

Transportation Policy Committee Meeting
Woodland Park, 2100 Willowcreek Road, Portage
July 21, 2015
MINUTES

Members Present

Stan Dobosz, Joe Simonetto, George Topoll, Teri Dixon, Jeff Huet, Joe Crnkovich, Stan Dostatni, Mark O’Dell, Tom MacLennan, Richard Morrisroe, David Wright, Frank Rosado, Jr., Taylor Wegrzyn, Tris Miles, Phil Gralik, Bruce Spires, Mike Yacullo, Lindsay Quist.

Guests

Paul Panthor, James Mandon, Mark Pittman, Joe Rurode, Jake Dammarell, Mike Vandergast, Greg Falkowski, Peter Kohut, Craig Phillips, Mitch Bishop and Keith Benman.

NIRPC Staff

Mitch Barloga, Gabrielle Biciunas, Belinda Petroskey, Scott Weber, James Winters, Gary Evers, Steve Strains, Eman Ibrahim and Mary Thorne.

1. Call to Order, Opening and Announcements

- a) Chairman Stan Dobosz called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.
- b) The INDOT voluntary participation survey was available.
- c) On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Taylor Wegrzyn, the minutes of the May 12, 2015 meeting were approved as submitted.

2. Bikes On Trains – Mitch Barloga reported that the consultant will give a presentation to the NIRPC Commission and the Ped, Peddle and Paddle Committee at their meetings on July 23 at Woodland Park at 9 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. respectively. A public meeting was held last Thursday to elicit public feedback on the Bikes on Trains recommendation. The proposal is to retrofit five cars to accommodate up to 30 bikes at a cost of \$10 million for a five-year pilot program. Mike Noland, NICTD General Manager, recognizes the urgent desire for this and is looking at a short term solution which he will put before their board in September. Joe Crnkovich added that care must be taken to ensure the safety of NICTD’s riders.

3. Planning

- a) Mitch Barloga described Amendment 2 to the FY 2016 Unified Planning Work Program. It adds \$22,000 to the 2016 budget for new planning tasks for trail counters, marker and uniform signage development. It also reduces the budget by \$19,375 for Air Quality Education/Outreach and \$122,000 for Diesel Engine Retrofit planning tasks. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Bruce Spires, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend Amendment 2 to the FY 2016 Unified Planning Work Program to the Commission for approval.
- b) MPO FY 2016 Federal Aid Spending Plan – Gary Evers reported that there are already changes to some of the projects in the handout. A couple of lettings came in at less than anticipated. The new projects added will be appended into the list for approval at the Commission meeting on Thursday. The Chicago Urbanized Area (UA) will receive about \$24 million for Lake and Porter Counties and the Michigan City

Urbanized Area will receive about \$7 million. Staff was able to restructure and cut about \$6 million in 2016 carryover dollars for the Chicago UA and cut about \$.5 million in spending in the Michigan City UA. This will be updated as needed. The list of projects will be posted on the NIRPC website.

4. Programming

- a) A letter from INDOT approving the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program was available in the packet.
- b) Notice Of Funding Availability – Gary Evers provided a handout and reported that the Lake and Porter stakeholders met on April 30 and the LaPorte stakeholders met on June 30. Gary Evers overviewed the proposed projects for CMAQ, HSIP and STP selected which were recommended by the Environmental Management Policy Committee on July 2. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Bruce Spires, the Committee voted to recommend the new federal aid projects to the Commission for approval, with one opposing vote.
- c) Gary Evers described Amendment 1 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program adding 18 INDOT projects or phases in Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by David Wright, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend the new federal aid projects to the Commission for approval.
- d) Gary Evers described Amendment 2 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program adding 18 local projects or phases in Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties and deleting local projects or phases already funded in the prior year or at the request of the local public agency. Two items will be amended. First, DES 1173708 is a project in Crown Point. DES 1401046 supplemental funds for sign replacement for Merrillville will be \$1,057,394. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Phil Gralik, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend the new federal aid projects to the Commission for approval with the two amended items. Gary Evers added that NIRPC needs to approve all change orders with the expectation that reimbursement will come from federal funding. NIRPC will not administratively approve federal funding increases of more than \$500K without prior TPC and Board approval. The new Transportation Resource Oversight Committee (T-ROC) will help create policies for consistency in handling changes. NIRPC is no longer funding post-audit and project closeout charges from FHWA and INDOT as it is impossible to predict when these charges will post.

5. Indiana Department of Transportation

Lindsay Quist reported on the INDOT lettings.

6. Transit Operators Reports

- a) **LaPorte Transit** – Tom MacLennan reported that TransPorte is currently building infrastructure for propane fueling stations for five vehicles in their fleet. Two other city departments are currently retrofitting propane vehicles. The Transit Triangle received two buses late last month. One bus was featured in the July 4 parade and served the LaPorte County Fair.
- b) **Valparaiso V-Line and Chicago DASH** – Taylor Wegrzyn reported that the *ChicaGo* Dash had its highest ridership level ever, with 6,128 passenger trips, up 13% over June 2014. The V-Line made 1045 trips last month, an 8% increase from June 2014.
- c) **East Chicago Transit** – No report was given.
- d) **GPTC** – David Wright reported that the June ridership was up 4.5% over June of 2014 with 66,000 riders. GPTC has received and is reviewing the last part of the Livable Broadway Plan report. Once approved by the GPTC Board, it will be presented and details discussed with NIRPC for recommendations for implementation. August 13 is Transit Day at the Lake County Fair.
- e) **Michigan City Transit** – No report was given.

- f) **NICTD** – Joe Crnkovich reported that new schedules with the fare increases were approved on May 29 and went into effect July 1. June ridership is up almost 4% over June of 2014. There were 22,473 riders on the day of the Blackhawks parade alone. So far, July ridership is up slightly. The overhead wire project continues at about six miles per year, and service outages will occur in mid-August, mid-September and late October east of Michigan City. Two engineering study contracts were awarded for rehabbing five bridges.
- g) **North Township Dial-A-Ride** – No report was given.
- h) **Opportunity Enterprises** – No report was given.
- 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** – No reports were given.

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

9. **Planning Neighbors**

Teri Dixon of the Chicago Metropolitan Area for Planning reported that their new Executive Director is Joe Szabo. The TAP and CMAQ programs, the TIP, Go to 2040 plan and the semi-annual conformity are out for public comment through August 17.

10. **Public Comment on Agenda Items** – No requests were received.

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

- a) **Other Business** – In answer to a question by Jeff Huet on the new committees, Steve Strains replied that the Commission voted to approve the new structure and more information would be forthcoming at the Commission meeting on Thursday.
- b) **Staff Announcements** – Mitch Barloga said listening sessions on Greenway + Blueway 2020 were held in May and June. He and Kathy Luther are now meeting with the stakeholders and a survey is being distributed. Approval of the Plan by the NIRPC Board is expected to take place in late 2015 or early 2016.
- c) **Upcoming Meetings at NIRPC** – Future NIRPC meetings will be announced as they are scheduled.

On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by George Topoll, Stan Dobosz adjourned the meeting at 10:10 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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