

**Transportation Policy Committee Meeting**  
Construction Advancement Foundation Training Center  
6050 Southport Road, Portage  
September 8, 2015  
MINUTES

**Members Present**

Stan Dobosz, Joe Simonetto, John Bayler, Joe Crnkovich, Claudia Taylor, Tom MacLennan, David Wright, Bruce Lindner, Frank Rosado, Jr., Taylor Wegrzyn, Phil Gralik, Jeff Huet, Mike Yacullo, Lindsay Quist.

**Guests**

Julie Retzler, Julia Surber, Mike Vandergast, Jake Dammarell, Deborah Laverty, James Mandon.

**NIRPC Staff**

Mitch Barloga, Gabrielle Biciunas, Belinda Petroskey, Scott Weber, James Winters, Gary Evers, Steve Strains, Eman Ibrahim, Stephen Sostaric and Mary Thorne.

**1. Call to Order, Opening and Announcements**

- a) 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.
- c) On a motion by Bruce Lindner and a second by Joe Simonetto, the minutes of the July 21, 2015 meeting were approved as submitted.

- 2. Presentation:** David Wright reported on the Livable Broadway Regional Plan which would help make the commercial corridor more accessible and livable. The plan has been approved by the GPTC Board and the next steps include a kickoff of the implementation and hard planning. GPTF hired T.Y. Lin International at a cost of \$250,000 to conduct a study of public transportation on a 14-mile stretch starting from the Gary Metro Center on Fourth Avenue and ending at 93rd Avenue, at the Merrillville/Crown Point border. That study recommended implementing a bus rapid transit line, improvement of bus shelters, removing accessibility barriers, improving branding and marketing, and adjusting bus stop spacing. According to the study, the plan will cost at least \$1 million per year for operational expenses and about \$2 million in capital funding for up to six buses. INDOT could install bypass lanes, eliminate parking conflicts and improve sidewalks. The project is in NIRPC's Transportation Improvement Program. Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) would fund 80 percent of the operating expenses and a local match is needed.

**3. Planning**

- a) Stephen Sostaric showed a 45-second commercial from Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, on "what is an MPO?"
- b) Eman Ibrahim described Amendment No. 3 to the FY2016 Unified Planning Work Program for La Porte County STP planning projects. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by David Wright, the Transportation Policy Committee voted to recommend FY 2016 UPWP Amendment No. 3 to the NIRPC Board for approval.
- c) Mitch Barloga provided an update of the Greenway & Blueway Plan. The survey is out for the next month for a draft of the plan will go out for public comment. The final plan will be out in spring of 2016.

#### 4. Programming

- a) Stephen Sostaric said a seven-day public comment was solicited for the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments 3, 4 and 5. No comments were received.
- b) Gary Evers described Amendment No. 3 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program adding 2 INDOT projects in the City of Hobart and unincorporated Porter County for SR 130 for intersection improvements and new signalization. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Bruce Lindner, the Transportation Policy Committee voted to recommend Amendment 3 to the Commission for approval.
- c) Gary Evers described Amendment No. 4 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program adding 7 local projects or phases in Lake and Porter counties and deleting the grade separation project in Munster as INDOT has requested recombining the project with the original road project (DES 0710056). On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Joe Crnkovich, the Transportation Policy Committee voted to recommend Amendment No. 4 to the Commission for approval.
- d) Belinda Petroskey described Amendment No. 5 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program adding new public transit projects using 5310 funds for new vehicles for Parents and Friends and Michiana Resources, both in LaPorte County. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Mike Yacullo, the Transportation Policy Committee voted to recommend Amendment No. 5 to the Commission for approval.

#### 5. Indiana Department of Transportation

Lindsay Quist reported on the INDOT lettings through December.

#### 6. Transit Operators Reports

- a) **LaPorte Transit** – Tom MacLennan reported that the Transit Triangle has not seen a significant increase in ridership from LaPorte to Purdue North Central, but a significant increase in ridership was seen between Michigan City and Purdue, at double the ridership from LaPorte to Michigan City.
- b) **Valparaiso V-Line and Chicago DASH** – Taylor Wegrzyn reported that the V-Line had over 10,000 riders last month and the *ChicaGo* Dash had just shy of 6,000. A new transfer location on the V-Line was installed at Valplayso Park.
- c) **East Chicago Transit** – Frank Rosado, Jr. reported that East Chicago’s entire fleet will be outfitted with bike racks by the end of the month.
- d) **GPTC** – David Wright reported that the June ridership was up 5% over June of 2014. The route to Highland and Munster continues to perform well. A bus stop assessment will be performed for Gary and East Chicago. A workshop will be held prior to the assessment on October 16, possibly at North Lake Methodist. Volunteers will be needed to assist with the assessment at US 12/20 and Indianapolis Blvd. and Burr St. The bus program with Ivy Tech will be continued for the 2015-2016 school year.
- e) **Michigan City Transit** – No report was given.
- f) **NICTD** – Joe Crnkovich reported that August ridership was down 2% over August of 2014. The overhead wire project continues at about six miles per year, and service outages will occur in mid-August, mid-September and late October east of Michigan City. Two engineering study contracts were awarded for rehab work on five bridges. At the NICTD board meeting last month, an interim plan for Bikes on Trains was presented which called for converting part of three 1992 cars and replacing some of the seats with bike racks. The cars would be on weekend trains between South Bend and Chicago. The plan was thought to be in place by next spring. Catenary wire work continues. An outage is scheduled for next week and another the week of October 26. A contract is out for steel posts for counterweights for the wire. A TIGER VII grant application was filed to get the work done sooner. NICTD is working with the City of Gary on their grant application for development around the Miller Station for double tracking and new high level platforms.

- g) **North Township Dial-A-Ride** – No report was given.
  - h) **Opportunity Enterprises** – Claudia Taylor reported that they were in the process of procurement for two replacement vehicles, fencing and security cameras for the area where the vehicles are stored and are in talks for placement of ads on vehicles to gain extra income.
  - i) **Porter County Council on Aging and Community Services** – Bruce Lindner reported that they received a small grant for new garage door openers at the Valparaiso garage. Three new buses came in last month. Porter County Council on Aging continue to operate seven vehicles a day and provide 2,000 rides per month.
  - j) **South Lake County Community Services** – No report was given.
7. **Regional Transportation Partners** – No reports were given.
8. **Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration** – No reports were given.
9. **Planning Neighbors** – No reports were given.
10. **Public Comment on Agenda Items** – No requests were received.
11. **Other Business, Staff Announcements and Upcoming Meetings**
- a) **Other Business** – No other business was discussed.
  - b) **Staff Announcements** – Gary Evers referred to the 2016 spending plan handout for the Chicago urbanized area for Lake and Porter Counties and the Michigan City urbanized area for LaPorte County for a record \$24.2 million in federal funds including \$17.4 million in regular apportionment and \$6.6 million in prior year balance funds. We are currently under programmed by about \$.5 million. If an LPA's project is on the list, they are expected to spend their money. There are currently no obligations for 2016 for the Michigan City urbanized area. Updates will be posted on the NIRPC website monthly as well as the updated Transportation Improvement Program.
  - c) **Upcoming Meetings at NIRPC** – Future NIRPC meetings will be announced as they are scheduled.

The Executive Board/Full Commission will meet on September 17 at 9:00 a.m. at the Construction Advancement Foundation Training Center, 6050 Southport Road, Portage.

Because of a conflict with the MPO Conference, the Transportation Policy Committee will meet on October 6 at 9:00 a.m.

Stan Dobosz adjourned the meeting at 10:10 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](mailto: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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