



Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization

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Seyed Shokouhzadeh, Executive Director

EVANSVILLE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Regular meeting held at 10:00 a.m. in room 318
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:

Angie Higgins, Brent Schmitt, John Petkovsek, Andy Chandler, Shawn Will, John Stoll, Ron London, Tracee Matthews, Melissa Voegel, Nick Hall, Jason Orange, Denise Johnson, Gina Boaz

Evansville MPO Staff Present:

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

Others Present:

Jack Cebe

1. ELECTION OF EMPO TECHNICAL COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Stoll: The first item on the agenda is the election of Technical Committee Chair and Vice Chair. At this point, I'll open the floor for nominations for anyone whose name isn't John or Brent.

Mr. Shokouhzadeh: Looks like we'll nominate Ron then.

Mr. Stoll: We've got a motion for Ron to be chair, are there any seconds? (Motion was made by Mr. Shokouhzadeh and seconded by Mr. Schmitt.) Voice vote. SO ORDERED.

Mr. Stoll: We need nominations for Vice Chair.

Mr. Schmitt: I make a motion for myself.

Mr. Stoll: Ok, do we have a second? (Motion was made by Mr. Schmitt and seconded by Ms. Higgins.)
Voice vote. SO ORDERED.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. London: Let's see here, we need approval of the prior meeting minutes. Do I have a motion to approve? (Motion was made by Mr. Schmitt and seconded by Mr. Stoll.) 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 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 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. 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.

US Highway 60, Spottsville Bridge:

Ms. Lamb: A Preliminary Line and Grade meeting was held February 2, 2015.

Mr. Hall: There was also a Preliminary Line & Grade meeting for the US Highway 41 & Wolf Hills Road project that was held on the same day.

Mr. London: Does anyone have any additional comments or questions? (None.)

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 MPO, INDOT, KYTC, METS and HART. 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.

Mr. London: Does anyone have any questions regarding this? Seeing none, do we have a motion to approve? (Motion was made by Ms. Higgins and seconded by Mr. Stoll.) Voice vote. SO ORDERED.

B. FY 2013-2016 TIP Amendments

Mr. Luebke: TIP Amendments, we have one this month, it's a request from 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. London: If there are no questions, is there a motion to approve? (Motion was made by Mr. Petkovsek and seconded by Mr. Schmitt.) Voice vote. SO ORDERED.

C. FY 2013-2016 TIP Administrative Modifications

Mr. Luebke: TIP modifications – we don't need your approval on these, this is just for your information.

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. London: Thank you, Craig.

D. Update on Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity Master Plan

Hi guys, my name is Jack Cebe, I'm with Alta Planning + Design, and we are consulting team that is working with the MPO, the stakeholders from the city, to complete the Evansville Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity Master Plan. We began the process almost a year ago and have been working diligently with a lot of help from the MPO, reaching out to the community, and reviewing existing conditions and making recommendations, and we've been looking at some of the national best practices for bike and pedestrian planning, looking at engineering, evaluation planning, education, encouragement, and enforcement to identify appropriate infrastructure changes needed to improve bike and pedestrian conditions, but it's also about culture change, making it a normal activity for people to bike and walk to work, school, run errands, that sort of thing.

Today we are just going to present a broad overview of where the plan is headed. We are going to have a draft in the next couple of weeks, and the next step is bringing it to City Council for adoption.

Basically, with the planning effort, as with most planning efforts, is to create a vision of what direction we want the city to go in. And after talking with several stakeholders, we drafted this vision based on feedback, and the vision is that the transportation in Evansville comfortably, safely, and efficiently facilitates bike and pedestrian transportation for users of all ages and abilities. Again, meaning kids going to school, meaning people going to work, reaching a population that this may be their only means of transportation, or 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 these attractions in the City can become a tri-state destination for biking and pedestrian activity. Not only will the residents be drawn into the facilities, but this is one of the goals, making this a regional, maybe even national, destination for people to come and enjoy the downtown amenities that Evansville has to offer. And ultimately, these changes will lead to healthier lives, smarter investments, and improving the future of the city.

In breaking down further the vision, we can find many objectives to help guide the projects. Connectivity, what we have here, what efforts have been done already in connecting neighborhoods, and bridging that gap.

Sustainability and evaluation – really talking here about economic sustainability as well as environmental, and making health improvements. And for evaluation, it's looking at national programs that can give Evansville recognition. There are several programs that we kind of base our evaluation on for the city to apply to, like the Bicycle Friendly Community program, the Walk Friendly Community program. The businesses that residents look at to see if they have these awards, so these are important for recognition to look after to achieve some of these goals in the plan.

We want the plan to be implementable, the long-term vision is kind of a grandiose vision of what the city will look like, but then we also break it down into implementable action steps. 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.

And it's really about safety, making a safe environment for all users. And this should help, and it was a little bit scary to look at early in the process, is that, and it takes a bit to break this down, but 80-90% of bike and pedestrian crashes in Evansville resulted in injury. So we want to look at ways to reduce that number.

I just want to take a minute to share what some of the benefits these types of improvements can have on a community. I'm from Greenville, South Carolina, grew up there, and this is what Main Street Greenville looked like in the 70's. The leadership made a tough decision against pushback from the citizens to reimagine how the downtown functions. 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. Now, Greenville has one of the most iconic Main Street's in the southeast, people from all over come to Greenville for the things to do there.

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, connects to another community to the north, in a study they found that a \$6.7 million benefit from outside users and visitors coming in and spending money along the trail, that's over a half a million users a year, and does not include the health benefits of being active. So these facilities really have the ability to transform a community.

Diving into the analysis and recommendations phase, we looked at several, several layers of information, looking at the network and trying to identify pinch-points in the system that were not connected or bridged together to make a more cohesive network. We looked at demographics, equity, we looked at crash data and identified some of the high crash locations, for traffic, we took a look at stress for bikes and pedestrians within the existing network, we looked at the street network connectivity, trying to identify highly traveled grouped of streets, and we looked at destinations and origins, looking at where populations are and where they are going.

We had an extensive public outreach process. We had a project steering committee that had business interests, had public and private interests, had advocates on the group that review all of our documents and provided feedback throughout the process. We took them on bike rides to explain some of the treatments we are thinking of proposing in the plan. 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, we were at Streets Alive!, at the Farmer's Market, and this was interesting, we had several focus group meetings throughout the city. We met with leaders of the business community, we met with the Chamber of Commerce, 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 approach. On high-traffic volume and high speeds streets, we are looking at more separation for bicyclists traveling on the streets. That will make them more comfortable, separating them from the traffic lane. And we also looked at lower-volume shared streets that can be used to bridge some areas of towns going through more of the neighborhoods. And this is just a diagram showing the treatment types we are looking at, explaining the concept where this, right here, is a shared street concept, or sometimes called a neighborhood greenway or bike boulevard, where it can be as simple as signage and pavement markings through neighborhoods, making them low-volume connections for cyclists and the property owners and pedestrians as well. Moving on to more heavy traffic and high-speed streets, you want separation, things like bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, and this is a treatment that is happening in other communities, called a cycle track, which is literally separated by a vertical separation, whether it be bollards, vertical posts, green space, a curb with a barrier. So these are some of the facility types we are looking at as we make recommendations.

On the pedestrian side, there is a great sidewalk network in Evansville already, so we are trying to look at what the big picture will be here, and how we can bridge connections together, like schools, work centers, around downtown, various destinations. Making sure the sidewalk is clear, making sure intersections are safe and up to standard. In some locations, looking at potential mid-block crossings, so you don't have to walk a quarter of a mile out of your way to get to an intersection or bus stop or a restaurant across the street. And then traffic calming, here's an example here, of a bulb-out, which is a closed, free-sightline curb that can be found around places such as schools, and where a high amount of pedestrians are expected.

And then we also looked at non-infrastructure recommendations, such as policy recommendations, safety and education programs and enforcement recommendations. Building on the existing efforts we have here, and the Walk Friendly Community and Bike Friendly Community programs, Safe Routes to School, Bike to Work Week, Bike to Work Month, there are already a lot of great partners now doing great things, trying to encourage education, and so we are making recommendations on how the City can continue working with those groups and supporting those groups, because it really makes the City and those departments and advocates and the business community to make these sorts of improvements really happen. We have UpGrade going on now with the CDC grants, they put up some of the billboards that teach cyclists how to ride their bike, and educate motorists to share the road.

So in decision making, we looked at several different factors in terms of planning the routes. We looked at opportunities to connect to transit, opportunities where we saw people crossing at midblocks, where we saw goat paths, where there really is that hidden demand and people are using it, and may be using it more if facilities are provided. And we also looked at some of the existing facilities, like here along Weinbach, where you have sections in the sidewalk, where these people are walking ok, but maybe someone with ADA mobility issues might have difficulties traversing an area like that.

So when you think of the core network, expanding the whole city and really building that long-term vision of a network, it really emanates from downtown connecting into previous proposals for the City and incorporating those into the vision for the City. We looked at facility types like I was talking about, the shared lanes, the bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, greenways and sidepaths, and things like that. We did the same at the pedestrian scale. We looked for improvements that would bridge the gaps.

And then for the action plan part of it, planning the vision and prioritizing it and making it digestible for people that will be implementing it is an important part. 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've developed at Top 10 list already of the projects, working with the MPO, working with the stakeholders, projects that really have a lot of momentum already that we can build upon and use this to create our initial core network that the city can use to build off of in the future. As you can see, it includes bike improvements, it includes intersections improvements for pedestrians, so we tried to come up with a good mix of projects. And so to help kind of visualize these improvements, we came up with a few photo simulations kind of show how these improvements might look. Here's Walnut Street where we're looking at a potential road diet. Walnut was really identified early on as a key corridor that connects to downtown from the University and gets a lot of bike traffic already. And so we are trying to make that a more safe environment, moving cyclists downtown while still facilitating car traffic. The nice thing about Walnut is that you have a parallel facility in Lincoln that can be used to reduce car volume on Walnut, they're already pretty low initially, but there's a lot of space that can offset the reduction in cars.

Similarly on Martin Luther King, right through the heart of downtown, 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. These are just planning level visualizations and so a lot of details need to be worked out, but these are the major ideas.

So that's about it, if you have any questions specifically on anything, I'm happy to field them or have a discussion.

Mr. London: Does anyone have any questions? Comments? Thank you very much, Jack.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

Meeting adjourned.