INDIANAPOLIS REGION'S

# tempo

KEEPING PACE WITH OUR TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

SPECIAL EDITION

JUNE 1999

## SPECIAL REPORT

You may have heard about it during radio traffic reports. Or, in IHSAA finals broadcasts, on local talk shows, or as the subject of newspaper articles. OR, even through public forums or direct mail pieces. But, chances are, you still may have questions about *conNECTions* — the 18-month study of **N**orth**E**ast **C**orridor **T**ransportation. If so, you've come to the right place! This update of *teMPO*'s May/June 1998 Special Edition on the same topic (For reprints, call Mike Peoni, MPO Principal Planner, **317/327-5133**) synopsizes progress to-date, possible strategies currently under consideration to mitigate the congestion and lack of mobility that plague corridor travelers, public survey results, often voiced comments, and more! It's all here, and it's all part of your Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) continuing effort to incorporate your informed participation into our regional planning process. Read on! Then, jump in, because you're conNECTed!

## NECT Alternatives

"At the very center of *conNECTions* is **N**orth**E**ast **C**orridor **T**ransportation," says Lori Miser, MPO Manager. "*conNECTions* focuses on improving transportation system safety and efficiency in the region's busiest corridor now and in the future."

Because it incorporates our most traveled roadways, the northeast corridor - the area stretching from downtown Indianapolis northeast to Noblesville (see map, page 3) — poses problems for our transportation system that are extreme, if not unique. The same rush hour congestion and lack of mobility that plague the area are of growing concern elsewhere in the region, though to a lesser degree. Finding regionally preferred solutions for these problems that can be first implemented in the Northeast Corridor, then employed in our other "hot spots" is what *conNECTions* is all about.

northeast corridor transportation

CONNECTIONS

*linking our region's opportunities*

*conNECTions* is an 18-month transportation study intended to (1) address the transportation problems in the northeast corridor, (2) help maintain the integrity of our transportation system, and (3) develop solutions that are financially achievable and locally preferred. To achieve these goals, your Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the study's administrator, along with its planning partners (See Funding Box, page 19) is actively seeking the public's informed participation to build consensus and, eventually, arrive at a mutually agreed upon recommendation.

*cont on page 7, see NECT Alternatives*

## Study Update

"It's amazing what we've learned over the last year," says Lori Miser, MPO Manager, of the 18-month *conNECTions* study, now in its 13th month. "As transportation planners, we certainly had enough technical information to define the problems *conNECTions* is intended to help address. But, over the last year, we've gotten a lot of first-hand, personal input from the people who deal with these problems everyday — residents and travelers of the Northeast Corridor," she explains. "How they handle these issues, how they cope with travel difficulties, and what they think should be done about them, has influenced both the goals and methodologies of *conNECTions*."

*cont on page 6, see Study Update*

# ACRO-NYMBLE

Here's a list of the agency and program acronyms mentioned in this issue. Refer to it to keep your understanding letter-perfect.

**CAC -** Citizens Advisory Committee

**CD -** Collector/Distributor

**CIRCL -** Central Indiana Regional Citizens League

**DEIS -** Draft Environmental Impact Statement

**EIS -** Environmental Impact Statement

**FHWA -** Federal Highway Administration

**HAR -** Highway Advisory Radio

**HHPA -** Hoosier Heritage Port Authority

**HOT -** High Occupancy Toll

**HOV -** High Occupancy Vehicle

**IHSAA -** Indiana High School Athletic Association

**INDOT -** Indiana Department of Transportation

**IRTIP -** Indianapolis Regional Transportation Improvement Program

**ITS -** Intelligent Transportation System

**LOS -** Level of Service

**MIS -** Major Investment Study

**MPA -** Metropolitan Planning Area

**MPO -** Metropolitan Planning Organization

**ROW -** Right-of-Way

**SOV -** Single Occupant Vehicle

**TAZ -** Transportation Analysis Zone

**TDM -** Transportation Demand Management

**TSM -** Transportation System Managment

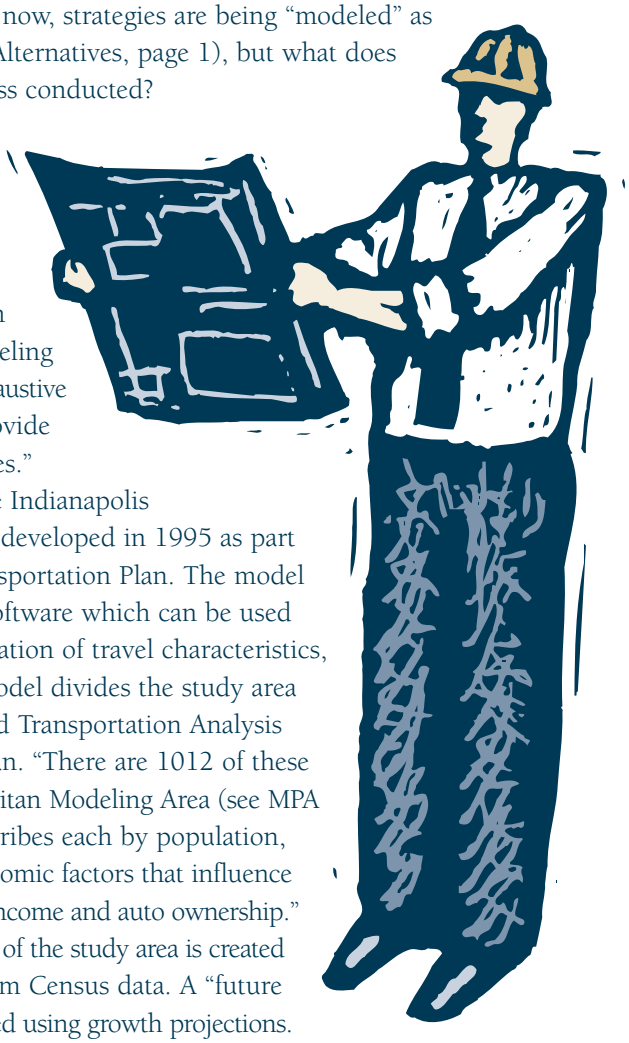
**VMS -** Variable Message Signs

# In This Issue



## Modeling The Future

Have you ever wondered what it means when planners and engineers "model" something? Right now, strategies are being "modeled" as part of *conNECTions* (See NECT Alternatives, page 1), but what does that mean? And how is the process conducted?



"There's really no mystery, just a lot of hard work," laughs Bill Wiedelman, Supervising Engineer for Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, the transportation consulting firm primarily responsible for the modeling work. "Basically, we process an exhaustive amount of data in an effort to provide decision-makers with clear choices."

The process begins with the Indianapolis Transportation Model which was developed in 1995 as part of the Indianapolis Regional Transportation Plan. The model consists of data and simulation software which can be used to create a system-wide representation of travel characteristics, or a *travel demand model*. "The model divides the study area into small geographic units, called Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZ)," explains Wiedelman. "There are 1012 of these units in the Indianapolis Metropolitan Modeling Area (see MPA map, page 3) and the model describes each by population, employment and other socio-economic factors that influence travel behavior, including median income and auto ownership." A "base year condition" description of the study area is created using this known information from Census data. A "future year condition" description is created using growth projections.

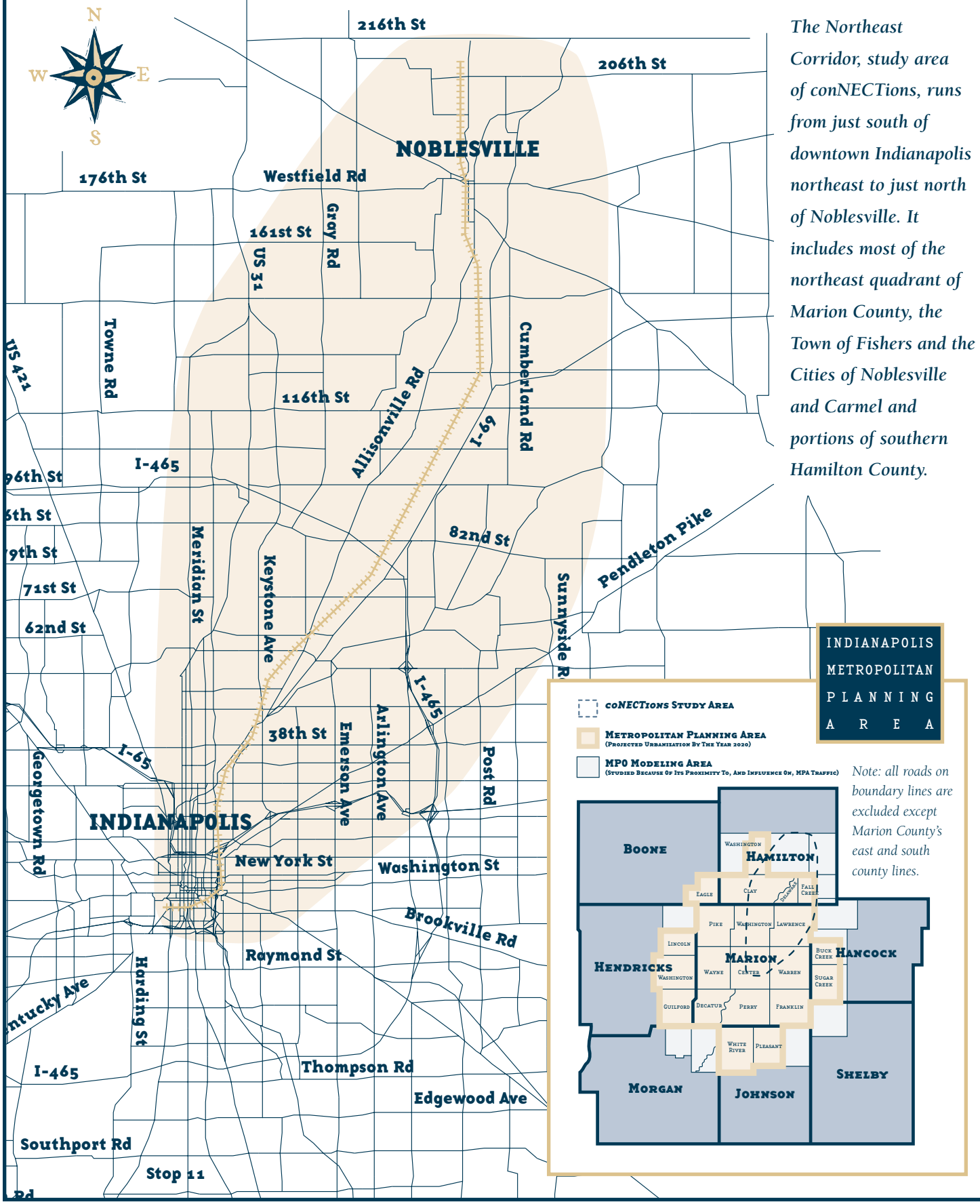
"Our simulation model also describes our study area's transportation system by roadway network and transit services," notes Wiedelmen. "Using mathematical equations, the number of trips produced by, and attracted to, each TAZ is determined and assigned to its transportation system." Trip counts are done for both base and future years. To "calibrate our model," and help assure process validity, base year traffic assignments are compared with actual traffic counts. If the model duplicates actual counts, it is considered capable of estimating future travel demand using future projections. Future traffic counts are then assigned to the existing transportation network to determine where deficiencies may occur.

"Once we know where deficiencies will develop, we create alternatives to correct the situations," Wiedelman explains. "We assess the impact various alternatives will have on our transportation system's operating level-of-service." This information helps establish an alternative's relative efficiency and contributes to its perceived benefits or disadvantages. "Essentially, we try to bring travel demand and system capacity back into balance," he says.

Still, for all of its detail, the modeling process is best used as a "broad brush" system analysis tool. "For any given alternative, we're considering ridership projections, air quality impacts, ability to serve total travel demand and a hundred other things," Wiedelman notes. "That's why we're most comfortable identifying major trends with modeling, not designing intersection details."

*cont on page 19, see Modeling*

# THE NORTHEAST CORRIDOR




*The Northeast Corridor, study area of conNECTions, runs from just south of downtown Indianapolis northeast to just north of Noblesville. It includes most of the northeast quadrant of Marion County, the Town of Fishers and the Cities of Noblesville and Carmel and portions of southern Hamilton County.*

*Note: all roads on boundary lines are excluded except Marion County's east and south county lines.*

# Early Cuts

Sure, there are a lot of bus, bus/rail, highway expansion and other road-related options being evaluated right now by *conNECTions*, but have we thought of everything that could be done to improve transportation throughout the Northeast Corridor?

"That's the question that keeps transportation planners awake at night," says Lori Miser, MPO Manager. "We're always trying to expand our horizons, to open our thinking to perspectives and possibilities that we haven't thought of before. And *conNECTions* is the perfect example of that," she adds. "Never before has a process so actively pursued public input for its different insights, or evaluated such a broad spectrum of possibilities."

Still, that long list of initial possibilities needed to be shortened prior to the labor-intensive, time-consuming modeling process. How was that done? "Throughout the study, we've consistently applied the same set of evaluation criteria to all possible options," Miser explains. "Consistent application is one way we insure study objectivity, and also how we identified alternatives that failed to meet criteria minimums."

Following are profiles of half a dozen options that didn't make the grade along with the reasons why.

## Subways

Locating transit lines below-grade (underground) eliminates the possibility of transit/general traffic accidents, permitting higher transit speeds and improved safety. However, the benefit comes at a price. Below-grade alignments typically cost nine or ten times as much as similar at-grade (surface) alignments. In addition, subway stations cost about twenty times as much as similar stations above ground. This is why newer transit systems in mid-sized areas generally tend to be at-grade.

### Estimated Cost:

Approximately nine to ten times the cost of an at-grade alignment.

### Previous Studies:

National/international studies have indicated that only very large, densely populated urban centers (e.g. Chicago, New York, Washington, Atlanta) can generate the ridership necessary to justify the high cost of this type of transit.

### Pros:

(compared to at-grade transit alignments)

- less disruption of surface traffic
- accommodates greater overall transit speeds
- enhances safety
- less disruptive in terms of aesthetics and neighborhood impacts

### Cons:

- nine to ten times more expensive than surface alignments
- higher on-going maintenance costs
- longer and more disruptive construction period
- about three times the cost of elevated alignments which offer similar speed and traffic benefits when compared to at-grade alignments

### Basis For Rejection:

*Cost-Effectiveness*

Subway alignments in the Northeast Corridor are very unlikely to compare favorably with either at-grade or elevated transit alignments when costs are measured against benefits.

*Environmental Impacts*

Compared to at-grade alignments, subways require lengthier construction times and cause more disruption to traffic, neighborhoods and water resources.

## Elevated Transit Alignments

Like subways, elevated transit alignments provide greater overall speed by eliminating conflicts with surface vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Newer systems in Atlanta, San Francisco and Washington are elevated, as are older systems in Chicago and New York.

Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) and other monorail technologies are also typically carried on elevated track, thus having similar negative impacts (i.e. aesthetic, neighborhood, higher construction and maintenance costs). Benefits differ, however, with PRT offering slower travel speeds and lower capacities than conventional transit. Also, because PRT is new, many systems involve proprietary technologies which limit vendor competition and future expansion options.

### Estimated Cost:

Elevated facilities usually cost about three times as much as surface facilities. In addition, elevated structures tend to be visually unattractive and difficult to integrate into the urban environment. For this reason, most newer systems in mid-size cities are built at-grade. PRT systems have higher initial costs than conventional light rail due to the large number of individual vehicles required.

*cont on page 14, see Cuts*

***Obviously, the success of this plan is dependent on the involvement of the community. So, I hope you'll continue this outreach program.***

Hot Line Caller

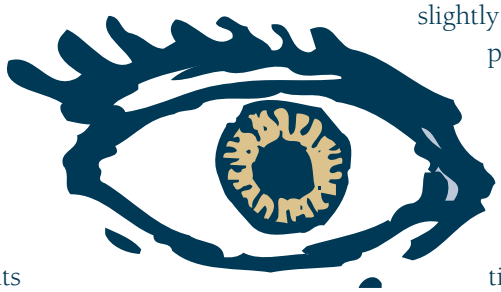
# ConNECTing with the Vision Plan

On April 21st of this year, *The Indianapolis Star* ran an article on the Mobility 2020 Conference held the previous day. That conference, and the article it inspired, concerned the preliminary recommendations of the Central Indiana Regional Citizens League's (CIRCL) Vision Plan — a 20-month initiative to envision a preferred future for our area by concentrating on its land use and transportation planning policies. For many *Star* readers and seminar attendees participating in the *conNECTions* study of the Northeast Corridor, the information was both new *and* familiar.

"There's a good reason for that," says John Myers of Parsons Brinckerhoff, the engineering firm consulting on both projects. "The studies may be distinct in their goals and study areas, but they are not exclusive. Both *conNECTions* and the Vision Plan look beyond pure engineering factors to consider broader quality-of-life issues such as regional development, community identity and urban sprawl. In fact," says Myers, "the Vision Plan really creates a context for looking at the results of the *conNECTions* study."

Each study identifies present concerns for area residents that involve how we get around. In the Vision Plan, these concerns are directly related to development policies, acknowledging the interdependence of transportation and land use planning. *conNECTions* narrows its focus more to directly address identified problems with Northeast Corridor transportation, while looking at the relationship between transportation and development.

"The Vision Plan and *conNECTions* touch in a number of ways," Myers says. "For example, the overall developmental impact of the transportation alternatives currently being evaluated by *conNECTions* is really what the Vision Plan is all about. Certain alternatives, such as bus and rail transit, encourage compact land use and higher density neighborhoods, which the Vision Plan recommends. Auto-oriented alternatives, such as highway expansion, tend to stimulate more dispersed, lower density land use."



Still, the studies' differences are just as important as their similarities. For instance, while the Vision Plan released its preliminary findings in April, 1999, *conNECTions* is still modeling possible solutions to the problems of Northeast Corridor congestion and lack of mobility (see "NECT Alternatives", page 1). Following this three month process, option benefits and disadvantages will be evaluated and the best of each will be combined into a locally preferred, economically feasible recommendation.

Could the studies arrive at different conclusions? "That's very possible given their differences in focus," says Myers, "but the Vision Plan and *conNECTions* will probably also agree on a number of points." And the element that allows the conclusions of each to be valid? Informed public participation. "Because the studies define problems and opportunities slightly differently, participants may arrive at different but compatible answers," Myers notes. "These differing perspectives are a good thing; a resource we'll rely on in the future when considering hard-to-measure, quality-of-life issues."

## STUDY COMPARISON

| | VISION PLAN | *conNECTions* |
|---|---|---|
| **NAME** | Central Indiana Transportation and Land Use Vision Plan | The Major Investment Study and Draft Environmental Impact Statement of Northeast Corridor Transportation |
| **TIME FRAME** | 2/98 - 12/99 | 5/98 - 11/99 |
| **STUDY AREA** | 9 county central Indiana region | Northeast Corridor stretching from downtown Indianapolis northeast to Noblesville |
| **SPONSORING ORGANIZATION** | Central Indiana Regional Citizens League (CIRCL) | Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) |
| **GOAL** | Identify current and future transportation and land use issues, concerns and priorities that reflect the goals of area residents and that can be incorporated as policies into the decision-making process | Arrive at a locally preferred, economically feasible solution for improving transportation efficiency in the Northeast Corridor, and elsewhere in the Indianapolis MPA, using a review process that incorporates consistent application of evaluation criteria and extensive public involvement |
| **FUNDING** | Underwritten CIRCL and the United Way of Central Indiana with sponsorship from The Lilly Endowment | Federal Transportation Administration 71%, INDOT 15%, Indy 7.5%, Hamilton County 1.6%, Carmel 1.6%, Noblesville 1.6% & Fishers 1.6% |
| **PLANNING HORIZON** | 2020 | 2020 |

## Study Update *(from page 1)*

(Read some of these public opinions by turning to "Web Words, Hot Line Hints" on page 16, or by looking for the quote boxes throughout this issue.)

*conNECTions* is an 18-month study of NorthEast Corridor Transportation. Its overall goal is to better "link our regional opportunities" by making it easier for us to move between the corridor's various origins and destinations of employment, essential services, commerce and recreation (For a complete listing of *conNECTions'* goals and objectives, see the box at right). Currently, the Northeast Corridor, which stretches from downtown Indianapolis northeast to Noblesville, is plagued with chronic traffic congestion and lack of mobility which threaten to jeopardize our transportation system's efficiency and safety. "The northeast is our #1, most-traveled corridor, so our system has the most immediate need of improvement there," Miser explains. "It's also where we are most likely to develop successful transportation strategies to serve as models for other busy corridors throughout the region." Study recommendations are likely to be implemented in the Northeast Corridor as well as other traffic "hot spots" in the region, such as from downtown Indianapolis south into Johnson County and Hendricks County west of downtown Indianapolis toward the airport.

Since it began in May, 1998, the study's planning partners have worked with transportation engineers at Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, project consultants, to 1.) define its purpose and need, 2.) develop an evaluation methodology, 3.) define possible alternatives, 4.) do preliminary screening of those alternatives, 5.) refine the definition of alternatives in greater detail, and begin the 6.) alternative analysis and 7.) modeling processes which may last through July. Yet to come is the selection of a preferred strategy and the development of a final report (To review a complete study timeline, turn to page 18). Throughout the last 12 months, the above processes have been monitored in meetings of the Policy Steering Committee, Technical Working Group and various groups representing the public interest, including the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC).

*cont on page 19, see Study Update*

***I, for one, would be on a commuter train in a heartbeat, if one were available. Therefore, I am delighted to see this project being undertaken.***

Web Site Visitor

## conNECTions Goals & Objectives

The heart of *conNECTions'* evaluation and decision-making process is the following set of goals and objectives:

### GOAL 1: IMPROVE MOBILITY IN THE CORRIDOR

Objectives

- Reduce congestion on streets and highways.
- Improve roadway safety.
- Expand transit service options to new markets and attract choice riders.
- Improve transit service in existing markets.
- Improve connectivity between workers and jobs.

### GOAL 2: ENHANCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE CORRIDOR

Objectives

- Improve freight movements.
- Enhance labor access to jobs.
- Provide transportation options for residential neighborhoods.
- Enhance access to major destinations.
- Promote land-use policies that concentrate development along transit corridors.
- Explore alternative technologies to improve mobility.

### GOAL 3: PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Objectives

- Improve air quality.
- Minimize noise impacts.
- Protect sensitive areas, including historic and cultural sites, wetlands, park lands, and other open spaces.
- Minimize community and neighborhood disruption.
- Support pedestrian and bicycle travel.

### GOAL 4: DEVELOP A COST-EFFECTIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM, MAXIMIZING THE RETURN ON PUBLIC INVESTMENT

Objectives

- Demonstrate that overall benefits of improvements warrant their overall costs.
- Identify a fiscally realistic alternative.
- Assure that costs and benefits are shared in an equitable manner.

### GOAL 5: REACH CONSENSUS ON A TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR THE CORRIDOR

Objectives

- Produce an alternative that is supported by the public, elected officials and agency staffs
- Promote informed community involvement in the decision-making process.
- Explore the impacts of proposed alternatives on different socio-economic groups, including the mobility-disadvantaged.

# NECT Alternatives *(from page 1)*

In all likelihood, *conNECTions'* final recommendation will feature a combination of complementary strategies that address diverse aspects of the issue, including two or more of the following highway, bus and rail/bus alternatives.

## HIGHWAY ALTERNATIVES

All "H" alternatives describe changes that can be made to highways within the corridor to increase traffic capacities and, thereby, reduce congestion.

### H-1: No-Build 2001

This alternative answers the question, "What happens if we do nothing?" H-1 assumes that no improvements will be made to Northeast Corridor roadways beyond those already committed, funded and approved for the next three years in the Indianapolis Regional Transportation Improvement Program (1999 - 2001 IRTIP). Although other planned roadway improvements will probably occur by the year 2020, this alternative represents the base transportation system against which other *conNECTions* highway expansion alternatives will be compared. Because H-1, by intention, does not take into consideration the travel demand projections upon which *conNECTions* is based, it fails to adequately serve this demand. As with all alternatives currently under consideration, computer modeling will establish H-1's relative success or failure at meeting *conNECTions* goals (see related story, page 2)

### H-1A: No Build 2020

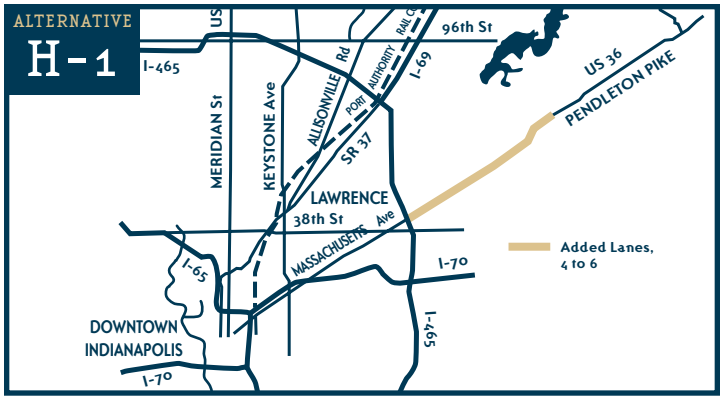
This alternative assumes that the financial constraints of the Cost Feasible Indianapolis Regional Transportation Plan (Revised July, 1997) would limit major improvements to those that can be programmed with expected funding levels. Some projects that are identified in the "needs" based plan, but due to a lower priority rating cannot be included in the Cost Feasible Plan, are not included in this alternative. All projects that are included expand the capacity of the regional transportation system. Maintenance-type projects are not included in this alternative. Notable projects that were identified as part of the needs-based plan, but not part of the Cost Feasible Plan, include widening I-465 from 6 lanes divided to 8 lanes divided and constructing High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes along S.R. 37 from I-69 south to the NE I-65/ I-70 interchange. Again, this alternative fails to address anticipated travel demands and is most useful for comparison purposes.

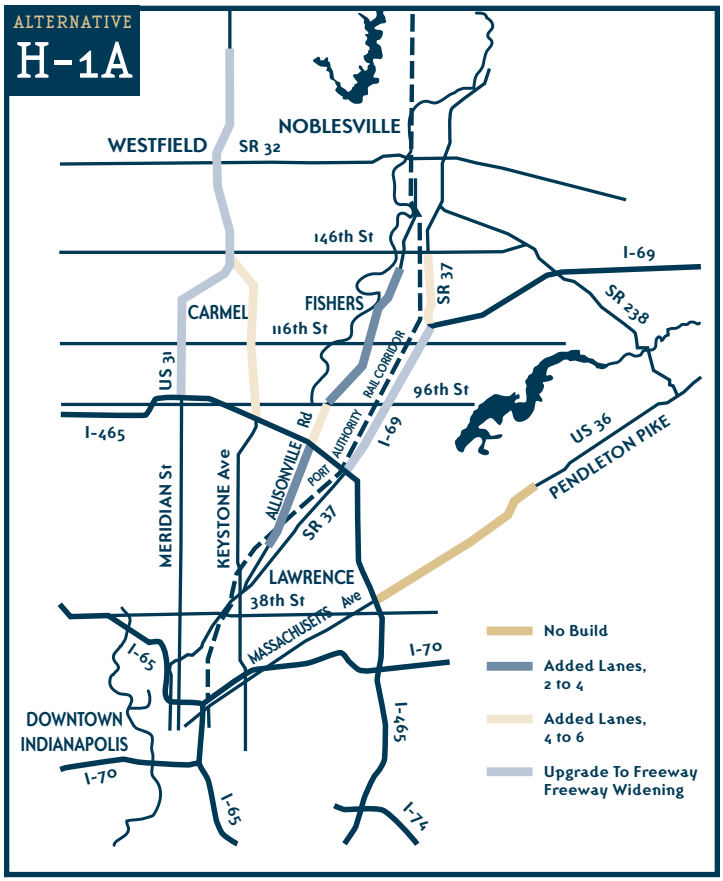
### H-2: TSM/TDM

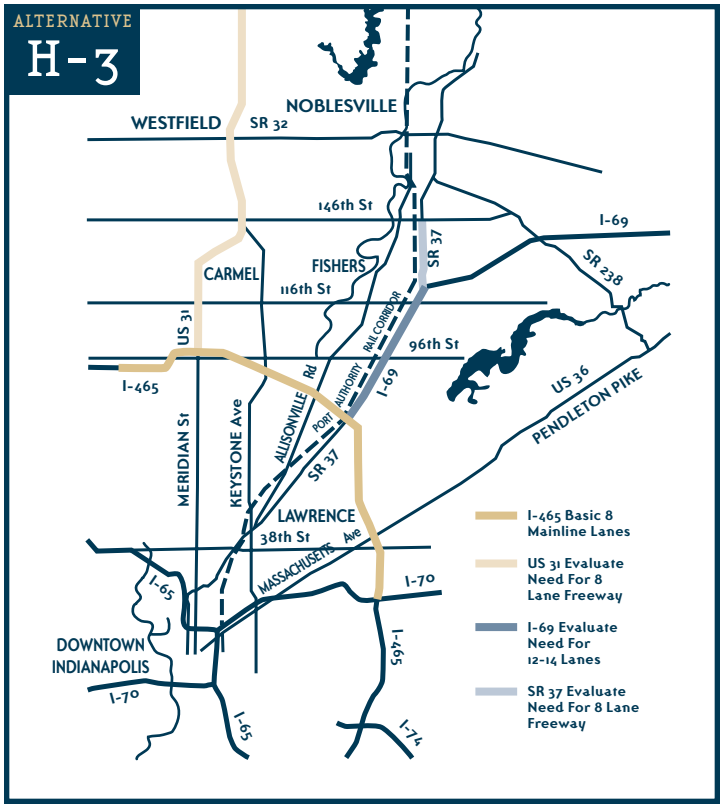
The purpose of this alternative is to reduce existing and future traffic congestion by implementing strategies that do not rely solely on increasing the number of travel lanes to increase capacity and reduce delay. Proposed strategies include 1.) Transportation System Management (TSM) which increases operational efficiency of existing facilities and, 2.) Transportation Demand Management (TDM) which changes travel behavior to shift use to higher capacity modes, such as transit and carpools. Implementation of this alternative could include roadway enhancements such as

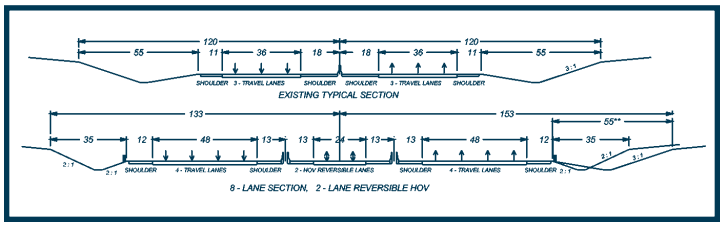
- widening to eliminate bottlenecks
- providing new connections to eliminate discontinuities in the street system
- signal-phasing modifications
- signal coordination improvements
- high occupancy vehicle lanes (HOV)
- ramp metering and Intelligent Transportation Strategies (ITS), such as Variable Message Signs (VMS) and Highway Advisory Radio (HAR) that convey transportation information to motorists for travel planning purposes.

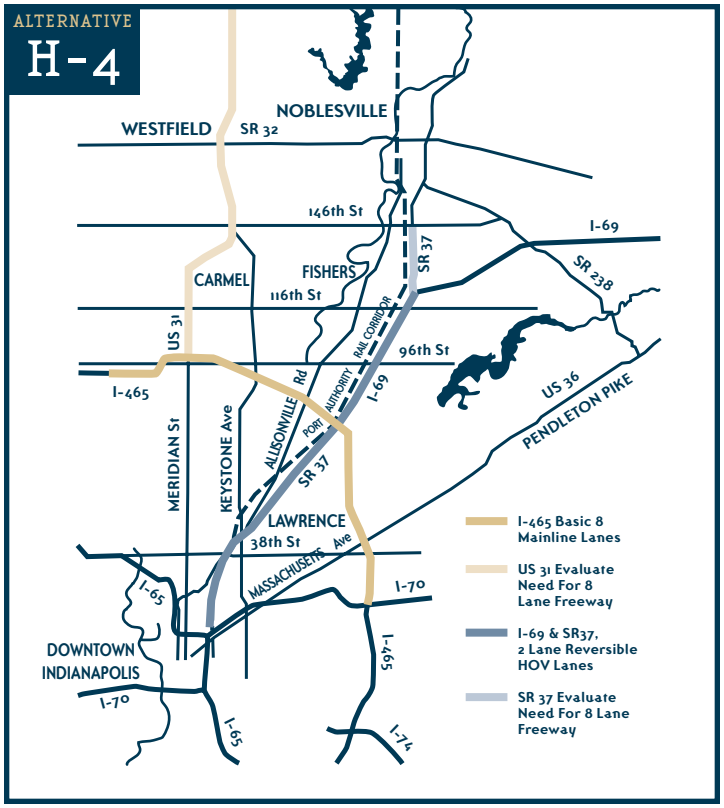
*cont on page 8, see NECT Alternatives*






## NECT Alternatives *(from page 7)*

HOV and other special use lanes would be separated from general use traffic by lane markers or barriers and identified with signage. Although these and other TSM/TDM strategies offer excellent cost/benefit ratios - one of the key evaluation criteria - they have limited ability to provide large increases in total corridor capacity. Modeling will determine to what extent this alternative can be involved in the study's final recommendation.

### H-3: Basic Freeway Expansion

This alternative recommends projects to increase the traffic-handling capacity of major corridor facilities, including I-465, I-69, US 31 and SR 37. I-465 would increase from its current six to eight "mainline" lanes, recognizing that total future demand will probably not be met and traffic is likely to divert to other highways. By limiting the total number of "through" lanes, these improvements could be implemented without drastically changing current right-of-way (ROW) — the "buffer zone" beside the road. Previous studies indicate that eight basic lanes may not adequately serve travel demand without significant congestion, unless a high percentage of travelers turned to transit or car-pooling.

### H-4: Expanded Freeway with Special Use Lanes

In this alternative, I-465 would get eight "through" lanes, as in H-3, plus two reversible special use lanes for high occupancy vehicle (HOV), bus or high occupancy toll (HOT) traffic. These special use lanes would probably only be recommended on SR 37/I-69 south to 38th Street, but could extend through the abandoned rail corridor from 38th Street to 16th Street where they would connect with the existing street system. These lanes would encourage car-pooling, but could accommodate single occupant vehicle (SOV) drivers who pay an electronically collected toll. Along I-69 and I-465, additional right-of-way would be needed to separate two reversible HOV lanes from general traffic.

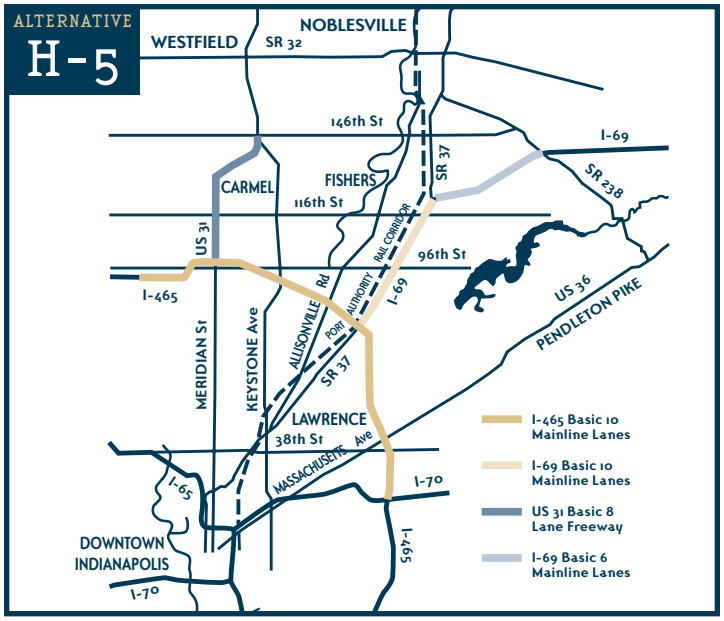
*cont on page 9, see NECT Alternatives*

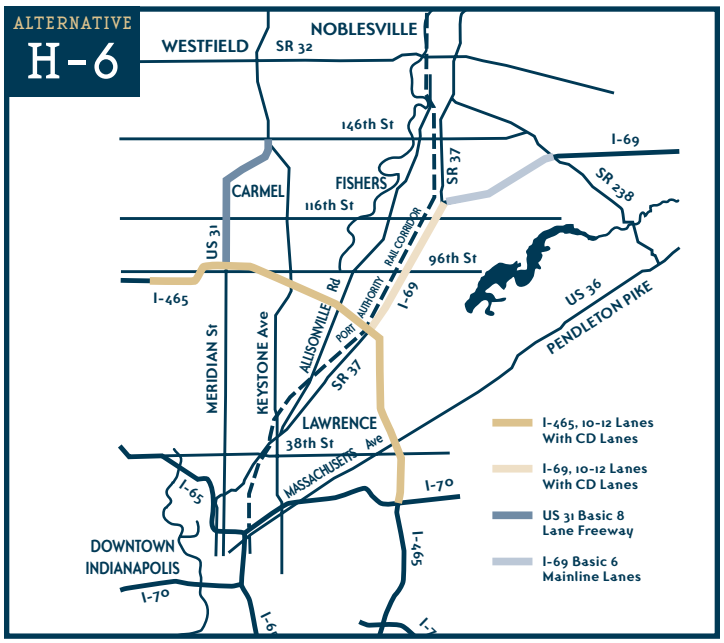
***The bus system doesn't run far enough north, or on time. There's still a lot of jobs in Carmel and Noblesville, but people can't get to them!***

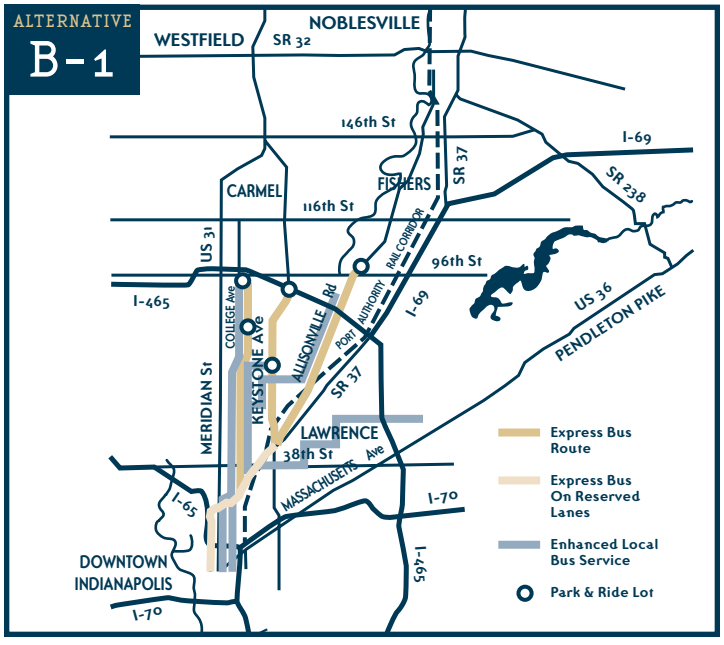
Hot Line Caller

***Want "real" behavior modification? Establish a toll road!***

Web Site Visitor




# NECT Alternatives *(from page 8)*

### H-5: Intermediate Highway Expansion

This alternative recommends projects that would increase the traffic capacity of major roads consistent with a maximum of 10 "through" lanes on I-465 — two more than H-3. No special use lanes are recommended. Additional lanes may be needed in interchange areas to accommodate ramp movements. Special construction techniques could help minimize right-of-way impacts at an estimated additional cost of $5 million per mile. Previous studies indicate that 10 basic lanes may not adequately meet total travel demand. As with H-3, significant congestion could result unless a high percentage of travelers are diverted to car-pooling or transit use.

### H-6: Major Freeway Expansion

This alternative recommends developing traffic capacity for I-465 equal to the total travel demand forecast. This would probably require a minimum of 12 "through" lanes and the possibility of continuous collector/distributor (CD) roadways paralleling the highway to improve safety and accommodate short distance travelers. Additional lanes would be required in interchange areas for ramp movements. New right-of-way would be required along existing alignments to accommodate this expansion. Although this highway alternative best serves anticipated travel demand, it could encourage the area's continued reliance on private, single occupant vehicles as the primary mode of transportation. In addition, because of the synergy between transportation and land use, it may contribute to future congestion by stimulating growth in outlying areas.

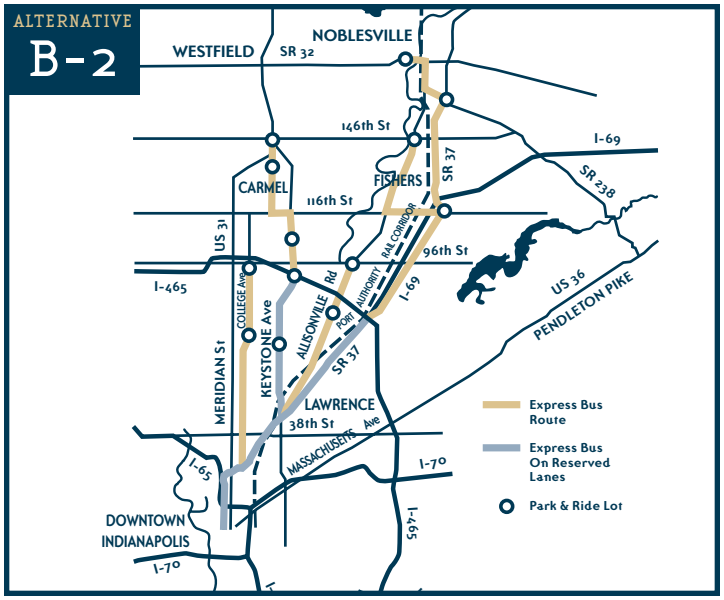
## Transit Alternatives

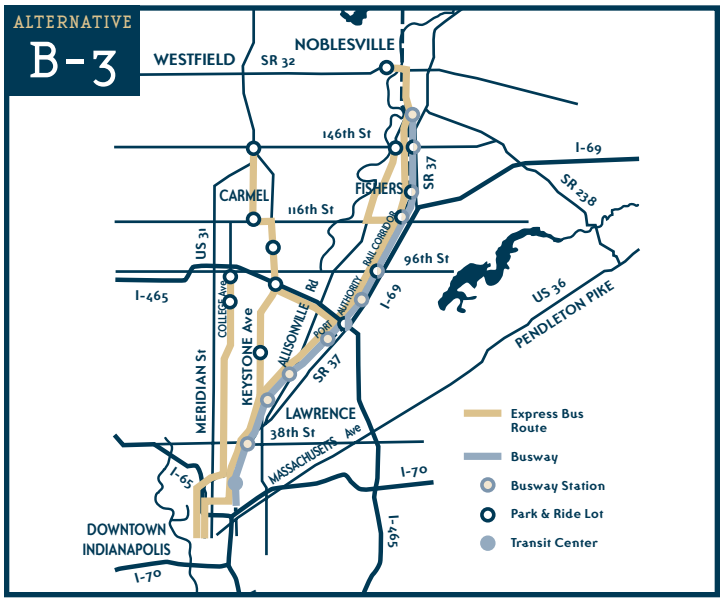
All transit-related options describe strategies intended to reduce congestion and increase mobility by providing new, improved or expanded service using high occupancy bus or rail. Alternatives designated with a "B" involve bus service exclusively; those with an "RB" combine rail and bus.

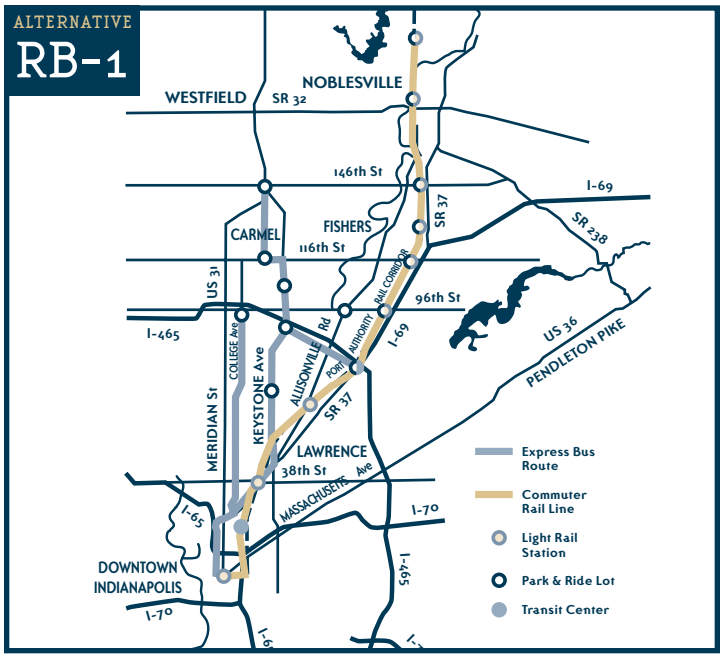
### B-1: Expanded Express/Local Service

This alternative involves three new express bus routes to serve downtown Indianapolis from 96th Street/Allisonville Road, 86th Street/College Avenue and Fishers/Castleton/Keystone at the Crossing while improving local bus service on four existing routes (4, 17, 18, 19). In all cases, buses would arrive every 10 - 15 minutes during peak travel times; 20-30 minutes off-peak. Facilities would include improvements to bus equipment, stops and a number of park & ride lots. Express lanes, some of which could be reversible, would serve inbound traffic in the morning and outbound traffic in the afternoon. Issues include whether to allow high occupancy vehicles on express lanes.

*cont on page 10, see NECT Alternatives*




# NECT Alternatives *(from page 9)*

### B-2: Express Service/Hamilton Co. to Downtown

This alternative incorporates all of the recommendations from B-1, plus adds three express routes from downtown Indianapolis to the Carmel, Fishers and Noblesville areas. Buses would travel these new routes at 20-minute intervals during peak periods. A total of 13 park & ride lots would make transit service convenient for drivers from surrounding low-density neighborhoods.

### B-3: Exclusive Busways for Marion and Hamilton Co.

This alternative includes the local service recommendations of B-1 and modifies the express service recommendations of B-2 by proposing a busway. A two-lane roadway for the exclusive use of buses would follow the Hoosier Heritage Port Authority (HHPA) right-of-way from Allisonville Road and 161st Street south to 16th Street in Indianapolis. This route, and modified Fishers and Noblesville routes from B-2, would eliminate the need for the Metropolitan Airport route described in B-1. During peak periods, buses would travel both this new express route and local service routes at 10-15 minute intervals. Facilities would include a total of 13 park & ride lots, nine busway stations and two transit centers serving six express routes. Issues yet to be determined include some intersection designs, bridge versus signal-control where the busway crosses local streets, and the closure of some cross-streets.

### RB-1: Commuter Rail/Noblesville to Downtown Indianapolis

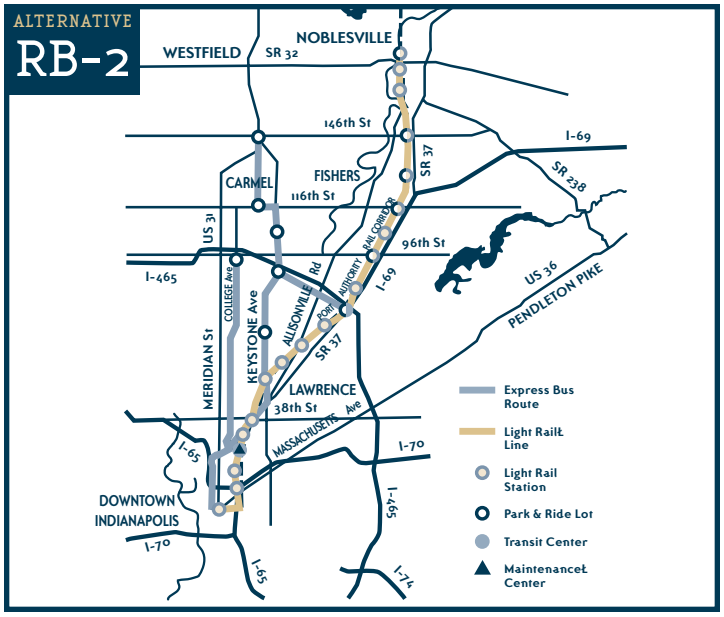
This alternative features commuter rail service along the Hoosier Heritage Port Authority rail corridor from 206th Street in Noblesville to 10th Street in Indianapolis. From there, it would follow the CSX right-of-way to Union Station. This alternative also includes improvements to local bus service, as in B-1, and a modified version of the express routes in B-3. Facilities would include 11 rail stations, seven park & ride lots for rail service and six for express buses, two transit centers accommodating both local and employer-sponsored bus service, and shuttle service distributing rail passengers throughout the downtown area from Union Station.

All rail alternatives would require shop facilities for both routine and major maintenance and repair. These could be at abandoned rail yards along the HHPA line at 25th Street and 38th Street, or at Amtrak's Beech Grove facility.

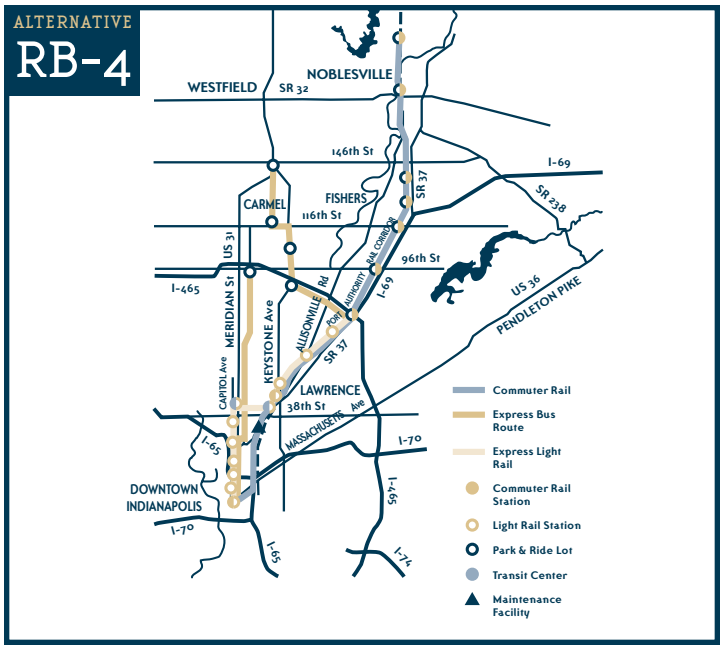
### RB-2: Rapid Light Rail/Noblesville to Downtown Indianapolis

This alternative features rail service along the same alignment as RB-1, but uses light rail — an electronically powered system which operates in mixed traffic at lower speeds and allows for more frequent service and stops. It also expands the

*cont on page 11, see NECT Alternatives*








# NECT Alternatives *(from page 10)*

local bus service recommended in B-1 and includes the express bus service recommendations from RB-1. Facilities include 20 rail stations, two transit centers, 12 park & ride lots for rail and six park & ride lots for express bus.

## RB-3: Express Light Rail/Noblesville to Downtown Indianapolis

The biggest difference between this alternative and RB-2 is rail alignment south of the State Fairgrounds. Instead of following the rail corridor, it would run on 38th Street, Capitol/Illinois and South Street. This alternative also includes the local bus service recommendations of B-1 and the express bus service of RB-1. Stations and park & ride facilities are basically the same as in RB-2, except that there are more stations south of the Fairgrounds to serve additional target destinations, such as hospitals, offices and museums, that lie along this alignment. Trade-offs include this alternative's higher ridership and economic development potential for Indianapolis versus RB-1's greater speed and better service potential for riders from Hamilton and northern Marion Counties.

## RB-4: Commuter Rail/Noblesville to Downtown Indianapolis & Express Light Rail/I-465 Transit Center to Downtown Indianapolis

This alternative combines the speed benefits of RB-1's commuter rail service with the service frequency and stop proximity benefits of RB-3's express light rail service, while minimizing service and cost duplications. It features commuter rail alignment, service, stations and park & ride lots from Noblesville to Indianapolis of RB-1 and the express light rail alignment, service and stations of RB-3 from the I-465 Transit Center to Union Station. All routes would be double tracked except for those north of I-465 and commuter routes south of the fairgrounds. These two technologies could share the same track between I-465 and the Fairgrounds. Facilities would include northside, eastside and I-465 transit centers; a Monon Bike-and-Ride Center; express bus service and improved local bus service.

"We already know a great deal about the alternatives currently under consideration," Miser says. "The computer modeling being done now (see related story, page 2) and public reaction to these alternatives will tell us what we don't know. Clearly, our goal is to arrive at a recommendation that combines the best strategies for addressing current and future transportation problems. To do that, we need the public's help in recognizing alternatives that address the interests and issues most important to them."

For more information on the *conNECTions* transportation alternatives currently being considered, or on how you can participate in the transportation planning process, contact Lori Miser at **327-5136** (LMISER@indygov.org) or Mike Peoni, MPO Principal Planner, at **327-5133** (MPEONI@indygov.org).

# Going "Off-Road" With *conNECTions*

Not all of *conNECTions* has been corridor-bound. Or even limited to committee meetings or computer screens! A lot of the study's activity has been focused on communicating with the public and soliciting their input.

"Sharing information has always been a big part of what we do," says Mike Peoni, MPO Principal Planner, "but the *conNECTions* Public Involvement Program is unique, even by our standards." As the MPO person most often responsible for interacting with the public, Peoni often chairs committees, calls meetings, draws up agendas and publishes reports intended to educate the public and encourage their participation. Still, coordinating the outreach aspects of *conNECTions* has been a challenge.

"Given the size of this study, the significance of the problems it addresses, and the impact its locally preferred recommendation will have on our region's future transportation efficiency, we've pulled out all the stops," says Peoni.

Following is a brief description of some of the efforts aimed at "connecting" with the public during *conNECTions'* first year.

### *teMPO* Special Editions

Complete background on the need for the study, plus its goals, design and implementation procedures (May/June 1998). The follow-up (May/June 1999) features a study update, description of specific alternatives, public input, a timeline, survey results and more!

### PSA Television & Radio

:30 TV spot and :60 Radio spot defining the problem, encouraging study participation, and promoting *conNECTions'* hot line and web site.

### Educational Video

For use at public forums, group presentations, schools and as background information for elected officials, area educators, the media and all interested parties.

### Interactive Voice Response System

A toll-free call to **1-877-NEC-LINK** puts you in-touch with study background, alternative details, a personal survey and the opportunity for further contact.

### Web Site

At www.indygov.org/connections, this site includes study area map, definition of problem, details on potential solutions under consideration, funding information, an e-mail survey, and more.

### Brochures

Highlighting major issues, participation opportunities and specific alternative being evaluated, two brochure have been distributed through a direct mail effort to 25,000 corridor residents selected at random. Additional limited copies of these brochures have been distributed at locations and events throughout the corridor.

A third brochure will be distributed via direct mail prior to *conNECTions'* final report.

### Direct Mail

Reminder cards of upcoming meetings have been distributed to a growing list of interested parties on a regular basis.

### Media Kit

Containing study fact sheets, goals, evaluation criteria, description of alternatives, committees, and more, this kit has been delivered to 30 media outlets throughout Central Indiana, including newspapers and radio & television stations.

### Press Conferences

As part of a coordinated public relations program, press conferences have been held in November, 1998 and January, 1999. Additional, exclusive interviews have been held with correspondents of various media outlets, including *The Indianapolis Star/News*, *The Daily Ledger*, WIBC Radio and Metro Networks News — all of whom have run special features on the study.

### Hosted Groups

Guided discussions on transportation-related issues have been held with employees of major employers in the Northeast Corridor, including Omni Hotel-North and Community Hospital-North, to learn their concerns and perspectives.

### Focus Groups

This is a traditional research method which offers anecdotal information from demographically/psychographically representative groups who are led through a discussion outline over the course of 1.5 to 2 hours. *conNECTions'* groups were held in September of 1998 and information gathered there was used to help develop a quantitative research survey.

### Telephone Survey

An extensive survey of 450+ respondents conducted by the I. U. Opinion Lab in December, 1998, and February, 1999, provided project-able findings for the corridor population and an awareness and attitudinal "baseline" for study planners.

*cont on page 13, see Off Road*

***Mass transit is the final solution, but it will NOT work until the automobile is either much more expensive or less convenient.***

Web Site Visitor

## Off Road *(from page 12)*

### Citizens Advisory Committee

To contribute more fully to *conNECTions*, regular members of the CAC decided to meet on a monthly basis (usually the fourth Tuesday of each month), increasing their commitment three-fold over the quarterly meetings to which they had previously agreed.

### Distance Learning Initiative

First suggested by John Harold, a member of the Citizens Advisory Committee, this program brings regional transportation planning into area classrooms. Participating educators have developed *conNECTions-related* projects for inclusion in their curriculum on a variety of disciplines (social studies, math, art, etc.). Distance Learning technology, including audio/video teleconferencing, is now used to simulcast select government presentations and monthly CAC meetings to/from various schools.

### Traffic Report Sponsorship

Many radio listeners throughout the region first learned of *conNECTions* during the traffic reports of their favorite radio stations. NECT-sponsored reports ran on more than 20 stations during late 1998 in an effort to build usage of the study's web site and hot line.

### Paid Media

*conNECTions* has also run limited media schedules to increase web site and hot line usage and build attendance at specific meetings. Included among these was the Public Forum held in late January, 1999, and sponsorship of the IHSAA Finals on WIBC.

### Public Presentations/Meetings

A partial listing of events held in 1998/1999 follows:

#### Citizens Advisory Committee Meetings (5/98 - 11/99)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| May 19 | November 17 | April 27 | August 24 |
| August 11 | January 12 | May 25 | September 28 |
| September 29 | February 23 | June 22 | October 26 |
| October 27 | March 23 | July 27 | November 16 |

#### Radio & TV

October 21 - "The Mark Shaw Show" on WMYS
November 4 - "Spotlight on Indianapolis" on WIBC
November 11 - "The Amos Brown Show" on WAV TV

#### Group Presentations

May 11 - Greater Allisonville Community Council
June 17 - Castleton Business Alliance
August 24 - Harrison Green Homeowner's Association (in Fishers)
August 25 - Chatham Arch Neighborhood Association
September 14 - Old Northside, Inc.
September 19 - Marion County Alliance of Neighborhood Associations
September 24 - League of Women Voters
September 24 - Hamilton Cty Coalition of Chambers Gov. Affairs Committee
October 1 - Nora Northside Community Council
October 5 - Herron-Morton Place Neighborhood Association
October 15 - Keystone Business and Community Association
October 19 - River Glen Homeowners Association (Fishers)
October 20 - Community Alliance of the Far Eastside
October 20 - Eastwood Neighborhood Association
November 16 - Sargent Road Association
December 2 - Noblesville Golden K Kiwanis Club
January 6 - East Avalon Hills Association, Inc.
February 9 - Lake Maxinhall Neighborhood Association
March 17 - Fishers Chamber of Commerce
April 22 - Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation Board
May 5 - Castleton Business Alliance
May 6 - Near Eastside Community Organization
June 8 - Greater Allisonville Community Council

#### Policy Steering Committee

July 22 November 19

#### Technical Working Group

July 8 September 9
September 21 - 22 October 21

"It's all been about communication," says Peoni, of the extensive effort. "The goals of *conNECTions*' Public Involvement Plan include informing the public of *conNECTions* and the transportation problems we're studying, persuading them to participate, and facilitating their participation so we have a real consensus-building process that results in a locally preferred recommendation."

For more information on how you can participate in *conNECTions* or our region's on-going transportation planning process, call Mike Peoni at **327-5133**.

## Can We conNECT With Your Group?

To succeed in recommending a preferred transportation strategy for enhancing mobility and alleviating congestion in the Northeast Corridor, *conNECTions* needs the informed participation of people throughout the region. So, make the connection! If you'd like to schedule a special presentation on *conNECTions* and its role in our transportation planning process, please contact Mike Peoni at **327-5133**.

## Cuts *(from page 4)*

**Pros:**

(compared to at-grade transit alignments)

- provides greater overall speed for transit service
- less disruption of surface traffic
- enhances safety

**Cons:**

- three times more expensive than at-grade alignments
- negative aesthetic impacts, possible neighborhood disruption
- longer required construction time
- higher on-going maintenance costs

**Basis for Rejection:**

*Cost-Effectiveness*

Elevated transit alignments in the Northeast Corridor are unlikely to compare favorably with at-grade alignments when costs are measured against benefits.

*Environmental Impact*

Elevated alignments cause greater aesthetic and neighborhood disruption when compared with at-grade alignments. Also, longer construction times would cause greater community disruption.

### Monon Corridor

This former railroad right-of-way extends from downtown Carmel, south past Carmel Civic Square, through Nora in northern Indianapolis, through Broad Ripple, past the State Fairgrounds, to join the Norfolk Southern right-of-way at 34th Street. It then extends to downtown Indianapolis just east of I-65/I-70 interchange (the Spaghetti Bowl).

**Estimated Cost:**

Depends on mode used (busway, light rail, commuter rail, new roadway)

**Previous Studies:**

In March, 1991, a planning process was initiated to determine the best use or uses for the corridor which culminiated in a published report dated February, 1993. The study was supported by a citizens' advisory committee composed of representatives from neighborhood organizations, special interest groups, the community at-large, and selected government agencies. Consensus was reached that the Monon Corridor should be used for recreational purposes and that the Norfolk Southern Rail Corridor should be used for transportation use. Since that time, over half of the Marion County portion of the Monon corridor has been developed as a recreational trail and plans are in place to develop the Carmel portion in a similar manner.

**Pros:**

- corridor is in public ownership
- corridor serves Carmel and other important origins/destinations from downtown Indianapolis

**Cons:**

- corridor is a popular recreational facility for pedestrians and cyclists
- there would be aesthetic and safety issues to introducing transit vehicles on the corridor
- corridor serves few high traffic generators directly
- corridor is the spine of the recently completed Indianapolis Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian System Plan

**Reasons For Rejection:**

*Environmental Impact*

Local support for the Monon Trail is strong. Indy Parks estimates that the trail receives more than one million visitors annually. Also, the corridor serves as the key north-south component of the plans for the regional bicycle and pedestrian system.

*Effectiveness*

There are parallel corridors, such as Keystone Avenue, that offer alternatives that would probably produce stronger ridership (by being closer to major origins and destinations). In addition, there probably would not be community support for narrowing, restricting or removing this popular recreational trail.

### Elevated Highway Alignments

Elevated highways provide additional roadway lanes with much lower right-of-way requirements than at-grade freeways. Significant elevated sections can be used for new freeways or the addition of lanes to existing freeways. In the Northeast Corridor, added elevated express lanes could be added to I-69, I-465 and/or I-70 instead of widening the same facilities at-grade.

**Estimated Cost:**

Elevated facilities usually cost three to four times as much as surface facilities. In addition, elevated structures tend to be visually unattractive and difficult to make an inviting part of the community.

**Previous Studies:**

None.

**Pros:**

- provides additional lanes and capacity with lower right-of-way requirements

**Cons:**

- costs three to four times that of at-grade facilities
- negative visual and aesthetic impacts
- promotes additional highway miles of travel instead of concentrating development in established corridors

*cont on page 15, see Cuts*

## Cuts *(from page 14)*

### Reasons For Rejection:

*Cost-Effectiveness*

Elevated highway alignments in the Northeast Corridor are unlikely to compare favorably with at-grade alignments when costs are measured against benefits.

*Environmental Impact*

Elevated alignments cause greater aesthetic and neighborhood disruption when compared with at-grade alignments. Also, longer construction times would cause greater community disruption.

### I-465 (Formerly, Northeast Freeway)

This alternative is a nine-mile freeway linking I-69 from I-465 to I-65/I-70 (Spaghetti Bowl) downtown. Minimum 6-lane freeway includes upgrade of SR 37 from I-465 to 46th Street, reconstruction of Fall Creek Parkway and elevated structures from 46th to 38th Street, and new right-of-way from 38th Street downtown (approximately 3 miles).

### Estimated Cost:

Not calculated.

### Previous Studies:

During 1979/1980, a preliminary draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for this project was prepared. This 550-page document became the focus of dozens of public meetings and spurred the opposition of local newspapers and community groups. At the request of then-Mayor William Hudnut, the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee reviewed the project and recommended its termination. Responding to a clear public consensus, the Mayor and then-Governor Otis Bowen suspended all development activities for the project and requested that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) remove the route from the interstate system.

### Pros:

- directly serves downtown trips from Fishers and Noblesville
- utilizes existing facility (SR 37) for approximately half the route
- diverts traffic from Meridian Corridor, as well as I-70/I-465
- new construction would allow incorporation of transit enhancements and ITS

### Cons:

- right-of-way impacts include approximately 600 homes and 75 commercial structures
- traffic impacts likely to require reconstruction of the Spaghetti Bowl
- high cost of right-of-way and construction
- interstate funding unavailable
- social equity imbalances dues to concentration of impacts south of 38th Street
- disruption to recreation properties (Old Northside Soccer, Fairgrounds, Monon)
- promotes current inefficient regional land use/growth patterns

### Reasons for Rejection:

*Environmental Impact*

The significant community and environmental impacts which prompted the project's previous termination still exist.

*Cost-Effectiveness*

Cost would be very high since reconstruction of the interchange and connecting freeway links in all directions would almost certainly be required.

*Feasibility*

The feasibility of connecting with I-65-I-70 interchange is dubious with today's traffic levels.

*Funding Availability*

Funding ordinarily used for interstate highway construction is unavailable for this project.

*Social Equity*

Since the people and neighborhoods most negatively impacted by the construction of this alternative would not enjoy a proportional share of its benefits, it fails to meet the study's goal of social equity.

*cont on page 20, see Cuts*

***I'm glad to see (the MPO) addressing an issue like this in this fashion.***

Hot Line Caller

***Well, there IS a train track that runs from downtown to Fishers. Sounds like a plan!***

Hot Line Caller

***"Express bus service" is an oxymoron... unless it travels on dedicated lanes.***

Hot Line Caller

***Governments often miss ideal opportunities by over-studying situations rather than acting on them. I hope conNECTions does not turn into another missed opportunity. Good luck.***

Web Site Visitor

# Web Words, Hot Line Hints

The following comments are just a sample of those gathered from *conNECTions*' web site (*www.indygov.org/connections*) and Hot Line (**1-877-NEC-LINK**) surveys, or public meetings. The wide-ranging, and sometimes contradictory, perspectives they express reflect the diversity of both our resident population and the transportation alternatives being considered. This input plays an important role in our transportation planning process and *conNECTions*' goal of developing a locally preferred recommendation which relies on informed public participation.

**We need to synchronize our lights.**

> ***I live downtown and don't drive. If I want to shop in Castleton, the bus ride takes at least an hour, which I think is ridiculous.***

There are too many people out during rush hour. There should be a subway, or something.

> *My childrens' school is near the rail corridor. I'm concerned about safety.*

**I think our biggest problem is the lack of alternatives to car travel.**

> We need a region-wide public transportation system.

**I like the idea of a commuter rail service because it would help with our air pollution and make us look more like a community.**

> ***Make use of AM radio to keep us aware of traffic conditions like they do in Atlanta***

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Check out the TSM/TDM alternatives on page 7)

> *We need a commuter rail system like BART in San Francisco.*

**It's probably a long term solution, but I'd love to see a commuter rail system.**

> I'm all in favor of roadway expansion, especially on Allisonville.

**I don't think we need any transit system that has only a north and south node. It isn't fair to the neighborhoods it travels through.**

> ***I realize any solution is going to be expensive. Maybe we could use tolls for fund-raising. I'd be willing to pay a reasonable amount to get to work faster.***

I'm really glad you guys are working on this. I didn't even know about (*conNECTions*) until my husband brought the phone number home.

> *I'd gladly ride a bike from 86th Street and Sargent Road to 106th Street and North Meridian, if there was a safe, I repeat SAFE, way to do so. Too bad our leaders never considered that. Yes, bikes are good for only some months of the year, but some is better than none!*

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Why not look into the Bike/Ped Plan, which is in various stages of implementation throughout our region? For more information, call Mike Dearing, MPO Senior Planner, at 327-5139.)

> *Light Rail and Express Buses sound good in theory, but people practically live in their cars today. Anything that requires a change of social habit will probably not be beneficial, or have enough interest.*

**What happens (to property values) when you live on the rail corridor? Will you (the city) be purchasing those properties? Especially those properties that border the rail passage on Kessler Boulevard and Allisonville Road areas?**

> Schedule your meetings at locations and times that are more convenient for people who work. For example, 7 PM in Fishers or Noblesville.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Recent Citizens Advisory Committee meetings, which usually take place at 6:30 - 8 PM on the fourth Tuesday of each month, have linked multiple locations using audio/video teleconferencing technology, including Noblesville High School in April and May. For more CAC information, call Mike Peoni, MPO Principal Planner, at 327-5133.)

> ***How do you expect working mothers with child care needs to use transit?***

My problem with carpooling is that I am not always able to leave work at the same time each day and seldom have advance notice when I'll need to work late. Any public transportation solution I could use would need to accommodate a flexible schedule.

> *I commute daily from Anderson to downtown Indianapolis, and have often wondered why Indianapolis (which is trying and, in some cases, succeeding to be recognized as an innovative, contemporary "major" city) is so woefully behind the times in providing alternative ways to move its population from point "a" to point "b". We should have investigated and implemented more mass transportation solutions to (solve) our growing traffic problems long ago.*

**...It is more than just a matter of feasibility studies, financing, and infrastructure re-alignment. The public's attitudes and expectations must be re-aligned, as well. We independent midwesterners are very**

**"wed" to the freedom of movement that driving our own cars allows us! Never the less, I believe this re-education can be accomplished by applying some basic psychological principles of learning and behavior modification**

It could be years before a commuter rail system, for example, becomes a "paying concern." But this is a transition that absolutely must be faced at some point in our community's development. The sooner, the better!

**Please consider alternatives to travel. For example, if the proper infrastructure for high-speed Internet connections were available, not only would more people tele-commute, but those who tele-commute would be more likely to move into the area.**

***Adding travel lanes defeats the real purpose of this initiative: to reduce the volume of traffic in the NE corridor. Adding lanes only encourages people to drive more. Mass transit, if made adequately available is the best solution — no more land wasted by roads, fewer cars on those roads, and less air pollution (which our area is struggling with).***

I mistrust the city's commitment to mass transit. In the mid-70's, I could go where and when I wanted, but the curtailing of routes and runs since that time make it nearly impossible for me to do so now.

*Having come from New York to live along the Northeast Corridor, I have experienced the benefits of rail and bus travel and major road reconstruction. All are viable options, if properly implemented. I applaud the road improvement efforts I have witnessed currently in progress or recently completed. The people who live here and complain about traffic congestion should spend a week traveling I-95 in New York during rush hour. That would quiet them down.*

**If you wait another ten or twenty years to attempt improvements, it will be nearly impossible due to the growth currently expected along the corridor. Now is the perfect time to consider implementing improvements.**

I think Indianapolis should develop a system like MARTA in Atlanta. MARTA is a fast, clean, incredible system that I would take to work daily to avoid the hassles of driving.

**I would not use public transportation of any kind if it added more than 15 minutes to my half-hour commute. That probably means running a bus or train every ten to fifteen minutes in morning and afternoon peak drive times.**

***I feel that improvements in NE corridor transportation would enable many more people to consider jobs in a wider range of locations, especially downtown.***

We should be making commuting from outside of the city a less attractive option for people. Maybe if it wasn't so easy to get downtown from outside the city, people would be more willing to live closer to the downtown area and help revitalize our schools and neighborhoods.

*I recently traveled to Tokyo, where the rail system is quite impressive. This (rail service) would be a huge paradigm shift for local residents, but is quite effective in the Japanese culture. A lot of education will be required to sell this method. I would be interested in helping more with this study.*

**This (traffic congestion, lack of mobility) is a huge problem which must be solved in a first class way. Every dollar spent will pay back many-fold. The planners and leaders of the communities need to be very forward thinking and take risks.**

I think a lot of Indianapolis residents are somewhat sheltered and close-minded when it comes to new ideas. Hopefully, you guys can help broaden their horizons and pull off a great plan. Good luck and I look forward to going to a public meeting or following things on your web site.

**I live along the rail corridor and I don't want transit in my backyard.**

If you would like to be heard on subjects relating to Northeast Corridor transportation, visit the *conNECTions* web site (*www/indygov.org/connections)*, or hot Line (**1-877-NEC-LINK**), plan on attending the *conNECTions'* public forum (dates to be announced soon) and/or the monthly Citizens Advisory Committee meetings, or call Mike Peoni, MPO Principal Planner, at **327-5133**.

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Metropolitan Planning Organization
City-County Building
200 East Washington Street
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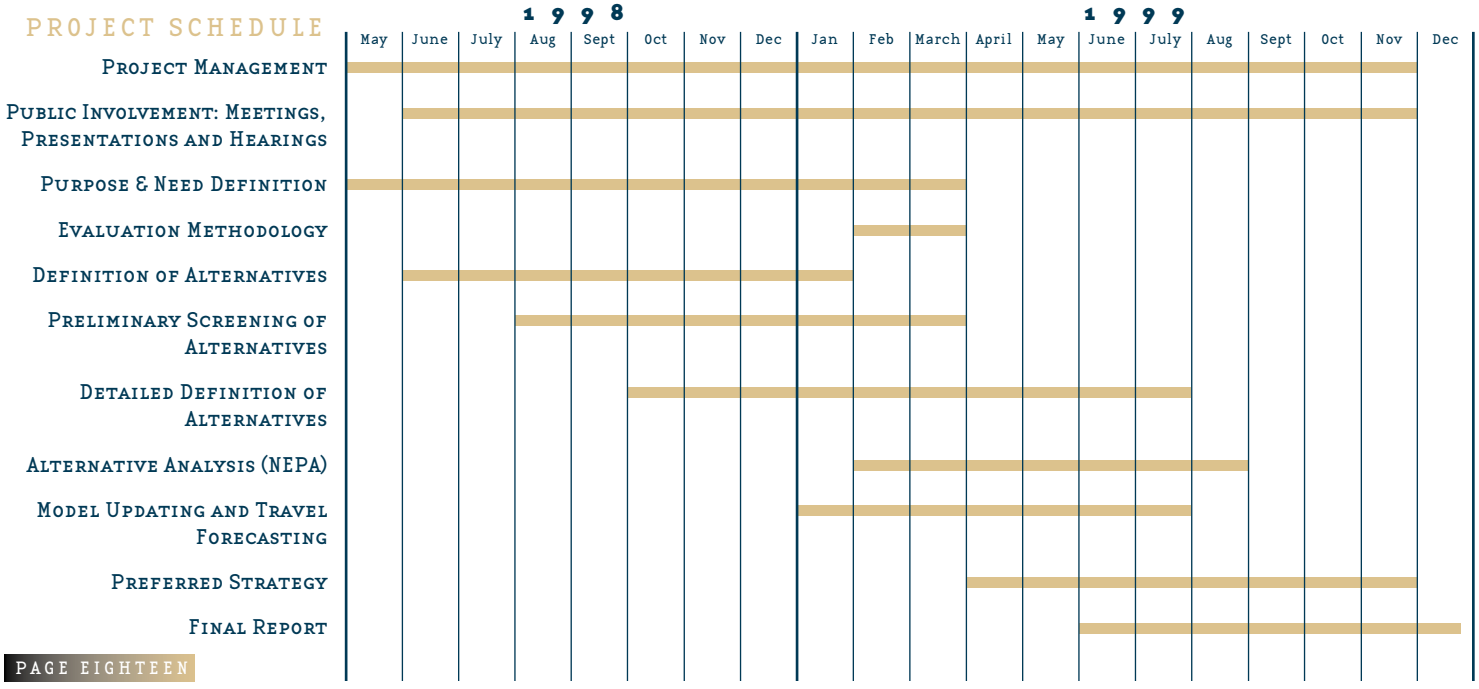
# Survey Results

"This research serves as our base line," explains Mike Peoni, MPO Principal Planner, referring to the findings of the recently completed quantitative telephone survey conducted by the I. U. Opinion Lab. "It was unique among the various elements of our Public Involvement Plan because, through it, we didn't intend to share information," he explained." Instead, our goal here was to just listen. We wanted to find out what people thought — if they felt there was a traffic problem in the Northeast Corridor; how serious the problem was; how the problem might be solved, and so on."

The telephone survey was conducted during December, 1998 and February, 1999, by the Indiana University Public Opinion Laboratory which interviewed 454 residents of the Northeast Corridor. The primary goal of the research was to find out residents' opinions on various transportation issues facing the area. The main findings, presented here, are considered projectable or proportionately representative of the corridor's population.

- Sixty-two percent of survey respondents said that they have noticed traffic, congestion or transportation problems in the area in which they live. One-third of these respondents said the problem was simply congestion and/or "too many people on the road". Other respondents mentioned specific locations that are problematic — mostly areas in the Castleton region.
- To solve the problems, 21.4% of the respondents suggested widening the roads/adding more lanes, while 5.4% suggested more public transportation. Five suggested synchronizing lights. Twenty percent of survey respondents said they didn't know what could be done to help.
- Respondents say they are concerned about forecasts that predict an increase in traffic congestion in the region. Seventy-five percent report being concerned. They support several proposals to help fight traffic congestion. Seventy-six percent were in favor of "widening existing highways and roads", while 68% supported "creating a new system of mass transit". Very few people (18.7%) supported "adding tolls on highways".
- Ninety-three percent of the "commuting" respondents do so by personal automobile. If their cars were not available for a day, they would most likely ask a friend/relative to drive them.
- Just 10% of survey respondents had ever used the bus. There was a large number (38%) who said "nothing" could be done to encourage them to take the bus. Some respondents did mention that improved reliability, improved safety and "having it go where I wanted" would help.
- Eighty percent say they have a favorable opinion of passenger train service. Sixty-five percent said they would be "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to use the service to "downtown Indianapolis, or to Castleton, Fishers or the Noblesville area." Forty-five percent say they would use the service at least once a week. Most (79.8%) are willing to pay $1 or $2 for one-way service.
- Respondents were split on whether they would be willing to pay taxes for "roadway expansion projects intended to reduce traffic congestion" or to improve/add bus/rail service. About 48% said "yes", while about 44% said "no' to these taxes.



## Study Update *(from page 6)*

"Much of what we do is required by the Federal Government, our primary funder," says Ken Kinney of Parsons Brinckerhoff. (See funding pie chart, this page.) "But every step serves a purpose and needs to come in a certain order. People may get impatient, hoping to see faster progress, but it's the deliberate checks & balances of the procedures that guarantee due diligence and comprehensive oversight," he explains. "We're looking to help solve problems, not create new, unexpected ones."

When a final, locally preferred strategy is identified with the help of public participation, it will be recommended in *conNECTions*' Final Report. Then, the implementation phase, including formal development of funding strategies, will commence. "We still have a while to go before we see any real relief on our current traffic situation, because of *conNECTions*," Miser acknowledges. "But we're looking at both short term, low cost, easier-to-implement options, and long term, more expensive and intensive measures. Clearly, we're checking out all the routes to get where we want to be."

For more information on *conNECTions*, call Lori Miser, MPO Manager at **327-5136** (LMISER@indygov.org) or Mike Peoni, MPO Principal Planner at **327-5133** (MPEONI@indygov.org).

***Do you really think you're going to get people out of their car? Nothing would get me out of mine!***

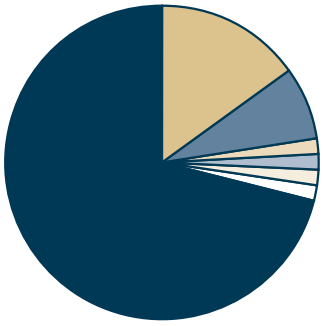
Forum Attendee

## Modeling *(from page 2)*

In some cases, the "thing" that needs considering can't be projected from our current model. For example, Indianapolis' "mode split" — the percentage of population using various means of travel — is traditionally low for transit, because of the area's limited past options. To model a future transit-related alternative, travel parameters must be "borrowed" from other cities that are similar to what Indianapolis could be like in the year 2020. The potential for subjectivity in such instances requires a consensus among planners. "We are transportation professionals with only one goal: to identify the real benefits and disadvantages of each alternative," Wiedelman explains. "To do that, we use the best data available and the comprehensive oversight of our planning partners."

For more information on *conNECTions* modeling process, call Bill Wiedelman of Parsons Brinckerhoff at **972-1706** or Mike Peoni, MPO Principal Planner, at **327-5133**.

## *conNECTions'* Costs=$1.7 Million



| Funding Organization | Amount in Dollars | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Federal Transit Administration | 1.2 Million | 71.0 |
| Indiana Dept. of Transportation | 250,000 | 15.0 |
| City of Indianapolis | 125,000 | 7.5 |
| Hamilton County | 31,250 | 1.6 |
| City of Carmel | 31,250 | 1.6 |
| City of Noblesville | 31,250 | 1.6 |
| Town of Fishers | 31,250 | 1.6 |

*All percentages approximate*

***Rush hour lasts all day (in the Northeast Corridor).***

Hot Line Caller

## Your MPO Staff

*. . . includes these people who would be happy to address your comments or questions on any aspect of the transportation planning process:*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Steve Cunningham • Senior Planner** | **317/327-5403** |
| **Mike Dearing • Senior Planner** | **317/327-5139** |
| **Kevin Mayfield • Planner** | **317/327-5135** |
| **Lori Miser • Manager** | **317/327-5136** |
| **Michael Peoni • Principal Planner** | **317/327-5133** |
| **Sweson Yang, AICP • Chief Transportation Planner** | **317/327-5137** |

## Cuts *(from page 15)*

### Meridian Street

Meridian Street is a major north/south highway corridor serving downtown Indianapolis from Carmel. It is a segment of US 31 which extends from Indianapolis to Kokomo, South Bend and Niles, Michigan. The section of potential interest to *conNECTions* is the four-lane section of Meridian Street between 38th and 86th Streets in Marion County, where it may be physically feasible to provide added travel lanes to increase traffic capacity.

### Previous Studies:

There are no known previous studies for recommending added travel lanes to this section of Meridian Street, nor has the proposal been included in any Thoroughfare Plan for Marion County. However, a project was proposed by INDOT in the late 1970's to widen the roadway 18 to 24 inches on each side to provide eleven foot lanes between 38th Street and 57th Street. Due to the unique historical character and location of this roadway, resistance to this proposal was strong and widespread.

### Pros:

- corridor is well placed to serve regional travel demands
- extended setback of most homes would minimize structural relocations

### Cons:

- the historic character of Meridian Street is significant and unique to the area
- area residents have consistently resisted any physical changes
- any lane widening would threaten existing trees and landscaping
- safety and auto emission concerns from increased vehicular traffic

### Reasons for Rejection:

*Environmental Impact*

Negative impact to historical character of area, potential worsening of safety and air quality due to increased traffic.

*Effectiveness*

Negatively impacting this street's historical and aesthetic character may make it difficult to meet *conNECTions*' community support objectives.

***I want rapid transit lanes for buses with severe penalties for cars that get caught using them.***

Hot Line Caller



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NORTHEAST CORRIDOR TRANSPORTATION