

Land Use Committee Meeting
Wednesday, September 18, 2013
NIRPC Packer Room

Members & Visitors: Craig Phillips, Sherryl Doerr, Greg Stinson, Phil Gralik, Christopher Meyers, Brian Poland. Via Telephone: Tyler Kent

NIRPC Staff: Eman Ibrahim, Jack Eskin, Gabrielle Biciunas, Sara Geinosky, Gary Evers, Meredith Stilwell

Call to Order by Chairman

Chairman Murphy called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

a. Introductions

Self-introductions were made by members, visitors and staff present.

b. Approval of the August 14, 2013 Minutes

Craig Phillips motioned for the August 14, 2013 minutes to be approved. With no opposition, the minutes were approved.

2. Regional Land Use Planning

a. Northwest Indiana Livable Centers Project Update

The Livable Centers concept was developed as part of the 2040 plan implementation regarding how to meet and focus growth as well as improve air quality, reduce congestion and encourage walking or biking within urbanized areas. Population determined livable center sizes which are metro, large, medium and small; incorporating unique and distinct design characteristics which make it easy to reach multiple destinations by foot, bike, car or transit and promote convenient safe and easy street crossings. Steps used by the NIRPC livable center team included 1) preliminary GIS analysis to identify livable center areas; 2) Plans and codes analysis to identify planned livable centers and 3) gathering of data and completion of a livability checklist for preliminary livable centers to the fullest extent possible. Roadway density and downtown areas were also considered. The analysis findings were taken to meetings held with 19 cities and towns. Transit operators were met with to discuss the ½ mile transit station area boundary and a small community workshop was held to complete the 41 municipality livable and neighborhood center boundaries. Next steps include finishing livable center/neighborhood description reports with complete data and maps to be reviewed by local government. Examples of mapping were presented. The team would like to be finished finalizing reports by mid-October before the Creating Livable Communities (CLC) application release and for approval by the NIRPC board at the October 17 meeting. Eligibility for CLC funding depends on the project being within the livable centers and transit area maps. The transit area map, project criteria and issues, and project examples were reviewed by Eman.

Center descriptions and boundary information will be sent to the communities for final review for presentation to the Pathway to 2040 Committee on October 10 for approval and recommendation to the October 17 NIRPC board meeting. Any concerns and changes must be addressed and made before the board meeting approval; when approved, changes cannot be made. Concern over final information being received by communities for review and presentation to their committees and commissions before the NIRPC board meeting was raised and discussed. Although TIF areas were not considered, there is sometimes an overlap. Currently a study is being completed for Porter and Lake Counties on TIF districts and once that study is completed the report information can be added later. It will be revisited in two to three years to see where communities are with the implementation of the livable centers. If communities decide to amend the livable centers into their comprehensive plans, NIRPC staff will be willing come and present. Chairman Murphy stated a great job was done pulling the information together and creating maps. Christopher Meyers thanked the Committee members at the meeting and those not present for helping mold and shape the process. Craig

Phillips commented this is a unique planning approach for Indiana and might write a blog report for the state planning chapter newsletter and thinks NIRPC should be nominated for an award for the livable centers initiative. He also noted this is an impressive implementation tool for the 2040 CRP. C. Meyers also remarked that all of the solicitations now have some aspect of sustainability.

b. Map of Livable Centers in Northwest Indiana

A preliminary map was presented and reviewed by Sara Geinosky. Factors and information used when meeting with the communities include dense blocks, population, housing and employment. Plans and future happenings were also discussed during the community meetings. The final map is still in the works since conversations are still being held with some communities. While 16% of incorporated land is considered a livable center, that encompasses 32% of the region's total population. The largest center is Miller Aetna; the most populous center is the downtown, central east Hammond district; the densest center is the northside southside section in East Chicago; and the smallest and least populous center is located in Dune Acres.

c. Creating Livable Communities (CLC) Program (Final Draft Application)

\$400k has been allocated for two years from Lake and Porter County STP funds for planning projects. The CLC application was reviewed and the criteria scored at the August meeting. The application will be released the last week of October. LaPorte County is not be included in this round because their transportation funds had already been allocated but different opportunities can be visited in the interim and an attempt made to develop a strategy to be implemented for the CLC 2015 funding round. Educating the county will be very important.

The application guidelines/review criteria scoring decided upon at the August meeting was reviewed and after discussion it was agreed to change the wording for (3a) to: *Innovative approaches to economic reinvestment/investment*. It was appreciated that the consensus process used to determine the point totals was very effective and a good use of meeting time. Discussion was held regarding adding public transit ridership information and it was decided that as only a small portion, since every community does not have transit being too specific would exclude some communities or give more points to those who have transit. Public transit information will be included in the project description on the application and might be a stronger component in the future.

CLC study deliverables were reviewed with no concern at the August meeting and the application and instructions were updated to reflect changes requested at the August meeting. After review at this meeting it was requested to change instructions 2 and 3 to contact person from ERC. Eman noted that change was to have been made after the last meeting and she would change it. In addition, item 9C needed to have the word "be" removed. Discussion took place regarding project monitoring. The local community will be consulted after receiving the grant to ensure they did a plan and to see where they are with implementation of that plan and if not implemented it is also to see what prevented implementation; it is more of a gauge to see if the applicant did what they said they would do and how successful the program is. Eman stated the monitoring will be within two years and would add language to indicate that. It was suggested to look at #12 on the application and #15 in the deliverables and make them consistent regarding an end product and/or summary report. Gary Evers explained that the INDOT process will need to be followed regarding paying contractors and getting reimbursed and delivering final reports plus work programs to close the grant/project.

Once the application is released, a workshop will be held to explain the process, requirements, etc. before grants are awarded. An evaluation committee, basically consisting of Land Use Committee members, will be formed but will not include anyone who applied. Christopher Meyers motioned to approve the criteria document and application, included the changes discussed by the Land Use Committee at this meeting, to be forwarded to the entire NIRPC board for their review. With second by Greg Stinson and no opposition, the motion carried.

d. Regional Focus – Jack Eskin, NIRPC Regional Planner

i. NIRPC Testimony on Port Infrastructure

NIRPC and other stakeholders were asked to provide testimony on the two key topics of rail and transit and future ports development in northwest Indiana. Transcripts of the two testimonies given by NIRPC were provided. Jack presented an overview of both testimonies. The port testimony was directed at expanding on the context of adding a second port in northwest Indiana; both Gary and East Chicago are looking into it right now. As part of the 2040 CRP, multi-modal transportation investments were identified as a priority and for shipping freight, which is ports and maritime shipping. It receives extra weight in funding criteria. Maritime economic profile and size of the industry including advantages of spatial location and infrastructure and the link with other planning initiatives were also discussed. Rail vision and working groups are focusing on at grade crossings, many of which are located within the study area focusing on enhancing the infrastructure and improving the quality of the space. There are challenges of receding lake levels and lack of financing from the federal government to complete dredging in order to satisfy the minimum lake level. Any initiative in Gary or East Chicago should follow the best management practices of how sustainable development has been added to make ports not only active, but green as well. The discussion seemed to be less contentious than anticipated.

Christopher Meyers spoke as a citizen of northwest Indiana and after seeing the testimony handouts for the first time at this meeting, voiced his concern over what was presented. He was involved in the development of the Marquette vision and citizens, stakeholders and businesses came out and discussed ports and while he understands that there is a large amount of unused industrial property, to come out and make statements as presented, knowing the concerns of hundreds of residents, seems to be contradictory to the original intent of the Marquette vision which was to help create a more mixed use lake front and help to move away from limited access. An additional port within northwest Indiana may bring a retrograde in terms of the advancements that have happened in Portage recently and in other portions of the lakefront communities. He has great concern about the amount of time put into the Marquette vision and dedicated areas for international shipping, as well as existing industrial shipping canals as well as existing industrial ports. He hopes that his tax dollars are not frivolously wasted for another unneeded study. He also remarked that it was not presented that shipping on the great lakes has actually fallen nearly 12% over the past several years, which could be partly because of receding lake levels, but also on demand logistics is something that needs to be better addressed at NIRPC; shipping things via Lake Michigan is more an industrial use and not logistics. The Mississippi is not easily accessed from Lake Michigan and the only access is northward into Canada and onward. He hopes these issues will be considered in the future otherwise all of the efforts from the last 10-12 years will be somewhat moot.

ii. NIRPC Testimony on Transit/TOD

The testimony NIRPC provided regarding transit oriented development (TOD) included its benefits in economic, community and public health aspects and also included how TOD was a major focus in the devising of the NIRPC 2040 CRP. There is commitment to TOD in the work NIRPC does through initiatives like livable centers and creating livable communities and how livable communities can provide a pipeline of projects for TOD. Different communities, urban core and suburban, have begun to insert TOD into their plans and there is a real community desire throughout the municipalities in northwest Indiana to make this happen. If it does happen the transit side needs to have a strong busing system throughout the region and a clear commitment from NICTD. After the testimony, active discussion relating to NICTD's strategic business plan occurred. There is still not consensus on the future of rail and TOD between the transit provider and many communities. Jack noted that state representative Ed Soliday is an advocate of TOD and having him as part of that community can really help efforts going forward. Eman interjected that NIRPC's 2040 plan proposed the South Shore study for TOD stations around the NICTD line in northwest Indiana and how to get typologies and specific design around each station based on the

density and type of transit. FTA funding was to be used and RDA funding was sought and while agreed to provide funds which were not available later on. NICTD has been given funds to complete a business study and have stated they will look at TOD. However, when NICTD presented testimony they spoke about the study but a strong TOD component was not shown. A workshop is being held by NICTD consultant URS and NIRPC will attend to see the business study direction. Chairman Murphy stated his appreciation regarding the testimony on this issue and discussion was held regarding the TOD topic including NICTD's lack of interest and commitment to TOD, putting the onus on communities and their leadership to further TOD opportunities within the communities. It was suggested to take NICTD across state lines to see examples and concern was raised regarding having the right stakeholders at the table for the business study taking place. It was suggested to have the Land Use Committee extend a request to NICTD to be involved and be a stakeholder in the process. Eman remarked Ed Soliday requested NIRPC educate the Commission about TOD and are thinking of a way, which could include inviting speakers from states around us or nationwide to present about TOD and reviving communities, giving successful examples. A one-day workshop or charrette could be a possibility but cost and obtaining local match has to be considered. Further discussion was held regarding a possible change in the NICTD issue in the coming years with fresh outlooks coming on board and community development occurring in anticipation of rail corridors.

3. Local Community / Agency Update

a. Current or Proposed Studies, Plans and Projects

- Craig Phillips announced Michigan City has signed a contract with a group of consultants led by Hitchcock Design Group to do a substantial planning project on the north end of Michigan City, called the Lake Michigan Gateway Implementation Strategy. It is focused primarily on a combination of land use, alternative and regular transportation and additional streetscaping improvements; a combination of physical and aesthetic improvements. The north end is basically Michigan City's downtown and is their main livable center.
- The City of Crown Point recently executed its grant agreement for the Lake Michigan Coastal Program 2013 solicitation. The City is moving forward in developing a strategic plan and corridor vision called the Lakes of South County. The plan will create connectivity between the downtown historic square going southward toward Lemon Lake. There currently are no trails off street or on street or any spurs or environmental interpretive areas that help link the downtown historic district through the residential neighborhoods. The intention is eventually rolling out a north south priority trail corridor that is listed within NIRPC's bikeway plan and will essentially connect to the Town of Cedar Lake and hopefully move southward toward the Kankakee River. Partners include various city departments, Lake County's Commissioner, Parks and Plan Commission, as well as various neighborhoods. They want to work with IMPACT and Fransiscan to integrate the small trail networks located around their facilities into the ultimate corridor vision. Ultimately the vision will be used to request future TAP funding requests. NIRPC will be invited to be a stakeholder.

4. Announcements

- a. Pathway to 2040 Implementation Committee – 9:00 a.m. Thursday, October 10, 2013
- b. **Next Meeting Wednesday November 20, 2013 @ 10:00 a.m.**

On motion from Christopher Meyers and second by Greg Stinson the meeting adjourned at 11:43 a.m.