

**Pathway to 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan  
Implementation Committee Meeting  
NIRPC Auditorium  
December 4, 2013  
Minutes**

**Attendees**

Tim Morgan, Tony Sindone, Dewey Pearman, Sergio Mendoza, Sandy O'Brien, Dale Engquist, Don Parker, Rich Herr, Bruce Bendull, Jim Ton, Cecile Petro, Geof Benson, Christopher Meyers, David Wright, Kay Nelson, Sharron Liggins, Alice Dahl, Joan Crist, Jim Jessup, Richard Morrisroe, Kris Parker, Brian Poland, Joseph Wszolek, Cindy Rojas, George Malis

**Guests**

Ed Maher, Harold Mussman, Pat Mussman, Ron Shimizu, Matt Mikus, Jim Pinkerton, Stephanie Smith, Phyllis Malis, Rob Earnshaw, Kevin Crawford, Marc Poulos, Tom Frailey, Butch Rose, Jeffrey Dalles, Ed Linden, Sandy Linden, Jeff Veach, Jim Earl, Philip Roth, Randy \_\_\_\_\_, Carlton Glover, Denarie Kane and Joyce Newland and Jerry Halperin on the conference phone.

**Staff**

Gabrielle Biciunas, Jack Eskin, Kevin Garcia, Mitch Barloga, Scott Weber, Stephen Sostaric, Steve Strains, Sarah Geinosky, Ty Warner and Mary Thorne.

**Welcome and Introductions**

Commissioner Michael Griffin called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.

**Approval of Minutes**

On a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Don Parker, the minutes of the October 10, 2013 meeting were approved as submitted.

**Proposed Illiana Expressway**

- a) Overview – Jim Pinkerton, INDOT described the proposed project from I-65 in Indiana to I-55 in Illinois. He presented on INDOT's analysis report and fiscal constraint summary. INDOT's white paper analysis established categories of consistent, inconsistent, mixed, uncertain and neutral. More negative findings were concentrated in the environmental areas, with mostly consistent or neutral ratings on over half of the goals. The total investment of state highway funds and federal highway funds is \$80-\$110 million. For the period 2018-2053, net total revenues are projected to exceed the total project costs. Hearings on the projects will be held in January 2014.
- b) Illiana Corridor: 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Staff Analysis – Mitch Barloga described the criteria and process to put a major project such as this into the plan. He described the 12-mile Indiana portion of the Illiana and the I-65 widening projects and referred to a letter received from INDOT requesting the projects be included in the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan. Staff developed a white paper, analyzing the goals and objectives in the CRP and established categories of consistent, inconsistent, mixed, uncertain and neutral. Staff offered no recommendation to approve or disapprove, but rather offered recommendations should the project be approved such as building a trail along the full length of the expressway, limiting greenfield development, incorporating environmental practices and maintaining water accessibility. The Transportation Policy Committee approved the Congestion Management Process for the projects and recommended the

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inclusion of the Illiana and the I-65 projects into the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan and the 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program. Joyce Newland added that this project is regionally significant and must be included in the 2040 Plan to go forward. The full NIRPC Commission will vote at their meeting on December 12 to be held at 9:00 a.m. at Woodland Park.

c) Committee Discussion

Regarding a question by Joan Crist on environmental justice impacts to the northern core communities, Kevin Garcia responded that the analysis performed could only look at direct impacts. These two projects would only have secondary impacts which limitations in our analysis could not address at this time. These secondary indirect impacts include potential for the project to draw development away from urban core and that any project-associated job creation – both short- and long-term – will not benefit EJ communities. Other concerns are about jobs moving from the I-80/94 corridor to the Illiana corridor.

Don Parker felt that the wrong questions are being asked, and that in the past seven years, vehicle miles traveled has dropped. If this project goes forward, we need to take a Committee position as to the staff recommendations and either endorse or reject them. A new modeling system should be researched.

David Wright felt that potential jobs would not be served by public transportation and may be out of the reach of some of the northern core residents and he disagreed with the “neutral” status of the recommendations and at best should be “uncertain”.

Michael Griffin added that the perceived modeling limitations are on economic development impacts. There are only three interchanges and sprawl should be minimal. One compelling issue raised by the Town of Lowell and its residents is the question of who will provide emergency services. It is hoped that additional communication as to fiscal impacts on local communities are addressed. The Illiana will most likely be fiscally constrained. Jim Pinkerton added that the term is 30-35 years for the 12 mile segment.

Rich Herr said there was a lot of inconsistency and not enough information provided to warrant the building of this project.

Brian Poland was concerned that without complete answers, the process is not complete enough. Mitch Barloga added that as phases of development continue, future amendments will be made to the 2040 CRP.

Kris Parker asked how much voice the taxpayers will have in renegotiating unexpected cost increases. Sandy O’Brien responded that the Governor has the power to renegotiate with the public private partnerships.

Tony Sindone said care must be taken not to understate the costs and overstate the benefits. There were some constraints put on the benefits but not on the costs. Some sprawl around the three interchanges is necessary to increase the tax base that will be lost when the highway is built. He said this committee must decide whether there are enough items which weigh in with the goals and objectives of the CRP. Geof Benson responded that criteria with multipliers was endorsed by this committee and the commission to filter projects for the process.

Steve Strains provided a table of the staff analysis weighing the Illiana project with the 65 goals and objectives of the CRP. Roughly half were categorized as Consistent, Inconsistent or Mixed.

Public comments were taken.

Pat Mussman, West Creek Township spoke against the Illiana, citing articles in the Bloomberg Report and the Wall Street Journal and she said the money could be better spent in the north county.

Sandy Linden, Lowell spoke against the Illiana citing research she did on costs and financing adding that this road would take jobs away from north Lake County residents and would also promote sprawl.

Kevin Crawford, South Shore Trails asked several questions, saying there is too much ambiguity in this project and more information should be provided. Also, as a bicycling traveler, he has seen several roads and intersections that are completely hostile to cyclists and pedestrians.

Jim Earl, INDOT, said the drop in vehicle miles traveled has been taken into account in all the modeling. When the state builds a project, they assume all risk and all cost. Michael Griffin added that NIRPC has adopted a policy that streets must be designed to be more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

Ed Linden, Lowell said I-65 should be 3 lanes all the way to Indianapolis. The emergency services needed on I-65 are already straining our services. Ed Linden said he is against the Illiana.

Kay Nelson read a position paper from the Northwest Indiana Forum in support of the Illiana.

Marc Poulos, IIFFC said this is a much needed project. He added that the projects identified in the Bloomberg report were done during the worst economic times we have seen since the 1930's. He asked for a positive recommendation on the project.

d) Committee **ACTION** on Illiana Proposal

Michael Griffin stated that there are 24 members of the committee who are eligible to vote. 13 votes is a majority. He said the Transportation Policy Committee voted to recommend the projects based on the metrics currently present and the alignment of the projects with the 2040 Plan. Staff did a great job with their analysis. This committee can decide to do nothing, or vote to recommend or not to recommend, based on the consistency or inconsistency with the plan. Regardless, the Commission will vote next week. Geof Benson added that a quorum of the Full Commission is needed on a project of this magnitude. Don Parker noted that only 20% of the objectives in the analysis are in the consistent category. George Malis said he did not believe it should be included in the Plan.

Jim Ton moved to find the project generally consistent with the 2040 Plan; seconded by Tim Morgan. On a show of hands, 10 voted to carry the motion. The motion failed.

Joyce Newland commented that INDOT has a say over funding categories for their projects. She added that NIRPC already passed the project through its Congestion Management Process.

Dewey Pearman moved to table the recommendation. Upon counsel of the Chair, Dewey Pearman amended his motion to make no finding at this time. There was no second and the motion did not advance.

Don Parker moved that this committee can not endorse the Illiana project owing to inconsistencies and uncertainties as expressed in the staff report. Rich Herr seconded the motion. Jim Ton said that could be interpreted as unnecessarily harsh by implication on the NIRPC staff and negative reports of all the efforts made by many people. He knows staff put in a lot of time and effort on the report. Michael Griffin commented that if the information is inadequate that's one thing, but if we're hostile to the issue that's another matter and he felt uncomfortable with the motion. Geof Benson said the issue is whether or not to

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recommend the projects for adoption into the 2040 Plan or to take no action. The current motion is convoluted and not an answer to the task. George Malis concurred. A motion was made to call a question. Two-thirds majority voted to end the debate. Call for vote on the aforementioned motion was made. On a show of hands, four voted in favor of the motion. The motioned failed.

Joe Wszolek motioned to vote to include the Illiana and the I-65 expansion projects in the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan; second by Chris Meyers. It was noted that a few members of the committee left the meeting and a majority would be 12 members. On a show of hands, 10 voted in favor of the motion. The motioned failed.

Michael Griffin stated he was sensitive about the time and he recommended that the committee make no recommendation. After three votes, the committee did not vote in favor of anything and that is okay. Discussion followed. Jim Ton stated that the Chair can declare a consensus based on votes to make no recommendation. David Wright agreed that there is a consensus of no majority on any of the votes. Michael Griffin encouraged the members of this committee to speak to the Commission since they are not bound by a majority of this committee. There were a lot of competing concerns here that were all valid and should be respected. Christopher Meyers said an action needed to take place. Michael Griffin said it did. Christopher Meyers said this committee should be able to come up with a position as a committee and asked to make a recommendation that we mirror the standing of the Transportation Policy Committee at their meeting yesterday. Discussion followed.

Joe Wszolek motioned to adjourn; seconded by Brian Poland; motion carried. Michael Griffin adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

**Schedule of Meetings:**

- a) February 13, 2014
- b) April 10, 2014
- c) July 10, 2014
- d) October 9, 2014

Handouts and materials provided:

- Agenda Packet
- Staff Analysis of Consistency with 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan

*An audio file of this meeting is available upon request.*

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.