

Technical Planning Committee
NIRPC Lake Michigan Room, Portage, IN
April 9, 2019
Minutes

Kevin Breitzke called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions. Committee members present were Kevin Breitzke, Will Farrellbegg, George Topoll, Marino Solario, Kay Nelson, Mark O'Dell, Dean Button, David Wright, Tyler Kent, Tom MacLennan, Kelly Wenger, Margot Sabato, Stephen Stofko and Jessica Miller.

Others present were Doug Ferguson, Jeff Huet, Jerry Siska, Bruce Lindner, Claudia Taylor, Don Oliphant, Chris Moore, Ron Wiedeman, Ismail Attallah, Jake Dammarell and Denny Cobb.

Staff present were Trey Wadsworth, Mitch Barloga, Charles Bradsky, Dominique Edwards, Scott Weber, Peter Kimball, Eman Ibrahim, Gabrielle Biciunas and Mary Thorne.

The INDOT participation survey was available in the lobby.

The minutes of the March 12, 2019 meeting were approved on a motion by Will Farrellbegg and a second by Dean Button.

Public comment requests were made by Dean Button and Dennis Cobb and were discussed under the Programming portion of the agenda.

Trey Wadsworth reported on Resolution 19-14, Amendment #2 to the FY 2019-2020 Unified Planning Work Program. The amendment was released for a 7-day public comment period from March 4 to March 10, 2019. One public comment was received regarding working to achieve transit across the three counties. The Indiana Department of Transportation provided technical comments to clarify language and modify the Air Quality Public Education task. Comments were addressed and reflected in the final draft of the UPWP. Changes are minor in nature. An overview of the regional planning activities included in the amendment was provided. Mark O'Dell identified a correction on page 11, which will be made and taken to the Executive Board for final approval at their meeting next week. On a motion by Kay Nelson and a second by Will Farrellbegg, the Technical Planning Committee recommended Resolution 19-14, Amendment #2 to the FY 2019-2020 Unified Planning Work Program as corrected.

Mitch Barloga presented an overview of the *NWI 2050 Plan* presented the draft *NWI 2050 Plan* which is out for public comment through April 30. The Plan examines trends and influences of the future including economy and place, environment, mobility, and people and leaders. It identifies strategies to pursue, investments to make, and progress to measure to achieve the vision for the region. This plan provides sixteen critical paths of action to be prepared for Northwestern Indiana's future. The Plan is online at <https://www.nirpc.org/2040-plan/transportation/2050-plan/>. Information includes the Plan Storybook, the Plan in PDF format, a link for comments and information on the open houses and public hearings which will be held during the last full week of April in all three counties. Schedules were available.

Also out for public comment through April 30 is the 2020-2024 Transportation Improvement Program. It is on the NIRPC website at under the Transportation/2020-2024 TIP dropdown. All input from the public and the topical committees will be presented in a public comment report.

The Transportation Conformity Determination for the *NWI 2050 Plan* and 2020-2024 Transportation Improvement Program can be found on the NIRPC website under the Environmental - Air Quality drop down. It is also open for public comment through April 30.

Charles Bradsky reported on Resolution 19-15, Amendment #21 to the FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program. The amendment was released for public comment from February 28 through March 27 with no comments received. During a review with Federal highways, it was found that several projects were inadvertently left off of the amendment due to the new reporting style generated from the new RTIP or the new web-based TIP. The revised list went out for a revised 9 day comment period from March 29 through April 7. No public comments were received. Federal Highways' technical comments were for a better listed location, a project's air quality conformity being exempt or non-exempt, whether the project would add capacity and a better description of the work being done on a project. These were all included in the description portion of each project prior to the second release. They will also be included in future reports. Charles Bradsky overviewed the projects and changes in the amendment. Dean Button asked for language to be included of what is being added in the amendment. On a motion by Dean Button and a second by Will Farrellbegg, the Technical Planning Committee recommended Resolution 19-15, Amendment #21 to the FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program.

The topical committees' meeting schedule was discussed. Budgetary concerns were cited as a reason for holding less frequent meetings as well as the fact that attendance at topical committee meetings has dropped significantly and achieving a quorum was difficult. A quarterly amendment cycle was another issue. It was noted that the Transportation Resource and Oversight Committee reacts to INDOT lettings which are on a monthly cycle and the committee feels they should meet regularly. Several other committees have also expressed concern about going to quarterly meetings. It was the consensus of the Technical Planning Committee that topical committee Chairs and staff leads should determine frequency and content of topical committee meetings. There is also a possibility of combining some of the committees to make the process more efficient. It is better practice to cancel a meeting than try to plan to attend an unscheduled meeting.

Discussion was also held on issues with the TIP as requested by Dean Button in the Public Comment portion of the agenda. The TPC met on February 12 to make project selections for the 2020-2024 TIP within the bounds of the funding that was available. We were subsequently notified at the March 12 meeting that we were unprepared to review a TIP and that we would review it in concept in advance of the publication of the TIP, the *NWI 2050 Plan* and the air quality conformity. The Transportation Resource and Oversight Committee then met and were informed that we received about \$1 million and the 2020-2024 TIP was amended to include at least 9 projects without review by the TPC. Mr. Button said he believed this committee should review those 9 projects as he felt there are issues with those projects that need clarification as they may affect a future TIP. Hammond received funding for two projects, and there were two other projects that had significant influence over the NOFA following this current published TIP: a Valparaiso project and a Gary project which would both affect a future TIP. There were also two projects from Lake County Parks that were not included in the current TIP that

need to be shown on the TIP. This committee should be allowed to review and recommend those projects and Mr. Button asked for a special meeting to be held by this committee. Kevin Breitzke commented that since TROC had many members of this committee that there was no issue or problem. Mr. Button said TROC never vetted those projects. Trey Wadsworth expressed concerns about missing a window with getting the new TIP to INDOT and Federal Highways with all the other MPOs in Indiana and adopted by the Governor in mid-May for implementation July 1st. Projects with a July letting would have to wait for those approvals. Staff will review the Public Participation Plan as to whether a modification is deemed significant or non-significant. The process and the deficit in the previous TIP was briefly overviewed by Mr. Wadsworth. He got the appropriations the day after the March TPC meeting. Transit operators are still waiting on their numbers from FTA. It was the consensus of the committee to hold a special TPC meeting on April 16 at 10 a.m. at NIRPC to discuss these issues and projects and make its recommendation to the Commission.

Topical committees reported out.

- Kay Nelson said the Environmental Management Policy Committee will meet on May 2 at 9 a.m. which will feature Carl Woodrich from DNR on the wetland fee in lieu of mitigation program. A workshop is scheduled for 1 p.m.
- Mitch Barloga said the Ped, Pedal & Paddle Committee heard presentations on a bike conference in Arkansas and the NWI 2050 Plan at their meeting last week. The next meeting is Thursday, June 6 at 1:30 p.m.
- Eman Ibrahim said the Land Use Committee heard presentations at their meeting last week on an update on the Creating Livable Communities and the *NWI 2050 Plan*. The next meeting is Thursday, June 6 at 10:30 a.m.
- Scott Weber said the Surface Transportation Committee heard presentations at their meeting last week on the *NWI 2050 Plan*, the 2020-2024 TIP and the Air Quality Conformity document. The next meeting is Tuesday, June 4 at 9 a.m.
- Charles Bradsky said the Transportation Resource & Oversight Committee meeting was scheduled for May; however, he will discuss the next meeting with the Committee Chair, Jim Biggs. A meeting announcement will be forthcoming.

Kelly Wenger reported that the West Lake Corridor received a medium high rating from the feds. No rating was received yet on the double tracking project. On April 17, NICTD will hold a vendor open house at 10 a.m. at the Hammond Sportsplex Community Center for the West Lake, Double Tracking and other capital projects for the next three years.

Other upcoming meetings at NIRPC include:

- The Finance & Personnel Committee will meet on April 18 at 8:00 a.m.
- The Executive Board will meet on April 18 at 9 a.m.
- The Outreach Committee will meet on Wednesday, May 8 at 10 a.m. at NIRPC.

The special Technical Planning Committee meeting will be on April 16 at 10 a.m. The next regular meeting will be held on May 14 at 10 a.m. at NIRPC.

Hearing no other business, Kevin Breitzke adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.