

Surface Transportation Committee
Lake Michigan Room
YouTube Recording:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqriqMrE2no>
April 25, 2023
Minutes

Thomas Schmitt called the Surface Transportation Committee (STC) meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and introductions.

In attendance were Thomas Schmitt (Schererville), Mark O'Dell (Chesterton), and Gerald Swets (St. John).

NIRPC staff present were Scott Weber, Tom Vander Woude, Charles Bradsky, Stephen Hughes, Kevin Polette, and Flor Baum.

On motion by Mark O'Dell, second by Gerald Swets, the STC voted to approve the February 7, 2023 minutes as presented.

There were no public comments.

Scott Weber spoke on the 2022-2023 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) debrief and discussion. The STC looked at roadway improvements and new roadway projects in the fall. NIRPC staff noted inconsistencies with some community strategies in scoping the extent of projects. NIRPC staff will revisit this issue before the next NOFA. There were no new comments added from members.

Scott spoke on Draft *NWI 2050+* Freight Chapter Implementation and Opportunities. NIRPC hired a consultant (CPCS) to take an extensive view of all modes to come up with a context of findings. The findings are to better plan freight and implement in the *NWI 2050+*. Under All Modes, the issue of workforce shortages was identified as a threat to freight-dependent industries. Another All-Modes issue is NWI's infrastructure bearing high levels of pass-through traffic. Truck Modes issues identified are as follows:

- Truck traffic congestion
- Environmental impacts of trucking activity
- Pavement conditions
- Safety issues
- Oversized (OS)/ overweight (OW) loads
- Bridge clearance
- Truck parking

Rail, air, and maritime modes issues were the following:

- Rail grade crossings
- Single-track rail bridges
- Moveable bridge conditions
- Maritime investment
- Lack of intermodal facility
- Limited air cargo operations

Environmental issues such as extreme weather was identified. Extreme weather damages infrastructure, especially extreme cold and heat. Air emissions and ozone continue to be a problem in NWI. Some locations experience freight-related noise pollution.

NIRPC's recommendation for the Draft NWI 2050+ Freight Chapter include having workforce training programs, technology deployment opportunities, and a truck parking study. Comprehensive corridor studies for US-12/20 truck study and truck access to Cleveland Cliffs-Burns Harbor. Additional policy/program recommendations include rail grade crossing improvements, rail crossing task force resurrection, an air cargo study, expanded resiliency study, and future planning support.

Scott spoke on the Draft NWI 2050+ Roads chapter Implementation and Opportunities. Policy and program recommendations were discussed. NIRPC will continue to implement regional corridor studies and encourage communities to adhere to an asset management approach. Next steps include streamlining functional classification change requests and expanding transportation demand management (TDM) programs. NIRPC will set aside enough funds for bridge projects and assist counties in identifying other or nontraditional funding sources for bridge projects. Additional funding will be sought after for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. Communities will receive assistance in pursuing a Vision Zero approach to road safety and applying for grant opportunities regarding safety programs, such as Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A). Policy and program recommendations include improving the design of roads and highways to encourage motorists to travel at safe speeds. Travel demand forecasting tools will be used to manage travel congestion. Please contact Scott with any questions or comments at sweber@nirpc.org.

Scott spoke on the 2023 Safety and Travel Time Reliability (TTR), Truck Travel Time Reliability (TTTR) and Congestion updates for the 1st quarter. The TTR is at 97.6% YTD, which is 4.6% above the 93% TTR 2023 target. Traffic congestion is due to I-80/94 Westbound. The Non-Interstate TTR is at 98.9% YTD, which is 5.9% above the 93% 2023 target. TTTR was at 1.25, which was .07 below the 2023 target. The system should have a TTTR less than 1.32. For more information, please contact Scott Weber.

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:53 a.m. The next STC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 29, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. in the NIRPC building.