

**AREA PLAN COMMISSION OF TIPPECANOE COUNTY
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

DATE..... December 8, 2021
TIME..... 6:00 PM
PLACE..... Tippecanoe Room (Virtual)
County Building
20 North 3rd Street
Lafayette, IN 47901

MEMBERS PRESENT

Gene Kroeschen
Jim Beaty
Deanna McMillan
Shannon Stanis
Steve Clevenger
Lynn Nelson

STAFF PRESENT

Tim Strohshine
Aria Staiger

Tim Strohshine called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. He conducted a roll call of the members present.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Steve Clevenger moved to approve the minutes from the September 08, 2021 meeting. Deanna McMillan seconded, and the minutes, as submitted, were approved by a roll call vote.

II. PROGRAM

Metropolitan Transportation Plan Project List

Tim Strohshine said this is something we are currently in the process of developing. He displayed a map of what APC has put together for the previous version of the plan, the 2045 Transportation Plan, and this is to give people an idea of what this effort might look like once it is completed. This is what we came up with for the 2045 Plan for highway projects, but we also have several other types of projects, for example, intersection improvements and reconstruction of existing roads. Tim presented a list of the recommended highway projects, and he stated he wanted to point out the cost column. He stated that is significant because these estimates are something that we work on with our local government engineers. We also have some projects from our partners at INDOT. They gave us the project name, description, project location, and a cost estimate. We also have a summary of project costs by jurisdiction.

The non-motorized projects are what we would like to spend more time on at this meeting. This is something we have been working on with some of our stakeholders to gather some feedback on. Tim presented some examples of potential trail projects. He stated this map shows us that there are several different trails that could be constructed. The blue lines on the map show an extensive trail network that, once completed, would allow people to get to a lot of different places along major roads using something that is safer than the shoulder of the road. One thing we have been doing with the stakeholder group is gathering some feedback, and one of the big issues that they mentioned was the issue of crossing streets. When people are on a trail and come to an intersection, how do they safely cross that intersection? Turning vehicles are a challenge, because they aren't always looking for non-motorized traffic, and that is a high potential for an injury or a fatality. What is very important is how we mark crossings and what kind of traffic control we have.

There are different types of treatments we could use. One example is pavement markings that denote more than just a crosswalk to alert drivers that other users are going to be crossing at these intersections. There are certain types of crossing signals with flashing lights or reflective beacons that can also assist in safe crossings.

Tim displayed a map showing trails along the major roads. Sometimes when people go biking, they want to use the trails along the major roads and end up at a State Park or other recreational facilities. The question is how we get people from these trails along major roads to that system of trails that they can use for recreation. Similarly, APC is looking at sidewalks. We are working to get a more aggressive sidewalk policy in a document we call our Thoroughfare Plan. We discussed this plan before, but the Thoroughfare Plan says when a new development comes in, either a new subdivision or redevelopment, we want to make sure we are getting sidewalks. That way, people can get not only from their house to their neighbor's house, but also get from their house to a shopping center or a restaurant.

Deanna McMillan asked if the county has a list of contractors that are prequalified to do some of those specialty items like curbs, sidewalks, handicap access, striping with approved colors, etc. Would there be an expense associated with identifying contractors that are able to do that kind of specialty work?

Tim Stroshine said it depends on the project scope. If that work is being completed as part of a larger project, it would be bid out, so it would be the responsibility of the contractor that won the bid to perform that work. If it is a smaller maintenance project, the local jurisdictions do have contracts with pre-approved contractors that they could contact to do some of that work at different intersections throughout the city.

Deanna McMillan said she is trying to get a grasp of what the local and regional impact would be of a project on a large magnitude. Maybe five years ago, there was an effort to put in curbs and handicap access on the sidewalks, and it seemed like every sidewalk in Lafayette was under construction, so there would be a big impact if we didn't have an idea of who could do the work and do it effectively.

Tim Stroshine said again, it would just depend on what kind of project it is. For a larger project, whoever would win that bid would be responsible for that work and the road construction portion of the work. If it is a smaller project, such as a jurisdiction with several different intersections where they need to redo the curb cuts, then they might just hire one contractor and sign a contract with them.

Tim Stroshine said with the sidewalks, the overall goal is to make sure that they are more accessible to all users. APC undertook a project this fall where we went to Dayton and did a sidewalk inventory. We looked at all the sidewalks to see what condition the surface was in, to see if there were any trip hazards, and to see if the sidewalk is heaving from roots pushing up and making it impossible for someone in a wheelchair to pass on that portion of the sidewalk. We looked to see if there were spots on the sidewalk where the surface was worn away or perhaps if there was a manhole or utility cover impeding the sidewalk. APC is planning on continuing that with some of the other small towns of Tippecanoe County. For Lafayette and West Lafayette, the City Engineering Departments are working on their own efforts to improve sidewalks. APC is working to fill this gap for the smaller communities that may not have the resources to do it for themselves.

For bike facilities, we are looking to see if there are some areas where APC can put in bike lanes. We are looking to see what will make bicyclists feel safer, and what we must do to protect them. We know that bicycle lanes do have some value, but a lot of times cyclists don't necessarily feel quite as safe when they are in the bicycle lane. Just having some paint between a cyclist and a vehicle doesn't necessarily make cyclists feel safe. The other primary solution is putting in separated trails. APC prioritizes these trails, but the issue is that they are a more expensive. If there are places where bicycle lanes could help a little bit and the cost is cheaper to put them in, then cyclists can get some value from them. That is what we are looking at with this, as the map shows, they are mostly in the cities; especially in the older downtown area where it is harder to get trails installed.

Steve Clevenger said he has noticed, over the years, a lot of construction that is originally planned as a four lane reconstruction, but they ended up building it as one lane in each direction with a very wide "suicide

lane.” An example is Lindberg Road and Klondike Road. Then they could be able to put in the bike lanes on either side at the edge of the road along with a trail. Why do they do that; would it not be better to add a couple feet on each side to accommodate bicycle lanes rather than making it so that you will never be able to have four lanes and the bicycle lane at the same time when the need arises.

Tim Stroshine said the reason why they do that has to do with cost. If you don't put it all in at the same time, you can get the project finished more economically initially, but that does lead us to the long-term problem when there's not enough right-of-way to get everything we want in the right-of-way, and in those cases, we would prefer only having a trail as opposed to a trail and a bike lane. Sometimes, the road gets paved first, then the trail comes later. By doing it that way, one small advantage is it allows you to have a bike lane initially, and then once a trail comes in, another lane could be added. Then you could have four lanes and a trail.

Steve Clevenger said for example, the new Lindberg Road that just opened was originally proposed as a four-lane road. It is not necessarily needed as a four-lane road right now, but over the years as you get growth, you may need that extra width. Why not plan for a little bit more. You will still have a bike lane because a lot of commuters like using the bike lanes as opposed to trails where you must stop so often.

Tim Stroshine agreed.

Steve Clevenger said in order to add bike lanes to a road, if it ever needed to be converted to four lanes, you would need to dig-up and redo all the gutters and storm sewers in order to do that, so you are talking about major reconstruction again. When you have the width for a four-lane road, it seems like a minor expense to just add a little bit more pavement.

Tim Stroshine said that these design decisions tend to be made by the local government engineers and their consultants. APC is not always involved in that level of decision making, and with funding the way it is, this makes for a big challenge.

Steve Clevenger said in contrast we will get the Cumberland Road extension, which is four lanes, but that ends at Klondike Road. Whereas Lindberg Road ends up hitting Jackson Highway and SR 26, you would think that would be a better option for a four-lane road. Cumberland Road does have a trail, but it doesn't have bike lanes. Then, near Wake Robin you have a lot of people, especially during the Lindberg Road reconstruction, making left-hand turns out of the passing lane. Why can't they think ahead and accommodate for a left turn lane there. When they design these, there is a lot of planning that needs to be thought through a little more.

Tim Stroshine said that is a fair point. He asked for any other questions regarding trails, sidewalks, or bike lanes. There were none.

Tim said the next topic is transit facilities. APC is looking to partner up with CityBus and see what we can do about making the bus stops more consistent in terms of what amenities they have. For anyone who uses the bus system, what is available for people varies widely from stop to stop. Some stops will have a shelter, a bench, and informational signs. Other stops will just have a sign with no other amenities. APC is trying to look at how we can fund those. The first thing we are working on is what funding might be available to help with that. CityBus has taken an inventory of their bus stops, and they have identified some of the locations where they might want to add some amenities, so there are plans to go ahead and construct several new shelters or at least add benches at some of these bus stops. That's a short-term plan. Long term, APC is looking at how we can make sure that the shelters are maintained at the stops and people have a safe place to wait, especially during inclement weather. We are working directly with CityBus on this.

Tim Stroshine said the next item to discuss is the new Infrastructure Bill. There is a lot of funding for trains, funding for electric vehicle charging, etc. Because some of it is new funding, we are not sure whether the State Department of Transportation will be managing it or if it will be managed at a local level, and we are not sure how we are going to use those funds or if we are even going to get a chance to have a say in how those funds are used. It is something that we are monitoring, and we are certainly hopeful that, at the very

least, we will have a chance to give some input regarding how those funds are spent. The 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan is going to be adopted in June of 2022, and we are not sure if we will have guidance from the federal government about some of the new funding by then, so that may be amended into the plan later once we get some more information. Tim asked for any questions.

Tim Stroshine said if you are interested in giving us some more specific comments about some of these things and would like those comments included in the plan, e-mail us at apc@tippecanoe.in.gov, and then we can set-up a method for you to get in touch with us. We do have some specific stakeholder groups that are meeting regarding some of these topics. I can get you a link to those virtual meetings. APC can take written comments, or can meet with you individually if that is what you prefer.

Deanna McMillan asked is there any way to go public with that, so other organizations can know that this plan is available. She suspects there are people who would like to have this information or have some input. She asked if there is a way to seek public input.

Tim Stroshine said we have done a couple things to seek-out public input. We have put together surveys that we distributed through our social media accounts, and we did receive good comments that will also be included in the plan. We had specific questions in those surveys that focused on some of these same areas.

Deanna McMillan said with this undertaking, since all the details are not apparent, there would be some other questions. She thinks this would be a good time to make an inquiry where there could be a broader input. She said to provide an opportunity for feedback from a larger group. She was thinking maybe a survey on a Facebook page or social media.

Tim Stroshine said when we were doing the surveys we did reach out to other organizations, and we had them share it on their social media pages as well, so it wasn't just ours. We used different social media platforms; we used Facebook, Nextdoor, and Twitter, and we did have other community organizations post the same link to the survey on their social media platforms. We do plan to have a couple more opportunities for people to comment on other aspects of the plan as well, and we will use some of the same methods to try to get it to as many different places as possible. He asked for any questions or comments.

Steve Clevenger asked if the slides were available online.

Tim Stroshine said everything I am showing you, is in the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan which is available online.

Steve Clevenger asked for confirmation that the slides were from the 2045 Plan and not the 2050 Plan. APC is just looking at the 2045 to plan for the 2050, so that is why no changes were noted for the 2050 MTP from the 2045 MTP.

Tim Stroshine said that this is correct. The 2050 changes are a work in progress, so we do have some changes on it, but nothing is finalized, and APC has been trying to get in contact with INDOT specifically to talk about some of their projects. INDOT also wants to check the financial statements that we put in there, so that will need to get finished before we can get this distributed.

III. QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Aria Staiger said there were no public comments on the streams.

Tim Stroshine said he wanted to mention the meeting dates for 2022. We will continue to meet quarterly; we will meet on March 9th, June 8th, September 14th, and December 14th. Also, when we send out the packet for these meetings via e-mail, we are going to include an Outlook Calendar invite, so everyone can get this on their calendars.

Aria Staiger said she wanted to add that the 2022 meetings will be held virtually again this year, and for the public, we have the Tippecanoe Room here at the county office building if people want to show-up in person.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Tim Stroshine adjourned the meeting at 6:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Ewen
Recording Secretary

Reviewed By,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Hittle", with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

David Hittle
Executive Director