

## Transportation Policy Committee Meeting

NIRPC/Forum Offices

January 14, 2014

### MINUTES

#### Members Present

Rob Strader, Stan Dobosz, Mark O'Dell, Duane Alverson, Art Biciunas, Joe Crnkovich, Bruce Lindner, Don Parker, Jeff Huet, Mike Yacullo, David Wright, Frank Rosado, Jr., Craig Phillips, Jezzy Rodriguez, Mary Jane Thomas, Claudia Taylor, Ian Nicolini, and Joyce Newland and Jerry Halperin via conference phone.

#### Guests

Michael Jabo, Ron Wiedeman, Justin Mount, Christopher Murphy, Marc Malczewski, Craig Hendrix, Jim Wiseman, Janet Cypra, Susan Carr, Skyler York, Lisa Shrader, Chris Reynolds, Steph Smith, Chris Moore, Glen Campbell, Julia Surber, Renae Jackson, Robert Earnshaw, Teresa Torres.

#### NIRPC Staff

Steve Strains, Mitch Barloga, Mary Thorne, Eman Ibrahim, Gary Evers, Jack Eskin, Kevin Garcia, Scott Weber, Sarah Geinosky, Gabrielle Biciunas, Belinda Petroskey, Stephen Sostaric.

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

- a) Vice Chair Jim Polarek called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.
- b) The INDOT voluntary participation survey was available on the table.
- c) The 2014 schedule of TPC meetings was included in the materials.
- d) On a motion by David Wright and a second by Don Parker, the minutes of the December 3 meeting were approved as submitted.

### 2. Presentation

Gregg Calpino presented "Complete Trails", on the trail work being done at Wolf Lake in Hammond and the Indiana Dunes State Park, making the communities "trail towns", improving access to the areas by residents and also improving tourism opportunities in Northwest Indiana.

### 3. Programming

- a) **NIRPC Funding Request Letter:** Gary Evers described an off-cycle request by the Lake County Board of Commissioners to reallocate funds currently programmed for the reconstruction of Colfax Street from Main to 45<sup>th</sup> to the rehabilitation of Lake County Bridge 241, Kennedy Avenue over the Grand Calumet River with the balance to the Phase II reconstruction of 45<sup>th</sup> Ave., Whitcomb to Colfax. Discussion followed. Gary Evers said this would be added as an amendment to amendment #7 to the TIP and the Colfax project would be deleted.
- b) **Amendment #6 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program:** Gary Evers described the 16 added INDOT projects. On a motion by Don Parker, second by Bruce Linder, Amendment #6 to the FY 2014-2017 was recommended to the NIRPC Board.
- c) **Amendment #7 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program:** Gary Evers described the new local projects and phases for Hammond, Crown Point and the Kennedy Avenue Bridge project as

described above in the funding letter from Lake County. Jim Polarek entertained a motion and second to approve Amendment #7 and a motion and second to amend it to delete the Colfax project. David Wright motioned to recommend Amendment #7 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program; Duane Alverson seconded. Discussion followed. Gary Evers added that the money was coming from the CMAQ pool and did not need to go back to committee as it was an administrative change. Some of the right of way money was released which was used to cover the \$25,000 in PE increased costs. Duane Alverson motioned to amend Amendment #7 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program deleting the Colfax project for Lake County; Don Parker seconded. Motion carried.

- d) **Quarterly Tracking Meeting Schedule:** Gary Evers called attention to a handout identifying the schedule for the 2014 quarterly tracking for meetings with communities listed which will be held at NIRPC. Also, the annual listing of projects will be posted on the website. Finally, employees in responsible charge must file their quarterly reports electronically within INDOT's SPMS system; no exceptions. Accuracy is important. We may be doing a workshop; date to be determined.

#### 4. Indiana Department of Transportation

Chris Reynolds described the projects in the letting list for December 2013 through March 2014. The March Griffith project has been rescheduled. There will be a number of projects in May; four are at high-risk. We need to work through those issues as soon as possible. Accuracy is very important. Contact Marcia Blansett with questions. Pothole repairs were briefly discussed, particularly on SR 49 south of US 30 over the train tracks and also on Broadway in Gary.

#### 5. Transit Operators Reports

- a) **NICTD** – Joe Crnkovich reported that December ridership finished strong, up 1.5% over December of 2012, but not enough to overcome the 1.6% loss for the year. That loss was due to Chicago downtown economy, fewer festivals, the shortening the Taste of Chicago and bad weather and the replacement of the Nine Span Bridge. Work on the Dune Park platform is finished except for landscaping in the spring. The Trail Creek Bridge is finished. The Hudson Lake Bridge replacement will be done in the fall of 2014. The Michigan City study is almost done. The strategic plan is about half done. The EIS work will begin for the West Lake Corridor study. The RFP should be available in a week or so. Proposals are due March 5. A brief presentation will be made at the Commission meeting this Thursday. More information is on the website.
- b) **GPTC** – David Wright reported that December ridership was up 4% over 2012 and about 5% for 2013. A full month worth of ridership was gained over two years since implementation changes were made. With regard to the Broadway project, the draft scope is going to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for their approval. A public forum will be added in February, probably in Merrillville, to update the business community. The GPTC Board of Directors authorized a public hearing in March for some service changes.
- c) **Michigan City Transit** – Rob Strader reported that after several years of declining ridership, 2013 saw an increase of 13% in 2013 ridership over 2012.

#### 6. Local and Regional Transportation Projects –

**Highways:** Mitch Barloga reported that NIRPC has received a request from INDOT to amend its 2040 Plan for the I-65 Expansion between US 231 and SR 2. A public comment period will be held from February 3 to March 5. The amendment also includes the Cline Avenue Bridge which, while private, is a regionally significant project and must be amended back into the Plan for our model runs. Also, the segment of Duneland-Kankakee trail is being rerouted through DNR woods and the SR 49 project will decrease to three lanes from four.

## 7. Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration

**FHWA:** Joyce Newland reported that FHWA is issuing planning emphasis areas (PEA) for 2015 for MPO incorporation into the UPWP for ADA, Quarterly Tracking, pavement management system supporting the requirements of MAP-21, and functional classification. The PEA will be coming out next week.

## 8. Planning Neighbors

**CMAP** submitted a report to Mitch Barloga that tool kits on a climate adaptation guidebook and arts and culture planning are available on the website.

## 9. Other Business, Public Comment, Staff Announcements and Upcoming Meetings

- a) **Other Business:** In response to a question from David Wright on the status of the Public Participation Plan, Steve Strains referred to page 5 of the December TPC minutes stating that a motion by Brian Snedecor was passed that the full Ad Hoc Committee review the changes and have an opportunity to report back to the Transportation Policy Committee.
- b) **Public Comment:** Teresa Torres, Everybody Counts asked members to please use the microphones and she commented on previous police presence and the imposed three-minute limit on comments. She asked for information as to the disbursements of RBA-allocated Public Mass Transportation Fund (PMTF) monies in 2013. Jim Polarek responded that her request for information would be passed to the Finance & Personnel Committee for a response to her. David Wright addressed Teresa Torres, saying that the state allocation of funds in 2012 to his knowledge were adjusted but that is not going to happen again. This process will become more transparent in the future.
- c) **Staff Announcements:**
  - Belinda Petroskey said a transit announcement has been postponed.
  - Steve Strains said that MAP-21 calls for revision of our 2008 planning agreement between NIRPC as the MPO, the transit operators and INDOT. This will be added to the agenda for the next transit operators' roundtable.
  - Mitch Barloga referred to a handout on the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals that NIRPC will host a series of webinars starting tomorrow and will be held every third Wednesday from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. from January 15 through December 17.
  - Mitch Barloga announced that Sergio Mendoza authored a book on the history of Hobart and will hold a book launch event on January 24 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the Hobart Community Center.The schedule of NIRPC meetings was announced.

The next Transportation Policy Committee meeting will be at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, January 14, 2014 at NIRPC.

On a motion by Don Parker and a second by David Wright, Jim Polarek adjourned the meeting at 10:20 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.

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.