

Transportation Policy Committee Meeting

NIRPC Auditorium

August 13, 2013

MINUTES

Members Present

Jim Polarek, Dwayne Williams, Bruce Lindner, Jezreel Rodriguez, Rob Strader, Joe Crnkovich, Don Parker, Mike Yacullo, David Wright, Teri Dixon, Art Biciunas, Mark O'Dell, Craig Phillips, Mary Jane Thomas, Claudia Taylor, Phil Gralik and Joyce Newland, Jerry Halperin and Phillip Roth (via conference phone).

Guests

Kate Zale, Rebecca L. Williams, Glen Campbell, Justin Molina, Ron Kurmis, Sue Crisman, Peter Kohut, Harold Mussman, Pat Mussman, Jeff Huet, Ed Linden, Sandy Linden, Ron Shimizu, Doug Robinson, Jeff Valles, Eric Wilson, Mark Pittman, Ted Gross, Rick Niemeyer, Paula Armour, Dennis Cobb, Michael Jabo, Jodi Coblenz, Liz Depew, Jim Wiseman, Maricella Kunstek, Richard Ludlow, Len Wojcik, Matt Mikus, Rob Earnshaw, Janet Cypra, Bruce Spires, Teresa Torres, Katie Kukielka, Jake Dammarel, Jim Pinkerton, James Mandon, Matt Kaiser, Bob Thompson, Jim Earl, Chris Reynolds, Ron Wideman.

NIRPC Staff

Mitch Barloga, Mary Thorne, Gary Evers, Sarah Geinosky, Gabrielle Biciunas, Jack Eskin, Kevin Garcia, Steve Strains, Allen Hammond, Stephen Sostaric, Melissa Deutscher.

1. Call to Order, Opening and Announcements

- Vice-Chair Jim Polarek, NIRPC Commissioner and Porter County Councilman, called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.
- The INDOT voluntary participation survey was available on the table.
- On a motion by Don Parker; second by David Wright, the minutes of the July 9 meeting were approved as amended.
- Stephen Sostaric described a proposed resolution to support Amtrak funding for the 750 mile Hoosier State service from Chicago to Indianapolis. INDOT is not considering the use of mass transit public funding to finance this service. NICTD wanted language in the resolution that any financial support for Amtrak shall not financially harm the public transit operators of Indiana. Sostaric said the resolution must be amended to include that language. Mr. Crnkovich moved to approve the resolution with the additional statement that such financial support for Amtrak shall not financially harm the public transit operators of Indiana. Don Parker seconded the motion. David Wright said the resolution was supposed to go to the transit operators' roundtable but the meeting is not until tomorrow. Without that action, GPTC could not support the resolution. Rob Strader said the funding source is currently unknown and INDOT could still use the transit fund. Michigan City Transit cannot support this resolution. The motion and second were withdrawn. New motion was made by Joe Crnkovich and seconded by Rob Strader to defer the resolution the next TPC meeting in September.

- 2. Presentation on the At Grade Crossing Report:** Jack Eskin said an abbreviated report has gone to the rail vision group last month. The report is an inventory and feasibility study of the 15 worst rail/highway at-grade crossings in northwest Indiana. Delay and safety metrics were measured. The inventory also includes freight, public transit, public roads and consultations were held with INDOT engineers, city engineers, planners and consultants. Cost per square foot was calculated. Funding opportunities were identified. Costs range from \$4 million to \$54 million and most of the crossings are in the urban core. A recommendation is to pursue grade separation as a

long term goal for crossings in Hammond, Munster, East Chicago, Gary and Chesterton in Porter County. These crossings need to be congruent with communities' local plans.

3. Planning

- a) Congestion Management Process Illiana Project Update – Mitch Barloga reported that NIRPC staff laid out a complex process for the public to see what needs to be done to move forward. No action will be taken here today. NIRPC staff will meet with INDOT, the project consultants, Federal Highway Administration and other agencies to discuss consultation work done to date and staff will prepare a white paper to present to the NIRPC Commission and this committee on the Illiana and the goals of the 2040 CRP. This was not done originally in 2011. The project was not fiscally constrained but now they are proposing a modification to the Plan due to that fiscal issue. The CMP is an analysis of alternative projects which can be implemented that could mitigate the impact of the Illiana. Every major project developed in the US must go through the CMP to see that other alternatives were exhausted. Other issues include air quality conformity as it is an added lane project, and an environmental justice compliance document. This work must be in place by the September TPC meeting. When the CMP is approved, the 30 day public comment period will begin for the amendments to the conformity determination, TIP and 2040 CRP. This will be for both the Illiana and I-65 widening between US 30 and US 231. Locations, dates and times for all three counties will be announced. Comments will be reviewed up until the TPC meeting on October 8, at which time the committee would vote to recommend approval by the NIRPC Commission on October 17.
- b) Memorandum of Understanding – Steve Strains said MOU of 2008 with INDOT, IDEM and the transit operators needs to be revised this year. INDOT will issue a standardized MOU which will be modified by each MPO to meet its own needs. The MOU defines roles and responsibilities of the MPO, INDOT and the transit operators.
- c) Public Participation Plan – Steve Strains said after the TPC voted in May to recommend the draft Public Participation Plan, the NIRPC Board instead formed an ad hoc committee to refine the plan by working with Everybody Counts. Meetings were held on July 2, 17, 31 and August 2 and 9. The committee will meet today at 2 p.m. to finalize its recommendations. The TPC could consider that since it already voted to recommend to the earlier draft to the Board, is there a need for the committee to vote again on the refined plan. The committee is to report its findings to the Commission. Vice Chair Polarek agreed that the committee will report its findings to the Commission.
- d) 2040 Plan Implementation – Eman Ibrahim reported that staff is about to wrap up two major projects. The Livable Centers Initiative defined livable and neighborhood centers which will be presented to this committee for recommendation for adoption by the Commission. Creating Livable Centers is a new grant program. \$400,000 is available for two years for redevelopment projects within the centers. The Land Use Committee will meet tomorrow to draft the application. The *Pathway to 2040* Implementation Committee will meet in October.
- e) ITS Architecture – Kevin Garcia said the ITS workshop was cancelled due to a lack of interest. Staff will meet individually with stakeholders.

5. Programming

Gary Evers reported that tracking meetings were held with all LPA's except four. East Chicago and Highland are two of the four. Contact Amanda Pollard for more information.

Gary said the CMAQ call for projects has been suspended until further notice. A verification form from INDOT for state-selected projects for Group 3, Group 4, bridge and TE projects selected prior to 2009 was to have been completed and sent to INDOT as verification that an LPA was still interested in their project. The deadline passed but it's prudent to send it in anyway. INDOT has fully booked funds for 2014 through June for local projects. Funds are also booked for 2015-2016. Contact Chris Reynolds or Marcia Blansett if you did not hear from them.

They have \$400 million in obligations over what they had planned to spend and are looking to suspend or kill any projects so that they can balance their books.

With regard to TIP fiscal constraint and closeout of funds, INDOT is still reviewing our TIP. NIRPC is also doing 10 year reconciliation and INDOT is passing along changes in apportionment. Gary provided a handout that shows the latest changes dated July 17 which were due to the resolution of a \$40 million takedown from federal funds given to INDOT by FHWA due to the non-compliance of Indiana law with the Open Container Act and DUI penalties. Although these legal standards have been met in prior years, FHWA maintained they have not been met this year. Instead of INDOT giving the money to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to be given back to the communities, INDOT is giving each urbanized area a lump sum of money for additional safety projects. The Chicago UA is getting an additional \$618,000 and just under \$70,000 for the Michigan City UA. Stephen Sostaric will be doing a solicitation for projects which do not require a lot of construction within the next 45 days moving toward a close out in October 2014 to zero out funding in a given year. The new system, which has not yet been designed, is scheduled to be in place in 2014. CMAQ for La Porte County is ending, but it will be picked up on the Group 1 side. Expect more funding changes, but there are no significant problems with any of the programs. See Gary with any questions.

Gary said the transit operators' roundtable will take place tomorrow and hopefully produce a list of transit projects for the TIP. Belinda will attend via conference phone.

6. Indiana Department of Transportation

Chris Reynolds highlighted projects lettings for July, August, September and October.

7. Transit Operators Reports

- **NICTD** – Joe Crnkovich reported that while July ridership was up about 5% over July 2012, but it is still down about 2% cumulatively for the year to date. The Dune Park platform work is progressing and should be completed by year end. Overhead catenary work east of Michigan City continues and a contract for feeder cable was awarded. Painting of the Grand Calumet River Bridge in East Chicago is ongoing. The Michigan City study is wrapping up and the 10th and 11th Street alignment was agreed upon. The Tiger II grant process is in the final stages and will be moving into the environmental stage.
- **GPTC** – David Wright reported that June ridership figures are up 8.5% over July 2012 and 5.5% year to date over 2012. Several ITS projects will begin this year. Bids were opened for the dispatch project, disaster recovery and the new media schedule software; bids are out for electronic signage in downtown Gary. Last week we held Transit Day to the Lake County Fair, along with North Township Dial-a-Ride and East Chicago Transit. Evaluation of the event will determine if we do it again next year. Response data is being tabulated from the Tri-City System survey. GPTC submitted an application for funding from NOAA for a transit planning projects on the Broadway Corridor and funding was approved. Work will be underway shortly.

8. Federal Highway Administration/Federal Transit Authority

A report on the certification review comment period will be provided at a later date.

9. Planning Neighbors

- **CMAQ** – Teri Dixon reported that the public comment period on the Illiana goes through September 3, 2013. The CMAQ project comment period will end August 26.
- **South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association** – No report.
- **Southwestern Michigan Commission** – No report.

10. Other Business, Public Comment and Upcoming Meetings at NIRPC

There was no other business.

Public Comment:

- 11th Dist. State Rep. Rick Niemeyer commented he attended several meetings on the Illiana, including one with the Governor, and will bring comments to the September TPC meeting.
- Pat Mussman, West Creek Twp., expressed concern that truths are not being told regarding the Illiana and commented that IDOT presented at a meeting in Will County, Illinois and was told the no build option was off the table and that the toll road was never intended to benefit the communities in the corridor, but only to get truck traffic for the warehouses and intermodals in Illinois.
- Sandy Linden, Cedar Creek, IL commented that there are better ways to spend our transportation money to benefit Indiana. The Illiana would provide no benefit to Lake, Porter or La Porte counties. Ms. Linden referred to a CMAP report which stated that 33 miles of expressway will add lanes to accompany the Illiana for a total cost of \$1.5 billion in 2009 dollars. It also states there will be increased economic growth in Will County, with a reduction in growth in Kane and Kendall Counties. Indiana communities will spend a good portion of their state and federal funds to maintain access roads, I-65 and SR 41 due to increased traffic from the Illiana. Even with the P3 option, we still have to purchase the land, and maintain adjoining roads. Who in Indiana will pay the Illiana's private company for lost tolls when I-65 is shut down in the winter and where will the trucks go when there is a major accident? Since the freeway option is off the table, all previous studies and calculations should be voided. The Illiana's original purpose of alleviating congestion on the Borman is no longer valid as the Borman widening project has solved that issue. The sole purpose of the Illiana is to alleviate truck traffic to the intermodals in Illinois. Other better options must be evaluated. Ms. Linden asked that NIRPC not include the Illiana in its 2040 Plan.
- Mitch Barloga commented that the INDOT consultant has put together a congestion management process evaluation for Indiana. All public comments received will be on the NIRPC website with a link to the Illinois side.
- Harold Mussman, West Creek Twp., commented that the intermodals near Joliet actually created a nuisance due to poor planning and they maintain the Illiana would relieve that congestion. A CNN rail line runs just north of Ellwood and a new one is unnecessary. Mr. Mussman stated he does not support the Illiana.
- Ted Gross, Lowell, commented that INDOT and IDOT have overemphasized the quantity of jobs to be created in Indiana and \$41 million worth of property still needs to be purchased. Where is all this money coming from? Mr. Gross called for support for the Gary Airport, a new shipping port at Inland Steel, a trauma center and improvement of our current highways.
- Teresa Torres, Everybody Counts commented that NIRPC needs to own its mistakes, clarity and accuracy is important. Last month, the TPC approved the TIP but the NIRPC Commission deferred the adoption because public meetings were not held. At the Ad Hoc Committee meeting on the Public Participation Plan, the majority of our concerns regarding the failure of NIRPC's processes were not met. Federal regulations were not followed. Not following regulations is bad enough, but when we don't acknowledge our shortcomings, that's a real problem. The Ad Hoc Committee identified that they had some concerns as well. Facts presented today were glossed over and not presented clearly.

Staff Announcements:

- Mitch Barloga reported that projects out for public comment right now are the TIP, Plan amendment and conformity analysis. NIRPC will hold a separate public comment period for the Illiana.
- Steve Strains apologized and said the omission of a public comment period on the TIP, Plan amendment and conformity analysis has been rectified.

Upcoming Meetings:

- ITS Architecture Workshop – 2 p.m. August 5 at NIRPC.
- Land Use Committee meeting – 10 a.m. August 14 at NIRPC.
- TIP Open House – Tuesday, August 27, 2013 1:00pm-4:00pm, East Chicago Public Library, Pastrick Branch, 1008 W. Chicago Avenue

- Full Commission/Executive Board meeting – 9:00 a.m. August 29 at NIRPC
- EMPC meeting – 9 a.m. September 5 at NIRPC
- TIP Open House – Wednesday, September 11, 2013 2:00 pm-4:00 pm, Valparaiso City Hall, 166 Lincolnway, Valparaiso
- *Pathway to 2040* Implementation Committee meeting – 9 a.m. October 10 at NIRPC.

The next Transportation Policy Committee meeting will be at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, September 10, 2013 at NIRPC.

Vice-Chairman Polarek adjourned the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

A Digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact Mary Thorne at NIRPC 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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