

Technical Planning Committee  
NIRPC Lake Michigan Room, Portage, IN  
April 16, 2019  
Minutes

Kevin Breitzke called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions. Committee members present were Kevin Breitzke, Will Farrellbegg, George Topoll, Michael Griffin, Kay Nelson, Marino Solario, Mark O'Dell, Dean Button, Tyler Kent, Stephen Stofko, Sarah Kobetis and Jessica Miller.

Others present were Brian Snedecor, John Cannon, Sandy Kolb, Phil Gralik, Jeff Huet, Mark Gordish, Doug Ferguson, Bruce Spires, Adam McAlpine, Nick Bellar, Bill Oeding, Greg Falkowski, Jill Murr, Beth Shrader, Claudia Taylor, Chris Murphy, Dave Shilling, Jake Dammarell and Denny Cobb.

Staff present were Trey Wadsworth, Mitch Barloga, Charles Bradsky, James Winters, Gabrielle Biciunas and Candice Eklund.

Charles Bradsky began the discussion on the 2020-2024 Transportation Improvement Program project lists. After the March Technical Planning Committee meeting, NIRPC received a letter from INDOT stating that the NIRPC region received approximately \$1 million more for the Chicago Urbanized Area. The funding would start in 2020. Group 2 and the transit operators are not impacted. As it was about a week before the public comment period was to begin, staff programmed those extra funds, as it was better to have a fully-funded TIP than to have unobligated funds. A lot of the projects were not vetted before the TPC and so this special meeting was called to discuss those additional projects. Going forward, any projects that are removed, but a new project being added must go through a public comment period and amended in July. INDOT's STIP public comment runs concurrent with ours. Everything out for public comment was approved in the NOFA.

The Highland project's original ask was \$280,000. They were granted \$130,000. They would now be given the full \$280,000 in 2023. Hobart asked for \$2,992,400. They scored fourth highest after Hammond, Merrillville and Gary. They received \$1,600,000 and would be given the full ask of \$2,992,400 in 2024. Some projects will be funded earlier and some got pushed back a year to free up some funds. The Porter County project was awarded the full amount of right-of-way which was \$324,000 for 2024. Projects with PE or ROW in 2024 will be considered a legacy project and will be applied to the next NOFA somewhere in 2025-2030.

Trey added that if projects were removed from the TIP, it would be considered a significant modification and would not go to the full Commission until August and would not be submitted to INDOT until after August. A July or August letting would not occur. Once the new TIP is approved, projects to be removed can then be decided on by amendment and go out for 30 day public comment.

On a motion by Dean Button and a second by Will Farrellbegg, the Technical Planning Committee voted to recommend fully funding the Highland project to the Commission for adoption.

Phase I of the Willowcreek project will be added to the 2025-2030 TIP. They received \$324,000 in 2024 in February. Hammond's Marquette Greenway Trail project was added. Legacy projects for Hammond,

Schererville, the Veterans Trail and Lake Station were discussed briefly. The Hammond Chicago Avenue project is fully funded. There is also Kennedy Avenue in Schererville will get some funding. The Veterans Trail amended score was 62 and 53. The Phase I request was \$2.6 million and the Phase II request was \$4.6 million. Dean Button said it seemed appropriate to remove Hammond's trail project from the TIP. The Next Level Trails application awards will be announced in a couple of weeks. During the process, if we remove projects, the \$1.2 million will go to the Veterans Trail Phase 1.

For air quality, we were able to move Lake Station's CNG from 2021 to 2020, which freed up \$360,000 in CMAQ funds for air quality education for NIRPC. The remaining projects in that group were approved at the February TPC meeting.

For Complete Streets, the onroad Gary trail on 5th Avenue was the highest scoring and they were given \$300,000 for PE in 2024. Sarah Kobetis described the project which would convert 5th Avenue into a two-way street diverting all truck traffic onto 4th Avenue. Dean Button objected to adding the project if Gary did not have clearance from INDOT since the project was added by staff and was not voted on by the committee. Mitch Barloga added that there are many projects throughout the TIP that don't have concurrence with the state. Hammond sought positive concurrence from INDOT to do their project on a state highway. Michael Griffin said clearer application metrics should be sought for the next NOFA. Projects which are already approved should not be penalized if the metric was not clear up front. There is a burden on the applicant to demonstrate funding for the life of that project and getting concurrence in writing is a goal. The committee structure was such that the purpose was to inform policy makers and not make the policies. The timing is critical at this point. Changes are needed but the TIP must be approved today and amendments can be made later. Charles Bradsky continued that 2024 is technically an illustrative year and the city is committing to complete the project sometime within the 2025 to 2030 timeframe. The next NOFA will be planned in the fall of 2020. Dennis Cobb thought it might be good to have some reserve funding for LPAs in the out years.

Charles Bradsky discussed the roundabout at 61st Avenue and Marcella. Mayor Snedecor previously agreed to fund at 40-50% local match. NIRPC fully funded the project at 80%, from \$1.6 million to the \$2.9 million ask since Hobart gave a large overmatch. Discussion followed. There were three other projects that scored higher and those should have been given consideration. Michael Griffin said projects with a larger local match should be given higher consideration, but a determination was needed as to whether the additional \$1.3 million should be considered for one or more of the higher scoring projects. Hammond was tied for the high score and can phase that project.

Beth Shrader moved to affirm the TIP as presented by staff with discussion on amendments to be made in the future. Kevin Breitzke said there was an issue with her being a member on the committee for 2019. (NOTE: Beth was an alternative for Blair Milo from the City of La Porte. It was determined at the Board meeting on April 18 to add Mayor Krentz to the Committee with Beth Shrader as alternate, replacing Nick Meyer). Michael Griffin made the motion with a rider affirming the work of the staff with the added advisory that when the timetable permits, that we make that reallocation to Hammond what would be recovered from the additional amount given to Hobart; second made by Will Farrellbegg. Mark O'Dell objected saying that the motion should not be made until all the amendments have been reviewed. On a voice vote, the motion passed with three voting against - Mark O'Dell, Dean Button and Marino Solario.

Charles Bradsky said Valpariaos had \$1.4 million for ROW and PE. The limit was set at 7.5%. This would be over funded. The ask was \$700,000 for the first phase of the project, which includes a roundabout, a tunnel and a street. Mark O'Dell said a legacy project and the Veterans Trail scored higher. Charles Bradsky said the Vet Trail was a lower scoring project and it was unintentionally overlooked at the February TPC meeting that it was a legacy project. Although there was no vote taken, the committee agreed with Dean Button to remove the Hammond project and put that money towards the Vet Trail. That would free up \$1.3 million to go towards at least Phase 1 which is \$2.6 million. The Phase II was \$4.6 million. This could be brought back to committee for discussion in June.

Michael Griffin volunteered to be on a proposed task force to be used for making a formal presentation to the full TPC for honing future NOFA criteria. Dean Button, Mark O'Dell and Charles Bradsky also volunteered for this task force.

Kevin Breitzke added that this was an extreme circumstance of a perfect storm with a new NOFA, TIP and *NWI 2050 Plan* all with the same April 1 submission deadline. The Chicago Street Hammond project is scheduled to be let in July or August. Approximately \$5 million was being distributed over a five year TIP. Nick Bellar said the Winfield Town Council is looking for a decision on their sidewalks on Randolph construction project which connects an elementary school to a large 15-acre park and Phase 2 connects further to a major residential area. The town is self-funding other parts of the project. Charles said the project scored 63 with a \$391,000 ask. This project and others added by staff are at risk. The Vet Trail scored very low but it's a legacy project. On a motion by Dean Button, seconded by Mark O'Dell, the committee voted to recommend to the NIRPC Board/Commission for adoption the 2020-2024 Transportation Improvement Program subject to any projects added by staff subsequent to the February TPC meeting be subject to repurposing of the funds with opposing votes by Sarah Kobetis and Tyler Kent.

Charles Bradsky was tasked in June to start the new NOFA process to work toward a better process which is fair for everyone and suggested using the time scheduled for the TROC meeting to work on the TPC issues like INDOT's concurrence on a state road. Every community in the region is a member of TROC.

The next meeting of the Technical Planning Committee will be held on May 14, 2019 at 10 a.m.

Hearing no other business, on a motion by George Topoll and a second by Will Farrellbegg, Kevin Breitzke adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

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