

**2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan
Steering Committee Meeting
NIRPC Auditorium
October 27, 2011
Draft Minutes**

Members

Mike Aylesworth, K-Todd Behling, Geof Benson, Kevin Breitzke, AJ Bytnar, Jan Dick, Rich Herr, Jim Jessup, Keith Kirkpatrick, Eric Kurtz, George Malis, Kay Nelson, Sandy O'Brien, Charles Oberlie, Craig Phillips, Brian Poland, Bob Thompson, Garry Traynham, Joe Wszolek

Guests

Joe Crnkovich, Craig Grabow, Sharron Liggins, Jim Nowacki, Don Parker, David Wright

Staff

Gabrielle Biciunas, Eman Ibrahim, Steve Strains, John Swanson, Tom Vander Woude

Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Charles Oberlie called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. with self-introductions. The minutes and summary of the June 16 meeting were approved by the committee on a motion by Eric Kurtz and a second by Kay Nelson.

CRP Summary Plan

Steve Strains reported that the plan is done; distribution is beginning. There is a full version including the transportation, congestion management and environmental sections. There is also an abridged version and CDs. Contact Mary Thorne for copies. The plan documents the process, the results and recommendations very well. The plan was resented two weeks ago at the MPO conference. Staff presented on elements of the plan other than transportation as this is a comprehensive plan. The summary is the document most people will want to read. The primary responsibility for the plan goes to Mitch Barloga, for re-writing the draft from the consultants, Eman Ibrahim and Tom Vander Woude for completing the plan together. The draft summary will be sent to the printer next week.

Tom Vander Woude guided the committee through the contents of the document. The first section covers the vision, framework, key principals of environmental justice, natural resources, growth and vision for revitalization, the implementation action plan and NIRPC's role and commitment. The rest of the document covers the summary plan elements, from growth and conservation patterns, transportation, environment and green infrastructure, human and economic resources, stewardship and governance and implementation. Strategies for implantation are included, as well as local planning initiatives. Comments on the summary will be taken through Monday. Stakeholders and the public were also invited to stay and meet with Tom or other staff to discuss the summary

Comments from the committee on the Summary:

- ❖ Brian Poland: Some images are faint and the legend is not legible
(Staff: NIRPC is working on replacing the maps at a higher resolution).

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- ❖ Sandy O'Brien: The maps on the website are difficult to read throughout the document, say that bigger sizes and better maps are available on the website
(Staff: The final printing will be better quality than the black and white draft)
- ❖ Kevin Breitzke: Put the maps into an atlas at the end of the document
- ❖ Keith Kirkpatrick: Note throughout the document that this is a summary and the full plan is on the website
- ❖ Geof Benson: Note that requests for CD's of the plan should be made to Mary Thorne at mthorne@nirpc.org
- ❖ Kevin Breitzke: Reference to the website should be on the inside cover
- ❖ Craig Phillips: A footer should be added saying 2040 CRP summary document
- ❖ Geof Benson: We need to get people to read it other than ourselves
- ❖ Keith Kirkpatrick: The marina picture on page 31 should reference what you are looking at
- ❖ The picture of the Portage Lakefront Park and Riverwalk should have a caption saying what it is and where it is.
- ❖ Sandy O'Brien: A lot of people don't know what NIRPC is. Have some description on the inside cover or at the beginning of the document.
- ❖ Keith Kirkpatrick: At the end, page 82, say 2011 NIRPC Board of Commissioners. Also say what NIRPC is (an MPO and Council of Governments) and list staff.
(Staff: Acknowledgements are in the back of the document)
- ❖ Keith Kirkpatrick: Say that NIRPC is required to develop a plan periodically, why and talk about funding
- ❖ Geof Benson: The title on page 85 should be shown on page 84 as well
- ❖ Jim Nowacki: The consolidation of stations in Gary and Miller should be discussed. This plan does not address the closing of 1/3 of the stations as a significant change to the plan. A station in a populated area is good and in an unpopulated area is contrary to the plan. Citizens expect NIRPC to use this plan going forward and look at the issues.
(Staff: The issue of consolidation of stations in Gary and Miller was not discussed in the plan as this came up after the plan. We will research the issue)
GPTC's David Wright commented that since that is a significant change, it would be amended into the plan. At that point, the project might actually have to go through the conformity analysis. It is not consistent with the goals of the plan
Geof Benson commented that pages 38-40 state that more study is needed. It has not been finalized in any transportation plans.

- ❖ Keith Kirkpatrick: These questions merit a guidebook (this is how this can be used). All the verbiage about it being a living document for the next 20 years will continue to be amended as things change.
- ❖ Sandy O'Brien: Page 46 and 67: the plan supports development of logistics industry and the NWI Economic Development District. A question is of consistence with sustainability and goals and objectives. The plan states it supports multi-modal and economic development.
(Staff: That would be the Implementation, the next steps.)
- ❖ Keith Kirkpatrick: It should ask the citizen, "where do I offer support and what can I do to question things in the plan?"

Steve Strains commented that the thoughts received today have been very helpful and will delay the printing of the final Summary by a few days as staff reviews the comments.

Implementation Committee

The implementation committee, chaired by Michael Griffin, will likely meet quarterly with the first meeting on November 16, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. Those wishing to serve should contact Gabrielle Biciunas at gbiciunas@nirpc.org. We will work with the Transportation Policy Committee and the Environmental Management Policy committee as well.

Steve asked the committee for ideas that would be passed along to the Implementation Committee. "What does implementation mean to you?"

- ❖ Bob Thompson: Benchmarks, achievable, implementable and measurable
- ❖ Joe Wszolek: NIRPC has no strength other than agreeing that this plan is one to be implemented. New elections will make new implementers. Lake County alone has 17 local governments. We need to get everyone on board first. Buy-in by the local governments, including any newly elected officials is needed before implementation can be done.
- ❖ Geof Benson: NIRPC has some clout and we made a set of criteria for transportation projects in the TIP and all projects have and will be affected. CMAQ, Transit, etc. – this is already a large part of implementation. It is measurable.
- ❖ Keith Kirkpatrick: Implementation should:
 1. Promote the use of the document
 2. Educate our decision makers on how to use it
 3. Let citizens know this exists and its purpose
 4. Define the process on how people can address changes as time goes on.
- ❖ Steve Strains: We will be on track to review and update the plan within four years. That is a transportation requirement. Anything non-transportation can be refined as well.
- ❖ Keith Kirkpatrick: That should be in the summary.

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- ❖ Kevin Breitzke: Orientation on NIRPC takes place for all new Board members. Most of the stuff produced in the last 10 years has been dynamic.
- ❖ K-Todd Behling: As we transition from current elected to new ones, training will need to be done. Also, the goal of the plan was to try to get all the communities to work together to reach these goals.
- ❖ Chuck Oberlie: Those transitioning out are the ones who need to help with this.
- ❖ AJ Bytnar: What is implementation to NIRPC? Smaller communities do not have planning staff.
- ❖ Steve Strains: Best practices through a local assistance program will allow for NIRPC to help smaller communities with planning efforts through technical support, legislative initiatives, how we function as a council of governments to local development decisions. The implementation action plan is to develop a 5 and 10 year implantation program to assess and identify NIRPC's and its partners' commitments to implementation. It expresses what our desires are and what your desires are.
- ❖ Jim Jessup: Implementation involves priorities, focusing and doing and funding some quick successes, not just talking about them in the next 30 years. Implementation Committee members should complete an application form stating who they are, who they represent and what they can contribute as a member of the Implementation Committee.
- ❖ Bob Thompson: Has NIRPC looked at prioritizing these sections?
- ❖ Steve Strains: We will have to do that with guidance from the Implementation Committee.
- ❖ AJ Bytnar: An action plan/road map should be created.
- ❖ Keith Kirkpatrick: How is the committee being formed?
- ❖ Steve Strains: We are asking people to volunteer and be recommended to the NIRPC chair. There are some holes and some agencies will be targeted to fill in those gaps.
- ❖ Gabrielle Biciunas: The committee so far includes eight commissioners appointed by NIRPC Chair Mayor Tom McDermott of Hammond: Kevin Breitzke, Michael Griffin as chair, Eric Kurtz, Chuck Oberlie, Kathy Chroback (vice chair), Nancy Adams, Richard Ludlow and James Ton. See Gabrielle if you would like to be considered. Some of the missing entities we would like to include are universities, NIPSCO, housing, realtors, developers, redevelopment commissions, the Northwest Indiana Forum, the RDA and other funders.
- ❖ Keith Kirkpatrick: Is there decent representation from the urban core?
- ❖ John Swanson: They are a target. We will wait until after the elections. Give Gabrielle your name if you have an interest in serving.

Next Steps

Chairman Oberlie thanked the members for their hard work. As we started the journey we thought a year would fly by and it's been over two years. The final product is a good reflection of the comments, thoughts and ideas everyone brought to the table. We have tried to listen to all the perceptions on the issues and tried to evaluate that in a document that will be a challenge in this three county area. To demand a collaborative process, establish priorities and recognize that sometimes we help our brother instead of ourselves. It will be a challenge going forth to make sure that all the communities understand that we must work together if we are going to achieve these goals and have a stronger Northwest Indiana as a whole. As you contemplate your continued service on the Implementation Committee, one of the issues we need to fill in relates to environmental justice. We have a tendency to react to projects as they roll out, but as we remind our own Board members, the plan has been developed and we may go into engineering and environmental phases and then it will be four or five years before you get into construction and someone will say where did that come from? It is very important to keep the entire community involved in the implementation processes as well. Thoughts on that are welcome. NIRPC staff will get your comments incorporated into the summary.

The committee thanked Mayor Oberlie for his leadership as Steering Committee Chairman throughout the process.

Mayor Oberlie adjourned the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

Handouts and materials provided:

- Agenda
- June 16 Meeting Minutes
- June 16 Meeting Summary
- Abridged 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan
- Draft 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Summary

A Digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact Mary Thorne at NIRPC should you wish to receive a copy of it.

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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