

**Pathway to 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan
Implementation Committee Meeting
NIRPC Auditorium
November 16, 2011
Minutes**

Attendees

Michael Griffin, John Artis, John Parsons, Amy Delahunty, Tony Sindone, Joan Crist, Peter Kohut, Angie Fegaras, Joe Wszolek, Dale Engquist, Sandra Rodriguez, Ian Nicolini, Don Parker, Geof Benson, Rich Herr, Tyler Kent, Bruce Bendull, Brian Poland, Beth Jacobson, Sergio Mendoza, Jennifer Kharchaf, Kevin Breitzke, Nancy Adams, Jim Ton, Alice Dahl, Craig Grabow, Cecile Petro

Staff

Gabrielle Biciunas, Mitch Barloga, Bill Brown, Kevin Garcia, Ryan Hicks, Eman Ibrahim, Kathy Luther, Jody Melton, Hubert Morgan, Steve Strains, Mary Thorne, Tom VanderWoude

Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Michael Griffin called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions. Michael commended the Steering Committee for their work in developing the plan. "I got to participate in its very early stages and a variety of reasons kept me from continuing with your work. I was asked to chair this Implementation Committee and I know we will be a blend of those people who participated in the architecture of this plan and some of us to hope very much to see it realized. I am much honored to be a part of what Caesar called, "primus inter pares" first among equals. I hope that you see me in that fashion. Thank you all for giving up some of your time towards a broader future. I love the mix here; it's a very eclectic like that has been assembled here and I appreciate that very much."

Presentation – Background on the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan

Eman Ibrahim gave an overview of the plan, the elements of Growth & Conservation, Transportation, Environment & Green Infrastructure, Human & Economic Resources, and Stewardship & Governance. The region is evolving and without utilizing the principals of urban reinvestment support, environmental justice, protection of natural resources, and integration of transportation and land use, the urban core communities will continue to lose population and jobs and the unincorporated areas of the region will continue to lose their rural character and further the spread of unsustainable sprawl. Kathy Luther highlighted the four strategies for growth & conservation for the unincorporated framework, transportation strategies and human & economic resource strategies. She described the role of NIRPC through support and monitoring the implementation, building coalitions, funding opportunities, education and the support of local assistance programs, managing progress through the benefit of the Implementation Committee and utilizing performance measures and the implementation action plan of a clear 5 and 10 year program for livable centers, infill develop, green infrastructure and the environment, economic development, transportation initiatives, and stressed the need for regional participation and intergovernmental collaboration.

Role of NIRPC

This was outlined in the presentation and is in the Implementation chapter which was a handout for the committee.

Role of Committee

a) Committee Purpose

Chairman Griffin referred to the Purpose, Roles and Responsibilities document included in the packet. "We need to own this statement and part of that ownership is what you can contribute to this committee as part of implementation. Many of you served on the Comprehensive Regional Committee. You are a policy-making body. To take the 'beauty of your dreams' as Eleanor Roosevelt would call it and translate them in to something tangible is what we are about now. The first step was taking the first part of the ether of that dream and reducing it to a document that allows us to say, 'This is the dream that we share for our region.' This committee is going to be not about that. We will be doing the heavy work of what many of you have participated in before, and some of you are new to this process. The best line in here for me is 'The Committee will serve as a conduit to the region in helping to identify, organize, prioritize, target and support specific actions and recommendations of the CRP. It is also intended that this committee not function in a policy role, but rather a technical role in the implementation and monitoring of progress.' This committee will be asked to do things of a task nature. We have the policy and I commend all of you for your hand in this. This plan was adopted by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission in June and the work is outstanding. Now for this to be meaningful we have to take the next step and realize the dream."

b) Roles and Responsibilities

Chairman Griffin added, "Towards that end, since you're not a policy making body, we use a lot of verbs. You probably remember from elementary school that they are action words; they're about doing. I've come to this committee from a variety of backgrounds and I also serve as a Commissioner of NIRPC. We are always engaged in the triumph of optimism over structure. If you look at every one of those objectives before us, we have the charge of the state legislature to be about the business of delivering on every one of those items. Yet they've not given us any of the classic powers of a democracy of 'suasion' as James Madison would call it. We have no power of social control – the legal ability to compel people to honor these objectives. We have the power of our charm. We have the power of persuasion. Those are our tools and the fact that we are linked. NIRPC is a remarkable instrument because it is comprised of 52 parochial interests and yet they have managed to put those parochial interests aside and very often do something regional, particularly in the areas of transportation and environment. Now we are going to be about the business of the larger lifting. So remember every day when we're implementing this, we have been given this high task, idealistic in the highest sense of that concept, but we're triumphing over our structure, until the legislature gets a little more insightful about the need to equip us with those powers, perhaps with the better for being able to have the gift of persuasion to lead to all of these. We will still be measured on how we deliver this product. This is still a service that, as a public agency, we are delivering. We talk about the 'Three E's.' The first is effectiveness. We will be effective in delivering this and that will be a measure of our goal. Secondly, we are measured by our efficiency. That's a production function and it's identical in both the private and public sectors. Have we delivered the highest possible product at the lowest possible cost? The third E is equity and I commend you for talking about it in the CRP committee. This is fairness. If we believe in the concept of strict equity, everyone will be treated the same no matter what. In our policy areas we are about what is called market equity. That is a fair allocation of services for cost for the parks system or maybe the delivery of water. But it is not necessarily the way we ought to measure the delivery of justice. We so believe in the concept of public safety and

justice being delivered equally to all, that we use a tax system to deliver that service because it isn't measured by something you pay, it's just something you get as part of a membership in society. We also need to think about the two forms of justice: the environmental and what I would call the economic and social access equity. You could thrive but for the fact that you were born into a situation you didn't ask for that made you less economically able to act. We have all kinds of things: scholarships, Head Start, social programs for people with disabilities. I am an asmath so I really love the idea of clean air. Just to know that you are engaged in the high art of delivering when you don't have all the tools to do it except for those tools we bring in as individuals. One final thought, why I love what this committee is about – how eclectic it is, all the disciplines that are here, it reminds me of a scripture close to my faith, written by Paul of Tarsus: 'Let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season, we shall reap if we do not lose heart.' That's what this committee is about. You are engaged in well-doing and you know the triumph isn't going to come tomorrow or the next day. It may have a very long time horizon. Think of the audacity of calling something '2040', but we're that audacious. I commend all of you for agreeing to be on this committee to implement it. I ask that a motion be made to adopt our Pathway document as our statement of how we are going to get to the high ends that we described."

On a motion by Kevin Breitzke and a second by Tony Sidone, the committee voted to adopt the Pathway to 2040 Committee Purpose, Roles and Responsibilities statement.

c) Committee Expectations & Contributions:

- ◇ Rich Herr: Sustainability is a moral and ethical issue. The use of alternative fuels is needed.
- ◇ Angie Fegaras: Resources and a willingness to work with everyone on all levels.
- ◇ Kevin Breitzke: He described his involvement as an engineer, former NIRPC commissioner, policy-committee member. We need to embrace these principles that were just passed and move forward for the sake of future generations.
- ◇ Dale Engquist: Working with the National Park Service, being interested in protection of all the environmental aspects of the region.
- ◇ Joe Wszolek: His involvement with the Greater Northwest Indiana Realtors which has a large lobbying base, working in Highland, economic growth in the region and having full support of our regional municipalities, our representatives and our senators.
- ◇ Tony Sidone: As an economist, his interest is in the economy of the region, a better and more qualified labor force, better education of the public in regional thinking and a better quality of life.
- ◇ John Artis: Improving reinvestment and strength in the urban core through collaboration and regional approach with other communities, training programs, housing, economic opportunities and attracting businesses. We have a "drawer full of sharp knives" at this table and together we can realize our goals and objectives.
- ◇ Geof Benson: Regionalism in larger cities seems easier than it is in northwest Indiana. Repetitiveness in government is an issue. Involvement in environmental organizations and with the issues. We can be separatists in our own communities but we must think regionally as we have a vested interest in communities other than our own and we need to support their success and reinvest in our urban core.

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- ◇ Jennifer Karchaff: She hopes to bring efficiency and new technology to the region for the purposes of cleaner air which will affect so much like EPA standards, better quality of life and better health for our residents.
- ◇ Jim Ton: Hopes to bring a historical environmental perspective of the area. Many people coming into the area are doing so because of the environmental treasure we have, however, the ingress can have a negative effect on the environment as well as employment and growth issues.
- ◇ Bruce Bendall: A statistician for the state, regional data can be provided at the state level.
- ◇ Alice Dahl: Would like to see training centers for better employment opportunities, better transportation in the south Lake County communities, assist in implementation of the plan at the township level and with stewardship & governance.
- ◇ Brian Poland: Would like to provide assistance in planning and regional transit issues relative to lack of local funding.
- ◇ Beth Jacobsen: Would like to bring the perspective of the urban communities and some of the challenges they face in economic development.
- ◇ John Parsons: There are opportunities for improving regional connectivity. NICTD is looking to improve service and reductions in travel time, which may require consolidation of some stations in Gary and Michigan City. Most of the South Shore's daily passengers live in the southern areas. Northern infill will benefit the railroad.
- ◇ Tyler Kent: The V-Line and ChicagoDash ridership is growing at a fast pace. He'd like to see better connectivity to other municipalities. Technological opportunities and changes need to be looked at.
- ◇ Ian Nicolini: He would bring his talents as a town administrator and his professionalism relating to governance and implementation experience.
- ◇ Amy Delahunty: South Shore Clean Cities would bring their environmental expertise to help with initiatives, education, grants and funding to implement the plan.
- ◇ Sandra Rodriguez: As a part of the food systems planning, community gardens and urban core renewal, she would bring her grass roots involvement and talents to help with the revitalization of the urban core.
- ◇ Sergio Mendoza: He would bring state and coastal program resources to help implement some of the initiatives in the plan and more outreach to the communities as well as technical and educational expertise.
- ◇ Don Parker: There's been a great deal of success in trail and pathways development. Complete streets policies, collaboration between municipalities, education of leadership about the importance of the plan and looking at ways to maximize our resources.
- ◇ Nancy Adams: She is looking forward to helping with the implementation of the plan. Our influences in the community can get this done. We have a lot of education opportunities in this region to help with our economic development and workforce development. We need to get more buy-in from our higher education entities.
- ◇ Chairman Griffin closed by saying that he has a good idea of the committee's expectations; we will be very much framed by the skillsets they brought to the table. This list of comments will be brought up at the next meeting for any changes or comments to be added. We have an adherence to regionalism, a lot of liaisons to a variety of places both public and private, sincere and able advocates for the urban core, new approaches to agriculture, and privatists to help keep us on track in getting this done.

Current Initiatives.

a) Pending Grants

- ◇ Eman Ibrahim discussed the application for a grant for a sustainable community as an execution plan. The grant was made available in part by Housing and Urban Development, the US Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency. We partnered with the Regional Development Authority, our urban core communities of Gary, East Chicago, Hammond and Michigan City in a consortium with the Urban Land Institute, Metropolitan Planning Council, and the housing section here in northwest Indiana. This application is for about \$2.8 million with a local match of about \$700,000 provided by the RDA. We will be looking at two elements for this project: regional, looking at defining the boundaries of livable centers. The second is to develop a funding program called “Creating Livable Communities” connecting transportation with land use using funding from STP, TE, and CMAQ funding and will develop criteria. The second task is to look specifically at the urban core communities and look at an urban design plan.
- ◇ Kathy Luther discussed grant applications to Indiana Department of Environmental Management for watershed planning, an implementation grant for Turkey Creek, Deep River, Burns Waterway, for green infrastructure for Lake County Porter County, Merrillville, Crown Point, and on up to Portage; a grant application to the Donnelly Foundation for green infrastructure network environmental assets to develop some pilots in municipalities; a pre-application to the Coastal Program for a grant to update the Marquette Plan for industrial and historical heritage corridors. We are also working with the RDA and Gary, Hammond and East Chicago on two regional coalition brownfield grants for assessment and a loan fund for brownfield cleanup.

b) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Gary Evers described the new TIP program and highlighted the details of congressional appropriations through the motor fuel trust fund, of which about \$900 million is awarded to Indiana. 75% goes to INDOT operations and the remaining 25% is awarded to the local public agencies for eligible transportation projects.

c) CRP Launch Event – Hubert Morgan said the outreach will continue, and the traditional stakeholders the leadership of the region. They are planning people. The residents of the region need to be excited about this dynamic plan. We need to convey that this is no longer an abstract but definitive work is being done to be able to identify what they see as challenges and how to develop action strategies. The launch event will be held in early spring in the urban core area, possibly the Marquette Park pavilion. We are looking at possibly 100 to 200 people. We will have a regional discussion relevant to the locals as to why the goals are important and hear why it is difficult to implement them. We can then address these issues early and find ways to solve them. It was suggested that we reach out to the 500 people that attended the 2008 launch event to show them that this plan is because of their input.

Schedule of Meetings - 2012

- January 18
- April 18
- July 18
- October 17

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Other Business

There was no other business presented to the committee.

The next Pathway to 2040 Implementation Committee meeting will be on January 18 at 9:00 a.m. at NIRPC.

Chairman Griffin adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

Handouts and materials provided:

- Agenda
- Implementation Committee Roles and Responsibilities
- 2040 CRP Implementation Chapter
- 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Presentation

A Digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact Mary Thorne at NIRPC should you wish to receive a copy of it.

Requests for alternate formats, please contact Mary Thorne at NIRPC at (219) 763-6060 extension 131 or at mthorne@nirpc.org. Individuals with hearing impairments may contact us through the Indiana Relay 711 service by calling 711 or (800) 743-3333.

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