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Creating Transit Centered Communities

A team of national experts held a workshop in Indianapolis on August 27th to share best practices and insight on Transit Oriented Development benefits, planning, financing and implementation. The workshop was made possible through a grant from *Living Cities*, a philanthropic collaborative of foundations and financial institutions focused on improving the lives of low income people and urban areas, and the Harvard Kennedy School's Project on Municipal Innovation. The team consisted of Catherine Cox-Blair (Reconnecting America), Jeff Kingsbury (Green Street Ltd.), Marilee Utter (Citiventure) and Dena Belzar (Strategic Economics).

You will find the presentations from the workshop on the MPO website at <http://www.indympo.org/Plans/MultiModalPlanning/Pages/Home.aspx> under the heading of "Recent Projects." The entire workshop was recorded by Channel 16 WCTY and will be televised. It is available for online viewing at http://indianapolis.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=3 under the special events category. The MPO is working to distribute the program to stations in surrounding counties as well.



A Greener Welcome

On October 7th, Eli Lilly and Company, in collaboration with Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc. (KIB), will landscape and enhance the interchanges that form the western gateway to urban Indianapolis for Lilly's third annual Global Day of Service. Nine thousand volunteers will swarm interchanges along I-70 from the airport to downtown Indianapolis, planting some 73,000 native plants, trees and shrubs, creating [A Greener Welcome](#) to our city.

To ensure safety of volunteers working along the highway and motorists who could become distracted, and to enable the project to be completed in 12 hours, a 6 mile section of I-70, from I-465 on the west side to I-65 downtown, will be closed from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday, October 7th.



A traffic management plan is in place for the temporary closure so traffic will be diverted to other roadways. Motorists will be notified while on the

roadways by overhead electronic message signs. Additionally, statewide media will be informed about this project so the public will be informed well before the event.

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ARRA Funds Benefit Small Community Transportation Projects: City of Southport's Walnut Street Improvement Project

In 2009, the [City of Southport](#) received \$154,341 for resurfacing and ADA improvements to the curbs and sidewalks on Walnut Street from Southport Road to Stop 10 Road. The Recovery Act funds also paid for the construction engineering activities associated with the improvements. Project construction started in July 2010 and was completed in August 2010, well ahead of the February 2012 deadline for completion of ARRA-funded projects.

The improvement project resurfaced a deficient roadway and brought curbs and sidewalks into compliance with ADA requirements. New signage and pavement markings were also installed as part of this project. The project received several accolades from Southport Mayor, Robin Thoman, and the City Council at the August City Council meeting. In addition, many Southport citizens have offered their positive comments and approval of this project.

This ARRA-funded project is a great example of how even the smallest of improvement projects can be a symbol of pride and progress for a small community such as Southport.

Restoring Plainfield's Historic Town Center: Town Center Streetscape Project

The [Town of Plainfield](#) is undertaking several related projects to restore and improve its original town center. The Town Center Streetscape project used multiple funding sources including three Transportation Enhancement grants totaling \$1,985,869, an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant in the amount of \$2,580,927, and local funds in the amount of \$2,207,103 for streetscape improvements along this two-mile long stretch of US 40. This project will enhance the aesthetics and pedestrian accessibility within the downtown area.

A comprehensive set of improvements include better defined intersections; elimination of on-street parking in favor of landscaping amenity zones to establish a more pedestrian friendly downtown environment; complete reconstruction of the pavement, curbs, and sidewalks; the replacement of the underlying storm sewers, sanitary sewers, and water mains; and installation fiber optic conduits and cables. New amenities include decorative railings, ornamental benches and trash receptacles, storm water planter areas, curb ramps, crosswalks and parking areas constructed of permeable pavers, new wider concrete sidewalks, ornamental street lighting with LED fixtures, way-finding signage, and numerous landscaping enhancements. The sewer system improvements enabled Plainfield to complete a significant separation of the existing combined sewers under the US 40.



See the August 2010 issue of Plainfield's [newsletter](#) for other projects happening there!



There's a New Main Street in Speedway

As a commercial hub for the [Town of Speedway](#), Main Street has, like many cities and towns across the state and country, seen a decreased level of retail activity over the past few decades. Likewise from an infrastructure standpoint, there has been a decline in the quality of the pavement, sidewalks, curbing and gutters. Armed with a sound vision and the support of the community, the Speedway Redevelopment Commission (SRC) and design partner, Indianapolis-based [American Structure Point](#), began construction of a new, improved Main Street in November 2009.

Currently underway is the locally-funded renovation of Main Street, which runs from 10th Street to 16th Street in the heart of Speedway. This stretch of road has been host to

Indianapolis 500 racers and victors; is a generational reminder of the Town's history in the automotive industry; and welcomes tens of thousands of mini-marathon participants to the Town.

The Main Street project was phased into four segments to allow maintenance of traffic, retail access and accommodation of the three major race events at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Included in the Main Street renaissance is:

- Replacement of existing sidewalk with wider, more pedestrian-friendly walkways;
- Enhanced curbside parking;
- Enhanced lighting, banner poles, benches, trash receptacles; and
- A bicycle lane and amenity areas.

Under-the-road improvements are also taking place. The Main Street project includes the installation of a storm sewer system to capture and convey rain water. The Town also replaced and upgraded an 80-year old sanitary sewer main and installed a new drinking water main to replace an antiquated piping system.

To meet aesthetic and environmental goals, sustainable design strategies were implemented, including features such as porous paver strips, which border the street and pedestrian walkway to capture and convey surface storm water. Linear rain gardens are recessed between the bike lane and pedestrian way, providing enhanced vegetation areas, infiltration basins, and surface storm water conveyance.

The Main Street project's goal is to provide a high-quality urban environment utilizing sustainable solutions on what is destined to become one of the most highly visible streets in the Town. The improvements will enhance economic development opportunities in the area, beautify Main Street, improve the environment and encourage outdoor use and alternative transportation.

As the project nears completion of Phase Three in late October, the vision is unfolding...

Traffic Calming, Pedestrian Connectivity and Neighborhood Identity: Historic North Meridian Street, Indianapolis

[HARMONI](#) is a community-based organization serving the Historic Midtown area of metropolitan Indianapolis. Midtown is generally bounded by the State Fairgrounds/Monon Trail, Broad Ripple/White River, Michigan Road, and Fall Creek. HARMONI seeks to enhance the livability of Midtown by addressing pedestrian connectivity and safety, traffic calming while maintaining traffic flow, and neighborhood district identity.

With the expansion of commuter traffic from the northern suburbs, Midtown neighborhoods have increasingly become divided by high-speed, high-volume automotive traffic. In 2009, HARMONI was awarded an MPO planning grant to conduct an environmental study, preparing Midtown area projects for design and construction in the event federal funds become available. [Storow Kinsella Associates](#) was selected as the lead consultant for the environmental study, with assistance from [Weintraut and Associates](#) and [HNTB](#).



Pedestrian Connectivity and Safety

There are gaps in the sidewalk system, including the lack of crosswalks for pedestrians across Meridian Street, Illinois Street and Westfield Boulevard. Despite the traditional neighborhood pattern, increased traffic and impediments to walkability have contributed to the decline of local business and sense of community.

HARMONI has proposed intersection and pedestrian improvements for Midtown, including raised landscape medians on Meridian Street and Westfield Boulevard along the Alice Carter Place frontage, new and infill sidewalks with tree lawns, and pedestrian crossings at several major intersections.

On the Meridian Street bridge over the canal, seating nodes will be developed along with protected pedestrian crossings.

Traffic Calming

There are significant traffic safety concerns at several intersections, such as at Westfield and Meridian, with dangerous turns and unclear wait zones. With increased commuting traffic loads on Meridian Street between the northern suburbs and downtown Indianapolis, speed and traffic management have also become a concern.

HNTB assisted in the development of a traffic study report for potential improvements on Meridian Street in the Midtown area, and for traffic engineering changes in the vicinity to support HARMONI's mission of neighborhood stabilization, walkability, bikeability and creation of inspired places. A range of potential traffic control actions were identified to address these issues. The traffic study made the following conclusions and recommendations:

- Re-time signal system for 35 mph throughout - traffic will flow better, while maintaining volume;
- Install traffic signals at Meridian & 54th and Meridian & 43rd;
- Install 4-way STOP at 56th & Central; and
- Install motorist information speed signs.

Neighborhood District Identity

In addition to reconstructed pavement and new sidewalks, curbs and gutters, improvements will include light poles, sign posts, and wayfinding signs. Materials that are compatible with the historic district will be utilized where budgets allow. Landscaping will have seasonal interest and mitigate microclimate impacts.

Taken together, the physical and operational improvements presented for this project will enhance the character of the area and improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, while maintaining the essential function of Meridian Street and surrounding roadways with respect to regional mobility.

IndyGo Updates

IndyGo Purchases New Hybrid Fleet

IndyGo plans to welcome 22 new 40-foot, low-floor buses into its fleet. Of those 22 buses, 11 will incorporate the latest electric hybrid technology, resulting in fuel savings, reduced emissions and smoother, quieter rides.

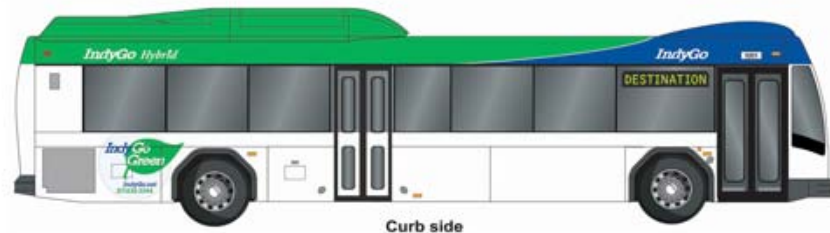
"We're very excited about adding these 'green machines' to our fleet as they will further accelerate our companywide 'Go Green' sustainability initiative," said IndyGo President and CEO Mike Terry. "Bus service, in general, is a 'greener' way to travel, but these hybrids will do even more to reduce the environmental impact on the city as well as lessen our dependence on fossil fuels."

IndyGo purchased these 22 replacement buses using grant dollars, local funds and stimulus money via the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The decision to convert 11 of the buses to hybrid came after IndyGo received an Electric Hybrid Grant initiated by Senator Richard Lugar.

Each IndyGo hybrid bus combines a diesel-fueled combustion engine, made by Columbus, Indiana-based Cummins, with a battery-powered electric motor, allowing it to deliver better fuel economy as well as generate 99.84 percent fewer emissions than a conventional bus. A Hoosier-built Allison transmission sends the power from the engine to the drive wheels.

These hybrid models also save energy by using regenerative braking systems, allowing the buses to capture and store energy while stopped in traffic. "Every time someone steps on their brakes, they are wasting energy," said Mike Moles, IndyGo's director of maintenance. "With regenerative braking, you can capture as much as half of that wasted energy and put it back to work, reducing fuel consumption up to 25 percent."

The 22 new IndyGo buses will hit the streets in January. They will join 133 other IndyGo buses, which include two 2004 hybrid models, and replace 25 buses from 2000 that have met the retirement requirements set forth by the Federal Transit Administration. The hybrid designs will be easily identifiable via the IndyGo 'Green' logo with the leaf.



IndyGo Adds Service Amenities

Communities often use Transportation Enhancement funds from the federal government to expand travel choice and strengthen the local economy. It's a program that better integrates a transportation system with the community it serves. Recently, IndyGo used some of these funds to add new bike racks and benches at several locations throughout the city including: College Avenue at 10th Street, 46th and 52nd Streets; Illinois and 46th Streets; and Broad Ripple and Carrollton Avenues.
