



RESOLUTION 23-10

A RESOLUTION OF THE NORTHWESTERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION TO ADOPT *NWI 2050+* A LONG-RANGE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR LAKE, PORTER, AND LA PORTE COUNTIES, INDIANA

July 20, 2023

WHEREAS, the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, hereafter referred to as “The Commission,” being designated the Council of Governments, representing all local governments in the region, has established a comprehensive planning process including the three domains of environmental, economic development, and transportation planning; and

WHEREAS, the Commission, being designated the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Lake, Porter, and La Porte County region, has established a regional continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative planning program to develop the unified planning work program, long-range transportation plan, and transportation improvement program; to annually endorse the plans and programs; to facilitate federal transportation funding for the Indiana Department of Transportation, regional communities, and transit operators; and to provide technical assistance and expertise to regional transportation stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, the Commission, as an MPO, is required to prepare a long-range regional transportation plan with a minimum horizon of 20 years that provides for the development and implementation of an accessible, multimodal transportation system, which includes transit, highway, bicycle, and pedestrian options; and

WHEREAS, *NWI 2050+* addresses the transportation and air quality planning needs of Northwest Indiana and complies with federal requirements found in the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act/Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (IIJA/BIL) of 2021 and accompanying guidelines and regulations; and

WHEREAS, *NWI 2050+* continues to emphasize the linkages between transportation, environment, land use, and economic development; and

WHEREAS, input from the public directly shaped the vision for *NWI 2050+* through multiple outreach methods including public open houses, a website with an online mapping tool, an online survey, social media updates, 3 county fair exhibits, community events, and committee meetings; and

WHEREAS, *NWI 2050+* combines public input with rigorous and comprehensive technical analysis to develop recommendations for active transportation, adaptation to climate change, freight mobility, land use, the regional road network, and transit; and

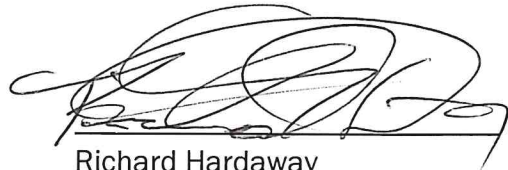
WHEREAS, *NWI 2050+* is the product of a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has determined that *NWI 2050+* conforms to the federal and state requirements for transportation and air quality, and

WHEREAS, *NWI 2050+* was presented for public comment in the manner prescribed by *Engage NWI*, Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission's Public Participation Plan adopted in 2019.

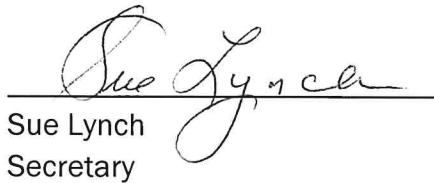
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission hereby adopts *NWI 2050+* as the long-range metropolitan transportation plan for Lake, Porter, and La Porte counties.

Duly adopted by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission on this twentieth day of July 2023.



Richard Hardaway
Chairperson

ATTEST:



Sue Lynch
Secretary



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Public Comment Report

NWI 2050+

The draft *NWI 2050+* was released for a 30-day public comment period beginning April 5, 2023. A draft of the document was made available at www.nirpc.org. NIRPC held four public meetings:

- April 5, 2023 at the Dean & Barbara White Community Center, Merrillville, IN
- April 10, 2023 at Purdue University Northwest, Hammond, IN
- April 12, 2023 at Michigan City Public Library, Michigan City, IN
- April 13, 2023 at Porter County Government Center, Valparaiso, IN

Comments were also accepted through email at comments@nirpc.org and through mail at 6100 Southport Rd., Portage, IN 46368.

The comments and responses to the draft are listed below. An update will also be provided at the NIRPC Commission meeting on July 20, 2023.

NWI 2050+ Plan Draft Comments & Responses

Commenter: Susan MiHalo, The Nature Conservancy

Comment: p. 387 and 393: Low-impact conservation design techniques are sometimes just as important in cities/urban areas as they are in rural areas. Whoever prepared this document certainly does not understand the inherent biodiversity of the area, including the dunes, dune and swale habitat and oak savanna habitat that are globally rare, not to mention that rare and endangered species that need to be protected in northern Lake County in places like East Chicago and Gary.

The items addressed on page 390 are great but seem to be buried in the document. Once those lands are developed, there is no turning back!

p. 400: What about the Grand Calumet River as an environmental corridor? It's completely overlooked! Meanwhile, it is what connects our dune and swale habitat, creating landscape-scale conservation in the area. So much more could be done too! Please feel free to contact us if you desire more information.

Response: On p 393, at the end of the Conservation Development section, the following was added "Even within existing cities and suburbs, conservation development should be considered for redevelopment and in-fill projects so that significant natural resources are protected. Many urban and suburban communities in NWI contain significant natural resources and rare habitat types that should be protected."

The addition of Figure 3.1. Environmental Focus Areas from Calumet Conservation Action Plan incorporates the Grand Calumet River as an environmental corridor and the Indiana Dunes ecosystems.

Significant Comment? Yes
Need to Modify? Yes

Commenter: David Wright (GPTC)

Comment: Table 7-2 on page 485 still has 2020 data though our notes stated almost unanimous support for using 2019 data.

Response: The use of 2019 data was agreed on and will be used in the final document.

Significant Comment? No

Need to Modify? Yes

Commenter: David Wright (GPTC)

Comment: The statement that there are only two regional routes (p. 496) needs context. Why would, for instance, the Lakeshore Connection not be included here? It serves the central business districts of Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago and connects to Pace. While Burr/Lake Ridge is also a main regional route, most of its mileage is in Gary so I am OK with that. And the Lakeshore South, Merrillville Shuttle and US30 Shuttles are all feeders in nature, though they serve multiple communities. Was a definition considered for “regional routes”

Response: The text has been revised to indicate that there are several regional routes but that the study focused on the two (South Shore Connect and Broadway Metro Express (BMX).)

Significant Comment? No

Need to Modify? Yes