

Summary of Comments from Public Meetings Regarding
Recommended Northeast Corridor Transit System

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Executive Summary

Background

On April 30, 2008, the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) presented a route and technology recommendation for meeting the long-term transit needs of the Northeast Corridor of Central Indiana. This preliminary recommendation, part of the rapid transit study DIRECTIONS, was made at a special joint meeting of the Technical and Policy committees of the Indianapolis Regional Transportation Council (IRTC), the decision-making body of the transportation-planning process.

In its presentation, the MPO recommended using the Nickel Plate Line as the Northeast Corridor route – the first of seven routes in a proposed region-wide rapid transit system – and relying on Diesel Light Rail technology to provide rapid transit service along this route. To arrive at its recommendation, the MPO considered technical feasibility, capital cost and speed of implementation, as well as public input concerning selection criteria, system goals and preferred transit characteristics gathered through DIRECTIONS' community-involvement program.

After reviewing the presentation, the IRTC voted unanimously to present the MPO's recommendations to citizens in a series of public meetings.

The MPO and CIRT (Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority) scheduled a series of meetings in Indianapolis and Fishers to discuss the proposal and hear public comments that will be delivered to the IRTC. The members of the IRTC will use the information contained in this report to inform their decision. Their final recommendation (expected in September 2008) will initiate the next step in the process, the development of an environmental impact statement.

Summary of Comment

The following report includes a collection of the comments made in public meetings, in email and by phone since May of 2008. The notes that represent summarized public comments are intended to be comprehensive and to accurately represent comments made and questions asked in forums held throughout Central Indiana. The MPO and CIRT will continue to collect comments and feedback throughout this process, but we are providing comments to date in an effort to give current information to members of the IRTC.

In summary, the feedback and responses received from the public suggests that residents of Central Indiana believe the time has come for improved and new transit options. A significant majority of those providing comment agreed that something must be done to address the variety of transit issues we face, and that we must work quickly and efficiently to meet the needs of all of Central Indiana.

In most of the meetings, the public focused on recurrent themes. The panel presenting the recommendation agreed that many of these recurring concerns must be addressed in the environmental impact statement process, and committed to working with neighbors and citizen groups to better define the following concerns and seek solutions to highlighted issues.

A consistent statement of concern centered on the impact of the route on vehicular traffic in adjacent neighborhoods. At many of the meetings, speakers expressed worries about congestion at road-rail intersections such as those on Kessler Boulevard, 62nd Street and Allisonville Road. Additional environmental concerns related to engine noise, vibration, train whistles and air quality.

The diesel light rail recommendation received mixed reviews. Some expressed concern that the use of diesel fuel would not only pollute but also raise cost factors. Many citizens opposed the use of self-propelled diesel and asked that electrified options be given greater evaluation. The use of diesel haul locomotive as an incremental approach caused greater concern than the diesel light rail proposal. As the Fair Train is currently the only operation on the Hoosier Heritage Port Authority, neighbors expressed dismay that this service would be more frequent, and they encouraged the MPO again to consider higher technology in its initial, proposed system.

The negative impact that perceived noise and air pollution could have on property values also generated consistent concern. These impacts will have to be given thoughtful evaluation in the environmental impact process and should be considered as the MPO and CIRTAs address some of the emergent neighborhood impacts.

Members of the disability community encouraged accommodation for people with disabilities in any transit solution.

Many speakers expressed a desire that transit stops serve Marion County neighborhoods. These concerns revealed perceptions that the focus of the recommendation was on the service to those in suburban communities in Hamilton County. Clearly, a number of citizens want the final solution to incorporate stops in Marion County, with connections to existing and future IndyGo routes.

A question asked in every meeting focused on how essential system improvements would be funded. These questions are to be considered thoughtfully. Some citizens ask these questions because they support the idea of transit and want a progressive solution; others ask because they do not want a new tax. The question is highlighted here because it was asked regularly.

Lastly, citizens regularly expressed concerns that the route and technology decisions already have been made. This underlines the ongoing need for public involvement in this process. The MPO and CIRTAs have strived to engage the public in this process, and will continue to as work moves forward. All involved entities believe public involvement must be an extensive part of the program.

While many legitimate concerns have been presented, the most interesting recurrent theme revealed a public desire for more vision and faster progress. The chasm of whether or not now is the time for transit in Central Indiana seems to have been crossed. Many citizens commended the recommendation as responsible and needed. Some asked how they could be more involved.

In closing, the panel believes that the members of the public who addressed this issue are in general favorable to the idea of transit. All they ask is that it be delivered in an affordable way with the least amount of negative impact on their property values, environment, neighborhoods and quality of life.

June 12, 2008 – BRAG Meeting

Attendance: 110+

- Concern with stations and parking
- Concern regarding impact at grade crossings and stations particularly at 62nd-Kessler-Allisonville-environmental impact
- Question regarding whether CIRTAs had or needed taxing authority
- Question about the need for eminent domain and whether it would be used as funding source
- Why not AGT?
- Thinks will add time for commuters in cars due to impact at grade crossings
- Comment that it was better to use the existing track
- Opposition to a tax and new tax authority to fund this, did not believe that ordinance creating CIRTAs eliminated its taxing authority
- Encouraged to check out the EPA and their various grants
- Re-evaluate diesel vs. electric
- When asked, this audience gave resounding support to pay more for electric
- Use bio-diesel
- Check out Leipzig Germany
- Need better land use in Hamilton County and a huge out of county resident tax
- Need Grade separation at those-Kessler/62nd/Allisonville
- Should divert funding from I-69 and build commuter rail the way we should
- Can we politically divert the funding for I-69 (NE) improvement to transit
- Because this is the fair train, need to fix the congestion @ 62nd, Allisonville, Kessler, Dean Road
- School buses and congestion
- Find the compromise to lessen the impact of congestion created by the Fair Train
- Don't do it on the cheap
- Just make sure you do it in the right way
- What is reprioritization of state funding?
- This is the same as 4-5 yrs ago at Glendale
- What are the schedules?
- Please reduce adverse environmental impacts
- Please show us with computer modeling and traffic impacts
- There will be adverse effect on the property values-who is going to pay for it?
- Please estimate impact to property values
- Way to go-good resource presentation-it is not just for Hamilton County
- Happy that that this does reverse commute-really excited
- In Hamilton County-how to get to office and around Hamilton County
- How much does it cost?
- Really "hot"-thinks it's a great idea
- Innovation-great idea-old working w/new technology inside-great for business
- Need to give elected leaders a mandate to solve our transportation problem/fuel crisis
- Work with us on paths/trails/sidewalks/etc

- Not sure about new vs. old technology and how to respond changing demands of workforce, specifically requests of the telecommute-workforce wants telecommuting
- Pursue linear induction technology- i.e. Tomorrow land at Disney World
- How was Dallas funded?

June 16, 2008 – Historical Society

Attendance: 65-70

Media: WRTV, WTHR, WISH, WIBC, Indianapolis Star/INTAKE

- Timeframe?
- ADA access?
- Who has MPO talked to?
- Union Station needs to be upgraded.
- Noblesville-52nd St. as initial segment. Connect to IndyGo.
- IndyGo should be more visible. Improve the express routes.
- How can we justify a project that only reduces traffic by 3%?
- Provide upgraded wheelchair/blind/shelter areas.
- Better lockers at stations/bike areas on trains?
- Park & Ride locations?
- What are economic benefits? Show where benefits are realized. Show all benefits in public relations work.
- Build it sooner. Don't invest in I-465/I-69. Redirect highway money. "It's a crime" to spend so much on highways without investing in transit.
- Another alternative: Door-to-door using information technology. Use church parking lots as park & ride for 55-passenger buses.
- Start with Pennsylvania Line from Ironwood. Four bridges. Better track.
- Need to improve pedestrian/bike/bus and health systems as well. We need transit to get healthier lifestyles started.
- How many buses?
- Diesel is an antiquated technology. Very dirty. Use electric buses.
- Any efforts to preserve right-of-way in other corridors?
- How many cars travel corridor now?
- Bio-diesel good. Need to also restrict traffic.
- Trains to Speedway? Possible special event connection?
- After 17 yrs of study, finally made obvious decision.
- Public buy-in is needed for legislative decision/referendum. Plans for public buy-in?
- Who is policy committee? 3 people?

Public Comment-June 17, 2008-Glick JA Center

Attendance: 135-140

- How will bus service interact with rail service
- How often? Where are interactions?
- Heard this 1 year ago
- What will be impacts to real estate values?
- What will really be done-Allisonville Intersections-62nd, 86th, 96th
- No sidewalks infrastructure
- Coupon for late trains
- Suggested by the some in the crowd for planners to move next to the route
- When audience member asked if folks wanted train or bus; majority said trains.
- Where are transit stops-how will we ensure access and safe access

- Funding should encourage urban development
- Salt Lake increased property values
- Air pollution and noise pollution-traditional use of fair train-no to fair train
- Comment about where public meetings are occurring
- We made our bed w/interstate
- Is this for peak only-initially
- Is there a regional solution
- When will you start
- Thanks for acknowledging the prior stated concerns from other meetings
- Move/shift to downtown to airport then shift to the highest tech solution for the NEC
- Concern about construction impacts in backyards
- What will fares be
- Nerve racking with fair train (10 days) behind the house during State Fair
- Should be elevated/electric
- Work hours-how much noise will reconstruction make
- What will cost to riders be
- Need to have something-can't wait! Need to reduce dependence on cars and oil
- Will we be able to attract federal funding for this project
- Downtown to airport or Broadripple or Greenwood first-pay something \$2/ride
- We're starved for sidewalks/greenways- concerned about noise and wants "classy electric rail"
- 75th street floods
- Pay city income taxes if you work in city
- We need to pay for it
- Concern about "diesel" as the right technology-but we need something.
- Disheartened by the idea that diesel is recommended. Make the other investments in sidewalks/infrastructure
- Think about the impacts to neighborhoods such as Steinmeyer and Eastwood
- Train did not look quiet
- Shuttling people w/more buses-please no diesel
- I bought my house w/465-I knew that when I bought it-should put 465 money into transit
- What extent have we planned for compensation for property acquisition
- Concern about eminent domain and impact to property value
- Improve 62nd street
- Rapid transit only works if people ride
- What's ICE doing?
- If you need double-why start with only one track, won't you need 2 tracks and property? Will the ROW house 2 tracks?
- Doesn't look like you need ROW
- Why not Nickel Plate to 82nd, to Binford back to Nickel Plate
- Light rail is quiet in St. Louis
- Monon was hated, now great
- Property values go up
- Don't use the DMU
- Okay w/ DMU-but don't buy used stock
- Have you talked with CSX
- Don't think opinions are being heard
- Impacts by congestion, noise, hours of operation

- Train doesn't help me
- Focus on improved buses
- Avoid people's backyards
- Who's pushing this?
- What's wrong w/ buses-rather have buses than trains
- What will the impact of this be on the congestion in the car?
- Look at impacts to the Berkeley Grove Subdivision
- What about derailment?
- Didn't seem to have lots of concrete information
- Can we use rail to trails-preserve ROW
- Will there be sound walls?
- Is DMU more fuel efficient?
- Which city has more interstates than anywhere else? Take Binford. Don't change strategy to transit mid-stream.
- Are we looking at a regional system or just peak NE corridor? Are we building anything before 2035?
- What kind of equipment will be used to rebuild track?
- Every tax dollar invested in transit results in \$6 in economic development.
- Put station at 71st, not 75th.
- We spend \$1 billion for the stadium. We can afford this. Use income tax to fund it.
- What about the Glendale underground station – part of Glendale study as a bus transfer station?
- Concerned about diesel train. Build the Northeast Corridor when [self-propelled] electric technology becomes available. Train doesn't look quiet. Consider bus systems, especially private bus operators.
- Will CSX let us into Union Station?
- What are next steps?

June 18, 2008-Fishers

Attendance: 120-130

Media Indianapolis Star/InTake

- Too little, too late. Can't wait 30 years.
- Just pave the railroad. No stations. Use private coaches that go unused on weekdays. Allow buses and carpools on the busway.
- I ride CICS. Rapid transit is the next step. How many stops downtown? How will it be funded?
- This corridor was identified six years ago. There were concerns about noise then. People didn't want diesel. Why now? Northeast Corridor transit won't serve the rest of the region, such as Greenwood and Brownsburg. Put in bus infrastructure all around the region. Run private buses without support from tax dollars. Wait for quieter train technology.
- You are selling me a Band-aid. Make a truly regional rapid transit investment. The Northeast Corridor is not enough, especially if it takes 30 years to build in 5-year steps. Please, not in my back yard. There will be property impacts. The noise will take my backyard in the morning. If you're taking my money, do it all at once, do it right.
- I take the express bus. There were 10-12 people in February. Now 40-48 people are riding. Likes Chicago and Northwest Indiana transit. We need a starter solution now. Include both express and local service. 50-60 minute travel time is too long.
- I like the express bus. We need east-west transit too. Plan other "quadrants" or spokes and how to connect them.

- Need stops at sports venues, airport, and convention center. Build bus now, trains later on east-west lines. Build subways.
- I applaud your recommendation. Don't wait. Start building the infrastructure ASAP. Include bike parking.
- Indiana needs to make investment in itself, young people. Build transit. Don't mess around with one line. Build it all now. Tax me.
- State Fair Train is noisy, but not a big deal. Noise won't be that big of an issue. People will drive to Park & Ride stations from a distance.
- I like mass transit. It is needed. But not in my back yard. Need to do it well enough that it minimizes impacts, serves entire city. The recommendation is taking easiest route, not the best route. You can't tell me what it will do to my property. Fair Train is no big deal. Serve entire city.
- Can homes be insulated for noise?
- Something needs to be done. Reinstate trolley to provide downtown circulation. Need to fix I-69 corridor first [before other transit corridors]. This solution is a start. Do it fast.
- Very supportive of probable recommendation. Consider noise abatement carefully. Plant trees, use wayside horns. The current Fair Train is 50-70 years old. This will be quieter.
- Show plan for entire system. Want to see "subway map". Add high occupancy vehicle lanes. Adjust to changing technologies. Is there anything better than diesel?
- If the train comes, I'll move out of Marion County to Fishers. I would like a stop at 71st- 75th Street. I would like an express bus route on Binford from 71st to downtown.
- Development will improve Union Station. The train will spur development. Post videos of transportation in other cities.
- What about an underground system?
- Is Union Station expandable for other lines? Other downtown options exist. Why do transportation projects take so long?
- Why not electric LRT?
- Are we looking at public-private partnerships? Can we get something started sooner to prove the concept?
- I live on the tracks and ride the bus. I am not opposed to the project. What about easements? What about property values? IndyGo needs to do better job with customer service. They are turning people away.
- I support mass transit. I am not sure that we have a good plan. This is much better than what was presented at the 2001 meeting. 90% of my neighbors won't ride the train. The line goes in the wrong direction. We need east-west lines. We need off-peak service. We need flexible destinations. 3% will ride if the train is affordable. 3% if convenient. There is lots of residential on this route, which increases impacts. We need to fix infrastructure to support a train. The CIRCL plan includes need for bus upgrades. Why not the airport line first? What about express bus with HOV lanes? What about crime impacts? Make a video of different kinds of trains. Introduce more buses.
- Need mass transit to get people moving
- More buses and carpooling
- Do you expect people from Carmel to come over to Fishers to ride?
- Are you looking at other transit systems to evaluate?
- 106th/116th-walks from home to Fishers ICE-very full bus-from NW In and around-people must commit now-politicians need to commit (resounding applause)-express and short stops-understanding by 2035 you'll do it all-needs to be first-oil has us where they want us-gas is going up-START NOW!-ICE is way over capacitated-Applause

- Need to address convention business-unaffordable commutes-need cross town-have we looked at 2 bus system for now
- Don't forget bikes
- Fishers-noise-doesn't notice trains and whistles-didn't notice coal train-doesn't think noise is an issue-fiancé drives from Fortville to ride Fishers ICE
- Lawrence-do more for whole system vision-frustrated for things IN lacks-in the meantime add high occupancy vehicle lanes-need to have a car
- How often do these meetings influence the outcome-public input
- When is this a success?-How is success of the system measured?
- Please try to avoid residential areas-not farmland anymore-need to invest in other infrastructure-sidewalks-streets
- D.C. is clean/safe-what's the traffic pattern
- More buses
- Feels like there isn't a voice-believes the decision is made
- Safety-kids ride in car seats-can't do that on trains
- Feel like we're doing this because it's free
- Please consider the reverse commute

June 24, 2008-Indianapolis Central Library

Attendance: 90-100

- I support mass transit. I question the average speeds in Table 4-2 and Table 4-4, as well as the acceleration and deceleration assumptions in Table 4.1. The Fair Train has no stops. Can commuter rail make it in 42 minutes? Can the 75th St. Station work if elevated? Is LRT adaptable? BRT is more adaptable. Is 5 min service feasible? There is no room for 2 tracks at 62nd/Kessler. The website says that the system will generate \$75 million per year in revenue. The rail bed will need to be rebuilt. Therefore it is not cost effective. The system will not pay for itself.
- I have concerns about safety at Eastwood Middle School. There are environmental issues.
- There will be impacts on vulnerable individuals.
- What is the source of funding? Have you considered public-private partnerships?
- I am eager to see public transit installed. Quality of life is important. Install it before 2035. I commend the team on the recommendation. The project has environmental health benefits too. Transit users get more physical activity. Taxes subsidize car travel. It is OK to subsidize transit too. Property values increase near transit.
- It is inspiring to see mass transit becoming a priority in Indy. Don't overestimate the benefits and underestimate the costs. Is the MPO providing cost analysis of operations and maintenance costs and fare revenue? We need to understand the public costs. Los Angeles built a wonderful system that doesn't go to the airport. Why not? What is the commute shed on I-69? Would CSX to Anderson do a better job of relieving I-69 traffic? Don't build the [Los Angeles] Gold Line. The Orange Line busway is very successful. Why not on CSX? Why not busway? Why not to Airport?
- I commend the MPO on recommending a common sense technology. The DMU technology is good. The HHPA alignment is good. It is good to integrate Union Station. Most LRT vehicles are not FRA compliant, which would be OK for use on the HHPA Railroad. LRT DMU's are available now too. They are non-FRA compliant, lighter, quicker, sexier vehicles.
- Does the single track require land acquisition? Then more land for double track? What determines whether a property needs to be bought?
- Transit diverts resources from existing needs. We need sidewalks and bike trails. We have bad roads and a poor bus system. I am concerned about long-term operating and

maintenance costs. How much will fares be? How much subsidy? I don't see this being feasible. There is not enough ridership and political will to keep it funded over the long term. It is not a viable system the way this city is laid out. Limited busways might work on existing streets.

- We need to do homework on public opinion about the transit system. I like the bus portion (COA). We need a better IndyGo system sooner. We need to alleviate traffic everywhere sooner. We need to try building infrastructure in the area first (sidewalks, etc.) and build a transit line to the airport before the Super Bowl. There is new technology on the horizon in 3 to 5 years. Therefore, let's improve IndyGo in the short term and invest in transit later.
- How many people here ride IndyGo? The IndyGo website said the meeting was at 7pm. I missed everything. I am trying to help people figure out how to use transit.
- The IndyGo website has many problems. Indianapolis is the 12th largest city, but has the worst public transit of the top 20 cities. We are behind. But we can make the right decisions. The federal government wants Indianapolis to take the first step toward transit.
- I like the expandability of the recommendation. I had some initial concerns about diesel LRT, but I like its upgradeability. How will the IndyGo upgrade be funded?
- Mr. Kopp made excellent arguments for BRT. Flexibility is important. IndyGo expansion is contingent on funding. We need to use public-private partnerships to improve IndyGo.
- This route doesn't do any good for my commute. But I want this to help others. Build it big enough to be useful. Start work on Airport/Plainfield route soon. Look at unusual ideas, such as combining routes (like AGT to Keystone Crossing from the HHPA). This is not about us vs. them or Hamilton vs. Marion. We are all in this together. Let's work together to get the problem solved.
- ICE is overcrowded. It is leaving people at the stops downtown. I have no worries about the rail line getting enough riders. We are already talking about the need for another parking lot in Fishers. If you drive everyday, you'll be in an accident on these congested roads before long. Riding the bus helps to avoid accidents.
- Add to the ICE routes first. It takes me 20 to 30 minutes to drive from 71st/Allisonville to downtown. The congestion begins at 71st. I will keep driving. The main benefit of the rail line is for people further north.
- How will the tax work? Who has the tax burden? The MPO is exploring how to extend ICE to other counties and corridors. Funding for transit is inadequate statewide. All transportation is subsidized – roads too. CIRT is looking at a dedicated funding mechanism, including a reprioritization of the INDOT program. The funding mechanism may fund rapid transit, IndyGo, sidewalks, greenways, trails, and local roads.
- Can we do it faster? Why should taxpayers fund it? It is not a zero sum game. There are no free lunches. For 2 miles of I-465, we get 14 miles of railroad. We should build a barebones system and see if it works. The need is demonstrated by gas cost and ICE demand. Why not go to the airport? Why not on freight RR's? Lots of "good suggestions" at these meetings don't hold up to scrutiny. After a long study, this is the obvious conclusion. Stop talking and start building.
- How much tax money has gone into highways in the 8-year study period? This system creates opportunities for place making. We need interesting, lively, authentic places to keep young people and halt the "brain drain". We need to focus our planning efforts on the stations. This will make Indiana more competitive.
- The recommendation is a good place to start. It is a wise investment. We'd be foolish not to do this.
- I want to stress the importance of funding from the state. The I-69 extension near Evansville is being built despite environmental concerns and citizen objections. What impact will I-69/SR37 have on public transportation? NICTD has broken its 1920s records for passenger

trips. The state is adding a spur to Lowell. The Legislature is aware that public transportation works, but only in Northwest Indiana. The Legislature doesn't understand the needs of Central Indiana. Write your reps. This project will boost the economy and improve the culture in the state.

- We need to improve IndyGo. Will this be connected to the Clarian people mover?
- Is light rail adaptable enough once you're in a fixed guideway
- All the improvement causes more tax burden
- Safety @ Eastwood Middle School-how are we to address middle school kids at crossings
- What's overall impact to neighborhood air quality in micro climate-understands
- Supports mass transit-will live in Indiana if it's here
- Can a PPP fund the success
- Physician-environmental health-commend us and team-love to see HHPA put to good purpose-people who use transit have more physical activity- air emissions are improved with transit-must improve cars (reduce emissions-other transit city case studies-show increased property issues)
- From LA: Resident-inspired it's becoming a priority-don't make mistakes of L.A.-understate costs/overstate performance and make sure public costs are covered-L.A. doesn't go to airport-69 is a huge problem, what's the commute shed of that if CSX were utilized-be careful building a gold plated system-be good with your resources-make sure you hit ridership-would like to see other regional options-do airport downtown-strive for scalable/affordable.
- Commend MPO for common sense technology and alignment-using existing
- Initial plan-does it require property acquisition and when would double track implementation begin
- What is deciding factor for residential property acquisition-concern that we are diverting existing resources from existing needs
- Doesn't see sidewalks as part of program-concern about long term o/m-will it be priced to encourage feasibility-won't have support long term- shouldn't have to alt service-\$ don't have density to support-supports limited busing BRT
- Private companies going other places-need a viable cost effective solution-10-15 yrs needs to be faster for COA-need to serve lots of areas- promoting an idea that time/money could be spent on existing infrastructure-go to airport and see success
- Bloomington-excited-hopefully evolves-how does rail enhance ridership-will you invest in IndyGo
- Fishers ICE rider-missing buses for capacity-ICE riders need it-want a ride now faster and willing to pay more-safer, doesn't understand why people say they won't ride it-growth is exponential
- 71st/Binford-commute 25-30 min plus 10 min walk-bottleneck starts at 71st concerned that we're not adding express capacity and knows we need transit, but doesn't think it's a problem for him-build for regional system
- Why can't you do it faster (rhetorical meaning do we fund this w/tax- city does tax)-likes to eat out, but does pay tax for stadium-buses aren't free-tear up roads-transit isn't in front of you in traffic-there are no free lunches-\$160m gets you 2 miles of US 31
- Bring up a bare bones system and see if it works
- Need is growing
- Bring on the free enterprise!

July 17, 2008 – IndyGo Mobility Advisory Committee Meeting

Attendance: 20

- Why do some states have transit and we don't? Other places have it and the gas prices make it worth it. Would be nice if we had better transit.
- Have the transit stops been determined yet?
- Will all of the stops be accessible for people with disabilities?
- What's the accessibility of the vehicles for people with disabilities? Suggestion to use the MAC group in testing accessibility of potential rail vehicles.
- In order to make it work, we have to improve our existing ground transportation.
- Please remember pedestrian safety.
- How have other communities accommodated Open Door (para-transit service) with comprehensive transit strategies?
- Can we do the people mover everywhere in the region?
- How many people are willing to put their money into the system.

Additional Comments from Email and Note Cards

- "I support the light rail recommendation (and really any of the options) just as long as we get people out of their cars. Indianapolis is 45th out of 50 cities in terms of environmental quality. Improved mass transit will help immensely. Thank you for your research!" Anne Lakes
- I really support transit and want good options as quickly as possible. Please create a stellar system that offers excellent service and mobility that is "fresh and green" to inspire people to make a change in their lives.
- Yes to diesel light rail. Stops at 106th St., 22nd St. and 16th St. are VITAL. Thank you!
- I enjoyed. Cost-effective is good point. Flexible for future. Networking is good thing for future. With Super Bowl, we need something! Use Beech Grove yards again!! Mark Blackburn, 3530 S. Shelby, Metro Bus rider for 2 years.
- NOISE ISSUES: Please do more on the noise study. You gave it short shrift at the meeting. This IS an important issue to those who have invested in building in Indy. Please look at this in detail and don't take the downtown residents for granted. STOPS: If there's only one stop and none near the 16th and College corridor, we will NOT support the project.
- Well Done. J.P. Morgan
- NOISE: Sound barriers need to be investigated as additions to decrease noise in residential areas adjacent to the rail line. Initial Stops: Which stops will be part of the initial investment? If not evenly spaced throughout the rail line, the cost will not serve those not near a stop (and I predict that all of the stops will be north off I-465!!). This doesn't help those near downtown and will bring LEGAL CHALLENGE!! Buses seem to be the viable option right now.
- The time for studies is over. We need to "get on board"(literally) and move forward with light rail in Indiana. If we can come up with the funds for Lucas Oil Stadium, then we can certainly come up with the funds for public transportation that will benefit us all (elderly, low income, etc.). Rome was not built in a day and we have to start somewhere. We have recommended the best alternative for a starting place. So let's go! Ultimately, this needs to be a total "system" for moving people where they need to go.
- I have major concerns about the noise and vibrations and the effect on our property values, as I live in Berkley Grove. Our proximity to a station will not be an enhancement to our property values, but likely a negative.
- I also am concerned about how single-minded this is. IT doesn't solve the traffic congestion of east and west (i.e. Fishers to the Pyramids or to Park 100). It really just perpetuates the drawbacks of the current IndyGo lines. T. SIEFERT

- If \$690 million will give us a limited light rail system, wouldn't that amount give us a world-class bus system that could service the entire city? Our current bus system has riders standing in ditches with no platform, benches or shelter. Look at the big picture like in Paris, France. There is a bus system that rivals their subway! In addition, where will these funds come from? What is the cost per taxpayer for this? I live in Marion County and I do not want to pay for all of the tax burden, while riders in Hamilton County have no tax burden. Please respond. Lara Cooney.
-

I am convinced that Indianapolis needs a mass transportation system. I am not convinced that using the Hoosier Heritage Railway System is a good idea. As a homeowner affected by the current plan to use the old rail bed as a base for the transportation system connecting Noblesville to downtown Indy it would seem that there is a better alternative for those of us on the Northeastside who would be impacted by this plan. First, the single rail system would require extensive upgrading including improving the rail bed, putting in the new welded rails and numerous road crossings. In a 1 1/2 mile stretch from 75th Street to Kessler Boulevard there are 7 crossings. The rail bed is not designed to handle an additional rail that will ultimately be necessary in order to run the transportation properly with trains running in both directions at the same time by the year 2035. This, of course, means additional rail bed has to be developed and there are some areas in which the space is not currently there to support such a system. And finally, the impact on current residents of those areas directly affected by the physical closeness of the rail system to their homes with regard to possible loss of value of their property is enormous. It is interesting that an analysis was conducted on the low-income areas of the city impacted by this rail system but not the middle-income residents. Are we second-class citizens because we work or have worked for a living and can afford to live in a better neighborhood? Do we not deserve consideration as to how we will be impacted by this proposal? Who on the committee lives along the proposed rail line and is willing to roll the dice on their property values? It would make far better sense to run the rail system down Binford Boulevard. There is adequate room to support it. It is already State or City property for the most part. There would be no need to improve the rail bed since the rail system would be built new as it goes into place. There is adequate space along Binford for station stops. Park and Ride areas could be easily developed along Binford. And the railroad's presence would be an advertisement for itself for it to be used. It would seem that the proponents of this rail system would be acceptable to using those facilities that will provide the best use for this proposal. Certainly, using Binford may cost a bit more in the short-term but seems a better idea in the long-term.

Your term "boondoggle" is absolutely correct, i.e. "to waste time on pointless and unnecessary work".

An IndyStar.com article, 06/18/08, "Our View: Get on board with mass-transit solutions" identifies Hamilton County Commissioner Christine Altman as also being the chairwoman of the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA). To quote Altman about the Northeast Corridor System that would use diesel trains, at a cost of up to \$160 million, "That's why I signed up for the job, to get things moving," she said of her willingness to represent Hamilton County on CIRTA.

Also on 06/18, Dan Carpenter wrote a column in the Indy Star, "Leaving money on the road". He wants to lay railroad tracks and double the size of the city bus system, as well as having a regional bus system.

This bus idea was a general conclusion of attendees at the 06/16 MPO/CIRTA neighborhood meeting. Before making any decision for using diesel light rail on the Nickel Plate/Fair Train route, there needs to be a ridership survey conducted in Hamilton County. If gasoline prices drop, how many commuters would still use these trains? It is expected that the trains will not be profitable, with fares needing to be subsidized by taxpayers.

The better idea is a regional bus system which (1) Could be operational in months using existing highways; (2) Could be adjusted for changes in passenger volume; and (3) Would be more flexible in taking riders too many Downtown Indy destinations, without requiring everyone first to be dropped off at Union Station. I did talk individually to Mike Dearing and Ehren Bingaman about this concept after our meeting.

Dan Carpenter's article further addressed some of the economic considerations for mass transit: (1) "Current federal transportation budgets, in force until 2009 (six months from now) offer help only to local rail systems now in operation. (Would the Nickel Plate Line qualify since the Fair Train runs on it each August?); (2) The state has told Bingaman's coalition of city and county governments that Major Moves money won't go to mass transit ...; and (3) Locally, nobody is going to raise property taxes, the principal source of IndyGo."

Logically, Hamilton County should pay the major share for a regional bus system, since it mainly benefits their residents. The Nickel Plate Line is thus attractive to them as a possible source of federal funds, rather than raise taxes in Hamilton County. The proposed commuter trains and passenger stations will have very little benefit to Marion County for years, although a "state-of-the-art" elevated electric train down Binford Boulevard to the State Fairgrounds and Union Station would be welcome, when it becomes financially feasible.

The City of Indianapolis and Marion County would be better served by making the "Airport to Downtown Indy" route its highest priority, relegating the Northeast Corridor route to secondary status. "Airport to Downtown Indy" is less than half the length of the NE Corridor route. It is possible that it could be finished and operating for the 2012 Super Bowl, gaining additional favorable national recognition for Indy. If Federal/City/State funding could be arranged, the train route might be profitable, and act as a selling point for more convention activity.

The "Airport to Downtown Indy" mass transit line obviously requires Mayor Ballard's support, as well as efforts by our Senators and Congressmen to secure 2009 federal funds for this project. Such a result would be far superior to the contentious Northeast Corridor proposal, which will disrupt traffic, degrade home values, and pollute the environment for a beautiful part of Marion County. Joe Goeller

I attended last night's meeting at the Central Library, and all I have to say is YES. Yes to light rail for Indianapolis!

If Indianapolis is ever going to really be the "world class city" public officials claim, we MUST have reliable public transportation. If we found money to pay for a new football stadium, we can find money for this, that benefits SO many more people.

I live in Martindale on the Monon (just north of 16th Street and just east of the Monon Trail), and work in Fishers, as do several of my neighbors who were also in attendance at last night's meeting. I IMPLORE you to please, please put stations at 16th Street and 106th Street. This would be a dream come true!

I support the light rail not only for those of us who live in Indianapolis, but also for visitors! I know you understand how much it would mean to be able to tell houseguests, "Yes, you can take this train right to downtown!" Don't even get me started on the future downtown to the airport route... I endorse this, too, not only from a convenience standpoint for residents, but also as a draw for tourism.

We need the light rail, thank you for this wonderful, beautiful idea.

Sincerely,
Annette Marino

I attended the public meeting last night on the NE Corridor mass transit planning. I want to commend the MPO, CIRT A and their team for the work they have done; I strongly support mass transit in Indianapolis and central Indiana and believe you have outlined a sensible approach to getting started.

I heard several comments last night from my fellow citizens that surprised me. One gentleman from California complained about \$.05/gallon tax that Californians pay to support their transit system; I would gladly pay at least \$.05/gallon (less than \$1.00/tank) if I knew it was going to support mass transit, rather than an expansion of our roadways. Does he not realize that we already pay over \$0.20/gallon federal fuel tax?

Another gentleman did not believe people would ride the train. To what level do gas prices have to rise for him to believe people will ride it? I suppose he is not concerned with our reliance on foreign oil. As Ehren Bingaman pointed out, this is just one of the many benefits of investment in mass transit. I was encouraged by the comments made by a physician in attendance who pointed out the impacts of obesity and poor air quality that result from our reliance on the automobile.

Unfortunately I had to leave the meeting early before the comment session was over. I hope the comments that came later were more supportive of mass transit. Please add my name to the list of supporters.

My View: We must invest in alternative transportation, from greenways to mass transit. Our exclusive reliance on the automobile as a primary means of transit has led to urban sprawl, poor air quality, polluted streams, high obesity rates, and a loss of community. The skyrocketing cost of fuel is clear evidence that our current course is not sustainable and a paradigm shift in our approach to transportation is needed. No longer can we count on building our way out of these problems with newer and wider highways. The development of a comprehensive network comprised of light rail systems, transit-oriented development, an effective bus system, fully integrated bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and other transportation alternatives must be at the forefront of our transportation planning. Kevin Osborne

I think a major problem with the presentation was that they (the presenters) started out saying how this mass transit system will get commuters from Fishers & Noblesville to downtown. Then they gave the impression that any station en route would be secondary. Now while getting Hamilton county commuters to work without clogging Indy streets IS the real reason for the proposed system I think the presenters should have said that this as a mass transit system for northeast Indy & beyond and pointed out how this would help northwest Indy.

I wouldn't really mind paying for a mass transit system if I felt it was really for Indy residents. All

appearances so far look like it will mostly benefit Hamilton county with Marion county residents footing most of the bill in both money & inconvenience.

I would like the state to divert some of the funds it has earmarked for the I-69 expansion to be used to immediately beef up and expand the current express bus system. Why should providing bus service to Hamilton county be a Metro responsibility? Each bus rider represents one less car on I-69. The more bus riders the less back-up on I -69. With the investment of of few million dollars into the bus program the state could save the hundreds of millions of dollars it will take to expand I-69. This also with reduce the Hamilton county traffic through our county. (Fall Creek, Sargent Road, etc).G. Cain.

Regarding the Evaluation of Alternatives draft report dated June 12, 2008, please note that the decision for the recommended alignment and technology was made before the public meetings and presentations were held on June 17, 18 and 24. At what point does the committee take into consideration the appropriate desires and concerns presented by the public? Certainly there is a paragraph provided for public input but what weight does that input carry? The committee has already made it's decision. Oh yes, there is a paragraph (6.3) for the final recommendation of the committee, but again, how much weight has the public carried with it's presentations of concerns regarding cost, air quality, property values, tax issues, safety, their preference regarding alignment and technology and other issues that will impact them directly, or indirectly.

And, how has the committee come to a decision about it's preferred alignment and technology when it is working with flawed and incomplete data? Ultimate construction costs, defining unresolved issues, making contingency plans, the tax impact on the general public regarding this project and making good use of the people's money through this project have not been totally considered. There are issues of future right of way for expansion of the Northeast Corridor project that have not been addressed in this report. There is no determination for location appropriate sidings that allow the passage of trains that are moving concurrently in both directions. There is no plan for coordination of the timely movement of the trains as they move concurrently in both directions. And there is not a contingency plan for service interruptions due to accidents.

I certainly favor a mass transit system that is going to provide on-going service to it's clientele in a timely, safe and cost-effective manner. I do not believe that bio-diesel light rail in this circumstance is the answer.

Sincerely,

Richard Stamm

Friends,

The question is: Does Indianapolis want to be known (1) as a pleasant, overgrown Midwestern town with a nice race track, or (2) as a dynamic world-class city? If the latter, then we absolutely must build comprehensive public transit, planned around the hub of a regional rail system, into which busses, autos, our small existing monorail, and bicycle trails can all be connected. Having myself previously lived and worked in Washington DC, Chicago, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Frankfurt am Main (Germany), all of which are tied together by excellent transit systems, I can easily envision the excitement and energy for economic re-development that such a system would bring home to the Indy region; and I, for one, would most certainly use it whenever possible.

We need a master plan for overall development, but it's important to start now in any practical way that we can. The proposed single route from Downtown to Noblesville is a good place to begin: The land corridor is already in place, and only a modest amount of new construction will be needed. We can begin now with economical, light bio-diesel rail units, then convert later to cleaner and more efficient (and underground-friendly) electric power. This crucial initial rail line can be in place and visible for our Big Show in February 2012, with the terminal station right next to the Stadium. So it's time to launch: Let's get to work.

If the experience of other cities also proves to be valid here, no sooner will construction begin on the initial rail line than land prices (and the tax base) will begin to skyrocket right around every planned station stop; and we will see mixed development occurring around each of those locations: Offices, retail, high-rise dwelling units, and entertainment venues will sprout up naturally in a decade within walking distance of each station. If we build it, experience in other cities proves, they will come... With obvious economic benefits to the whole metro area.

I would strongly recommend big thinking and a metro master plan, which could then be implemented in stages, one line at a time. Along with Noblesville, it makes sense initially to follow established rail corridors out from the downtown hub to existing population and business centers (Zionsville, the new Airport Terminal, Greenwood area), and to places where new mixed-use development is already being planned (the Lawrence/Ft. Benjamin Harrison Town Center, Avon). Then a bit later, and with adequate federal and state support, it would also be possible to dig additional underground lines beneath re-developable business routes such as Keystone Ave., Washington Ave., and 38th Street.

People who object to publicly-subsidized mass transit by saying that transportation should "pay for itself" are not considering the vast sums of taxpayer funding that currently goes into roads.

Face facts: All transportation systems are publicly financed at one level or another – rail, roadways, air, everything. The question is not whether public money will be used. The question is how our tax dollars will be used. And in a true world-class metro region, a cheap, clean, efficient mass transit system is simply a necessity.

Indy is already a dynamic, thriving city that has grown to the edge of greatness, as the coming of our Super Bowl demonstrates. Now it's time to plan and to build a transit infrastructure to take us another step up, to the next level.

Sincerely,
AL RIDER

A Commuter Rail Proposal For Indianapolis

As I read a recent Indianapolis Star front page story on the excitement over federal funding of \$20M to expand ex-railway walk/bike trails I was struck by our local obsession with a "nice to have" walk/bike way vs realistic assessments of public transit needs. Heretical as it may sound to baby boomers, Gen Xers, and whoever comes next, I'm not so sure that the celebrated Monon Trail shouldn't be returned to the marvelous railway it once was! While our major highways (I69, I70, I65) slowly become daily parking lots at rush hour, we might reflect on the public transportation revolution that has caught fire in most cities of our size and breadth. Rail transit equipment builders cannot keep up with the demand from expanding metro area rail transit systems in such unlikely cities as Minneapolis, Salt Lake City, Portland, Seattle, Dallas, Miami, and others. Even highway happy southern California embraces an expanding Metro-

Link/Amtrak system fanning out to Santa Barbara, San Bernardino, and Oceanside. And of course, Chicago's marvelous Metra commuter system continues to relieve that city's highways of commuters in areas ranging from Waukegan to W. Chicago to Aurora to Joliet/Chicago Heights to Gary.

For the most part, these commuter rail systems take advantage of existing freight railway trackage or rights of way. While arrangements with the track owners need to be negotiated on issues ranging from scheduling windows to speed limits to trackage rights fees, the example of Chicago's Metra system can certainly serve as exhibit A. The great advantage here is that no start-from-scratch right of way and trackage is required. Clearly, upgrades to existing trackage, signaling, and grade crossing protection would be needed, but these are relatively inexpensive compared to new highway lanes or totally new rail lines.

While it may not be generally recognized, much of Indianapolis' once marvelous spoke rail network is still in place, and with certain required upgrades could evolve into a commuter rail network as fine as Chicago's Metra system. Perhaps the most compelling argument in favor of this proposal is that, with the exception of extending former Big Four trackage to Zionsville, all routes are largely in place and active.

Having said that, I am fully aware that much capital investment will be required for locomotives, rolling stock, and track upgrades. However, these costs should be balanced against the current costs of adding more and more concrete simply to accommodate more one person vehicles. As stated earlier, even Los Angeles has come to realize that fact of life.

The possibilities for Indianapolis include:

- Noblesville/Carmel/Fishers—Existing ex-Nickel Plate rails to 21st/Sherman area and existing Indpls Belt Ry connections to Union Station
- Zionsville—Former Big Four Chicago line tracks through NW side and Speedway to Union Station (Note: tracks would have to be restored from 86th St. to Zionsville)
- Brownsburg—former NYC Peoria main line via former Pennsylvania (PRR) connections directly into Union Station (currently today's Amtrak route).
- Avon/W. Indpls—former NYC St. Louis mainline (currently CSX east-west mainline) directly to Union Station
- Airport—Former PRR Indpls-St. Louis mainline on straight shot to Union Station (easily accessed off High School Rd north of airport).
- SW side/Decatur Twp—Former PRR rails along Ky Ave. via connections with former PRR Indpls-St. Louis mainline to Union Station
- Greenwood/South Indpls—Former IC line reaching Union Station via Indpls Belt Ry and/or former PRR Louisville mainline (now L&I RR) providing direct shot into Union Station
- SE Indpls—Former NYC mainline to Shelbyville and Cincinnati via Beech Grove. Rails still in place as direct shot into Union Station
- East Side—Former B&O Cincinnati mainline directly into Union Station paralleling English Ave. (Also current Amtrak route to Cincinnati).
- NE/Lawrence—Former NYC Cleveland mainline (now CSX main) directly into Union Station

Dr. David Nealy
Greenwood, Indiana

(1/18/08)

As I mentioned on 06/17, I was impressed by your presentation, and Mike's handling of the "question and answer" session. The microphone, slides, and maps provided a better understanding of the issues, and contributed to a well-organized meeting. While I oppose the use of the Nickel Plate/Fair Train Line, it has become clearer that adequate funding is a major constraint in mass transit decisions, including buses.

Regards,
Joe Goeller

As a native, I'm so pleased that mass transit is being seriously discussed. To move forward, our city needs to take the possibility seriously.

Lisa Marchal
Far Eastside

Living on the north side of Fishers, it costs me close to \$20 roundtrip to commute to the IUPUI campus where I work. Recently, I have started carpooling to cut down on cost. I like the express bus but it makes the commute in the morning and afternoon a little too long for my taste. I think a light rail system, with a park and ride lot, is the way to go.

I just wanted to write and let you know I support the idea of light rail/mass transit from Noblesville!

I have long advocated that the quickest way to get into the mass rail transit business is to put existing buses on existing rail lines. This can be done by adding rail trucks to buses. The railroad has many trucks that are hybrid rubber tired and steel rail wheels. One of the advantage is that the bus can get off the track and finish the route downtown on streets.

I would be happy to discuss this concept if there is interest.

Bill Steiner

Hello.

I have been reading up on the proposed rail using the existing "Fair Train" tracks. I think it is a great idea to use the tracks that are already there.

I noticed however, that there are plans for a lot of money to be spent on building new tracks and buying new trains to connect to the existing lines, so that it can go all the way to downtown.

These plans seem to be rather long term. Admittedly, the train as it stands now probably needs some repairs...but they do use it each year during the State Fair, so it is in working order at this time. Have you considered using this Fair Train as it is now and then having shuttles at the Fairgrounds to take people the rest of the way into downtown?

I live in Noblesville, and would love to see a train go all the way downtown. I would not only use it for work, but for sporting events and other things too if they had routes all times of the day. It just seems to me that we can have a short term solution to the I-69 congestion and environmental car commute issues if we went ahead and started using the tracks as they are now. If it is a success, then we could work on expanding the tracks and getting new cars.

Thanks for your time!

Robin

I'm interested in helping out in any way I can with the light rail (Fishers-Downtown) idea --- are there any areas where I can get involved and be of help?

I go in to work 1/2 hour early so I can leave 1/2 hour early to avoid some of the traffic. This earlier time is really hard because I have a small child and have to get him ready, so I have to get up really early. It has helped my commute time somewhat. I live about 19 miles from work and now it is 45 minutes one way instead of over an hour. The problem at most times is traffic volume and people not paying attention and going too slowly (i.e., talking on the phone while driving, putting on makeup while driving) or stopping to gawk at a car on the side of the road. Interstates are about as slow as city streets now. I'm REALLY, REALLY tired of the north side being given all of the commuter options. They've had the commuter bus for at least a year, and now they're going to get the light rail system. All the rest of the area residents are left to fend for themselves. I have always felt that city leaders consider the north side a little more important than all other sides, and this is a perfect example. One can argue that IndyGo is an option, but not if the buses don't come where you live (i.e., just outside Marion County) and you're required to make several transfers just to get to work. Indianapolis should take an example from Boston--sure, the streets are tough to navigate, but the public transportation system is top notch.

Building a system with at grade crossings is unsafe. You cannot do enough to stop idiot drivers who want to get around gates. Indiana drivers always rank high in grade crossing accidents.

You need an elevated system or a below grade system. Your cost analysis does not include the money necessary to accomplish this.

John Sullivan
Indianapolis

RE: Mass Transit for Hamilton/Marion Counties and eventually the Nine County Metro NO FOSSIL FUEL - even if that means that we have to wait! Don't throw away money on a system that needs to be retired. Wait for technology to catch up and spend our money on system that runs on alternative energy. THINK LONG TERM NOT QUICK (or not so quick) FIX Thanks!

5/8/08 (Male) Phone Response-AB

" I saw article in editorial. I am all for light rail in all 4 directions; (Hamilton Co, Greenwood, Downtown, Airport) I believe we can fund this by using funds from an ecological license plate or adding a 1cent "green tax". The tax would include light rail, trails, bike paths. I hope others will get on board. This is more important that a Colts stadium"

Mrs. Anderson (Kingswood Subdivision in Indpls) Phone Response-AB

"Indiana is so backwards. There is no reason a monorail system cannot be completed in 3 years. The government is inept when it comes to making quick decisions. We need a rail system that goes from Hamilton Co to Downtown. The new system would attract people to Indianapolis. We need to spend the money on rail rather than conventions. We have also neglected bike paths. I know people in the Kingswood subdivision who would use the system, including myself. People would take a good fast train system. There are ecological advantages and big savings. Govt. needs to review who they are serving and get the job done."

Male- Phone Response-AB

"I saw editorial and want to comment. I am 100% behind Rapid Transit. I also support the routes. Best of luck getting it done and I hope it becomes a reality."

Amanda Laudin- Phone Response-AB

"My home backs up to Nickle plate. I think the rail is a terrible idea. The track is a few feet from my home. I am totally against it."

Barbara Tutts- Phone Response-AB

" I used to take the inner-urban rail system in the 1930's-1940's. My family used it from Seymour to Indianapolis and then would take a streetcar home. I also took it to Muncie and back. It was a our main type of transportation. I remember it well. It sounds like the same thing. Its a good idea. Never should have gotten rid of it."

I attended the meeting at the Historic center this afternoon and support fully the plan.

Glad to see this process moving forward. Has anyone considered a type of public fundraiser, even a website for contributions, that could help finance, or at the very least draw attention, to this upcoming project? I am sure that by simply having a website where people can offer contributions, a buzz would be created and big time advocates of the project could let their wallets do the talking for them. This would also help to silence critics that are not looking forward to being part of the funding solution via taxes. Even if a modest percentage, like 5-10% of the project, could be funded this way, it would be a great public relations story for the project and would certainly give wealthy Indianapolis area citizens that want to support the future of our city a means to do so in an easy manner.

Ryan Litherland

ryanscott2202@yahoo.com

I fully support the idea of a commuter line on the NE corridor. I live about 1 mile from the line and would use it daily to commute to work. I used to live in D.C. and was fully comfortable taking mass transit. I just wish this city had a better bus system.

I attended the Fishers presentation last night but did not leave a comment card behind. Not quite sure where they were to be left (had to leave early). So here they are:

We need to keep moving this forward rapidly. No need to wait 3 years, and in fact no need to wait 1 year. We need this NOW!

When construction finally begins, we should move this on the fast track (pun intended), similar to what we did and are doing for the interstate roads in Indianapolis. Why spread construction over 2-3 years, when it could get done in less than a year.

Someone needs to talk to the state about using some Major Moves money. By applying some money for this, they actually save money by not needing to build or upgrade as many roads.

People need to better understand (especially in Fishers and along the Nickle Plate line) that the newer diesels are not the same as the Fair Train.

I appreciate concerns over noise, but surely, with newer diesel, upgraded tracks, better road crossings, it seems as if all of these concerns can be minimized. It will not be perfect for all, but not moving forward because someone does not want a train in their backyard (they bought the house with the tracks there) is ludicrous.

I would also like to see some future planning ideas for rail connection to the airport, and more

importantly, how this can feed into a regional transportino network that includes highspeed trains to Chicago, Cincinnati, etc. Again, we are just so far behind the rest of the world.

Keep pushing!

I am a resident of Berkley Grove in Fishers (106th and Hague) and the cul-de-sac I live on backs up to the railroad tracks that will be used for the proposed commuter train that is being discussed.

My husband and I -- as well as our cul-de-sac neighbors -- have several concerns about the proposed commuter train. Foremost, we believe the train will negatively affect our property values and would like to know whether this has been given any consideration given that the tracks will affect multiple neighborhoods and residential properties along its path.

We're also very worried about safety -- especially those of us who have children playing in backyards that are so close to the tracks. We would like to know what preventative measures are being planned -- since again, these tracks are literally within feet of numerous backyards.

We also believe the new train route will increase traffic back-ups on already congested streets due to the delays it will cause at train crossings -- what plans are being considered to address this issue?

We also would like to know what impact the train will have on noise and air pollution. The State Fair train is extremely noisy -- is this what we should expect?

The current IndyGo bus program appears to be working wonderfully. It is an extremely convenient option for commuters. Personally, as someone who commutes from Fishers to downtown daily, I would not find the commuter train to be a more desirable option. In fact, I would rarely use it given I would not want to add the minimum hour to 1.5 that I'm estimating the commute would take (given riders would have to transfer to a bus after riding the train).

This proposed commuter train plan appears to have many flaws that should be thoroughly vetted before any final decisions are made. It feels like a knee-jerk reaction to high gas prices -- not a well-planned investment.

Sincerely,

Carole Puls

I think a light-rail system is a wonderful idea. I'm a fan of mass transit and would GLADLY leave my car at home if the train sked meshed w/my work sked (that's my problem with IndyGo's commuter service from Carmel -- I don't get off work Downtown until 7:30 p.m. usually -- and sometimes overtime keeps me until 11:15 p.m.).

I hope MPO will address these concerns:

* Trains need to run until at least midnight. A number of Indy residents work fast food jobs, and many of those places stay open until midnight or later. Ideally, I'd love to see it run from roughly 5 a.m. to 1 or 2 a.m. daily (actually longer on Friday and Saturday nights).

* Affordability. Discounts for weekly, monthly and annual passes.

- * Adequate parking at stations.
- * Possibly security for trains running late at night.
- * Expansion, as soon as possible, to other sides of town.
- * Air conditioning on the trains. I've ridden trains with and without and, well, it's clearly worth the money.

Thanks!

Judy Wolf

As an urban planning grad who has lived just a few hundred feet from the proposed light rail route for over three decades, I've followed the twists and turns of this endeavor from the beginning. Although I no longer work downtown or even commute to a regular job, I still support the light rail concept. I have done so from the beginning.

My primary concern from the beginning has been the economics of any rail transit system, but the rapidly declining availability of fossil fuels worldwide and the accompanying rapid rise in the cost of both diesel and gasoline fuels are making the comparisons much more favorable for the transit system.

My one remaining concern is the proposal to use diesel (or biodiesel) as the fuel of choice rather than electric or natural gas (NG). Diesel is a big mistake in my opinion because of the rapidly changing nature of fossil fuels markets around the globe. I agree with the MPO that electric is probably impractical at this point, but think diesel/biodiesel should be avoided at all costs and that NG would be a better immediate choice.

My concern with using diesel is based on what's going on worldwide with fossil fuels. We now have 6.7 billion people in the world and will soon have 7 billion. Most are in developing countries and several of these countries (notably China, India, Brazil, Russia and the Middle East oil producing nations) have developed voracious appetites for fossil fuel-based energy. Demand for fossil fuels is skyrocketing and shortages are beginning to appear. In particular, diesel shortages have appeared in several countries recently. The continuing rise in demand for diesel and the world's inability to increase supplies sufficiently to meet the growing demand means higher and higher prices for the fuel—when it's available.

In fact, crude oil supplies from the North Slope of Alaska, the North Sea, Mexico, Venezuela, Russia and other producing countries are now declining on a year-over-year basis. The Saudis and Kuwaitis and the Russians are all now for the first time in history talking about withholding some of their oil for future generations. The US still prohibits drilling in most offshore areas. These limitations on the availability of oil simply mean that diesel production won't keep up with demand.

Furthermore, in this country in particular, NIMBY actions have prevented any new refineries from being built in recent decades. Plus, crude oil production in this country peaked nearly 40 years ago. That trend won't be reversed and the crude oil we do find will be far more expensive to produce than the oil we've already used. Sure, we've got access to the Canadian Oil Sands, but that, too, is a very expensive source of oil. The more we rely on it, the higher our fuel costs will go.

NG is different. Production of NG in the US is rising at a rate of 7%. Several new sources of NG have been found in the past couple of years in both the US and in British Columbia. These sources contain huge amounts of NG and we now have new drilling and production technologies that make it possible to get the gas at a reasonable cost. Supplies of NG over the next few decades in North America are assured whereas supplies of diesel and biodiesel are questionable. And NG is clean. Just look at any of the top NG producers' proven and probable NG reserves in their most recent reports. We may actually see NG prices declining in the coming years!

I think the MPO is being short-sighted to focus on diesel/biodiesel. The nature of energy use and its economics is changing rapidly and the MPO seems to be unaware of these changes. Just look at all of the cities around the country that are trying as quickly as they can to convert their city buses from diesel to NG. Or look at Cummins. They've been working with a Canadian company for a while now to build engines that burn NG instead of diesel. Or look at the Port of Los Angeles where they've just committed to converting their 5000 vehicles to NG. Or look at Waste Management or any other company that runs a large fleet of diesel-powered vehicles. They're all converting or at least looking at converting to NG-powered vehicles. The MPO needs to take these changes into account.

I realize that today's diesel fuel is cleaner than the old stuff, but that won't matter when it's in short supply and even more expensive tomorrow than it is today. The relative future supply of NG compared to diesel (or biodiesel) will keep NG fuel costs for any new light rail system lower for years to come. And NG vehicle maintenance costs are lower, too, because it's cleaner burning.

Please, avoid the diesel/biodiesel route. It's a dead end and I'd hate to see our mass transit efforts in Indy start off on the wrong foot. We might never have the opportunity to expand the system if we make this sort of mistake on the first route we build.

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I think the commuter rail system is good. I would like to see a plan for a transportation network that incorporates higher density urban villages. Also, I think it would be good to link transportation systems together. If the rail, bus, and bicycle transportation networks worked as one system and were linked to destinations where people wanted to go I think it would be well used and loved by the citizens of Indianapolis. I think we should incorporate a bicycle system like (Velib) in Paris, FR and Bristol, UK are doing or have done. Thank you for all of your work to date.

I am fully in support of the Northeast Corridor Transit Recommendations. I am glad to see that the Indianapolis area is finally moving toward implementing a mass transit system that will bring us up to par with other major metropolitan areas. It is a shame that it has taken this long. I especially applaud the people with the foresight to reserve the Nickle Plate Railroad right-of-way. It would be interesting to know how much money this saves us from having to purchase land to build a transit system.

I have read some of the comments made by critics and am now especially concerned that the public comment period has been extended. I hope this is not an indication that the NCTR might not be implemented.

Some people believe that their tax dollars should not be used to build the transit system. I

understand that many different sources of funding will be used to fund this system, which will help reduce the direct overall cost we will have to spend. As with any public system, it makes sense that it is created through public, not private dollars. It should not be an expectation that only the people that use the system should fund the entire share of the system (Not to mention that they will be paying to use the system when it is up and running). A transit system is no different than the funding and use of our vehicle roadway network and should not be treated differently. It is also important for people to understand that the transit system will serve more people per dollars spent on the system, especially compared to cost of expanding major thoroughfares and roadways. It is important to factor into the expense of building new roadways with the loss of federal dollars for not being in compliance with Federal air quality standards. It is more expensive to not have a transit system than the cost to create a new transit system.

I also understand that the greatest need is between the Fishers area and Downtown Indianapolis. There were many other routes to consider, but this route will benefit the greatest number of potential riders. Considering that public transit is a relatively new concept to the Indianapolis region, it makes sense that the focus be on the area with the greatest amount of potential riders. Hopefully over time with the successes of the Fishers/Indianapolis route, the rapid transit system will be able to expand to other important areas.

I know that extensive thought and research has gone into the Northeast Corridor Transit Recommendations and I am in full support of the recommendations. I look forward to using the system when it is up and running. Thanks for all your hard work.

Melissa Begley

Noblesville

I have been following the information on the proposed routes for the mass transit into the Fishers area and I am opposed to using the Nickel Plate line for the Northeast Corridor route. In order to have two sets of tracks it appears the existing right of way is not adequate for the route.

I would prefer using the Binford/I69 corridor using electric powered system. Let's do it right. Also I don't see what the Super Bowl scheduled for 2012, as mentioned by Chris Sikich in his article in the Indianapolis Star dated 6/27, has to do with the light rail. If anything I would think it would be better to build it to the airport first.

While in Denver recently I rode the light rail from the south side to downtown Denver and found that it runs every 30 minutes. Northbound from 5:41 am until 8:41pm and southbound from 5:09am until 11:34pm on weekdays. The proposed schedule would be unacceptable. When I worked downtown I would not want to be dropped off in the morning and not be able to return to the Fishers area until 3pm. I also noticed in Denver that even though they had built light rail systems the highway construction is still necessary.

Another major concern is that there is not a good bus system when one arrives downtown to transfer to other areas in the city.

I recently read that the Indy-Go express was doing well but needed to improve. I would recommend major improvements in Indy-Go's express routes

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and system which can provide more stops in the downtown area which makes the commute more attractive.

How will the light rail system be paid for?

How many tax dollars are required?

What is the expected ridership in the next 5, 10, 15 & 20 years?

What are your assumptions for future ridership? Are your assumptions based on what you want or what is reality?

Mike Parente

I am very excited about the prospect of having light rail and extended bus service. We live in Fishers and go into Broad Ripple often to eat and head down town for shows, sports, and entertainment. It would be great to not have to drive. In fact, I like the idea of ICE so much, that I am thinking about finding a new job downtown so that I can take advantage of its services.

Thank you -

Laura Rinderknecht