

Land Use Committee Meeting
Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Members & Visitors: A J Monroe, Kevin Breitzke, Michael Barry, Beth Schrader, George Malis, Joe Rurode, Tina Rongers

NIRPC Staff: Eman Ibrahim, Gabrielle Biciunas, Meredith Stilwell, Sara Geinosky, Steve Strains

Call to Order by Chairman

Chairman Breitzke called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. and asked for a moment of silence for the passing of Bob Thompson's father

Approval of September 17, 2014 Minutes

On motion by Michael Barry and second by George Malis and with no opposition, the September 17, 2014 minutes were approved as presented.

Growth/Regional Land Use Planning

a. Regional Corridors / NWI Current Corridor Planning Presentation – Eman Ibrahim, NIRPC

Eman began her presentation on studies happening within the region by showing CMAP's Livability and Mobility video which depicts the potential results when three neighboring communities do not plan collaboratively. As part of the 2040 CRP implementation, NIRPC began a Regional Corridors Study (RCS) in July. The purpose of the study is to improve major transportation network connectivity, improve mobility across the region and reduce congestion and travel time. The focus of the study is on filling gaps between regionally significant highways and limited access local arterials. While there are currently 14 interchanges within almost 45 miles on interstate 80/94, only six of them are regionally connected through major arterials to US 30 which is the major east-west connector in the region. A steering committee has been established and a meeting held to review a gap-draft map which showed all interchanges and listed the missing connections within the region. After reviewing the map, the committee identified four more segments which were added to the list. The missing segments were presented to the Land Use Committee. As part of the 2040 CRP update the corridors will need to be prioritized and criteria created and in the next year or two look for a consultant to begin work on preliminary engineering and then look for funding. Red flag analysis will be completed for the corridors. A December 5th meeting will be held with the steering committee to review the segments attain and the refine the study area. Other regional corridor planning currently taking place include:

- The Michigan City US 421/South Franklin "South Gateway" Corridor Study - Due to a combination of visual clutter; underutilized properties; a lack of cohesive design and land use theme; and a gateway, a corridor study was identified by the City. The project is aimed at revitalizing the US 421/South Franklin Corridor.
- Porter County Willowcreek Extension – Aimed at creating a new economic development corridor to connect 100 S. to Willowcreek Rd; providing direct access via 249 to the Indiana Toll Road and I-94. This would provide an alternate to traffic from south Porter County to north Porter County, relieving some congestion on I-65 and would create a new economic development corridor to provide north-south access on the west side of Porter County.

City of Portage US 20 Corridor Study Presentation – A J Monroe

The US 20 Corridor is one of the last corridors in the city to be studied and is challenging since it is mostly developed and there is limited time; capacity; and resources. The study began in 2012 with the purpose of future redevelopment along the corridor. The study area is from County Line Road at the west to Salt Creek at the east. Community outreach was done through public meetings and interviews and various past plans were analyzed, including the 2009 Comp Plan and Marquette Plan. Since it is important to understand the market and something to look at as a component to any study, market assessments were completed. The corridor has had a number of hotels and motels and as the way to get into Chicago has always seen a high volume of truck traffic. Current zoning was analyzed and a vision plan developed. When looking at the land use plan and design guidelines it was found that zoning

ordinances were pretty good and responsive to what is out there and several design guidelines are already existing for types of developments in the area. The trail and sidewalk networks were looked at as well as infrastructure and utilities. An economic strategy is also addressed in the study. In addition to the US 20 Corridor Study, a corridor plan which looks more at aesthetics for 249 looking all the way to the Port of Indiana is also being developed.

Discussion took place regarding a lighting plan and how the ordinances and zoning for route 20 fit with Burns Harbor plans. Route 20 and 14 were identified as livable centers for the Town of Burns Harbor and they have a good standard for their development. Tina Rongers gave an update on the Towns of Burns Harbor stating they currently have an RFQ out for master development and are beginning to think about the future of community. They want to conduct outreach to neighboring communities to find out what they are doing in order to look broadly at potential development to create individual character for communities yet maintain positive collaboration and continuity.

Growth / Regional Land Use Planning

NIRPC Transportation Project Selection Scoring

The NIRPC Project Selection Scoring Definitions handout was shared with committee. Every year as plans improve more criteria is added or changed. The five main categories of mobility; transportation and land use; safety; environment; and quality of life are broken down into specific items to be evaluated for scoring increments. The two highest scoring total categories are mobility and quality of life. There are currently 45 total baseline points which can be increased by multipliers that include Main Center (1.30); Neighborhood Center (1.20); Focused Revitalization Area (1.15); and Growth and Infill Area (1.10). The scoring system shows how planning elements are coordinated to select transportation projects and is up for discussion now to be adopted soon.

Concerns were raised regarding the scoring system used in the last TAP review of projects and the many flaws found during the review. It was felt the scoring system has to be thoroughly vetted to ensure that “no-brainer” best projects that can be built score high and suggested to run the scoring system through with real projects to see if the obvious choices rise to the top. Eman wants to make sure this is presented to enough people to ensure they can all give feedback. The scoring item for Coordinate Projects Across Multiple Agencies in the Quality of Life category was questioned regarding who is writing the letters of support and why does a point get awarded for that. Suggestions were made for possible additions for points for project readiness and public safety.

Current or Proposed Studies, Plans and Projects

- Michael Barry of Porter announced the Town Council will be approving the contract for their downtown project next week and are looking to coordinate the Porter and Burns Harbor plans for Route 20. He also announced that the property that was going to be used for the Gateway to the Dunes project was given away by NIPSCO and they are now looking for what to do as a result.
- A. J. Monroe of Portage announced the ribbon cutting for the Lakefront South Property Phase 1 will be held December 8th with an economic development lunch to follow at Woodland Park with Pete Visclosky as the keynote speaker. The US Army Corps project for Portage was contracted at the end of September and a contract meeting was held with the Corps regarding work within the Northside development as well as north of 12. Work will probably start in February 2015. Part of that work will include the demolition of warehouse 57. The update of the Northside Master Plan is close to being done. The driving force is Ameriplex is about 85% built out.
- Jack Eskin announced the Marquette Plan update is in mid desktop publishing phase and should tied up within the month.

Announcements

- a. **2040 Plan Update Schedule:** Public meetings are completed and feedback from the public is being compiled. The first draft update for release to the public should be ready in March 2015 with

feedback due by mid-April. The Pathway to 2040 will review the final Plan update with adoption by the NIRPC Commission by the end of May 2015.

b. Next Meeting Wednesday January 21, 2015 @ 10:00 a.m. (NIRPC Packer Room)

The meeting adjourned at 11:51 a.m.