

Land Use Committee Meeting  
September 19, 2012  
NIRPC Auditorium

Members & Visitors: Craig Phillips, A J Bytnar, Tyler Kent, Kevin Breitzke, David Wright

NIRPC Staff: Steve Strains, Eman Ibrahim, Gabrielle Biciunis, Stephen Sostaric, Sarah Geinosky, Bill Brown, Meredith Stilwell

Steve Strains called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.

Bill Brown briefly discussed the need for adjustments to the urban area boundaries which will require coordination with communities. He reviewed the 2000 and 2010 adjustments and noted a workshop was held and interaction with the communities will continue with the 2012 adjustments ready for board action in October. There will be a presentation regarding the boundary adjustments at the September Commission Meeting.

The July 11, 2012 minutes were reviewed and David Wright asked for a correction to be made on page 3 to change the ridership totals in Northwest Indiana from 110-120 to 110,000-120,000. On motion by David Wright and second by Bill Brown, the July 11, 2012 Land Use Committee Meeting Minutes were approved. **NOTE:** After the meeting, upon further review of the minutes and consultation with David it was discovered the totals in question referred to number of trips instead of riders and should remain 110-120.

• **Preliminary Livable Centers in Northwest Indiana – Eman Ibrahim, NIRPC**

Work has begun to develop analysis for the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI). The LCI can assist communities in planning and show the most efficient and effective way to link land use and transportation within the livable centers. Within the last ten years, FHWA and FTA have realized the importance in linking land use and transportation and controlling sprawl which has become a major issue in northwest Indiana. A graph reflecting transportation planning impacts on land use and the cycle of automobile dependency was presented. The 2040 Plan attempts to avoid or limit the dependency on automobile oriented planning by creating livable centers. Conceptual livable centers were established, but continued work with the communities needs to be done to accurately define the livable center boundaries. The basic elements of livable centers recommended in the 2040 plan were reviewed and Steve questioned if the group knew of any area in or outside of northwest Indiana that incorporated all or most of the elements. He stressed it is a serious question and NIRPC would love for a number of the region communities to have as many of those basic elements as possible. Eman noted every community is different and is classified based on size and land use.

The methodology/scope includes three steps:

- Step 1: GIS analysis to identify preliminary livable center areas with criteria of block size, residential density, employment density, transit stations/stops and land use reviewed.
- Step 2: Analysis of plans and codes to identify planned livable centers.
- Step 3: Gather data and complete livability checklist for preliminary livable centers to the extent possible.

Continued methodology includes context sensitive solutions (CSS) which exercises flexibility and creativity to shape effective transportation solutions, while preserving and enhancing community and natural environments. A handout was available and reviewed that detailed context zones and their characteristics. Also included in the handout were thoroughfare descriptions and design parameters for walkable urban thoroughfares. Other general standards being used include diversity of use, density and compactness, job opportunities, low crime rate, diversity of housing, accessibility/connectivity. Next steps will be to conduct meetings with the municipalities to identify and define and map the geographic boundaries of the livable centers. The steps following the identification of the boundaries will determine the level of planning and regulations for each center and based on the study of existing centers, and a context-sensitive typology of livable centers in the region will be developed.

NIRPC is working with FTA and FHWA to determine how the Creating Livable Communities (CLC) Funding Program can be funded. The Land Use Committee will review the criteria and eligibility for this program.

Steve asked to return to the cycle of automobile dependency portion of the presentation and discussed where he felt there are attempts being made to break the cycle.

- **Livable Centers Land Use / Zoning** – *Gabrielle Biciunis, NIRPC*

A Code of Zoning Ordinances matrix was presented and Gabrielle stated each community's code of zoning ordinances is being reviewed. During this review process which zoning areas have the features and elements of a livable center is being determined. In addition, mixed use and Transit-Oriented Development zoning areas are also identified. This reviewing process helps establish the boundaries for the livable centers. Including unincorporated in the process was discussed and Eman remarked those areas should possibly be considered since some of them are incorporating livable center elements. The analysis can be applied to those areas to determine if they should be considered. Neighborhood centers are being considered to add as well. The information currently only includes zoning maps available and information available online. David Wright noted this is an impressive effort by NIRPC and is glad this is being done.

- **Map of Preliminary Livable Centers** – *Sarah Geinosky, NIRPC*

Sarah presented a map which reflects the preliminary analysis of the livable centers in Northwest Indiana. The methodology and criteria were reviewed and presented for the areas of Hobart, Valparaiso, Michigan City, Portage and Gary.

- **Broadway Corridor Study (GPTC)** – *David Wright*

The Broadway Corridor Study was included in the 2013-2014 Unified Planning Work Program and is essentially an alternatives analysis for upgrading the corridor. The study area includes Gary through Merrillville and due to development south of 93<sup>rd</sup> into Crown Point. \$400k in programmed FTA funds is dedicated to the study and a match by non-USDOT sources is being sought. The 2040 CRP advocates livable centers, several of which exist along the Broadway Corridor both in and outside of Gary, and also advocates looking at updating modes of transportation along the Corridor. Finding a way to optimize how people are transported up and down the Broadway Corridor within the City and suburban portions of the corridor is being looked at and is in line with Gary's 2009 strategic business plan. Outside of the Southshore, the Broadway corridor is by far the most productive transit corridor in northwest Indiana with roughly 20,000 riders per month. During August 23,000 riders were transported. Those totals only include Routes 17 and 18 which are the Broadway routes and do not include the three other routes that overlap the Corridor. Goals and objectives were reviewed and include assessing the current state of transit on Broadway, transit/pedestrian linkages (there are currently four planned bike and pedestrian nodes on Broadway) and modal conflicts. Growth scenarios for the corridor will be reviewed/created and integrated with optimal transit and pedestrian mobility consistent with the 2040 CRP. Finally, recommendations will be made for transit scenarios and modes, and funding strategies for transit and development for the corridor. The idea is not to force a particular type of land use on the communities but find out what stakeholders have in mind and how best to create pedestrian and transit access for the development patterns. Stakeholders include City of Gary, Town of Merrillville, City of Crown Point, NIRPC, IU Northwest, Methodist Hospitals, Chambers of Commerce, INDOT, and the RDA. When asked if NICTD could be a major stakeholder or are they still planning to move their station from the Gary Metro Center, David remarked that they could be a potential stakeholder and City of Gary is putting together some study regarding the potential for that move. No definite decision has been made and there are many variables involved, but if the move occurs there will have to be some type of transit linkage between the Metro Center area and the new station. A scope of work is being developed for a consultant to be hired, but is not completed.

Chairman Breitzke joined the meeting and apologized for his tardiness due to being called to an emergency Development Review Committee meeting.

Bill Brown recommended considering a study along the US20 corridor after the Broadway Corridor study is completed. Discussion followed regarding the US20 corridor. A possible third corridor study between Indianapolis and Calumet in Hammond was also mentioned. Eman spoke about a proposed corridor study east of Broadway from 12 and 20 to I-65.

- **Suburbia Retrofit (US 30 & I-65 Area) Project** – *Steve Strains, NIRPC*

The US 30 and I-65 area was identified as a metro center in the 2040 Plan. How to redevelop and repair the area from sprawl in a sustainable way, how to make the area less congested and dangerous, how to reduce land consumption, how to make livable urban centers and how to increase local connectivity are all areas that need to be addressed. Although a HUD grant application for an I-65 and U.S. 30 Retrofit Project was submitted but not funded, a different opportunity for

assistance with the project became available when Professor Scott Truex from the Ball State University Department of Urban Planning noted his excitement and desire to have his students work with NIRPC on projects related to the 2040 Plan. In January 2013 a group of around 15 the Ball State planning students will begin a Suburbia Retrofit course and will be collecting data to complete an analysis for the US 30 and I-65 area project. The City of Hobart and Town of Merrillville will be included as major stakeholders and there will be some oversight by Eman to make sure the project is running well. Eman and Steve Strains will be meeting with Scott. A scope of work has been proposed and will be adapted to fit with the Suburbia Retrofit course. A group comprised of representatives from City of Hobart, Town of Merrillville, INDOT, and NIRPC will do surveys to help the students start the project. Even though this might not be the complete project initially intended, it will permit analysis and recommendations to be completed, allowing for further transportation funding to be looked into for design plans and implementation. The Land Use Committee will be updated as this project progresses.

A.J. Bytnar from Hobart stated he sent his recommendations to NIRPC and feels meetings should be held with both Hobart and Merrillville to amend the project boundaries before the curriculum is set and study begins. It was mentioned that others, including large property owners should be met with regarding this process.

• **Current or Proposed Studies, Plans and Projects:**

Tyler Kent announced Valparaiso should be finished with their 2030 Comprehensive Plan by the end of 2012 and the Valparaiso University Master Plan will be revealed on September 20 and will include the old hospital site plan. The airport plan should be finishing up within the next couple of months. He noted both the VU Master Plan and the Airport Plan need to be in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

Craig Phillips announced there have been efforts to look at all Michigan City plans completed over the past several years and tie them together to create an action plan. Wayfinding signage programs are being worked on as well. It was noted former Mayor Oberlie is involved as both a stakeholder and advisor.

A.J. Bytnar announced Hobart has finished their downtown study and are working on an action plan. The Hobart Marsh Plan review is also being finalized. Revisions are being finalized on their stormwater ordinance.

Bill Brown announced the Toll Road and INDOT are working on a plan for the interchange between the Toll Road and the Borman and are interested in forming a Citizen Stakeholder Advisory Committee. He noted Gary, Lake Station and surrounding neighborhoods would be potential candidates. He also announced the updating of NIRPC's Public Participation Plan. A draft is close to completion, will be reviewed by Steve Strains and one or two other staff members and then be forwarded to the Public Participation Task Force. Further discussion was held regarding changes in the Plan involving TIP amendments.

Chairman Breitzke spoke about Enbridge and their pipeline replacement project in northwest Indiana and asked if there was an interest in having them present to the Land Use Committee. They recently presented to the Environmental Management Policy Committee and it was decided a presentation to the TPC might be a more appropriate forum. Communities can contact Enbridge individually if they have questions or concerns.

**Announcements:**

- a. Pathway to 2040 Implementation Committee 9:00 a.m. Thursday, October 11, 2012
- b. Next Land Use Committee Meeting – November 14, 2012, 10:00 a.m.

Meeting adjourned 11:57 a.m.