

Transportation Policy Committee Meeting

NIRPC Auditorium

February 10, 2015

MINUTES

Members Present

Stan Dobosz, Roosevelt Allen, Jr., Joe Simonetto, Matt Deitchley, David Wright, Joe Crnkovich, Deb Backhus, Taylor Wegrzyn, Frank Rosado, Jr., Don Parker, Tom MacLennan, Mike Yacullo, Mark O'Dell, Claudia Taylor, Art Biciuinas, Tom VanderWoude, Jeff Huet, Margot Sabato, Robin Tillman, Nick Minich and Craig Phillips. Joyce Newland participated via conference phone.

Guests

Lyndsay Quist, Julie Ritzler, Stephanie Smith, Mary Jane Thomas, Deb Backhus, Pete Kohut, Adam James, Jim Wiseman, Chris Moore, Ismail Attallah, Beth Shrader, Mitch Bishop, Ron Wiedeman, Jim Nowacki, Mike Jabo, Rebecca "Sis" Williams, , Joe Wszolek, John McBrayer^(sp) and Keith Benman.

NIRPC Staff

Steve Strains, Belinda Petroskey, Scott Weber, Gabrielle Biciunas, Mitch Barloga, Gary Evers and Mary Thorne.

1. Call to Order, Opening and Announcements

- a) Vice-Chairman Stan Dobosz called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.
- b) The INDOT voluntary participation survey was available on the table.
- c) On a motion by Don Parker and a second by Jeff Huet, the minutes of the January 13, 2015 meeting were approved as submitted.

2. Presentations –

Regional Corridor Study Survey Results

Gabrielle Biciunas presented the results of the survey. Staff analyzed the data as submitted by over 300 responders, mostly in Porter County. Most of the responders traveled to work from Porter County and Lake County and traveled to Porter County, Lake County and Illinois. The main mode of transportation was by car. Trip durations were under 30 minutes, one way. Responders said they lived under 5 miles, 6-10 miles and over 30 miles from their destination, with most trips taken between 3 and 5 times per week. I-80-94 was the most traveled major road at 15.5%, but 20 major roads were identified throughout the three counties. 53.5% said they experienced congestion, with the top three congested roads listed as I-80-94, US 30 and SR 49. David Wright asked for a breakdown of the "Other" mode of transportation as shown in question #9 on page 11. In response to a question, Scott Weber replied that US 12/20 was listed as a major roads and also shown as a congested road.

Scott Weber showed a matrix defining the alternate routes taken when the 20 major routes were congested. For I-80/94, the top three routes listed were Ridge Road, US 12/20 and the Indiana Toll Road. For US 30, the top three routes were 77th Avenue, 73rd Avenue and US 231. For SR 49, the top three routes were Meridian Road, SR 149 and I-65. The three main recommendations to enhance main route travel included expansion, signalization, and transit options. Of note was that of the 14 major roads, 11 were actually congested

corridors. Of the 70 alternatives identified, 43 are congested. Of the 27 not congested, 12 were actually poorly connected. Survey responses were consistent with that was identified in the 2040 Plan. The Regional Corridor Study is an effort to improve region-wide roadway connectivity. 24 minor gap segments were identified. Analysis is being done and these gaps will be run through the transportation model to select a couple of segments which could be prioritized for implementation funding to help ease roadway congestion.

Roundabouts

Mitch Barloga showed a brief YouTube video from Michigan DOT on roundabouts, which improve the occurrence and frequency of accidents. He suggested communities use a link to this video to educate their residents on roundabouts.

3. Planning

- a) 2040 CRP Update – Mitch Barloga presented an updated timeline. The draft plan update should be ready to present for public review from March 2 through April 3. The update is on target for May approval, along with the TIP update.
- b) Funding Cycle Update – Gary Evers said the funding deadline for the 2014 NOFA for HSIP, CMAQ and STP Group II dollars is this Friday afternoon. Funding requests for existing projects should be done via letter. Additional funding requests for pre-existing eligible CMAQ projects should also be done via letter. In March, staff will provide you with a lengthy list of everything that came in. Stakeholder meetings will be scheduled from mid to late March through April for projects to submit to the feds for eligibility for HSIP and CMAQ in June and July. Contact Kathy Luther, Amanda Pollard or Gary Evers with questions. In response to a question by Joyce Newland, Gary Evers said a similar schedule will be followed for the TIP and the plan update.

4. Programming

- a) Belinda Petroskey reported that 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment #29 is an administrative amendment for cost revisions for six NICTD local transit projects.
- b) Belinda Petroskey described Amendment #34 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program for three NICTD improvement projects and a project for six bike racks for transit vehicles for the City of East Chicago. It is out for public review and comments about the bike racks have been positive. No comments have been made on the NICTD projects. It will be brought to the NIRPC Board next Thursday for adoption. Don Parker thanked all transit agencies for adding the equipment for a bicyclist to be able to travel multi-modally. David Wright made a motion to recommend Amendment #34, to the NIRPC Board seconded by Don Parker. Frank Rosado said at minimum, the cost of the bike racks will be at least double what is shown. David Wright amended his motion to recommend Amendment #34, with the adjustment in cost of bike racks, to the NIRPC Board. Don Parker amended his second. The Transportation Policy Committee recommended Amendment #34, as amended, to the NIRPC Board for adoption.
- c) Gary Evers described Amendment #33 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program for five new INDOT bridge painting projects and one new INDOT bridge maintenance project. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Don Parker, the Transportation Policy Committee recommended Amendment #33 to the NIRPC Board for adoption.
- d) Gary Evers welcomed Julie Ritzler, INDOT Northwest District, who will be working with capital projects.
- e) Gary Evers described Amendment #35 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program to divide a Munster existing project in to two multiple projects and one Valparaiso existing project into four multiple projects. A new project phase would be added for Chesterton for Phase 2 of the Westchester Library Trail construct. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Don Parker, the Transportation Policy Committee recommended Amendment #35 to the NIRPC Board for adoption.

5. Indiana Department of Transportation

Lyndsay Quist reported on the lettings for February through April 2015.

6. Transit Operators Reports

- a) **LaPorte Transit** – Tom MacLennan reported that the Transit Triangle service started last week between Purdue North central, La Porte and Michigan City. The service received excellent publicity in the Herald Argus.
- b) **Valparaiso V-Line and Chicago DASH** – No report.
- c) **East Chicago Transit** – Frank Rosado said they are looking forward to getting the bike racks and saw a ridership increase of 1% over last year.
- d) **GPTC** – David Wright reported that January ridership was up 9% over January 2014 for an 18% increase overall over the previous year due to the weather. The Lake Shore Connection Route 12 received additional buses for an increase in ridership both per trip and overall. David Wright displayed a handout of the Broadway Project to date. The steering committee met last week and INDOT sent four representatives to that meeting.
- e) **Michigan City Transit** – Robin Tillman echoed the report from LaPorte Transit.
- f) **NICTD** – Joe Crnkovich reported that January ridership was up 7.1% over January of 2014 and weekend ridership was up over 27% over 2014. The new schedule is available and fare changes are being discussed due to an increase in Metra fares. The Chicago Auto Show begins Friday and certain weekday trains will stop at McCormick Place during the show. The overhead wire project east of Michigan City is ongoing. NICTD is building some components for the Ogden Dunes substation. New rail has been ordered to replace the old rail east of Michigan City. Other projects will resume with warmer weather.
- g) **North Township Dial-A-Ride** – No report.
- h) **Opportunity Enterprises** – Claudia Taylor said two new vehicles are arriving on Friday and they are in the procurement process for two additional ones.
- i) **Porter County Council on Aging and Community Services** – No report.
- j) **South Lake County Community Services** – Margot Sabato said they participate in the regional coordinated dispatch system with both Porter County Council on Aging and North Township Dial-A-Ride. The system currently supports 30-35 vehicles per day. Within the last six months, the service was upgraded and the old server is being used as a backup. First generation ADL systems were changed over to tablets. They now have a computerized notification module. Each client is called the night before their scheduled trip and they can confirm or cancel their next day's trip. This has saved hours of staff time.

7. Regional Transportation Partners

- a) **South Shore Trails** – Don Parker reported that spring events are being planned and they will advertise your event on their Facebook page and website. Visit www.southshoretrails.org.
- b) **Illinois Toll Road** – Roosevelt Allen, Jr. reported that the La Porte County and Lake County Commissioners are still in the process of bidding on the toll road lease, surviving the first round of bidding. They are meeting with Shell Friedman representing the two counties for an update on the process. An investment bank delivered a report to LaPorte County that showed the Toll Road could produce between \$38 million to \$53 million per year after operating and maintenance expenses to be used by the counties as they see fit. There is no point in that money going to a foreign consortium, when it could come back to the two counties and supplement our income for infrastructure.

- 8. **Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration** – Joyce Newland said the lifting of the corrective action on ITS Architecture is in the signature process. Steve Strains thanked USDOT for their swift review.

9. **Planning Neighbors** – No reports were given.

10. **Other Business, Public Comment, Staff Announcements and Upcoming Meetings**

a) **Announcements** –

- Steve Strains announced that NIRPC has posted a job announcement for a Transportation Planner & Policy Analyst to replace two staff members who resigned. This search continues through March 20.
- Steve Strains announced that Mitch Barloga is getting married in October.
- Mitch Barloga announced that the NIRPC office buildout will take place soon. Watch for announcements.

b) **Public Comments** – Jim Nowacki, Gary, testified against HB 1618, and voiced his opposition to the South Shore express train service being planned from South Bend to Chicago to compete with Amtrak. The express train would bypass Gary and Hammond. He also expressed his opposition to the proposed closing of two Gary stations. Jim Nowacki asked that the TPC and the NIRPC Board take a position on this.

c) **Upcoming Meetings at NIRPC** –The Legislative Committee will meet on February 13 at 2 p.m. The Finance & Personnel Committee will meet on Thursday, February 19 at 8 a.m. The Executive Board will meet on Thursday, February 19 at 9 a.m. The Ped, Pedal & Paddle Committee will meet on February 26 at 1:30 p.m.

The next Transportation Policy Committee meeting will be at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, March 10, location to be determined.

Stan Dobosz adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

A Digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact Mary Thorne at the phone or email below should you wish to receive a copy of it.

For 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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