

**Technical Planning Committee**  
NIRPC – Virtual Meeting  
January 11, 2022  
Minutes

This meeting was convened as an electronic meeting, pursuant to Governor Holcomb’s extended Executive Order 22-01. All persons were meeting remotely on a Zoom platform that allowed for real time interaction and supported the public’s ability to observe and record the proceedings. When the agenda item was provided for public comment, this was supported as well. A roll call was taken to motion and approve the agenda items. The recorded meeting can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mv-GYZqcWu4>.

Kevin Brietzke called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and a roll call.

In attendance were Kevin Brietzke, Mary Tanis, Bryan Blazak (St. John), Chris Murphy (StructurePoint), David Wright (GPTC), George Topoll (Union Township), Jessica Miller (INDOT), Kelly Wenger (NICTD), Laurie Keagle (SSCC), Rafi Wilkinson, Tom Schmitt (Schererville), Jeff Huet (Schererville), Mark O’Dell (Chesterton), and Steve King (Merrillville).

NIRPC staff present were Mitch Barloga, Charles Bradsky, Meredith Stilwell, Candice Eklund, Kevin Polette, Kathy Luther, Peter Kimball, Scott Weber, and Flor Baum.

The meeting minutes of November 9, 2021 were approved on motion by David Wright and second by Mark O’Dell. A roll call was taken, and the committee voted unanimously to approve.

There were no public comments.

**Planning**

Mitch Barloga presented on Resolution 22-02: Old Plank Road Memorandum of Understanding. Resolution 22-02 approves a memorandum of understanding between NIRPC and Sauk Village, IL for the 2020 Invest in the Cook Program. The resolution aims to create active and safe communities by enhancing connectivity by the improvement of transportation systems for all users. The DOT of Cook County has approved the project for \$300K. NIRPC has agreed to reimburse Sauk Village up \$50K toward the cost of conducting the PROJECT from 2020 federal planning liaison (PL) funds. The project has been included within NIRPC’s 2021-2022 UPWP.

On motion by Mark O’Dell and second by Mary Tanis, the TPC approved to recommend to the Commission for approval.

Mitch Barloga presented on Resolution 22-05: 2021-2022 UPWP Amendment #5, FY 2022 Update. NIRPC is being designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Lake, Porter, and LaPorte County, and has established a comprehensive transportation planning process to develop the FY 2021 – 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The UPWP preparation is a required part of the metropolitan area transportation planning process. Federal transportation funding will be adopted into the current UPWP. The NWI 2050 Plan will be updated by March 16, 2023 with the assistance of consultants. \$400K will be reallocated to support this effort.

On motion by Mary Tanis and second by George Topoll, the TPC approved to recommend Resolution 22-05 to the Commission for approval.

Rafi Wilkinson and Mitch Barloga presented on the Marquette Greenway (MG) Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability & Equity (RAISE) and READI Awards. The Marquette Greenway has total length of 60mi., of which 34mi. have been either constructed or funded. NIRPC has applied for the RAISE grant for the remaining 26mi., requesting \$23,119,971, and was awarded \$17,799,282 in November 2021. Local funding, plus awards, totals \$17,884,945. \$5M shortfall was due to national park service segments being eliminated for consideration because RAISE grants are not allowed on federal land. The MG will be divided into 17 projects, totaling a cost of \$40,804,916. The MG goes through some complex configurations of geographical areas that includes bridge work and national park connections. The Dune Park branch trail uses an abandoned rail line that connects to Portage Lakefront. This segment is funded within the national park. The City of Gary will have trail connections into Douglas Park. Construction for this segment, from Lake Street to the East is slated for next summer. The Marquette Trail is currently gravel but is slated to be paved and upgraded next summer as well. The Marquette Trail will be renamed The Marquette Greenway Trail. The trail in Portage will come very close to the Portage Lakefront Riverwalk. Burns Harbor will enter national park land just shy of the Norfolk Southern tracks. The trail will go over the tracks by building an overpass over Northfolk Southern into Monoki Prairie. The land will have to be elevated to assure users stay out of the wetland, on the segments of the Calumet Trail that are going to be built within the NIPSCO ROW. These segments will be paved asphalt surfaces. Singing Sands Trail (4mi. segment) in La Porte County opened last year as part of the MG. A trail will be built in Michigan City that will connect to a funded segment, continuing up to US 12, and into Michigan. The READI Grant is a state-led initiative. READI is administered by the Indiana Economic Development Corp. and made \$500M available statewide last year from the American Recovery Act funds. 36 projects were selected for funding, including the MG. The proposal was based on previous work under 2018s IGNITE the Region Plan. NWI was led by NWI Forum, and they were awarded \$50M, with MG slated to receive up to \$3M in funds to aid local match obligations. The completion of these projects are slated for 2028. For more information, please email Mitch at [Mbarloga@nirpc.org](mailto:Mbarloga@nirpc.org).

### **Programming**

Charles presented on Resolution 22-03: FY 2020-2024 & FY 2022-2026 TIP Amendment #22-03. The public comment report was released for a 21-day period which began on December 13 and ended on January 3. No public comments were received. NIRPC received on technical question from the Interagency Consultation Group. The question was whether four large legacy projects were included in NIRPC's MTP of the *Long-Range Plan*. The projects are included. The FY 2020 - 2024 and FY 2022- 2026 TIP is an implementation of the *NWI 2050 Plan* and is consistent with the state implementation plan *for Air Quality*. Amendment 22-03 is the surface infrastructure of the highway portion, and #22-03.5 is the transit portion. Projects not exempt were La Porte Counties North/South Corridor, Schererville's Kennedy Avenue, NICTD's double track, and NICTD's Westlake project. Amendment 22-03 contains projects from FY-22, 23, 24, 25, and 26 which include 9 new projects for INDOT. The projects consist of one small structure replacement, three railroad crossing safety projects, one PEL study, one intelligent transportation system, and three Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) projects. Cedar Lake has a sidewalk project. Chesterton has a new project for EVP on traffic signals. East Chicago and Hammond have road reconstructions. Highland, Michigan City, and Hammond have bike pedestrian projects. Hobart had the elimination of a project. La Porte had the corridor study sidewalks and an elimination of a project. Merrillville and Valparaiso had intersection modifications to a roundabout. Munster and Schererville had road reconstruction.

On motion by Mary Tanis and second by Mark O'Dell, the TPC approved to recommend Resolution 22-03 to the Commission for approval.

Charles presented on Resolution 22-04: FY 2020-2024 & FY 2022-2026 TIP Amendment. The resolution contains six projects for NICTD. Among them are Double Track NWI and the West Lake Extension. Please contact Charles for a copy of all the project at [Cbradsky@nirpc.org](mailto:Cbradsky@nirpc.org).

On motion by Mary Tanis and second by Mark O'Dell, the TPC approved to recommend Resolution 22-04 to the Commission for approval.

### **Topical Committee Reports**

Mitch announced 3PC held a meeting on January 6. 3PC is working on the Indiana Year of the Trails. The next 3PC meeting is slated for May 26. Eman announced the LUC is slated to meet on February 23. The STC meeting is slated for February 22, per Scott Weber, and will have a Safety Data presentation by Peter Kimball. Charles announced the next TROC meetings will be on January 25.

### **Reports from Planning Partners**

Lauri Keagle (SSCC) reported on events and programs. Please click [here](#) for complete details of the SSCC report. Visit [www.southshorecleancities.org](http://www.southshorecleancities.org) or contact Lauri at [lkeagle@southshorecleancities.org](mailto:lkeagle@southshorecleancities.org).

### **Adjournment**

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

The next TPC meeting will be on April 5, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. at the NIRPC offices.