

Technical Planning Committee

NIRPC Lake Michigan Room

YouTube Recording:

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July 11, 2023

Minutes

Kevin Breitzke called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. In attendance were Kevin Breitzke (Porter County), George Topoll (Union Township), Beth Shrader (Valpo Transit), Mark O'Dell (Chesterton), Lisa Shrader (INDOT), Ryan Lisek (DCI), Dean Button (Hammond), Kay Nelson (Forum), Rebekah Hammond (NICTD), Tony Siegmund (NICTD), and David Wright (GPTC).

NIRPC staff present were Mitch Barloga, Tom Vander Woude, Charles Bradsky, Scott Weber, Kevin Polette, Stephen Hughes, Grace Benninger, Candice Eklund, and Flor Baum.

On motion by Dean Button, second by Kay Nelson, the Technical Planning Committee (TPC) approved the minutes of May 9, 2023 minutes as presented.

There were no public comments.

Planning

Mitch Barloga presented on Resolution 23-10: NWI 2050+ Long Range Plan Adoption. Engage NWI is the federally required "Public Participation Plan" that enables NIRPC staff to ensure that it is meeting all federal requirements for public participation. There was a 30-day public comment report in which two non-significant comments were received. Additionally, the draft plan was made available on NIRPC's website, and four public meetings were held to solicit comments and feedback. The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC), as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Council of Governments (COG) for NWI, has the responsibility to conduct economic development, environmental, and transportation planning for Lake, LaPorte and Porter Counties. This plan carries forward some of the focus areas of the prior plan, *NWI 2050*, and this updated plan continues the idea of Connected, Renewed, United, and Vibrant. It also addresses the new Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) legislation for transportation legislation and includes an updated section on Resiliency, Housing, and Carbon Reduction. The chapters include the following: Introduction, Land Use, Active Transportation, Roadways, Climate and the Environment, Transit, and Freight. Once the plan is adopted, implementation can begin over the next few years. On motion by George Topoll, second by Dean Button, the TPC recommended Res 23-10 to the Commission for approval.

Scott Weber gave an informational presentation on the Urban Area (UA) Boundary. UAs are delineated by the US Census Bureau every 10 years with at least 2K housing units (HUs) or 5K people, at least one nucleus of 1,275 HUs per sq mile, and a density of at least 200 HUs per sq mile. MPA's within the NIRPC Region, at a minimum, must incorporate applicable UAs and adjacent areas expected to become urbanized within 20 years. Before 2020, UAs were measured by population. The population threshold increased to over 5K people. The "jump" threshold reduced from 2.5 mi. (2000-2010) to 1.5 mi. There are no longer Urban Clusters. Instead, certain small UAs (Lowell, Lake of the Four Seasons, and Westville) with a population of 5K – 49.9K are designated UAs. There will be an adjustment process of the 2020 Census UAs. FHWA and FTA will apportion formula funding amounts based on unadjusted UA boundaries, including STBG

funds. Roadway Functional Classification is no longer tied to Urban vs. Rural. The adjustment process of the census-defined UAs is as follows:

- States and MPOs, in coordination with local officials, may adjust the Census-designated UAs.
- The entire Census-designated UAs must be included.
- NIRPC approved the 2010 adjusted UA in December 2012 (Res 12-25).
- The 2020 adjusted UA is due to FHWA in December 2023.
- INDOT must approve NIRPC's proposed adjusted UA and submit to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for final approval.

NIRPC staff is currently preparing a draft that includes the 2010 adjusted AU boundary (AUAB) and extends to the 2020 unadjusted UA boundary to areas not included in the 2010 AUAB. Also noted, this will be extended to municipal boundaries if outside of the 1+2 above and will also be extended to incorporate federal aid routes continuity. The AU adjustments will be reviewed with stakeholders to determine any possible conflicts or missed areas prescribed in the *NWI 2050* or the *NWI 2050+*. Draft will be presented at the TPC and Commission meeting in October 2023, and it is slated to be submitted to INDOT for review.

Programming

Charles Bradsky presented on Resolution 23-11: FY 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Amendment #22-10 of the 2022-2026 TIP. Res 23-11 was released for public comment on June 13 and closed on July 4. One question regarding if Hammond's Local Trax project, Governor's Parkway Bridge, was in the amendment. It is not. The amendment was sent to members of the Intergovernmental Consultation Group (ICG) on June 12. With NIRPC's agreement with the ICG, if no response is received, concurrence is granted. No comments were received from the ICG; therefore, approval was given by the members by concurrence. Clarification was requested for two projects:

- Schererville project (des #1382603) is non-exempt and is in our long-range plan.
- INDOT's project (des #1900177) clarification of the description, "left turning improvements along the SR 2 corridor." It is NIRPC's understanding, in a statement from the project designer, that INDOT has since removed any left-turning improvements along the corridor.

Amendment #22-10 contains six projects which are either new or modifications for fiscal years 2024, & 2025 and are as follows:

- Three new INDOT projects were added - 1 bridge rehabilitation project and 2 road rehabilitation (one Concrete and one asphalt).
- The City of LaPorte eliminated a sidewalk project.
- Porter County added a new bridge replacement project.
- Schererville added a substantial amount of funding for ROW. This is for the second phase of the corridor project which will be going to construction in 2025.

On motion by Dean Button, second by George Topoll, with technical corrections being addressed, the TPC recommended Res 23-11 to the Commission for approval.

Charles spoke on Resolution #23-05: FY 2024-2028 TIP Adoption, *Invest NWI 2024-2028*. During the 21-day public comment period, no public comments were received.

No comments were received at the open houses that were held for the *NWI 2050+*. Two comments were received from the FHWA regarding a deficit reported that was corrected and a request to provide explanation of the funds NIRPC loaned to another MPO that will be paid back at a later year. INDOT and the USDOT have reviewed NIRPCs proposed TIP and are awaiting the new Air Quality Conformity information to be implemented by NIRPC. On motion by Dean Button and seconded by David Wright, the TPC recommended Res 23-05 to the Commission for approval.

Topical Committee Reports

3PC announced the mobile app (Calumet Greenways & Blueways) that is now available on Apple and Android phones.

Reports from Planning Partners

Ryan Lisek (DCI) reported on projects, upcoming events, and funding programs within NWI. Drive Clean Indiana (DCI) is Indiana's only U.S. Department of Energy-designated Clean Cities Coalition. If your community is looking to implement any clean transportation activity, please reach out to Drive Clean Indiana at 219-644-3690, or visit www.drivecleanindiana.org for more information.

Adjournment

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:46 a.m.

The next TPC meeting is slated for September 12, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. in the NIRPC building.