

Transportation Policy Committee Meeting
Construction Advancement Foundation Training Center
6050 Southport Road, Portage
December 8, 2015

MINUTES

Members Present

Joe Simonetto, Dave Decker, Art Biciunas, Joe Crnkovich, Mark O'Dell, Claudia Taylor, Tom MacLennan, David Wright, Taylor Wegrzyn, Phil Gralik, Jeff Huet, Bruce Spires, Stan Dostatni, Robin Tillman, Mitch Bishop, Don Parker, Spike Peller, Teri Dixon, Francisco Rosado, Jr. and Mike Yacullo.

Guests

Julie Ritzler, Jamie Erdmann, Sherri Ziller, John Parsons, Jake Dammarell, Rebecca Williams, Ron Wiedeman, Jarvis Joiner, Mark Gordish, Ismail Attallah, Mike Jabo, Jill Murr, and Chris Moore.

NIRPC Staff

Mitch Barloga, Scott Weber, James Winters, Gary Evers, Steve Strains, Sarah Geinosky, Eman Ibrahim, Stephen Sostaric and Mary Thorne.

1. Call to Order, Opening and Announcements

- a) Chairman Stan Dobosz called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.
- b) The INDOT voluntary participation survey was available for attendees to fill out.
- c) On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Jeff Huet, the minutes of the November 10, 2015 meeting were approved as submitted.

2. Presentation: Mitch Barloga presented on the recent approval of the United States Bicycle Routes 35 and 36, by the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO). This was accomplished through a collaboration between the Indiana Department of Transportation, Hoosier Rails-to-Trails Council, Bicycle Indiana, City of Indianapolis, Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, and many other partners. The new segments cross portions of Indiana and connect with one or more neighboring states. The USBRS creates a national network of inter-connected routes to aid cyclists to travel in/thru/across and explore areas of the United States. Further, the USBRS offers local communities to benefit from the income and monies spent by long distance cycling tourists. U.S. Bicycle Route System has now expanded to over 11,000 miles in 23 states. USBR #35 runs from Michigan, at La Porte County Line, Indiana, to Louisville, Kentucky at Jeffersonville, Indiana. USBR #36 connects South Chicago in Illinois, through Lake, Porter, and La Porte Counties in Indiana to cup around Lake Michigan to Michigan City, and into Michigan State on its way to Detroit and then on to Sault Sainte Marie in Ontario, Canada, the only international surface route in the state of Indiana. Signage for the routes is being planned.

3. Planning

- a) Eman Ibrahim presented Amendment 4 to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for \$375,000 for transit-oriented development study on the West Lake corridor extension for Hammond, Munster and

Dyer, with \$75,000 local match provided by the Regional Development Authority (RDA). On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by David Wright, the committee voted to recommend Amendment 4 to the NIRPC Commission for adoption.

- b) Stephen Sostaric reported that public comment period to amend the Functional Classification System into the updated 2040 Plan produced one comment providing suggestions for accuracy of the base map.
- c) Mitch Barloga said the Functional Classification System was approved in April of 2014. Action today is to amend the Functional Classification System into the Comprehensive Regional Plan Companion. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Don Parker, the committee voted to recommend amending the Functional Classification System into the Comprehensive Regional Plan Companion to the NIRPC Commission for adoption.
- d) Sarah Geinosky announced that she will be reaching out to communities who need to contact INDOT to add their roads to INDOT's inventory.
- e) Mitch Barloga summarized the new five-year transportation legislation, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, which resulted after five short term extensions. It provides \$305 billion in funding over five years. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimated that the state actually needs \$2.2 trillion for roadways only. While the amount of funding has increased, it is discretionary. Non-profits are now eligible for funding. The funding will cover roads, bridges, public transportation, highway, motor vehicle, truck and bus safety, hazardous materials, railroads and other provisions. Because of the legalization of marijuana in some states, it requires a feasibility study for an impairment standard for drivers under the influence of marijuana. Gary Evers added that we are currently in Year One.

4. Programming

- a) Gary Evers presented Amendment #7 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program for Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties adding 15 new INDOT projects and project phases. It is currently out for public comment until Sunday. It was noted that the Amendment needed to be amended to show that DES #0500462 preventive maintenance is on SR 53. On a motion by Joe Crnkovich and a second by Bruce Spires, the committee voted to recommend Amendment #7 to the NIRPC Commission for adoption contingent upon the addition of "SR 53" under DES #0500462 and having no adverse public comment.
- b) Gary Evers presented Amendment #8 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program for Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties. The amendment adds changes for 10 projects for both the Michigan City Urbanized Area and non-urban LaPorte County as well as changes for 49 projects for both the Chicago Area Urbanized Area and non-urban Lake and Porter County. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Don Parker, the committee voted to recommend Amendment #8 to the NIRPC Commission for adoption.
- c) Stephen Sostaric overviewed the 15 projects by LPAs who sent Letters of Intent 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. Gary Evers said this limited solicitation was the result of \$4.1 million in projects that did not make it through the eligibility determination process. FY 2016 funds will be forfeited if they are not obligated. Joe Simonetto made a motion, seconded by Don Parker to recommend the NOFA 2015-1 limited solicitation for HSIP projects for HSIP funds for low cost/high impact and high crash location projects. Discussion followed. Gary Evers said this is the final NOFA solicitation and the system will be overhauled in the next 18 to 24 months. He also overviewed the FY 2016 funding review summary provided by INDOT. Chairman Dobosz said the motion and second were made; the committee voted to recommend NOFA 2015-1, the limited solicitation for HSIP projects to the NIRPC Commission for adoption.

5. Indiana Department of Transportation

Julie Ritzler reported on the INDOT lettings through February.

6. Transit Operators Reports

- a) **LaPorte Transit** – Tom MacLennan reported that ridership was down about 8% this year, but last year saw an enormous gain of 12%. They will be receiving two new propane buses.
- b) **Valparaiso V-Line and Chicago DASH** – Taylor Wegrzyn reported that the V-Line had 9,728 passenger trips last month and the *ChicaGo* Dash had 4,611, both down a little over October 2014.
- c) **East Chicago Transit** – Francisco Rosado, Jr. reported that this is the second month with the addition of bike racks. The public is happy.
- d) **GPTC** – David Wright reported that ridership for October was the highest since 2010. An open house was held on November 30 to launch the planning phase of service expansion on the Broadway Corridor (Broadway Rapid). Gary Redevelopment Corp. will match federal dollars for bus shelters and Public Works for approval of no parking zones for bike lanes. Mapping was made available.
- e) **Michigan City Transit** – No report was given.
- f) **NICTD** – Joe Crnkovich reported that November ridership was down half of one percent over November of 2014, but it is still up for the year. Fair increases did not adversely impact the service. The overhead wire project for 2015 has ended with new wire installed from the Michigan City shops to a point east of Range Road in LaPorte County and there will be no more service outages. The Dunes Park station work has been delayed due to the suppliers and it is hoped to be completed for the holidays. Extra trains out of downtown will run earlier in the day on Saturday for the next two Saturdays. Notice was provided. Engineering for five projects should be completed in the next week or two; then going out for bid with contracts expected to be awarded in January. Go to www.nictd.com for more information.
- g) **North Township Dial-A-Ride** – No report was given.
- h) **Opportunity Enterprises** – Claudia Taylor reported that November figures were down slightly, due to the Thanksgiving holiday.
- i) **Porter County Council on Aging and Community Services** – No report was given.
- j) **South Lake County Community Services** – No report was given.

7. Regional Transportation Partners –

South Shore Trails: Don Parker reported that the annual meeting will be held on Monday at 7 p.m. in Hobart to look at the 2016 work plan.

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

9. Planning Neighbors – Terri Dixon, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), reported that the kickoff for their new long range plan will be in February.

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

11. Other Business, Staff Announcements and Upcoming Meetings

- a) **Other Business** – Steve Strains congratulated both Stan Dostatni and Stan Dobosz for their service. Both are retiring. Stan Dobosz received a service award for Chairing the TPC.
- b) **Staff Announcements** – Mitch Barloga said the Ped, Pedal & Paddle Committee meeting is Thursday, December 10 at 1:30 at Construction Advancement Foundation.
- c) **Upcoming Meetings at NIRPC** – Future NIRPC meetings will be announced as they are scheduled. The Executive Board/Full Commission will meet on December 17 at 9:00 a.m. at the Construction Advancement Foundation Training Center, 6050 Southport Road, Portage, which is just west of NIRPC.

On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Bruce Spires, Stan Dobosz adjourned the meeting at 10:30 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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