

Transportation Committee
NIRPC Lake Michigan Room
August 5, 2025
Minutes

Kevin Breitzke called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Voting members in attendance were Kevin Breitzke (Porter County), Jeff Huet (Schererville), Mark O'Dell (Chesterton), Dean Button (Hammond), Max Rehlander (Valparaiso), Kay Nelson (Forum), David Wright (GPTC), and Kelly Wenger (NICTD).

Jake Dammarell, Daniela Martin (Valparaiso), George Topoll (Union Township), Jenny Monroe, Scott Sandstrom, Melody Panos (INDOT), Noelle Bayer (INDOT), Alex Metz, Beth Shrader, Ryan Lisek (DCI), Katlyn Fine (Forum), Elizabeth Bengel, and Terry Martin were also present.

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

On a motion by Kay Nelson, seconded by Dean Button, the committee approved the minutes from the May 6th meeting.

Planning

Grace Benninger spoke on the 2025 1st and 2nd quarter Safety, Travel Time Reliability, Freight, and Congestion Performance Measures. The Transportation Committee reviewed federally required safety and congestion performance measures, including interstate and truck travel time reliability and annual hours of peak excessive delay per capita, using interactive maps and metrics for 2024 and 2025. The committee discussed metrics for measuring delays and timing, reviewed crash data from 2024-2025, and examined data on vulnerable roadway users, with some noting errors in the data during beta testing.

Stephen Hughes presented Resolution 25-15, which proposed a technical amendment to NIRPC's Public Participation Plan, *Engage NWI*. Originally adopted in August 2019, the plan outlines NIRPC's approach to public engagement in accordance with federal requirements under 23 CFR 450.316. The amendment reflected minor updates to account for the new committee structure adopted in June 2024 and the change in social media branding from Twitter to "X," including instructions on locating NIRPC on that platform. No substantive changes were made to the document's content, timelines, or engagement process.

As a technical amendment, the change requires approval by the Commissioners but does not necessitate the full public comment process that will be undertaken during a more comprehensive future update.

On a motion by Kelly Wenger, seconded by Mark O'Dell, the Transportation Committee recommended Resolution 25-15 to the Executive Board. No questions or comments were raised, and the motion passed unanimously.

Scott Weber presented Resolution 25-16, a technical amendment to the *NWI 2050+* long-range transportation plan. Federal regulations (23 CFR 450.324(f)(11)) require an MTP to demonstrate fiscal constraint by including a financial plan and project listing. While *NWI 2050+* had already been found to demonstrate fiscal constraint in its April 17, 2024, air quality conformity approval, INDOT

and FHWA provided feedback recommending that the plan include a more explicit financial appendix with detailed funding sources, fiscal constraint tables, and project costs.

The financial plan outlines formula and discretionary funding sources, including federal highway programs such as STBG, HSIP, CMAQ, and TA; transit programs such as Sections 5307, 5337, 5310, and 5339; and discretionary programs such as BUILD, MEGA, and RCE. Fiscal constraint tables and project listings were largely drawn from the already adopted FY 2026–2030 TIP, with projects shown by year of expenditure and urbanized area. The plan also includes financial analysis tables for Northwest Indiana, Valparaiso, and Michigan City urbanized areas, as well as assessments of local government financial capacity.

The committee discussed revenue and cost projections, noting that the fiscally constrained plan showed \$251 million in revenues for 2024–2033, with \$200 million already secured and an additional \$55 million anticipated for 2034–2050. Costs were estimated at \$43.78 million for the latter period, leaving sufficient reserve capacity to cover operations and maintenance (O&M). Local sponsors were found to have adequate budgetary authority to meet O&M obligations after fulfilling federal match requirements, with \$105 million available in Northwest Indiana and \$18.8 million in Michigan City.

The committee reviewed the timeline and financial feasibility of regionally significant projects expected by 2030 and 2035, including the US 20 center turn lane, Kennedy Avenue added travel lanes, Monon corridor transit service, and I-80/94 flex lane projects. The Northwest Indiana/Valparaiso-Shorewood urban area project list is fiscally constrained, but it was noted that the approximately \$100 million La Porte City Connector in the Michigan City urbanized area may exceed anticipated revenues. Since reserves from Group I funds could potentially be loaned to Group II, though, the overall MTP is fiscally constrained.

Scott Weber emphasized that the amendment did not request additional funding but demonstrated to federal partners the methodology and formulas used to ensure fiscal constraint. The long-range plan would continue to be updated every four years, with financial projections revised five years ahead to ensure flexibility and affordability for future updates. The amendment provided transparency and compliance while maintaining capacity to incorporate additional projects as communities advanced them.

On motion by Dean Button, seconded by David Wright, the Transportation Committee recommended adoption of Resolution 25-16 to the Full Commission. No opposition or comments were raised, and the motion passed unanimously.

Programming

Stephen Hughes presented Resolution 25-14: FY 2026–2030 TIP Amendment 26-02. The Transportation Committee discussed the proposed amendments and reviewed the public comment report. The amendments were released for a 21-day public comment period from July 1 through July 22, 2025. They were posted on NIRPC's website and social media platforms and distributed through press releases, with links provided for public review. No comments were received during this period. The amendments were also forwarded to the Interagency Consultation Group (ICG) on June 24, 2025. No questions or concerns were raised, and the ICG provided concurrence for the projects on July 1, 2025.

The committee reviewed updates to 220 projects using federal highway and transit funds. The list included both projects exempt and projects non-exempt from the Air Quality Conformity process. Amendment 26-02.1 covered 101 highway projects funded by FHWA that were exempt from conformity requirements. Amendment 26-02.2 included 5 FHWA-funded projects subject to conformity. Highway project types included right-of-way acquisition, bridge improvements, ADA sidewalk construction, pavement rehabilitation, added turn lanes, corridor and intersection upgrades, safety projects, small structure replacements, and trail enhancements. Amendment 26-02.5 contained 114 FTA-funded transit projects exempt from conformity, including operating assistance for complementary paratransit, preventive maintenance, planning and oversight, capital projects, and new initiatives.

The committee noted that separating the amendments would allow INDOT to process exempt projects more quickly, ensuring timely project delivery. Members supported the resolution, emphasizing the importance of updating the TIP to reflect current needs and costs.

On motion by Dean Button, seconded by Jeff Huet, the Transportation Committee recommended adoption of Resolution 25-14 as presented to the Commission. The motion passed unanimously.

Reports from Planning Partners

Ryan Lisek of Drive Clean Indiana discussed funding awards for electric vehicle charging stations, clean diesel projects, and educational initiatives. \$3.3 million in Go EVIN funding was awarded for publicly accessible fast and level two charging stations at various locations, including travel centers, convention centers, and car dealerships. Various funding awards and opportunities were announced, including \$740,000 for diesel replacements and up to \$10 million for clean diesel and electric vehicle funding. Ryan reported updates on various projects, including electric vehicle deliveries, scholarship awards, and recognition for clean air initiatives in Lake and Porter counties. The Midwest ZEV project has \$25,000 in funding for schools interested in building an electric go-kart and participating in a one-year curriculum, with additional events like a National Drive Electric Week EV ride and drive planned.

Tom Vander Woude provided staff updates on various projects:

Lake County can apply for EDA FY2025 disaster supplemental grant funding for economic development projects, such as infrastructure and utilities, to increase economic resiliency, not just disaster recovery.

He reported that the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration are conducting the quadrennial certification review of NIRPC's planning process and are seeking public feedback on the transportation planning process in Northwestern Indiana through August 26. Everyone is encouraged to fill out a comment form, which will be sent out via Constant Contact. After reviewing documentation and public comments, the FTA will issue a report by the end of the year with commendations, recommendations, and possible corrective actions.

Tom reported that NIRPC received 15 road safety audit applications and will review and prioritize review them and contact sponsors in two weeks regarding funding for 9-10 projects.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m. The next TC meeting is slated for September 9 at the NIRPC building.

References

[YouTube recording of 8/5/2025 TC meeting](#)



[Drive Clean Indiana](#)



[TIP Amendments 26-02.1, 26-02.2 and 26-02.5](#)



