

**2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan
Steering Committee Meeting
NIRPC Auditorium
October 14, 2010
Minutes**

Members

Vanessa Allen, Don Babcock, Geof Benson, Joan Bliss, David Blumenthal, A.J. Bytnar, Jan Dick, Dale Engquist, Phil Gralik, K-Todd Behling, Richard Herr, Keith Kirkpatrick, Myrna Maldonado, Lou Martinez, Sergio Mendoza, Christopher Meyers, Richard Morrisroe, Sandy O'Brien, George Malis, Charles Oberlie, Mark Reshkin, Jill Ritchie, Daniel Suson, Kathy Chroback, Joseph Wszolek, Pat Pullara

Guests

Richard Leverett, Craig Phillips, Robert J. Boklund, Floriam Bolsega Sr., Jim Sheehan, Julie Roesler, Bob Carnahan, Keith Benman

Consultant

Phil Hanegraaf

Staff

Mitch Barloga, Kathy Luther, Gabrielle Biciunas, Hubert Morgan, Eman Ibrahim, Chase Morris, Ryan Hicks, Matt Hay, Kevin Garcia, Belinda Petroskey, Steven Sostaric, Tom VanderWoude, Bill Brown, Bob Niezgodski, Steve Strains, Gary Evers, Meredith Stilwell

Chairman Charles Oberlie called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. On a motion by Geof Benson and a second by David Blumenthal, the minutes and summary of the August 26 meeting were approved.

Phil Hanegraaf reported that the framework for the draft plan now needs to be finalized. The framework is not a plan yet, but vision and direction are needed to be able to talk about more specific strategies working toward plan adoption and the draft provides a construct on dialogue with the constituents in the region as to how goals are adopted. Four scenarios, made up of two static scenarios (trend and plan) and two interactive scenarios (livable centers and infill), were used to create the results.

The Trend scenario reflects current employment and population from 2010 to 2040 and is a dichotomy between where employment is moving and where residents are living. The job to housing ratio is moving farther apart, meaning more travel and a greater cost to do business. The 171,000 population growth and 80,000 job growth figures for the region to 2040, which came from the trend scenario results, were used for the two interactive scenarios as well.

The Plan Scenario reflects current land use, as well as future land use. The plans will probably change many times throughout the next 30 years and the most important aspects of the scenario are making sure growth is being directed where it is wanted and with regard to the goals. Local community plans and the process in generating those plans are respected, but we need to insure that the pieces in terms of infrastructure, environment and others are together when looked at regionally.

The Livable Centers scenario concentrates population in each of the centers showing what the population distribution might look like using the 171,000 population and 80,000 employment figures. In the four cluster workshops that were held last fall, it was the opinion of the people that the majority of growth should go to the Metro centers and other large communities and that unincorporated land use areas shouldn't get as much development.

A lot of time was directed into determining what would represent the Infill scenario, resulting in identifying four communities critical to the infill scenario. They are Gary, Hammond, East Chicago and Michigan City. The decision of how to allocate population and employment to those communities by reviewing the 2008 vacancy rates, resulting in that rate plus ten percent for redevelopment equals about 57,000 or almost 35% of the total forecast for the region for 2040 to move into the infill centers.

As these are scenarios, the next step calls for the constituency communities to come up with final numbers for the transportation plan. However, this provides direction in terms of putting the basic questions on the table for people to be able to answer "where do we want to go?", "do we like are plans?", and "are we ready for change?"

Outreach & Public Involvement

Hubert Morgan reported on the public meetings that were held across the region to help in deciding on the preferred scenario recommendation for the 2040 Plan. Although not all of the meetings were well attended, they produced qualitative results. Public meetings were held in East Chicago, Gary, Cedar Lake, Portage, Michigan City, Hammond and LaPorte. Some of the key elements heard at these meetings were:

- If northern communities show accountability and good management, other communities will give their endorsement and forego some of their funding
- Lake front reinvestment
- Continuing implementation of the Marquette Plan
- Helping revitalize the northern cities helps all communities

Summary Results & Indicators from Meetings & Workshops

A Stakeholders meeting was held on September 30 with 64 people present, with approximately 37% of them being first time attendees. Those present were taken through the process of deliberately assessing the scenarios and keypad polling was used to obtain the results of their choice for the preferred scenario. It was determined by a majority of 80%, that the Trend Scenario was not meeting the objectives of moving toward the regional vision and goals. 65% of the people felt that the Plan Scenario was not moving us in the right direction when looking at the regional overlay for where we are going collectively. 75% of the people felt that the Infill Scenario was leading in the right direction. Likewise, 70% of the people felt that the Center Scenario was leading in the right direction. The final response of that meeting was that the Stakeholders liked the idea of concentrating growth in some way.

A few of the top ideas for implementation to get to the right direction were:

- Coordinated Leadership
- Focusing on the role of education and Universities
- Lakefront reinvestment
- Gary Airport expansion
- Illiana through LaPorte
- High speed rail

A discussion at the Land Use Committee Meeting held on October 13 resulted in a desire for a new Hybrid scenario which would combine a Plan scenario with an Infill scenario. More than 90% of the attendees of the Land Use Committee Meeting voted for this hybrid. In moving forward with a preferred scenario, work will have to be done with the constituent communities to come up with final understanding of where the centers, population and employment are, under the direction of this framework, and how what the communities are trying to do fit within this framework.

Since this plan is a vision plan and was disconnected from the forecast process, forecasts will have to be done quickly on the preferred scenario to determine what that means for the benefit of the long-range Transportation Plan.

Steering Committee Actions

Three actions were brought before the Committee for decision:

- Scenario/direction of preference
Results: To focus on a Centers and Infill concept based on plans, which is constrained by population and employment growth with environmental sensitivities while being deliberate on where infrastructure is being directed. Meetings will be held with each community to shape what that concept means to that community. The Plan Scenario will play out in those conversations by talking about good planning around those principles.

- Direction on transit, Illiana or other enhancements
Results: The consensus was very clear that transit should be included in the plan, but on the fence with Illiana in several ways. Some members thought it made sense going west since we are already doing it and several comments were made that although we may not want it, we should plan for it.
- Comments and ideas regarding other transportation improvements include: green technology materials, Cline Ave., Gary (4th & 5th Avenues), the importance of the
- Gary Airport expansion, HOV lanes, freight/rail congestion as it relates to our roadway system, water, freight & water connections, the lake front, high-speed rail, monorail, bike and ped/ped friendly, energy efficient transportation and transit, improving the quality of existing transit, and roundabouts
- Implementation – What are the challenges we face?
Due to time constraints, it was decided that the implementation discussion would take place at the November meeting.

Milestone Timeline & Dates

Bill Brown discussed the milestone timeline and the corresponding dates and meetings, with the Plan Adoption slated for April 21, 2011 at the Full Commission Meeting. There are many steps still left to accomplish and he showed the anticipated timeframe, adding that dates are subject to change.

Phil presented the NIRPC Comprehensive Regional Plan Draft with the major bullet points being:

- Vision and Goals and Indicators
- Sustainable and Livable Communities
- Mobility
- Human and Economic Capital
- Stewardship and Governance
- Priority Agenda

Next Steps: Outreach to the Environmental Justice Communities with the Benefits & Burdens Analysis, and workshops in those communities.

Public Comment:

- Geoff Benson wanted to remind everyone that the transportation aspect that is literally driving the bus and the NIRPC has decided to make it a comprehensive plan and include the transportation plan.
- George Malis commented that he had spoken against the Illiana and cautioned NIRPC against endorsing it.

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The next Steering Committee meeting will be on November 23 at 9:00 a.m. at NIRPC to further discuss the implementation action.

Mayor Oberlie adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Handouts and materials provided:

- Agenda
- August 26 Meeting Minutes
- August 22 Meeting Summary
- 2040 CRP Public Outreach Meeting Summary Report
- Turning Results by Question from NIPRC September 30 meeting
- Milestone target dates
- NIRPC Comprehensive Regional Plan-Draft

Audio tapes of this meeting are filed. Contact Mary Thorne at NIRPC should you wish to schedule a time to hear them.

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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