

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties, Indiana for 2018-2021

Part I: Introduction

A Transportation Improvement Program, or TIP, is a short-range financial and spending plan for the utilization of U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) surface transportation funds. These funds, identified later in this document, are used for highway, transit, and non-motorized transportation projects. NIRPC's TIP is updated every other year and includes projects undertaken by municipalities, counties, transit operators, and the State of Indiana. Federal (U.S. DOT) planning regulations guide the preparation and development of TIP documents.

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) has been designated by the Governor as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to undertake transportation planning for northwestern Indiana. NIRPC is a council of governments established under Indiana law. NIRPC has, pursuant to the federal planning regulations, undertaken a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process that includes, among other things, the development of a Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

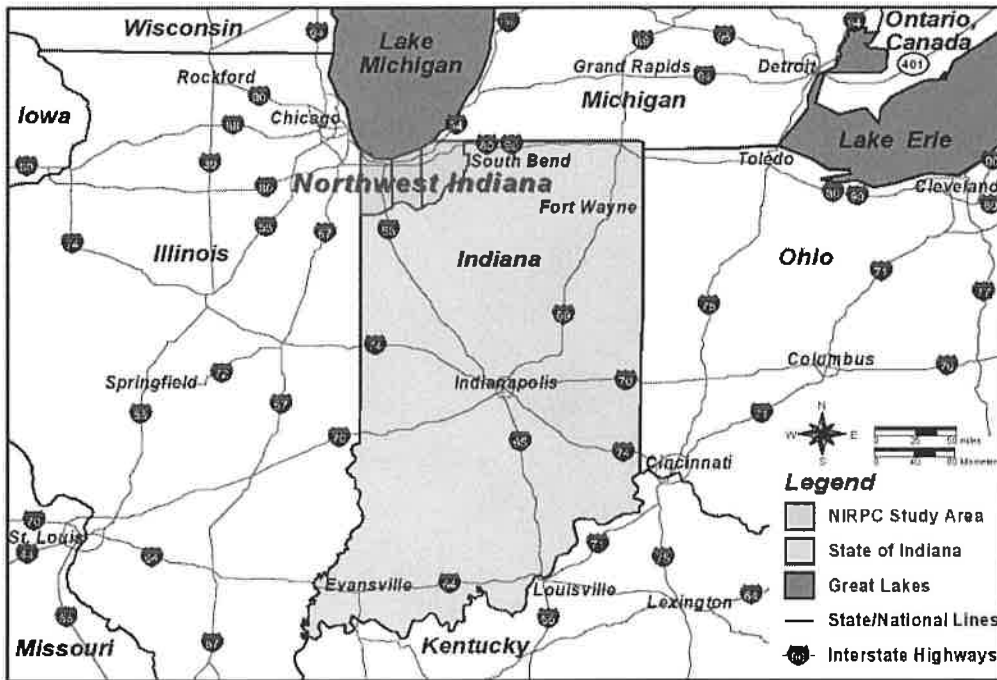
The TIP process is designed to ensure the implementation of the goals and objectives identified in NIRPC's Regional Transportation Plan.

NIRPC's Regional Transportation Plan is the Transportation Section of the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan (CRP), adopted in June 2011, and as amended and updated (most recently) in May 2016.

About NIRPC

NIRPC was originally established as the Lake-Porter County Regional Transportation and Planning Commission in 1965, pursuant to an act of the Indiana General Assembly. An amendment to this legislation in 1973 provided the Commission with its current name and allowed for the addition of new member counties. La Porte County joined NIRPC in 1979. The most recent major change to NIRPC's authorizing legislation occurred in 2003—which established NIRPC as a council of governments.

NIRPC is a regional council of local governments serving the citizens of Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties in Northwest Indiana. The entire three-county area is part of the U.S. Census Bureau's Chicago Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Northern Lake and Porter Counties are a part of the Chicago, IL/IN urbanized area. The northwest corner of LaPorte County is part of the Michigan City-LaPorte, IN/MI urbanized area. NIRPC provides a forum that enables the citizens of Northwest Indiana to address regional issues relating to transportation, the environment and community, and economic development. For transportation planning, NIRPC has been named as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Indiana portion of both urbanized areas.



NIRPC's metropolitan planning area is located at the southern tip of Lake Michigan and represents an integral part of the greater Chicago metropolitan area. It consists of 771,815 people (2010 Census) and covers 1,520 square miles. There are forty-one cities and towns and forty-four townships within the NIRPC planning area.

NIRPC Commissioners. There are fifty-three Commissioners—all of whom are elected officials (per statute). In addition to the 41 municipal appointments (one per city or town), the County Councils, Boards of Commissioners, County Surveyors, and two Porter County Township

Trustees appoint one member each, as does the Governor. The Commission or the Executive Board meets monthly. NIRPC's meetings are open to the public and there is a place on every agenda for public comment.

The legislation under which the Commission operates is contained within Indiana Code Title 36, Article VII, Chapter 7.6. Section 12 of this statute plainly states our purpose:

“The purpose of the commission is to institute and maintain a comprehensive planning and programming process for:

- (1) transportation;*
- (2) economic development; and*
- (3) environmental;*

policy and provide a coordinative management process for the counties described in section 1 of this chapter. The commission shall coordinate its activities with all member units in the counties and shall coordinate and assist the planning programs of member units and the state that are related to its purpose.”

One of the most important designations NIRPC has received is that of Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for northwestern Indiana. MPO's are responsible, together with state departments of transportation and public transit operators, for carrying out the transportation planning process for urbanized areas.

Of equal importance is our status as a Designated Recipient of U.S. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds (in two urbanized areas) under three FTA grant programs. We function as the grantee for seven (7) local public bus transit operators. We are also the cognizant Designated Recipient for the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), Indiana's only commuter railroad.

Our region is a diverse and dynamic place whose complexities are reflected in the regional transportation system. The NIRPC planning area includes arguably some of the most strategic and critical links in the national transportation system. These factors combine to make the role of MPO for

northwestern Indiana extraordinarily challenging. NIRPC, in undertaking its mission, is cognizant of its obligations and responsibilities, under various federal and state statutes, to promote inclusion and not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, or any other factor.

Basic Federal Requirements for Transportation Improvement Programs.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's current planning regulations¹ associated with the implementation of surface transportation programs include specific requirements for development and content of TIPs. These requirements are summarized below.

- ***Time period: The TIP shall cover at least a four year period and be updated at least every four years.*** The TIP covers the four year period from July 2017 to June 2021.

- ***Public Comment: The MPO shall provide all interested parties with an opportunity to comment on the proposed TIP.*** Appendix B of this document summarizes the public participation process for the development of the Conformity Determination, Comprehensive Regional Plan, and TIP, including comments, suggestions, and responses from that process.

- ***Regionally Significant Projects: The TIP shall contain all regionally significant projects requiring an action by FHWA or FTA regardless of funding source.*** These projects are discretely identified in the TIP's list of projects.

- ***Specific Project Information: The TIP shall list capital and non-capital surface transportation projects using a variety of federal funds or regionally significant projects requiring FHWA or FTA action.*** For each project or project phase, the TIP shall include sufficient descriptive material including work type, termini, length, total cost, amount of federal funds, and responsible agency. The project table in the TIP provides this information for each project.

¹ 23 CFR Part 450, Subpart B, issued February 14, 2007

- **Consistency with the Transportation Plan:** *Each project or project phase included in the TIP shall be consistent with the approved metropolitan transportation plan.* New capacity expansion projects selected for inclusion in the TIP were selected from our 2040 transportation plan. All other projects (i.e., those involving preservation and maintenance of existing infrastructure) are consistent with that portion of the plan that requires the prioritization of these types of projects.

- **Financial Plan:** *The TIP shall include a financial plan that provides system-level estimates of costs and revenue sources that are reasonably expected to be available to adequately operate and maintain Federal-aid highways and public transportation.* Appendix D provides summary financial information regarding projected surface transportation funds and expenditures for cities, towns, counties, and transit operators within the three-county area over the life of the TIP.

- **Prioritization Process:** *The MPO, in cooperation with the State and public transportation operator(s) shall develop a prioritized TIP and should identify the criteria and process for prioritizing projects.* Descriptions of the procedures and processes used to select and prioritize projects in the TIP are found in two places. Projects selected since publication of the prior TIP (July 2015) are found in Chapter II; projects selected prior to that date are found in Appendix E.

- **Status of Major Projects from the previous TIP:** *The TIP should list all major projects from the previous TIP that were implemented or delayed.* This list appears at the end of Part II of this document. Separately, there is an Annual List of Projects (ALOP) that is published during the first quarter of each year. The ALOP shows federal surface transportation fund obligations for the prior year and is available for download from NIRPC's website.

- **Air Quality:** *The TIP shall demonstrate conformity with the State Implementation Plan (SIP).* Appendix C contains the current air quality conformity determination.

Organization of the TIP Document

This balance of this document is organized into the following two parts:

Part II: TIP Development and Project Selection Processes. This chapter contains a description of the MPO planning process, general guidelines we followed in soliciting and selecting local projects with federal funds that are assigned to us by INDOT or FTA, and a brief description of INDOT's project selection processes.

There were two Notices of Fund Availability (NOFA's) issued in late 2016. One was for Local Highway Safety (HSIP) projects and the other was for FTA Section 5307-funded public transit projects in Lake and Porter Counties. The results of the transit NOFA were set aside for reasons explained in Part II. However, both NOFA's are discussed in Part II.

As already noted, solicitation and selection system details for most MPO-selected, FHWA-funded projects from solicitations prior to 2016 can be found in Appendix E. *It should be noted that these systems are obsolete and will be replaced in late 2018.*

Part III: Program of Projects and Related Information. This chapter begins with a summary explanation of the actual list of projects, including tabular and graphic information. This is followed by a key to interpreting the information in the tables and where to go to get additional information.

LIST of APPENDICES

Appendix A: Official Actions and Compliance. This appendix contains the NIRPC Board resolutions adopting the Conformity Determination, Plan, and TIP. The final published version also contains the planning process self-certification document.

Appendix B: Public Involvement. This appendix contains the Public Comment Summary Report for the Conformity Determination, Plan Update, and TIP. Per the process requirements in our Public Participation Plan, the

Report identifies each comment received, our response, an assessment of the comment's significance, and a statement regarding the need to modify the document prior to adoption. This appendix will be included in only the final (published) version of the TIP.

Appendix C: Conformity Determination. This document, adopted separately, will be included only in the final (published) version of the TIP.

Appendix D: Financial Plan. The joint FTA/FHWA Planning regulations identify three primary purposes of the financial plan for Transportation Improvement Programs: 1) To demonstrate how the TIP, if approved, will be implemented; 2) To identify resources from public & private sources that are reasonably expected to be made available to carry out the TIP; and 3) To recommend additional financing strategies to carry out needed projects and programs. The Financial Plan will be issued with the final, (published) version of the TIP.

Appendix E: Prior Project Selection Processes. This appendix contains details on the manner in which MPO-funded were selected for funding in Lake and Porter Counties prior to July 2015.

Appendix F: NIRPC Commissioners, TPC Contact/Membership Lists, and Transit Operators.

Part II: TIP Development and Project Selection Processes

MPO Planning Process

The NIRPC Board of Commissioners is the final decision-making body of the MPO. Transportation-related decisions made at the Board level almost always originate at a lower level in NIRPC's committee structure¹.

NIRPC 2016 Committee Structure Revisions.

A revised committee structure was adopted by the NIRPC Board in May 2015. These changes were implemented beginning in the fall of 2016. A full description of each committee, together with its purpose, function, membership, and meeting frequency is found later in this Part II. Committees that perform a duty or function relative to the transportation planning process are either described or summarized following.

Technical Planning Committee (TechPC). This committee was formed by combining the former Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) with the 2040 Implementation Committee. It's primary purpose is to ensure the technical consistency of plans and policies related to transportation, environment, and public participation with Federal Planning Requirements and NIRPC's own Comprehensive Regional Plan (CRP). It advises the NIRPC Board on policies and programs related to transportation planning and federal transportation funding. This is primarily done through TechPC actions on a regional transportation plan, transportation improvement program, studies, analyses, Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and other special programs. The TechPC receives input from transportation stakeholder subcommittees (now referred to as "Topical" Committees) and Transportation Resource Oversight Committee (T-ROC), then makes recommendations to the NIRPC Board.

A significant portion of the TechPC's duties is financial. It is charged with:

¹ However, the Commission may, under Indiana law, act on any matter brought before it for consideration.

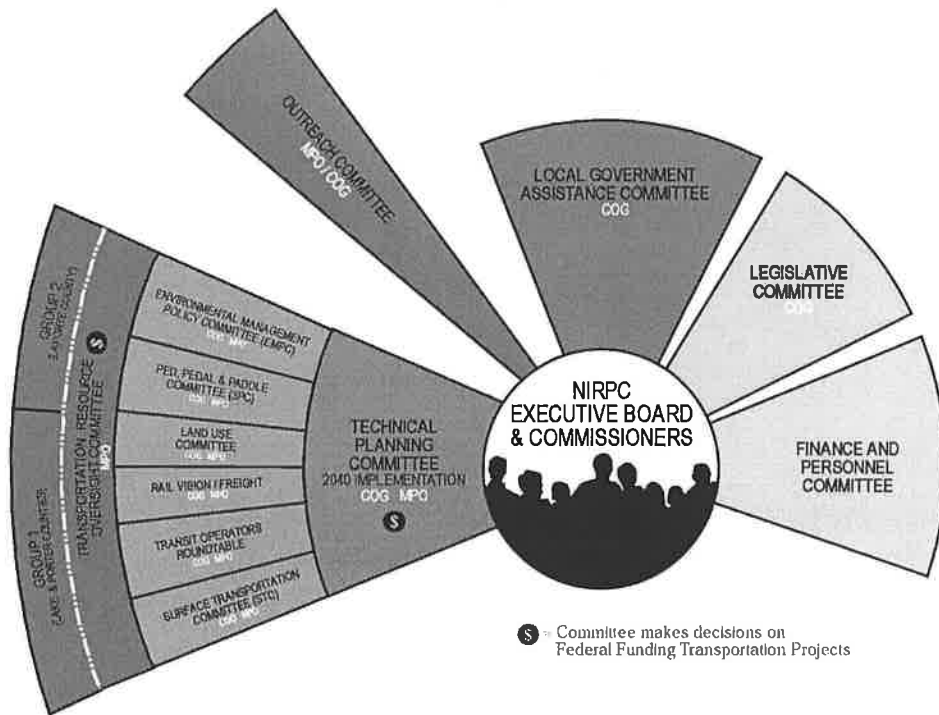
- Receiving and reviewing requests for funding changes (i.e., TIP changes) from the T-ROC and recommending (or not) the approval of those requests to the NIRPC Board.
- Following receipt of a notification from the T-ROC of the availability of federal funds for new projects, 1) establish categorical funding targets and priorities for a solicitation for projects; 2) inform the Topical Committees of these targets and priorities and direct them to review and update their project selection criteria; 3) instruct the T-ROC to release a Notice of Fund Availability (NOFA); and 4) making a determination of consistency with the CRP for each new project proposed.

Topical Committees. Many functions of the former TPC that are inherent in the metropolitan area transportation planning process have been transferred to the six “topical” committees. These committees report directly to the TechPC on a monthly basis. They are:

- Environmental Management Policy Committee (EMPC)
- Ped, Pedal, & Paddle Committee (3PC)
- Land Use Committee
- Rail Vision/Freight Committee
- Transit Operators Roundtable
- Surface Transportation Committee (STC)

Duties vary by committee, but each is charged with advising NIRPC on matters that are pertinent to the specific topical committee. Each are also responsible for developing federal-aid project selection criteria and recommending transportation projects for transportation funding.

Transportation Resource Oversight Committee (T-ROC). This committee reports directly to TechPC. It oversees financial aspects of the transportation planning process, including the development of the TIP and changes thereto following adoption, tracking the expenditure of all federal funds allocated to NIRPC, implementing a quarterly construction project tracking process, and ensuring that federal funds are expended in a timely manner.



Commission and TechPC Membership. Membership on the Commission is established by state statute (I.C. 36-7.7.6). Membership on the TechPC is limited to 20 persons, as specified in the December 2016 Committee Description document (presented at the end of this Part II). Membership on the Topical Committees and T-ROC is largely unrestricted—committees at this level are open to all local units of government, transit operators, organizations which represent various interests (persons with disabilities, environmentalists, senior citizens, etc.), federal and state agencies, and other persons representing a group or groups of people. The contact list for the NIRPC Commissioners and TechPC is contained in Appendix F.

MPO Planning Area. The MPO planning area covers all of Lake, Porter, and La Porte Counties, Indiana. This means that any surface transportation construction project funded through the U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must be listed in our TIP as well as the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Urbanized Areas and Federal Funds. The Chicago IL/IN Urbanized Area extends into Lake and Porter Counties. In Lake County it includes all incorporated areas (except Lowell). In Porter County, most of the area from Valparaiso to Lake Michigan is also part of the Chicago Urbanized Area. Most of northwest La Porte County (and a small portion of extreme northeast Porter County) lie within the Indiana portion of the Michigan City/La Porte IN/MI Urbanized Area.

Congress appropriates several types of Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Transportation annually to both states (primarily highway-oriented funds) and urbanized areas (primarily transit funds). MPO's have the responsibility of allocating these funds to specific transportation projects. NIRPC oversees a number of locally adopted project selection processes, as described below, that involve stakeholder participation in the development of the selection system and in the selection of local projects recommended for inclusion in the TIP. INDOT maintains a parallel system of project selection for improvements to its own roadways.

MPO Project Selection. The TIP development process for MPO-selected projects originates in the Transportation Resource Oversight Committee (T-ROC). T-ROC informs the TechPC of the availability of federal funds for allocation to projects. TechPC authorizes that a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) be issued and specifies the categorical funding targets and priorities for the solicitation. TechPC informs the topical committees of these targets and priorities.

The Topical (stakeholder) committees develop criteria based upon the categorical funding targets and priorities established by TechPC. All meeting notices are posted on the NIRPC Website and also mailed to all transportation stakeholders of record. The T-ROC then publishes the NOFA, receives project funding requests, and then transmits same to the Topical Committees. These committees transmit their list of projects recommended for funding to TechPC (which, following approval, is forwarded to the NIRPC Board for official project selection).

A solicitation for projects may or may not be conducted as a part of the development of a new TIP.

Types of Federal Funds. Federal surface transportation funds come from two operating administrations of the U.S. DOT: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). FHWA funds are allocated to the state and suballocated to NIRPC. FTA funds are usually allocated to urbanized areas. The specific federal funding programs from FHWA and FTA are as follows:

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG). Each year the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) makes apportionments of FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) contract authority to each Urbanized Area for highway improvement projects. The area within the Chicago Urbanized Area is apportioned STBG Group I (large Urbanized Area) funds; the area within the Michigan City/LaPorte Urbanized Area is apportioned STBG Group II (small Urbanized Area) funds.

FTA Section 5307/5340. Each year the FTA apportions Urban Area Formula Grant (Section 5307/5340) funds to each Urbanized Area for public transit projects. These funds are used for public transit operating and capital projects involving both bus and commuter rail transit services. Separate apportionments of Section 5307/5340 funds are received by each of the two Urbanized Areas.

Section 5307/5340 funds apportioned to the Chicago Urbanized Area are for the entire Urbanized Area, including both Illinois and Indiana portions. NIRPC maintains a Letter of Understanding with the Northeastern Illinois Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) that specifies how these funds are to be split among the two states.

Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ). The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) apportions FHWA CMAQ funds to NIRPC based upon each county's air quality status (i.e., in an air quality non-attainment or maintenance area, if attainment has been achieved). Funds are received on the basis of population and the severity of the air quality problem. CMAQ projects are transportation projects which, if implemented, will result in lower emissions from internal combustion engines. For 2018-2021, CMAQ funds are made to the combined Lake/Porter County non-attainment area and to the La Porte County Maintenance Area.

FTA Sections 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program). Section 5310 funds are intended to improve mobility for seniors and

individuals with disabilities. Like the Section 5307/5340 funds, some Section 5310 funds are apportioned to the Chicago Urbanized Area for the entire urbanized area, including both northeastern Illinois and Lake and Porter Counties in northwestern Indiana. NIRPC maintains a Letter of Understanding with the Northeastern Illinois Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) that specifies how these funds are to be split. LaPorte County applicants have access to Section 5310 funds by submitting applications to INDOT.

FTA Section 5337 State of Good Repair Program (Existing Commuter Rail). These are FTA formula funds that are used by the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) for improvements to the commuter rail facilities all along NICTD's rail corridor. Chicago Urbanized Area SGR funds are divided between Illinois and Indiana under an agreement with the RTA. NIRPC's TIP also displays SGR funds allocated to the South Bend Urbanized Area. Listed SGR projects may be undertaken in any of five counties, including Lake, Porter, LaPorte, and St Joseph Counties, Indiana, and Cook County, Illinois.

FTA Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities Program. These are FTA formula funds that are used by public transit operators to replace, rehabilitate, or purchase buses, bus-related equipment, and bus-related facilities. Chicago Urbanized Area Bus funds are divided between Illinois and Indiana under an agreement with the RTA. LaPorte County public transit operators have access to Section 5339 funds by submitting applications directly to INDOT.

Highway Safety Improvement (HSIP). These FHWA funds must address critical safety needs on local roadways which have a history of crashes. Separate allocations are made to each Urbanized Area but funds may be used for projects anywhere within the county served by the MPO.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). These FHWA funds may be used for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; and safe routes to school projects. TAP funds may be used for projects anywhere within the county served by the MPO.

High Priority or Demonstration Project Funds. The TIP also includes other transportation projects which are selected by Congress (i.e., Demonstration or "High Priority" Projects).

The TIP also includes Regionally Significant transportation projects that involve no federal funds, and INDOT-selected local projects that are usually

located outside of the urbanized area but within the three-county metropolitan planning area. These projects are not selected by NIRPC.

INDOT System Improvements. The TIP also includes projects that are undertaken by the state of Indiana. The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) selects projects that will occur on state-owned roadways, which include Interstates and US-marked and State routes.

INDOT conducts its own project selection processes for those funds that it controls and provides NIRPC with a list of projects to include in the TIP.

INDOT also assists other state agencies such as the Indiana State Prison, Westville Correctional Center, Indiana Dunes State Park, Ports of Indiana at Burns Harbor, Purdue and Indiana Universities, and others by listing road and parking lot construction projects in the TIP and bidding them out through INDOT's letting system.

Road Improvements on Federal Lands. The FHWA Eastern Federal Lands Division (EFLD) maintains its own TIP process and document for transportation projects within or affecting federal lands in the region (e.g., Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore). There are two EFLD-funded projects in this TIP.

Major Projects Implemented from the Prior TIP.

0900071	61 st Ave Added Travel Lanes (Arizona to SR 53 in Hobart)
1173426	93 rd Ave Intersection Improvements @ Chase St (Crown Point)
1297288	61 st Ave Bridge over Deep River (Hobart)
1500221	RW – Chicago Ave Added Travel Lanes (Hammond)
1173706	C&O Bike/Ped Trail (Merrillville)
1297541	Smoke Rd Intersection Improvement @ Division Rd (Porter Co.)

TIP Development Process

Introduction. Development of the new 2018-2021 TIP began in late 2016. An announcement was made at the October 2016 TechPC meeting. A series of meetings with the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) regarding some extraordinary plan amendment needs was held at

about the same time. A NOFA for FTA Section 5307/5340 projects in Lake and Porter Counties was issued in November 2016. No additional federal aid highway projects were solicited because all expected 2018-2021 INDOT/FHWA revenues have already been allocated to projects. The new TIP will be accompanied by a Long Range Transportation Plan Amendment and updated Conformity Determination. An adoption deadline of May 2017 was set—this was consistent with INDOT’s previously stated intent to develop a new 2018-2021 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

NIRPC issued one NOFA for Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) projects in October 2015. We issued a NOFA for FTA Section 5307 projects in Lake and Porter Counties in November 2016. Projects were selected under the HSIP NOFA but were not under FTA Section 5307. The selection processes are described or included following.

There are three documents shown on the following pages. These are:

NOFA 2015-1: Call for Projects under the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). (Five pages)

NOFA 2016-1: Transit TIP Projects and Selection Criteria (Three pages)

NIRPC Committee Descriptions. (10 pages)

**Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) 2015-1
Solicitation/Call for Federal-Aid Transportation Projects
Lake and Porter Counties, Indiana**

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) is soliciting proposals within Lake and Porter Counties, Indiana under the following Federal-Aid Program in the amount indicated:

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Year 2016	\$ 0.7 Million
Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Years 2017-2021	\$ 4.1 Million

Of the funds to be made available under this Solicitation, about \$700,000 is available now (State Fiscal Year 2016). We expect all remaining funds (\$4.1 Million) to be fully obligated on or prior to June 30, 2021.

Submission Deadline: **Letter of Intent: Friday, December 4, 2015**
 Full Application: Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Background

In our previous NOFA (2014-2) we made \$9.9 million in HSIP funds available for programming. Projects were selected by the NIRPC Board at their July 2015 meeting. Afterward, they were submitted to INDOT for a determination of eligibility for HSIP funding. INDOT found five of the seven new projects eligible. We anticipate that issues with one ineligible project (\$531K) will be resolved. However, the issues associated with the second ineligible project (\$4.0M) are likely insurmountable. We are seeking a substitute project or projects to use the \$4.0M.

Secondly, we have reconciled each of our four federal-aid accounts (STP, CMAQ, HSIP, and TAP) to avoid overspending in each account by year. This was done in response to an INDOT directive received in July 2015. We are able to transfer up to 50% of the annual allocation of funds in each account to other accounts. This reconciliation has left us with approximately \$700,000 in 2016 HSIP spending authority that we are unable to allocate to projects. Of this amount, \$620,292 is available for expenditure with a 100% federal share.

Eligible Activities

A highway safety improvement project is any strategy, activity or project on a public road that is consistent with the data-driven State Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) and corrects or improves a hazardous road location or feature or addresses a highway safety problem. Specific INDOT Guidance is downloadable from our website (www.nirpc.org).

There are two types of projects, 1) Low Cost/High Impact Projects, and 2) High Crash Location projects. These are summarized on Attachment 1 to this NOFA.

Applicants with prior road construction awards under the STP or CMAQ programs may submit an HSIP application that will result in the exchange or "trade out" of a portion of their prior STP or CMAQ award for HSIP funds. Such applications are subject to all HISP program requirements (specifically Cost/Benefit calculations).

Applicants may request funds to perform a Road Safety Audit (RSA) at a given location or for an entire corridor. RSA projects that use 2016 HSIP funds will be funded at 100% federal.

Applicants may request supplemental funding for existing HSIP-funded projects.

Please note that Cost/Benefit calculations are to be performed using HAT 2.0 software, which is downloadable from ERMS at no cost.

Geographic Restrictions by Fund Type

HSIP funds may be used anywhere in the county.

Eligible Applicants

1. County Governments. Applications may only be submitted by the Board of Commissioners. Boards and/or Commissions created by the county may not submit applications directly to NIRPC.
2. Cities and Towns. Applications may only be submitted by the Chief Elected Official. Boards and/or Commissions created by a city or town may not submit applications directly to NIRPC.
3. Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD).
4. State Agencies, including state-assisted public colleges and universities (IU, Purdue, Ivy Tech, etc.).
5. NIRPC, on behalf of itself or other multiple units of government.

Submission of Letters of Intent/Applications/Deadline

Letters of Intent are due on Friday, December 4, 2015. The letter should indicate the applicant's intent to file a full application on or before the deadline. Notwithstanding, applicants may submit their full application instead of a Letter of Intent.

Full applications must be transmitted to NIRPC on or prior to Wednesday, December 16, 2015.

Application packages may be e-mailed, mailed (via USPS) or delivered in person to:
Amanda Pollard aperegrine@nirpc.org or at NIRPC, 6100 Southport Rd, Portage, IN 46368-6409.

Application Form Preparation

A project application form may be downloaded from NIRPC's website (www.nirpc.org). The application form is in Microsoft Excel. Applicants should fill in the form, print it, attach required documentation, and then either 1) scan the documents into pdf format and submit the materials via e-mail or 2) physically submit the original application, with required documentation, to NIRPC in person or by mail. (Alternatively, applicants may use a paper copy of the application and complete it either by hand or typewriter for submission.) A dated transmittal letter, executed by the CEO (Chief Elected Official or Chief Executive Officer), must also accompany the application.

An area of emphasis this year is the preparation of Purpose and Need Statements. The purpose of the project should be stated clearly and concisely. The need for the project should be quantified whenever possible. Documentation that supports the need for the project should be attached.

Project Selection Process

A list of projects submitted in response to this Solicitation/Call will be presented to the NIRPC Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) at their December 8, 2015 meeting. The list will identify the project, its funding needs by year, projected Cost/Benefit information, and indicate if the project is believed to be eligible for HSIP funding.

NIRPC's 2013 HSIP Project selection system will be utilized. For the \$4.1M available in 2017-2021: Following takedowns for supplemental funding, of the total amount of federal funding available, the first 75% of

funds will be reserved for Low Cost/High Impact projects and the 25% balance reserved for High Crash Location projects.

For the \$700K in 2016 funds, all reasonable funding requests will be considered.

The TPC will recommend funding for two lists of projects—those using the 2016 funds and those using the 2017-2021 funds. These lists should be considered tentative until the full applications have been received and the NIRPC Board adopts two final lists at their meeting on Thursday, December 17, 2015.

NIRPC Contacts

For HSIP Process & Project Eligibility: Stephen Sostaric ssostaric@nirpc.org

For Funding Questions: Gary Evers gevers@nirpc.org

For general questions regarding the solicitation, deadlines, document formats, etc:

Amanda Pollard aperegrine@nirpc.org

Telephone 219.763.6060

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission
6100 Southport Rd, Portage IN 46368-6409
November 10, 2014

Attachment #1 to NOFA 2015-1

November 11, 2015

The main source of information on the projects and information required is the Indiana Department of Transportation's *Highway Safety Improvement Program Local Project Selection Guidance* document, which can be found here: <http://www.in.gov/indot/files/LocalHSIPProjectSelectionGuidance.pdf>

There are two types of eligible projects:

1. **Low Cost/High Impact Projects.** These projects fall into seven categories designated by INDOT in their *Local Project Selection Guidance* document. The types are as follows:
 - Conduct replacement of outdated regulatory and warning signs to meet MUTCD retroreflectivity requirements (*Please note! Guide signs are no longer eligible under this item!*)
 - Upgrade traffic signals on public road approaches to a minimum of one signal head per travel lane
 - Install black backing plates on all signal heads on a public road approach traffic signal
 - Make changes to yellow interval signal timing or interconnect to improve safety on public road approaches
 - Install pedestrian push button and countdown heads on a public road approach traffic signal
 - Install new pedestrian crosswalk warning signs, flashing beacons, special pavement markings, and refuge areas on a public road approach
 - Passive warning improvement at railroad crossings that lack active warning devices

Funds will be evenly divided among these seven project types. Projects will be rated among each other during the selection process by the number of injuries and fatalities at the project location and then by the ADT, which will be determined by following the NIRPC process. Top priority will be given to the number of injuries and fatalities, as they demonstrate crash severity.

For the Lake/Porter Urbanized Area, please note that these projects will receive 25% of the total HSIP funds being allocated to this urbanized area. There will be a \$100,000 per project cap, with no more than \$25,000 of that going to PE. A pool of \$50,000 will be set aside for any right-of-way needs that might arise as part of projects that are selected.

The Low Cost/High Impact projects will use the short form application from INDOT, which will be included in the solicitation packet. While this is INDOT's own application, please keep in mind that NIRPC will be requiring the inclusion of the following in the "Additional Project Supporting Information" section:

- At least three years of data showing crashes, with emphasis on deaths and injuries
- The project location's ADT

Any submissions lacking these elements will not be considered during this process.

2. **High Crash Location Projects.** These projects are the more traditional, higher cost safety projects. More information on these projects can also be found in the *Local Project Selection Guidance* document.

For the Lake/Porter Urbanized Area, please note that these projects will receive 75% of the total HSIP funds being allocated to this urbanized area. PE will be capped at \$100,000, or 10% of the total project cost, whichever is less, and there will be a strict cap of \$50,000 in federal funds per project for right-of-way expenses.

A benefit/cost (B/C) analysis is required to be performed, as is a road safety audit (RSA). During the selection process, the B/C ratio will be used to rank projects. Bonus points to be added to the project's base B/C ratio may also be rewarded for the following:

- Project is a top 25 crash location within its county as listed in NIRPC's 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan: +.25 on B/C Ratio
- Project is a top 10 by crash type location as listed in NIRPC's 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan: +.25 on B/C Ratio
- Project is located in an environmental justice community: +.1 on B/C Ratio

The top crash locations will be included in the solicitation packet. Please note that any projects using a top 10 crash location by type must demonstrate that they are addressing that specific crash type.

Transit TIP Projects and Selection Criteria

The Transit Operators Roundtable (TOR) is the Topical Stakeholder Committee responsible for overseeing NIRPC's transit planning process and program. The TOR meets monthly to problem-solve ongoing transit issues in the region, coordinate transit services, and problem-solve funding issues. Most importantly, the TOR is also responsible for the development of the project selection process for various FTA funding programs.

Currently, Northwestern Indiana encompasses portions of two Urbanized Areas (UZA): Chicago, IL/IN and Michigan City-LaPorte. These geographies require TOR to operate as two distinct groups, each with their own project selection processes. Both groups determine funding priorities based on consensus.

Chicago, IL/IN UZA

Gary Public Transit Corporation
North Township Dial-A-Ride
Northwestern Indiana Commuter Transit District
Porter County Aging and Community Services
South Lake Community Services
Valparaiso V-Line and Valpo Dash

Michigan City-LaPorte UZA

Michigan City Transit
Transporte

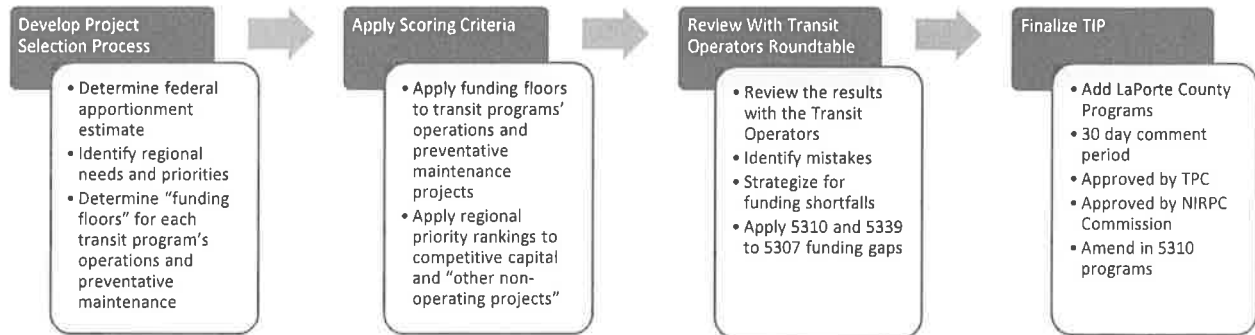
Michigan City-LaPorte UZA. The providers in the Michigan City-LaPorte UZA do not utilize a competitive process to determine their funding priorities. For 2018 and 2019 the estimated apportionments \$951,024 and \$970,044 were distributed based upon their estimated operating expenses for those years. Both providers were able to reach consensus on this distribution mechanism.

Chicago UZA. Within the Chicago UZA a detailed project selection process was developed. Consensus was reached among the six operators on the selection process and a NOFA (Notice of Funding Availability) was released in November 2016. Following receipt of projects, numerous errors were discovered within the NOFA and selection system. Consequently, we have decided to nullify the results of the project solicitation. We will convene the TOR to correct the errors in the project selection system and reissue the NOFA. This process will occur after the publication of the FY2018-2021 TIP, but before the end of calendar 2017. Projects selected as part of the Michigan City-LaPorte UZA, and projects that were not part of 5307, 5339, or 5310 were added to the TIP. This primarily includes all NICTD projects using State of Good Repair (SOGR), Core Capacity, New Start, and local funds as funding sources.

Accordingly, 5307 projects included in the new 2018-2021 TIP are those previously included in the 2016-2019 TIP. We intend to amend-in the new projects following a redo of the solicitation for 2018-2021 Section 5307-funded projects in the Indiana portion of the Chicago UZA.

The following section will outline a typical project selection process and illustrate how the 2018 projects were or will be selected for inclusion in the FY2016-2019 TIP. The typical process is as follows:

Project Selection Process for FTA 5307, 5310, and 5339 Funding Programs for Lake and Porter County



Currently, transit operators in Northwestern Indiana can utilize the following FTA funding sources:

- FTA funding program 5307, “Urbanized Area Formula Funding” has a very wide umbrella of funding opportunities. 5307 can be used to for transit capital and operating assistance in urbanized areas, and for transportation-related planning.
- FTA program 5339, “Busses and Facilities” is only available to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities including technological changes or innovations to modify low or no emission vehicles or facilities.
- FTA program 5310, “Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities” is used help meet transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs.

Even though each program has a distinct separation of eligible activities, TOR implements the same system for scoring these projects. The 5339 funding is used fund eligible vehicle replacements before the more versatile 5307 funding needs to be expended. 5310 projects are also usually selected through this process, in accordance with NIRPC’s Coordinated Services Plan. Similarly to 5339 operations and capital project that can be funded with 5310 are funded first, so the bulk of 5307 can be shared across all other program areas.

Regionally Significant Transit Projects

NICTD included two projects in the FY2018-2021 TIP that would meet NIRPC’s definition of being “regionally significant.” These projects are the West Lake Corridor Expansion and Double Tracking the South Shore Line.

The West Lake Corridor Project

The West Lake Corridor Project would be an approximate 9-mile southern extension of the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District’s (NICTD) existing South Shore Line (SSL) between Dyer and Hammond, Indiana. Trains on the new branch line would connect with the existing SSL and ultimately Metra Electric District’s (MED) line to the north. The proposed project would provide new transit service

between Dyer, Indiana and Metra's Millennium Station in Downtown Chicago, Illinois, a total distance of approximately 29 miles.

An expansion of the South Shore Line has long been recognized as a value to the Northwest Indiana regional community. As early as 1989, the NIRPC released a study that identified an extension to the SSL as a potentially viable means to expand mass transit in the region. Since that time, multiple evaluations have occurred. In 2011, NICTD's West Lake Corridor Study concluded that a rail-based service between the Munster/Dyer area and Metra's Millennium Station in Downtown Chicago would best meet the public transportation needs of the study area. In June 2014, NICTD and the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) released the 20-Year Strategic Business Plan, which highlighted the importance of a West Lake Corridor Project. In May 2014, NICTD initiated the environmental review process for the West Lake Corridor Project, a required next step to advance overall project development and secure federal funding.

The purpose of the West Lake Corridor Project is to provide a vital transportation link that connects Northwest Indiana to Chicago and Cook County, Illinois. NICTD is proposing the West Lake Corridor Project as a southern branch extension of the SSL route to reach high-growth areas in Lake County, Indiana. The project would expand NICTD's service coverage, improve mobility and accessibility, and stimulate local job creation and economic development opportunities for Lake County.

The benefits to be achieved from the Project are to:

- Improve regional mobility
- Improve transportation links to downtown Chicago
- Improve regional accessibility to an expanded commuter rail network of services
- Provide equitable access to transportation
- Support the economic vitality of Northwest Indiana

Double Tracking the South Shore Line

The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) proposes to double-track its South Shore commuter rail line in northern Indiana to allow for expanded peak-hour service that will relieve current crowding. The project includes double-tracking along a 24 mile-segment of the line between Gary and Michigan City, and platform upgrades at five stations. Two miles of the project corridor are in Michigan City, where the project includes construction of an exclusive two-mile right-of-way to replace the current street-running segment. These upgrades will allow NICTD to increase peak-hour capacity without procuring additional rolling stock.

NIRPC Committee Descriptions

(as of December, 2016)

COMMITTEE CONTEXT & ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND:

NIRPC is both a Metropolitan Planning Organization and a Council of Governments:

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Regional Transportation Planning, required for federal transportation subsidies.

- Maintain planning documents and processes required under federal transportation programs
- Programming the federal transportation dollars to local projects

Council of Governments (COG)

Planning, Programming, Policy for:

- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Environment
- Coordinative Management Process with all member units

Assist in planning programs of member units

To help give context for Committee Functions, the committees below have been grouped as COG Function, MPO Function, or General NIRPC Operations.

COG Functions

Legislative Committee

What does it do?

- Determines NIRPC positions on priority state and federal legislation across all NIRPC planning domains and topics of local interest

Who is on it?

- Commissioners (voluntary and no limit); Quorum made up of majority of attendees but no less than 3 in attendance (including Chair)

When does it meet?

- As called by the Chair. Typically during session.

Local Government Assistance Committee

What does it do?

- Provides a forum for sharing or learning of best practices and issues related to local governments, provides training opportunity, explores funding opportunities, local problem solving. Connects urban core communities and small towns for areas of common concern.

Who is on it?

- Commissioners (voluntary and no limit); Quorum of majority of attendees with no less than 3 in attendance (if needed)
- City/Town Managers, Planners, Engineers
- Appropriate stakeholders and/or subject area experts as appropriate

When does it meet?

- Historically, on 5th Thursdays.

MPO Functions

Technical Planning Committee

What does it do?

- Receive funding requests from Transportation Resource and Oversight Committees (*see further below*)
- Provide funding recommendations to Full Commission/Executive Board regarding amendments to the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)
- Consider if projects requested/recommended from the Transportation Resource and Oversight Committees support implementation of the 2040 Vision
- Review program applications and evaluate against NOFA allocations
- Advise NIRPC on policies and programs related to federal transportation funding.
- Delegates and instructs Policy Committees on transportation funding solicitations
- Ensures plans and policies related to transportation, environment, and public participation, and others are technically consistent with Federal Transportation Planning Requirements and the 2040 Plan
- Sets categorical funding targets and priorities for specialized policy committees allocating federal transportation funding for various programs

Who is on it?

- 12 Commissioners (4 per County, including Chair); Quorum of majority of attendees with no less than 3 in attendance
- Commissioner may send a staff representative in his/her stead
- 3 Transit Operators (1 per County) Eligible Federal Transportation Funding recipients
- 1 NWI Forum Representative
- 1 INDOT Representative
- 1 NICTD Representative
- 1 from Lake County FTA Direct Recipient (GPTC)
- 1 from LaPorte County FTA Direct Recipient (Michigan City Transit)
- FHWA/FTA Representative(s) - non-voting

When does it meet?

- Monthly, typically 2nd Tuesdays at 9am.

Environmental Management and Policy Committee

What does it do?

- Explore topics, policies, programs, and regulations relevant to NWI such as
 - Air Quality
 - Water Quality and Watershed Planning
 - Biodiversity and Conservation
 - Ecosystem Services and Green Infrastructure
 - Brownfields
 - Energy
- Provide regional convening body for complex environmental issues impacting NWI
- Recommend environmental policies and oversee development of funded environmental plans and programs
- Advise NIRPC on MPO required Environmental Mitigation program
- Establish selection criteria and recommend transportation projects for special environmental categories eligible for transportation funding including:
 - CMAQ Public Education, Diesel Retrofit, and misc. air emission reduction projects
 - Transportation Alternatives Stormwater, Wildlife Mitigation, and Invasive species management

Who is on it?

- Commissioners (voluntary and no limit); Quorum made up of majority of attendees but no less than 3 in attendance (including Chair)
- Municipal environmental staff
- Industrial environmental staff
- IDEM & IDNR
- Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
- Environmental Advocacy Groups
- Regional Academic experts
- Regional private sector/individual subject area experts
- NIRPC Environmental Staff

When does it meet?

- Monthly, typically 1st Thursdays at 9am.

Ped, Pedal, and Paddle Committee ("3PC")

What does it do?

- Explore topics, policies, programs, and regulations relevant to Trails, Complete Streets, and non-motorized transportation.
- Advise NIRPC on policies and programs related to non-motorized transportation development
- Provide training on best practices to local governments relating to trails, complete streets, and non-motorized transportation.
- Oversees development of the regional Ped and Pedal Transportation Plan, Trail Priority Map, and Blueways (Water Trail) projects

Who is on it?

- Commissioners (voluntary and no limit); Quorum made up of majority of attendees but no less than 3 in attendance (including Chair)
- Local planners
- Local Park and Rec. staff
- Park and Trail Advocacy Groups
- Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
- National Parks Service
- NIRPC non-motorized staff

When does it meet?

- Monthly, 4th Thursdays at 1:30pm.

Land Use Committee

What does it do?

- Explore topics, policies, programs, and regulations relevant to land use, smart growth, and transit oriented development (TOD).
- Advise NIRPC on land use planning, demographics, GIS, and other data programs
- Provide training on best practices to local governments relating to sustainable development, smart growth, land use, livable communities, and related topics.
- Recommend land use policies and oversee development of the Livable Centers Program
- Establish selection criteria, select, and recommend transportation projects for Creating Livable Communities funding program

Who is on it?

- Commissioners (voluntary and no limit); Quorum made up of majority of attendees but no less than 3 in attendance (including Chair)

- Local Planners
- Smart Growth Advocates
- NIRPC Planning Staff

When does it meet?

- Historically every other 3rd Wednesday at 10am.

Rail Vision Workgroup/Freight

What does it do?

- Explore topics, policies, programs, and regulations relevant to freight transportation planning, rail, freight related economic development, high speed rail, and rail crossing safety.
- Advise NIRPC on freight transportation needs and freight related economic development and policies to implement freight elements of the regional transportation plan.
- Act as convener for local communities and stakeholders pertaining to rail and highway interactions and issues.

Who is on it?

- Commissioners (voluntary and no limit); Quorum made up of majority of attendees but no less than 3 in attendance (including Chair)
- Regional Industries
- Railroads
- Port of Indiana
- Economic Development?
- Local planners

When does it meet?

- Historically, every other 3rd Wednesday at 10am.

Transit Operators Roundtable

Note: The Transit Operators Roundtable is composed of operators of public transit (see below) and has not previously had Commissioner representation. NIRPC Commissioners were assigned to this committee based on interest and potential involvement in transit planning.

What does it do?

- Negotiate allocation of federal transit funding between operators
- Select and recommend transit projects for funding

Who is on it?

- Transit Operators
 - NICTD
 - Gary Public Transportation Corp
 - East Chicago Public Transit
 - North Township Dial A Ride
 - Opportunity Enterprises
 - Porter County Aging Community Services
 - City of LaPorte Transit
 - Michigan City Transit
 - City of Valparaiso V-line & ChicaGo Dash
 - South Lake County Community Services
- NIRPC Transit Planner and Transit oversight staff

When does it meet?

- Often following the Technical Planning Committee (TPC) meeting every 2nd Tuesday morning, but essentially as needed.

Surface Transportation Committee

What does it do?

- Explore topics, policies, programs, and regulations relevant to street and highway transportation.
- Oversees development of Regional Transportation Plan elements relating to requirements including:
 - Congestion Management
 - Intelligent Transportation System
 - Highway Safety Improvement Program
 - Pavement Management System
 - Performance Based Planning
- Advise NIRPC on policies to implement the plan elements listed above.
- Establish selection criteria and recommend transportation projects for STP and HSIP funding.

Who is on it?

- Commissioners (voluntary and no limit); Quorum of majority of attendees with no less than 3 in attendance (if needed)
- Municipal Planners and/or Engineers
- INDOT
- NIRPC Transportation Planners

When does it meet?

- This is a newly formed committee, with meeting frequency to be determined.

Transportation Resource & Oversight Committees (Group I & Group II)

This new entity is open to all City/Town/County Commissioners at any time.

What does it do?

- Submits project and subsequent funding requests for CMAQ, STP, TAP, HSIP
- Groups I & II meet respectively to create consensus on division of projects and funding amongst stakeholders present
- Meet quarter to provide oversight of project progress for projects successfully added to the TIP

Who is on it?

- Stakeholder Commissioners for respective groups (Group I/Lake & Porter Counties or Group II/La Porte County); Quorum is majority of Commissioners in attendance
- Town/City/County Planners, Town/City/County Engineers or other staff as applicable; non-voting members unless representing a Stakeholder Commissioner
- Appropriate NIRPC Staff

When does it meet?

- This is a newly-formalized entity, with meeting frequency to be determined, but essentially as-needed.

Combined MPO & COG Committee Function:

Outreach Committee

Advises and receives direction from TPC.

What will it do?

- Oversees the Public Participation Plan
- Assists NIRPC staff with local and regional outreach.
- Devotes special attention to and consideration of environmental justice communities for participatory inclusion in the planning process.

Who should be on it?

- Commissioners (voluntary and no limit); Quorum made up of majority of attendees but no less than 3 in attendance (including Chair)
- May include Stakeholders

When does it meet?

- This is a newly formed committee, with meeting frequency to be determined.

General NIRPC Operations:

Finance and Personnel Committee

What does it do?

- Oversees routine NIRPC operations such as budget preparation, claims, HR functions, contracts, etc.

Who is on it?

- NIRPC Treasurer (Chair)
- 9 Commissioners - Voluntary membership; Quorum made up of majority of attendees, but no less than 3 in attendance (including Chair)
- NIRPC Executive Director, Finance and Administration Staff
- NIRPC Attorney

When does it meet?

- Monthly on the 3rd Thursday at 9am, prior to Executive Board/Full Commission meeting.