



Committee Meeting ~ Woodland Park
October 22, 2015
Minutes

Members & Guests –Robert Boklund, Bob Huffman, Leslie Phemister, Julie Mandon, Shannon Eason, Jan Orlich, John Novacich, Walter Lenckos, Mark Gordish, Chris Moore, Don Parker, Greg Vitale, Mark Schreiber, Jan Dick

Staff – Mitch Barloga, Meredith Stilwell

Chairman Dick called the meeting to order at 1:39 pm.

Ped

A. South Shore Trails Update

Don Parker reported that the planning meeting for their 2016 work plan will be November 12 at a location to be determined. He also reported that South Shore Trails has been assisting with the Greenways + Blueways trail surveys.

B. Greenways + Blueways 2020 Plan – Update

Two surveys have been published; one public survey and one survey targeting municipalities regarding how various trails are handled. A matrix of accomplishments and progress will be developed from the survey results. Mitch remarked South Shore Trails has been very helpful with the trail intercept surveys. 480 online surveys from the general public and 300-400 intercept surveys have been completed. The next step in the Plan update is data crunching with the plan being put together November 2015 to January 2016 with public meetings to hopefully follow in February 2016.

C. G&B Map – 2016 Edition Update

The G&B Map will be a concurrent development. The first edition of the map was published in 2007 with the last update in 2012. Sponsorships are very important and are being rounded up. An RFP for a consultant for the update will be out in early January with anticipation of publication in mid to late spring. Input will be needed from 3PC.

Mitch announced that US Bicycle Route 36 has been adopted by INDOT. The route begins around the New Buffalo area and runs through several areas of our region. INDOT did a press release, but there will possibly be more strategic and targeted publicity regarding the routes running through the region.

Pedal

A. South Suburbs Update – Leslie Phemister, Active Transportation Alliance

Active Transportation Alliance is a non-profit advocacy organization that make it easier, safer, and more fun to walk, bike and take transit in the entire Chicagoland area. In 2008 the South Suburban Mayors and Managers and South Council of Mayors developed a bike plan which is now being expanded to include a complete streets plan. It will not only include bicycle ways but also large gaps in sidewalks on main arterials for people to be able to get around and is making connections to transit. Through this process and another funding source there is going to be six complete streets policies done in the south suburbs.

Burnham Gap: There is a two mile gap in the 11 mile Burnham Greenway that is pretty much funded but faces hesitation from railroads allowing the trail to go over their tracks. The railroads think no one walks or bikes there, and feel it is unsafe for people to go over the tracks in that location. There are no gates and the area is not ADA compliant but people are already walking and biking there and the area needs to be made safe for those who are doing so. Railroads want a bridge, but to make the bridge accessible it would have to be longer, more expensive and would have to go over another road. People probably wouldn't use it since it would take them out of their way. There is already funding and it needs to be made safe right now. There is a petition on the Active Trans website regarding the railroad issue.

Cal-Sag: A gap exists on the Burnham Greenway which connects to the west end of the Cal Sag which runs from Alsip to Lemont. That 13 mile portion of the Cal Sag was completed and opened this past June. The other 15 miles will be completed in 2017. All match money has been obtained

Thorn Creek/Cal-Sag/Major Taylor Connector: The Cal-Sag also connects to the Major Taylor Trail. Active Transportation Alliance is attempting to connect the Thorn Creek Trail to the south to the Cal-Sag and the Major Taylor. Meetings have been held in an attempt to find the connections. Most likely the route will go through the forest preserve to connect to the Thorn Creek.

Old Plank Road Trail: There will be a ribbon cutting on November 1st in Chicago Heights. The connection goes all the way Western Avenue in Park Forest. Eventually the connections will run from the Old Plank, to the Cal-Sag, to the Burnham Greenway to the Major Taylor.

Willow Springs: The weekend of October 17th Centennial Hill opened. An Eagle Scout in Willow Springs has chosen to do mile markers on the I & M Trail as his Eagle Scout project.

Willow Springs is part of Cook County's Partners to Improve Community Health Program. This program is from a Center for Disease Control federal grant for obesity prevention. As part of the program eight complete streets policies and three active transportation plans are being developed. As part of the initiative a two day complete streets conference was held. The first day of the conference was focused on teaching municipalities about complete streets and what goes along with it, and the second day enabled the eight municipalities which were chosen for complete streets policies to start working on their policies. Adoption will happen at the end of March 2016 and most municipalities are moving forward sooner than that.

CMAQ and Transportation Alternatives funding just came out. Park Forest will connect the Old Plank to Thorn Creek on Western Avenue, putting a side path in. Sauk Village are putting in side paths and crossings at Sauk Trail and 394. They are putting in a side path connecting 394 to Cottage Grove and then connect to Bloom Trail High School. Frankfort received many grants. Oak Forest is getting signage and different routes to be able to connect to their Metra Station throughout town. Orland Park has a 108th Avenue Trail connection. Romeoville received funding for Weber Road, which Will County owns. IDOT was coming through and redoing the I-55 interchange. Romeoville had plans to install side paths and a diverging diamond over I-55 where the trail was going to be in the middle of the roadway and then split off on either side. Will County was not going to allow Romeoville to place side paths and crossings on their roadway. Weber road has a senior center on one side of the road and shopping areas on the other side. They also would not allow IDOT to install pedestrian islands on the roadway. Romeoville has been working with Will County, who is being more flexible now, to install these paths with CMAQ money to make sure people can access the road.

Paddle

A. NWI Paddling Association – Update

The ribbon cutting for the Michigan City ADA kayak launch was held on September 26, with close to 200 people attending. An individual from Chicago who was in a wheelchair, couldn't swim and was terrified of water volunteered to cut the ribbon and is now going to join a paddling club. This launch is gaining national attention and work is being done with Gary to get a couple more installed. The Northwest Indiana Chapter of Team River Runner also opened on the same day. They fit kayaks to individuals with disabilities. The LaPorte Chain of Lakes Boat Trek was held on September 27. Michigan City Parks has just started a life jacket loaner program. The Sand Hill Crane paddling excursion was held on October 18. The City of Hobart had Wilderness Inquiry for eight days on Lake George, taking every third, fourth, fifth and sixth grader in Hobart out onto the Lake. The Hobart kayak launch project just started the week of October 19th on the river side. The ADA launch will be next spring.

Grab Bag

A. Project Updates

- Schererville Pennsy to Munster Connection: Hoping to get engineering and survey work done by the end of the year. The Board just signed a supplemental agreement to start the appraisals the beginning of next year so purchasing can be started.

- The ribbon cutting for Brinka Cross Trails in Pine Township was held on October 21st. 1.5 miles have been installed as result of the Recreation Trail Program grant that was received last year. Some details need to be finished up before the grant is completely done.
- Singing Sands Phase II in Michigan City is fully funded and will probably be constructed at the same time as Phase I. Five proposals were received for consulting work and the consultant should be hired by January 2016. Some seed money has been received for Phase III.
- The Chessie Trail in LaPorte is in the engineering phase. A hawk signal will be installed to get across Highway 35/39.
- The lights in the tunnel under Route 30 on the C & O in Merrillville have been changed to vandal proof lights. The graffiti has been removed and the tunnel will have a mural tagged in it. Nine benches will be put on the trails. Merrillville will begin plowing the trail this year.
- The State Line Trail issue in Hammond is still going on with talks with property owners to determine a good selection for the route and everybody seems happy. Letting is in 2017. The trail on Sheffield is coming along well. There is no official date for opening, but hopefully within a month. The rest of the trail from Calumet Avenue to White Oak went out for bid in October and there will probably be a spring start.
- Construction at 51 has delayed the Oak Savannah Trail in Hobart. There is not a definitive date as to when it will be open.
- The two mile segment of the Dunes Kankakee Trail running from the Indiana Dunes State Park to the visitor center will be open, if it isn't already. From there it has to be determined how to get to Chesterton.

B. General Announcements (upcoming rides, events, etc.)

NIRPC Board Chair, Mayor Blair Milo, thought NIRPC needed better oversight so a sub-committee of the Commission was formed to review and establish a new NIRPC Committee structure. A graphic of the new structure was made available to the group for review. The new Transportation Resource Oversight Committee will be established to oversee all financial decisions which allows for more transparency and accountability.

C. The Next Meeting is Thursday, December 10, 2015??

The meeting was adjourned at 2:48 pm.