

## **Transportation Policy Committee Meeting**

NIRPC Auditorium

September 10, 2013

### MINUTES

#### **Members Present**

Shawn Pettit, Jim Polarek, Phil Gralik, Art Biciunas, Bruce Lindner, James Mandon, Mark O'Dell, Joe Crnkovich, Tyler Kent, Claudia Taylor, Frank Seilheimer, David Wright, Don Parker, Francisco Rosado, Jr., Jeff Huet, Craig Phillips and Jerry Halperin (via conference phone).

#### **Guests**

Bill Brown, Ron Wiedeman, LuAnn Franklin, Mike McPhillips, Ryan Olsen, Michael Jabo, Jim Pinkerton, Dawn Biela, Doug Robinson, Craig Hendrix, Julia Surber, Matt Mikus, Peter Kohut, Chris Moore, Glen Campbell, Christopher Murphy, Don Carnahan, Ted Gross, Chris Reynolds Dan Corbin, Chris Moore.

#### **NIRPC Staff**

Steve Strains, Mary Thorne, Gary Evers, Kevin Garcia, Belinda Petroskey, Amanda Pollard, Allen Hammond, Stephen Sostaric, Scott Weber.

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

- Chairman Shawn Pettit, NIRPC Commissioner and Merrillville Town Councilman, called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions. Steve Strains said Bill Brown is here to assist in the transition of Scott Weber, NIRPC's new transportation modeler.
- The INDOT voluntary participation survey was available on the table.
- On a motion by Bruce Lindner; second by Don Parker, the minutes of the August 13 meeting were approved.
- Stephen Sostaric described a proposed resolution to support Amtrak funding for the Hoosier State service from Chicago to Indianapolis. Jim Pinkerton added that INDOT is meeting with mayors along the route line to finish their internal review and recommendation by the end of September. Amtrak will not pull the line as long as we are working on a solution. Sostaric added that NIRPC met with the transit operators to come up with an amended portion of the resolution that will read "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this supporting resolution is contingent upon there being no adverse financial impact on state funding for any public transit providers in the State of Indiana." Joe Crnkovich moved to recommend the resolution with the added amended language to the resolution; seconded by Don Parker. Frank Seilheimer, representing Rob Strader of Michigan City Transit, conveyed that Mr. Strader is not in support of the resolution and would like to see the Board not act on this resolution because the ridership on the line is low and does not believe there will not be any adverse effects on state funding for local transit providers. Mr. Strader wishes to see this funding to local transit operators. On a voice vote, the Committee voted to recommend the resolution supporting the Hoosier State service to the NIRPC Board for approval with two no votes.

- 2. Presentation on Lake Station Interchange Progress:** Mike McPhillips said INDOT has been working with the Indiana Toll Road Concession Company (ITRCC) and they presented a modification report in early 2012 showing three alternatives for reconfiguring the interchange between the Indiana Toll Road and I-94. The current plan is to rehabilitate the bridgework in the current footprint with no added capacity. Ryan Olson, Indiana Toll Road Concession Company described the progressive rehabilitation plan for the interchange. FHWA has given their approval contingent upon conditions in a checklist they provided are met. This federal checklist does not include action by NIRPC to include it in the TIP or Comprehensive Plan, since it is not regionally significant nor is it adding

capacity. The project will let this month, with one phase of the demolition and construction to start in October and the next phase to start next year and the projected completion date is mid-2015. Brief discussion followed.

### 3. Planning

- Congestion Management Process Illiana Project Update – Steve Strains referred to the timetable in the packet showing NIRPC’s actions through December. Through discussions with INDOT and their consultant, we expect the Full Commission to take action on the Illiana at their meeting on December 12. Exact dates for the public comment period have not been set, but it will be held in parts of October and November. Both NIRPC and INDOT are taking comments. We expect that the environmental justice analysis through a consultant and NIRPC outreach will occur prior to the December 12 meeting. Staff is analyzing the Illiana corridor in light of the 2040 plan with regard to its visions, goals and objectives. The white paper should be finalized late this month. It is not a recommendation, but only analysis of how the project might fit in with the concepts in our 2040 plan. The staff analysis will be presented at the October 10 TPC meeting.
- ITS Architecture – Kevin Garcia said the stakeholder meetings are continuing. Staff is spending a lot of time right now with the congestion management process of the Illiana, so ITS will become a high priority work item after the Illiana work is complete.

### 5. Programming

- Quarterly TIP Project Tracking – Amanda Pollard reported that tracking meetings were held with Merrillville, Munster, Griffith and Valparaiso. On September 24, staff will meet with La Porte County, Highland, St. John and East Chicago. On September 26 staff will meet with Lake Station and on October 3 staff will meet with Porter County. In 2014, meetings will be held more frequently. Amanda asked for responses to her emails when she contacts LPAs to keep communication flowing.
- TIP Status Report – Gary Evers reported on the status of the TIP since the July meeting. On August 29, the Full Commission adopted the TIP contingent upon a review by NIRPC’s legal counsel on whether/how all procedures were followed.
- Amendment #1 to the FY 2014-2017 TIP – Belinda Petroskey reported on the transit projects for 5307 funding for Lake, Porter and La Porte Counties, some minor New Freedom for Lake and Porter and major CMAQ funding. NICTD’s funding sources are listed as well. There were public meetings in Gary and East Chicago with no significant adverse comments. Gary Evers added that some project funding has been shifted through administrative modifications with no amendments necessary. Steve Strains pointed out that the total amount of funding of \$115 million is mostly for maintenance of current transit service; not expansion. It will not cover the cost of a sustained regionally connected system of public transportation. We need new local money to expand our public transit regionally. On a motion by Joe Crnkovich and a second by Jim Polarek, the Committee voted to recommend Amendment #1 to the FY 2014-2017 TIP to the NIRPC Board.
- Amendment #2 to the FY 2014-2017 TIP – Gary Evers described the addition of phases to exempt INDOT projects already in the TIP, the deletion of phases or projects, added new rail safety signal projects, new INDOT projects and new statewide INDOT projects. Brief discussion was held on certain projects and phases. On a motion by Don Parker and a second by Joe Crnkovich, the Committee voted to recommend Amendment #2 to the FY 2014-2017 TIP to the NIRPC Board.

### 6. Indiana Department of Transportation

Chris Reynolds highlighted projects in the letting list provided in the materials for August, September, October and November.

### 7. Transit Operators Reports

- NICTD – Joe Crnkovich reported that while August ridership was down from August 2012, rush hour ridership is up. Rehabbing of the bridge over the Grant Calumet River has begun and trains will be slowing down. The work will wrap up by November. Catenary project continues. NICTD did not get the federal Tiger V grant and

the electrical work will be done in stages east of Michigan City. The bridge over Trail Creek will also be replaced. Part of the new high level platform at Dune Park opened on August 30. The north doors of the station will be closed until the completion of the work at the station. The new sidewalk will be installed and work should be completed by mid-November.

- GPTC – David Wright commented on the INDOT US 12/20 reconstruction project, that some residents are unhappy with the project parkway and sidewalks because of fill being used instead of dirt and the bus stop signs need to be put back in place. Jim Pinkerton replied that INDOT is meeting with the Mayor of Gary about the project on Friday. Wright reported that August ridership was up 8.5% over August 2012. Work begins this week on replacing the roof at the Metro Center. The Tri-City route ridership service showed 60% from Gary, 35% from East Chicago and Hammond and the other 5% from other locations. GPTC has five local and five regional routes serving other communities. 62% of ridership is on that regional network going to or from Gary, Merrillville, Crown Point, Griffith, Highland, Hammond, and East Chicago. 59% of total route mileage is on those regional routes. 100% of local commitment to transit in northwest Indiana released to GPTC is by Gary residents. That gap should be changed and support for a regional route should be shared by the communities it serves. Public transportation is a regional issue and funding needs to be regional as well.

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

No report.

#### **9. Planning Neighbors**

- CMAP – No report.
- South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association – No report.
- Southwestern Michigan Commission – No report.

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

- Other Business: Jerry Halperin asked that the record show he was present on the conference phone. The new planning MOU between INDOT and each MPO is in progress.
- Public Comment: None
- Staff Announcements:  
Belinda Petroskey invited those present to attend the Transit TIP Open House tomorrow from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Valparaiso City Hall, 1166 Lincolnway.
- Upcoming Meetings:
  - Transit TIP Open House – September 11, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. at Valparaiso City Hall, 166 Lincolnway
  - Land Use Committee – September 18 at 10 a.m. at NIRPC.
  - Executive Board – 9:00 a.m. September 19 at NIRPC.
  - Ped, Pedal & Paddle Committee – September 26, 1:30 p.m. at NIRPC
  - EMPC – October 8 at 9:00 a.m. at NIRPC
  - Local Government Assistance Committee – October 31 at 9:00 a.m. at NIRPC
  - The next Transportation Policy Committee meeting will be at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, October 9, 2013 at NIRPC.

The next Transportation Policy Committee meeting will be at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, October 8, 2013 at NIRPC.

Chairman Pettit adjourned the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

*A Digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact Mary Thorne at NIRPC 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.

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