

Transportation Policy Committee Meeting

NIRPC Auditorium

January 13, 2015

MINUTES

Members Present

Stan Dobosz, David Wright, Joe Crnkovich, Deb Backhus, Taylor Wegrzyn, Frank Rosado, Jr., Joe Simonetto, Jezreel Rodriguez, Don Parker, Bruce Spires, Tom MacLennan, Mitch Bishop, Mike Yacullo, Mark O'Dell, Claudia Tayler, Bruce Lindner, Art Biciunas and Bob Carnahan. Joyce Newland and Karen Stippich participated via conference phone.

Guests

Mark Pittman, Lyndsay Quist, Mary Jane Thomas, Julia Surber, Pete Kohut, Chris Moore, Matt Kaiser, Ismail Attallah, Craig Hendrix, Chris Murphy, Bob Csanyi, Mike Seitz, and Keith Benman.

NIRPC Staff

Steve Strains, Belinda Petroskey, Jack Eskin, Scott Weber, Eman Ibrahim, Gabrielle Biciunas, Mitch Barloga, Amanda Pollard, Gary Evers and Mary Thorne.

1. Call to Order, Opening and Announcements

- a) Vice-Chairman Stan Dobosz called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.
- b) The INDOT voluntary participation survey was available on the table.
- c) On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Don Parker, the minutes of the December 9, 2014 meeting were approved as submitted.

2. Presentation – 2020 Greenways & Blueways Plan Update

Mitch presented a brief history of the region's abandoned railroad corridors and how they are now being converted to multi-use trail systems. Of the 300 miles of abandoned rail corridors, roughly 150 miles have been converted to trails. Federal legislation in 1991 specifically programmed funds for trail conversion of former rail lines which created the Rails to Trails movement. In the 1990's NIRPC made the first bikeway plan which identified the locations of those corridors for trail development. The 1994 plan was a successful model document and NIRPC built on that in 2005 with the Ped & Pedal Plan, which also encompasses pedestrian travel. The creation of the regional priorities trail map aided greatly in determining where to utilize the federal funds. The Ped & Pedal Plan was then updated in 2010, with mapping showing funded or completed trails. In 2006, NIRPC received a grant from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation through Openlands which resulted in the 2007 Greenways & Blueways Plan. The plan identified bike, hike and water trails throughout the region and 15 potential corridors between Lake Michigan and the Kankakee River. The many creeks in the three counties are recreational opportunities. Environmental stewards continue today to help preserve our rich ecological benefits. The update of the 2020 Greenways & Blueways Plan will combine the two plans into three major planning initiatives of conservation, recreation and transportation. The target date of completion is December 2015. There will be sessions with the communities to develop information to bring to the public comment period. More information will follow. Brief discussion followed.

3. Planning

- a) 2040 CRP Update – Mitch Barloga reported that an updated timeline will be presented next month. Two projects have come forth. A draft plan should be ready to present for public review from March 2 through April 3. The update is on target for May approval, along with the TIP update.
- b) Quarterly Tracking – Amanda Pollard said the next round begins on February 3. Emails were sent and will be sent out three times a week until February 3. Contact Amanda for rescheduling. A laptop will be set up in the meetings to assist those having problems. Quarterly reports for Gary, Hammond, Hobart, Lake Station, Michigan City, Portage, Lake County, Schererville, Valparaiso and Munster must be turned in to Gary Evers. Cedar Lake, Chesterton, Crown Point, Lake County Parks, East Chicago, Griffith, La Porte County, City of LaPorte, Lowell, Merrillville, Porter County Parks, and Porter County must be turned into Amanda. Any community not in compliance will have their funding suspended.
- c) ITS Architecture – Scott Weber said the full draft of the Architecture is available on the website. A two page synopsis was included in the materials. Scott Weber described some of the elements of the architecture and said the Architecture will help improve operations through the use of more technology. FHWA sent an email giving an unofficial approval. Karen Stippich commented that she expected to see how the architecture is used in in the future in the planning process and project selection. Joyce Newland agreed, adding that FHWA was very happy with it and looked forward to seeing how it is used in the long range transportation plan process. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Art Biciunas, the Committee voted to recommend the ITS Architecture to the full Commission for adoption.

4. Programming

- a) Gary Evers described Amendment #31 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program for projects in Hobart, Lake County and La Porte County. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Don Parker, the Transportation Policy Committee recommended Amendment #31 to the NIRPC Board for adoption.
- b) Gary Evers described Amendment #32 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program for two INDOT projects. On a motion by Don Parker and a second by Joe Simonetto, the Transportation Policy Committee recommended Amendment #32 to the NIRPC Board for adoption.
- c) Belinda Petroskey announced that Hobart and Portage have requested FTA funds for feasibility studies for public transit. An amendment to the 2015-2016 Unified Planning Work Program was presented to the Committee for the City of Hobart transit feasibility study. On a motion by Bruce Spires and a second by Joe Simonetto, the Transportation Policy Committee recommended the UPWP Amendment for the City of Hobart to the NIRPC Board for adoption. Don Parker called for point of order that the committee took one action on two amendments.
- d) Belinda Petroskey presented an amendment to the 2015-2016 Unified Planning Work Program to the Committee for the City of Portage transit feasibility study. On a motion by Bruce Spires and a second by Mark O'Dell, the Transportation Policy Committee recommended the UPWP Amendment for the City of Portage to the NIRPC Board for adoption.
- e) Belinda Petroskey described Amendment #30 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program to include the transit feasibility projects for Hobart and Portage. On a motion by David Wright and a second by Frank Rosado, Jr., the Transportation Policy Committee recommended Amendment #32 to the NIRPC Board for adoption.
- f) Gary Evers reported that INDOT asked the Indiana MPO Council to prepare a set of business rules to be followed statewide to reflect mutual understandings for both INDOT and the MPOs regarding federal funding. A handout of the MPO version of the draft business rules was provided to the committee. Gary briefed the committee on the four main categories.
 - Spending plans: MPOs can overspend by 15%, however, that amount would be subtracted from next year's funding.

- Prior year balances: We have roughly \$24 million in carryover within Lake and Porter Counties and about \$2.2 million in La Porte County. We were required to show INDOT where we put those dollars and we will be making those changes in the TIP. We can change the projects assigned those dollars but we cannot move funds between years.
- Annual allocations and obligations of funds: The most significant is how the overages and underages are to be handled. A “use it or lose it” approach will be taken if a project fails to let.
- Fund tracking: Do your quarterly reports, come to the tracking meetings, etc. INDOT and NIRPC’s SPMS numbers match, which was previously unheard of. This is about the timing of lettings. The best prices can be given within the first months of the State Fiscal Year, July through October.

5. Indiana Department of Transportation

Lyndsay Quist reported on the lettings for December 2014 through March 2015. In March, DES 1382209 was moved to July.

6. Transit Operators Reports

- LaPorte Transit** – Tom MacLennan reported that the Transit Triangle service start is February 2 between Purdue North central, La Porte and Michigan City as a five day commuter service.
- Valparaiso V-Line and Chicago DASH** – Tyler Wegrzyn reported that Dash ridership for 2014 was 62,431 trips, a 13% increase over 2013. The V-Line experienced a 6% increase from 2013 with 131,462 total trips.
- GPTC** – David Wright reported that the GPTC draft Year in Review was available. December ridership was up 10% over December 2013 for a 5% overall increase in 2014 over 2013. Student ridership was added in the 4th Quarter to the Ivy Tech Campus and overall student ridership increased 30% over 2013. The Lake Shore Connection serving the Ivy Tech Campus experienced a 35% increase. Ivy Tech is looking to open a campus at 99th Avenue and GPTC is looking at providing service to that area. With regard to the Broadway project, a steering committee will be formed and the consultant will provide recommendations at its first meeting. A northern Lake County transit guide will be available on February 2 and will be available. Only 1,000 will be printed.
- NICTD** – Joe Crnkovich reported that 2014 ridership was up over 2013 with over 9,000 more riders, for a total of over 3.6 million. December ridership was up 7% over December 2013. The overhead wire project east of Michigan City is ongoing. The new General Manager has additional priorities which will be reflected in the TIP amendment request coming in the next couple of months. Other projects will resume with warmer weather.
- Opportunity Enterprises** – Claudia Taylor said relief drivers are needed.
- Porter County Aging and Community Services** – Bruce Lindner said their ridership was down about 2,000 due to funding and fleet reduction of four buses. There is an opportunity with the City of Valparaiso on their public works project and offered PCACS indoor storage in their old facility. They are working through the first civil rights complaint in 10 years that they are not providing enough rides to an individual. The County Council awarded them another \$80,000 in annual funding which enabled them to reinstate the four buses that were previously cut.

In response to a question on the increase in ridership, all operators cited good management, increased service, an increase in jobs in Chicago and increased parking fees in Chicago contributed to the increases.

7. Regional Transportation Partners

South Shore Trails – Don Parker reported that they are involved in the Greenways & Blueways update as well as with the State of Indiana rewrite of its statewide trail plan. The Indiana Bike Summit will be held on March 19-20 in Indianapolis. For more information go to www.bicycleindiana.org. South Shore Trails is holding its annual membership drive. Visit www.southshoretrails.org.

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

9. Planning Neighbors – No reports were given.

10. Other Business, Public Comment, Staff Announcements and Upcoming Meetings

a) **Announcements**

- Belinda Petroskey said the transit operators will meet immediately following this meeting. Guests and members were invited to examine the state-of-the-art low floor medium duty bus in the parking lot.
- Gary Evers said one month from today, February 13, is the deadline for CMAQ and HSIP applications.
- Steve Strains announced that Jack Eskin will take a position with the City of Gary as its Deputy Director of Redevelopment. Jack Eskin said it is a great opportunity to help Gary with vacancy issues.
- Mitch Barloga said that no meetings will be held at NIRPC during February and March due to the NIRPC remodel. He described the coming construction.

b) **Public Comments** – None.

c) **Upcoming Meetings** –The Finance & Personnel Committee will meet on Thursday, January 15 at 8 a.m. Executive Board will meet on Thursday, January 15 at 9 a.m. The Ped, Pedal & Paddle Committee will meet on January 22 at 1:30 p.m.

The next Transportation Policy Committee meeting will be at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, February 10, location to be determined.

On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Don Parker, Stan Dobosz adjourned the meeting at 10:25 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. Individuals with hearing impairments may contact us through the Indiana Relay 711 service by calling 711 or (800) 743-3333.

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