



Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization

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Seyed Shokouhzadeh, Executive Director

EVANSVILLE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Regular meeting held at 4:00 p.m. in Room 301
Civic Center Complex – Administration Building
Evansville, Indiana

February 5, 2015

The foregoing are minutes and not intended to be a verbatim transcript. An audio version of the proceedings can be heard or viewed on our website at www.evansvillempo.com.

ROLL CALL

Members Present (voting):

Jack Corn, Stephanie Brinkerhoff-Riley, Todd Robertson, Stephen Melcher, Donald Angel, Angela Koehler-Lindsey, William Hubiak, Russell Sights, Richard Reid, Lori Buehlman, Rusty Fowler, Kevin McClearn, Beth Jones

Members Absent (voting):

Mayor Lloyd Winnecke

Members Absent (non-voting):

Karl Browning, Rick Marquis, Scott Deloney, Marisol Simon, Tony Greep, Jose Sepulveda, Bernadette Dupont, Mike Hancock, Keith Damron, John Gowins, Michelle Allen

Evansville MPO Staff Present:

Rob Schaefer, Kari Akin, Laura Lamb, Craig Luebke, Pam Drach, Seyed Shokouhzadeh

Others Present:

Ted Miller, Steve Sherwood, Jack Cebe, Kevin Jasinski, Mark Tuley

1. ELECTION OF EMPO POLICY BOARD CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Corn: The first item on the agenda is everyone gets sworn in, or you cannot participate. The clerk informs me that that's a no-no now. But we've never done that before.

Mr. Corn: The first item on the agenda is the selection of a Policy Board Chairperson, and a Vice Chairperson.

Mr. Sights: I nominate Jack Corn as the Policy Board Chairperson.

Mr. Corn: Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I guess we'll close the nominations. I would entertain a motion for approval. (Motion was made by Mr. Sights and seconded by Mr. Angel.) Voice vote. SO ORDERED.

Mr. Corn: Now we need a Vice Chairperson.

Mr. Reid: I make a motion to continue with Lori.

Mr. Corn: Any other nominations? Hearing none, the nominations are closed. I would entertain a motion for approval. (Motion was made by Mr. Reid and seconded by Ms. Brinkerhoff-Riley.) Voice vote. SO ORDERED.

Ms. Buehlman: Thank you.

Mr. Corn: I think this is my 30th year, and this might be my last year...

2. APPROVAL OF BILLS

Mr. Corn: Ok, approval of minutes from the previous meeting. I entertain a motion for approval. (Motion was made by Ms. Buehlman and seconded by Mr. Reid.) Voice vote. SO ORDERED.

3. OLD BUSINESS

A. Project Update

CITY OF EVANSVILLE

Washington Avenue-Weinbach Avenue Intersection

Ms. Lamb: The Board of Public works approved a construction inspection contract for with American Structurepoint on December 11, 2014. The project was posted for bid, for the construction, on February 4, 2015 with no bids below the engineer's estimate being received. INDOT will review the bids to determine if the low bid is eligible for award.

SR 66/Lloyd Expressway Pedestrian Overpass

Ms. Lamb: This project was posted for bids on December 10, 2014 and the contract for construction was awarded to Blankenberger Construction, Inc. of Cynthiana, IN for a low bid of \$2,238,182.50. The preconstruction meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2015.

Evansville-Vanderburgh Sign Inventory and Replacement

Ms. Lamb: The sign installation portion of this project has been split into two phases and the letting date has been pushed back to allow additional federal funds to be programmed. Phase 1 is currently scheduled for letting on July 8, 2015.

Tekoppel Safe Routes to School

Ms. Lamb: The project was posted for bids, this is for the construction of the project, on February 4, 2015 with no bids below the engineer's estimate being received. INDOT will review the bids to determine if the low bid is eligible for award.

VANDERBURGH COUNTY

Green River Road Widening: Millersburg Road to Kansas Road

Ms. Lamb: Construction continues with 73% of the project now complete. The contractor will continue removing the old pavement and work on storm sewer installation.

Heckel Road Widening: Green River Road to Oak Hill Road

Ms. Lamb: The preliminary plans are close to being complete and a public information meeting will be scheduled in the next six weeks to review and discuss the proposal.

Green River Road: Kansas Road to Boonville-New Harmony Road

Ms. Lamb: The Stage 2 design package was submitted to INDOT on January 25, 2015 for review and approval.

TOWN OF NEWBURGH

Newburgh Safe Routes to School

Ms. Lamb: The Safe Routes to School project is now complete.

Newburgh Rivertown Trail

Ms. Lamb: Still waiting on property appraisals but a required update to the environmental document has been completed and submitted for review.

INDOT

SR 61 Connector – Boonville

Ms. Lamb: This phase was posted for bids for construction on December 10, 2014 and the contract for construction was awarded to Blankenberger Brothers Inc. of Cynthiana, IN for a low bid of \$2,266,474.70.

CITY OF HENDERSON

Sand Lane Safe Routes to School

Ms. Lamb: The bid package proposal and the LPA Project Development Checklist has been submitted to KYTC for review and approval.

KYTC

KY 351/Zion Road

Ms. Lamb: Preliminary work began on February 2, 2015. The contract completion date is currently set for August, 2015. The roadway will be closed approximately 4-5 months during construction so a detour will be posted.

US Highway 41 & KY 812/Airline Road

Ms. Lamb: A statewide consultant has been requested.

Ms. Lamb: For the last two projects, Nick was telling me today, for the US Highway 41 & Wolf Hills Road project and the US Highway 60 Spottsville Bridge project, that they both had a preliminary Line & Grade meeting that was held February 2, 2015.

Mr. Corn: Questions?

Mr. Angel: I guess this is for INDOT, so Rusty, or whoever would know the answer. On a couple of the things that were read, some of the proposals weren't under the engineer's estimate, so when INDOT looks at that to see if they can maybe be awarded anyway, is there criteria that you go by?

Mr. Fowler: Yes, it's not only based off of cost, but it's also based off of a firm's ability, as far as their ability within a number of dollars that they are capable of doing it in in a given amount of time, there's a lot of DBE and MBE goals, that type of thing, insurance. There's a lot things that actually gets considered, it's not just the low bid. Generally speaking, all of the information they have to do the bid is normally handled up front, so we get the bids in it's easy, you get the notice to proceed, but every once in a while there will be questions on DBE goals or MBE goals, or insurance or something like that, so yes there's a checklist that we have to go through.

Mr. Angel: Ok, thank you.

Mr. Corn: Any other questions? Thanks, Laura.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Memorandum of Agreement between EMPO, INDOT, KYTC, METS, and HART

Mr. Schaefer: The Evansville MPO requests approval of a Memorandum of Agreement between the Evansville MPO, NDOT, KYTC, METS and Henderson Area Rapid Transit. This agreement is a requirement among agencies involved in the transportation planning process in this area and it defines roles and responsibilities of each agency. We request the approval of this MOA.

Mr. Corn: Any questions?

Mr. Sights: Page 13, item 3 – I don't think we are planning on anything that would involve improving METS service.

Mr. Schaefer: It should be HART services. We will change that. Thanks.

Mr. Corn: Any other questions? If not, I entertain a motion for approval with that correction. (Motion was made by Ms. Koehler-Lindsey and seconded by Mr. Angel.) Voice vote. SO ORDERED.

B. FY 2013-2016 TIP Amendments

Mr. Luebke: We have one TIP amendment this month requested by INDOT.

Des# 0501206: I-64: HMA Overlay, Preventive Maintenance, 3.05 miles east of SR 65 to 0.5 miles east of US 41. Add the project for preliminary engineering in Fiscal 16 for construction inspection. That PE cost will be split – that \$80,000 – is 90/10 between Interstate Maintenance Federal Funds and INDOT match.

Mr. Corn: Questions? I'll entertain a motion for approval. (Motion was made by Ms. Brinkerhoff-Riley and seconded by Mr. Melcher.) Voice vote. SO ORDERED.

C. FY 2013-2016 TIP Administrative Modifications

Mr. Luebke: And for your information, we did process two administrative modifications in December, both were for Kentucky projects.

Item# 02-152.02-04: The first - the Henderson Riverfront Development project, a high-priority project for the development of the Henderson Riverfront - revised the construction description, estimate, and schedule. This will be for non-highway land acquisition, master planning, and site improvements here in this fiscal year totaling \$2,174,005. That is an 80/20 project, with federal High Priority funds and a 20% Henderson in-kind match.

Item# 02-79.30: The second is US 60, a KYTC project, to widen and improve US 60 from west of Henderson Community College east to KY 425. Revising the preliminary engineering schedule to reflect \$100,000 in fiscal 14 and \$400,000 in fiscal 15. That's the same PE budget just split over fiscal years differently. This is a federal STP project, and a Kentucky Toll Credit match.

Mr. Corn: Any questions? Seeing none, thanks, Craig.

D. Update on Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity Master Plan

Mr. Cebe: Good afternoon. My name is Jack Cebe, I'm with Alta Planning + Design, and we are a nation-wide consulting firm that specializes in bike and pedestrian planning, design and engineering. We've been working with the City, the MPO, and a whole slew of stakeholders over the past year developing a Bike and Pedestrian Connectivity Master Plan for the City of Evansville.

This plan is really a long-term vision based on the feedback we heard from citizens, from various stakeholder groups, for the City of Evansville and looking at how we want the city to become in terms of accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians for transportation specifically in this plan. Based on the feedback, we drafted a

Vision Statement to frame this vision. We are hoping that in the long term, the Evansville roadway system will comfortably, safely, and efficiently facilitate bike and pedestrian transportation for users of all ages and abilities, whether that be a child walking or biking to school, whether it be someone trying to commute to work, whether it be a senior trying to walk or take the bus to fulfill their daily needs, providing options for people of all ages and abilities.

We believe that the City can become a tri-state destination for walking and biking. We've seen it in other places, as I'll show here in a little bit. Building these facilities, making these investments draw people into the community, not only visitors wanting to use them, but also attract businesses and attract young, talented employees. Ultimately, all of these improvements will lead to a goal that everybody has – building healthier livelihoods for people, making smarter community investments, and really improving the future for the city.

In breaking down that vision statement, we came up with several objectives to really try to hone into in this plan. One is connectivity, and that is looking at the pieces of the bicycle and pedestrian network we have already – and there's a lot - and really trying to bridge these pieces together, fill in the gaps, fix the pinch-points, and park on the great things we have already.

Sustainability and evaluation – looking at how the city, when they make these investments, can get recognized for them. There are programs such as the Bicycle Friendly Community program, the Walk Friendly Community program that are national programs that cities apply for, and business, and people looking to move to cities recognize that and it can be used to showcase achievements that Evansville is making.

Implementation – Like I've said, this is a big, overall vision, but we want to break it down into digestible implementation action steps that the city can use moving forward, so a big part of this plan is an action plan which prioritizes projects and provides a roadmap moving forward on implementing those. The overall goals of the projects is all about safety, providing people with more transportation options, viable transportation options, and that really plays into the overall human and social health of the community.

To kind of give a case study of how these sorts of improvements can affect the community. I'm from Greenville, South Carolina and grew up there, have been working there for the past several years. In the 70's, Greenville was facing a crossroads, and this is what Greenville's downtown looked like in the 70's. It was pretty auto-oriented, a lot of empty store fronts, and the city's leadership made a decision to bring people back into downtown and try to attract them. And to do that, they focused on walk-friendly improvements and bicycle-friendly improvements. And now, this is what Greenville's Main Street looks like today, and it's a destination, really regionally, and it's an iconic Main Street throughout the U.S., and a lot of people think it's always been like that. It was really tough choices and visionary choices made several years ago that turned the Main Street into what it is today.

Similarly, with the Falls Park in downtown, it used to be a bridge and when they were looking at tearing it down and making it into a more attractive atmosphere for pedestrians and bicyclists, they had a lot of pushback, because they thought tearing down the bridge would bring awful congestion downtown. It was just the opposite – it turned Falls Park into a great amenity for the city, it has gotten it national acclaim and has been a huge economic generator for the community.

This is the Swamp Rabbit Trail, which runs through Falls Park, and you can see there that the numbers don't lie. It's caused a lot of visitors investing money, it caused a lot of businesses to open up, and that's just the numbers. The health benefits are unaccounted for, but also great as well.

To give you an overview of the process we've been through, we started out looking at existing conditions and looking at several factors, such as demographics in the city, trying to make this plan as equitable as possible, reaching all sorts of communities. Looking at safety data, looking at where crashes are occurring and trying to fix those trouble areas. Looking at traffic patterns, looking at existing infrastructure, looking at connectivity between neighborhoods, and then looking at concentrations of where people live, and where they are trying to get, rather it be retail, whether it be jobs, whether it be school.

We had an extensive public outreach process. We had a project steering committee that had business interests, had public interests, had advocates on the group that review all of our documents and provided feedback throughout the process. We had an extensive online and in person public outreach process that included a website, included online mapping where people could in and input where they would like to see improvements, and you see the graphs show some of the summaries of results. Of those over 1,000 responses we got, there was broad support for walking and biking improvements in Evansville. Then there were several other types of meetings. Public input meetings, we had one early on in the process to get input from people. We are having one Saturday at the mall, presenting our draft recommendations to get feedback on how people think they will work. We've went to public events, and this was a great, unique part to this plan, we had several focus group meetings throughout the city. We met with leaders of the business community, we met with the Chamber, we met with the Parks Board, and we met with leaders in the health community, to get their input on the plan and really heard just broad support across the board.

As we were digesting all of this input, we started looking at bike facilities that we were considering for Evansville, and looking at, again, that all ages and abilities consideration. In with that, there's kind of a range of facility types that we want to use in different context. In low-volume neighborhood streets, we're looking at more of a shared lane/shared roadway environment. You see on the far left, that can be accomplished through pavement markings, through signage, through some maybe minor changes in stop signs and other sorts of traffic signage along minor streets. And as the roadways you're putting bike facilities on, as the traffic increases, as the volume of the speeds increase, you want more separation from the traffic to maintain that comfort level for bicyclists. As you can see with the buffer bike lane on higher volume streets, increasing that distance, that separation from the cars, and these are a few other facility types we looked at on even higher volume, higher speed streets, called cycle tracks, where there's typically some vertical separation, whether it be parked cars, or bollards, or a curb. These benefit pedestrians as well, buffer them from the roadway making, making it a more comfortable environment for them, slowing down traffic in some cases, and so it's a benefit for all users.

Similarly with the pedestrian environment, we looked at really kind of specific improvements that could be made. There's already a great base of pedestrian facilities in Evansville, a great sidewalk network, so really looking at pinch-points in the network such as intersections, where maybe those signals, those crosswalks could be upgraded up to standard. We looked at a few locations where midblock crossings may be warranted. It's pretty discouraging if you have to walk a quarter-mile just to get to the other side of the road safely, so there are a few locations where we looked at trying to bridge that gap. Other considerations were obstruction's in the sidewalk, such as utility poles, looking at areas where that occurs, and making recommendations on how to improve those, especially because those are a huge impediment to people with mobility issues. And then traffic calming improvements in areas around schools, and in downtown, where high volumes of pedestrians are expected, and that includes a few minor geometry improvements like the bulb-outs you see in the large picture up top. And again, the goal is accessibility for all ages and abilities. The term that has kind of been coined to represent that is "8-80 Cities". That's kind of what we are going for here.

Also looking at non-infrastructure recommendations and trying to build the culture in Evansville that biking and walking are normal activities, a normal way to get around. And that could be through education

programs, such as some of the great Safe Routes to School programs already going on, through evaluation planning, like the Bike Friendly Community and Walk Friendly Community program I was telling you about earlier, an encouragement program, such as Bike to Work Week or even Bike to Work Month, and enforcement programs. There are key areas where violations are occurring, and maybe targeting these areas and giving warnings or tickets. Like I said, building upon the great efforts that are going on here already with the local partners, and this is really where the partners play a big role in this, such as the upgraded curb ramps, such as the local Evansville Mountain Bike Association chapter, and the CDC money that has funded the Bike Right billboards around town, these are some great things to continue building upon.

When planning the routes, we considered a lot of things. There's the consideration for safety, we looked a lot at crash data to help locate where some of these real big problem areas are, where demand was, where we heard from the public they would like to see facilities, connections to transit, trying to extend the transit network and make safe connections to transit. And also, making sure these improvements line up with previous proposals. There have been a lot of different proposals and planning efforts, and so that was a big intent, to make sure this was cohesive with those. As you can see here, here are just a few example areas, but we saw the need for facilities around town, such as no sidewalks at the bus stop, that's Virginia Street, a lady crossing in the middle of Green River Road, and then some obstructions from the sidewalks on Weinbach.

So here's the maps we came up with, these are draft maps, and we are open for comment if you guys want to look at these and provide some comments over the next few weeks, we'd love to see them. And really, kind of concentrating on the downtown area and emanating from there, as that's where a lot of the demand for biking and walking is with the amenities downtown, the proximity to the universities, the new health campus going in. And similarly with the walking network, we're looking at improvements all over town, but a lot more concentration on the downtown area.

And then finally, getting to that implementation phase, we had to look at providing a roadmap as far as implementing this vision, and this is a long-term vision, this is not going to happen overnight. And so we looked at several factors to prioritize these improvements, trying to identify which ones were the biggest opportunities for improvements with the lowest possible cost, your real low hanging fruit projects, looking at considerations such as supply and demand, equity, public input, whether it connects with existing facilities or connects existing facilities, and the safety benefit of these facilities. We're currently developing this prioritization right now.

We initially developed a list of Top 10 recommendations, kind of the out of the starting gate recommendations, that we feel really rose to the top of this list based on all of the data we analyzed, everyone we talked to, that can be really big, impactful, easy wins for the community. Several of these, such as the Main Street improvement, the Weinbach improvements, are in development currently. This map just shows the distribution of those around town, trying to keep those as interconnected as possible, keeping a mix of bike and pedestrian projects in there to reach out to affect those different user groups and maintain a semblance of a core network within these projects themselves. And so to help kind of visualize these improvements, we came up with a few photo simulations and we'll continue to work on these, but here's Walnut Street, where we're proposing cycle tracks, taking that and restriping the roadway and implementing cycle tracks on that street where you would have that vertical separation and that buffer from the traffic.

Similarly on Martin Luther King, we felt like this is a high priority corridor, it's downtown, it's very visible, it's in a lot of ways the gateway to downtown and providing those sorts of amenities will really make it a centerpiece for the vibrancy that's going on downtown. Also, I forgot to mention with Walnut Street, that was really an important connection, it connects with the State Hospital Grounds, it connects with the

University of Evansville, there's already a lot of users using it, bicycling on it, and we're trying to make that a safer environment. And here's just another option on MLK.

And like I said, we are working on the draft plan, which will be out in a few weeks, and eventually getting comments back on that when it comes out, eventually taking it to the Council for adoption, and we welcome your feedback as we're working through editing this draft. So with that, I'm happy to field any questions.

Mr. Corn: Any questions?

Ms. Jones: I'm not familiar with this project, can you tell me who the originator of it is? Is it the City of Evansville, is it INDOT, who?

Mr. Cebe: It's, and Seyed might want to jump in too, the MPO is the sponsor on the project, but the limits of the scope is really concentrated on the City of Evansville itself.

Ms. Jones: Was there any thought at all about giving some thought to potential connections to the Kentucky side at some point? That's going to be included in it?

Mr. Cebe: We understand that we're not planning in a bubble and we're definitely looking at possible connections to other jurisdictions.

Mr. Corn: Other questions? Yes, Don?

Mr. Angel: There's an opportunity at the mall you said?

Mr. Cebe: Yes, the mall on Saturday from 12:00 – 4:00.

Mr. Corn: Any other questions? Thanks, Jack.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

A. 1st and 2nd FY 2015 Indiana and Kentucky Quarterly Reports

Ms. Akin: In your packets are the 1st quarter reports for Indiana and Kentucky. We are reevaluating how we do these quarterly reports so the 2nd quarter is not in there right now. Just to give you a couple of statistics, we did 76 traffic counts, 13 TIP amendments, and 13 TIP modifications during the July 1st through September 30th time period. Also, this gives you a progress report of our special projects that we've been working on such as the METS Comprehensive Operational Analysis, our Evansville Bike and Pedestrian Connectivity Master Plan that Jack was speaking about, and our Regional Pavement Management process. So if you have any questions about what we're working on during our office days you can just give us a call and we can answer your questions.

Mr. Corn: Any questions? Thanks, Kari.

B. Approval of Bills

Mr. Corn: I would entertain a motion for approval bills. (Motion was made by Ms. Buehlman and seconded by Mr. Hubiak.) Voice vote. SO ORDERED.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Corn: Rusty, I understand you want to talk about something.

Mr. Fowler: I do, thank you. Before this meeting, I had a short conversation with Seyed, Pam, and Jack regarding something that was discussed at the last MPO Council meeting, which is the intention of INDOT to do a planning funds compliance review in all the MPO's. So, at that point in time, we didn't really know what kind of time frame we were going to be on or anything like that, we just knew it was going to be early in 2015, so I'm here to say that that program is going to be initiated. We have engaged a consulting group, KSM consulting from Indianapolis, IN, to assist us with the development of the program. That has actually happened at this point in time, with the MPO Council meeting, they discussed the development phase was going to take a month and a half or two months, well, that development phase is done. So, starting in early 2015, a.k.a. February, we're going to start the process of field reviews at the MPO's. We will be working with KSM and the MPO's to determine the best timeframe for scheduling. At this point in time, we're looking at Evansville being the first of the MPO's to go through the process. Don't look at that as a negative thing, look at that as a positive thing, because when you are the first to go, you also have input and some influence on maybe how that program develops. And so you guys will be the first to participate in the compliance review. After this meeting, I'll notify KSM and they will be talking with you shortly to schedule the best times. The way I understand it, there will be a questionnaire, it's actually in the form of a spreadsheet, the questionnaire that will be sent with several questions and information to be supplied as part of that questionnaire, and tentatively they are looking at minimizing the field review time, but we don't exactly know what that will be at this point in time, but hopefully less than four days. We talked about the potential of two to three, but obviously we want to minimize the time and the impact of the MPO staff per our conversations before. So, I guess that's just to get that out there so everyone knows we are going to begin that process, and Evansville is going to be the first MPO to go through the process, so if you have questions, I'll be happy to answer them if I can, and we'll go from there.

Mr. Corn: Any questions?

Ms. Buehlman: I have a comment. Starting with this MPO, we'll set the bar extremely high for the rest of them.

Mr. Corn: Any other questions, comments? Any other public comments?

Mr. Angel: I have a comment. After your 30 years of serving on a public board, I'd like to say thank you for serving.

Mr. Corn: Thank you. I think it's almost about time though for new blood. Any other comments or questions?

Meeting adjourned.