- b) Gary Evers presented Amendment #11 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program for two sign replacement projects in Griffith, one sign replacement project in Merrillville, two sidewalk projects in Cedar Lake and a reconstruction phase on SR 152 in East Chicago using relinquishment funds from Dickey Road. On a motion by Bruce Spires and a second by David Wright, the committee voted to recommend Amendment #11 to the NIRPC Commission for adoption.
- c) Stephen Sostaric overviewed the final list of 5 projects for the NOFA 2015-1 limited solicitation for HSIP projects for the proposed use of unallocated 2017-2021 HSIP funds for low cost/high impact and high crash location projects. The available funds would cover the 109<sup>th</sup> and US 41 project in Lake County, safety improvements on 109<sup>th</sup> in Crown Point, various intersection improvements on CR 100S in Porter County and the Silhavy roundabout in Valparaiso. On a motion by Joe Crnkovich and second by Bruce Spires, the committee voted to recommend the four HSIP projects for HSIP projects to the NIRPC Commission for adoption.

Gary Evers added that this concludes federal funds from FY 2016-2021. The next solicitation will be in 2018. Under the new committee structure, new projects and criteria will be formulated. 57% of funding was expended in Lake and Porter Counties and 5% was expended in LaPorte County. Quarterly tracking meetings will be held the last week of January with a deadline of mid-February to submit the 2017 spending plan to INDOT and firm up 2016 obligations. \$76 million has been scheduled for obligation in 2017.

#### **5. Indiana Department of Transportation**

Lyndsay Quist reported on the INDOT lettings through March.

#### **6. Transit Operators Reports**

- a) **LaPorte Transit** – No report was given.
- b) **Valparaiso V-Line and Chicago DASH** – Taylor Wegrzyn reported that the ChicaGo Dash saw 64,709, a 3.6% increase over 2014. The V-Line year end saw 131,547 riders, 100 more than 2014.
- c) **East Chicago Transit** – No report was given.
- d) **GPTC** – David Wright reported that December ridership was up 7% over December 2014. 2015 ridership increased 3.2% over 2015, mostly on the Ridge Road routes. GPTC is looking into connecting the Lake Shore South and the Lake Ridge route to create a transit corridor from Burr Street to Calumet Avenue.

Metro Center improvements are set for design solicitation in February with construction later in the year. A bus rapid transit update flyer will be available after the meeting.

- e) **Michigan City Transit** – No report was given.
- f) **NICTD** – Joe Crnkovich reported that 2015 ridership was up 1,700 over 2014 for a total of 3,617,266. Rush hour ridership was up, but mid-day ridership was off due to lack of parking at the stations after 9 a.m. The West Lake Corridor will help that and NICTD is looking for additional parking areas in Hammond. Bikes on Trains will start in April and due to the highly successful pilot, 25% of about seven cars will now be converted to hold bikes. Five bridge construction contracts were let on December 16 and bids are due January 14. Work will start in April and service interruptions are expected. Three new crossovers of double tracking will promote higher speeds of around 40 mph. Bids will be opened next Thursday. The RFP for engineering of the proposed double tracking was released yesterday from east of Gary to Michigan City. Bids are due February 16 at 2:30 p.m. at NICTD headquarters in Chesterton. Go to [www.nictd.com](http://www.nictd.com) for more information.
- g) **North Township Dial-A-Ride** – No report was given.
- h) **Opportunity Enterprises** – Claudia Taylor reported that two new vehicles were in service in December and procurement of the next two is beginning. The new fencing and security project was completed in November.
- i) **Porter County Council on Aging and Community Services** – Bruce Lindner reported that ridership for 2015 was down slightly due to an accident and a surgery causing a shortage of replacement drivers. An RFP for fleet maintenance will go out the end of February or March.
- j) **South Lake County Community Services** – No report was given.

7. **Regional Transportation Partners** – No reports were given.

8. **Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration** – No reports were given.

9. **Planning Neighbors.**

**South Shore Clean Cities (SSCC)** – New employee, Shelli Dell, reported for Carl Lisek who is speaking in Washington DC at the Transportation Research Board. Working with NIRPC and other entities, a \$1,338,400 Hoosier Homegrown Blender Pump Grant was awarded through USDA.

A \$736,000 grant was awarded through IDEM for diesel emission reduction projects for East Chicago, Hammond, Hobart, Michigan City, Valparaiso and a school bus heater program through SSCC. Contact SSCC for information on participating in the Midwest Green Drives Initiative. Transportation Energy Partnership, Washington DC will take place February 7-10. The SSCC Annual Meeting is February 16. Green Truck Show in Indianapolis is March 1-4. Contact SSCC for free passes.

10. **Public Comment on Agenda Items** – No comments were given.

11. **Other Business, Staff Announcements and Upcoming Meetings**

- a) **Other Business** – No other business was brought to the Committee.
- b) **Staff Announcements** – No announcements were given.
- c) **Upcoming Meetings at NIRPC** – Future NIRPC meetings will be announced as they are scheduled.

The Executive Board/Full Commission scheduled for January 21 has been cancelled. The next meeting is scheduled for February 18 at 9:00 a.m. at the Construction Advancement Foundation Training Center, 6050 Southport Road, Portage, which is just west of NIRPC.

The Transportation Policy Committee will meet on February 9, 2016 at 9 a.m. at the Construction Advancement Foundation Training Center, 6050 Southport Road.

On a motion by Bruce Spires and a second by Bruce Lindner, Joe Simonetto adjourned the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

*A Digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact Mary Thorne at the phone or email below should you wish to receive a copy of it.*

For requests for alternate formats, please contact Mary Thorne at NIRPC at (219) 763-6060 extension 131 or at [mthorne@nirpc.org](mailto:mthorne@nirpc.org). Individuals with hearing impairments may contact us through the Indiana Relay 711 service by calling 711 or (800) 743-3333.

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