

Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes

Lake Michigan Room

August 4, 2026

10:00 a.m.

Minutes

1. Call to Order

The Transportation Committee meeting was called to order at 10:00 am, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of the May 5, 2026, meeting were presented.

The voting members in attendance were Kevin Breitzke (Porter County), Angie Nelson Deutch (Michigan City), Bob Thompson (Valpo Transit), Max Rehlander (Valparaiso), Martin Bobcek (Porter County), Dean Button (Hammond), Jeff Huet (Schererville), Mark O'Dell (Chesterton), David Wright (GPTC), Ryan Lisek (Drive Clean Indiana), and Michele Murday Pariso (NWI Forum).

Staff in attendance were Tom Vander Woude, Charles Bradsky, Candice Eklund, Ann Weitgenant, Scott Weber, Stephen Hughes, Mitch Barloga, Eman Ibrahim, and Grace Benninger.

Also in attendance were Hashem Alhashem (East Chicago), Doug Ross (Post-Tribune), Scott Pruitt (First Group), Alex Olesker (BF&S), Gretchen Sipp (GPTC), Jessica Renslow (GPTC), Melody Shreves (INDOT), George Topol (Union Township), Beth Shrader (SEH).

2. Public Comment on Agenda Items

No public comments were offered on agenda items.

3. Presentation

3.1 David Wright, Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC), presented the GPTC 2024-2025 Annual Impact Report. He noted that the report was developed to provide a more comprehensive look at GPTC's regional impact, including ridership growth, fleet investment, service partnerships, electric bus benefits, access for seniors and riders without personal vehicles, and connections to employment, education, healthcare, and regional destinations. Gretchen Sipp and Jessica Renslow assisted with portions of the presentation.

The presentation highlighted GPTC's fare structure, including local, senior, student, regional, and Access 219 fares, as well as free rides for veterans. New and expanded service routes were discussed, along with the role of public transit as economic infrastructure supporting household income, trips to work and school, and access to major destinations such as Hard Rock Casino, downtown Gary, and future development opportunities.

GPTC also discussed Cycle 219 bike share expansion, including increased usage, regional trail connections, partnerships with Purdue University Northwest and the National Park Service, and opportunities for expansion into additional communities. Staff described partnerships with NIRPC, IU Northwest, Greyhound, the City of Gary, and advertisers, noting that Greyhound's continued investment at the Adam Benjamin Metro Center benefits regional transit riders.

Additional topics included GPTC's fleet size and reliability, safety record, mobile fare technology, website traffic, future QuickFare and trip-planning improvements, employee contributions, funding, outreach events, public art, school and senior partnerships, and ways for organizations to partner with GPTC. Committee discussion included comments about bike share usage across county lines, trail access, adaptive bike access, and possible future expansion into Porter County.

4. Planning

4.1 Stephen Hughes presented the public comment report and Resolution 26-10, amending the *Engage NWI* Public Participation Plan. He reported that the amendment was released for a 45-day public comment period from June 9 through July 23, 2026, and no public comments were received.

4.2 Mr. Hughes presented Resolution 26-10 amending *Engage NWI* by adding Appendix A, which outlines procedures and strategies to engage interested parties, including traditionally underserved populations, and explains how NIRPC identifies emphasized places, provides notice, selects outreach strategies, and chooses meeting types and locations.

Mr. Hughes explained that the amendment responds to a corrective action from NIRPC's federal certification review. FHWA reviewed the draft and provided comments, which were incorporated before the public comment draft was released. Committee discussion focused on improving access to public meetings and outreach, including holding meetings or pop-up engagements in transit-accessible locations and at community events in Gary, Hammond, Michigan City, and other emphasized places. Staff noted that this approach is being used for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan outreach process.

A motion was made by Mayor Angie Nelson Deutch and seconded by Jeff Huet to recommend approval of Resolution 26-10 to the Executive Board and Full Commission. The motion passed unanimously.

4.3 Scott Weber presented Resolution 26-11, approving a technical amendment to *NWI 2050+* adding a System Performance Report. He explained that the report is a federally required component of a Metropolitan Transportation Plan and evaluates transportation system condition and performance against required performance targets. The report also satisfies part three of a corrective action from NIRPC's federal planning certification review.

Mr. Weber summarized the report's performance measure categories: highway safety; pavement and bridge condition; system performance, freight, and congestion mitigation/air quality; transit asset management; and transit safety. He reviewed target-setting responsibilities, recent statewide and regional performance, and actions NIRPC facilitates to support progress, including road safety audits, Safe Streets and Roads for All planning, project selection criteria, corridor studies, performance dashboards, transit asset management planning, and transit safety measures. Mr. Weber noted that there is no penalty to NIRPC for not meeting targets, but progress must be documented. A minor correction was identified for the transit safety section to include the number of transit worker assaults as required.

A motion was made by Dean Button and seconded by Mayor Angie Nelson Deutch to recommend Resolution 26-11, as amended, to the Executive Board and Full Commission. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Programming

5.1 Charles Bradsky presented the public comment report for FY 2026-2030 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments 26-08.1 and 26-08.5. He reported that Amendment 26-08.1 was an infrastructure amendment involving federal highway funds and Amendment 26-08.5 was a transit amendment. The 21-day public comment period ran from July 2 through July 22, 2026, and no public comments were received. The amendments were also sent to the Interagency Consultation Group, and no questions or comments were received.

5.2 Mr. Bradsky stated that Amendment 26-08.1 included 30 INDOT projects and 13 local projects for Burns Harbor, Cedar Lake, Chesterton, Hammond, La Porte County, Lowell, Merrillville, Michigan City, Porter County, Schererville, and St. John. Amendment 26-08.5 included four new projects for NICTD. A motion was made by Mark O'Dell and seconded by David Wright to recommend Resolution 26-12 to the Executive Board and Full Commission. The motion passed unanimously.

5.3 Mr. Bradsky then presented the FY 2026-2030 Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modification report for modifications 26-24, 26-25, 26-26, and 26-27. He explained that the report covered three months because the committee did not meet the prior months and that administrative modifications represent minor project changes. The report included 23 INDOT projects and 28 local projects and was received for information. Mr. Wright asked about administrative modifications related to two flexed capital projects, and staff agreed to follow up after the meeting.

6. Reports from Planning Partners

6.1 Ryan Lisek, Drive Clean Indiana, reported on a community partnership grant opportunity focused on invasive species control, stormwater runoff treatment, Great Lakes shoreline restoration, and habitat protection. Applications are due November 13, 2026, with letters of intent due September 4, 2026. He also noted that charging stations remain available for

donation, non-federal funding for clean diesel replacements is expected in October through the final Volkswagen settlement round, and several charging station deployments are opening through the GO program.

Upcoming Drive Clean Indiana events include the Clean Air Golf Outing on August 25, National Drive Electric Week on September 17 at NIRPC before the Executive Board meeting, and the Drive Clean Indiana Clean Tech Conference, featuring Mayor Angie Nelson Deutch as a headlining speaker.

7. Other Business, Staff Announcements and Upcoming Meetings

Staff provided several updates. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan update is underway, with the existing conditions phase nearing completion. The Regional Profile and Performance Report is expected to be released soon. Public engagement continues through pop-up events at community gatherings, county fairs, farmers markets, and other regional events, and an online public input survey is available.

Staff reported that road safety audit meetings are scheduled with Cedar Lake, Crown Point, Dyer, Hammond, Highland, Griffith, and Porter County. NIRPC has also executed a contract with Lochmueller Group to develop the Regional Safety Action Plan, funded through the Safe Streets and Roads for All program. The plan will cover Lake, Porter, and La Porte counties, with a major focus on county road networks and regional policies that can support municipal safety efforts.

Staff announced that a Notice of Funding Availability for the 2028-2032 Transportation Improvement Program is expected this fall, likely in September. NIRPC is reviewing and clarifying programming rules and project selection criteria to make applications easier to complete and evaluate.

Mitch Barloga announced an upcoming webinar on e-bikes, e-scooters, and other personal electric vehicles, scheduled for August 27 from 10:00 a.m. to noon. The webinar will address policy, ordinance, enforcement, and safety considerations. Committee discussion included concerns about e-bikes, scooters, golf carts, and other personal electric vehicles on local and county roads, as well as the need for clear local ordinances, enforcement, and possible state legislative action.

Staff announced that the Transportation Committee meeting previously scheduled for October 27, 2026, will be moved to November 10, 2026, due to a conflict with the Indiana MPO Conference. Notices will be sent regarding the cancellation and rescheduling.

8. Upcoming Meetings

Upcoming meetings were announced as follows: the Environment Committee on August 6, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.; the NIRPC Executive Board on August 20, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.; TROC Lake and Porter on August 25, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.; TROC La Porte on August 25, 2026, at

1:00 p.m.; and the next Transportation Committee meeting on September 1, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the NIRPC offices.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.