

## **Transportation Policy Committee Meeting**

Woodland Park  
2100 Willowcreek Road, Portage  
March 15, 2016

### **MINUTES**

#### **Members Present**

Dave Decker, Bob Carnahan, George Topoll, Art Biciunas, La’Kisha Girder, David Wright, Jeff Huet, Taylor Wegrzyn, Dean Button, Tom MacLennan, Phil Gralik, Julie Ritzler, Zach Hurst, Claudia Taylor, William Allen, Joe Crnkovich, Mitch Bishop, Frank Rosado, Jr. and Mike Yacullo.

#### **Guests**

Mike McPhillips, Amber Kettring, Jami Erdmann, Woody Dresden, Carl Lisek, Kristi DeLaurentis, Marino Solorio, Mark Gordish, Jim Yuratevac, Dan Prevost, Andrew Steele, Jill Murr, James Mandon, Jim Wiseman, Gene Yarkik, Denny Cobb, and Ron Wiedeman.

#### **NIRPC Staff**

Mitch Barloga, Gary Evers, Eman Ibrahim, Scott Weber, Sarah Geinosky and Mary Thorne.

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

- a) Dave Decker called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.
- b) The INDOT voluntary participation survey was available for attendees to fill out.
- c) On a motion by Phil Gralik and a second by Dean Button, the minutes of the February 9, 2016 meeting were approved.

- 2. Presentation:** Zach Hurst, Director of Infrastructure at ITR Concession Company, gave an update on the two-year, \$200 million rehabilitation project scheduled to begin April 4. The 80/90 PUSH project which will be done in stages stretches 73 miles from Lake Station to Elkhart, and is the largest single project since the Toll Road was constructed in 1954. Work will include pavement, rehabbing of the shoulders, ramp and bridge work, and the use of an iCone ITS system which will be used in real time monitoring and transmission of speed data. The work zone speed limit will be 45 mph. More information is available at <http://8090push.com>.

#### **3. Planning**

- a) Mitch Barloga gave an update on the updating of the bike map with assistance from Active Transportation Alliance. Data collection is now being performed and the survey of active transportation habits of the survey responders will go out today and should be completed by April 5.
- b) Eman Ibrahim announced the new FY 2017-2018 Unified Planning Work Program which is in line with the Surface Transportation Act and the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. She identified the tasks under Administration and Public Participation, Data Collection and

Analysis, Short Range and Long Range Planning, Transit and Active Transportation, and NIRPC Programs. Some of the new tasks include Title VI Program Management, a Sprawl Analysis, the Marquette Action Plan, I-65 and US 30 Corridor Safety Planning, Brownfield Coalition, Calumet Land Conservation Partnership and Deep River Portage Burns Waterway Initiative. The draft UPWP will go to INDOT and FHWA this week for their review and then on to the NIRPC Board for adoption.

#### 4. Programming

- a) Gary Evers presented Amendment #16 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for INDOT projects in Porter and La Porte Counties for installation of train-activated gates at various highway rail crossing locations on the NICTD line, two CN rail crossing upgrades, bridge replacement, sidewalk construction and the purchase of 6 replacement transit buses. On a motion by George Topoll and a second by Phil Gralik, the committee voted to recommend Amendment #16 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program to the NIRPC Board for adoption.
- b) I-65 Added Travel Lanes
  - i. Scott Weber presented the Air Quality Conformity Determination between the updated and amended 2040 CRP, the FY 2016-2019 TIP and the Indiana State Implementation Plan for Air Quality. The Inter-Agency Consultation Group met and their analysis found that air quality results from the I-65 added travel lane project analyses out through the year 2045 were at or below federal vehicle emission budget limits for ozone and PM<sub>2.5</sub>. The 2040 Regional Transportation Plan as updated and the FY 20126-2019 Transportation Improvement Program have been found to conform to the requirements of the Clean Air Act Amendment and the related requirements of the Federal Transportation Conformity Rule. On a motion by Frank Rosado, Jr., seconded by George Topoll, the committee voted to recommend the Air Quality Conformity Determination to the NIRPC Board for adoption.
  - ii. Scott Weber Scott Weber presented the Congestion Management Process (CMP) with respect to the I-65 Added Travel Lanes Project. Four of the 12-step CMP criteria applied to the project: data collection, identification of the area of application, evaluation of growth and development scenarios to identify future congestion problems and identify and evaluate strategies. Results of analyses were provided along with a similar case study on I-95 in New Jersey. The process conclusion was that the I-65 added travel lanes project between SR 2 and SR 10 is recommended to pass the NIRPC CMP and achieves a level of service in 2040 consistent with existing conditions. On a motion by George Topoll, seconded by Phil Gralik, the committee voted to recommend the I-65 Added Travel Lanes Project Congestion Management Process to the NIRPC Board for adoption.
  - iii. Sarah Geinosky reported for James Winters on the Environmental Justice (EJ) Benefits and Burdens Analysis for the SR2 to SR 10 I-65 Travel Lanes Project. The analysis measures the level of impact on minority communities and low income communities using 11 criteria. The EJ analysis for the widening of I-65 between US 30 and SR 2 was already completed as part of the Illiana project in November of 2013. The only feasible concern is the continuation of suburban sprawl. With some adjustments to policy, this can be avoided. The conclusion of the analysis is that the I-65 widening project between SR 2 and SR 10 will not negatively affect the environmental justice communities identified in Northwest Indiana. On a motion

by Frank Rosado, Jr., seconded by La’Kisha Girder, the committee voted to recommend the Environmental Justice (EJ) Benefits and Burdens Analysis for the SR2 to SR 10 I-65 Travel Lanes Project to the NIRPC Board for adoption.

- iv. Stephen Sostaric announced the public comment period for the I-65 Travel Lanes Project goes from tomorrow through April 15. A public meeting will be held on March 31 at the Lowell Public Library, 1505 E. Commercial Ave.

c) Funding Updates-

- i. Gary Evers referenced a handout on the SFY 2016 Federal Aid Closeout Status Report handout. Under the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the Surface Transportation Program acronym is now STBG (Surface Transportation Block Grant program). Apportionment calculations changed and will take effect this year. More money is being added to the population-based component with an increase of 9-11% in STGB. A dollar reduction in the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and slight increases in the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program (CMAP) results in \$930,000 more than budgeted in Lake and Porter and \$105,000 in the Michigan City Urbanized Area. Over the five year life of the bill, because of the yearly population increase projections, this translates to a minimum of \$4.5 million additional in Lake and Porter for programming and about \$5-6 million over time. The downside is the immediacy of spending that additional money. With regard to the SFY 2016 Federal-Aid Closeout Status Report handout, staff performed a risk analysis based on what charges have come in thus far in 2016, what charges have not come in that we were expecting. A status of “complete” the risk shows “ok” and there are no further issues. A status of “incomplete” means that a purchase order must be issued before May 8. If the risk status of project completion is shown as “likely”, “unlikely” and “unsure”, there is a notation as to why. The program should be 92% obligated in Lake and Porter with 3.7% incomplete or unsure. In the Michigan City Urbanized Area, there is \$211,000 unallocated.
- ii. With regard to the 2016 funding increase, Gary Evers is communicating with the Local Public Agencies (LPAs) to see the status of their projects and asked for ideas on what to do with the additional money. Capital project transfers to the Federal Transit Administration are at the top of the list, additional preliminary engineering work already under contract, additional lid money for projects with the \$200,000 limit under STP Group I, HSIP projects, change orders, etc. and bring a report back to this committee next month for a decision. Gary Evers reminded the committee that money not put to a project will revert back to INDOT. NIRPC will ask about a carryover possibility. The immediate need is to get purchase orders buy by mid-May and allocate all funding.
- iii. Gary Evers said that Congress authorized the recapture of earmark of earmarked dollars from 2005 and prior to promote the reuse of unallocated earmark dollars within 50 miles of the original project’s location. NIRPC is waiting for advice from Congressman Visclosky.
- iv. Gary Evers said that in the upcoming INDOT Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) funds for 2019-2022, about \$300-400 million will be available in Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) 3 and 4, bridge and TAP programs. There is about \$28 million for Lake County, \$4-5 million in Porter and \$3-4 million in LaPorte. Of the 2016 amount, 75% must be spent on transportation, 25% anywhere else limited by statute at a 50/50 match. More information will be forthcoming. IACT will also be releasing information. MPOs are not involved in this.

Bob Carnahan announced that Congressman Visclosky will be the keynote speaker at Tiebel's at 12 noon for the Lake County Advancement Committee. Tickets are \$20.

## 5. Indiana Department of Transportation

Julie Ritzler reported on the INDOT lettings through April.

6. **Road School Roundup** – Mitch Barloga reported that a bike share program was being looked at using more economical choices than the Divvy system. Dave Decker said Purdue is opening road school up to topics other than transportation. There was a lot of useful information on transportation, freight and commuter rail. Jill Huber said Purdue is putting the presentations on line. There was a good presentation on how Branson expanded into older communities. ERC training will also be on line. Stephen Sostaric said he enjoyed the very informative tour of the new GE jet engine plant and seeing the role our transportation plays in the making and distribution of a jet engine. Phil Gralik said the railroad coordination course said that effective July 1, if you have a project using federal funds and at a certain amount of feet of a train track as dictated by the speed limit of that road, you must improve the safety of that grade crossing to current standards and up to 18 inches outside the rail.

## 7. Transit Operators Reports

- a) **LaPorte Transit** – Tom MacLennan reported that two new buses are on the road. An open house is next Tuesday at 10 a.m.
- b) **Valparaiso V-Line and Chicago DASH** – Taylor Wegrzyn reported that the V-Line had 9,971 passenger trips and the Dash saw 4,730, due to the snow days. Ticket vending machines will be provided on the buses within the next six months.
- c) **East Chicago Public Transit** – Frank Rosado said several projects are in the works and he will report on them at the next meeting.
- d) **GPTC** – David Wright reported that February ridership was up 10% over February 2015. They are setting up solicitation for engineering work for rehabilitation of the Metro Center at the same time Metro is turned into a trailhead. Their 2015 annual report flyer was provided. He reported on several of the routes. They are receiving a small grant from Lake Michigan Coastal Program for transit outreach for regional transit and the Broadway Corridor. The Gary Metro Center is soliciting for design work. 20 preschoolers rode the bus on a field trip; it was a rolling preschool.
- e) **Michigan City Transit** – No report.
- f) **NICTD** – Joe Crnkovich reported that February ridership was down 1% due to the snow days. The Bikes on Trains pilot program begins April 2, operating on weekends only through October 31. Work is starting on repair and rehab of five projects, four in the double track areas and there will be no service interruptions this year. The positive train control (PTC) shop facility expansion is expensive at \$100. It is federally mandated and NICTD is on track to finish by 2018. The West Lake draft EIS statement is wrapping up by year end. NICTD received a \$300,000 grant to study transit-oriented development on the West Lake Corridor. Mitch Barloga added that a Bikes on Trains presentation will be given at the Executive Board meeting on March 17 and at the Ped, Pedal & Paddle Committee on March 24. Bikes on Trains is available only on high level platform areas.

- g) **North Township Dial-A-Ride** – No report was given.
- h) **Opportunity Enterprises** – Claudia Taylor said 2014 put in 8200 more one way trips. March 18 is National Transit Driver Day and her drivers are participating in the “roadeo” in Columbus, Indiana in April.
- i) **Porter County Council on Aging and Community Services** – No report was given.
- j) **South Lake County Community Services** – No report was given.

**8. Regional Transportation Partners –**

South Shore Clean Cities (SSCC) –Carl Lisek said they are hosting a variety of events and several grant opportunities are available. The federal Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) has a maximum of \$2.5 million available and matches are required. The state DERA will be coming up as well. SSCC applied for a “Midwest Thrives Initiative” grant two year program. SSCC has 42 brand-new alternate fuel vehicles such as buses, cars, over the road trucks ranging from clean diesel to propane to electric to Class A hybrid trucks for only the cost of the insurance and fueling during a two-month period. Communities interested in driving one of these vehicles should contact them for more information. A ribbon-cutting will be held on March 24 at 4 p.m. EDT at South Bend Transpo which is transferring South Bend’s buses and equipment to compressed natural gas (CNG). South Bend will then have the largest fleet of CNG vehicles in the country. The electric vehicle charging station program will wrap up soon. Mitch Barloga added that Carl Lisek will be presenting to this committee next month.

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

**10. Planning Neighbors –** No reports were given.

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

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

- a) **Other Business** – Bob Carnahan said Ford Motors is developing a tire system to deal with potholes.
- b) **Staff Announcements** – None.
- c) **Upcoming Meetings at NIRPC –**
  - The Executive Board will meet on Thursday, March 17 at 9 a.m. at Construction Advancement Foundation Training Center, 6050 Southport Road, Portage, which is just west of NIRPC.
  - The Ped, Pedal & Paddle Committee will meet on March 24 at 1:30 p.m. at Construction Advancement Foundation Training Center, 6050 Southport Road, Portage, IN
  - The Environmental Management Policy Committee will meet on April 7 at 9 a.m. at a location to be determined
  - The NIRPC offices will be closed on Good Friday, March 25.

The next Transportation Policy Committee will be on April 12, 2016 at 9 a.m. at a location to be determined.

On a motion by Phil Gralik and a second by George Topoll, Dave Decker adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

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