



6100 Southport Road  
Portage, Indiana 46368  
(219) 763-6060  
www.nirpc.org

## MEETING OF THE FULL COMMISSION NORTHWESTERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

January 16, 2025 at 9:00 A.M.

NIRPC Lake Michigan Room, 6100 Southport Road, Portage

- 1.0 Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance – Tom Dermody, Mayor of La Porte
- 2.0 New Appointments to the Commission - Dave Hollenbeck, Attorney
- 3.0 Roll Call – Candice Eklund, Executive Assistant
- 4.0 Public Comment on Current Agenda Items  
*The Chair will recognize audience members who have signed up to comment on agenda items below. Time is limited to 3 minutes per commenter.*
- 5.0 Approval of the Minutes of the December 5, 2024, Full Commission Meeting (pp. 1-3)  
**ACTION REQUESTED: Approval**
- 6.0 **LEADERSHIP** – Tom Dermody, Mayor of La Porte (p. 4-10)
  - 6.1 Presentation of **Norman E. Tufford Award**
  - 6.2 Report of Nominating Committee
  - 6.3 Election of Officers & Executive Board (p. 4)  
**ACTION REQUESTED: Approval**
  - 6.4 Exchange of Gavel
  - 6.5 Perfect Attendance Recognition
  - 6.6 Proposed 2025 Budget Amendments 1-3 Transfers Within Categories (pp. 5-6)  
**ACTION REQUESTED: Approval**
  - 6.7 New Three-Year Executive Director Employment Agreement (pp. 7-10)  
**ACTION REQUESTED: Approval**
- 7.0 **TRANSPORTATION** – Kevin Breitzke, Porter County Surveyor (pp. 11-18)
  - 7.1 Public Comment Report on FY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #24-04.1; 24-04.2, and 24-04.5, Charles Bradsky (p. 13)  
**ACTION REQUESTED: Informational**
  - 7.2 Resolution #25-01: TIP Amendment 24-04.1, 24-04.2, and 24-04.5, Charles Bradsky (pp. 14-18)  
**ACTION REQUESTED: Approval**
  - 7.3 INDOT - Matt Deitchley, La Porte District Deputy Commissioner
- 8.0 **ECONOMY & PLACE** – Denarie Kane, NIRPC Economic Development District Coordinator (pp. 19-21)
  - 8.1 NIRPC Economic Development District Report
  - 8.2 **Presentation:** Miah Michaelsen, Executive Director, Indiana Art Commission

9.0 **ENVIRONMENT** – Bill Emerson, Lake County Surveyor

10.0 Other Business

11.0 Announcements

12.0 Adjournment: The next meeting on February 20, 2025, at 9:00 a.m., will be an Executive Board meeting.

**NIRPC Full Commission Meeting**  
6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN  
Minutes of the December 5, 2024 Full Commission Meeting

**Call to Order**

Chair Tom Dermody called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was streamed live on YouTube.

**New Appointments to the Commission**

Dave Hollenbeck announced the re-appointment to the Commission of Mayor Eddie Melton (Gary).

**Roll Call** - Taken by Candice Eklund

**Present**

The 27 Commissioners present at the meeting included Jenny Beier (Schneider), Thomas Black (Highland), Austin Bonta (Portage), Kevin Breitzke (Porter County Surveyor), James Burge (Porter), Bob Carnahan (Cedar Lake), Tom Dermody (La Porte), Denise Ebert (Wanatah), Keesha Hardaway (Merrillville), Bonnie Hawksworth (Dune Acres), Josh Huddlestun (Hobart), Lori Hunt (Westville), Scott Kingan (Ogden Dunes), Peter Land (Crown Point), Jack McGraw (Burns Harbor), Wendy Mis (Munster), Edward Morales (Porter Township), David Phelps (Beverly Shores), Linda Pompeii (Pottawattomie Park), Lisa Rosenkranz (LaCrosse), Rick Ryfa (Griffith), Warren Schacht (Trail Creek), Tom Schmitt (Schererville), Mary Tanis (Dyer), Jim Ton (Chesterton), George Topoll (Union Township), and John Yelkich (Lowell). As a note, there were 25 Commissioners present during the roll call; 27 Commissioners are needed to fulfill a quorum of the Full Commission. Two additional Commissioners arrived after the roll call was taken, allowing the 2025 calendar year budget and extending the employment agreement of the Executive Director also to be voted on for approval; both required a quorum of the Full Commission.

The 23 Commissioners absent included Kyle Allen (Lake County Commissioner), Duane Arndt (Kingsford Heights), Bill Carroll (Lake Station), Tim Clayton (Winfield), Jon Costas (Valparaiso), Daina Dumbrys (Michiana Shores), Bill Emerson (Lake County Surveyor), Connie Gramarossa (La Porte County Council), Jonathan Haley (Long Beach), Tony Hendricks (La Porte County Surveyor), Vanessa Hernandez Orange (East Chicago), Justin Kiel (La Porte County Council), Eddie Melton (Gary), Tom McDermott (Hammond), Angie Nelson Deutch (Michigan City), Randy Niemeyer (Lake County Council), Jim Pressel (Governor Appointee), Barb Regnitz (Porter County Commissioner), Steve Spebar (Whiting), Gerald Swets (St. John), Sharon Szvedo (New Chicago), Andy Vasquez (Porter County Council), and CJ Wittmer (Kouts).

Hebron, Kingsbury, and The Pines have appointed no representatives to NIRPC.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Talaya Jones, Kathy Luther, Tom Vander Woude, Charles Bradsky, Grace Benninger, Denarie Kane, Flor Baum, Candice Eklund, and attorney Dave Hollenbeck.

**Public Comment**

There were no public comments. Tom Dermody introduced Joe Thallemer, former mayor of Warsaw, who was involved in his area's regional planning council before he retired. Mr. Thallemer reported that he has been focusing on the Accelerate Indiana Municipalities (AIM) organization since his retirement last year. AIM provides education for newly elected officials and legislative advocacy.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the October 17, 2024, Executive Board meeting were approved on motion by Kevin Breitzke and seconded by Jim Ton.

**Leadership**– Tom Dermody, Mayor of La Porte

Tom Dermody stated that a quorum of the Full Commission had not been met yet, but there was a quorum of the Executive Board, which would proceed and vote on agenda items that the Executive Board could approve.

Kathy Luther presented the Drive Clean Indiana 2025 contract, stating this contract is NIRPC's mechanism for funding Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) projects. This program was initially the Green Fleet Program, developed to significantly improve the environmental performance of business and government vehicle fleets. The overall program is to reduce air emissions so non-attainment can be obtained. On motion by Kevin Breitzke and seconded by Denise Ebert, the Executive Board approved the Drive Clean Indiana Contract.

Ty Warner discussed the meeting schedule for 2025, stating that by state statute, the Full Commission must meet four times yearly. Those dates for 2025 are January 16, May 15, September 18, and December 18. All Commissioners are expected to attend the four Full Commission meetings but are also welcome and encouraged to attend the Executive Board meetings.

Resolution #24-15: Calendar Year Budget. Ty Warner reported that the 2025 budget is final but will be amended in January due to medical insurance costs that are being finalized. This is being voted on today to prevent NIRPC from entering the new year without an approved budget. On motion by Robert Carnahan and seconded by James Burge, the Full Commission approved this resolution.

Resolution #24-14: Extending the Current Executive Director Employment Agreement. Wendy Mis reported that Ty Warner's employment contract expires on December 31, 2024. This resolution extends the contract for three months so he can receive a fair compensation package. The final numbers will be known only after all medical insurance costs for 2025 are finalized. On motion by Robert Carnahan and seconded by Jack McGraw, the Full Commission approved this resolution. Ty said it was a pleasure to work with this Commission and thanked all who were able to attend today.

#### **Transportation – Kevin Breitzke, Porter County Surveyor**

Kevin Breitzke reported the Technical Planning Committee met on November 12. The committee brought the action item below to the Full Commission with a favorable recommendation. The next meeting is scheduled for January 7, 2025.

Resolution #24-13: 2025 Safety Performance Measures. Tom Vander Woude reported these performance measures must be included in NIRPC's Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). NIRPC receives Highway Safety and Improvement Program (HSIP) funding and is required to set targets for safety performance measures. NIRPC has adopted the targets developed by INDOT. John Yelkich asked if the non-motorized metrics could be obtained. He felt it would be valuable to know these metrics with the ongoing Marquette Greenway Trail initiative to get these users off the roads and onto the trails. Tom will look into this request. On motion by Jim Ton and seconded by Tom Schmitt, the Full Commission approved Resolution #24-13.

Charles Bradsky provided a summary of the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) application received for 2024. The applications are being reviewed for FYs 2026 to 2030, focusing on years 2029 and 2030. There is an estimated \$108 million in available spending for 2029 and 2030, with \$36 million for infrastructure projects and \$72 million for transit projects. There is less funding available for this NOFA compared to previous years, but there is still a need to have a NOFA because there are transformative projects, NIRPC needs to show there's a need if additional funding becomes available, and projects for HSIP, CMAQ, CRP, and PROTECT funds still need to be programmed. The applications will be reviewed by NIRPC staff through January 10, 2025, and then be presented to the NIRPC Commission on May 15, 2025, for final approval.

Grace Benninger reported on the 2024 third-quarter safety, travel time reliability, freight, and congestion update. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)/Infrastructure Investment and Job Act (IIJA) requires states and MPOs to set targets in several national performance areas to help track performance and determine whether federal transportation investments improve transportation system performance. Comparing the data with the state targets for quarters 1-3 in NWI this year, we had 6% of the state target fatalities and 20.3% of the state's target for serious injuries. Cumulative collision data by county shows that 70% of the collisions occur in Lake County, 12% in La Porte County, and 18% in Porter County.

#### **INDOT - Matt Deitchley**

Due to unforeseeable circumstances, a representative from INDOT was unable to attend.

### **Economic Development District Report – Denarie Kane**

Ms. Kane reported two out of four community engagement sessions had been held for the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) needed for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) update. The third session will be held at NIRPC tomorrow, and the fourth will be virtually on December 9. Denarie encouraged those interested in attending to register. The next Economy and Place committee working group meeting is on December 10. Purdue's Center for Regional Development consultants will discuss additional information regarding the region's industry clusters. The Economy and Place Committee will meet on January 8 at NIRPC.

### **ENVIRONMENT – Kathy Luther**

Kathy Luther introduced Carl Lisek, Executive Director, and Ryan Lisek, Program Director, with Drive Clean Indiana (DCI). Carl Lisek was thankful for their contract's earlier approval and for continuing to work in the region. The collaboration between DCI, NIRPC, and NIPSCO began 25 years ago. NIRPC started the Clean Cities program in NWI, which expanded to 18 counties and the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) area. Now, they are a state-designated coalition in all 92 counties. Ryan Lisek said the U.S. Department of Energy has recognized the NWI Green Fleet Program for the great work being done in the region. The City of Lake Station was recognized as a NIRPC Green Fleet of the Year. The collaborative efforts of DCI and the communities in NWI allow them to work through the different private and public opportunities and work together to ensure they can collaborate on programs and projects that reduce emissions and operational and capital costs. DCI is working on several programs and projects, but its current focus is on the I-80 Midwest (IN-IL-OH) corridor for medium and heavy trucking, including hydrogen and electric trucks. In the last 18 months, regional partners have been awarded \$11.7 million, (matching of \$12.5 million of local dollars), from grants DCI helped to create, submit, and manage through Green Fleets. DCI also continues to assist local governments with projects awarded through NIRPC's Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). For example, they continue to assist NIRPC and Lake Station with implementing the \$2.9 million Lake and Porter County Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) project for 80 electric vehicles, 2 fleet chargers, and 20 public level 2 charging stations. For DCI's upcoming events, visit their website at <https://drivecleanindiana.org/>.

### **Other Business**

Kathy Luther reported that NIRPC is working in partnership with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and the Chicago Mayor's Caucus on a metropolitan statistical area-wide climate action plan. A handout providing NIRPC's position in this 13-county region was available.

Kevin Breitzke reported that INDOT's US 30 Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study from the East of Valparaiso to Fort Wayne, conducted for safety reasons, will impact some of our region's communities.

### **Announcements**

Bob Carnahan relayed announcements of various events in Cedar Lake. David Phelps recognized the Legacy Foundation giving a 1 to 1 match, up to \$50,000, for the Marquette Greenway project. Mary Tanis said a pedway across Route 30 in Dyer would be helpful.

Ty Warner thanked FLUID Coffee Roasters for generously providing the coffee at today's meeting. He ended the meeting by saying he recognized a lot of information was provided today, adding that NIRPC does a lot of this work, so others don't have to. The information provided shows how federal funding keeps flowing so that projects can be done in our communities.

Hearing no other business, Tom Dermody adjourned the meeting at 10:23 a.m. The next meeting will be a Full Commission Board meeting on January 16, 2025.

*The livestream video recording for this meeting is available on NIRPC's YouTube Channel at [Full Commission Meeting 12-5-24 \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12-5-24)*

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE**  
(TOM DERMODY, WENDY MIS, TY WARNER)  
**FOR THE**  
**EXECUTIVE BOARD OF NIRPC**

CHAIRPERSON

Wendy Mis (Lake County)

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Austin Bonta (Porter County)

SECRETARY

Denise Ebert (La Porte County)

TREASURER

David Phelps (Porter County)

EXECUTIVE BOARD (LAKE COUNTY)

Tom Schmitt (Schererville)

Bill Emerson (County Surveyor)

EXECUTIVE BOARD (LA PORTE COUNTY)

Lisa Rosenkranz (LaCrosse)

Courtney Parthun (La Porte)

EXECUTIVE BOARD (PORTER COUNTY)

Jim Ton (Chesterton)

Kevin Breitzke (County Surveyor)

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GOVERNOR'S APPOINTMENT

Jim Pressel (new appointment pending)

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR (non-voting)

(Tom Dermody)

**PROPOSED 2025 BUDGET AMENDMENT**  
**Transfers Between Categories**

**Amendment 1:**

Increasing budget to support fringe benefits

TO: Fringe Benefits

Purpose:

Transferring funds from Workers Compensation and Unemployment Compensation (SUI) categoric items to cover Perf Contributions, FICA and ICMA line items for increased costs.

CATEGORY		DETAILED BUDGET LINE		Original	Addition	Amended
FRINGE BENEFITS	Expense:	FICA	\$	122,472.00	\$ 1,130.00	\$ 123,602.00
FRINGE BENEFITS	Expense:	ICMA	\$	27,034.00	\$ 260.00	\$ 27,294.00
FRINGE BENEFITS	Expense:	WORKERS COMPENSATION	\$	5,000.00	\$ (1,390.00)	\$ 3,610.00
FRINGE BENEFITS	Expense:	PERF CONTRIBUTIONS	\$	200,300.00	\$ 1,837.00	\$ 202,137.00
FRINGE BENEFITS	Expense:	UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION (SUI)	\$	4,000.00	\$ (1,837.00)	\$ 2,163.00

**Amendment 2:**

Increasing budget to support salary increases

TO: Salary

Purpose:

Transferring funds from Workers Compensation, Unemployment Compensation, Cyber Insurance, Commission/Executive Director and Legal categoric items to cover salary increased costs.

CATEGORY		DETAILED BUDGET LINE		Original /Amended	Addition	Amended
SALARY	Expense:	Salary	\$	1,600,938.00	\$ 14,773.00	\$ 1,615,711.00
FRINGE BENEFITS	Expense:	UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION (SUI)	\$	2,163.00	\$ (163.00)	\$ 2,000.00
FRINGE BENEFITS	Expense:	WORKERS COMPENSATION	\$	3,610.00	\$ (610.00)	\$ 3,000.00
EQUIPMENT SERVICE/MAINTENANCE	Expense:	CYBER INSURANCE	\$	10,000.00	\$ (8,500.00)	\$ 1,500.00
DEPARTMENTAL	Expense:	COMMISSION/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	\$	32,000.00	\$ (5,000.00)	\$ 27,000.00
CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	Expense:	LEGAL SERVICES	\$	27,000.00	\$ (500.00)	\$ 26,500.00

**Amendment 3:**

Increasing budget to increase 2025 potential Audit costs

TO: Audit and Accounting

Purpose:

Transferring funds from Legal Services to Audit and Accounting line item

CATEGORY		DETAILED BUDGET LINE		Original /Amended	Addition	Amended
CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	Expense:	AUDIT AND ACCOUNTING	\$	30,000.00	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 33,500.00
CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	Expense:	LEGAL SERVICES	\$	26,500.00	\$ (3,500.00)	\$ 23,000.00

## NIRPC FY 2025 Budget

	<u>Final Approved Dec 5th 2024</u>	
	<u>FY 2025 Budget</u>	<u>Re-allocate FY 2025 Budget</u>
<b>REVENUES</b>		
COUNTY APPROPRIATIONS	674,527	674,527
FEDERAL AGENCIES	2,150,000	2,150,000
STATE AGENCIES	2,584,603	2,584,603
LOCAL AGENCIES	178,851	178,851
INTEREST INCOME	44,750	44,750
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>5,632,731</b>	<b>5,632,731</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		
<b>SALARY</b>	<b>1,600,938</b>	<b>1,615,710</b>
<b>FRINGE BENEFITS</b>		
FICA CONTRIBUTIONS	122,472	123,602
WORKERS COMPENSATION	5,000	3,000
UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION	4,000	2,000
PERF CONTRIBUTIONS	200,300	202,137
HEALTH INSURANCE	294,794	294,794
LIFE & DISABILITY INSURANCE	26,000	26,000
ICMA CONTRIBUTIONS	27,034	27,294
STAFF DEVELOPMENT	18,000	18,000
	<b>697,599</b>	<b>696,827</b>
<b>OCCUPANCY</b>		
OFFICE LEASE	240,000	240,000
PROPERTY INSURANCE	15,000	15,000
BUILDING MAINTENANCE	20,000	20,000
UTILITIES	34,000	34,000
	<b>309,000</b>	<b>309,000</b>
<b>EQUIPMENT SERVICE/MAINTENANCE</b>		
COPIER LEASING/MAINTENANCE	5,000	5,000
COMPUTER SERVICE	49,000	49,000
TELEPHONE & INTERNET SERVICE / MAIN.	17,000	17,000
CYBER INSURANCE	10,000	1,500
OTHER EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	2,500	2,500
	<b>83,500</b>	<b>75,000</b>
<b>DEPARTMENTAL</b>		
COMMISSION/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	32,000	27,000
PLANNING	49,126	49,126
SUBGRANTEE MANAGEMENT	4,000	4,000
ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS	11,315	11,315
PARTNER AGENCIES	-	-
ALLOCATED FUNCTIONS	32,000	32,000
ENVIRONMENTAL PROMOTIONS	13,750	13,750
GENERAL USE SUPPLIES	3,750	3,750
	<b>145,941</b>	<b>140,941</b>
<b>CONTRACTUAL</b>		
LEGAL SERVICES	27,000	23,000
AUDIT & ACCOUNTING	30,000	33,500
LA PORTE RLF SERVICES	-	-
TRANSIT OVERSIGHT	13,000	13,000
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTRACTS	515,000	515,000
PLANNING	971,753	971,753
PLANNING- Marquette Greenway Project	1,150,000	1,150,000
BOARD DEVELOPMENT	2,000	2,000
ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	2,000	2,000
E-TIP	55,000	55,000
	<b>2,765,753</b>	<b>2,765,253</b>
<b>FURNITURE &amp; EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>5,632,732</b>	<b>5,632,731</b>
<b>FUND BALANCE - ENDING</b>	<b>(1)</b>	<b>(0)</b>



## EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

**BY AGREEMENT ENTERED INTO** the 16<sup>th</sup> day of January 2025, by and between the NORTHWESTERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION, hereinafter referred to as "NIRPC", and MR. TYSON WARNER, hereinafter referred to as "Executive Director", the following is hereby agreed to:

**WHEREAS**, NIRPC is desirous of securing the services of an Executive Director to assist in implementation of its statutory role and function including that of a metropolitan planning organization for Northwest Indiana; and

**WHEREAS**, Tyson Warner has served as the Executive Director of NIRPC since January 1, 2013, and the parties to this agreement are desirous of renewing and otherwise extending his serving as the Executive Director of NIRPC.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the parties to this agreement hereby do mutually agree as follows:

- A. The term of this agreement shall commence on January 1, 2025, and shall terminate as of December 31, 2027, unless otherwise terminated pursuant to the provisions of this agreement.
- B. Mr. Tyson Warner shall perform the function and serve in the role of the Executive Director of NIRPC during the term of this agreement. In addition to those matters which may from time to time be assigned to him by NIRPC, Mr. Warner's role and responsibility as Executive Director for NIRPC are more particularly described and identified in the Job Description attached hereto and made a part hereof as **Exhibit "A"** to this agreement.
- C. The Executive Director shall meet with the Chair of the NIRPC Commission following the Chair's appointment in 2025, 2026 and 2027, for purposes of establishing goals for each of the years of this Employment Agreement. The Executive Director and Chair, together with other NIRPC appointed officers as may desire, shall meet mid-year and near end-of year to discuss progress, provide feedback on performance, and to make such other adjustment and course correction to goals as may be necessary or beneficial.
- D. During the first year of this agreement, NIRPC agrees to pay its Executive Director the sum of One Hundred Ninety-Two Thousand Two Hundred Eight Dollars (\$192,208) to be paid in the same manner and fashion as payments are made to other NIRPC employees during the course of the calendar year. The Executive Director salary for the second and third year of this agreement shall be increased 5% on January 1 of each year.
- E. Additionally, the following benefits of employment shall be available to the Executive Director:
  1. Insurance: The same health insurance and benefit programs provided to NIRPC employees shall be available to the Executive Director.

2. **Vehicle:** The Executive Director will be reimbursed for mileage at the applicable IRS rate for use of his personal vehicle in conducting NIRPC business. The Executive Director may have use of a NIRPC owned or NIRPC leased vehicle as may be authorized by the Chair of the Full NIRPC Commission.
3. **Professional Memberships:** NIRPC will maintain membership for its Executive Director in ICMA, APA, and the Congress for New Urbanism and their respective state chapters and will either pay for, or reimburse, the Executive Director for participation in these organizations' annual conferences. NIRPC will also maintain Mr. Warner's membership and participation in the Lambda Alpha International Land Economics Society.
4. **Retirement Benefit:** The Executive Director will participate in an ICMA-RC 457 Plan. NIRPC will contribute to that plan in the same amount as would have been paid on the Executive Director's behalf to PERF.
5. **NARC Participation:** NIRPC shall pay for or reimburse the Executive Director to participate in events and activities of the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) on behalf of NIRPC.
6. **Vacation:** The Executive Director shall be entitled to four (4) weeks of paid vacation during each calendar year of employment under this agreement. While vacation is intended to be used throughout the course of year, vacation shall be allowed to accrue within the same limits allowed to other NIRPC employees as long as the Executive Director is employed by NIRPC. Should any accrued vacation remain upon termination of this agreement, the Executive Director shall be paid in accordance with Section E below.
7. **Expense Reimbursement:** The Executive Director shall be entitled to reimbursement for business-related expenses pursuant to the guidelines and procedures established by NIRPC. In addition thereto, the Executive Director shall be paid the sum of \$150.00 per month as reimbursement for his job related use of communication technology. This reimbursement shall not preclude the use of data-connected equipment as may be issued and paid for by NIRPC.
8. **Sabbatical:** In recognition of the unique challenges of the position and over a decade of past service to NIRPC as Executive Director, Mr. Warner may be eligible for a paid sabbatical in the second year of this agreement, during which time his employment benefits shall continue to accrue. This sabbatical can be supplemented with existing vacation time. Should the Executive Director voluntarily terminate his employment under Section E.2 of this Agreement within 6 months of the conclusion of the sabbatical, the sabbatical pay shall be reimbursed by the Executive Director.

F. This agreement may be terminated upon the agreement of the parties or upon a showing of just cause:

1. In the event the Executive Director is terminated pursuant to this Agreement, NIRPC agrees to pay the Executive Director a severance payment equal to twelve (12) weeks base salary, plus accrued and unused vacation days; provided, however, that in the event the Executive Director is terminated because of his conviction of any illegal act, then in that event, NIRPC shall have no obligation to pay the severance pay sum designated in this paragraph.
2. In the event the Executive Director voluntarily resigns his position with NIRPC, he shall give NIRPC at least sixty (60) day notice of such resignation prior to the cessation of the performance of his duties hereunder unless otherwise agreed to by NIRPC. If the Executive Director resigns, he shall not be paid the severance pay above but shall receive accrued and unused vacation days; provided, however, the Executive Director shall be paid his base salary during said 60-day notice period.

G. This agreement shall be deemed as superseding and replacing the terms and conditions of the prior employment agreements entered into by NIRPC and the Executive Director.

H. For that purpose of interpreting the terms and conditions of this agreement, the laws of the State of Indiana shall apply.

ALL OF WHICH HAVING BEEN AGREED to by these parties and memorialized by the signatures affixed hereto:

NORTHWESTERN INDIANA REGIONAL  
PLANNING COMMISSION

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tyson Warner

## **Exhibit A**

### **Job Description**

Job Title: Executive Director

Agency: Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission

Reports To: Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission

The Executive Director is the Chief Administrative Officer and regular Technical Advisor of the Commission. The subject of the supervision by the Commission and in furtherance of the purpose of the Commission, the Executive Director role and responsibilities are that which are identified in IC 36-7-7.6-11 (Executive Director; Powers and Duties). All of which is intended to facilitate fulfillment of NIRPC's overall purpose as defined in IC 36-7-7.6-12.

Technical Planning Committee  
NIRPC Lake Michigan Room  
YouTube Recording:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/sr3AtITPUBU?si=NLOoPEgOpVyewhEf>

November 12, 2024

Minutes

Chairman Kevin Breitzke called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Kevin Breitzke (Porter County), Mark O'Dell (Chesterton), Mary Tanis (Dyer), Max Rehlander (Valparaiso), George Topoll (Union Township), Kelly Wenger (NICTD), David Phelps (Beverly Shores), David Wright (GPTC) and Bob Thompson (Valparaiso) were present.

Brian Snedecor, Terry Martin, and Chris Murphy were also present.

NIRPC staff present were Tom Vander Woude, Grace Benninger, Stephen Hughes, Charles Bradsky, Meredith Stilwell, and Flor Baum.

On a motion by Mark O'Dell, second by Mary Tanis, the Transportation Committee (TC) approved the October 2024 meeting minutes, as presented.

There were no public comments.

Planning

Grace Benninger presented the 2024 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter Safety, Time Travel Reliability (TTR), Truck TTR (TTTR), and Congestion update. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) requires that states and MPOs (Metropolitan Planning Organizations) set targets in several national performance areas and track performance measures to determine whether federal transportation investments are improving transportation system performance. Performance areas required to be measured include safety, travel time reliability, freight, and congestion. In keeping with these regulations, NIRPC adopts these performance measure targets periodically as required and provides reports on these measures approximately quarterly. 5739 total collisions were reported in the Region, of which 1054 resulted in injury and 18 in fatalities for the third quarter. Lake County had the highest number of collisions, under 4500, followed by Porter County, having approximately 700, and La Porte County, having just under 1100. NWI's TTR Interstate target was 85.3%, 7.7% below the TTR state target. The highest traffic congestion can be found on the Eastbound Boman Expressway. The Region's Non-Interstate TTR was 99.8%, 6.8% above the State target. The 1.47 YTD target for Truck TTR for Interstate roads did not meet the 1.32 State target. The Peak-Hour Excessive Delay Per Capita was 7.6h, well below the 15.6h required by the State target. Lastly, it was reported that over 80% of vehicles on the road are single-occupancy vehicles. For more information, contact Grace at [gbenninger@nirpc.org](mailto:gbenninger@nirpc.org).

Tom Vander Woude spoke on Resolution 24-13: Adopting 2025 Safety Performance Measure Targets. State DOTs and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) establish required annual targets for five safety performance measures. NIRPC staff will continue the practice of supporting state targets. Changes in the five measures are as follows:

- Number of fatalities- The 2024 target of 876.3 will be adjusted to 812 in 2025.
- Rate of fatalities per 100M Vehicle Mi Traveled (VMT) - The 2024 target of 1.072 will be adjusted to 1.009 in 2025.
- Serious injuries - The 2024 target of 3281.1 will be adjusted to 3032 in 2025.
- Rate of serious injuries per 100M VMT - The 2024 target of 3.987 will be adjusted to 3.402 in 2025.
- Non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries - The 2024 target of 391.6 will be adjusted to 363 in 2025.

The amended targets will also be reflected in *NWI 2050+*. NIRPC has historically approved a resolution supporting INDOT's targets and incorporating them into the agency's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). For more information, contact Tom at [tvanderwoude@nirpc.org](mailto:tvanderwoude@nirpc.org).

On motion by Mark O'Dell, second by Mary Tanis, the TC approved to recommend Res. 24-13 the Commission.

#### Programming

Charles Bradsky spoke on the 2024 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)/Call for Projects. NIRPC held its bi-annual Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for transportation infrastructure improvement projects from September 10 – October 18, 2024, and the four Transit Investment Programs were opened from September 10 – November 14. 26 projects were submitted for various programs. The largest being Roadway Modifications (10). The total request for funding is over \$61 million. Over the next two months, NIRPC committees and working groups will meet to review the applications and their scores. Their recommendations will be presented to the Transportation Committee at its February 2025 meeting.

#### Staff Updates & Reports from Planning Partners

Ryan Lisek reported on Drive Clean Indiana. For up-to-date information, visit [www.drivecleanindiana.org](http://www.drivecleanindiana.org).

#### Announcements

Announcements were made.

#### Adjournment

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

The next Transportation Committee meeting is slated for January 7, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in the NIRPC building.



## Public Comment Report

### Amendments #24 –04.1; 24-04.2; and 24-04.5 to the FY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

#### Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission

January 16, 2024

Amendments #24 –04.1; 24-04.2; and 24-04.5 of the FY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program was released for a 21-day public comment period which began on December 10, 2024, and ended on December 31, 2024. Resolution 24-01 is composed of the following amendments:

- 24-04.1 is for infrastructure projects using FHWA (highway) funds and that are exempt from the Air Quality Conformity process.
- 24-04.2 is for infrastructure projects using FHWA (highway) funds and that are not exempt from the Air Quality Conformity process.
- 24-04.5 is for transit projects only using FTA (transit) funds and that are exempt from the Air Quality Conformity process.

The amendments were made available for viewing at [www.nirpc.org](http://www.nirpc.org) and press releases with links were posted on several social media sites.

No public comments have been received on any of the projects in any of the amendments.

NIRPC staff also sent the amendment to the Interagency Consultation Group (ICG) on December 6<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024. There were no questions concerning the list of projects on any of the amendments.

Concurrence was given for these projects on this amendment by members of the ICG on December 20, 2024.

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission

**From:** Charles Bradsky, Transportation Projects Manager

**Date:** January 16, 2025

**Re:** TIP Amendments #24-04.1; 24-04.2; 24-04.5

**Action Requested:** Recommendation to adopt Resolution 25-01, Amendments #24-04.1; 24-04.2; 24-04.5

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The NIRPC Executive Board adopted *NWI 2050+ Plan* and the Fiscal Years 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) on July 20, 2023. INDOT and USDOT approved both the MTP and the TIP on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Since the adoption of the FY 2024-2028 TIP, project sponsors have proposed new projects and changes to existing projects, which must be reflected in the NIRPC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Changes in the TIP are the first step in this process. This resolution contains three TIP amendments. There are three amendments because if approved, the numerous projects will take one of three paths before being included in the STIP. The simplest process is to put each project in an amendment for the corresponding path. The three amendments are:

- 24-04.1 is for infrastructure projects using FHWA (highway) funds and that are exempt from the Air Quality Conformity process (136 projects).
- 24-04.2 is for infrastructure projects using FHWA (highway) funds and that are not exempt from the Air Quality Conformity process (2 projects).
- 24-04.5 is for transit projects only using FTA (transit) funds and that are exempt from the Air Quality Conformity process (12 projects).

Amendments #24-04.1 and 24-04.2 contain:

For INDOT – 95 Projects:

- 3 Right of Way Acquisition Projects (new projects)
- 39 Bridge Projects,
  - 22 Bridge Deck Overlays
    - 12 New Projects
    - 10 Projects adding a significant amount of funds
  - 4 Superstructure Rehabilitations
    - 3 Projects adding a significant amount of funds



- 1 Project adding a phase
- 2 Bridge Replacement (adding a significant amount of funds)
- 3 Bridge Removals (adding a significant amount of funds)
- 8 Bridge Maintenance Projects (painting or scour remediation)
  - 2 New Projects
  - 5 Projects adding a significant amount of funds
  - 1 Project adding a phase
- 2 ADA sidewalk ramp construction
  - 1 Project adding a phase
  - 1 project adding a significant amount of funds
- 19 Pavement/Roadway Rehabilitation
  - 3 New Projects
  - 13 Projects adding a significant amount of funds
  - 3 Projects adding a phase
- 1 Added Turn Lane Project (added a phase) (a non-exempt project)
- 10 Intersection Modifications
  - 5 New Projects
  - 3 Projects adding a significant amount of funds
  - 2 Projects adding a phase
- 18 Small Structure Repair/Lining/Replacements
  - 11 New Projects
  - 6 Projects adding a significant amount of funds
  - 1 Project adding a phase
- 3 Other Projects
  - 1 Welcome Center Renovation (adding a phase)
  - 1 Traffic Signal Modernization (new project)
  - 1 Raised Pavement Markings project (new project)

For locally sponsored projects – 42 Projects for the municipalities of Cedar Lake (5), Dyer (1), East Chicago (3), Gary 1, Griffith (1), Hammond (4), Hobart (1), La Porte (3), La Porte County (1), Lake County (4), Lake Station (1), Long Beach (1), Merrillville (1), Munster (2), NIRPC (1), Portage (1), Porter County (3), St. John (1), Valparaiso (4), Winfield (2):

- 4 Intersection Modifications (adding a significant amount of funds)
- 10 Roadway Safety Projects (new projects)
- 3 Signal Modernizations
- 6 Trail Projects
  - 4 New Projects
  - 2 Projects adding significant amount of funds
- 3 Complete Streets Projects (new projects)
- 5 Bridge Replacements Projects
  - 4 New Projects
  - 1 Projects adding significant amount of funds
- 1 New bridge Project (Adding a phase)
- 3 Pavement Rehabilitation
  - 2 New Projects
  - 1 Projects adding significant amount of funds
- 2 Road Reconstruction Projects
  - 1 New Project
  - 1 Project adding a significant amount of funds
- 1 New Road Project adding a significant amount of funds (a non-exempt project)

- 4 Other type projects (new projects)

Amendment 24-04.5 has 12 projects for the procurement of capital items for Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) and 2 projects are for Operating Assistance for NIRPC to support our sub-recipient transit providers.



## RESOLUTION 25-01

**A RESOLUTION OF THE NORTHWESTERN INDIANA  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION AMENDING THE  
FY 2024-2028 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR LAKE,  
PORTER, AND LAPORTE COUNTIES, INDIANA  
AMENDMENTS NO. 24-04.1; 24-04.2, and 24-04.5  
January 16, 2025**

**WHEREAS**, Northwest Indiana’s citizens require a safe, efficient, effective, resource-conserving regional transportation system that maintains and enhances regional mobility and contributes to improving the quality of life in Northwest Indiana; and

**WHEREAS**, the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, hereafter referred to as “the Commission”, being designated the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Lake, Porter and LaPorte County area, has established a regional, comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing (3-C) transportation planning process to develop the unified planning work program, a transportation plan, and a transportation improvement program to facilitate federal funding for communities, counties, and transit operators, and to provide technical assistance and expertise to regional transportation interests; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission performs the above activities to satisfy requirements of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (PL 117-58), applicable portions of all prior federal transportation program authorizing legislation, as well as other federal, state, and local laws mandating or authorizing transportation planning activities; and

**WHEREAS**, the FY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program is a product of a multi-modal, 3-C transportation planning process, compatible with regional goals and objectives and socio-economic and demographic factors used to form the *NWI 2050+ Plan*; and

**WHEREAS**, the FY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program is an implementation of the *NWI 2050+ Plan*, is fiscally constrained, and is consistent with the State Implementation Plan for Air Quality; and

**WHEREAS**, the FY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program is developed by the Commission in coordination and cooperation with local elected and appointed highway and transit officials, special interest and service organizations, including users of public transit, the Indiana Department of Transportation, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, the U.S. Federal Highway Administration, the U.S. Federal Transit Administration, and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency; and

**WHEREAS**, the FY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program brought about by this amendment were reviewed by the Air Quality Conformity Task Force's Interagency Consultation Group (ICG); and

**WHEREAS**, the changes to the FY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program brought about by this amendment were subjected to public comment in the manner prescribed by the 2019 Public Participation Plan, *ENGAGE NWI*; and

**WHEREAS**, the Transportation Committee has recommended that the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission make these changes to the FY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission hereby amends the FY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program by adding the new projects and making other changes as shown on the attachment to this resolution.

Duly adopted by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission this sixteenth day of January, 2025.

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Chairperson

ATTEST:

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Secretary

## **Economy & Development Committee**

NIRPC Lake Michigan Room

YouTube Recording:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/ISCFdUfKqWM?si=Aq1t4kFepxUoNWT9>

October 9, 2024

### Minutes

George Topoll called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

In attendance were George Topoll (Union Township), Anthony Sindone (IUN), Andy Vasquez (Porter County), Annie Cruz-Porter (Purdue), Randy Palmeteer (NWIBTCT), Juan Moreno (Hammond), Lois Whittaker (BCCNWI), Joe Wozolek (NIRA), Jen Trowbridge (NWIAC), James Burge (Porter), Judith Cardenas (NWSBDC), Gary Johnson, and Spencer Summers (Forum).

Staff present were Denarie Kane, Eman Ibrahim, Tom VanderWoude, Flor Baum, Meredith Stilwell, and Grace Benninger.

Tom VanderWoude spoke on the Economy & Place Committee (EPC). The Economy & Place Committee focuses on Land Use and Local Government Assistance. In 2019, NIRPC was designated by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) as the Economic Development District (EDD) for Lake, Porter, and La Porte counties. NIRPC maintains and works with partners to implement the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), a five-year strategy-driven plan for regional economic development. The role of the Economy & Place Committee (EPC) is to serve as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee. It is responsible for developing, implementing, revising, or replacing the CEDS for the Planning Organization (NIRPC Full Commission/Executive Board). It is responsible for reviewing and providing recommendations to the Full Commission/Executive Board regarding adopting and adding amendments to the CEDS. The CEDS committee is also responsible for evaluating EDA funding applications directly or through a designee to ensure consistency with CEDS and provide letters of support. The EPC also serves as a Land Use and Community Planning Topical Committee. The EPC will educate members on topics, policies, programs, and regulations relevant to land use, smart growth, economic development, and transit-oriented development (TOD). The role of the EPC is to advise NIRPC on policies and programs related to land use, smart growth, economic development, and transit-oriented development (TOD). The committee will oversee the development of and provide recommendations to the Transportation Committee regarding adoption of and amendments to the Land Use element of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan; oversee the development of plans, programs, and policies related to land use, smart growth, economic development, and transit-oriented development (TOD) as initiated by staff, the committee, or at the direction of the Transportation Committee; oversee the development and implementation of an annual LPA Planning Assistance program and recommend a program of projects to the Transportation Committee. The EPC will also provide training to local government officials, economic development officials, developers, and affiliated industry representatives on best practices for sustainable development, smart growth, land use, livable communities, and related topics. Membership of the EPC will consist of 12 Commissioners (4/County, including Chair). The commissioner may appoint a qualified staff representative, who must have direct influence over planning, redevelopment, or economic development, as a proxy. One NWI Forum representative, one Workforce Development representative, one Higher Education representative, two Minority Group representatives, at least one of which represents a minority business enterprise, one Labor Group representative, one Realtors Association representative, one private individual representative, and two other representatives who can contribute to and benefit from improved economic development in the region. Three voting committee members constitute a quorum and are required to pass motions. The meeting schedule is quarterly for the second Wednesday of the month. However,

more frequent meetings may be needed. For more information, contact Tom Vander Woude at [tvanderwoude@nirpc.org](mailto:tvanderwoude@nirpc.org).

Annie Cruz-Porter and Denarie Kane spoke on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). An Economic Development District (EDD) consists of having an EDA approved CEDS. The EDD must meet the EDA's regional distress criteria for the following:

- Low per capita income—The area's per capita income is 80% or less of the national average.
- Unemployment rate above national average—The area's unemployment rate is at least 1% greater than the national average.
- Special need – The area has experienced or is about to experience a special need arising from actual or threatened severe unemployment or economic adjustment problems resulting from severe short-term or long-term changes in economic conditions, such as a military base closure.

A map identified Lake and LaPorte counties as distressed by unemployment and low income. Components of a good CEDS demonstrate significant public engagement, outline industry clusters to support, and include resiliency aspects. A good CEDS includes workforce development topics of concern, an evaluation framework, and a SWOT analysis of the Region. The SWOT analysis examines strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to resiliency, infrastructure, industry clusters, and workforce issues. NIRPC and PCRD are working on scheduling the public engagement needed for the SWOT analysis with several in-person and virtual meetings planned. The Economy & Place Committee is slated to have a policy formation session as well as hold two working group meetings focused on regional industry cluster data and the SWOT analysis. The project timeline was presented, and the CEDS is scheduled to be finalized and sent to the EDA for their approval by the end of March 2025. Contact Denarie Kane at [dkane@nirpc.org](mailto:dkane@nirpc.org) for more information or questions.

Eman Ibrahim gave an overview of NIRPC's Regional Land Use, an update on Land Use and Housing, and NIRPC's NOFA applications. The Land Use and Housing element focuses on existing land use patterns, population trends, and community planning efforts. They also look at NWI's future population and the overall development that helps the region attain an equitable and environmentally sustainable future. Goals were identified.

- A plan for the needed infrastructure to support walking, bicycling, and transit of historic downtowns and older retail corridors with non-motorized patterns.
- Identify regional approaches that address shared economic and social resilience and preparedness challenges, environmental protection and restoration, workforce development, and housing markets.
- Identify key arterial roadways, including state highways and other arterials, that can be reimagined to enhance the livability of NWI communities.
- Plan for the 15-minute city. It envisions a developed city of districts where people can perform six essential functions (living, working, commerce, health, education, and entertainment) within a 15-minute walk or bike ride from their homes.
- Identify key places and corridors that need to be examined in more detail to focus resources on.

Population changes were presented from 1980 to 2020 which showed overall growth in the three county areas to be very slow. A scenario comparison for land consumption was discussed. The

desired scenario is 4-5 housing units per acre, meaning smaller lot housing is the most likely direction of the housing market. There is less dependence on multi-family or very high-density solutions as a result. Additionally, there is less conversion of new lands to urban uses and more open space preserved in a 4-5 housing units per acre scenario.

Six overall development frameworks were identified.

- Traditional development, which is older and established around an urban grid. Infill supports development, revitalization, and reinvestment.
- Suburban development with city services focuses on areas that generally grew from 1960 – present. Subdivisions, single-family residential, older subdivisions requiring conservation strategies, and infill of subdivisions and higher-density development are typically included in this development.
- Future urban development includes areas around existing development that permit incremental extensions of urban services.
- Community edge/large lot development areas concentrate on a strongly established large lot or rural residential pattern. New, low-density developments should be focused on available infill sites rather than expanding into predominantly rural counties.
- The areas of conservation development are more rural and have some topographic constraints, so conservation techniques should be used, such as clustering large lots to preserve environmentally sensitive areas as open spaces.
- The development/agriculture interface refers to the establishment of a border between developed areas of the region and the agricultural areas. The areas beyond that border line are maintained for primary agricultural use, except in areas contiguous to rural towns and centers.

The NOFA application deadline is next Friday, October 19. A list of projects will be presented at the January meeting. For more information or questions, contact Eman at [eibrahim@nirpc.org](mailto:eibrahim@nirpc.org).

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m. The next Economy & Place meeting is slated for January 8, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.