

Transportation Committee
NIRPC Lake Michigan Room
YouTube Recording:
https://www.youtube.com/live/x3DeZAx_3v4?si=aAr4tU49jArj4Fme
January 7, 2025
Minutes

Acting Chairman Tom Schmitt called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Tom Schmitt (Schererville), Kevin Breitzke (Porter County), Dean Button (Hammond), Mark O'Dell (Chesterton), Mary Tanis (Dyer), Max Rehlander (Valparaiso), Bob Thompson (V-Line), George Topoll (Union Township), Kelly Wenger (NICTD), David Phelps (Beverly Shores), Austin Bonta (Portage), and David Wright (GPTC) were present.

Liz Benge, Bailey Tambers, Andy Hansen, Ryan Lisek (DCI), Jeff Huett, Terry Martin, and Chris Murphy were also present.

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

On a motion by Dean Button, second by Bob Thompson, the Transportation Committee (TC) approved the November 12, 2024 meeting minutes, as presented.

There were no public comments.

Planning

Mitch Barloga presented on the Marquette Greenway Update. The Marquette Greenway spans 60 mi of trail from South Chicago, NWI, and into New Buffalo, MI, along Lake Michigan. There has been approximately \$115M in investments for the 44 segments that have been built. Many of these grants were awarded by NIRPC using Federal Highway funds through their competitive programs. A large amount of land needed for the Greenway is publicly owned. Significant property donations have been secured, with expected easements granted by NIPSCO and the South Shore Line. There are challenges in developing the 3.7 mi segment in the West Gary proposed route. A bridge over the toll road would have to be rehabbed, and a new bridge over a Canadian national track would have to be built, along with road dieting. Improvements in downtown Gary build on concurrent efforts by the city to establish Gary as the western gateway to the Indiana Dunes National Park. A map of proposed activities was presented. In Michigan City, the development of a Cultural Trail along Pine Street will connect the new Franklin at 11th Street Station, downtown Michigan City, the Marquette Greenway, a new \$260M public-private partnership 14-story SoLa mixed-use development, other redevelopment opportunities, and the proposed Discover Hub. For more information, contact Mitch Barloga at mbarlog@nrpc.org.

Programming

Charles Bradsky spoke on Resolution 25-01: FY 2024-2028, TIP Amendment #04.1, 24-02.2, and 24-04.5. The NIRPC Executive Board adopted the *NWI 2050+* Plan and the Fiscal Year 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) on July 20, 2023. INDOT and USDOT approved the MTP and the TIP on June 6th, 2024.

Since adopting 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. Projects have been divided into three amendments to expedite their inclusion in the STIP.

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

Amendments #24-04.1 and 24-04.2 contain 42 locally sponsored projects and 95 INDOT projects. Amendment 24-04.5 has 12 projects for procuring capital items for the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), and two projects are for Operating Assistance for NIRPC to support our sub-recipient transit providers.

On motion by Dean Button, seconded by George Topoll, the TC approved recommending Res 25-01 to the Commission.

Staff Updates & Reports from Planning Partners

Staff noted that the following proxies were appointed to the committee by their commission member: Bob Thompson for the City of Valparaiso, Jeff Huett for the Town of Schererville, Mark O'Dell for the Town of Chesterton. The TC 2025 schedule was presented.

Ryan Lisek reported on Drive Clean Indiana. For up-to-date information, visit www.drivecleanindiana.org.

Announcements

Announcements were made.

Adjournment

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:46 a.m.

The next Transportation Committee meeting is slated for February 4, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in the NIRPC building.