

Technical Planning Committee

Tuesday, February 9, 2021

Minutes

This meeting was convened as an electronic meeting, pursuant to Governor Holcomb's extended Executive Order 21-03. All persons were meeting remotely on a Google Meet 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.

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

Committee members present were Bryan Blazak (St. John), Kevin Breitzke (Porter County), Jeff Huet (Schererville), Blossom Mabon (Lake Co. Comm. Services), Beth West (La Porte TransPorte), Kay Nelson (FORUM), Jake Dammarell (BFS), Don Oliphant, Timothy Werner (CIORBA), Nick Bellar (Winfield), Adrian Vera (Lake Station), Jessica Miller, Gerald Swets (St. John), Eric Wolverton (Structure Point), Chris Murphy (Structure Point), AJ Bytnar (Gary), Katie Vallis (IDNR), Bill Emerson, Duane Alverson (Lake County), Rachelle Morgan-Ceasar (Gary), Sandy Kolb, Trish Nugent, Sergio Mendoza (St. John), Amy Blaker (Lochmueller), Lauri Keagle (SSCC), Dean Button (Hammond), Terry Martin, Mark O'Dell (Chesterton), David Wright (GPTC), Jessica Miller, Craig Wilson (ATC), Beth Shrader (Valparaiso), Bob Thompson (Porter County), Jennifer Fehlman, Steve King (Merrillville), Mayor Matt Murphy (Valparaiso), Robert Dirks, Stephanie Belch (INDOT), Amanda Geary (Opportunity Enterprise), Dennis Cobb (First Group Engineering), Mike Jabo (Valparaiso), Deb Backhus (Gary), and Kelly Wenger (NICTD).

Staff present were Mitch Barloga, Denarie Kane, Meredith Stilwell, Ty Warner, Kathy Luther, Scott Weber, Kevin Polette, Candice Eklund, Charles Bradsky, Peter Kimball, and Flor Baum.

The January 12, 2020 meeting minutes were approved on motion by Kay Nelson and second by Blossom Mabon.

Public Comments

No public comments to announce.

Programming

Charles Bradsky presented on the FY 2025-2026 NOFA Project Programming. The projects are being funded by Federal Highway money for FY-25 and FY-26. Unused monies will be reprogrammed in other projects as needed.

Group I Multi-use path projects:

- Crown Point was programmed for \$2mil in FY-25 for the multi-use path on Veterans Memorial and Pennsy Greenway Trail.
- Valparaiso was programmed for \$1,918,104 in FY-26 to provide a multi-use trail connection within our TOD, connecting the Chicago Dash stop to downtown.
- The City of Hammond, East Chicago, and INDOT are tied together in this particular project. A new bike trail will be placed on the new bridge that INDOT is building on Michigan Street (over Kennedy Ave). Hammond was programmed for \$720,314 in FY-25.
- Hammond was programmed for \$100K (PE) in 2023 for the multi-use path Marquette Greenway (Kennedy to Cline).

Group II Multi-use path projects:

- LaPorte County was programmed for \$1,164,678 in FY-25 for the Lincoln Trail Extension from 300 South to Purdue Northwest approximately 1.9 miles (connects to Town of Westville and Bluhm Park via Lincoln Trail).
- Michigan City was programmed for \$1,967,039 in FY-26 for Singing Sands Trail Phase III - A & C (Liberty Trail to 2011 E. Hwy 12).

- Michigan City was programmed for \$109,255 (ROW) in 2024 for Singing Sands Trail Phase III - D (Liberty Trail to 2011 E. Hwy 12).

Group I & II Complete Streets projects:

- Cedar Lake was programmed for \$110K (PE) in 2023 and \$1,751,300 in FY-25 for the East portion of the Complete Streets project. The construction of this sidewalk would provide much needed connectivity for pedestrians to safely walk from the commercial corridor along 133rd Avenue (west of the lake) to the Town facilities and other future commercial corridors on the east side of the lake.

Group I Quality of Place projects:

- Schererville was programmed for \$191,387 in 2023 and \$5,672,783 in FY-25 for the Kennedy Ave Ph III Roadway Expansion project.
- Lake Station was programmed for \$61,875 in 2023 and \$750,000 in FY-26 for the Traffic Calming project. This project will create a greenspace between Central Ave and Fairview Ave, allowing for safe navigation by pedestrians. This is also a legacy project. Charles noted that this project may only qualify for STBG funds, but he will also submit this to INDOT.

Group I Roadway & Bridge Improvements projects:

- Chesterton's implementation of preemption through multi-agencies project was programmed for \$87,130 (PE) in 2023 and \$1,664,810 in FY-25.
- East Chicago was programmed for \$3,592,206 in FY-26 for one phase of the roadway reconstruction of Michigan Ave from Sheridan Place to Block Ave.
- Griffith was programmed for \$109,620 of PE in 2023. The Intersection Safety Improvement project encompasses Broad St. and Avenue H Intersection Improvement.
- Hammond was programmed for \$3,713,783 in FY-26. The Pavement Rehab or Reconstruct project will reconstruct Summer Street from Willis Street to Indianapolis Boulevard.
- Lake County was programmed for \$836,000 in FY-25 for the replacement of Lake County Bridge (#45-00097 Colorado St) over Deep River.
- Merrillville was programmed for \$100,000 (ROW) in 2024. The Intersection Congestion Improvement project is for the Mississippi and 69th Avenue Intersection Improvements Roundabout.
- Merrillville was programmed for \$3,927,129 in FY-26. The Intersection Congestion Improvement project is for the Mississippi St. and 79th Avenue Intersection Improvements (Dogbone Roundabout).
- Town of Munster's Pavement Rehab or Reconstruction project of Main Street from Columbia Avenue to Hart Ditch was programmed for \$318,000 (PE) in 2023 and \$5,034,593 in FY-25.
- The Valparaiso Intersection Congestion Improvements project for SR 130 at CR 400N (Vale Park Rd) Roundabout was programmed for \$142,896 (PE) in 2023.
- The Valparaiso Intersection Congestion Improvements for Lincolnway at Campbell Street Roundabout was programmed for \$2,216,121 in FY-25.

Group II Roadway & Bridge Improvements projects:

- La Porte was programmed for \$33,084 in 2024 for their Emergency Communication Equipment project.

Group I New Roadway/s projects:

- Porter County was programmed for an additional \$321,975 (PE) in 2024 and \$5,226,374 for Ph I in FY-26. The New Roadway project seeks to improve regional connectivity and operational traffic flow by providing a direct north-south route in Porter County, generally between the Valparaiso-Merrillville corridor and downtown Portage.
- St. John was programmed for \$559,366 (PE) in FY-25. The New Roadway project will be for an extension of Cline Avenue from West 93rd Avenue to 101st Avenue.

Group II New Roadway/s projects:

- La Porte was programmed for \$935,322 in FY-25. The New Roadway project is for preliminary Engineering on North-South Corridor-Phase I; US 35-SR 4 in partnership with LaPorte County.

Transit Expansion projects:

- TPC will hold a special meeting on February 18 at 10:00 a.m. to discuss Group I & II transit projects in the 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

On motion by Dean Button and second by Mark O'Dell the Technical Planning Committee approved to recommend Group I & II new projects in our 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to The Commission.

Topical Committee Reports

Mitch Barloga reported that the Ped, Pedal, and Paddle Committee (3PC) received the updated bike maps and NIRPC staff is in the process of distributing them regionally. 3PC is also working on a mobile app. It is slated to be rolled out by April of this year.

Eman Ibrahim reported on the Land Use Committee. The last committee meeting was held on January 7. There was discussion of roadway expansion and planning projects.

Scott Weber reported that the Surface Transportation Committee (STC) will meet in April instead of May to discuss final prerequisites for some of the projects that were agreed to.

Reports and Planning Partners

Announcements and upcoming dates were shared with the committee. Lauri Keagle announced that South Shore Clean Cities (SSCC) released their annual report. 80% of SSCC funding went to the NIRPC region. Round three of the on and off-road grants for the Volkswagen (VW) grants are expected to be open for applications in March. Partners for Clean Air is awarding scholarships for high school seniors in the Lake, Porter, and La Porte counties of up to \$2500 each. Applications are due March 31st. Please contact SSCC for more information.

Next Meeting

The next Technical Planning Committee (TPC) meeting is slated for Tuesday, March 9, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. at the NIRPC offices. A special meeting will also be held on February 18 at 10:00 a.m. to further discuss Transit Expansion projects.

The meeting concluded at 11:22 a.m.