



Committee Meeting ~ NIRPC Auditorium
December 4, 2014
Minutes

Members & Guests –Mark O'Dell, John Novacich, Craig Zandstra, Mark Schreiber, Sedrick Green, Alison Zoll, Bob Huffman, Mark Heintz, Stu Summers, Eric Ehn, Beth Shrader, Chris Moore, Danielle Ziulkowski, Jerry Rosko, A J Monroe, Jenny Orsburn, Jake Dammarell

Staff – Mitch Barloga, Meredith Stilwell

Chairman Jan Dick called the meeting to order at 1:39 p.m. with self-introductions.

Ped

South Shore Trails - *Update*

They are pretty much done for the year. The annual meeting is December 17, 2014.

Pedal

A. FEATURE PRESENTATION: 2020 Greenways & Blueways Northwest Indiana Regional Plan

A big update is coming next year to the Greenways & Blueways NWI Regional Plan. Since the 1800s when there was thousands of miles of rail many of those miles across the country have been used for trails. In support of that movement in the region, the 1994 Regional Bikeways Plan was produced and identified corridors ripe for development. The map was a success and in 2005 the Northwest Indiana regional Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan was adopted and featured the first priority regional corridor map. In 2010 the plan as well as the map were updated. The plans and map have been very successful and regional order has been brought to the funding for trails. Our region is unique with an array of land uses and ecology. While the development of the steel industry brought threats to ecology in the region, many have helped to preserve and now many are looking to restore the ecology. In 2005 a grant was received from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation to put together the Greenways and Blueways Plan which was released in 2007. The Plan featured a map highlighting greenways opportunities for Northwest Indiana and also brought to the forefront the first study for water development. 15 water routes were identified. The Northwestern Indiana Paddling Association was formed and has grown to a paid membership of 500 and is a great success story born from a regional planning initiative. Greenways are corridors of open space that differ in location and function, but overall is a network that will protect natural and cultural resources, provide recreational opportunities, improve and sustain hydrological functions, and enhance the natural beauty and the quality of life in neighborhoods and communities. Brownfields that have been left from industrial abandonment need help and can be part of the greenways network. In an effort to encompass the recreational, ecological and land use sides of the equation, the Greenways & Blueways and Pedestrian & Bicycle Plans will be combined to create a single document which includes the spectrum of conservation, recreation and transportation. The Plan will also feature elements of open space, water trails, surface trails and complete streets. Hopefully the Plan will be completed and adopted by December 2015. Stakeholders will be met with to determine the Plan's look and content.

B. Bikes on Trains Study – *Update from Project Manager, Jack Eskin, NIRPC staff*

The consultant has completed tasks one and two of their six tasks which puts them about 1/3 of the way through the study. Task one focused on case studies on similar transit systems

across the country with the two focused on being the New Jersey system and the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority which services Boston. The New Jersey transit system is very similar to NICTD in its age and cut and add system. It starts in Penn station and goes to industrial areas, metro suburbs, the beach and casinos. Their systems has had their bikes on trains program going for over a decade and the consultants made a field visit over Columbus Day weekend to meet with management and took their bikes on the trains. A summary of the experience was created and will be included in the final document. An inventory of NICTD characteristics has been completed and the consultants have now begun Task three. In regard to public outreach, the project advisory committee decided it would be better to hold stakeholder presentations at the end of the implementation stage which should end around March 2015. In March different alternatives will be presented for input and in late June/early July another public meeting will be held unfolding the preferred alternative. There should be notice over a month in advance of the stakeholder presentations. A bike ridership survey to help gauge what sort of service should be developed by determining the types of riders who would use the system is the beginning stages as well. The Ped, Pedal and Paddle Committee will be talked with in the near future to help with the survey and distribute it when completed. The project is still on track for completion by late June 2015.

C. Current CMAQ, HSIP & STP-2 Funding Cycle – Update & Details

The notice of funding availability was available as a handout at the meeting and reviewed with the group by Mitch. There is \$13.4m in CMAQ and \$9.9m in HSIP funding for Lake and Porter Counties with funds to be made available beginning in State Fiscal Year 2017 (July 1, 2015). LaPorte County has \$2.6m in CMAQ, \$1.5m in HSIP and \$4.7m in STP II with funds to be made available beginning in State Fiscal Year 2016 (July 1, 2015). All funds awarded are to be fully obligated on or prior to June 30, 2021. The deadline for application submissions is February 13, 2015. The notice of funding availability, guidance documents and applications are available online on the NIRPC website. Targeted amounts have not been set. Maximum federal funding requests and fund breakdown per year per county listed on the handout were reviewed. Trails are intended to be transportation related and not just recreational and are also eligible for STP II funds. HSIP still has the low cost high impact category and all caps determined last time are carrying over and are all stated in the application. The desire is to see many applications come in and if necessary 3PC will prioritize them. Mitch spoke briefly regarding the Hawk signal for the Erie-Lackawanna which was the result of HSIP funding.

Discussion was held regarding the release of the notice before the applications had a chance to be reviewed by the committee and lack of programming year selection on the application.

Paddle –

NWI Paddling Association – Update

No update given

Grab Bag

A. Project Updates:

- Bob Huffman reported that Eggers Grove in Chicago is building a bike path that will connect from the Burnham Greenway up to the corner 112th and the State line where it will then connect to the Hammond trail. He also noted that there appears to be a sidewalk by the Franciscan Hospital in Munster that will connect from 45th Ave. to Superior Street which will give people from Illinois direct access to Three Floyds.

- Chris Moore reported that meetings were held with property owners and they are on board with the State Line Generating Plant trail and crews should be out in the next week or two. Help is still needed in dealing with Chicago to carry the trail into Illinois.
- Craig Zandstra reported that there was only one respondent to the RFP for land acquisition for the second phase on the Veterans Trail. They are going to rerelease it in hopes of receiving more responses.
- Beth Schrader reported for La Porte, announcing their complete streets ordinance narrowly passed its first reading to the Council. They are also going to continue to seek funding for the Chesapeake.
- Eric Ehn from the National Lakeshore announced he is now the Chief of Maintenance but wants to remain on the trail side of things as well.
- AJ Monroe announced there would be a ribbon cutting on December 8 at 11 am at Portage Lakefront south properties. It is a trail that extends south out of Portage Lakefront and Riverwalk and takes you to the Portage Ogden Dunes train station. Congressman Visclosky will be at the ribbon cutting. Per an agreement between Ogden Dunes and Norfolk southern, the west gate is only supposed to be open when there is a train stopped but a route has been cut-in around the gate to allow pedestrian and bike access.
- Jenny Orsburn of Portage reported a small trail spur at Countryside Park connecting a neighborhood through the park to the Prairie Duneland is almost complete. The City of Portage built it themselves and although it will not be paved until spring, it is already being used. She also spoke about using Coastal Funds to match with Bicentennial funds for a section of Salt Creek in between the Iron Horse and Prairie Duneland. It was well received in Indianapolis and recommended anyone looking into land acquisition projects consider that as an avenue. The Steelworkers Union built a paved path behind their hall at 149 for public use and is a spur to Imagination Glen. The Iron Horse is still in discussion regarding pavement design and is still on track for letting in June or July 2015.
- Mitch announced that the City of Hobart is looking to build a trail from the Prairie Duneland/Oak Savannah to County Line Orchard.
- Stu Summers announced he is working with a team of three in Burns Harbor in planning for TIF monies they will have in 2015.

B. Miscellaneous Issues, Concerns, Grips: *None*

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

- A free Green Streets/Green Alleys Workshop is being held at the Hobart Community Center on December 11th from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm and will be focused on using natural design to treat stormwater runoff.
- A five-year contract has been awarded for the Army Corps project for Portage parks. The North side development will begin to see restoration work in January or February 2015.
- Mitch announced there will not be a Cornucopia event held in 2015. Work will be done toward updating the Greenways Blueways Map and possible creation of an app in 2016.

D. Next Meeting is Thursday, January 22, 2014

Meeting Adjourned.