



**COMMITTEE MEETING ~ NIRPC AUDITORIUM
OCTOBER 25, 2012
MINUTES**

MEMBERS & GUESTS – Bruce Spires, Craig Zandstra, Bob Thompson, Jake Dammerell, Eric Ehn, Denarie Kane, Craig Hendrix, Walter Lenckos, Jerry Rosko, Mark Heintz, Jan Dick, Shannon Eason, Dan Plath, Chris Moore, Doug Olson, Nick Minich, A J Monroe, Peter Kohut, Stu Summers, Don Parker, Chip Sobek, Dan Corbin

STAFF - Mitch Barloga, Meredith Stilwell

Chairman Dick called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m. with self-introductions.

PED

CALUMET TRAIL REVITALIZATION –

Porter County contracted with SEH to rehabilitate the crushed limestone trail which is in poor condition. The NIPSCO and Federal Highway agreements have been reached and the project is moving forward. Craig Hendrix from SEH stated a feasibility study was conducted in 2009 which looked at items such as existing conditions, proposed cross-sections, drainage issues and environmental concerns. Building on the 2009 study the project, funded with \$1.6m in TE funds and a \$400k match from the Regional Development Authority, is in the very early stages now. Starting at Mineral Springs Road the trail will continue to at least to the NICTD station and possibly to Tremont Road. Not a lot of changes can be made to the existing route due to NIPSCO constraints, but will be enhanced with other things. There will be a connection to the Dunes Kankakee Trail, the Town of Porter will have a connector trail from the NICTD station to the trail and another spur leading to the visitor center. Other opportunities involve environmental improvements. One challenge of the trail rehabilitation is the inability to use some material due to the use of the path by NIPSCO trucks, but there is an opportunity to expand some of the water quality. There is a drainage issue that has to be addressed especially on the west end of the project. Pictures of some of the flooding issues were shown and Craig noted in will be a 10 foot wide paved section with stone shoulders. Because there are environmental issues and many unique resources along the trail the project development phase is more robust than for a typical trail project. A wetlands survey has been completed and baseline data gathering, early coordination, and identifying and engaging key stakeholders are currently in the works. In addition, forming a community advisory committee or working group is also being looked into. The project schedule was reviewed. The NIPSCO license agreement and the County Commissioners require public input and comments will be reviewed before the design process begins.

FEATURE PRESENTATION: Portage's Northside Trail Project –

The city of Portage and Doug Olsen's administration secured a grant from Visclosky to build a trail originally proposed for downtown Portage development. After further review it was determined more could be done building a trail in a different location. The City of Portage entered into a contract with SEH to provide engineering services for the development of the 1-1 ½ mile trail in the area surrounding the NIRPC office. The groundbreaking ceremony for the trail was held 10/23. Substantial completion of the project is November 14, 2012 and certain soft scape elements will be completed in spring 2013. The boardwalk section of the trail may take longer. Asphalt, limestone and a section of concrete boardwalk will all be featured trail types and this project will be showpiece on the use, maintenance and upkeep for the different surface types. The trail will feature a pedestrian at-grade crossing at 249 and Ameriplex. Mitch noted this is a critical link in the Marquette greenway tri-state network and Craig Hendrix spoke regarding the attempt to be sensitive to the area and use the correct surfaces for area.

SOUTH SHORE TRAILS - UPDATE Don Parker reported South Shore Trails is accepting nominations for their annual connector and connections of the year awards. The awards recognize a non-motorized project and the community supporting the project as well as an individual(s) that has demonstrated outstanding leadership in moving the projects forward. The awards will be given at their annual meeting at the end of November.

PEDAL

FEATURE PRESENTATION: MAP-21: Transportation Alternatives Program

Although the MAP-21 bill became effective October 1 and a few days ago Federal Highway announced internal guidance giving MPOs and other entities an idea of how to use the money. Mitch explained that TAP is absorbing Safe Routes to School, RTP and TE funding and will now also include environmental and roadway projects. TAP will provide funds

directly to MPOs and local governments through INDOT. Mitch stated he does know if the money INDOT is administering will be eligible for the cities and towns in our region since they are already part of an MPO eligible for TAP funds. Indiana will continue RTP funding out of TAP. The state can transfer up to 50% of TAP funds to STP, CMAQ, Highway Safety or back to the MPOs, but also have the option of not spending any TAP funds on non-motorized projects. Nirpc will or may have to make up difference in other programs such as STP, CMAQ & HSIP to offset the amount of money being distributed. Since there are no earmarks in MAP-21 the other funding sources will have extra monies, but those decisions will be determined at the Committee levels. The MAP-21 law does not establish specific standards for competitive process, but is not a real concern for NIRPC since there has been long standing process. There will be around \$1m dollars from TAP to spend in the area on eligible non-motorized facilities, conversion of abandoned railroads, billboard removal, historic preservation of transportation facilities, highway runoff management, wildlife connectivity and SRTS projects. Formally an independent dedicated funding source Safe Routes to Schools is now part of TAP with the same infrastructure and non-infrastructure related areas and will be administered by NIRPC. Projects no longer eligible include safety and educational activities for ped and bicycles (except K-8 SRTS related projects), acquisition of scenic easements, visitor and welcome centers, operation of historic transportation facilities, archaeological planning, and transportation museums. While waiting on INDOT to establish the first TAP funding cycle a new NIRPC TAP application must be established before the next meeting on December 13, at which the new draft application will be reviewed. Committee of the whole meetings will take place a couple times in November to discuss and establish new draft application. Discussions will need to take place regarding how to review and rank SRTS projects, remove projects formally eligible under TE, and find out how much money to afford each of the eligible project categories. Once the new application is established it will be presented to the TPC and the NIRPC Full Commission for approval. The revision of the priority corridors will also be discussed during this process. Mitch reiterated the need to work and cooperate with other funding committees to make up the funding shortfall.

OLD PLANK ROAD TRAIL CORRIDOR ACQUISITION - UPDATE

NIRPC has been working with Openlands on a project to extend the Old Plank Road Trail east into Indiana and to the Pennsy Greenway in Schererville. Openlands filed a rail banking and public use condition request with Surface Transportation Board. The rail banking request was denied, but the public use condition was approved. Although approved it only gives the entities about 180 days to negotiate for the purchase of the corridor which is owned by Norfolk Southern. Work is being done with Dyer and Schererville to get an appraiser on board and move forward with the purchase of the land needed for the future trail connection.

PADDLE —

NWI PADDLING ASSOCIATION — UPDATE

Dan Plath updated the Committee on the Blueways Stewardship Program, Education Committee activities and the Paddling Committee.

- Blueways Stewardship: Deep River Meeting with Lake Station and USACE; the Kankakee River Water Trail Overnight Camp MOU; The Trail Creek ADA Launch at Hansen Park; and work on the Little Cal E. Branch.
- Education Committee: planning Parkids 2013 and the Great Lakes Surf Rescue Project. The Wilderness Inquiry Voyageur Canoe Project was very successful with over 450 kids participating.
- Paddling Committee Report: Saugany Lake Jellyfish Paddle (9/22) was rained out; LaPorte Chain of Lakes Event (9/29) had around 65 participants; and the 3rd Annual Kankakee River Sandhill Crane Paddle (10/21) included over 124 participants.
- Upcoming Events: 1/12/2013 Winter Rendezvous – NWIPA Awards

GRAB BAG

A. MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES, CONCERNS, GRIPES & A BIT OF FUN

- A presentation on how to engage with community groups and stakeholder in the advocacy process was given by Don Parker at the American Planning Association's regional meeting at Winona Lake. Complete streets was also discussed.
- Videos on Asian carp and bicycling in Copenhagen were shown.

B. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS (UPCOMING RIDES, EVENTS, ETC.)

Annual crane cruise in Medaryville on October 27, 2012.

C. THE NEXT 3PC MEETING IS DECEMBER 13, 2012.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:51