

## SURFACE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

### Virtual Meeting

August 4, 2020

### Minutes

This meeting was convened as an electronic meeting, pursuant to Governor Holcomb's Executive Order 20-04 and 20-09, extended by Executive Order 20-39. All persons were meeting remotely on a Google Meet platform that allowed for real time interaction and supported the public's ability to observe and record the proceedings. When the agenda item was provided for public comment, this was supported as well. A roll call was taken to motion and approve the agenda items.

Tom Schmitt called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call. In attendance were Richard Hardaway (Merrillville), Gerald Swets (Saint John), Michael Jabo (Valparaiso), David Wright (Gary Public Transit), Jeff Huet (Schererville), George Topoll (Union Township), and Kevin Breitzke (Porter County Surveyor).

NIRPC staff present were Scott Weber, Kevin Polette, Candice Eklund, Peter Kimball, Charles Bradsky, James Winters, and Flor Baum.

There were no public comments.

The minutes of the February 4, 2020 meeting were approved on motion by George Topoll and second Richard Hardaway.

Charles Bradsky presented on the plans for the upcoming Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA); the next open opportunity for eligible applicants to apply for federal funds for surface infrastructure projects. The NOFA will be open to receive applications from September 11 to October 21. Similar to last year, a workshop will be conducted on September 29 to discuss any questions regarding the application. NIRPC staff will also be available for one-on-one assistance. Between November through February, the topical committees will review the applications. The Technical Planning Committee will meet February 9th to award the projects. In April of 2021, the TIP is expected to be adopted with all the new projects at the Commission Meeting. There will be two STC-related program applications: 1) New Roadways, and 2) Roadway Improvements. Generally, the applications are similar to the Past NOFA. Please see below for the changes.

- In the previous NOFA application, funds were set aside for risk. Now, funds will be set aside for future PE and ROW.
- Question 13A of the programming rules covers group 1, in which \$250 thousand per year will be set aside for PE and ROW. Question 13B of the programming rules covers group 2, in which \$70 thousand per year will be set aside for PE and ROW.
- Any project exceeding \$6 million and cannot be broken into phases shall be deemed a Transformative Project. It will be reviewed separately from the other NOFA projects by the TPC.
- All LPA's are to provide uninflated funding requests. NIRPC staff will put together a matrix and inflate all funding according to historical spending.
- Currently, there is no Federal Transportation Highway bill, therefore the funding overview amounts have not changed.
- Planning and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) have their own category.
- The New Roadways section will continue to be reviewed by STC. However, the Land Use Committee will also give input.

- The General Project Information section will be populated with all the risk. This includes, but is not limited to railroad involvement, ROW needs and type, Regional significance, and NEPA documentation.
- Lastly, the LPAs will submit all project applications and supporting materials through a Google Form. This has a couple benefits:
  - A notification will be sent to Charles and the LPA to include what was submitted.
  - The project's general information will be accessible to the public on a Google spreadsheet after October 21.

Charles is currently working on the categorical funding targets and other pending business. He is expected to complete and post all applications on NIRPC's website on the tentative date of September 1.

Scott Weber presented on NIRPC's progress for the upcoming MOVE NWI Congestion Management Process (CMP), a federally required process. Preparation to adopt MOVE NWI is needed due to the 2011 CMP being outdated. E-commerce has changed the way people purchase goods. The COVID-19 pandemic has also reshaped mode choice. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have recommended the CMP be updated. MOVE NWI will have passively collected data coming from several sources, especially big data as opposed to static data that is currently being used. This will be a shared responsibility between NIRPC and project sponsors. NIRPC will allocate the resources to acquire and maintain the analytical tools used in MOVE NWI. The Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) process will include MOVE NWI as an easy-to-understand checklist to determine whether a project is categorically exempt or needs to be screened for CMP compliance. MOVE NWI will follow the federally required 8-step process. This includes identifying and describing data sources used to measure the performance measures. It also includes analyzing existing conditions, and noting problems of congestion in Northwestern Indiana, and Identifying and assessing strategies. Projects will be periodically evaluated. MOVE NWI objectives correspond to a performance measure and is organized by the NWI 2050 Critical Path. Thirty-four (34) strategies (grouped in four (4) categories and broken down into tiers) derive from NWI 2050, additional stakeholder feedback, and literature review. Programmed projects into the NIRPC TIP are already adherent to the CMP and need not demonstrate NWI MOVE adherence. The Surface Transportation Committee (STC) will primarily oversee MOVE NWI with other committees sharing partial oversight. The draft policy is scheduled to be presented to The Commission for adoption on September 17. Contact Scott Weber with any questions regarding the MOVE NWI CMP.

The committee discussed the definition or a set of standards for "transit orientated development," (TOD). Scott informed the committee that pg. 50 from the MOVE NWI document refers to TOD. However, the definition can be improved. Scott will reach out to NIRPC's Eman Ibrahim for a more detailed definition of TOD.

Scott Weber updated the committee on Fiscal Years 2021-2022 of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The Fiscal Years 2021-2022 Unified Planning Work Program aligns the Commission's projects and resources to tasks fitting the NWI 2050 Plan and other Commission priorities. The Surface Transportation related tasks are planning data collection, in which NIRPC staff gathers and reviews data from various modes. Traffic count data will be ramped up, and geographic Information Systems (GIS) support will consist of mapping the collected data, putting into a spatial context. NIRPC will continue to move forward from the ADA bus stop inventory recently completed and continue to provide support for the NOFA process maps. NIRPC will continue to use and provide support for community data from the 2020 Census. Performance-based planning activity task will be led by Scott. There will be an interactive dashboard on the NIRPC website by the end of this year. NIRPC is also planning to take a more centralized approach towards asset management planning.

There was no other business to discuss.

The next Surface Transportation Committee meeting is scheduled for November 3, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. in the NIRPC offices. Scott mentioned that the November meeting falls on election day. On motion by Richard Hardaway and second by George Topoll, the meeting adjourned at 10:06 a.m.