

Technical Planning Committee Meeting

NIRPC Lake Michigan Room
6100 Southport Road, Portage

September 13, 2016

MINUTES

Members Present

Michael Griffin, Dave Shafer, Kevin Breitzke, Geof Benson, George Topoll, Nick Meyer, Margot Sabato, Taylor Wegrzyn, Mark O'Dell, Tom MacLennan, Robin Barzoni-Tillman, David Wright, Rebecca Williams, Beth Shrader, Kay Nelson, John Parsons, Lyndsay Quist, Susan Orona and William Emerson, Jr.

Guests

Michael Noland, Joe Crnkovich, Mary Jane Thomas, Jeff Huet, Woody Dresden, Teri Dixon, Claudia Taylor, Jerry Siska, Mark Gordish, Ray Riddell, Ismail Attallah, Gerald Heimsoth, Stephen Stofko, Tony Stofko, James Mandon, La'Kisha Girder, Lori Latham, Jake Dammarell, Vince Epps, Dennis Cobb, Al Walus, Deb Backhus and Andrew Steele.

NIRPC Staff

Steve Strains, Gary Evers, Kathy Luther, Sarah Geinosky, Stephen Sostaric, Scott Weber, James Winters, Gabrielle Biciunas, Belinda Petroskey, Amanda Pollard and Mary Thorne.

1. Call to Order, Opening and Announcements

- a) Michael Griffin, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions. There were two amendments to the agenda: action on the NICTD double-Tracking Environmental Justice Analysis and action on Amendment #30 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program will not be taken today.
- b) The INDOT voluntary participation survey was available for attendees to complete.
- c) On a motion by Geof Benson and a second by Dave Shafer, the minutes of the August 9, 2016 Technical Planning Committee meeting were approved as presented.

2. Presentation

David Wright, Gary Public Transportation Corp. presented a review of GPTC's Broadway Rapid Bus service and operating costs, alignment alternatives, route numbering recommendations and the results of the route naming poll. Open Houses will take place on September 8 from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Metro Center, in Gary and September 29 at 2 p.m. at the office of Everybody Counts, 9111 Broadway in Merrillville. A public hearing will be held on October 6 at 5:30 at the Metro Center. The Board will select the final preferred alignment, adopt the revised route numbering and adopt a name for the rapid service.

3. Implementation Planning

- a) Gary Evers presented on the "B-List" project solicitation kickoff and schedule. INDOT has a policy that MPOs spend down all monies by the state fiscal year end of June 30. Having a pre-selected list of backup projects will permit us to bring new projects into our spending plan and TIP quickly.

This B-List process will prevent us having to return funds to INDOT should a project letting be cancelled or delayed. These leftover funds have been a boon for transit and through the B-List process we will now be able to obligate money to projects, which will involve construction. Gary Evers described the types of shovel-ready projects that could be added to the list for planning or capital assistance, transit operating assistance and low-cost construction projects with a cost of \$500,000 federal or less. The time of year may dictate what types of B-List projects pulled off the list and actually funded. Some types can take 90 to 120 days to get funds obligated. Funds for transit projects can be transferred from FHWA to FTA within 30 days. Projects can be pulled off the list and funded at two times during the year: In the fall, all types of projects can be funded and in the spring, only transit and planning projects can be funded. The intent of this process is to implement projects that support the Comprehensive Regional Plan (CRP). Restrictions include: no freight railroads or bridge replacement projects, Project Engineering (PE) is required on all construction projects, no right of way, and on-system pavement projects only. There is no guarantee of funding for any project.

Gary Evers announced the preferred timeline. Applications are due by September 30. A meeting must be held to rank the projects. The topical committees would validate the rankings on October 5. This committee would review the rankings on vote on October 11 with action by the Commission on October 20, as the Commission does not meet in November. Discussion of the process and timeline issues followed. Michael Griffin suggested that an ad-hoc committee could be formed to finalize the solicitation more quickly and enable this timeline to be followed. This committee would be comprised of volunteering members of the TPC and recognized by the NIRPC Chair at the Board meeting on Thursday. This subcommittee of the TPC would review the solicitation and make final edits for its release. Dave Shafer made a motion to create an ad hoc committee to review the solicitation and make final edits for its release. Kevin Breitzke seconded the motion. Discussion followed. David Wright was concerned that the call for projects comes out based on criteria on which neither the full TPC nor the non-voting members have an opportunity to provide any input. Gary Evers said the La Porte County Transportation Resource & Oversight Committee met yesterday and reached consensus to opt out of the discussion and create their own B-List of projects at their meeting on October 6. Michael Griffin commented that the vote today would enable representation on this committee's behalf in order to avoid having another meeting of the full TPC in a week or so and this is due to time constraints in getting a fall solicitation through. In answer to David Wright's question about comments received so far, Gary Evers said there is one major comment by an engineer which needs to be closely considered. On a call for question, the TPC voted to create the ad hoc committee with one vote of "no" by David Wright.

- b) Scott Weber presented on the Port of Indiana – Burns Harbor Bridge Congestion Management Process. Items that needed to be addressed included data collection, identification of area of application, evaluation of growth and development scenarios to identify future congestion problems in the context of the CRP, and identify and evaluate strategies. The conclusion of the congestion management process for the Port of Indiana-Burns Harbor second bridge project shows that only the added second bridge strategy for improving congestion outperforms the existing 2015 Level of Service in 2040. The project is therefore recommended to pass the NIRPC

Congestion Management Process. In response to a question by Dave Shafer, Lyndsay Quist responded that access to the Port would not be interrupted when future bridge repair is done. One bridge would close for repair and traffic would divert to the other bridge. On a motion by Kay Nelson and a second by Kevin Breitzke, the TPC voted to recommend adoption by the Commission of the Port of Indiana – Burns Harbor Bridge Congestion Management Process.

- c) James Winters presented on the Port of Indiana – Burns Harbor Bridge Environmental Justice Analysis. While the proposed corridor passes directly through Northwestern Indiana’s Environmental Justice population, the changes proposed are all within an established industrial area property owned by the Port of Indiana and no new property needs to be acquired. The proposed bridge is small and isolated within an industrial area and will have no positive nor negative impact on the EJ population. On a motion by Kevin Breitzke and a second by George Topoll, the TPC voted to recommend adoption by the Commission of the Port of Indiana – Burns Harbor Bridge Environmental Justice Analysis.

James Winters said the action on the NICTD Double-Tracking Environmental Justice Analysis was being delayed.

4. Transportation Programming.

Gary Evers said that the action on the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment #30 will be deferred to the October TPC meeting as the public comment period closes four hours after the Board meeting on Thursday. Also, there was an error within the text of the amendment for one of the projects and finally, a member of the Interagency Consultation Group is out of the country and have not yet concluded their review of the document. INDOT has agreed to the delay.

5. Topical Committee Reports

- a) Environmental Management Policy Committee – Geof Benson said the committee is submitting a resolution to the NIRPC Board on Thursday in support of the SepticSmart Week.
- b) Ped Pedal & Paddle Committee – No report.
- c) Transit Operators Roundtable – No report.
- d) Land Use Committee – Gabrielle Biciunas said the committee met on September 17 to provide history of the committee, select new members, review the committee purpose and the next year will focus on Phase II of the Creating Livable Centers initiative. The next meeting is October 19 at 10 a.m. at NIRPC.
- e) Rail Vision Workgroup/Freight – No report.
- f) Surface Transportation Committee – No report.

6. Planning Partners –

- a) Teri Dixon said CMAP is waiting for the MPO Coordination rulemaking. The comment period was not extended.
- b) Susan Orona said comments were received from MPOs across the country on the rulemaking.

7. Public Comment on Agenda Items – There were no requests for public comment.

8. Emerging Trends – There was no presentation.

9. Other Business, Staff Announcements and Upcoming Meetings

a) There were no announcements nor other business.

b) Upcoming Meetings at NIRPC –

- Michael Griffin reminded those present that the Executive Board will meet on Thursday, September 15 at 9 a.m. in the Ambassador Room on the 2nd Floor of The Radisson, 800 E 81st Ave. in Merrillville. The One Region event will follow.
- The Ped, Pedal & Paddle Committee will meet on Thursday, September 22 at 1:30 p.m. in the Lake Michigan Room at the NIRPC office.
- The Environmental Management Policy Committee will meet on Thursday October 6 at 9 a.m. in the Lake Michigan Room at the NIRPC office.
- Other topical committee meetings will be announced as they are scheduled.

The next meeting of the Technical Planning Committee will be on October 11, 2016 at 9 a.m. in the Lake Michigan Room at the NIRPC office.

Hearing no other business, Michael Griffin adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

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

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, marital status, familial status, parental status, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.