

## **Transportation Policy Committee Meeting**

NIRPC Auditorium

August 14, 2012

### MINUTES

#### **Members Present**

Stan Dobosz, AJ Monroe, Jim Pinkerton, Claudia Taylor, Tyler Kent, Jeff Huet, Deb Backhus, Dwayne Williams, Jezreel Rodriguez, Denarie Kane, Mark O'Dell, Joseph Crnkovich, Bruce Lindner, Art Biciunas, David Wright, Mary Jane Thomas. Jerry Halperin and Joyce Newland via conference phone.

#### **Guests**

Keith Benman, Peter Kohut, Jake Dammarell, Daryl Williams – Dotsun, Chloe Dotson, Eric Wilson, Kevin Crawford, George Rogge, Marcia Blansett, Glen Campbell, Michele Bollinger, Jim Harmening, Chris Reynolds, Craig Hendrix, Janet Cypra, Eric Wolverton,

#### **NIRPC Staff**

Mitch Barloga, Gabrielle Biciunas, Bill Brown, Gary Evers, Sarah Geinosky, Allen Hammond, Belinda Petroskey, Stephen Sostaric, Steve Strains, Mary Thorne, Tom VanderWoude

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

- Chairman Stan Dobosz, NIRPC Commissioner and Griffith Town Councilman, called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.
- The INDOT voluntary participation survey was available on the table.
- Bruce Lindner motioned to approve the minutes of the June 12 meeting; seconded by Joe Crnkovich. Motion carried.

- 2. Presentation** – Bill Brown reviewed technical comments provided by NIRPC staff on the Illiana Corridor Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement. The study area population and employment increases were projected by the consultants at 176% and 225% respectively. The estimates were inconsistent with NIRPC's growth projections from the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan adopted in June 2011 of 19.8% population growth and 27.9% employment growth in the Indiana part of the study area. If the official MPO forecasts were used instead of the consultants', the need for the project would be greatly diminished. Other comments made were on Congestion Management, impacts to wetlands, agricultural and historic resources, land use, impacts on environment, air quality, economic, environmental justice areas, and others. Steve Strains added that the purpose of the staff's analysis was not to criticize the work done but to gain further clarification on several items and look forward to the next series of studies. Both states and consultants have done a lot of work. Tier 2 will be more detailed and they will answer questions and provide clarification. It will begin next year and take about 18 months. NIRPC has no opinion on the suggested routes but clarification is desired.

#### **3. Planning**

- ADA Transition Plans – Allen Hammond reported that the survey went out to all LPA's on August 1, looking for information on seven areas and where they are in the process. Some communities have already completed their evaluations. Transition plans must be completed by December 31, 2012 to be eligible for federal funding by FHWA.

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- 2040 CRP Implementation – Gabrielle Biciunas reported that staff has presented the 2040 Plan to the Portage City Council and Griffith Town Council on August 7. Staff continues to schedule presentations to the remaining 37 communities. The next meeting of the *Pathway to 2040* Committee is October 11 at 9:00 a.m.
- Urban Area Boundary – Bill Brown reported that a workshop for stakeholders was held last week. We will have a follow up workshop and a preliminary discussion to the NIRPC board at the September meeting, with action at the October meeting of the Full Commission/Executive Board.
- ITS Architecture – Bill Brown reported staff is planning a workshop to be held soon to go over elements of ITS Architecture.
- Congestion Management Process – Stephen Sostaric reported that NIRPC received a letter from FHWA/FTA stating that our CMP has met the requirements necessary to remove the corrective action. We will be discussing the expansion of congestion pricing in the region. We already have a pricing system with the toll road. Denarie Kane inquired as to mitigation efforts on connection points other than congestion pricing. Infrastructure is the developers' obligation. A lot of retail developments are private. Retrofitting access points is costly and there are higher priorities for the funds available to municipalities. There are ways to help congestion but they will be costly. Bill Brown added that we will need to consider options in more detail and be mindful of costs to business. David Wright commented that GPTC has a transit route servicing US 30, but only one vehicle connects from the transit service to a point on US 30.
- Public Involvement Plan Update – Steve Strains reported that the plan update is almost ready to go out for public comment. It will then go to the NIRPC commission in October. The task force met four times and there is a lot of work being done. NIRPC is using social media to reach out to the public.
- US12 Arcelor-Mittal Workgroup – Tom VanderWoude reported that the working group met on August 10 and continues to discuss alternatives to congestion issue at the east gate of the Arcelor-Mittal plant. Four alternatives were presented for an overpass to be built over the SouthShore railroad and alternatives will go back to Arcelor-Mittal. There are a lot of constraints in the project; the biggest is funding and the group is looking into public-private partnerships.
- Air Quality Conformity Update – Bill reported that the work continues on the Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets (MVEB) for the region that will replace old budgets using the Mobil 6 model. The new model (MOVES) works differently. The State Implementation Plan is being updated to use the MOVES model and INDOT is taking the lead for most of the MPOs with a post-processor which they will run. We are almost ready to convene a meeting of stakeholders, FHWA, IDEM and INDOT to look at the budgets and reach a consensus.

#### **4. Programming**

Quarterly Project Tracking Part III – Gary Evers reported on the proposed revisions to the Quarterly Tracking System which was provided to the committee for post-project, pre-letting and post-letting. The MPO Council and INDOT will insure everyone has a change order policy. We are proposing changes to the tracking system. NIRPC will make construction site field visits

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with pre-notification to the ERC. Contact Gary with questions; feedback must be submitted by September 7.

- Transit Service Status and Funding – Belinda Petroskey reported that North Township demand response operating at a reduced level from when the RBA was in service. We have prepared an amendment to get a grant in place and hope to hear something this week.

**5. Indiana Department of Transportation**

- Jim Pinkerton reported on the letting list for July through October.
- The Cline Avenue demolition will be completed by year end. East Chicago is working to finalize details for the reconstruction of the bridge.
- The public comment period for the Illiana is through August 29. Later this year a preferred alternative will be chosen, with a design in December. INDOT met with NIRPC staff a couple of weeks ago. Chris Reynolds will be the new LPA Project Manager.

**6. Transit Operators Reports**

- **NICTD** – Joe Crnkovich reported that on August 16 NICTD and Michigan City will hold a public meeting for the preferred alignment for the SouthShore. The open house will be from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Michigan City, City Hall. July ridership was down over the previous year with loss of service on July 24 when a NIPSCO wire landed on a catenary wire during one of the storms. Weekend ridership was up 4.5% over last August. The Dune Park Platform cost estimates are forthcoming. The bridge at the Ford Plant was fabricated on site and will be put in place.
- **GPTC** – David Wright reported that there was a service adjustment due to low ridership on many of their routes. Some routes have increased service. June ridership was up about 5% over 2011. ADA ridership figures for July and August will be presented at the next TPC meeting. Federal law requires complimentary paratransit and we will know the impacts by early September. The ADA fleet was increased by one vehicle.

**7. Local and Regional Transportation Projects Update.**

No report.

**8. Federal Highway Administration/Federal Transit Authority**

NIRPC received a letter lifting the certification corrective actions. The next certification review will take place in 2013.

**9. Planning Neighbors: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and Southwestern Michigan Commission**

No reports.

**10. Other Business, Public Comment and Upcoming Meetings at NIRPC**

Other Business: Don Koliboski described the Northwest Indiana Economic Development District. A grant application was approved and we are accepting projects for inclusion in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) as required by the US EDA. Projects must be submitted by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, September 28, 2012. General information on the

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project submission and the Project, Program or Activity Submission Form was available at the meeting.

- Steve Strains announced that Stan Dobosz is celebrating his birthday.
- Upcoming Meetings:
  - Michigan City Public Open House – 5:00 p.m. August 16 at City Hall.
  - NWI Rail Vision Workgroup – 10:30 a.m. August 23 at NIRPC.
  - Ped, Pedal & Paddle Committee – 1:30 p.m. August 23 at NIRPC.
  - Environmental Management Policy Committee – 9:00 a.m. September 6 at NIRPC.
  - Executive Board – 9:00 a.m. September 20 at NIRPC.
  - Joint meeting of the Local Government Assistance Advisory Committee and Towns and Small Cities – 9:00 a.m. September 26 at Festival Park Community Center, Hobart.

**11. Next Transportation Policy Committee Meeting**

The next Transportation Policy Committee meeting will be at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, September 11, 2012 at NIRPC.

Chairman Dobosz adjourned the meeting at 10:45 a.m.