

## Technical Planning Committee

NIRPC Lake Michigan Room

YouTube Recording:

[Technical Planning Committee Meeting 7/11/23 - YouTube](#)

October 3, 2023

### Minutes

Kevin Breitzke called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. In attendance were Kevin Breitzke (Porter County), George Topoll (Union Township), Beth Shrader (Valpo Transit), Maxwell Rehlander (Valparaiso), Ryan Lisek (DCI), Dean Button (Hammond), and David Wright (GPTC).

Also in attendance, Steve King (Merrillville).

NIRPC staff present were Mitch Barloga, Tom Vander Woude, Grace Benninger, Kevin Polette, and Flor Baum.

On motion by Dean Button, second by Mark O'Dell, the Technical Planning Committee (TPC) approved the minutes of September 12, 2023 as presented.

There were no public comments.

### Planning

Kathy spoke on the overview draft *NWI 2050+* and Climate Action NWI (CAN). NIRPC is required by Federal law to update the long-range plan every four years and must have at least a 20-yr horizon. CAN is a multi-stakeholder effort that encourages long-term action, engagement and implementation of local climate action places including the following:

- Develop a Regional Framework for Climate Action with science-based carbon reduction targets for communities to build their Climate Action Plans around.
- Adopt SBTs and Regional Climate Action Plan into Long Range Transportation Plan.
- Provide support and assistance to local governments wanting to create and adopt local Climate Resilience Plans (CAP)
- Maintain and Update Inventory and Plans on 5-year cycle.

A 2017 baseline for CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions was established for Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties, totaling 54.5M tons. 54.9% CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions come from industrial energy, 24.7% is from industrial processes and fugitive, 8.7% is from transportation and mobile, commercial energy contributes 5.2%, and residential energy is at 5.9%. It is estimated that between 2016-209, trees and forests removed a net 442,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions. The Framework coordinates local efforts to achieve a regional goal of 63.4% reduction in 2017 GHG emissions levels by 2030 and a carbon neutral region by 2050. NIRPC completed a Business-as-Usual emissions forecast. Planning assumptions for growth in population on vehicle miles traveled were aligned with land use, housing, and travel demand portions of *NWI 2050+*. By 2050, future GHG emissions would increase to 58M tons.

Examples of corporate goals to reduce industrial energy include Cleveland Cliffs. Their corporate goal is a 25% GHG reduction from 2017 by 2030 and designing 50-70% CO<sub>2</sub> capture from blast furnace gas at Burns Harbor (2M tons/year). US Steel's corporate goal is to have a 20% GHG reduction by 2030. NIPSCO has made efforts in decarbonization of energy generation and committed to continued investment in renewable energy.

Regional contributions and local government are the primary metrics that will be used to prioritize emission source categories for CA planning. NIRPC will provide climate action plan templates and technical support to cities and towns interested in pursuing a local CAP.

Transportation accounts for 40% of NWI total GHG emissions. Diesel vehicles and freight rail can lessen the impact by reducing idling and congestion. Promoting transitioning to electric where appropriate, was discussed. An increase in electric vehicle (EV) adoption is part of transportation decarbonization. A map of EV charging stations within the Region was presented. Regional transit expansion will consist of collaboration with public transit to enhance regional transit and expand capacity by establishing a regional fixed route mass transit system.

Plans to increase Resilience are as follows:

- Climate friendly parks - Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Action Plan: The plan aims to reduce vehicular and waste related emissions in the park and provide robust educational programming to staff and visitors on sustainable park practices.
- IDNR Wetland Action Plan: instituted an in-lieu fee program for mitigation of impacts to aquatic resources.
- Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs): The plan is to protect, restore, and enhance Indiana's landscapes by coordinating efforts to identify, prevent, and control invasive species.
- Watershed Management Plans: The plan is intended to be a practical tool with specific recommendations on practices to improve and sustain water quality.
- Conservation Action Plans

For more information, please contact Kathy at [kluther@nirpc.org](mailto:kluther@nirpc.org).

Eman Ibrahim spoke on Resolution 23-03, Sensible Tools Handbook+ (STH+). NIRPC previously adopted the STH+ in 2007, which covered the basic requirements of applying sensible growth principles in Indiana on planning, zoning, and subdivision of land for cities, towns, and counties based upon Indiana planning and zoning law. The 2023 Sensible Tools Handbook+ is to supplement the broad suite of planning tools and best practices available to address new opportunities and challenges.

The five sections of the STH+ are as follows:

- Resilient: Mitigation efforts undertaken before a natural disaster to reduce/eliminate risks from hazards. Hazard Mitigation tools (HMT) will update land use codes, zoning, development standards, incentive programs, and plans /policies to better prepare for stresses from natural disasters. HMT will assist in developing procedures that allow for action in an unexpected event. Green Infrastructure for s Stormwater runoff is a major contributor to water pollution in urban areas. Design and modeling tools were presented.
- Healthy: Integrates health considerations into cities' urban planning processes, programs, and projects with a focus on air and water quality, sanitation, green cities, transportation alternatives and transit, the aging population, school siting, and safety.
- Sustainable: Directs local governments to become low carbon, resilient, and livable communities. The Sustainable element includes urban forestry, wetland protection, farmland preservation, water conservation, urban agriculture, affordable housing, energy, brownfields, and redevelopment.
- Equitable: Prioritizes and protects low-income and minority communities by ensuring equitable growth. The Equitable element includes environmental justice, equitable transit, universal design, parks & recreation. Without a specific equity framework, lower-income people near rapid transit will be displaced.
- Smart: Urges communities to shift to smart cities. Smart cities bring together infrastructure and technology to improve citizens' quality of life and enhance their interactions with the urban environment. The Smart elements include the internet of things (IoT), smart mobility, connected & automated vehicles, micro mobility, and smart communication.

Updating to the STH+ was recommended in the *NWI 2050+* as it will continue to support cities, towns, and counties in making community-shaping decisions in the future.

On motion by George Topoll, second by David Wright, the TPC approved to recommend Res 23-03 to the Commission.

Grace Benninger spoke on Resolution #23-13, Adjusted Urban Area Boundaries (UA/UAB). The Census Bureau (CB) conducted a decennial census of the US population in 2020. Following the census, the CB designates UAs that represent densely developed land, and encompass residential, commercial, and other non-residential urban land uses. To improve transportation planning and programming consistency, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) allows for the adjustment of the UAB. Which in this case, resulted in a larger area. The three urban areas in the Region with a population of 50,000+ are Chicago, IL-IN, Michigan City-LaPorte, IN-MI, and Valparaiso-Shorewood Forest, IN. Maps of the proposed AUBs were presented. Upon Commission approval, NIRPC staff will send the adjusted UABs to INDOT for review and will also be submitted to the FHWA for approval by the end of the year.

On motion by Dean Button, second by George Topoll, the TPC approved to recommend Res 23-13 to the Commission.

#### **Programming**

Nothing to report.

#### **Topical Committee Reports**

Nothing to report.

#### **Reports from Planning Partners**

Ryan Lisek (DCI) reported on grant funding, project updates, and events within NWI. Drive Clean Indiana (DCI) is Indiana's only U.S. Department of Energy-designated Clean Cities Coalition. If your community is looking to implement any clean transportation activity, please reach out to Drive Clean Indiana at 219-644-3690, or visit [www.drivecleanindiana.org](http://www.drivecleanindiana.org) for more information.

#### **Adjournment**

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:31 a.m.

The next TPC meeting is slated for November 28, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. in the NIRPC building.