

**Land Use Committee Meeting  
January 11, 2012 ~ Minutes  
NIRPC Auditorium**

**Members & Visitors**

Craig Phillips, Bob Thompson, Jennifer Birchfield

**NIRPC Staff**

Eman Ibrahim, Gabrielle Bicuinas, Meredith Stilwell

Eman called the meeting to order at 10:17 a.m.

On motion by Bob Thompson and second by Craig Phillips, the Land Use Committee Meeting Minutes from November 2011 were approved.

◆ **Regional Land Use Planning – Eman Ibrahim, NIRPC Planning Manager**

**a) NIRPC Proposed Programs for the Implementation of the CRP**

It is time for an update of the UPWP two year program and changes need to be made to begin implementation of the 2040 CRP. Eman spoke on two programs that are being proposed:

- Northwest Indiana Livable Centers Initiative – In the 2040 Plan, the 41 municipality centers were established conceptually, but there is a need to define/set the livable center boundaries. NIRPC will meet with elected officials and planners to define these boundaries which will factor into the 2040 CRP funding priority to regional transportation projects within these areas. Activities include determining existing condition, data, level of planning and regulation for each center, as well as developing a context-sensitive typology and draft map to be reviewed by staff and elected officials of the municipalities. An example of a toolbox and checklist from a Kansas City MPO was noted. A type of checklist will be created and once size and activity within the center are determined, recommendations for change will be given that could factor into the funding program. The result of these activities will be a map of Northwest Indiana Livable Centers, descriptions of each center, and regional centers typology report and should be completed within one year. *Identifying economic centers is a separate effort from this initiative. Hopes are to receive funding to provide assistance for the program, but will basically be NIRPC staff working with each municipality.*
- Creating Livable Communities (CLC) Funding Program – The purpose of the program is to aid in the implementation of the 2040 CRP and will be to fund land use and transportation projects within the transit and livable center areas identified in the Northwest Indiana Livable Centers Initiative. Funding will be created by allocating a portion of NIRPC's federal surface transportation formula funding. (i.e., STP, CMAQ, TE, etc.) These projects will fall in the "Other" category since they cannot compete well with transit and highway projects. *It was mentioned there is a lack of understanding regarding the connection between land use planning and transportation.* This program will also allow for construction and is not just for planning. Several MPOs around the country have already implemented similar programs and have been very successful. The program will not start with a huge percentage allocation from the funding sources, but if successful more money can be requested. The RDA is in support of this program and local money can be obtained from them to match federal dollars. Once the livable centers have been defined, program guidelines, eligibility and scoring criteria, evaluation procedures, and funding mechanism to support both capital and planning projects will need to be researched and developed working with the Land Use Committee. *Craig Phillips noted an example of a 40-50 acre site of undeveloped land in the middle of the City of Valparaiso. This is a prime opportunity to do a mixed use development which could function as a live/work environment. It is currently zoned business park which allows for a certain number of uses and residential is allowed as long as it is above the first floor of the established businesses. Eman indicated this is the type of project being looked for. The number of livable centers in various municipalities was discussed and it was noted some municipalities did not represent themselves when determining their centers.*

## **b) 2040 CRP Implementation Matrix**

The Pathway to 2040 Implementation Committee has created a matrix to bring together the 2040 CRP's expressed goals, objectives, and strategies which are located throughout the various sections of the Plan. The matrix is categorized based on the CRP chapters, and each category will be reviewed by an appropriate NIRPC Committee with the Land Use Committee reviewing growth and conservation goals and objectives. An example of the matrix was presented. Each goal and objectives of that goal are listed and broken down into action steps; short, medium, or long-term determination; what NIRPC, Fed/State, Local, and other entities can do; and funding sources. If there are good examples for a particular action step they will then be listed in the final Successes/Best Practices column. *It was questioned if there is a category/column for listing resources and it was decided that type of information could be added to the Successes/Best Practices area. Craig Phillips provided Eman with a downtown zoning checklist from North Carolina that could be shared with other communities. Although not 100% complete at this point, Eman reviewed information and examples already incorporated into the matrix. Craig mentioned adding that communities can modify their existing regulations to encourage mixed use, requiring standards of design that encourage pedestrian connectivity in a complete streets types of standards to the Create Livable Centers Action Step under Objective 1-A. He also noted suggesting to other communities to define and adopt specific standards in their ordinances regarding infill development and cited some of the standards listed in Valparaiso's ordinances. Eman will email the matrix and information from the meeting for review and feedback.*

*A discussion was held regarding three apartment proposals currently in front of the Valparaiso planning commission. One issue the City is struggling with is the need to understand that attitudes and realities involved with home ownership are changing and not everyone wants to or can reside in a single family home. Difficulties with condominium ownership, including lending requirements and building codes, were also discussed.*

## **c) Land use Committee Accomplishments towards the CRP**

A handout of the Land Use Committee Accomplishments towards the CRP and development of the 2040 Plan over the previous two years was distributed for review. The report details education, presentations, recommendations, and strategies.

## **◆ LOCAL COMMUNITIES UPDATE**

### **a. Current or Proposed Studies, Plans, and Projects**

Craig Phillips reported Valparaiso and Porter County are close to wrapping up the Airport Plan. A public open house was held at Ivy Tech in November 2011. The implementation strategies are currently being drafted and there will be a meeting in January or February 2012.

The Greentown Conference is being held at Valparaiso University Harre Union on September 27 and 28, 2012. Kathy Luther is on the steering committee and the event is being partially funded by NIRPC. This is a sustainability conference and will feature a land use tract dealing with healthy living, green living, green building, etc., as well as an air and water quality environmental track. More information regarding the Conference can be found on their website at [www.greentownconference.com](http://www.greentownconference.com). The event usually brings in around 200-400 people and it is important to spread the word to get northwest Indiana communities involved as participants and companies involved as sponsors. An advisory committee will be formed and include agencies, individuals, and interest groups.

Grand Oaks, a large residential development of over 400 units on the south side of Aberdeen in Porter County, is currently being reviewed and includes some mixed housing. The area has utilities but there is a struggle with the drainage process.

The U.S. 6 overlay should come before the Porter County planning commission for recommendation next month.

Bob Thompson discussed a possible PVD ordinance backing in Porter County. A 2011 study revealed that since the adoption of the Unified Development Ordinance, every application before the Planning Commission first stopped at the BZA to request variances. Two of the biggest items involve landscaping and stormwater and the ordinance would help work out some of the issues.

Jennifer Birchfield reported on a TMDL being worked on in partnership with IDEM and EPA that takes into account impaired biotic communities and involves land use and impervious surface calculations. A public meeting will be held in late February.

**Announcements**

- Pathway to 2040 Implementation Committee for the Comprehensive Regional Plan – 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, January 18, 2012.
- The next Land Use Committee will be held Wednesday, March 14, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. at NIRPC.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.