

Land Use Committee
NIRPC
April 26, 2023
Minutes

Nick Bellar called the Land Use Committee (LUC) meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

In attendance were Ashley Abernathy (Cedar Lake), Ashley Sharkey (DNR), Jessica Gage (Valparaiso), and Nick Bellar (Winfield).

Staff present were Eman Ibrahim, Thomas Vander Woude, Stephan Hughes, Kevin Polette, and Flor Baum.

On motion by Ashley Abernathy and second by Tom Vader Woude (whom was a member of the LUC during that time), the committee voted to approve the February 15, 2023 meeting minutes.

Eman Ibrahim presented on the Final Draft of NWI 2050+ Land Use and Housing Chapters. The Land Use & Housing elements focus on existing land use patterns, population trends, and communities planning efforts. The Land Use & Housing elements also looks at the future population for NWI and the overall development that helps the region attain that future in an equitable and environmentally sustainable way. 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.
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- Plan for the 15-minute-city. It envisions a city developed of districts in which 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 the direction of the housing market. There is less dependence on multi-family or very high-density solutions. Additionally, there is less conversion of new lands to urban uses and maintains open spaces in a 4-5 housing units per acre scenario.

Six overall development frameworks were identified.

- Traditional development, which is older and established around urban grides. Infill supports development, revitalization, and reinvestment.
- Suburban development with city services focuses on areas that generally grew from 1960 – present. Subdivision, single-family residential, older subdivisions requiring conservation strategies, and infill of subdivisions and higher-density development in 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 large lot or rural residential pattern that is strongly established. 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 with some topographic constraints that should use conservation techniques, clustering large lots to preserve environmentally sensitive areas as open space.
- A development, or agriculture interface covers areas south of a line that should be maintained for primary agricultural use, except contiguous to rural towns and centers.

Regional policy for traditional centers should reinforce the character and investment. Central city areas within a 15-minutes of walking or biking improve active transportation access and help to increase population. It was determined that NIRPC staff will request RDG to provide names of corridors on the map. Community corridors regional policy is moving toward urbanism that satisfies transportation and development goals. Land Use and Housing environmental corridors were identified in the W. Branch of the Little Calumet River, the Hoosier Prairie, Hobart Branch, and Deep River. The Moraine and the E. Branch of the Little Calumet River were also identified as environmental corridors.

For more information, please contact Eman Ibrahim at eibrahim@nirpc.org.

Announcements were made.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 30, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:52 a.m.