

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

NIRPC Auditorium

April 2, 2015

Members/Guests Present: Mike Molnar, Dorreen Carey, Susan MiHalo, Leslie Dorworth, Jody Melton, Michael Kuss, Deb Backhus, Geof Benson, Maggie Byrne, Dan Plath, Ashley Snyder, Michelle Caldwell, Leanne Whitesell, Charlotte Read, Lee Botts, Candice Smith, Jennifer Gadzala, Kacey Alexander, Bruce Carter, Natalie Conlon, Kevin Breitzke, Chandra Viswanathan, Peter Avis, Kay Nelson

NIRPC Staff: Kathy Luther, Joe Exl, Stephen Sostaric, Scott Weber, Belinda Petrosky, Meredith Stilwell

Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Benson called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.

Approval of March 5, 2015 EMPC Minutes

On a motion by Deb Backhus and second by Jody Melton, the March 5, 2015 EMPC meeting minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Presentations:

a. NIRPC 2040 CRP Update – Stephen Sostaric, Scott Weber and Kathy Luther-NIRPC

NIRPC is in the midst of a comment period for the 2040 CRP update as well as for the 2016-2019 TIP and air quality analysis. There are three major planning products required by NIRPC: The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which is included within the CRP; the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The 2040 CRP was adopted in 2011. The CRP is broken down into recommendation sections that include growth and conservation; transportation; environment and green infrastructure; human and economic resources; stewardship and governance.

The growth and conservation element covers demographics and housing trends in 2013; growth patterns; and local food systems. The four priorities considered in this Plan Update reflected in the CRP goals are livable urban, suburban, and rural centers; revitalized urban core cities; managed growth that protects farmland, environmentally sensitive areas, and important ecosystems; and linked land use and transportation. Since 2010, the region has lost 2,521 people but this change does not indicate a major long term trend of population loss. The region's housing supply continued to grow between 2010 and 2014, despite the population loss. Some of the growth and conservation element priorities implementation/action items by NIRPC between 2011 and 2015 include transit oriented development (TOD) projects; corridor studies; Creating Livable Communities (CLC); NIRPC Creating Livable Communities (CLC) Initiative; Urban Core Subcommittee; cultural & historic inventory mapping project; prioritizing transportation funding to support centers, revitalization areas, and infill & growth areas as well as tracking development patterns. Community projects include the Gary Northside Redevelopment Project; Roxana TOD Project in East Chicago; Lake Michigan Gateway Implementation Strategy in Michigan City; and the Marquette Plan Update 2015.

The transportation element in the update shows safety data; the congestion management process; 2015 Intelligent Transportation System Architecture update; non-motorized transportation and transit. There is a new FY 2016-2019 Transit TIP and while new regional

transit services, ridership is up and more communities are exploring transit as an option, a lack of a dedicated source of local match still stymies system-wide growth.

Kathy Luther presented the Environmental Chapter updates and changes. In the green infrastructure and ecological resources section there are now 294 natural/recreational areas; 21 fewer “managed areas”; an increase of 6,500 acres and the refined Chicago Wilderness GIV 2.1 which shows significantly more analysis of both habitat quality and connectivity. The Water Quality & Resources section changes show 878 more stream miles impaired, primarily due to new data from the TMDL study requested by the EMPC; new IDNR floodplain maps; per acre estimates of Ecosystem Services \$\$ for different resources has been added; Six watershed management plans have been completed/approved to date; When the Little Calumet River East Branch and Deep River-Portage Burns Waterway Plans are completed, 27% of our land will have approved plans; and a CSO long-term control plan status summary has been added. In addition the significant water withdrawals data and air quality data have been updated and Great Lakes regional water consumption coefficients have been added to the Plan. NIRPC implementation actions for this portion of the plan include environmental red flag investigations for transportation projects; development and support of watershed management plans; update of Green Infrastructure Vision (GIV); and support letters for partners implementing GIV through land acquisition.

The Human & Economic Resources chapter elements are collaboration is key to economic health and vitality and continued support of the key strategies of advancing top industry clusters; leveraging land use and multimodal transportation; continuing to support Northwest Indiana Economic Development District (NWIEDD); and supporting education and job development partners.

Stephen took the presentation back over to discuss the 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a short-term project list of highway, transit, non-motorized and environmental projects which implements the Regional Transportation Plan and includes local and state projects. Current regionally significant projects are the Illiana Expressway; SR 312 reconstruction in Hammond; US 20/SR2 Interchange in Rolling Prairie; US 41 center turn lane (US 231 to 93rd Avenue); and 45th Avenue grade separation at Calumet Avenue. A summary of transit TIP projects reflected 229 proposed projects for a total of \$265,516,090 with total Federal expected funds of \$120,795,292 and \$144,720,799 local funds needed. The transit projects are mostly for maintenance and improvements to existing services.

Scott Weber presented the Air Quality Conformity section of the Plan indicating all regionally significant capacity expansion projects must conform to Air Quality Budgets for ozone and fine particles every 5 years to 2040. There is interagency consultation between NIRPC, FHWA, FTA, US EPA, IDEM, and INDOT. New projects being added are the Willowcreek Road extension; Livable Broadway Bus Rapid Transit; Gary Public Transit Lakeshore South; Gary Public Transit Lakeshore North; and the Triangle Transit Service

Comments made after the meeting may be emailed to comments@nirpc.org; by telephone at (219) 763-6060 ext. 160; and by US Postal Service at 6100 Southport Rd., Portage, IN 46368. NIRPC can be found online at www.nirpc.org; on facebook at facebook.com/nirpcmpo; and on twitter at twitter.com/nirpc.

Lee Botts commented that NIRPC needs to try harder to communicate with news sources to inform citizens of the region.

NIRPC Business:

a. CMAQ Funding Applications – Kathy Luther, NIRPC

Kathy noted that the list of CMAQ projects provided at the last EMPC meeting was inaccurate and a new list was handed out to meeting attendees. A poll will be sent out to schedule a subgroup meeting to analyze the proposals in more detail.

Public Comment: *None*

Announcements:

- Kay Nelson provided the group with a legislative update of current House and Senate bills and their status.
- Meeting and event announcements will be forwarded to the EMPC email distribution list.

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.