

**Land Use Committee Meeting
March 20, 2013
NIRPC Auditorium**

Members & Visitors: Richard Murphy, Sergio Mendoza, Craig Phillips, Greg Stinson, Tyler Kent, David Wright, Brian Poland, George Malis, and by phone Joyce Newland (Federal Highway Administration)

NIRPC Staff: Eman Ibrahim, Stephen Sostaric, Sara Geinosky, Gabrielle Biciunas, Bill Brown, Meredith Stilwell, Steve Strains, Ty Warner, Jack Eskin

Chairman Murphy called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. with self-introductions.

Upon motion by Craig Phillips and second by Sergio Mendoza the minutes of the January 16, 2013 Land Use Committee meeting were approved.

Regional Land Use Planning

a. Update on Livable Centers Project

Stephen Sostaric and Sara Geinosky updated the group on what has occurred over the last few months regarding the Livable Centers Project. Block perimeter; housing, population and employment densities; mixed use zoning; school; civic buildings; higher education; South Shore Stations and bus route information were used when determining the livable centers for the communities. The NIRPC Livable Centers team has met with Michigan City, La Porte, Valparaiso, Gary, Hammond, Crown Point and Cedar Lake for livable center determinations. Maps were presented detailing downtown and neighborhood centers for those seven communities. Meetings will be held with the remaining communities to establish livable center determinations. A map of a preliminary analysis of transit oriented development in Northwest Indiana was presented by Sara and highlighted areas which are within a .5 mile walk to public transit. Eman noted that because this project is linked to the funding program, there are eligibility areas and plans for development and redevelopment within the livable center areas and around transit stations are encouraged and will be considered. Chairman Murphy commented on his appreciation of the process, especially the conversations with communities to fine tune the livable centers to be in line with their goals and efforts leading to funding and implementation and is interested in having further conversations about transit oriented development. A brief discussion was held regarding a neighborhood center in Gary. It was noted the livable center concept is getting wide spread support in Michigan City in part due to the way it is being presented.

b. ARC Livable Centers Initiative: Catalyst for Change project <http://www.atlantaregional.com/land-use/livable-centers-initiative>

A video was shown highlighting the Atlanta Regional Commission's livable centers program which was created in the 90s and is one of the first and most successful livable centers program. Eman noted that although this is a larger scale project, Atlanta still has small towns which are the size of cities and towns in this region. The Atlanta program has \$750k annually for planning and additional monies set aside from STP funding for construction and implementation. Eman noted the difficulties in obtaining funding for the Creating Livable Communities (CLC) Program due to STP funding budget cuts. \$400k (\$200k per year) for planning has been programmed from STP funds for Group 1, Lake and Porter Counties, while Group 2, La Porte County is still being negotiated. CMAQ and FTA are also being looked into as potential funding sources. Chairman Murphy requested information regarding NIRPC's TOD study and Eman informed the group NICTD has received RDA funding to complete a business plan. Although originally introduced as a financial business plan between NICTD and the RDA in 2012 it has now been learned that it will include investigating TOD options along the entire NICTD corridor, as well as the area between 65 and Lake Street. Eman requested and was sent the scope from the RDA. While pretty ambiguous at this point, in general the scope will look at the TOD for current stations, but specifically look at options for a new consolidated station by 65 and the Miller station. Eman was informed by the RDA that since they are in the process of doing this study with NICTD, money is not available for their commitment to the NIRPC TOD study and it has been placed on hold. A consultant has

been selected for the NICTD study and the contract is being finalized. Eman will contact NICTD to ask for NIRPC to be on the advisory committee and find out what their exact plans. Chairman Murphy believes NIRPC should consider conducting an independent TOD study regardless of NICTD's plan. Craig Phillips strongly suggested it should be stressed to the RDA that studies on existing stations they should involve communities the stations are in. Comment was made regarding looking at transit development to establish community interconnectivity. Eman remarked a connection between Hammond and Munster is being looked into as part of the Westlake corridor. Brian Poland commented it has seemed that NICTD has been reluctant to pursue that and if it did happen would be a good opportunity for a centralized station for the two lines to meet in Hammond. He voiced his concern that a NICTD TOD study will focus on how to get people to Chicago as opposed to aiding transit in the region and feels a NIRPC study it would take on a different focus.

c. Creating Livable Communities (CLC) Program – available funding

\$400k in STP funds has been programmed for Group 1 planning for two years, with the first \$200k available July 1st. Group 2 (La Porte) is still in negotiations. A draft of the program was provided as a handout to the Committee for review. This program was established to support community based development and redevelopment of transportation and land use projects in the downtown and neighborhood station areas to link transit, housing, and jobs and maximize development within existing infrastructure. The 2040 CRP goals of a livable urban, suburban and rural centers and revitalized urban core will be used when looking at criteria and scoring. An advisory committee (LCAC) will be established and will include a variety of experts from planning, transportation, urban design and development.

d. CLC Project: Funding Categories – Eligibility – Selection Criteria

Projects must be identified in the livable centers map area or transit area map and must be possible under existing codes/ordinances of the local government to be eligible. Because this is STP funding the projects will have to be within the urbanized area boundaries. Since some communities fall outside of the boundaries different ways of funding will be explored in the future. The grant will be awarded on a competitive basis to local governments, transportation agencies, and community-based nonprofit organizations. Non-governmental organization must partner with a local government agency. Recipients will be required to enter into a funding agreement with NIRPC/INDOT and attend a workshop on grant administration. CLC is to fund planning projects that revitalize existing centers, neighborhood, downtown, transit stop or transit corridors and will assist cities with activities such as urban design, detailed redevelopment designs and economic feasibility analysis to prepare projects to compete for STP funding. It may also fund projects related to land assembly, access management, surface water management, zoning ordinance, streetscape improvements and design guidelines. Selection criteria includes achieving Creating Livable Communities program goals and objectives, improving quality of life, promoting economic development, create walkable places, ability to be implemented, improve connectivity, create the groundwork for future implementation projects and improve environmental quality. It was requested that instead of being a required element, that NIRPC help communities in establishing design guidelines. Michigan City has implemented a special zoning application for any boundaries within a half mile of a NICTD stop. Eman noted there will be tools available on the NIRPC website to aid communities in the CLC program highlighting local examples to aid others in planning. Joyce Newland was questioned regarding eligibility of STP funds to be used for the types of planning projects within the CLC program. After review she indicated the CLC projects are eligible for Federal Highway STP funds. The selection criteria was briefly reviewed and Eman asked for ideas regarding changes to the criteria and David Wright indicated he would like to discuss the criteria internally at GPTC and with other transit operators for input. The maximum funding amount was discussed and Eman indicated after reviewing other MPO examples she thinks the maximum award would be \$150k with 20% match. Discussion followed regarding the subject of maximum funding and what the lowest awarded amount could be that could still have value. There is no minimum established because some communities have trouble coming up with local match. David Wright suggested a \$100k maximum. Any suggestions should be emailed to Eman before the May meeting.

Local Communities Update

a. Illiana Project – Local Communities Land Use

Bill Brown informed the group that the Tier 2 environmental analysis has begun on the Illiana project. During a meeting between the corridor program group and the technical advisory committee held in the week prior to the Land Use Meeting the project team offered to work on land use and zoning issues with local communities that are directly impacted. It is yet to be determined how that will work. The Project is taking on land use as part of their tier 2 environmental process. The corridor project team will present what's happening at NIRPC Committee meetings and will interact directly with those Committees. A question was raised regarding the no build option and whether that is the most acceptable option for NIRPC to consider in light of the 2040 plan. Bill indicated NIRPC is not supposed to have a personal opinion, but completes the analysis and then decision makers, stakeholders, and committee members can have opinions about it. However, NIRPC can defend and be advocates for the 2040 plan.

b. Current or Proposed Studies, Plans and Projects

- David Wright announced GPTC applied for a coastal grant and a positive recommendation from DNR was given. They are now awaiting word from NOAA. The grant is for the livable Broadway project which is a corridor study to assess current and anticipated land uses from downtown Gary to US 231 in Crown Point. The intent is to come up with the proper fit for public transit, pedestrian and green infrastructure for anticipated growth scenarios for the involved communities. The main impetus involves some of the projects submitted to the 2040 plan. GPTC does not advocate a mold so the analysis would just provide direction. The funding request from the Coastal Program was \$50k for match of a \$400k grant already awarded. The maximum used unless other funding sources are established would be around \$250k. This project could spawn further projects that could use the CLC funding.
- Sergio Mendoza announced that the Coastal Program is gearing up for the 2013/2014 Coastal Advisory Board. 10 voting members are already established, but the three voting member seats for anyone associated with a city or town in Porter County, a Porter County citizen at large, and Lake County Chamber of Commerce are still vacant. There is a one year requirement and involves six meetings. The members Vote on priorities, projects and give direction on where the program should go for the year. Sergio also announced that the IDNR is scheduled to present about the Coastal Program at the NIRPC Full Commission meeting in April and are available to present to local councils and commissions. They are also available to meet to discuss project ideas and were recently contacted by the City of Hobart to meet regarding water trail project.

Announcements

- a. Pathway to 2040 Implementation Committee 9:00 a.m. Thursday, April 11, 2013
- b. Next Land Use Committee Meeting – May 15, 2013, 10:00 a.m.
- c. Four NIRPC public meetings to be held in Porter, Lake and LaPorte.

New NIRPC Executive Director Ty Warner introduced himself to the Committee and voiced his excitement regarding the livable centers and CLC funding programs and thanked the committee for working on this.

Meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m.