

**Technical Planning Committee**  
NIRPC Lake Michigan Room  
YouTube Recording:  
[Technical Planning Committee Meeting 7/11/23 - YouTube](#)  
September 12, 2023  
**Minutes**

Kevin Breitzke called the meeting to order at 10:01 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), Mark O'Dell (Chesterton), Julie Ritzler (INDOT), Ryan Lisek (DCI), Dean Button (Hammond), Kay Nelson (Forum), and David Wright (GPTC).

Also in attendance were Jeff Huet (Schererville), Jake Dammarell (BFS), and Steve King (Merrillville).

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

On motion by Dean Button, second by Mark O'Dell, the Technical Planning Committee (TPC) approved the minutes of July 11, 2023 as presented.

There were no public comments.

**Planning**

Mitch Barloga presented on *NWI 2050+ Active Transportation (AT)*. The AT chapter supplements *NWI 2050+* which recognized the role of both trails and complete streets and established a funding framework for both. The region now has over 300 miles of local, regional, park, and multi-state trails. Trail development has robustly developed. Now there is a focus on street infrastructure, including ways to link trails together and to neighborhoods and major off-trail destinations. The Priority Trail Corridor identified 26 routes throughout the Region, spanning 200 mi. Survey results for the evaluation of infrastructure solutions (IF) were shared. Some higher-ranking and mid-ranking IF are as follows:

- Cycle Track: Medium volume downtown street; a two-way cycle track with physical separation. Score of 148.9.
- Side path: medium volume rural or low-density road with adjacent off-road shared use path and signed and enhanced. Score of 157.2.
- Off-street separated lane: medium volume street with bike lane above curb, adjacent to but differentiated from sidewalk. Score of 153.1.
- Bike boulevard: Low traffic street with features like markings, stop preferences, intersection improvements to increase bicycle and pedestrian safety. Score of 68.4.
- Neighborhood street: Low volume local street without other modifications. Occasional speed bump for traffic calming. Score of 84.6.

The proposed active network includes 48 routes within NWI. This includes routes from Dyer to Chesterton via Main Street and trails, Valparaiso to La Porte via SR 2. The AT Plan is being promoted through social media, email expediting firm, open-to-the-public presentations, via survey and website performance measures. For more information, please visit [www.nirpc.org](http://www.nirpc.org) to view the *2050+ AT Plan* or contact Mitch at [mbarloga@nirpc.org](mailto:mbarloga@nirpc.org).

Tom Vander Woude spoke on Resolution 23-12, Amendment one of the FY-24 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties. Amendment one of the 2024 UPWP includes the addition of HSIP and STBG flex funding, which is included in the FY 2022-2026 and FY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Programs. Amendment one also reallocates funding to the Special Planning Activities element for the E-Commerce Area Plan task and to the Multi-modal Planning element for a Non-Profit Transportation Feasibility Study. The Short-range planning (STBG Flex) for TIP software licensing renewal will increase from \$43,750 to \$53,130. The data collection and analysis for road safety audits will decrease

funding from \$125K to \$96,875. The regional LPA traffic signal study funds of \$12.5K will be removed. The special planning activities element for e-commerce area plans will have funding of \$50K added, and the LPA planning assistance/ special plans funding will increase from \$62.5K to \$138.750. The non-profit transportation feasibility study (multi-modal planning) will have \$60K in funds added. On motion by Kay Nelson, second by Beth Shrader, the TPC recommended Res 23-12 to the Commission for approval.

Grace Beninger gave an informational presentation on the Urban Area (UA) Boundary. UAs are delineated by the US Census Bureau every 10 years with at least 2K housing units (HUs) or 5K people, at least one nucleus of 1,275 HUs per sq mile, and a density of at least 200 HUs per sq mile. MPA's within the NIRPC Region, at a minimum, must incorporate applicable UAs and adjacent areas expected to become urbanized within 20 years. Before 2020, UAs were measured by population. The population threshold increased to over 5K people. The "jump" threshold reduced from 2.5 mi. (2000-2010) to 1.5 mi. There are no longer Urban Clusters. Instead, certain small UAs (Lowell, Lake of the Four Seasons, and Westville) with a population of 5K - 49.9K are designated UAs. There will be an adjustment process of the 2020 Census UAs. FHWA program implications of the 2020 census UAs will affect the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STGB) Program. MPOs select projects for Group one & two funding. NIRPC will continue to work closely with INDOT on Group three. The state will also distribute STBG funding using formulas based on the population of unadjusted UAs. UABs adjustments will affect funds that may be spent within the state, but not how much funding the state receives.

- Group 1 = Large Urban (>200,000 population)
- Group 2 = Small Urban (50,000 - 200,000 population)
- Group 3 = Municipalities (5,000 - 49,999 population)
- Group 4 = Rural (<5,000 Population)

Under the highway functional classification system, roadway facilities located in urban areas and within the adjusted urban area boundary are classified as Urban, all other roadway facilities are classified as Rural. The Hwy Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) will request states to report annual highway statistics by highway functional classification, including urban vs. rural classification. Urban classification includes roadway facilities in urban areas and within the adjusted urban area boundary. The National Hwy Freight Program (NHFP) will use the adjusted urban area for the designation of critical rural freight corridors (CRFCs) and critical urban freight corridors (CUFCs). CUFC routes must be within the adjusted boundaries of an UA. CRFC routes must be outside the adjusted boundaries of any UA. The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program contains traffic congestion performance measures that require a single transportation network performance target for each UA. The UA definition includes the adjusted UABs. The Outdoor Advertising Control Program uses the adjusted UAB to specify the boundary between locations where signage can be placed beyond 660 feet and be intended to read from the highway. The FHWA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will apportion formula funding amounts based on unadjusted UABs, including STBG funds. FTA 5307 funds are defined by a formula that uses the unadjusted urban area boundaries to assess urban area status. The MPO, transit providers, and the State are required to coordinate the programming of Federal transit funding. The 2020 Census UAs adjustment will not affect transit or functional classification. Draft will be presented at the TPC and Commission meeting in October 2023, and it is slated to be submitted to INDOT for review.

### **Programming**

Nothing to report.

### **Topical Committee Reports**

EMPC, STC, LUC and 3PC met in August. Please visit NIRPC YouTube channel to view the meetings.

### **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 11:32 a.m.

The next TPC meeting is slated for October 3, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. in the NIRPC building.