

Technical Planning Committee
NIRPC Lake Michigan Room
YouTube Recording:
[Technical Planning Committee Meeting 2-6-24 \(youtube.com\)](#)
February 6, 2024
Minutes

Kevin Breitzke called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

In attendance were Kevin Breitzke (Porter County), Max Rehlander (Valparaiso), Ryan Lisek (DCI), Lisa Shrader (INDOT), George Topoll (Union Township), Beth Shrader (Valpo Transit), Dean Button (Hammond), and David Wright (GPTC).

Also in attendance were Mike Jabo, Paul Heuring, Steve King, and Jake Dammarell.

Jeff Huet (Schererville), Tom Schmitt (Schererville), Chris Murphy, Bob Thompson, Eric Wolverton, Alex Olesker, Elizabeth (last name unknown), and Terry (last name unknown).

NIRPC staff present were Tom Vander Woude, Mitch Barloga, Scott Weber, Grace Benninger, Charles Bradsky, Kevin Polette, and Flor Baum.

On motion by George Topoll, second by Dean Button, the Technical Planning Committee (TPC) approved the minutes of January 9, 2024 as presented.

There were no public comments.

Planning

Scott Weber presented on the Final Draft of NWI 2050+ Roads Chapter. Six visions were discussed: Connected, United, Renewed, Vibrant, Equitable, and Safe. The vision of a Connected region states, "NWI's people have accessible, safe, and equal opportunities for working, playing, living and learning." The goal for Connected is to complete roadway, bicycle, sidewalk, and transit networks across municipal and county lines to enhance safe and efficient access to opportunities for all. The four objectives of Connected are as follows:

- The roadway network in Northwest Indiana adequately covers the region and affords roadway users sufficient mobility and accessibility.
- The roadway network in Northwest Indiana balances opportunities for working, playing, living, and learning in the region.
- The roadway network extent in Northwest Indiana is not itself a major contributor to congestion.
- The roadway network in Northwest Indiana fosters connections between communities without imposing barriers.

The vision of a United region states, "NWI's diversity is celebrated, and we work together as a community across racial, ethnic, political and cultural lines for the mutual benefit of the region." The goal is to prioritize transformative investments to elevate the position of the region and to attract a diversity of residents and high-quality economic opportunities. The two objectives are the following:

- Northwest Indiana's residents are able to access jobs both within and outside the region, and Northwest Indiana's jobs attract talent from both within and outside the region.
- Leaders deploy Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies and transformative Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) investments in the region.

The vision of a Renewed region states, “NWI’s urban and rural centers are places people want to come to and live in, and our environment is safe and healthy.” The goal is to improve roadways, bikes, sidewalk, and transit networks to revitalize existing urban and rural centers and enhance equity. The two objectives are as follows:

- Leaders prioritize maintaining roadway and highway pavements in satisfactory condition in the Northwest Indiana region. Pavement quality tends to be poorer in urban areas than rural areas. Yet the region has been awarded over \$125M in CCMG (2022).
- Leaders prioritize maintaining bridges in a state of good repair in the Northwest Indiana region.

The vision of a Vibrant region states, “NWI’s economy is thriving, our people are well educated, growth is planned, and natural and agricultural areas are valued and protected.” The goal is to adopt technological innovation that enhances the safe and fluid movement of people and goods to enable a flourishing economy. The three objectives are as follows:

- The Northwest Indiana region is prepared to transition to Electric Vehicles (EVs) by ensuring that residents have the means to access EVs and that EV charging infrastructure is adequately and equitably distributed across the region.
- Northwest Indiana residents and freight carriers can expect to travel at reliable and safe speeds on the region’s roadway network.
- Leaders effectively manage congestion on the region’s roadway network to ensure that people and goods move fluidly to sustain a flourishing economy.

Feedback from planning and public involvement processes in the *NWI 2050+* development effort led to a vision for an Equitable NWI region to seek fairness in access to resources and opportunities to meet the needs of all community members. The goal is to seek to distribute access to the region’s roadway network equitably and justly as well as ensure that leaders invest in improvements to roadways equitably and justly. The two objectives are as follows:

- Leaders invest in projects and other improvements to the roadway network equitably and justly, not unduly benefiting or burdening certain communities at the expense of others.
- Leaders seek to ensure that Northwest Indiana region households have more equal access to vehicles.

Feedback from planning and public involvement processes in the *NWI 2050+* development effort also led to a vision for a Safe NWI to reduce and mitigate roadway safety and security risks. The goal is to ensure that the region’s roadways operate as safely as possible, with the guiding principle that any fatality on the roads or highways is one too many. The three goals for Safe are as follows:

- Leaders seek to reduce crashes on the region’s roadways.
- Leaders seek to reduce injuries on the region’s roadways.
- Leaders seek to eliminate fatalities on the region’s roadways.

No questions or comments were received. For more information, please contact Scott at sweber@nirpc.org.

Programming

Charles Bradsky spoke on Res 24-03: TIP Amendment 24-01 which was released for a 21-day public comment period that began on January 12, 2024 through February 2, 2024.

Comments were received from the Interagency Consultation Group (ICG) and from FHWA, and NIRPC staff responded to the comments. The *NWI 2050+* was approved back on July 20, 2023. However, approval has been on hold by INDOT and USDOT, pending FHWA approval of the Air Quality Conformity Determination (AQCD), a requirement for the Region as being designated non-attainment for ozone under the Clean Air Act by the US EPA. AQCD is slated

for approval in March. FHWA has advised NIRPC staff to begin the process of amending, upon contingency of approval. A summary of projects in TIP Amendment 24-01 were presented and are as follows: 10 new INDOT projects and 16 INDOT projects with a funding increase. 21 locally sponsored projects include the following:

- 11 new projects for East Chicago, Hammond, Hobart, La Porte, Merrillville, Michigan City, La Porte County, Porter County, and for NIRPC.
- Four changes in funding for projects in Chesterton, Michigan City, Schererville, and Porter County.
- Five projects with added phases in Gary, Michigan City, Valparaiso, and Lake County.
- One eliminated project in Gary.

On motion by David Wright, second by Dean Button, the TPC approved to recommend Res 24-03 to the Commission, contingent upon official approval of the FY 24-28 TIP by INDOT and USDOT.

Scott Weber presented on Res 24-02: Adoption of Air Quality Conformity Determination for NWI 2050+ which was released for a 30-day public comment period that began on January 5, 2024 and ended February 4, 2024. A public meeting was also held on January 30, 2024. No public comments were received. As stated previously, the *NWI 2050+* was approved back in July 20, 2023. However, approval has been on hold by INDOT and USDOT, pending FHWA approval of the AQCD, a requirement for the Region as being designated non-attainment for ozone under the Clean Air Act by the US EPA. Approval of these core documents will be used to administer federal aid funding. The AQCD report provided demonstrated compliance with the Clean Air Act Section 176©. Implementing non-exempt projects will not cause a surpassing of the ozone precursors regulated in the Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets (MVEB) in the SIP. On-road mobile source emissions (NO_x and VOC) that are projected to result from implementing the non-exempt, regionally significant projects in NWI 2050+ and FY 24-28 TIP is overseen by the ICG. A summary table of on-road mobile source emissions and budgets was presented. Emissions of NO_x and VOC are at or below the MVEB in the Indiana SIP. On motion by Dean Button, second by George Topoll, the TPC approved to recommend Res 24-02 to the Commission, upon contingency of the EPA not receiving adverse comments to the 2008 Ozone State Implementation Plan amendment.

Staff Updates and Reports from Planning Partners

Staff updates and announcements were made. Drive Clean Indiana shared updates. For more information, visit www.drivecleanindiana.org.

Adjournment

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:56 a.m.

The next TPC meeting is slated for March 5, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. in the NIRPC building.