



COMMITTEE MEETING ~ NIRPC AUDITORIUM
OCTOBER 24, 2013
MINUTES

Members & Guests –Shannon Eason, Jerry Rosko, Denarie Kane, Don Parker, John Novacich, Chris Moore, Chris Nesper, Jake Dammarell, Jan Dick, Eric Ehn, Corky Duquette

Staff - Mitch Barloga, Eman Ibrahim, Sarah Geinosky, Meredith Stilwell

Chairman Dick called the meeting to order at 1:42 p.m. with self-introductions.

Ped

South Shore Trails - Update

South Shore Trails is currently developing their 2014 strategic plan. A meeting will be held Monday October 28 at 6:30 p.m. at the Holiday Inn conference center in Matteson, Illinois. They are also currently accepting applications for outstanding person or project for trails and overall non-motorized transportation development in northwest Indiana. Awards will be presented in December 2013 or January 2014.

Pedal

NIRPC's Livable Centers Initiative – Eman Ibrahim and Sarah Geinosky, NIRPC

As one of the guiding philosophies and principals on how to accommodate new growth, the Livable Centers Initiative was born out of 2040 CRP Plan recommendation to encourage livability and accessibility. Adding 170,000 population and 80,000 job increase and looking at the trends of population going out into unincorporated areas and outside of urbanized areas there is a large vacancy rate within the communities. The Initiative classifies the region into different centers based on the population of communities. The classifications are metropolitan, which includes a concentration of employment opportunities and/or major trip generators, such as a university or hospital; large, which serves a more traditional downtown purpose by providing retail and employment options; medium, which includes most amenities and services but may lack full retail and employment and small, which serves as a town center with more local focus to retail and civic destinations. Livable Centers can be described as clustering many different land uses in a compact area to give people the opportunity to accomplish various activities without using a car. Some of the reasons for developing livable centers include high gas prices; environmental impacts; funding shortfalls on both state and federal levels. A pattern shift results in reduced congestion, reduced vehicle miles traveled and reduced single-occupant vehicle trips. Livable centers make it easy to reach multiple destinations by foot, bike or car or transit; a well-designed street and sidewalk system provides good connectivity and safety for everyone. Livable centers also concentrate housing, employment, shopping, and entertainment in areas with good pedestrian networks. Basic elements of a livable center are: compact mixed used development with building facing streets; short block length; unique and distinct design characteristic with shops offering local products and services; many access options including ped lanes, bike lanes, trails, transit and roadways; convenient, safe and east street crossing; well-maintained public streets; public gathering places; serving different activities that occur both day and night time.

Before meeting with the communities the NIRPC livable centers team completed GIS analysis of region as a whole including block size, population, housing, employment density and proximity of schools civic halls, transit and trails; researched municipal plans, past projects and current projects and initiatives; and drew boundaries based on the information from both NIRPC and the municipalities. The maps were then taken to the communities and boundaries were established for main and neighborhood centers. The livable centers team met with 19 cities and towns as well as transit operators to discuss transit areas/station boundaries within 1/2 mile. A small communities workshop was held to define livable centers boundaries for the remaining 22 communities. The finalized livable center boundary map was approved by the NIRPC board at their October meeting. The team is in the process of completing the final written description report for printing.

The Creating Livable Communities funding program goes along with the Livable Centers Program and allows for putting real transportation dollars behind the livable centers planning efforts. \$400k has been allocated from Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds over the next two years to provide tangible support to communities in Lake and Porter Counties. La Porte County transportation funds had already been allocated but will most likely take advantage of 2015 funding opportunity. The grants are to fund planning projects or pre-development plan that revitalize: existing centers, neighborhood, downtown, transit stop or

transit corridors, TOD ordinance, and/or prepare projects to compete for grants in the capital projects category. Eligibility for applicants was explained and projects must be located in the livable centers map or transit area map. Examples of issues and examples of projects were shown. Currently no funding limits have been set as that will depend on applications received. Planning for trails within urbanized areas would be eligible. It is an 80/20 match and NIRPC will try to meet with RDA to see if they will support this program as some communities might reach out to them for local match. The application will most likely be released mid-November and will be announced to all committees and communities. It is expected to have applications back by middle of January with a decision by the end of January. An evaluation committee comprised of Land Use Committee members and NIRPC staff will help to evaluate and make decision.

Golden spoke celebration –

October 27 is the official ribbon cutting for the portion of the Pennsy Greenway at the Indiana/Illinois state line. There is a brick bank on the trail to denote the state line. Eventually an arch and bench or two will be installed at the state line.

Paddle –

a. NWI Paddling Association – Update -

Mitch promoted visiting the NWIPA website for updates of their activities.

b. Camping on the Kank – Update

The LaPorte County campsite would be the first official campsite on the Kankakee and will be accessible by boat only. Porter and Lake Counties are working on sites as well.

Grab Bag

A. Project Updates:

- Chris Moore reported that the plans are done and an artist rendering completed for the Monon Bridge. Bids have been turned in and the contractor is discussing with the city to figure out the best way to install the bridge and access the site. The new bridge will feature two 50 foot sections on top of the existing train bridge and the long section will be a free span 125 foot section. The four center piers will be removed and sections of girder that sit on those for the free span section. The bridge is modeled off the Briar Creek Park bike bridge in Munster. The start date has not been set but completion date is scheduled for May 2014. Chris is also involved with work on a war memorial along the Erie Lackawanna in Hammond. Brick pavers with stone edging will surround the patio. A flag and bike rack are already in place and two park benches with war memorials on them will also be installed. The ribbon cutting will take place on Nov. 11.
- Denarie Kane reported that there was a pre-con meeting on the last leg of the trail in Hobart. Construction probably won't start until March 2014.
- Jan Dick reported the ribbon cutting at the track around Fairgrounds Park was held October 24. The track was widened over the summer to accommodate bicycles and an exercise pad with 7 pieces of equipment was also installed. He also reported that there nothing is happening currently with the Lincoln Highway project and is in the investigative phase. There are supposed to be two pedestrian bridges to transverse Lincoln Highway. Nothing has been let or bid at this point. A few public meetings have been held. A meeting was held on the Dunes Kankakee Trail involving a lot of legal representation for all the municipalities. More questions were raised than answers given. Another meeting should be scheduled within the month.
- Shannon Eason reported that the Singing Sands Trail is in the right-of-way acquisition stage. INDOT pushed the letting date back to July of 2015. Phase II of Michigan Blvd has started and will take approximately a year to complete. The kayak launch project is underway but installation and construction is being postponed until spring. The Michigan City Parks Department is close to completing a land management plan for 66 acres of Sheridan Beach Esplanade that will address public access points, increased public parking, wayfinding, restrooms and include a dune restoration plan. It should be completed by the end of 2013. The Park Department is also working with Redevelopment Commission to do improvements to the entrance of Washington Park. It is a \$1m project to be completed in three phases.
- Eric Ehn reported that he heard the Brickyard 20 had been purchased and paper was in hand to begin work. Work is being done on the Orchard Pedestrian Trail and he is unsure if they are going to try to tie the Brickyard with the completion of that project.
- John Novacich reported that they are still moving ahead with the acquisition from Main Street in Munster to the Schererville Town Hall on the Pennsy. Environmental work for NEPA documentation is being

completed. He thinks proposals for doing some of the title work have been received. Funding is unclear at this point for acquiring. A 9/11 memorial has been established just adjacent to the corridor and beam from the World Trade Center has been mounted. A ceremony was held in September. NIPSCO is relocating utilities by Kline Avenue in the Pennsy in anticipation of installing a roundabout in 2014. It is scheduled for a February letting.

B. Miscellaneous Issues, Concerns, Gripes

The NIRPC staff white paper for the Illiana Expressway in comparison to the 2040 CRP should be out in early November. Many points of review, objectives and goals for the project are non-motorized based. Some encouragements in the design process is to have a separated path along entire length of the proposed expressway and including launch locations at waterways crossings. 2010

C. General Announcements (upcoming rides, events, etc.)

D. Mid-American Trails & Greenways Conference-Oct. 27-30, Matteson Holiday Inn

E. Next Meeting is Thursday, November 21

Meeting Adjourned.