

## **Transportation Policy Committee Meeting**

Portage Lakefront Park Pavilion

March 18, 2014

### **MINUTES**

#### **Members Present**

Jim Polarek, Stan Dobosz, Joe Simonetto, Tom McLennan, Mike Yacullo, Deb Backhus, Bruce Lindner, Joyce Newland, Claudia Taylor, David Wright, Chris Meyers, Bruce Spires, Craig Phillips and Art Biciunas.

#### **Guests**

Jim Pinkerton, Jake Dammarell, Christopher Murphy, Brad Minnick, Rebecca Williams, Pete Kohut, Carole Carlson, Jim Mandon and Keith Benman.

#### **NIRPC Staff**

Steve Strains, Mitch Barloga, Mary Thorne, Gary Evers, Jack Eskin, Kevin Garcia, Sarah Geinosky, Gabrielle Biciunas, Belinda Petroskey, Stephen Sostaric and Amanda Pollard.

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

- a) Chairman Jim Polarek 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 on the table.
- c) On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Bruce Lindner, the minutes of the February 11 meeting were approved as submitted.
- d) There was no public comment.

### **2. Presentations**

- a) Cline Avenue Bridge Reconstruction. Christopher Murphy of American Structurepoint presented on the development design for the Cline Avenue Bridge replacement in East Chicago by United Bridge Partners. In 2012, INDOT agreed to replace the span with a private toll bridge. A joint venture was formed with United Bridge Partners, FIGG Bridge Companies, Lane Construction Corp. and American Infrastructure MLP funds. Construction of the bridge is expected to begin in early 2014 with completion in 2017. The cost of the bridge is expected to be \$150–250 million to complete depending on whether steel beams from the original structure can be reused. Unique design features will be incorporated into the new bridge, including LED lighting on the concrete piers, making it a gateway attraction. Toll schedules are not yet set but are expected to be anywhere from \$2.50 to \$3.50 for cars and will use E-Z Pass group transponders and license plate imaging to collect tolls.
- b) GPTC Expansion. David Wright presented on GPTC's Lakeshore Service into Gary, East Chicago, Hammond, Highland, Munster and Whiting. He noted the Lakeshore Connection Route service and the Lakeshore South service will launch May 5, 2014. The Lakeshore North service needs a transit investment of \$71,000 in local match and a launch date will then be set. Seeing an increase in their ADA clientele, GPTC is expanding their para-transit by one bus and requested an increase in the para-transit budget.

- c) Transportation Alternatives Program. Mitch Barloga announced that the TAP program is expanding into a seven year program with a two-year update. New funding targets are being sought, with programming by phase including engineering, right of way and construction engineering. Bike and ped is 80%, historical places is 10% and Safe Routes to Schools is at 10%. The Environmental Management Policy Committee will review, rank and recommend the historic projects. The next TAP workshop is March 27. The application will be online on April 1 with a due date of May 16. Recommendations to TPC will be made at their June meeting and recommendation to the NIRPC board at their August meeting. For more information contact Mitch Barloga.
- d) I-65 Added Lanes/Cline Avenue Bridge Congestion Management Process (CMP). Kevin Garcia provided the analysis for I-65 lane expansion between SSR 231 and SR 2. Alternative strategies will not sufficiently reduce congestion and staff recommended the project be allowed to pass the CMP. On a motion by Bruce Lindner and a second by Joe Simonetto, the committee approved the I-65 added lanes project to pass the Congestion Management Process.

Kevin Garcia noted that the Cline Avenue Bridge project passed the CMP for the 2040 plan from the model, but we are now adding it back into the plan as a toll bridge. Since it already passed the CMP and was included it did not need to be run through the CMP again. Steve Strains noted that with the added congestion on local roads in East Chicago and Hammond, the condition of those streets is very bad. On a motion by Bruce Lindner and a second by Joe Simonetto, the committee approved the Cline Avenue Bridge project to pass the Congestion Management Process.

### **3. Planning**

- a) Kevin Garcia presented a work plan and discussion earlier in the month to further the ITS Architecture plan. He met with transit operators and received all but one response to a survey. Kevin Garcia will be attending the quarterly tracking meetings to hear of any ITS projects to help with the plan update.
- b) Mitch Barloga reported that staff is working on the UPWP update and Eman Ibrahim will give a report next month.
- c) Amanda Pollard announced the quarterly tracking meetings start tomorrow. A schedule was made available and any conflicts should be brought to her attention. All tracking will be done before the April TPC meeting.

### **4. Programming**

- a) Gary Evers described the added INDOT projects in Amendment #14 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program. Gary noted two corrections which will be made, one on SR 41 between 77<sup>th</sup> and 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and the DES number on the East Chicago walkway project should read **1298398**. On a motion by Stan Dobosz and a second by Chris Meyers, the committee recommended the amended Amendment #14 to the FY 2014-2017 to the NIRPC Board for approval.
- b) Gary Evers described the new local projects and phases in Amendment #15 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program, which include seven projects under the new Creating Livable Communities funding program. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Chris Meyers, Amendment #15 to the FY 2014-2017 was recommended to the NIRPC Board for approval.

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

- a) Jim Pinkerton described the lettings for March and April which were included in the materials, noting the concrete restoration work on I-65 is of a preventative maintenance nature. Potholes are being patched when the crews are not plowing and the work will improve once the hot patch plants opens. Crews have been called from counties south of the NIRPC region to help with the work.

## 6. Transit Operators Reports

**GPTC** – David Wright said January ridership was “slammed” by the weather and was down 15% over January of 2013. A presentation and public forum on the Livable Broadway project for Broadway in Gary, Merrillville and Crown Point will be held Friday, March 21 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Merrillville Town Hall. For more information on either project, visit [www.gptcbus.com](http://www.gptcbus.com).

## 7. Local and Regional Transportation Projects – No reports were given.

## 8. Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration

**FHWA:** Joyce Newland reported that Notice of Proposed Rulemakings (NPRM) for MAP-21 are rolling out separately, with safety having come out last week. It will be published on the *Federal Register*. There will be a 60-day comment period. Joyce Newland will email the NPRM’s to Mary Thorne and Mitch Barloga. FHWA is also encouraging MPOs to have a pavement management system planning emphasis area. Evansville MPO put out an RFP for eventual approval by INDOT and they put in an initial \$250,000.

## 9. Planning Neighbors – No reports were given.

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

a) No other business was brought to the committee.

### b) Staff Announcements:

- Stephen Sostaric announced a comment period is open until April 10 for transit projects for a Tier 2 Environmental Impact Study for the South Shore expansion and triangle service and vehicles in LaPorte County between Michigan City, LaPorte and Purdue North Central. A meeting this Saturday, March 22 will be held at the town hall from 10 am to 12 noon. Meetings in La Porte County will be held on March 26 at Purdue North Central from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at LaPorte Town Hall from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and at Michigan City City Hall from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- Mitch Barloga thanked everyone present for attending the meeting today at the Pavilion.

c) The meeting Schedule was provided in the materials. The HSIP meeting is tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. at NIRPC. Bruce Lindner asked about the public participation plan status and Steve Strains responded that the consent decree ended on December 31 and discussions are being held between Everybody Counts and NIRPC staff to work on an agreement to have a continuing relationship between transportation needs in Northwest Indiana and the needs of the general public and people with disabilities. Completion of the plan is imminent.

The next Transportation Policy Committee meeting will be at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, April 8 at NIRPC.

Jim Polarek 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](mailto:mthorne@nirpc.org). Individuals with hearing impairments may contact us through the Indiana Relay 711 service by calling 711 or (800) 743-3333.

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, marital status, familial status, parental status, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.