

Steve Clevenger said this plan is generally amended as needed each year.

Deanna McMillan joined the meeting at 6:10 pm.

Tim Stroshine said the next term he wanted to discuss is designation number, or des number. This term will be seen in the documents sent by staff. This is a numerical code used to quickly identify transportation projects. Des numbers are used because INDOT and FHA deal with numerous projects, so it is easier to assign them a number.

David Berkey asked how close the Comprehensive Plan and the TIP are related.

Tim Stroshine said the Comprehensive Plan combines zoning and land use considerations by incorporating the Unified Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and Thoroughfare Plan.

III. PROGRAM Thoroughfare Plan Update

Tim Stroshine said the Thoroughfare Plan is part of the Comprehensive Plan. There are multiple parts to this plan. The first part considers the character of the area (if it is urban, suburban or rural.) There is a boundary that defines the difference between them. The plan then fits certain elements into the road right-of-way. (A right-of-way is the land acquired for a transportation project.)

Deanna McMillan said she has a different context for this phrase. She used to work for public utilities and the term "right-of-way" was used to describe the sidewalk area where the utility cable would be buried. Much of this area does not have sidewalk. She asked if there is a presumed right-of-way where there would be public utilities and public domain even if it is immediately adjacent to residential property.

Steve Clevenger said an easement would be used instead of right-of-way.

Deanna McMillan asked if easement and right-of-way are used interchangeably.

Tim Stroshine said it depends on where the project is located. Some areas the right-of-way will be the pavement and the shoulder. There are some cases where utilities are handled by easements.

Deanna McMillan said an assumption can be made that there are some areas of easement or right-of-way in residential areas regardless of if there is a sidewalk.

Tim Stroshine said that the old way was to have a defined right-of-way and then determine how much can go into it. Staff believes this is backwards. It is better to determine what the road needs to function to move traffic, people, and goods. People want to walk on sidewalks or bike on trails, not just drive cars. It is important to include these considerations in the plan. The updated plan will ensure when there is a new subdivision, there will be sidewalks. Staff thinks that will help improve the quality of life and the quality of the area. The old plan used a two-step process and the updated plan uses a three-step process. The first step considers development intensity. He showed a map of different development intensity areas. The second step considers land use, which uses broad categories. The third step considers street design, which is everything that goes into the street, like pavement, sidewalks, shoulders, curb and gutters.

Shannon Stanis asked what the white area on map was.

Tim Stroshine said that white on the map is the residential area.

Steve Clevenger said the white is residential and the green on the outside is rural. The greenish color in the middle is the mixed-use areas and the light blue is commercial and industrial.

Elva James asked if the green area is the non-urbanized part of the county when it comes to transportation.

Tim Stroshine said this is not exactly the urban boundary, but the urban boundary was taken into consideration while developing the Thoroughfare Plan boundary. There were conversations with

stakeholders about where sewage would be available in the next 25 years, and that helped to finalize the Thoroughfare Plan Boundary.

Deanna McMillan asked if a housing development would be considered urban.

Tim Stroshine said it would not necessarily be considered urban. There are some cases where subdivisions are developed outside of that area.

Deanna McMillan asked where an area in Lafayette that is urban but not downtown.

Tim Stroshine said 18th Street near Veteran's Memorial Parkway is an example of that.

Shannon Stanis asked if 18th Street would still be considered downtown.

Tim Stroshine said downtown might end at 9th Street for the purposes of this plan.

Shannon Stanis asked if the Lincoln neighborhood is considered urban.

Tim Stroshine said that is urban. The little red area on the map is the only downtown urban.

Deanna McMillan said most of the mixed-use space is urban. She asked if there is an urban area in West Lafayette that is separate from Lafayette.

Tim Stroshine said there is a portion of urban space that goes into West Lafayette.

Deanna McMillan asked if that urban space goes all the way to River Road.

Steve Clevenger said it goes up to Northwestern Avenue.

Deanna McMillan asked if the town area starts across SR 26 or US 231.

Tim Stroshine said towns are specific to spot areas.

Deanna McMillan asked what the Klondike Road area would be considered.

Tim Stroshine said that area is considered urban.

Shannon Stanis asked what area is rural.

Tim Stroshine said the orange area on the map is considered rural.

David Berkey asked what the black area represented.

Tim Stroshine said that is Shadeland and Otterbein. We do not have jurisdiction over them. Shadeland, which is part of Union Township, is a special exception. There was a law that briefly allowed a township to become its own entity and Shadeland is the only example in the state of this.

Elva James asked if West Point was a part of that area.

Tim Stroshine said no, West Point is not included. They could be part of the Area Plan Commission if they agreed to participate and follow our ordinances. They have chosen not to join, and we respect that.

Deanna McMillan asked when this happened.

Steve Clevenger said this happened in the late 1990's.

Tim Stroshine said the Thoroughfare Plan tries to project out 25 years which explains why some of the areas on the fringe do not seem urban now but may be in the future. We want to make sure to allow for

expansion of the urban area if the primary conditions to develop, sanitary sewer and water, are present. Just because this map puts something in an urban area does not mean development can automatically happen. The next component in the Thoroughfare Plan is Land Use which covers what people do in certain areas. This is broken down into four categories: commercial/industrial, mixed-use, residential, and rural. These categories are similar to those previously discussed but it is important to remember the parts of this plan are taken one step at a time. He asked for questions.

Deanna McMillan asked what the income generating areas are called in Tippecanoe County.

Tim Stroshine said they are called TIF districts.

Deanna McMillan asked if they are included in this and if they are, which category do they fall under.

Tim Stroshine said yes, they are included but it depends on which category they fall under. We put them mainly in the urban area boundary. For example, Hoosier Heartland on SR25 follows the border of the TIF district.

Gene Kroeschen asked if these match the zoning of the properties.

Tim Stroshine said the boundaries do not exactly match the zoning, which is why there is a potential challenge with this. No matter where we draw these lines, they may not match all the zoning. Zoning is just one tool in our tool box. It is a fluid thing that changes; there are times when developments must clean up a property that is comprised of different zones by going through the rezone process with the Area Plan Commission.

The third component of the plan is street design, which includes the different types of users on the street and based on that it will be divided into a classification. He said he did not include a map for this because staff is currently working on this section.

David Berkey asked for an example of a one-way arterial road.

Tim Stroshine said 3rd or 4th Street downtown is an example of this. These are one-way streets that carry a lot of traffic. This part of the plan is still on-going. We are creating a design standard using the street classifications and assigning the classifications to existing roads. Each classification comes with a laundry list of things. We are not only looking at pavement but also bike lanes, width of the road, trails, sidewalks and other considerations that are more technical engineering. He presented some design tables and maps of a downtown area and a mixed-use area. He said you'll notice some footnotes on the tables. When the table says "design," that indicates the road is subject to certain criteria by INDOT or local ordinance. When the table says "not applicable," that indicates that for those types of streets, we do not want to see that element on that type of street. For example, on street parking on a road like Sagamore Parkway is not desirable.

David Berkey asked if any of the this has to do with actual traffic counts. He said this is done with physical measurement to declare a road as primary arterial is designated by measurement of the pavement not the volume of cars.

Tim Stroshine said there are several metrics used to classify a road designation. Traffic counts is just one measurement used. We also analyze what type of function we want roads to have.

David Berkey asked if staff planned to classify all the existing roads in the city or is this for new development.

Tim Stroshine said staff will be doing both.

Elva James asked if this has already been done. The flow of traffic has been changed on some roads and is working well.

Tim Stroshine said because this plan is not official yet, the jurisdictions are not bound by it. However, because we know that this plan is coming, we try to funnel some of the concepts of this plan into current development in the community.

Steve Clevenger said there is a current Thoroughfare Plan that has some updates and standards.

Tim Stroshine said this new plan is not done quite yet. Once it is finished, there will be footnotes for the development community.

Deanna McMillan asked about the availability of bus service.

Tim Stroshine said it depends on the route. CityBus is the primary provider. When the routes run is their choice. They have tried to expand service for several routes recently. Being constrained by funding is a challenge they face. They must spend funding within certain requirements like drivers, maintenance and stops. Unfortunately, we do not have around the clock bus service, due to insufficient funding to maintain that type of service.

Deanna McMillan said adding one development near campus may change demand.

Elva James said Area IV services have started offering transportation services in areas that are not urbanized. There is a schedule and it does not run all day.

Deanna McMillan asked if there is 24-hour bus service to the YWCA shelter.

David Berkey said most everything stops around midnight.

Tim Stroshine said some stop earlier at 6 or 7 pm.

Elva James said this is a problem for people that work night shift.

Deanna McMillan asked about Lafayette Urban Ministry.

David Berkey said they have a few of their own buses. He asked if the bus service has their own tax area. They could always tax more to be able to provide more services.

Elva James said they offer services with their wheelchair accessible buses. CityBus is willing to give those to Area IV because, operating accessible buses is a money losing proposition for CityBus.

David Berkey asked if this service is an on-demand basis.

Elva James said that is correct and Area IV has 12 buses. They do not want to get in the way of CityBus and their services. Getting people places they need go and not just to doctor appointments is important.

Deanna McMillan said it is important for people to get to homeless shelters, the crisis center, or domestic violence shelters. Some people are from out of town and don't have access to these services.

Elva James said in Otterbein, which is considered Tippecanoe County, there is no bus service. Area IV serves Benton County to help with this.

Deanna McMillan said that is a big gap. She said she did not know that the bus service stops everywhere. This is an issue for those that work at the factories like SIA, especially if they work 2nd or 3rd shift.

Elva James said some places, like Kirby Risk, have their own vans to pick up workers.

Tim Stroshine said CityBus has tried to run routes out to the factories, but they have not been able to sustain enough riders. They tried to have partnerships with different businesses to maintain funding.

Elva James said we could potentially do more, but transportation is expensive. They have to hire drivers and drivers have to do multiple tests to get hired.

Tim Stroshine said a CDL is a big permit for a lot of places.

Elva James said drug and alcohol screening and training classes must be taken.

Deanna McMillan said she trains people for certifications for Work One. Getting a person through training and to show up for work is difficult.

Elva James said INDOT has more requirements than a Medicaid van driver.

Tim Stroshine said as for the classification of roads, he is looking for feedback on the changes to the plan. He asked if email would be the best way to get feedback. He said he is not sure if this will be ready by the next quarterly meeting.

Steve Clevenger said that email is the best way to communicate the plan.

Tim Stroshine said he wanted to show an example with this plan, using 20 N 3rd Street as the location. He said we are in the urban downtown zone in a mixed-use area. The next step would be to determine the road classification. Third Street is a one-way primary arterial road. Based on the classifications given, this road would be subject to certain design standards. There are different options that are subject to the discretion of the city engineer. Some of the options include sidewalk width or using a trail instead of a sidewalk. If a trail would be constructed, it would have a 10-foot width to allow two-way travel.

Deanna McMillan asked if that is what was done on campus along State Street.

Tim Stroshine said that is a cycle track, which is a little different. An example of a trail would be the trail outside of Walmart in West Lafayette or Happy Hollow Trails.

Shannon Stanis asked if there could be wider sidewalks in the urban downtown mixed-use area.

Tim Stroshine said yes, there can be sidewalks wider than 6 feet. There would be 6 feet that would be considered travel area and an additional space that would be a buffer area for utilities or trees.

Shannon Stanis said even in that case, the area is still not wide enough. She asked what the minimum sidewalk width is based on.

Tim Stroshine said the width is based on federal design standards called PROWAG which regulate sidewalks to ensure ADA accessibility. PROWAG requires a minimum width of 5 feet.

Shannon Stanis said APC has decided that a 6-foot width is better than a 5-foot width in our community.

Steve Clevenger said it is important to remember that the urban downtown is existing and limited by the buildings. The buildings cannot be torn down to widen the sidewalk.

Shannon Stanis asked if this plan is only for new road development.

Tim Stroshine said it is for both new development and redevelopment.

Steve Clevenger said in the urban area, there will be existing roads unless a block is torn down.

David Berkey asked if the sidewalk width would vary between existing development and new development. There are sometimes mixed-uses that don't blend well with other uses. For example, South River Road had a sidewalk built, but when it got to US 231, there was a different standard. There is a sign in the middle of the sidewalk that does not allow people to go any farther. If there was a new development on Third Street, would it have to go to a wider design standard?

Tim Stroshine said the process for this is not finalized.

David Berkey said the mixing of uses is not a wise design.

Shannon Stanis said she thinks the opposite can be argued. The wider sidewalks are appealing to people no matter where they are located. We want them to be in the mixed-use urban area in front of shopping areas and allowing restaurants more space for seating.

David Berkey said he disagrees based on keeping unity of the existing development.

Tim Stroshine said the reality of this is that planning is a challenge. There are no two ways about this. Sometimes projects develop a block at a time. In a lot of the downtown areas, unless a building comes down, wider sidewalks with the buffer will not be possible.

Shannon Stanis asked if the trees are included in this.

Tim Stroshine said we have a standard to provide a buffer area, where trees can be planted.

Gene Kroeschen said the utilities can sometimes take up the space where trees would be planted.

Tim Stroshine said that generally we would like to see the wider sidewalks to fit both the trees and the utilities. However, in some of the older areas downtown, we can only develop within the space available.

Deanna McMillan asked if trails could be developed as opposed to sidewalks. That would be a compromise.

Steve Clevenger said it is not likely to see trails in a downtown area.

David Berkey said Earl Avenue between South Street and Kossuth all the way down to Main Street had large portions of the front property removed to put in a 10-foot trail. He said he is unsure that taking the frontage of multiple businesses to build a trail was the most practical use of the land.

Deanna McMillan said she can think of other areas that would have benefitted from a trail.

David Berkey said with the new standards, this type of road may be the requirement.

Steve Clevenger said this allows for preservation, so when someone redevelops the land in the future, there is a wider footprint.

David Berkey said that in some of the areas where sewer work was done, they decided to add this additional development.

Steve Clevenger said they extended right-of-way but did not take down buildings. They were still limited and had to take land.

David Berkey said there is much more asphalt now because they removed the trees.

Steve Clevenger asked about the one-way pair arterial roads with on street parking. He said right now, most one-way pairs are labeled as not applicable when it comes to on-street parking.

Tim Stroshine said with the plan we have now, we will not go in and change things. The new plan will envision what will happen if there is new development.

Steve Clevenger said that in the urban downtown area that currently exists, there should be on-street parking at least on one side.

Tim Stroshine said this map does not yet show that much of these design decisions will be at the discretion of local government. He said he has had discussions with local government engineers about their frustrations with what the current plan does not allow. These engineering professionals can help with the

design standards. Leaving some of the decisions to local government engineers allows for more accurate variances to be granted in certain situations. However, if the plan is written to seem like local governments can do what they want, then why do we have these standards? We are trying to strike balance with this plan to allow good development with a set process for different scenarios. It is impossible to make a plan that will cover everyone's needs so it is important that we put forth our best effort to strike the right balance. He thanked everyone for their input.

Gene Kroeschen asked how overhead utilities fit into this plan and if they can be put into the ground instead. Most streets have them on at least one side, some even have them on both sides.

David Berkey said utilities have been hung on poles for 200 years now.

Deanna McMillan said the poles and the cables are meant to last for a long time.

Shannon Stanis asked what the life expectancy is of a buried utility.

Deanna McMillan said because there is no pole, they will be there until they are removed.

Steve Clevenger said in new development, utilities will be required to be buried.

Deanna McMillan said the contracts for overhead utilities are written into the mortgage for the lot of land.

David Berkey said the right-of-way is there regardless, so it does not prevent companies from putting utilities in the ground.

Deanna McMillan said if there is not overhead utility in the development area already, its unlikely overhead utilities will be installed.

Tim Stroshine said it is our preference that utilities be buried.

David Berkey said there was always the tug and pull between Area Plan and city engineers when it comes to development. He asked if this plan will be easy for the developers to work with.

Tim Stroshine said there are pros and cons to this plan. This plan gives developers more flexibility in terms of how wide the right-of-way can be. One of the cons for developers would be that some of the items we ask for (like wider sidewalks) will cost them more money. We are requiring these amenities to improve quality of life.

David Berkey said in Wildcat Valley Estates, there is not a sidewalk in sight and it would not look great with sidewalks. The quality of life there is good. He asked if a developer would be able to have this type of development with this plan.

Tim Stroshine said our ordinance allows different types of developments to happen. It would be possible but would need to be negotiated with local government.

David Berkey said in these types of upscale, urban rural developments, it would be unnecessary to put in sidewalks because they do not need them.

Tim Stroshine said there is a process that the developer would have to go through in order to do that. They cannot decide by themselves to leave sidewalks out of an area where they are required. Another issue with that is connectivity; if there are sidewalks in the adjoining neighborhood, there must be sidewalks in the new development.

David Berkey said Area Plan has allowed subdivisions to be developed without connectivity for many years.

Steve Clevenger said when the roads in those areas are redeveloped, the connectivity will be built.

Elva James said the city does not usually have much say in these developments. There may not be zoning changes needed for the development.

David Berkey said there is no connectivity because there is spot zoning. Cornfields that were once agricultural zoning become residential zoning with 400 to 600 homes.

Deanna McMillan asked how someone can get bus routes changed to locations that are not being as well served and where they would be able to get information on bus funding. People at Home with Hope do not get regular bus service to be able to get to work. She asked where someone would be able to speak about special interests in transportation.

Elva James said there is a Comprehensive Transit Plan.

David Berkey said it would be a good idea to go to the building on Canal Road and speak to the manager of CityBus.

Elva James said there is only so much they can do with the funding they receive.

Steve Clevenger said a definite need for the change would need to be shown.

Deanna McMillan said ridership or secured funding would be the biggest factors. Some people would eventually buy their own cars and no longer need to ride the bus.

Tim Stroshine said to email him with specific questions if you would like contact information.

Deanna McMillan said most people at Home with Hope are in recovery and do not have vehicles, so they rely on public transportation.

Gene Kroeschen said altering the hours of operation would be more difficult than altering bus stops or routes.

Elva James said CityBus is doing what they can with what they have. They have added more stops, but it is not enough.

Deanna McMillan said she has never seen more than 15 people on a bus at once.

Tim Stroshine said CityBus does a great job in comparison to other public transportation in the state. They are high performing because they maximize what they do with the resources they have.

Deanna McMillan said she is not criticizing CityBus. She said she is from an area where most people do not have cars and rely on public transportation.

Gene Kroeschen said the population per square mile is spread out.

Deanna McMillan said in the last five years, she has seen buildings go above four-stories on both sides of the river. West Lafayette is a different area when Purdue is in session. We live in an area where there is not an Amtrak service between two metropolitan cities. There is no way that a person would stay in Lafayette and try to commute to Chicago after graduation.

David Berkey said the demand for the Amtrak service never developed here.

Deanna McMillan said she understands that but if the downtown is being made more walkable with less places to park, this requires more options for commuting.

David Berkey said if a person wants to go a further distance like Chicago and they do not own a car, they can rent a car.

Deanna McMillian said there would be more attraction for students to stay in Lafayette after college if they had the ability to commute to Indianapolis or Chicago.

Steve Clevenger said the distance between Lafayette and Chicago is not commuter friendly.

Deanna McMillan said students that graduate and get jobs in Indianapolis will move to Indianapolis because there are not public transportation commuting options.

David Berkey said Lafayette and West Lafayette have a growing population; people want to live here.

Deanna McMillan said the transportation issue is more than just people that have lost their license. It is now becoming the people that are living in the new buildings in downtown Lafayette and West Lafayette. If their job is not here, they will move instead of commuting. Public transportation is limited in Lafayette while Indiana is number one in manufacturing jobs in the United States.

David Berkey said the most practical planning would be to have residential areas closer to these manufacturing plants to allow for people to get to work more easily.

Deanna McMillan said that is not the problem; you can get anywhere in almost 15 minutes when you work a shift that starts at 6 or 7. If you are in manufacturing, you're good.

David Berkey said if someone got a job in Indianapolis and they wanted to stay in Lafayette, they would have a transportation problem. That is not the most encouraging outcome of a plan to focus on that situation.

Deanna McMillan said if someone got a job in Indianapolis or Chicago, they cannot stay in Lafayette.

Steve Clevenger said in most cases, even if someone had their own car, they would still choose to move.

Deanna McMillan said that is because public transportation does not make it commutable.

Steve Clevenger said people would move because of the vast distance between the two cities.

Deanna McMillan said there are people in New York that commute to work in Washington DC.

David Berkey said those people that make that commute could move closer to Washington DC instead of commuting two hours there and two hours back.

Deanna McMillan said there is no way some people will do this, because if you are a legislator and you want to hold office, you cannot move your family to Washington DC.

David Berkey said that is a small population of people.

Deanna McMillan said there are a lot of people that commute in and out of the Capitol by Amtrak.

David Berkey said people can commute like that because the options are available.

Deanna McMillan said that is her point. The public transportation issue is becoming more of an issue now because there is a larger population that would be able to commute.

David Berkey said that is not the best solution for transportation planning because so much energy is being used to bring people to and from work. California has a concept of making sure people can live close to where they work so they do not have to spend 4 hours a day commuting.

Deanna McMillan said the point she is making is that there are two groups of people that need public transportation. It may not be justifiable to serve the first group based on a cost model analysis. These are people that have lost their license that struggle to get to work or homeless people that do not have stable living situations. The second group is people who have more stable situations, but do not own vehicles. If

there was an operating budget to extend these services for second or third shift workers, those people would have increased transportation options.

David Berkey said some of the new subsidized housing developments are not close to the manufacturing plants. Most of the people that live there do not have reliable transportation.

Deanna McMillan said she attends church with people that live in those housing areas and they work out transportation. She said she is talking about people that are 20-something that just graduated and are making \$50,000 or more a year that want to stay in Lafayette. When they are in school, they do not need a car because they live on campus or live in one of the nice apartments off campus. If they get job in Indianapolis, they will move because they do not have the ability to commute. Most kids that were raised in West Lafayette move away after graduation. Larger buildings are being built in Lafayette and West Lafayette for young professionals. We want them to stay here.

Elva James said her company has a contract with Enterprise to have a car on-site for car sharing. She said they have been trying to get two electric cars as well, but insurance has been too expensive.

Deanna McMillan said that is a good idea but that would not be functional in a large community.

Tim Stroshine said he would like to circle back to the agenda item. The problem with Amtrak is funding. Locally, there was some funding for Amtrak but that was pulled by the governor.

Deanna McMillan asked if these funds cannot be recovered.

Tim Stroshine said it is possible that they could be recovered. However, we do not have enough funding locally to support Amtrak, so we need a source outside of local funds.

David Berkey said having the appropriate ridership will also be important.

Gene Kroeschen said track rights will also be an issue.

David Berkey said he used to be an engineer that worked with the train system. The trains were required to be on the track at a certain to avoid facing a fine. It was difficult to get the train out of Chicago on time.

Deanna McMillan said Indiana should be the priority rather than Chicago if that is an issue. It would be tremendous to have a way to commute to Indianapolis.

Tim Stroshine said he agrees that there would some value to having a form of public transportation for people to commute to larger cities. However, it is a state-level issue to get funding for this type of transportation.

Bikes Count

Tim Stroshine said this effort has been around for the last few years to collect data on where bicycles are going. Until a few days ago, the plan was to continue by having volunteers take bicycle counts this year as well. However, Purdue has suspended classes after spring break which puts a strain on the count plan for this year. We want to continue tracking these counts in future years despite having something out of our control happen this year. There is a possibility of a fall count if things are more stable by then.

Deanna McMillan asked how count locations are selected and if they are located by housing developments or only on campus.

Tim Stroshine said counts are taken in both locations. The plan was to split this into two study times on campus and in Lafayette. Since the plans have changed, it may be fall when these areas are counted. He said he is willing to pass along more information on this item if people are interested in it. This project is a partnership with Bicycle Lafayette and they supply most of the manpower for these counts. Our staff organizes the counts and does the data analysis.

Deanna McMillan said the students that live in West Lafayette despite the public health situation are not going anywhere. She said her suggestion is to do a spring count but only at concentrated residential areas on campus. Students will still be going to the supermarket and where there is Wi-Fi. There may be more of a demand for gathering spaces for grad students and international students with the shutdown.

Elva James asked if the purpose of the study is to see if new bike trails are being utilized and if there is an area in need of additional bike trails.

Tim Stroshine said the purpose of this study is to find out where people are bicycling and at what volume. Campus undoubtedly has more bikers, but how many do they have relative to other areas in the community?

Deanna McMillan said there is a lot of traffic on campus. The skateboards and bicyclists are “road kill” after Purdue West because there is nowhere to bike.

Tim Stroshine said the second part of the study collects data about bicycle safety on the trails, sidewalks and streets. The bicycle data we obtain from this study is not as comprehensive as vehicle data, but we are starting to get a better idea of bicycle behavior in our community. Trends show us that people do not want to use vehicles as much anymore, so this information is important.

Social Media Outreach Discussion

Tim Stroshine said this agenda item is for generating ideas for topics to reach out to people via social media. As of now, we have this meeting to provide feedback, but this is a small group of people. We are looking to reach more people and social media can make this happen. But before this, we need to know what type of issues we want feedback on and what kind of strategy to use to reach people.

Elva James asked who the target audience is.

Tim Stroshine said it depends on the social media platform.

Deanna McMillan said you can reach a mass of people through Work One because people that are new to town, laid off or working through temp agencies that use their website frequently. Because of the volume of people, this would be a good place to reach out for questions.

Elva James said in terms of social media platforms, younger people don't use Facebook. They typically use Instagram or Twitter. She asked if there is a Facebook group set up for this.

Tim Stroshine said the county has a Facebook page that will be used and a Twitter account.

David Berkey asked if the neighborhood websites like Nextdoor would be used.

Elva James said the Greater Lafayette Chamber could be utilized.

David Berkey said the Nextdoor neighborhood pages are used by people that are concerned about their neighborhoods.

Steve Clevenger said that Sallie Fahey, the APC Executive Director, has responded to a few things on Nextdoor.

Elva James said Lafayette Chamber sends information out to a network of local groups.

Gene Kroeschen said the Nextdoor page can only send out information to your neighborhood and neighborhoods close by. The county government may be able to reach more neighborhoods.

Tim Stroshine said Nextdoor has been brought up as an idea previously. He said he does not know if the county has set up a page yet.

David Berkey said he uses Nextdoor to get information about things happening in the neighborhood, but it can be disorganized and the information may not be true. It is still a better resource than Facebook.

Elva James asked how the feedback will be processed and used by staff.

Tim Stroshine said the goal is for people that have concerns to have a space to discuss them. It is on us to start this by reaching out for comments. Some may be constructive, others may not but the goal is for this forum to grow into a place for meaningful discussion with focused surveys and opportunities for community members to get involved.

Gene Kroeschen asked if the comments will be public like Facebook or if comments and surveys will be sent via email. The comments being public will drastically change the type of discussion.

Tim Stroshine said the Tippecanoe County Facebook page is required by law to be public. It is considered a matter of public record.

Gene Kroeschen said people can be given a website link or email link where people can send comments.

Tim Stroshine said the type of comments will vary. We will start with general comments on social media to get people engaged. Eventually, there will be surveys to constructively get feedback on issues or to get information on how to resolve some concerns. Staff has used surveys in the past for other types of applications. This will be the first try at using surveys for public comment.

Deanna McMillan said a user group that is not as open as a Facebook page could be used. You could encourage people to start conversations by making posts.

Gene Kroeschen said it would be a government page, so people could not be denied access. It would be a public forum.

Deanna McMillan said user rules could be made.

Elva James said whatever comments are posted would have to stay.

Deanna McMillan said nothing would get posted until it is approved by an administrator.

Elva James said the comments or posts cannot be filtered.

Tim Stroshine said comments can be hidden if someone uses inappropriate language, but they cannot be deleted. There could be a separate page for this CPC group but there would still have to be a public mechanism.

Deanna McMillan said the Nextdoor groups are promoted by police to create an open discussion. There could be a competition for ideas on alleviating traffic between different neighborhoods.

David Berkey said in his experience using Nextdoor, it is difficult to get people to come to a meeting, but it is easy to get people to communicate through social media.

Deanna McMillan said she has not experienced that type of discussion using Nextdoor. However, if people are courteous in the discussions, then there can be structured conversations using Nextdoor.

Tim Stroshine said the competition would be a challenge because any project that uses federal money must go through an extensive review to make sure it does not adversely impact underserved groups. The competition could be viewed as something to get around that.

Elva James asked how much response is wanted from the public.

Tim Stroshine said there are going to be times when responses are not useful.

Elva James asked if there is a target number of responses or if staff just wants input. She said if that is the case, what do you want input on?

Tim Stroshine said the main goal is create a space for public forum. There are some governmental agencies that are farther ahead than us that have people that will actively post on there pages. This has been built over time as a place for people to voice their opinion or concern and get a response from their local government. This will be a place for feedback for us and a place where people can get an answer. It will take time to get through responses that are not constructive and to figure out how frequently to post to get people to respond.

Steve Clevenger asked how information can be filtered on the general county website or Nextdoor page. APC may need their own group or advertise on Nextdoor to get more people to join the groups without being buried under posts or comments that do not pertain to the APC page. It is not clear if people in different neighborhoods can see the posts of other neighborhoods.

Tim Stroshine said the Health Department has their own page. We would look to have our own page.

Steve Clevenger said it might be helpful to have an APC Transportation page to avoid having people complain about a rezone or subdivision. This is primarily a transportation committee.

Gene Kroeschen asked if this use of social media will be used for discussion of ideas submitted by the public.

Tim Stroshine said he does not mind if the public want to submit ideas for things but sorting through all the discussion will pose a challenge.

Gene Kroeschen said there could be a public post that directs people to the APC website to fill out a form with the idea or comment.

Steve Clevenger said that would not be social media, but social media could be used to direct people to the website to submit comments.

Tim Stroshine said there is value in having an open public forum because of the possible interaction between citizens and government. Once the dialogue starts and more people are involved, asking people to join other groups or participate in a meeting can be streamlined.

Steve Clevenger said a website that had a way of limiting discussion by category would make comments easier to sort through.

Elva James asked why staff wants public input. She asked if public input is required. She said she does not understand the purpose because if staff wants an open forum and input, they are going to get all kinds of responses.

Tim Stroshine said the intent is to get more meaningful comments on our planning efforts. When the 2050 Metropolitan Plan is rolled out, we would like to give the public a chance to review it and give their opinion. In order to build up to have meaningful discussion, we must start somewhere. We may have some angry people in the beginning, but we hope it will progress into what we want. For us to get public input, we have to go where people are like Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor. For example, the Highway Department has a place on their webpage to report a pot hole, but that is rarely used, because it does not go where people are. We need to go where people are in order to get them to engage in conversations.

Steve Clevenger asked if we are looking for specific feedback on specific items rather than general comments on transportation plans.

Tim Stroshine said we hope to get both eventually, that is the goal.

David Berkey said APC had an event at the West Lafayette library that invited the public to comment on a plan. He asked if this is a good way to get public involvement.

Tim Stroshine said it is a fine way to get public involvement but there are very few people that attend those meetings. These meetings have value, but it is limited in its reach. If we build a user base, more people may attend public meetings. Most people do not want to go to a government building, so we host them at libraries and other places.

Gene Kroeschen said on Facebook, only people that are following you can see your page or posts. Even then, only 10% of people will see it. Facebook may not be efficient at reaching a large base.

Steve Clevenger said Nextdoor would be better to reach people or advertise meetings.

Gene Kroeschen said if you want to reach a large base, send out a notice with each water bill.

Tim Stroshine said sending out notices with utility bills is a strategy that some government agencies have tried, and it has some merit. It would be great if we had the budget to do a media blast, but the reality is that we do not. One advantage of social media is that is free. There is no perfect system but if we can increase the amount of public comment per plan, that would help.

Elva James said staff should create a link to the APC page that members on the committee can share on their own pages. She said her organization has quite a few followers just like other churches and organizations that could share the link. The organization would have to be willing to share the information, but most would share the information.

Tim Stroshine said the best approach may be to send something out to the committee to see what agencies to contact. It would be helpful to say which committee member referred the organization in an email. This would be a great starting point.

Elva James said an event could be held at the North End or South End community center and invite the church communities to attend.

Tim Stroshine said we have hosted events at community centers previously. There was still low attendance. We are trying to revamp the displays for our events.

IV. QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

David Berkey asked if the transportation plan talks about things like Amtrak, railroad or air travel in the community.

Tim Stroshine said there will be a section of public transportation but will exclude the Amtrak. There will also be a section on commercial air travel. This plan will try to predict the future by determining if travel at the Purdue Airport will kick back up.

David Berkey said the airport director is doing research to get an air carrier back there.

Tim Stroshine said the airport director sits on our Technical Transportation Committee.

David Berkey said he has spoken with someone in another community where the trails in their county connected multiple communities. He asked how a community can do that.

Steve Clevenger said this could be done along abandoned railroad right-of-way and the Wabash River. The Wabash Heritage Trail runs along the river and there are plans to extend it to Delphi.

Tim Stroshine said there is a large trail planned with multiple proposed connections.

David Berkey asked if the trail under the bridge will be extended when Sagamore Parkway is redone.

Steve Clevenger said the trail is separate from the bridge project. The trail will be on the north side and go under the bridge.

David Berkey said he thought the bridge project was part of the original INDOT plan.

Steve Clevenger said the trail is separate from the bridge project, but they put it on there because of the idea of putting in a trail.

David Berkey said he thought that the trail was part of the original idea so that the other county trails would just need to connect.

Steve Clevenger said he believes the funding came from the enhancement funds. The funding for the bridge and the trail have to come from different pots of money.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Tim Stroshine adjourned the meeting at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chyna Lynch
Recording Secretary