

Transportation Policy Committee Meeting

NIRPC Auditorium

September 9, 2014

DRAFT MINUTES

Members Present

Jim Polarek, Stan Dobosz, John Bayler, Claudia Taylor, Chris Reynolds, Stan Dostatni, Jezreel Rodriguez, Rich Herr, Mark O'Dell, Bruce Lindner, Tom MacLennan, David Wright, Dave Decker, Don Parker, Mike Yacullo, Jeff Huet, Deb Backhus, Tyler Kent, Joe Crnkovich, Mary Jane Thomas, Phil Gralik, Frank Rosado, Jr.

Guests

Ayesha Mohiuddin, Ken Martin, LuAnn Franklin, Sedrick Green, Mark Pittman, Brad Minnick, Renae Jackson, Glen Campbell, Jake Dammarell, Teresa Torres and Rudy Velasco.

NIRPC Staff

Steve Strains, Gary Evers, Belinda Petroskey, Sarah Geinosky, Stephen Sostaric, Amanda Pollard, Gabrielle Biciunas, Eman Ibrahim, Scott Weber and Mary Thorne.

1. Call to Order, Opening and Announcements

- a) Chairman Jim Polarek called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.
- b) The INDOT voluntary participation survey was available on the table.
- c) On a motion by Stan Dobosz and a second by Don Parker, the minutes of the July 8 meeting were approved as submitted.

2. Presentation

David Wright, Gary Public Transportation Corporation, gave an update on the Livable Broadway Corridor project. Funding was provided through FTA Section 5307 for \$200,000 and DNR Coastal Grant for \$50,000. The project spans from the Gary Metro Center and extends to 93rd Avenue. The consultant team consists of T.Y. Lin International, Arsh Group, Applied Real Estate Analysis and Vlecidis-Schroeder Associates. The scope includes current assessment of the corridor including the use of a customer survey; review of growth scenarios; modal linkage accessibility, recommendations for transit levels of service, infrastructure needs and proposed key stations; and performing a cost/revenue analysis. Several meetings are planned, including a discussion and input session on October 13 at Buffington Harbor, a Steering Committee meeting on October 27 at 839 Broadway and two public workshops on November 17 at University Park in Merrillville. For more information, visit www.gptcbus.com, Facebook or Twitter.

3. Planning

- a) 2040 CRP Update Meetings – Stephen Sostaric highlighted the 15 public meetings, which will cover the major subjects of motorized surface transportation, public transit and the environment. The meetings will be held at various locations throughout the NIRPC region as shown on the meeting notice which was provided in the materials. He noted that comments can also be given via regular mail, on the NIRPC

comment line 219-763-6060 extension 160, via email at comments@nirpc.org, as well as on Facebook and Twitter. Visit www.nirpc.org for more information.

- b) Quarterly Tracking – Amanda Pollard reported that the next round of project tracking meetings will start in November. An email will be sent later this week to schedule the meetings.
- c) Functional Classification System – Sarah Geinosky reported that she and Scott Weber have met with various communities throughout the region to create an inventory of how our roads work. Contact them if your community has not yet met with them. Results will be brought to the Transportation Policy Committee by the end of this year.
- d) Bikes on Trains Study – Reporting for Jack Eskin, Gabrielle Biciunas said the study contract was approved by the Executive Board at their August meeting. Quandel Consultants will perform the study. They are experienced in passenger rail engineering, having worked on NICTD’s West Lake Corridor Study and others. They held a meeting last week to discuss a draft timetable. There will be a presentation at the Transportation Policy Committee in December.
- e) Public Participation Plan Update – Steve Strains reported that the current Public Participation Plan was adopted in September, 2007. He presented the latest draft plan, copies of which were available at the meeting. The Transportation Policy Committee last considered, but did not take action in December 2013. Since then more changes were made in consultation with Everybody Counts as part of a settlement agreement and a series of meetings this past summer. The changes have been incorporated into the draft plan. Since so much time has passed (about 9 months) since the previous draft of the Plan was discussed with the TPC and offered for action, staff thought it best to have additional time for review. The draft plan will be posted to the NIRPC website for another review and 45-day comment period to be held from Monday, September 15 through Friday, October 31. A report will be provided to the Board and the Transportation Policy Committee prior to its November action to recommend to the NIRPC Board for action at its December 11 meeting.

4. Programming

- a) Belinda Petroskey announced a 30 day public comment period for an FY 2014-2017 TIP amendment for six transit projects, one under FTA Section 5307 and five under MAP-21 FTA Section 5339 funds for bus and bus facilities for capital only. The amendment will come to the Transportation Policy Committee in October.
- b) Gary Evers described Amendment #24 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program for four INDOT projects in East Chicago, Merrillville & Gary, Burns Harbor and Dyer/Schererville. On a motion by Bruce Lindner and a second by Don Parker, the committee voted to recommend Amendment #24 to the NIRPC board.
- c) Gary Evers described Amendment #25 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program for two NIRPC projects for TIP and LPA Project oversight and management using STP Group 1 funds and one project using 5303 funds per the FY 2015-2016 Unified Planning Work Program adopted May 2014, as the metropolitan planning (PL) funding took a big cut. On a motion by Dave Decker and a second by Don Parker, the committee voted to recommend Amendment #25 to the NIRPC board.
- d) Federal Aid Changes, Funding Increases, Construction Engineering and Project Solicitation – Gary Evers reported that INDOT is making several new changes including the use of INDOT purchase orders, State Fiscal Year of July – June, and 8-10 year production schedules and TIP. Total apportionment must be zeroed out each year with no carryover and there will be no banking of funds permitted. Fund transfers between urbanized areas (UA) will be permitted. Changes will be phased in and complete by the end of State Fiscal Year 2018.

New 2015 funds for the Michigan City UA total over \$1.9 million with only \$82,000 obligated and the Chicago UA about \$17.5 million with only \$680,400 obligated. Obligations cannot exceed revenue and

some planned obligations will be bumped into 2016. Obligations will be made irrespective of funding category. This appears to be a form of a “block grant.”

With regard to carry over funds, the Michigan City UA has \$2.6 million and Chicago UA is \$23.4 million through June 2014. Funds may not be used during SFY 2015 and may be used with prior INDOT approval during 2015-2016. Carry over deficits of \$130,000 in STP II and \$1.829 million in Lake & Porter County CMAQ will be covered by surplus in other categories. The above balances include two types of TE. Five projects are defined as pre-2009 (INDOT selected and controlled) and five projects defined as 2009-2011 (MPO selected and controlled). These are locked up in carryover and cannot be access until 2016. Both total about \$5 million. INDOT has proposed a date of September 15 for closing out old TE. Unobligated TE will be forfeited included carry over. This date will not work for NIRPC. FHWA will approve alternate projects using TE funds. LPA’s with pre-2009 projects should confirm availability of funds with INDOT at least six months ahead of letting. NIRPC expects INDOT to extend that deadline date, perhaps another year. NIRPC should show good progress on this.

Quarterly tracking meetings are going very well. It is important that NIRPC are kept informed of your projects. NIRPC will still use the data to position projects in the TIP and annual spending plan. Reporting meetings are very important and failure to report or attend tracking meetings will delay fund obligation to a future year. NIRPC will issue a spending plan at the February tracking meetings and distribute a draft spending plan at the May tracking meeting.

RFPs for construction engineering must be issued in the same year as a PO for CN at least six months ahead of the letting. Change orders and post-audit closeout charges will be revised. The full 80% federal share to STP I may be unaffordable.

Federal aid projects may not be split funded over two fiscal years. Maximums for each type of federal aid and construction projects should be considered.

Gary Evers overviewed what has transpired to date. Next steps will include developing an accounting system this fall, updating production schedules for 2016-2025, updating the 2015 spending plan and meeting with district staff to discuss planning issues, a new solicitation for STP II HSIP and CMAQ projects in October and November and combined stakeholder meetings will be held the week of September 22-26. Contact Gary with any questions.

5. Indiana Department of Transportation

Chris Reynolds reported on the lettings for August through November, noting one omission in November for a project in East Chicago. He will respond to inquiries regarding paving on US 41 in Hammond and a US 12 Bridge status report in Miller.

6. Transit Operators Reports

NICTD – Joe Crnkovich reported that ridership was down about 2,000 in August over the same period in 2013 with one less work day. August is up about ½ of 1%. Weekends were up 6%. The Calumet Bridge work west of the East Chicago station is almost done. Catenary work is ongoing with the fourth of 5 outages this weekend. Bridge replacement at North Point Road will be completed in mid-November.

GPTC – David Wright reported that ridership for July increased over July 2013. Ridership is stabilizing. Lake Shore South ridership increased from a few dozen passengers to several hundred per week. More outreach is being done. Bus pass purchases arrangements are being worked out with North Township.

7. **Regional Transportation Partners** – No reports were given.

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

9. **Planning Neighbors** – No reports were given.

10. Other Business, Public Comment, Staff Announcements and Upcoming Meetings

a) **Announcements** – Frank Rosado announced the passing last month of Janet Cypira, who did consulting work for East Chicago and other communities, and asked for a moment of silence in her memory.

b) **Public Comments** –

Teresa Torres, Everybody Counts, commented on the draft Public Participation Plan, suggesting a public meeting be held. She also commented on the 2040 CRP update meeting schedule.

David Wright, GPTC, commented that transit operators are involved with NIRPC's public participation plan, the 2040 plan and the TIP to satisfy FTA needs and requirements and have been working with NIRPC to get the public participation plan approved.

Steve Strains responded to a suggestion and said that a public meeting will be held to hear comment on the draft, new Public Participation Plan at a date and location to be announced. Although not required in the current Public Participation Plan adopted in 2007, the new draft calls for a public meeting is called for when there are significant changes in such a Plan. It was suggested that NIRPC follow that public meeting provision in new draft Plan that has yet to be adopted, and Steve Strains agreed.

c) **Upcoming Meetings** –The meeting schedule was provided in the materials. The Land Use Committee will meet September 17 at 10 a.m. The Executive Board/Full Commission will meet on September 18 Time to be Determined. The Ped, Pedal and Paddle Committee will meet on September 25 at 1:30 p.m. The Environmental Management Policy Committee will meet October 2 at 9:00 a.m.

The next Transportation Policy Committee meeting will be at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, October 14, location to be determined.

Jim Polarek adjourned the meeting at 10:15 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. The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, marital status, familial status, parental status, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.