

**Pathway to 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan
Implementation Committee Meeting
NIRPC Auditorium
October 10, 2013
Minutes**

Attendees

Cecile Petro, Michael Griffin, Cindy Rojas, Bruce Bendull, George Malis, Tyler Kent, Don Parker, Kris Parker, Rich Herr, David Wright, Sergio Mendoza, Joe Wszolek, Christopher Meyers, Mark Maassel.

Guests

Craig Grabow.

Staff

Gabrielle Biciunas, Jack Eskin, Eman Ibrahim, Kevin Garcia, Steve Strains, Sarah Geinosky and Mary Thorne.

Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner Michael Griffin called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Don Parker and a second by Christopher Meyers, the minutes of the July 11, 2013 meeting were approved as submitted.

2040 CRP Implementation Activities

- **Rail VISION – At Grade Crossings**
Jack Eskin presented an update on the at-grade crossing report of the study which was done to identify problematic crossings and examine solutions. The analysis is complete; the report is partially completed. 15 crossings were identified as the worst in northwest Indiana. Data was collected on delay and safety metrics, cost calculation methodology and financing options were identified, such as STP, CMAQ, HSIP and FTA 5307 for transit lines. Congestion and safety issues are getting worse. There are two crossings in Hammond, one in Munster, three in East Chicago, four in Gary, one in Griffith, one in Schererville, one in Porter and two in Porter County. The most expensive crossing is in Hammond at \$54 million; the least expensive are Kennedy Avenue in Schererville and Old Hobart Road in Gary at \$4 million each. Recommendations include forming a construction authority, create implementation commissions, identify more local funding sources and engage local industry.

- **Northwest Indiana Livable Centers Project.** Chairman Griffin referenced Resolution 12-23 which will be recommended to the Full Commission for adoption. Eman Ibrahim said a lot of staff worked on the project. Sara Geinosky is doing all of the cartography of the livable centers map. Ray LaHood said financing of livable centers is a priority. Attributes of livable centers includes transit-oriented development, reduced congestion, good connectivity through the use of many access options linking land use and transportation. Livable centers were identified, criteria established based on density, connectivity, transit-oriented development and land use. Staff met with 19 cities and towns and a workshop was held to define livable

center boundaries for the remaining 22 communities. Dune Acres doesn't want a center; they are using Chesterton and Porter for their services and will submit something in writing. This committee will recommend mapping of the livable centers for adoption by the NIRPC Commission. Then projects will be identified for the Creating Livable Centers Program of \$400,000 in funding for two years with a 20% local match. Many members of the Pathway Committee are also on the Land Use Committee, which worked on the application. On a motion by Christopher Meyers and a second by Joe Wszolek, the committee voted to recommend Resolution 13-23 to the NIRPC Board for adoption.

Current Initiatives

- Kevin Garcia gave an update on the Illiana project. NIRPC staff is looking at goals and objectives in the 2040 CRP and is preparing a white paper, which is not a staff recommendation but identifies consistency with the goals and objectives of the 2040 Plan. The white paper should be out before the end of the comment period. A workshop on environmental justice will be held today at the genesis Center for representatives of the environmental justice community to get their feedback. Staff will then do a technical analysis to replicate the CRP environmental justice analysis. Although INDOT's consultant performed a congestion management process analysis, NIRPC staff is doing its own. The public comment period is from October 14 to November 20. Four meetings are planned and the schedule of meetings was available. We will take all comments, analyze and report out in a public comment summary report to share with the Transportation Policy Committee at its December 3 meeting. CMAP's staff analysis recommendation was to not amend their plan to include the Illiana. Their policy committee took action yesterday to not include the Illiana in their plan. The next vote is their MPO committee at their meeting on October 17. NIRPC's Board will vote on December 12. The Illiana must be in the long range plan of an MPO. The governors are in favor of building it. Discussion followed on the linkage of I-65 to I-55, the Illiana having no bearing on congestion in the north, the long-standing opposition, negative impacts to the environment, air quality and reinvestment in the urban core communities. The Transportation Policy Committee will take action as to whether to recommend adoption by the NIRPC board. As there were only 14 members present today, Don Parker moved to have the Committee meet again and weigh in on the Illiana; seconded by Kris Parker. Motion carried. Chairman Griffin will send an email to all members of the Implementation Committee to see whether this committee will schedule a meeting in early December, possibly the 4th, to weigh in on the matter of the Illiana. The Environmental Management Policy Committee will look at the environmental ramifications and will have a stake in this as well. All petitions and public comments received to date are on the NIRPC website, under the Illiana. Any future comments received will also be posted, and all comments will become part of the public comment summary report.

Schedule of Meetings – 2013

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held January 9, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. at NIRPC. Meetings are held the second Thursday of the month, quarterly.

Other Business

- Kevin Garcia is working with Craig Grabow to inventory all data to be made available to the public and they are working to create a web portal.
- Sergio Mendoza reported that the Lake Michigan Coastal Program received 23 pre-proposals which are under review and a handful of them referenced the 2040 Plan as part of a regional project for funding. NOAA is currently on furlough due to the government shutdown, but Coastal has enough funds to remain open for at least a year and a half.

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- David Wright reported that GPTC received a 2013 Coastal Grant which will enable the next steps in the comprehensive plan including working with Gary, Crown Point, Merrillville and Lake County to review current and proposed development along the Broadway Corridor and fit the appropriate type of transit to service the corridor. They are also looking at modal conflicts that may impact service delivery. A meeting will be set to discuss the project in advance of setting up stakeholder committees. GPTC will send a formal letter to the City of Crown Point and also invite INDOT to the table.
- Rich Herr commented that this would be an ideal application for overhead monorail.
- Chris Meyers commented that the City of Crown Point received a Coastal grant to develop a green link and recreation corridor from downtown going south towards the fairgrounds and connecting to the northern portion of Lemon Lake County Park. This will help activate the South Lake County Priority Trail Corridor.

Chairman Griffin thanked the committee and staff and adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:25 a.m.

Handouts and materials provided:

- Agenda Packet
- Livable Centers Map
- PowerPoint Presentations

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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