

Transportation Policy Committee Meeting

NIRPC Auditorium

April 8, 2014

MINUTES

Members Present

Jim Polarek, Stan Dobosz, Joe Simonetto, Tom McLennan, Deb Backhus, Claudia Taylor, David Wright, Bruce Spires, Art Biciunas, Robert Thompson, Frank Rosado, Jr., Jezreel Rodriguez, Mary Jane Thomas, Robert Zondor, Tyler Kent, Jeff Huet, Tom Vander Woude, Mitch Bishop, Joe Crnkovich and Reggie Arkell and Jerry Halperin via conference phone.

Guests

Jim Pinkerton, Jake Dammarell, Christopher Murphy, Brad Minnick, Rebecca Williams, Chris Reynolds, Mark Pittman, Tim Burkman, Ron Wiedeman, Ken Martin, Carole Carlson, Stephanie Smith, Michael Jabo, Chris Moore, A J Monroe, Clay Cates, Julia Surber, Glen Campbell, Lisa Shrader, Rudy Velasco and Keith Benman.

NIRPC Staff

Steve Strains, Mitch Barloga, Mary Thorne, Gary Evers, Eman Ibrahim, Jack Eskin, Kevin Garcia, Sarah Geinosky, Gabrielle Biciunas, Belinda Petroskey, Stephen Sostaric, Scott Weber, Ty Warner and Amanda Pollard.

1. Call to Order, Opening and Announcements

- a) Chairman Jim Polarek 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 Joe Simonetto and a second by Stan Dobosz, the minutes of the March 11 meeting were approved as submitted.
- d) There was no public comment.

2. Presentation

Tim Burkman, City of Valparaiso, presented on the roundabout system in Valparaiso. The five roundabouts have proven to be safer, greener and more efficient and cost-effective than traditional road systems such as clover leaves.

3. Planning

- a) Jack Eskin gave an update on a potential high speed rail initiative for service from Chicago to Detroit through a partnership between IDOT, INDOT and MDOT. Indiana's portion will fund engineering of existing right of way. Routes will be identified toward the middle of this year. Speeds would range from 110 in Michigan to 70 in Indiana.
- b) Mitch Barloga gave an overview of the I-65 added lane project and the Cline Avenue request. INDOT would widen I-65 between US 231 and SR 2 from 4-6 lanes with projected completion by December 31, 2019. The Cline Avenue Bridge project was presented at the last TPC meeting by American

Structurepoint. All prerequisites were satisfied. TPC actions sought are recommendation to the NIRPC board next week of the air quality conformity determination and an amendment to the CRP and TIP except for Cline Avenue.

- c) Stephen Sostaric reported on the more than 30 day public comment period for I-65 and Cline Avenue 2040 CRP amendment. Meetings were held in Merrillville and East Chicago with most of the interest being on the Cline Avenue project being a toll road. The report was available in the packet.
- d) Stephen Sostaric reported on the draft public comment report on the NICTD EIS for the South Shore expansion as well as a three-year demonstration grant for the "Triangle" transit service between Michigan City, LaPorte and Purdue North Central which will be up for action as Amendment #13. The Triangle is a joint partnership between the City of LaPorte, City of Michigan City, La Porte County and Purdue North Central for the service and one vehicle. Four public meetings were held; one in Munster and three in one day in Michigan City, La Porte and at Purdue North Central. There is a need for the Triangle Service. Recommendation to the NIRPC board for adoption next Thursday will be sought pending no adverse comments received before the comment period ends this Thursday.
- e) Scott Weber presented the Air Quality Conformity Determination for expansion of I-65 between US 231 and SR 2 and Cline Avenue. The determination complies with all federal requirements. All mobile source emissions of VOC and NO_x as well as PM_{2.5} are less than the Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets established in the Maintenance Plan included in the US EPA approved STIP for Lake and Porter Counties. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Joe Crnkovich, the committee voted to recommend the Air Quality Conformity Determination for approval by the NIRPC board.
- f) Mitch Barloga asked for recommendation of Amendment 4 to the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan as explained in 3. b) above. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Phil Gralik, the committee voted to recommend Amendment #4 to the Comprehensive Regional Plan for approval by the NIRPC board.
- g) Eman Ibrahim presented the FY 2015-2016 Unified Planning Work Program which is required by MAP-21 planning regulations, the Clean Air Act of 1990 and USDOT. The program spans from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2016. Elements of the program include Transportation law & regulations, MAP 21, safety, infrastructure condition, congestion reduction system reliability, freight movement and economic vitality. Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs) under MAP-21 include ADA transition plans, Functional Classification Update, Pavement Management System, FTA Planning Emphasis Areas, Planning Environmental Linkages, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Environmental Justice, the role of the MPO in major capital investment planning for transit, livable and sustainable communities and Map-21 Performance-Based Planning. Priorities include the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan implementation, livable centers, a regional vision for transit, core community revitalization, regional planning and implementation, education, a Sustainable Communities Partnership, and performance measures and indicators. The planning budget for 2015 is \$3,599,267 and the budget for 2016 is \$456,500 less at \$3,142,767. Contact Eman for more information.

4. Programming

- a) Gary Evers described the three non-exempt INDOT I-65 added travel lane projects and the non-exempt East Chicago Cline Avenue Bridge replacement project in Amendment #11 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by David Wright, the committee recommended FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment #11 to the NIRPC Board for approval.
- b) Gary Evers described the six exempt INDOT projects and phases in Amendment #16 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program. On a motion by Phil Gralik and a second by Joe Simonetto, the committee recommended FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment #16 to the NIRPC Board for approval.

- c) Belinda Petroskey described the transit projects in Amendment #13 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program for the NICTD West Lake Corridor Environmental Impact Study, the “Triangle” Michigan City-LaPorte, Purdue North Central Transit Service for three-year demo operating assistance) and the expansion vehicle for the new transit service. Steve Strains commented that the Triangle Service was anticipated for many years and also a potential implementation project for NIRPC’s Comprehensive Regional Plan. On a motion by Mary Jane Thomas and a second by David Wright, the committee recommended FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment #13 to the NIRPC Board for approval.

5. Indiana Department of Transportation

Chris Reynolds described the lettings for March, April and May which were included in the materials, noting that Contract R-30519 will let on April 9 and the last project listed for May is actually in Porter County. Projects for the July and August lettings should be submitted in the next couple of weeks.

6. Transit Operators Reports

- a) **NICTD** – Joe Crnkovich reported that March ridership was down 4/10 of 1% over March of 2013. Non-peak weekday service was down over last March but peak service was up 2%. The Dune Park and East Chicago Grand Calumet Bridge work will finish this spring. Five miles of overhead wire from the shops in Michigan City east will be replaced this year. The contract for the bridge replacement at North Point Road was awarded to JCI Bridge Group for \$1.2 million and will be replaced this fall with a two week outage. The Michigan City study is complete. The plan is done for Michigan City but actual construction work may not take place for a while. Interim repair to the street running will need to take place.
- b) **GPTC** – David Wright said February ridership was 1 or 2% below that of February 2013. The weather was still affecting ridership. The Lake Shore service starts in early May. On the Lake Shore South service, some mileage was cut out of the Purdue Calumet Loop to improve service to Highland with a target date of May 5. A public forum was held on March 21 on the Livable Broadway project and conversation led to some changes to the scope. An RFP is out and is due May 9 with pre-bids due on April 30. Go to www.gptcbus.com for more information.

7. **Local and Regional Transportation Projects** – No reports were given.

8. **Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration** – No reports were given.

9. **Planning Neighbors** – Tom Vander Woude of South Suburban Mayors and Managers reported that the Illinois-394/Illinois-1 corridor study from I-80 south to the proposed Illiana site kick-off was in March. The study of the 18-mile corridor study will take 18 months to complete. Information will be posted at IL-394andIL-1corridorstudy.com. Also, the Southeast Commuter Rail Transit District just released a request for expressions of interest related to a study on southeast service Metra line at www.secrdt.com.

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

a) Other Business:

Stephanie Smith of South Shore Clean Cities posted information at the table on the Green Fleet Program. SSCC is looking for communities wanting to green their fleet; two in each county, Lake, Porter and La Porte.

b) Staff Announcements:

- Mitch Barloga said in addition to NIRPC’s Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) solicitation, which runs until May 16, INDOT is putting out a call for projects for their TAP program for all urbanized areas in the state. Information will be sent out today.

- Steve Strains said all entities on US 30 may be interested in an upcoming meeting Thursday at 1 p.m. EDT in South Bend at the St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce on the Indiana Lincoln Highway Byway Corridor Management Committee. The committee is being formed including the 11 counties located along US 30.
 - Steve Strains said NIRPC's committee structure is under review by the Board, with the review meetings chaired by NIRPC Vice-Chair and LaPorte Mayor Blair Milo. All committees, task forces, etc. are under review to examine membership, functionality, value, etc. The goal is to perhaps streamline committee structure and avoid duplication, in addition to increasing participation.
 - Steve Strains had some copies available of NIRPC's Planning Certification Review which was released in late December. He added that NIRPC is certified with one corrective action.
- c) The meeting schedule was provided in the materials. The Executive Board/Full Commission will meet on Thursday, April 17 at 9:00 a.m. at NIRPC. Cornucopia 2014 will be held on April 24 at the La Porte Civic Auditorium from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Environmental Management Policy Committee will meet on May 1 at 9:00 a.m. at NIRPC.

The next Transportation Policy Committee meeting will be at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, May 13 at NIRPC.

On a motion by Stan Dobosz and a second by Phil Gralik, Jim Polarek adjourned the meeting at 10:30 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 mthome@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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