



SPECIAL REPORT

Regular readers of the Metropolitan Planning Organization's *teMPO* may think they know all there is to know about *conNECTIONS* — this issue's topic.

After all, this is the third Special Report dedicated to the study of Northeast Corridor Transportation to be published in the last two years. (For reprints of *teMPO*'s May/June 1998 and June 1999 Special Editions, call Mike Peoni, MPO



Manager/ Master Planner, at 327-5133). Not to mention the dozen or so study-related articles which have appeared in the newsletter's last eight quarterly issues. So, there can't be anything new to report, right? Wrong.

Find out why most now believe that *conNECTIONS*' recommendations will set the direction for transportation planning, not just in the corridor but throughout the entire region, for decades to come. And, why only eight of the original 20 travel options proposed in the spring of '98 have survived the study's evaluation process. And why study planners believe its more critical than ever for public input to be part of the final decision-making process. It's all here, plus estimated option costs and potential funding strategies! Read on, and get re—conNECTed, with *teMPO*!

FACING OUR TRANSPORTATION FUTURE

"ConNECTIONS has always been about more than just solving the transportation problems of the Northeast Corridor," says Mike Peoni, MPO Manager/Master Planner, of the study that has consumed an estimated ___% of his time over the last two years. "We've always known that the insights, strategies and policies developed through *conNECTIONS* would represent the future of transportation planning in the Indianapolis region," he explains. "That's why the study has enjoyed unprecedented levels of funding, time, attention and cooperation from more than XX governments agencies and jurisdictional authorities, and why our public involvement program has consistently said, 'What we learn here will be used to solve transportation problems elsewhere in the region'" (see related story below).

northeast corridor transportation

CONNECTIONS

linking
our region's
opportunities

After two years of study, *conNECTIONS*' stated mission hasn't so much changed as intensified. "We've found that we are very limited in what we can actually do to alleviate the congestion and mobility problems plaguing the Northeast Corridor and growing elsewhere in the region," Peoni says. "As our options narrow, it becomes more important than ever for people to become involved and let us know which of the remaining strategies are most acceptable to them."

Historically, area transportation planners handled congestion by increasing roadway capacity. This is particularly true as the city grew in all directions, use of
cont on page 6, see Transportation Future

STAYING CONNECTED WITH THE PUBLIC

How do you attract and hold public attention for more than two years? With a subject that most people don't initially want to hear about, let alone talk about? When many of those who do are angry even before they know the facts? And when the local media feels they've "been there, done that" too often to cover the story again?

These were just some of the questions confronting your MPO when it decided to make public participation a significant aspect of the *conNECTIONS* study of Northeast Corridor Transportation.

cont on page 14, see Staying conNECTed

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
CAC - Corporation for Educational Communication
CIRCL - Central Indiana Regional Citizens League
CIRTA - Central Indiana Regional Transit Alliance
DEIS - Draft Environmental Impact Statement
FHWA - Federal Highway Administration
HHPA - Hoosier Heritage Port Authority
HOV - High Occupancy Vehicle
IHSAA - Indiana High School Athletic Association
INDOT - Indiana Department of Transportation
IRTIP - Indianapolis Regional Transportation Improvement Plan
IVR - Interactive Voice Response
LOS - Level-of-Service
LRT - Light Rail Transit
MIS - Major Investment Study
MPA - Metropolitan Planning Area
MPO - Metropolitan Planning Organization
NEC - Northeast Corridor
NECT - Northeast Corridor Transportation
PSA - Public Service Announcement
PSC - Policy Steering Committee
ROW - Right-of-Way
SOV - Single Occupant Vehicle
TAZ - Transportation Analysis Zone
TDM - Transportation Demand Management
TIF - Tax Increment Funding
TSM - Transportation System Management
TWG - Technical Working Group
VHT - Vehicle Hours of Travel
VMT - Vehicle Miles of Travel

IN THIS ISSUE

TRANSPORTATION FUTURE PAGE 1
STAYING CONNECTED. PAGE 1
A CONNECTIONS PRIMER. PAGE 2
MPA MAP PAGE 3
NEC MAP. PAGE 3
SURVEY SAYS. PAGE 4
WHY THEY WERE CUT PAGE 5
REMAINING ALTERNATIVES PAGE 7
FUNDING OPTIONS PAGE 16
REGIONAL SURVEY 2000 PAGE 17

A CONNECTIONS' PRIMER

As hard as it is for members of your MPO staff to believe, not everyone eats, sleeps and breaths transportation planning. An unfortunate few, perhaps even dedicated readers of *teMPO*, may have forgotten aspects of *conNECTIONS'*, the newsletter's most covered topic, due to the distractions of . . . life. Not to worry. Here, again are the basics everyone needs to know.

BACKGROUND

Begun in May of 1998, *conNECTIONS* is the in-depth study of NorthEast Corridor Transportation. Its overall goal is to better "link our regional opportunities" by making it easier for all of us to move between the corridor's various origins and destinations of employment, essential services, commerce and recreation.

conNECTIONS is unique in its concentrated geographic focus; the breadth of its planning partners including XX federal, state and local agencies; the level of its jurisdictional cooperation; and the extent to which it encourages and accommodates public input in the decision-making process.

conNECTIONS is also unique in the impact its eventual recommendations are likely to have on our regional transportation system, now and in the future.

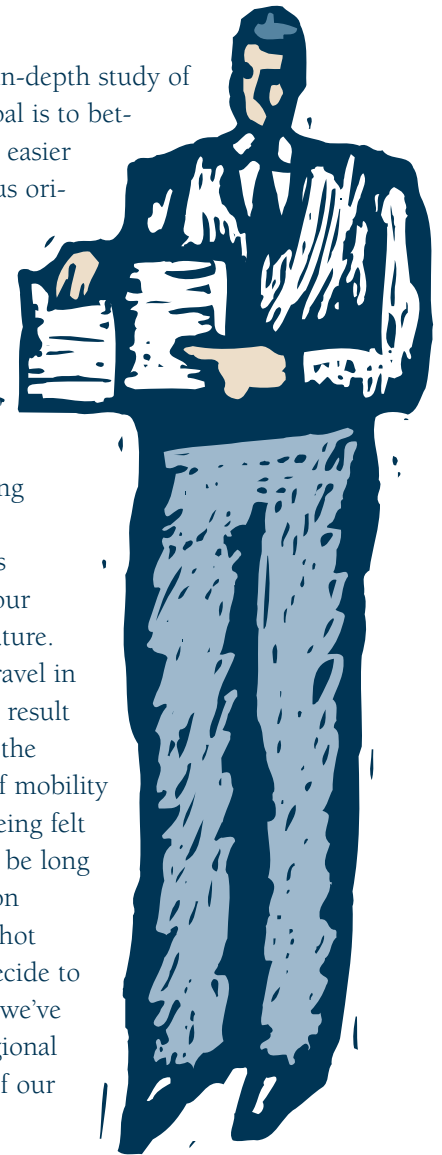
Even if you don't personally live, work or travel in the northeast corridor, the recommendations that result from *conNECTIONS* are important to you! Because the transportation problems of congestion and lack of mobility plaguing our busiest travel corridor are already being felt to a lesser degree throughout our region. It won't be long before they are also frustrating travelers in Johnson County, Hendricks County and the many traffic "hot spots" flaring up throughout the area. How we decide to deal with them in the Northeast Corridor, where we've had years to consider our options, could offer regional benefits as the efficiency, mobility and modality of our transportation system improves in the future.

PURPOSE

The study's purpose is to identify a locally supported, financially feasible transportation strategy to address traffic congestion and mobility limitations in the Northeast Corridor.

STUDY AREA

Stretching from downtown Indianapolis northeast to Noblesville, the Northeast Corridor is our region's most traveled (see map, page 3). For this reason, our transportation system — the network of roadways that carries traffic throughout the Indianapolis metro-

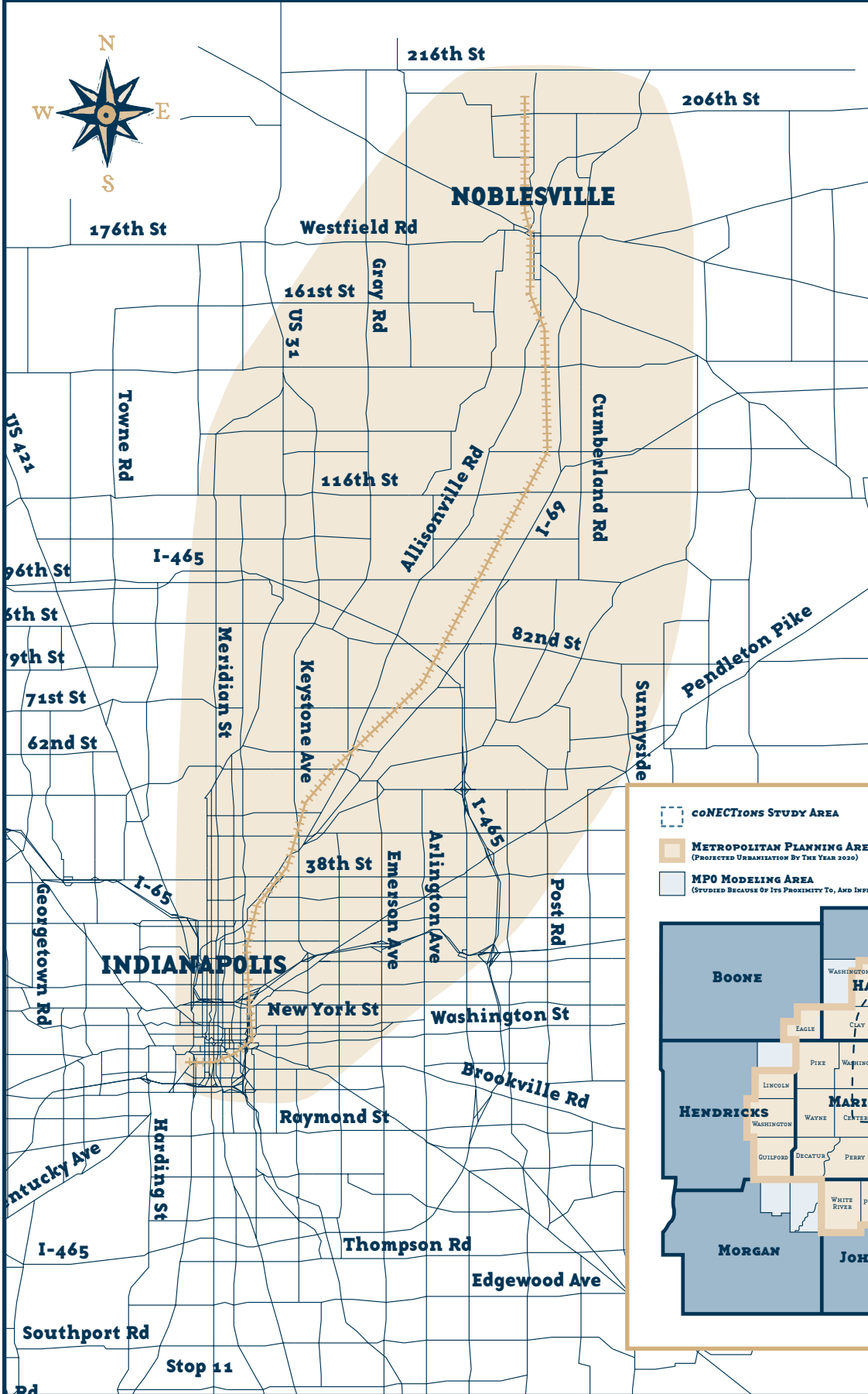


Did You Know?

**Over the next 25 years,
regional traffic is
projected to increase
53%, or more!**

cont on page 19, see Primer

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.

INDIANAPOLIS
METROPOLITAN
PLANNING
AREA

- conNECTIONS STUDY AREA
- METROPOLITAN PLANNING AREA
(PROJECTED URBANIZATION BY THE YEAR 2020)
- MPO MODELING AREA
(STUDIED BECAUSE OF ITS PROXIMITY TO, AND INFLUENCE ON, MPA TRAFFIC)

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



SURVEY SAYS. . .

Remember the *conNECTIONS* survey conducted by the Indiana University Public Opinion Laboratory in December '98/February '99 and detailed in the *teMPO* June 1999 Special Edition? It was a 'base line' survey, intended to find out if people felt there was a traffic problem in the Northeast Corridor; how serious the problem was; and, how they felt any problems could be solved. "It was unique among the other elements of our Public Involvement Program because, through it, we didn't intend to share information," says Mike Peoni, MPO Manager/Master Planner. "Instead, our goal was to just listen."

In May, 2000, a second *conNECTIONS* survey was again conducted by the Opinion Lab and had again as its general goal "to listen". But there the similarity ends.

The first survey consisted of 454 telephone interviews conducted exclusively among residents of the Northeast Corridor. This time, however, telephone interviews were conducted with residents living throughout the Indianapolis metropolitan planning area to better reflect a regional perspective on the issues with which *conNECTIONS* deals. To assure that the second survey would yield quantitative results - that is, answers that could be reliably 'projected' on the region's larger population, the total number of completed interviews was increased to 1129.

The most recent survey also dealt with different subject matter. This time respondents were asked whether they supported or opposed specific highway-, bus- and rail/bus-based options, as well as potential funding strategies. Brief background information was given to enable people to compare and contrast alternatives. Also, future traffic projections set the scenario in which the questions were posed. The survey instrument consisted of approximately 18 transportation-based questions and 6

demographic-based questions which helped researchers place the answers received in the context of who was giving them (size of household, annual income, level of education, ethnic background). Interviews took an average of 10 minutes.

All 1129 telephone interviews were conducted between May 18 and May 26, 2000. Calls were made between 4 PM and 9:30 PM, Monday through Friday; 11 AM and 5 PM Saturday; and 12 PM and 9:30 PM Sunday. All calls were placed using known prefixes and computer-generated phone numbers to insure random access. Quotas were based on age and gender populations for each county surveyed. The maximum margin of error, when comparing each county, is 3%. That means that, if the same questions we asked of a similar sample, 19 out of 20 times the same answers would be received within +/- 3.0 percentage points as those reported by the survey. Though detailed analysis of survey results has not yet been completed, the following preliminary findings have been noted:

Did You Know?

**Regional traffic
has grown 25% just
since 1990.**

- 57% of all respondents consider "widened existing roadways" to be somewhat important or very important to the Indianapolis region's transportation future.

- 43.7% of all respondents consider "improved and expanded bus service" to be somewhat important or very important to the Indianapolis region's transportation future.

- 48.6% of all respondents consider "train service" to be somewhat important or very important to the Indianapolis region's transportation future.

- 46.8% of all respondents consider "pedestrian pathways" to be somewhat important or very important to the Indianapolis region's transportation future.

- 52.1% of all respondents consider "bicycle routes" to be somewhat important or very important to the Indianapolis region's transportation future.

In addition,

- 75.3% of respondents believe that federal funds currently allocated for transportation improvements should be spent on both roadway and bus/train service improvements.

- 63.2% support the funding of new or expanded bus or train service where it is most needed in the region using existing gas tax dollars.

- 42% - 45% said they would be willing to ride expanded and improved bus service for work, shopping and entertainment trips if it was within convenient walking distance of their homes or had conveniently located park-and-ride facilities

- 66.3% of all respondents support the idea of dedicating one of our existing roadway travel lanes to the exclusive use of buses and other high occupancy vehicles (HOV), such as car-pool vans.

- 65.3% of all respondents support the development of an express bus system that travels longer distances at higher speeds, using either dedicated existing roadway lanes or land reclaimed from existing rail corridors.

- 54% - 59% of all respondents said they would be willing to ride efficient train service, such as commuter and light rail trains, if stations or park-and-ride facilities were convenient to their homes.

More detailed analysis of survey results will be reported in a future issue of *teMPO*, when available. To take the survey yourself, turn to page __. For more information on the survey, or how it was conducted, call Mike Peoni, MPO Manager/Master Planner, at 327-5133.

WHY THEY WERE CUT

The *conNECTions* study began in May, 1998 with 20 major improvement options under consideration for mitigating the daily congestion and lack of mobility plaguing the Northeast Corridor. Six of these were eliminated early in the review process due to “critical flaws” — that is, disadvantages considered so overwhelming that any possible transportation benefit paled by comparison. These options, described in detail in *teMPO* Special Issue #1, 1999 (For reprints, contact Mike Peoni at 327-5133 or mpeoni@indygov.org) are synopsized here.

- **Elevated Highway Alignments -**

Long segments of elevated alignments cause greater aesthetic and neighborhood disruption than do at-grade (surface) alignments.

Additionally, longer required construction times would cause greater disruption to the community. Elevated structures typically cost about three to four times more than surface facilities.

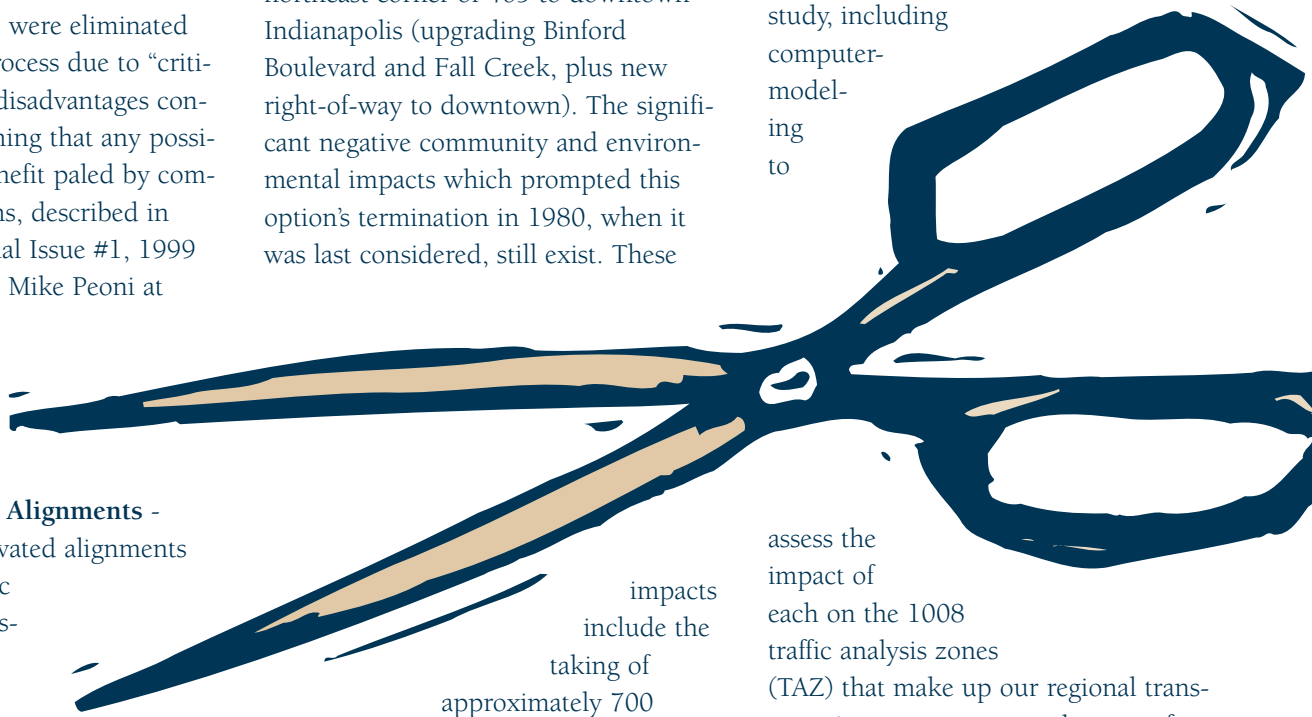
- **Elevated Transit Alignments -** As with elevated highways, above-grade transit alignments typically cost about three times more than surface facilities, tend to be visually unattractive, and are difficult to integrate into the urban environment. Longer construction times would also cause prolonged community disruption.

- **Subway Alignments -** The construction cost of below-grade transit systems is approximately nine to ten times that of a surface alignment system. Operating and maintenance costs are also substantially higher, while lengthy construction periods would prolong community disruption. A subway system through the

Northeast Corridor is estimated to cost approximately \$4 billion to build.

- **I-165/Northeast Freeway Alignment**

- This option proposed a new freeway that extended I-69 southwest from the northeast corner of 465 to downtown Indianapolis (upgrading Binford Boulevard and Fall Creek, plus new right-of-way to downtown). The significant negative community and environmental impacts which prompted this option's termination in 1980, when it was last considered, still exist. These



impacts include the taking of approximately 700 homes and business south of 38th Street, many in what are now revitalized areas.

- **Use of the Monon Corridor for Transit or as a Roadway -** In a planning process initiated in 1991, consensus was reached that the Monon Corridor should be used for recreational purposes, while the Norfolk Southern Corridor was to be reserved for potential future transportation use. Community support still clearly endorses preserving the popular Monon Trail from narrowing, restriction or removal.

- **Added Travel Lanes on Meridian Street -** This would involve widening Meridian Street between 38th Street and 86th Street, where it is physically feasible to add travel lanes. This option would negatively impact the historic character of the area, and potentially worsen its safety and air quality due to increased traffic. As with the Monon Corridor option, it would be difficult to

gain public support for *conNECTions*' recommendations if this National Historic Registry Neighborhood were negatively impacted.

THE NEW CUTS

After a year of in-depth study, including computer-modeling to

assess the impact of each on the 1008 traffic analysis zones (TAZ) that make up our regional transportation system, a second group of options were recommended for elimination by *conNECTions*' Technical Working Group. The following options were approved for elimination by *conNECTions*' Policy Steering Committee at its April 3, 2000 meeting:

- B3: Busway -** This option was cut due to a lack of public support and the belief among management team members that the low-desirability of a bus-only transit system would lead to low usage. However, members of the Policy Steering Committee have requested that an express busway within the Hoosier Heritage Port Authority rail corridor remain a possibility if rail is not a final study recommendation.

- RB2 & RB3: Light Rail Transit (LRT) from Noblesville to Downtown Indianapolis -** Light rail transit, which requires the installation and mainte-

cont on page 13, see Cut

TRANSPORTATION FUTURE *(from page 1)*

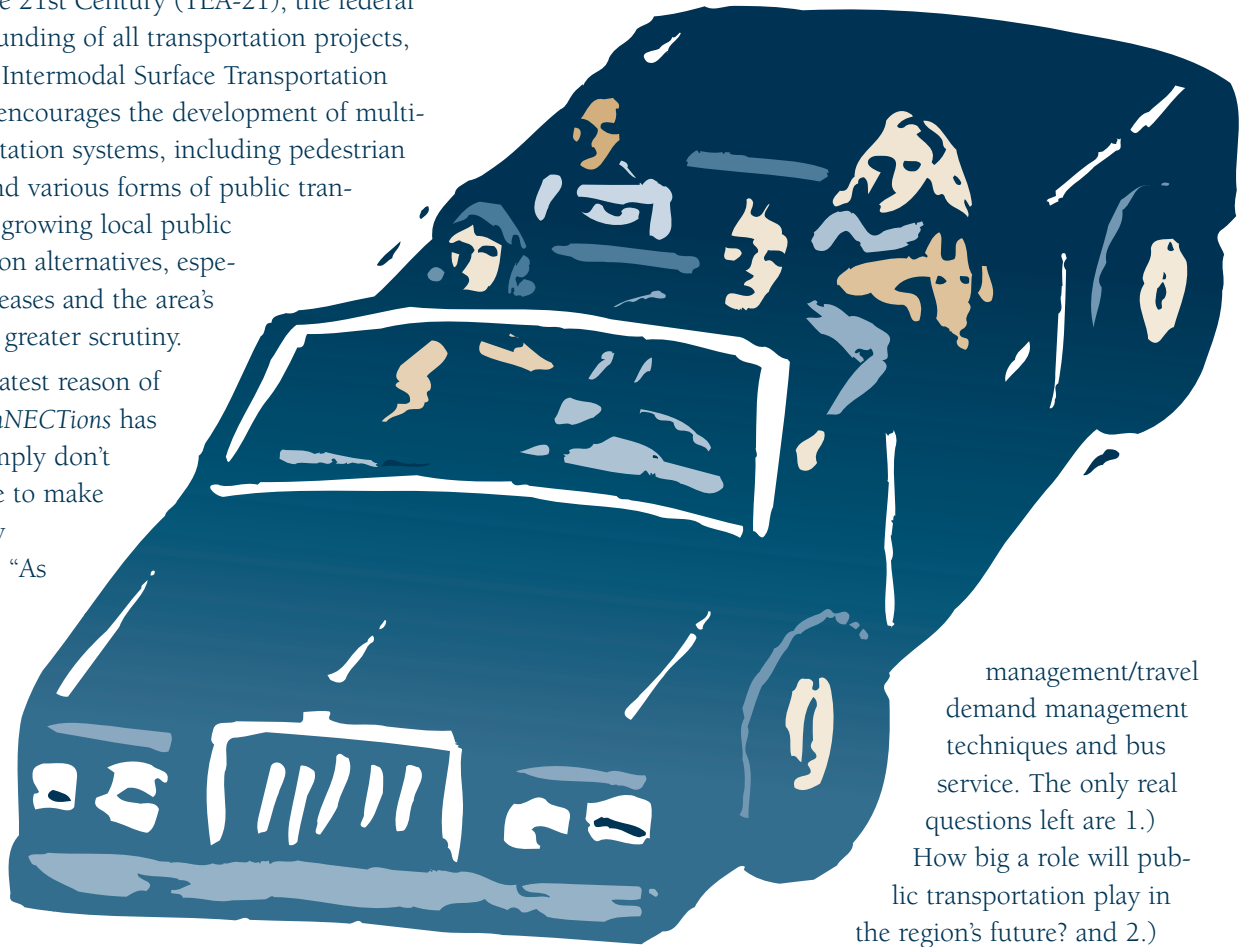
public transportation diminished, and the public's preference of personal vehicle use became clear. "We added lanes," Peoni says simply. "For decades, that's all we looked at."

Now, however, there are many reasons to seek alternatives to single occupant vehicles. The Transportation Enhancement Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), the federal legislation guiding the funding of all transportation projects, and its predecessor, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), encourages the development of multi-modal regional transportation systems, including pedestrian and bicycle pathways and various forms of public transit. In addition, there is growing local public demand for transportation alternatives, especially as congestion increases and the area's air quality comes under greater scrutiny.

Perhaps the greatest reason of all, however, is what *conNECTions* has taught us so far. "We simply don't have the room any more to make road expansion our only answer," Peoni explains. "As our region has become more fully developed, the right-of-way (ROW) constraints around our highways have increased. Now, it's difficult, if not impossible, to add enough lanes, to adequately serve the traffic increases we're projecting over the next twenty-five years." As evidence, Peoni points to the estimated levels-of-service the four remaining highways options promise. "None, by itself, offers us the medium level-of-service (D) we prefer," he points out. "Clearly, transit must be a part of the solution recommended by *conNECTions*."

Of the eight remaining transportation options found worthy of further study, half deal with bus and rail/bus transit strategies (see Remaining Alternatives, this issue). If implemented, one or more of these options, in conjunction with highway expansion, offers the best opportunity for meeting the region's projected travel needs in the future. But is it wise to recommend the development of new transit systems in an area where only 2% of the population currently uses transit? "It's the only wise option we have," Peoni says. "In other large mid-western cities of similar character, such as Milwaukee and St. Louis, transit has become a strong, effective component of the regional transportation system. Why not here?"

To answer that question, and achieve *conNECTions* goal of arriving at a locally-preferred recommendation, the MPO needs further public input. Some form of highway expansion will definitely be part of the study's final recommendation, as will low-cost transportation system



management/travel demand management techniques and bus service. The only real questions left are 1.) How big a role will public transportation play in the region's future? and 2.)

Will rail service be a part of that?

"We are now at a crossroads in our transportation history," Peoni says. "*conNECTions* has shown us what we can't do. We need the public to show us what we can." For more information on the Public Involvement Program, or to express your opinion on the region's transportation future, call Mike Peoni at 327-5133.

"I got involved in transportation planning because of *conNECTions*. I see it as a bellwether for what will happen in other areas in the future."

— Jerry H.
northwest side resident

REMAINING ALTERNATIVES

ConNECTions has brought us face-to-face with our region's transportation future. It has shown us that we are limited in the ways we can effectively address the more than 50% traffic growth we're projected to experience over the next 25 years.

Initially 20 options were considered using a broad evaluation. Eight options are still being evaluated. All others have proven too costly, environmentally impactful, socially unjust or publicly unacceptable.

These remaining eight options include four highway-based strategies, two bus-related strategies, and two rail/bus plans. They are described here by mode category: highway, bus, rail/bus. It's important to remember that none of these options alone is sufficient to meet our projected needs. In all likelihood, conNECTions' eventual recommendation will be a combination of the options described here.

HIGHWAY OPTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

One goal of the Highway Options developed for consideration has been a systems approach for highway improvements. For example, this approach does not try to compare the need for improvements to I-69 with the need for improvements to 465. Rather the options attempt to create a balance of traffic operations among the facilities included in the Northeast Corridor. The intended result is a more uniform level-of-service (LOS) for all involved facilities.

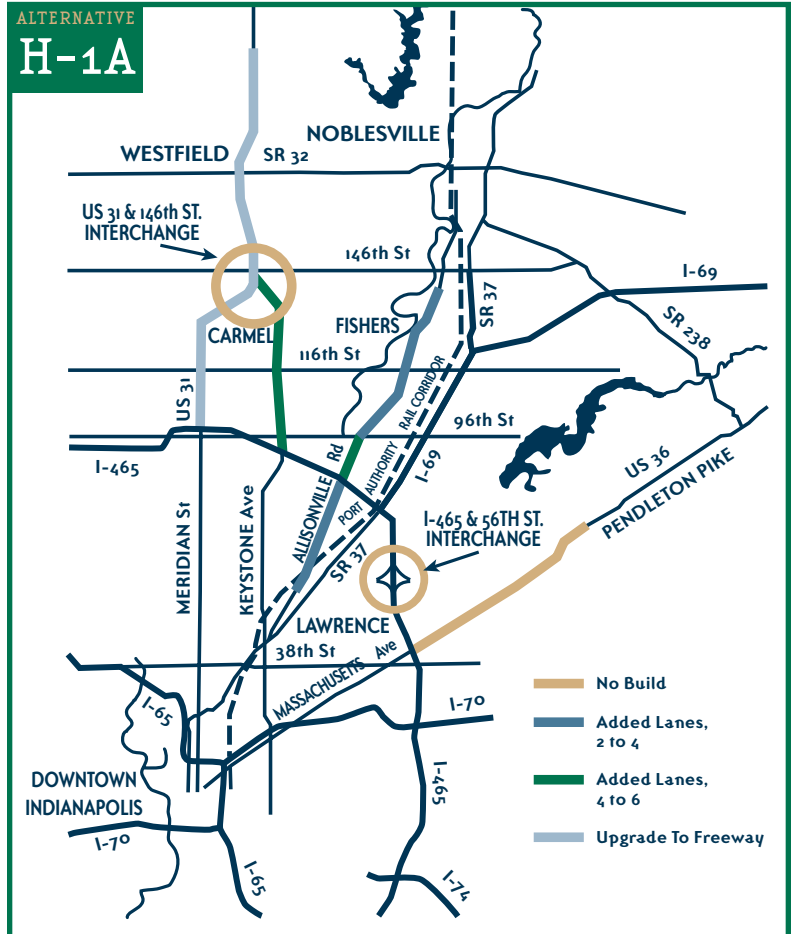
H1A: No-Build plus Year 2025 Planned Improvements

This is a 'No-Build Plus Planned Improvements' option, meaning that it reflects projects already contained in the Year 2025 Planned Improvements as part of the Cost Feasible Indianapolis Regional Transportation Plan (Revised July, 1997), but excludes any I-69/SR37 corridor projects. To provide a better comparison with other highway improvement options, improvements to I-69 and SR 37 are not considered in H1A. This option is for comparison purposes only and helps planners answer the question, "What happens if we do nothing?"

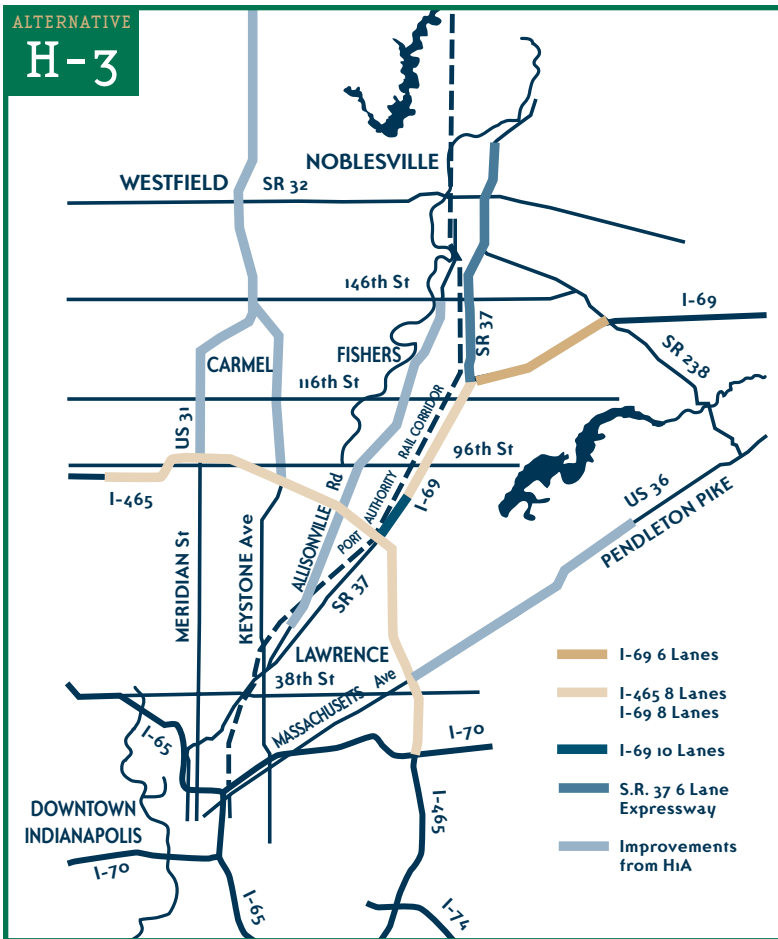
H1A is the lowest cost of the all the Highway Options and is the least effective in reducing traffic congestion. No freeway capacity expansion improvements would be made beyond those programmed for interchange, pavement and bridge rehabilitation. Right-of-way (ROW) requirements would be minimal and no residences or businesses would be directly impacted. Since the freeway system will experience several hours of severe congestion each day, traffic on the arterial street system will, no doubt, increase as many drivers will alter their travel times and routes to avoid peak highway congestion. Travel times and travel costs will increase from current levels and will be higher than with the other highway options.

Estimated Cost: _____

cont on page 8, see Alternatives



H-3



ALTERNATIVES *(from page 7)*

H3: Basic Freeway Expansion

This is a basic highway expansion option that would increase 465's traffic handling capacity by enlarging it to 8 "through" lanes in the Northeast Corridor. In addition, I-69, US 31 and State Road 37 would also be expanded. Additional lanes may be included at some interchange areas to reduce bottlenecks. Transportation System Management and Travel Demand Management (TSM/TDM) improvement strategies, from Option H2 which was eliminated, have been incorporated here because of their high cost/effectiveness evaluation

H3 would reduce the estimated 2 to 3 hours per day of severe congestion in H1A to approximately 1 to 2 hours per day. Although diversion of travel demand to the arterial street system and altered travel times would occur, they would not equal those of H1A.

Estimated Cost: _____

H5: Moderate Freeway Expansion

This is an intermediate 465 expansion option that would increase the number of "through" lanes to 10. I-69, US 31, State Road 37 and, possibly, I-70 would also receive additional travel lanes. Additional lanes may be included at some interchange areas to reduce bottlenecks. As in H3, this option would also include TSM/TDM improvement strategies. Capacity expansion improvements (added lanes) will also be considered for I-70 as part of this highway expansion option.

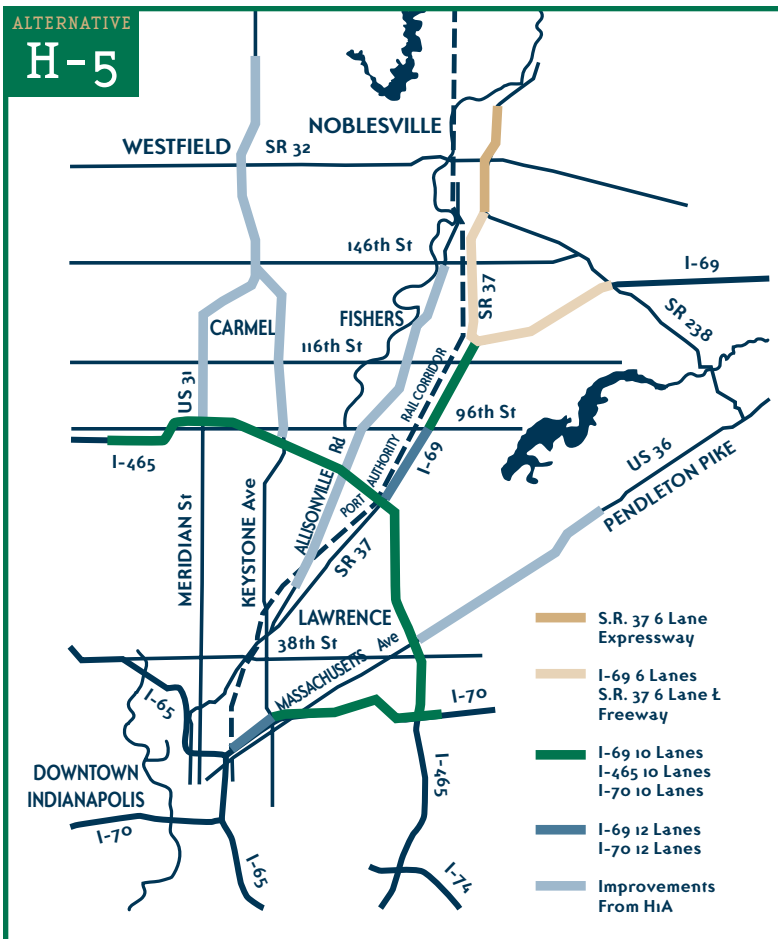
H5 would reduce H3's estimated 1 to 2 hours per day of severe congestion to a maximum of 1 hour per day. The level of traffic congestion on the highway system would be similar to existing conditions or, marginally, worse. Very little diversion of travel demand to the arterial street system or altered travel times would occur.

This alternative represents the maximum freeway improvement possible without significant right-of-way (ROW) impacts.

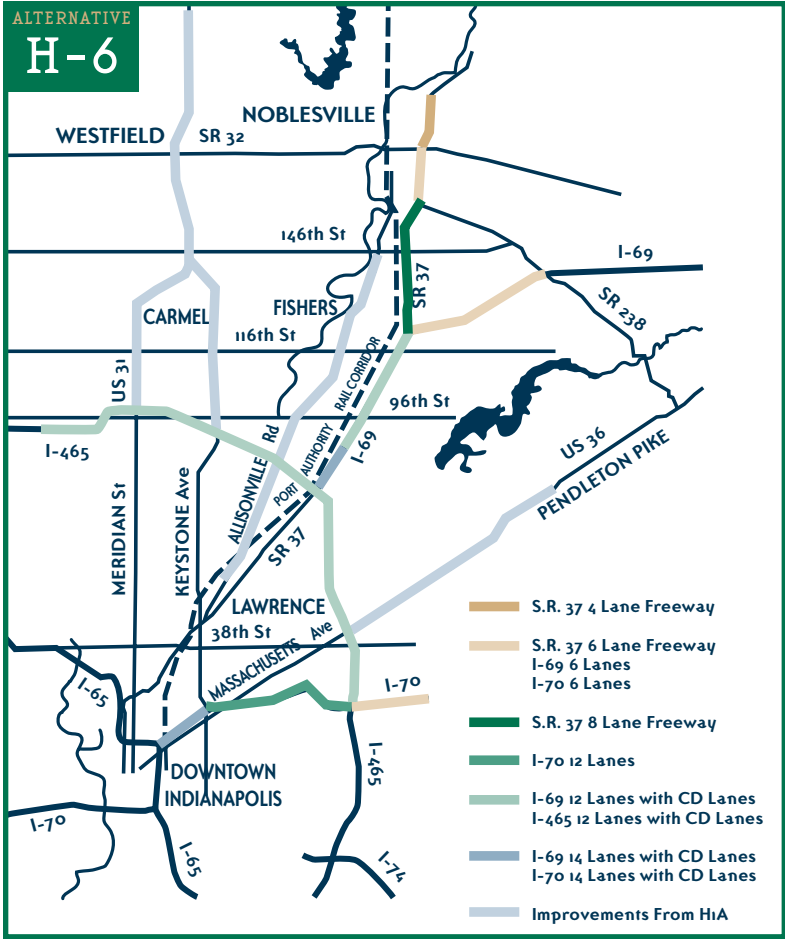
Estimated Cost: _____

cont on page 9, see Alternatives

H-5



Did You Know?
 Population and employment in the Indianapolis region are forecast to increase 19% and 31%, respectively, over the next 20 years.



ALTERNATIVES (from page 8)

H6: Major Freeway Expansion

This option would widen 465 to 12 “through” lanes (six mainline lanes, and six collector/distributor lanes), as well as add lanes to I-69, US 37, possibly I-70, and State Road 37 which would be improved as a limited access freeway. *conNECTIONS* management team originally eliminated this option, because it would require purchasing the most land from surroundings properties and, for this reason, would have the most extreme right-of-way impacts. However, the Indiana Department of Transportation requested that it receive further study so that the level-of-service benefits it offers could be documented. Of all highway options under consideration, this one comes closest to meeting our future needs.

This option is intended to provide a level-of-service consistent with a desired minimum level-of-service D, represented by somewhat constrained freeway operations but consistently maintaining speeds in the range of 50 - 60 mph. This level-of-service would be similar to, or a little better than, current conditions. Traffic would be drawn to the freeway system from arterial streets based on reduced travel times, even though trip lengths might be higher than more direct arterial routes. The result of this travel pattern would be higher total vehicle miles of travel (VMT), but lower vehicle hours of travel (VHT).

H6 would impose greater right-of-way acquisition impacts than any of the other options, including impacts on 157 residences and 59 businesses. In addition to direct ROW impacts, noise impacts would be higher due to higher traffic volumes and travel lanes closer to sensitive areas.

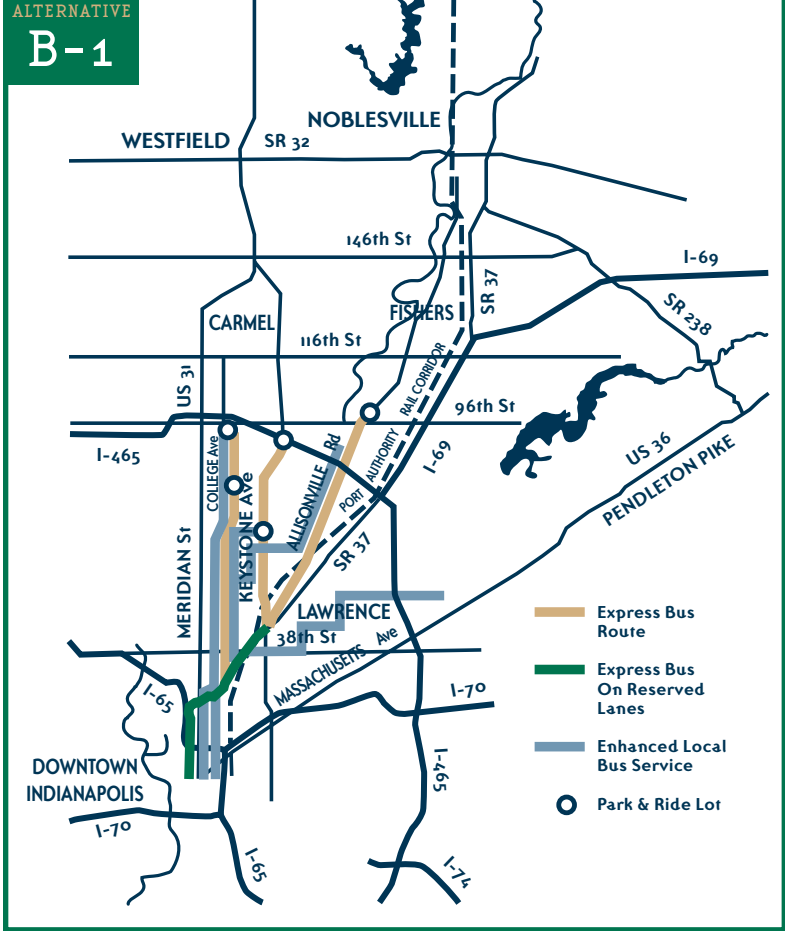
H6 would encourage continued reliance on the private automobile by making transit travel a less compelling or attractive option. The continuation of dispersed land use development would also be encouraged, possibly resulting in automobile travel increasing at rates greater than those forecast, with levels-of-service worse than estimated.

Estimated Cost: _____

BUS OPTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

B1: Expanded Express Bus Service in Marion County

This option offers improved and expanded express and local service within Marion County by increasing the frequency of existing local bus service in the corridor and adding three new express routes to the northern part of Marion County. In addition, express “bus-only” lanes would speed bus travel during peak traffic hours along



cont on page 10, see Alternatives



ALTERNATIVES (from page 9)

Fall Creek Parkway from Keystone to Capitol Avenue, and along Capitol and Illinois Streets between Fall Creek Parkway and Ohio Street. As an option, high-occupancy vehicles might also be allowed to use the express lanes. In this strategy, as well as in all transit options, passenger vehicles and facilities would be improved to include park-and-ride lots, bus shelters and other amenities.

B1 provides limited effectiveness at the lowest cost of any transit option under consideration. It would provide greater mobility options for corridor residents and employees. Its higher service levels, compared with existing IndyGo express service, may expand the market to more choice riders. The park-and-ride lot at Metropolitan Airport could attract some Hamilton County riders. Environmental and developmental impacts (both positive and negative) would be negligible. Reverse commute opportunities would be minimal.

Estimated Cost: _____

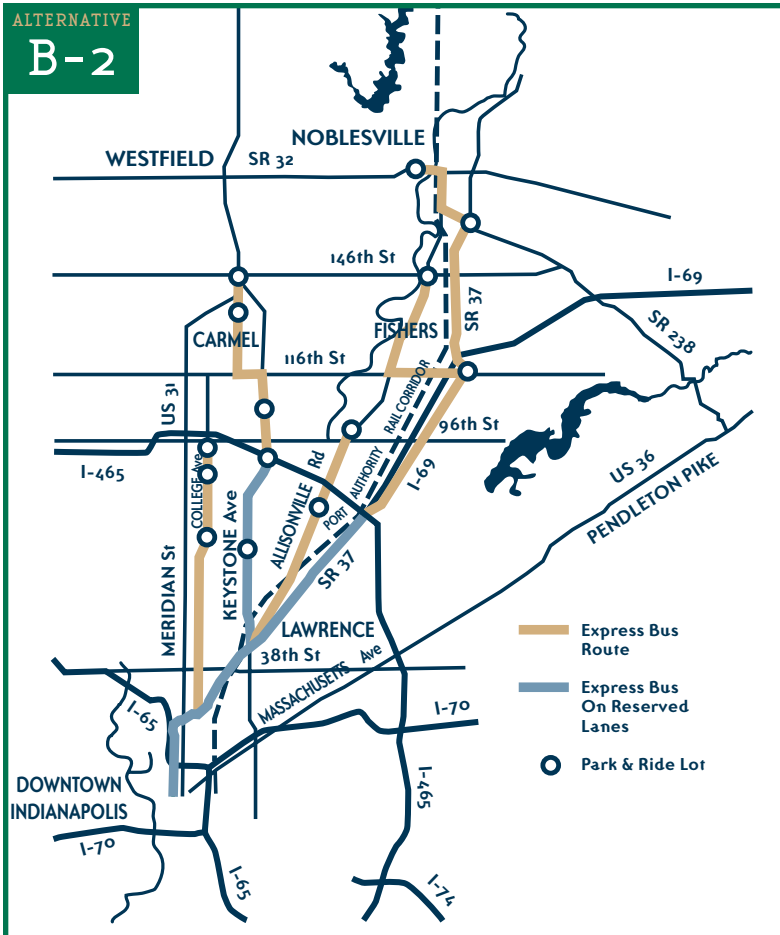
B2: EXPANDED EXPRESS BUS SERVICE IN MARION COUNTY, PLUS NEW SERVICE TO CARMEL, FISHERS AND NOBLESVILLE

This option builds on the benefits of Bus Option 1 by extending express service from downtown Indianapolis to the Carmel, Fishers and Noblesville areas. In addition to B1's 'bus-only' lanes on Fall Creek Parkway, Capitol Street and Illinois Street, express lanes would also be extended along Keystone Avenue and Binford Boulevard. A total of 13 park-and-ride lots would make transit service convenient for residents from surrounding low-density neighborhoods.

B2 provides a low-cost (when compared with rail options) alternative for introducing express transit into Hamilton County. Its effectiveness, in terms of ridership and associated development impacts, would be much more limited than that of the rail options. It would have a positive but minor impact on downtown Indianapolis and probably little, if any, impact on development in other parts of the corridor. Environmental impacts, both positive and negative, would be quite narrow. The potential for reverse commute service would be greater than that of B1 and could be similar to that of rail options RB1 and RB4.

Both bus options offer limited opportunity to improve transit's long-held regional image. In *conNECTIONS'* 1998 Opinion Lab survey, rail fared much better than bus service among respondents. However, public support for express bus service was nearly equal to that of rail in *conNECTIONS'* May, 2000 Opinion Lab survey (See Survey Report, this issue.)

Estimated Cost: _____





ALTERNATIVES *(from page 10)*

RAIL/BUS OPTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

RB1: COMMUTER RAIL SERVICE FROM NOBLESVILLE AND FISHERS TO UNION STATION IN INDIANAPOLIS, PLUS EXPRESS BUS SERVICE BETWEEN INDIANAPOLIS AND CARMEL

Rail/Bus Option 1 (RB1) would provide commuter rail service between Noblesville and Fishers to downtown Indianapolis using the Hoosier Heritage Port Authority (HHPA) rail corridor – the same corridor used by the State Fair train. Buses would carry commuter rail passengers to and from park & ride facilities and rail stations. In addition, it would provide express bus service from Indianapolis to Carmel. Commuter rail service provides higher travel speeds over long distances with few stops

RB1 would run diesel-powered commuter trains along the HHPA corridor to 10th Street, then use the CSX rail corridor to reach Union Station in downtown Indianapolis. This strategy, as well as the other rail-bus option, would incorporate many of the bus improvements described in B2, including feeder bus service from corridor neighborhoods to nearby rail stations.

Compared to RB4, RB1 is a relatively low-cost rail alternative that would primarily serve the longer-distance standard commuter market between Hamilton County and downtown Indianapolis.

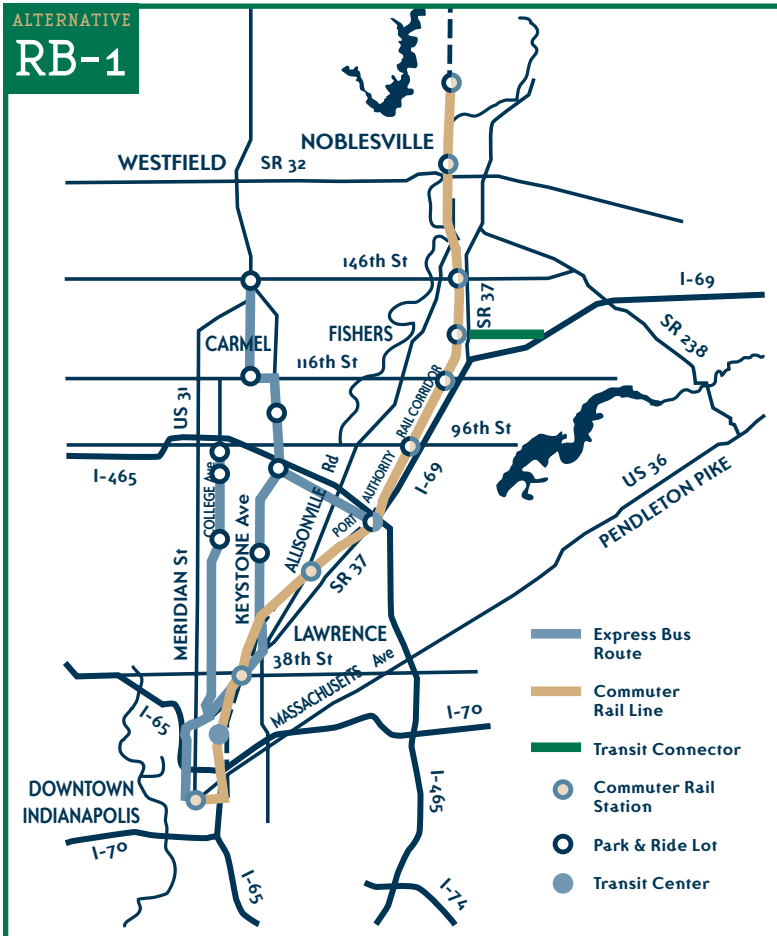
While its capital costs are lower than RB4, its benefits are also more limited since its ridership would be about

25 percent of RB4's. Its environmental impacts would be comparable to those of B1. Its reverse commute potential would be greater than that of B1, but less than that of RB4. This potential would be enhanced by the Eastside Transit Center, which could function as the southern hub of a reverse commute system.

Since rail tends to be more attractive to 'choice' riders than does bus service, RB1 would have positive but limited impact on downtown Indianapolis. Commuter rail operates most effectively with few stations, so the need/opportunity for development in the corridor would be less than with RB4's light-rail segments. This option could encourage compact residential development near stations in Hamilton County, assuming there is land available.

Estimated Cost: _____

ALTERNATIVE RB-1

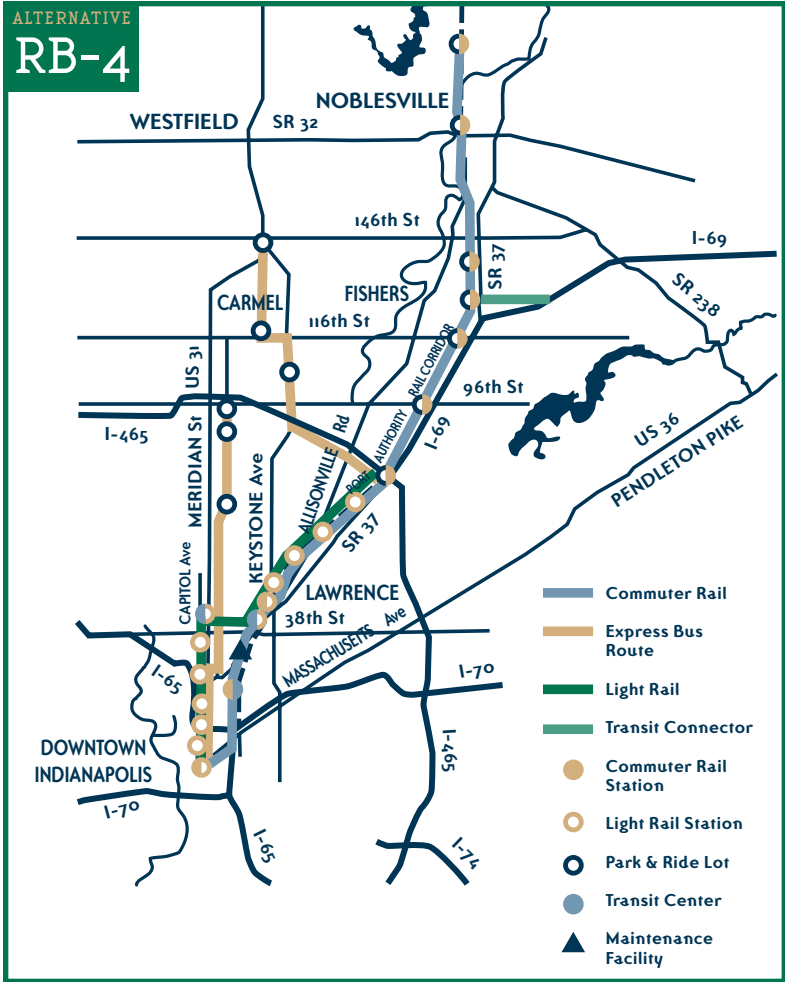


Did You Know?

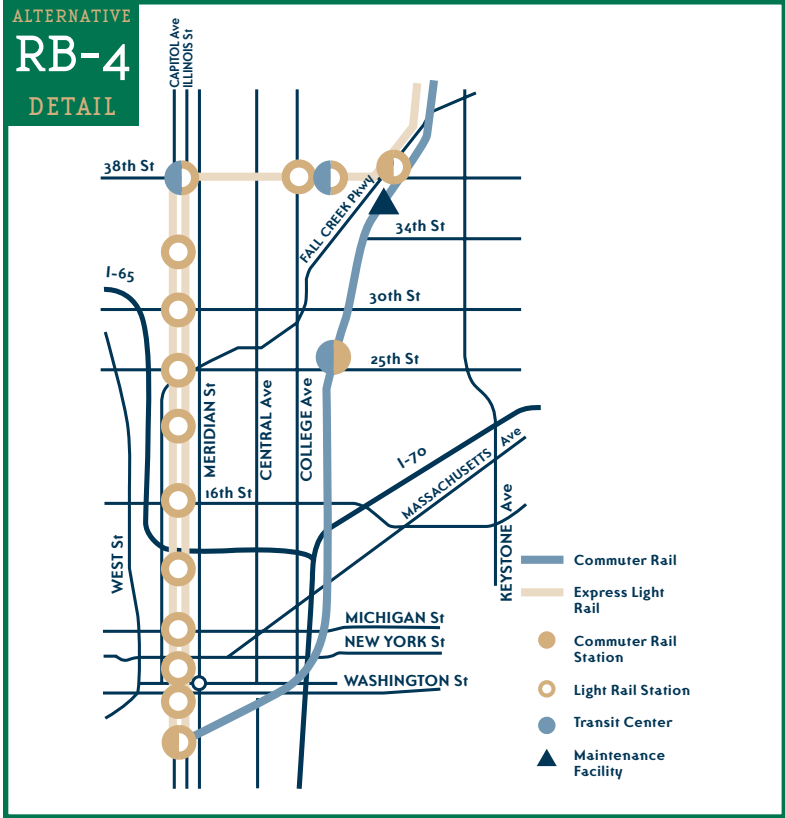
Daily person trips are projected to increase 34% by the year 2020



ALTERNATIVE
RB-4



ALTERNATIVE
RB-4
DETAIL



ALTERNATIVES (from page 11)

RB4: COMMUTER RAIL SERVICE FROM NOBLESVILLE AND FISHERS TO UNION STATION IN INDIANAPOLIS PLUS LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT) FROM 465 TO DOWNTOWN INDIANAPOLIS, PLUS EXPRESS BUS SERVICE TO CARMEL

Rail/Bus Option 4 (RB4) combines RB1's speed benefits of commuter rail service from Noblesville to downtown along the HHPA/CSX route, with light rail service from 465 to downtown Indianapolis. Light rail transit (LRT) service, offering slower travel speeds and more frequent stops, would branch off of the rail corridor at 38th Street and travel Capitol Avenue and Illinois Street to Union Station along the road surface.

RB4 represents the greater benefits, and costs, of any transit alternative currently under consideration. Its commuter rail component is identical to that of RB1, but its light-rail component would add commuter rail ridership by increasing the number of destinations served, especially from Methodist Hospital into downtown along Capitol and Illinois Streets. The light-rail segment would also provide the most attractive service for the intra-Marion County markets, which is largely why RB4's projected ridership is so much greater than that of RB1 (19,000 vs. 4,000).

Other than cost and ridership, the greatest difference between the two rail options is their impact on development. With more stations along the 465 to 38th Street LRT segment, and better service levels, more commercial and residential development opportunity would be created near stations. However, the greatest development impact could occur along 38th Street and the Capitol/Illinois corridor. With appropriate supporting policies, these areas could see significant revitalization.

Because of its street running segments, RB4 poses more environmental challenges (noise, aesthetics) than RB1 but also more environmental benefits, including economic and neighborhood opportunities. Since it is the only transit option projected to remove 5,000+ cars from area roads, it is the only one that could have a noticeable, though still minimal, impact on traffic volumes.

Estimated Cost: _____

Elected officials throughout the region have approved these eight options for public review and consideration. In addition, they've asked that:

- the possibility of an express busway along the Hoosier Heritage Rail Corridor also be considered, if the corridor is not recommended for rail service, and . . .
- that some new travel lanes added to 465 be designated for high occupancy vehicle use, if future conditions warrant.

CUT *(from page 5)*

nance of overhead electrical wires is much more expensive to build and construct than commuter rail, which is self-propelled. LRT is also slower than commuter rail, which makes it less suitable for long commutes, such as the 25 mile distance from Noblesville to Downtown.

H1: No Build - This alternative includes only committed projects for the next three years as approved in the Indianapolis Regional Transportation Improvement Program (IRTIP). These improvements would do little to alleviate the congestion expected in 2025, the study's design horizon.

H2: Transportation Systems Management And Travel Demand Management (TSM/TDM) - This option was rejected as a stand-alone alternative because its impact on our transportation system, though positive, is not of a scale to offer substantial congestion or lack of mobility relief. However, it has been agreed among study planners that TSM/TDM components should be part of *conNECTIONS'* final recommendation, because they offer effective, low-cost strategies for optimizing the use of existing transportation system infrastructure.

H4: High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes - Because Indianapolis currently has a very low rate of voluntary carpooling and transit use (approximately 2% of the population rides IndyGo), the study management team believes the public does not want is option.

• **Binford Boulevard Rail Alignment** - This alternative was suggested by the public as a way of avoiding the noise and other negative impacts of running rail service in the

HHPA corridor, which is located alongside many homes.

Although it would achieve

this objective, this

alternative would cost more than those rail options utilizing the HHPA corridor and would generate much lower ridership, resulting in low cost-effectiveness. Rail systems work best when stations are an accessible component of the urban fabric, and when they are close to where people live and work. The median of Binford Boulevard (formerly, SR 37) would not be very accessible by foot or from nearby park-and-ride lots. Also, bringing rail service through the already congested intersection of Fall Creek Parkway, Allisonville Road, 38th Street and Binford Boulevard would further disrupt traffic flow.

“By consistently applying our evaluation criteria to all considered strategies, we’ve found that our options are pretty limited,” said Mike Peoni, MPO Manager/Master Planner. “We’ve made hard choices, but we know that the options that remain for further study offer the region its best hope of safe, efficient and economical transportation in the future.”

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation criteria listed below have been used throughout the study to screen alternatives and to guide the selection process.

Whenever possible, quantitative measures have also been used.

Transportation/Effectiveness

How well does an alternative address the purpose and need for transportation improvements in the corridor? How well does it meet the goals and objectives?

Environment

How do the options compare in terms of their impact on the human environment?

Environmental criteria include natural elements, such as air, noise and water, as well as social and economic aspects, such as neighborhoods, economic development and historical resource impacts.

Cost

What financial resources are required to construct, operate and maintain each alternative? How does an alternative's effectiveness compare to that of others in relation to capital and operating costs?

Financial Feasibility

What is the likely source of funds for a project's capital and operating costs? Sources can include federal, state, local and private entities.

Equity

Does an alternative impose disproportionate costs on, or provide disproportionate benefits for, certain socioeconomic groups or neighborhoods?

Anticipated Public Acceptance

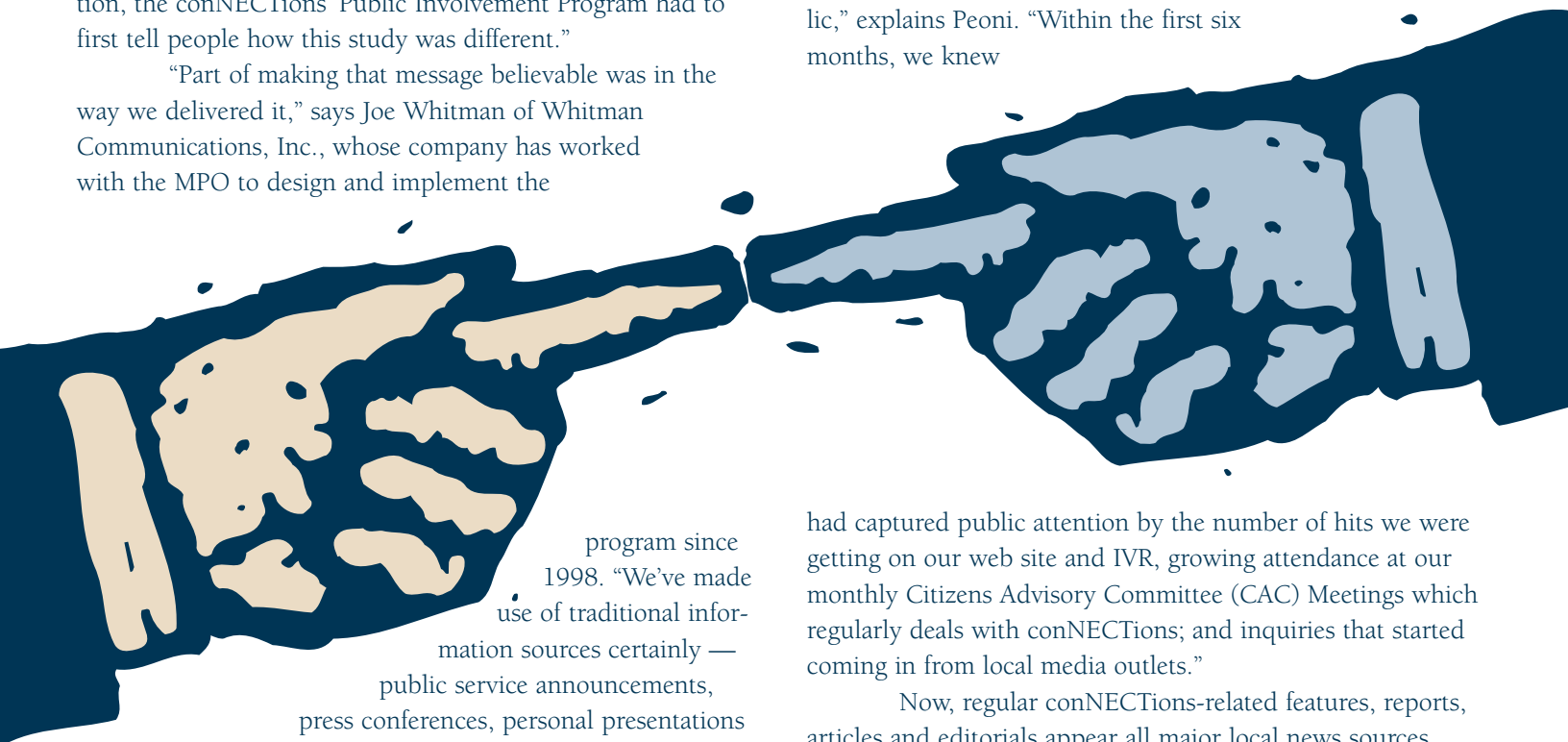
Ultimately, the public must accept the cost and impact of the preferred alternative if it is to be implemented. No matter how effective, economically feasible, or environmentally-conscious an alternative is, it will not solve the transportation problem unless the public accepts and uses it.



STAYING CONNECTED *(from page 1)*

“There had been other, recent studies conducted the Northeast Corridor that hadn’t resulted in significant improvements. I think both the media and the general public remembered those and thought conNECTions was just more of the same,” explains Mike Peoni, MPO Manager/Master Planner. “To encourage and accommodate informed public participation, the conNECTions’ Public Involvement Program had to first tell people how this study was different.”

“Part of making that message believable was in the way we delivered it,” says Joe Whitman of Whitman Communications, Inc., whose company has worked with the MPO to design and implement the



program since 1998. “We’ve made use of traditional information sources certainly — public service announcements, press conferences, personal presentations and guest spots (for MPO staff) on local radio and television shows — but I think our most effective information streams have been those you don’t expect a government agency to use. Especially to promote a transportation study.”

In 1998, conNECTions got its own web site (www.indygov.org/connections) offering the public background information on the problems it intended to mitigate, the solutions it was considering, its funding sources and cooperating jurisdictions, even a survey that could be e-mailed back — a first for an MPO transportation-based study.

At the same time, an Interactive Voice Response System (IVR) was developed that could be accessed with a toll-free call (1-877-NEC-LINK). This conNECTions Hot Line also offered the option of a push button survey, as well as strategy descriptions, study background and the opportunity to be added to the MPO’s mailing list for study updates.

Paid sponsorship of traffic reports on 25 MetroNetwork radio stations throughout the region encouraged the public to visit the web site and IVR during late 1998. In addition, a direct mail program made technical transportation planning information accessible to area residents who

responded by requesting further information in unexpected numbers.” We got hundreds of requests back,” says Whitman. “Our response rate was about 5% — unheard of in the direct mail industry when no financial incentive (e.g. coupon) is offered.”

“We had never taken any of these steps before, and I think they helped prove that conNECTions was different and that the MPO was serious about working with the public,” explains Peoni. “Within the first six months, we knew

had captured public attention by the number of hits we were getting on our web site and IVR, growing attendance at our monthly Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Meetings which regularly deals with conNECTions; and inquiries that started coming in from local media outlets.”

Now, regular conNECTions-related features, reports, articles and editorials appear all major local news sources. “Within the last two months alone, *conNECTions* has been featured on Channels 6, 8 and 59; repeatedly in WIBC Radio newsbreaks and in *The Indianapolis Star*,” Peoni says. In addition, Channel 13 is working with the MPO on an upcoming public forum concerning the region’s transportation future and the MPO Manager was recently interviewed by *The Wall Street Journal* concerning Indianapolis’ growing congestion and possible solutions.

BUMPS ALONG THE WAY

Still, the *conNECTions* Public Involvement Program continues to present some communications challenges. “When you’ve convinced people that this is a subject worthy of their time and attention, you’d better keep in regular and frequent contact with them,” says Whitman. “That’s difficult because transportation studies don’t proceed at a regular pace. There can be long technical delays which hold up progress, as there was during *conNECTions*’ computer modeling phase.”

For a good part of 1999, the study didn’t appear to be proceeding, despite public reports from the management team on other aspects of the study, including its environmental

cont on page 20, see Staying coNECTed

Since May, 1998, the *conNECTIONS* Study of Northeast Corridor Transportation has addressed the public as a primary transportation planning partner using both broadly and narrowly focused media and communications initiatives to:

1. describe/quantify the problems that make the study necessary
2. solicit input concerning possible solutions
3. build consensus for preferred recommendations

Broadly focused communications that address residents of the entire region, include:

1. more than a dozen articles and editorials in The Indianapolis Star and News, The Daily Ledger, and other local newspapers
2. frequent (monthly) drive-time news coverage on WIBC
3. Traffic Report sponsorship on 25 MetroNetwork radio stations in November and December 1998
4. *conNECTIONS* radio sponsorship of the 1998 IHSAA Finals
5. radio and television appearances by MPO staff on local programs, like The Amos Brown Show
6. a toll-free Interactive Voice Response System (1-877-NEC-LINK) that gives study background, descriptions of alternatives and an opportunity to leave comment/fill out survey
7. the *conNECTIONS* web site (www.indygov.mpo/connections)
8. TV and radio public service announcements,
9. an informational video promoted to various civic/educational groups
10. three special issues of *teMPO* — the MPO's newsletter of transportation planning in our region, as well as regular update articles 4 times a year
11. monthly media advisories to more

than 30 radio, television and newspaper sources

12. monthly promotion of *conNECTIONS*-focused CAC meetings through WCTY, (Comcast, Channel 16)
13. on-going news coverage on Channels 6, 8, 13 and 59
14. press conferences
15. public forums, of which four more are scheduled for: (times & places)
16. a region-wide telephone survey of 1129 respondents conducted by the I.U. Public Opinion Lab (May, 2000)



17. a "13 Listens" Special Forum, telecast in July, 2000 on WTHR, concerning our region's transportation future
18. joint ventures among the MPO, the Central Indiana Regional Citizens League (CIRCL) and the Central Indiana Regional Transit Alliance (CIRTA) to raise the profile of *conNECTIONS* among non-corridor residents. The MPO supports both groups as planning partners and has helped promote CIRCL's Vision Plan.
19. a prudent schedule of paid media in both newspaper and radio to promote MPO-based events and initiatives, including those involving *conNECTIONS* and its impact on our regional transportation future.

Narrowly focused communications that address corridor residents directly, include:

1. field research, including focus and hosted groups composed of corridor residents/travelers and held at corridor locations
2. a December 1998/ February 1999 I.U. Opinion Lab telephone survey of 454 corridor residents
3. direct mail campaign (May, 1999) — 25,000 households, selected at random and representing proportionate population within corridor zip codes
4. 80+ presentations by the MPO and consultants to special interest groups and neighborhood associations located throughout the corridor.
5. postal notification to "Northeast Corridor Stakeholders" of monthly Citizens Advisory Committee meetings which focus on *conNECTIONS* and are re-broadcast on channel 16
6. collateral print distribution at select corridor sites in late 1998/early 1999
7. a *conNECTIONS*-based distance learning program involving the Corporation for Educational Communication (CEC) and the curriculum, educators and students of nine corridor high schools.

As *conNECTIONS* nears completion, the study's Public Involvement Program continues to utilize the elements listed above to share information with, and solicit input from, the public. The original message of "*Eventual recommended solutions for solving congestion and lack of mobility in the Northeast Corridor will likely be employed elsewhere in our region*" has changed in response to preliminary findings. Now, *conNECTIONS' communications tells a region-wide audience: "If rail transit (and transit in general) is ever going to play an important role in our regional transportation system, inside or outside of the NE corridor, it must be considered NOW.*

FUNDING OPTIONS

As reported previously in *teMPO*, *conNECTIONS* is a major investment study in every sense of the word. Its \$1.7 million cost is being shared by area

options as well, and may do so in the future as the demand for travel alternatives grow. Still, there are not currently enough dollars allotted to pay for *all* needed improvements so other funding sources must be identified.

Vehicle Taxes

Drivers' License Fees
Auto Registration Fees

Sales Taxes

Retail Sales Tax
Utility Sales Tax (phone, electric)
Hotel/Motel Occupancy Tax
Restaurant Taxes
Beer/Liquor Tax
Tobacco Taxes
Car Rental Tax

Business Taxes

Corporate Income Tax
Payroll Taxes
Special Benefit Assessment District (property tax add-on)
Transit Impact Development Fee (downtown business district)
Franchise Surcharge (a corporate income tax based on the portion of a business' activities that are carried on within the transportation district)

Residential Taxes

Property Tax

Other

Tax Increment Funding (TIF) - district/joint development projects with private developers
Income Tax (additional percentage add-on)
Commuter Tax/Employment Tax
Business/School/University Purchase of Passes

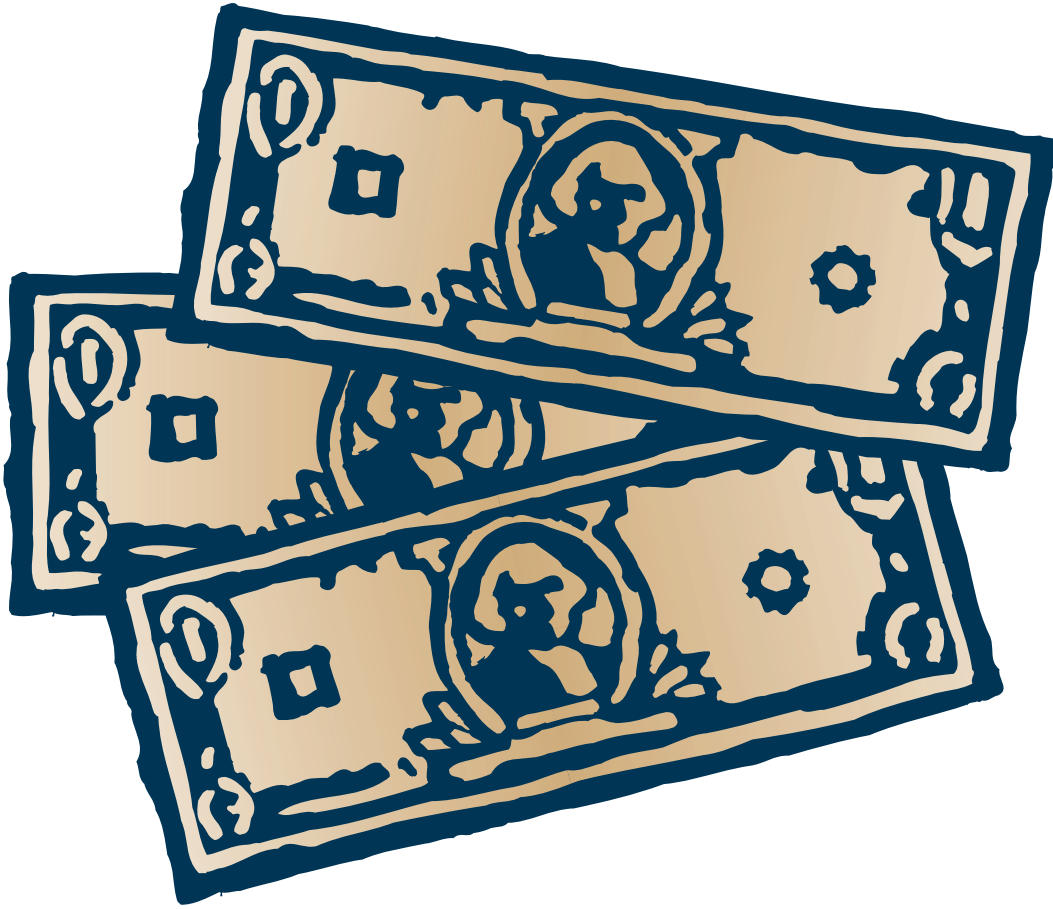
entities with jurisdictional authority over transportation issues — the same groups whose transportation systems will benefit from *conNECTIONS*' eventual recommendations. However, the cost of diagnosing our transportation problems and their possible remedies is only the beginning. Every potential solution has a price.

Substantial federal tax dollars are currently allocated for transportation improvements in our area. Traditionally, this money has been spent mainly on roadway improvements. However, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and its planning partners may elect to use these funds on transit

Here is a list of potential funding sources to cover the estimated capital and operating costs of the transit alternatives under consideration by *conNECTIONS*.

Fuel Taxes

Gasoline Tax (per gallon, or percent of sales)
Petroleum Business Tax



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 • PRINCIPAL PLANNER 317/327-5139

KEVIN MAYFIELD • PLANNER 317/327-5135

MICHAEL PEONI, AICP • MANAGER/MASTER PLANNER 317/327-5133

SWESON YANG, AICP • CHIEF TRANSPORTATION PLANNER 317/327-5137

For more information on our regional transportation planning process, visit the MPO web site at www.indygov.org/indympo.

REGIONAL SURVEY 2000

As a follow-up to its 1998 *conNECTions* Survey, your MPO again commissioned the I. U. Public Opinion Lab to probe the public on transportation related issues. The difference? "This time, our telephone survey wasn't confined to residents of the Northeast Corridor," says Mike Peoni, MPO Manager/Master Planner. "We expanded our survey area to encompass the entire Indianapolis metropolitan planning area for a couple of reasons. First, over the last two years, we've realized just how big an impact *conNECTions* final recommendations will have on the entire region's transportation future. What we decide to do in the Northeast Corridor, after having so much time to consider our options, will definitely affect transportation planning elsewhere. Secondly, the funding options being considered to pay for the recommendations could be implemented region-wide," he explains. "So, why not talk to everyone."

Have we talked to you? Did you get a call from the I. U. Opinion Lab? If not, here's another chance to be heard. Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey below. When completed, fax it (317.327-5103) or mail it to the MPO (1841 City-County Building, 200 East Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-3310). Your name and address may be used to send you further *conNECTions* information as it becomes available.

Name

Street Address

City State/Zip

Phone Number

1. Following is a list of possible improvements to our current transportation system that could be made by the year 2025. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT and 5 being VERY IMPORTANT, please indicate how important you think each is to the future of transportation in the Indianapolis region. If you are neutral, please write in 3.

- Widened existing roadways
- Additional, new roadways
- An improved and expanded bus system
- Train service, such as commuter and light rail trains
- Pedestrian routes
- Bicycle Paths

2. Are there any other improvements to the current transportation system that you would like to see included by the year 2025?
 No Yes

If yes, please specify _____

3. Studies show that traffic in our region has increased 25% since 1990 and is projected to grow another 50% by the year 2025. Major infrastructure improvements will need to be made to accommodate this increased traffic. These infrastructure improvements could require substantial public investment. Here is a list of possible improvements. Please indicate whether you support or oppose each one.

Spending public funds to expand and widen existing roadways, and build new roadways, throughout the Indianapolis region?

- Support
- Oppose
- Don't Know

Spending public funds to expand and improve the bus system throughout the Indianapolis region?

- Support
- Oppose
- Don't Know

Spending public funds to introduce train service, such as commuter and light rail trains, in the Indianapolis region?

- Support
- Oppose
- Don't Know

Making no major commitment of public funds to expand or improve our regional transportation system?

- Support
- Oppose
- Don't Know

4. Substantial federal tax dollars are currently allocated for transportation improvements in our area. Following is a list of ways to spend this federal money. Please indicate whether you support or oppose each one.

Spending these dollars exclusively on roadway improvements?

- Support
- Oppose
- Don't Know

Spending these dollars exclusively on bus and commuter and light rail train service improvements?

- Support
- Oppose
- Don't Know

Spending these dollars on both roadway and bus and train service improvements?

- Support
- Oppose
- Don't Know

5. Following is a list of taxes that could be used to fund specific types of transportation improvements. The first set of questions deals with funding bus system expansion and improvements. Please indicate whether you support or oppose each funding initiative.

A half a cent per dollar sales tax on non-food goods and services to pay for bus system expansion and improvements?

- Support
- Oppose
- Don't Know

A 1% increase in annual property taxes to pay for bus system expansion and improvements?

- Support
- Oppose
- Don't Know

A three-tenths of one percent income tax to pay for bus system expansion and improvements?

- Support
- Oppose
- Don't Know

6. The next set of questions deals with funding of a public transportation system using both trains and buses. How would you feel about:

A 1 cent per dollar sales tax on non-food goods and services to pay for the construction of a public transportation system using both trains and buses?

- Support
- Oppose
- Don't Know

A 1% increase in annual property taxes to pay for the construction of a public transportation system using both trains and buses?

- Support
- Oppose
- Don't Know

A seven-tenths of one percent income tax to pay for the construction of a public transportation system using both trains and buses?

- Support
- Oppose
- Don't Know

7. Would you support or oppose additional gas taxes going to fund new or expanded bus or train service where it is most needed in our region?

- Support
- Oppose
- Don't Know

8. Would you support or oppose your existing gas tax dollars going to fund new and expanded bus or train service where it is most needed in our region?

- Support
- Oppose
- Don't Know

9. In general, how do you think traffic congestion should be handled in the Indianapolis region?

- Expand and Improve the Roadway System
- Expand and Improve public bus and train transportation
- Both
- Don't know

10. Do you currently use a bus to get to work, school, or any other place?

- Yes
- No

11. Remember that traffic in our area is projected to increase more than 50% by the year 2025. In light of this, if expanded and improved bus service was available within easy walking distance of your home or with conveniently located park and ride facilities, would you be willing to ride the bus for:

Trips to and from work?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

Shopping trips?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

Entertainment trips?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

12. Would you support or oppose the idea of dedicating one of our existing roadway travel lanes to the exclusive use of buses and other high occupancy vehicles, such as car-pool vans?

- Support
- Oppose
- Don't Know

13. Would you support or oppose the development of an express bus system that travels longer distances at higher speeds, using either dedicated existing roadway lanes or land reclaimed from existing rail corridors?

- Support
- Oppose
- Don't Know

14. If efficient train service, such as commuter and light rail trains, was developed with station and parking facilities convenient to your home, would you be willing to ride the train for:

Trips to and from work?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

Shopping trips?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

Entertainment trips?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

15. Overall, if a train system was added, how likely would you be to use it for some of your travels?

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not very likely
- Not at all likely
- Don't Know

16. How much would you be willing to pay for train service one way?

- 0, nothing
- Less than \$1
- \$1
- \$2
- \$3

17. In what county do you live?

- Marion
- Hamilton
- Hancock
- Johnson
- Hendricks
- Boone
- Shelby
- Morgan
- Other (SPECIFY) _____
- Don't Know

18. In what county do you work?

- Marion
- Hamilton
- Hancock
- Johnson
- Hendricks
- Boone
- Shelby
- Morgan
- Other (SPECIFY) _____
- Not employed
- Don't Know

19. How many vehicles are there in your household? _____

20. Is there anything else you would like to add about any of the transportation issues mentioned here? _____

Thank you for making the *conNECTion* between your participation and better transportation.

PRIMER *(from page 2)*

politan planning area — suffers its most acute problems here.

GOALS

1. Improve mobility.
2. Enhance economic development.
3. Preserve and protect the environment.
4. Develop a cost-effective transportation system.
5. Reach consensus on a transportation plan for the corridor.

METHODOLOGY

conNECTions' purpose will be achieved only by working with elected officials and members of the community to narrow down a broad range of possible solutions to a recommended set of strategies that satisfy the stated goals.

TIMELINE

The study began in May of 1998. It was originally scheduled to conclude in December, 1999. That completion date was pushed back due to technical delays in the computer-modeling process and to insure adequate opportunity for participation and input of interested residents, through the Public Involvement Program. The current projected completion date is September 2000.

STUDY BUDGET

The \$1.7 million budget is made up of 80% federal money and 20% local funds. The \$1.2 million in federal funding comes from the Federal Transit Administration. The \$500,000 in local funds comes from a number of stakeholders in the Northeast Corridor: \$250,000 from the Indiana Department of Transportation, \$125,000 from the City of Indianapolis, and \$31,250 each from Hamilton County, the City of Carmel, and the Towns of Noblesville and Fishers.

MANAGEMENT

The study's Management Team is comprised of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and representatives of the study's funding entities. The primary consultant of record is Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, transportation engineers.

DECISION-MAKING

The study's Policy Steering Committee will either accept or reject the study's final recommendations. Generally, the Management Team makes recommendations to the study's Technical Working Group (TWG) which is comprised of transportation planners and engineers from the funding entities. The TWG makes recommendations to the Policy Steering Committee (PSC). If accepted, the PSC ultimately refers the recommendations to the appropriate implementing agencies.

POLICY STEERING COMMITTEE

The PSC is comprised of elected officials from various Northeast Corridor jurisdictional authorities, and is chaired by Mayor Bart Peterson of the City of Indianapolis; Cris Klika, Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Transportation

(INDOT); and Luke Kenley, State Senator from Hamilton County.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

In an effort to encourage and accommodate the informed participation of area residents in the transportation planning process, the MPO has undertaken a comprehensive information and outreach program. Program elements include the *conNECTions* web site, Interactive Voice Response System, multiple direct mailings, two quantitative telephone surveys, nearly 80 presentations to neighborhood organizations and civic groups, field research, a curriculum project involving nine corridor high schools, monthly reports at the Citizens Advisory Committee, and on-going public and media relations. For a more detailed description of the Public Involvement Program, read *Staying conNECTed with the Public*, this issue.

IMPLEMENTATION

Realistically, most of the major highway or transit-based options currently under consideration by *conNECTions* would take between seven to ten years to implement once approved, because of standard funding and construction time frames. However, low cost Transportation System Management (TSM) and Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies are already being employed to maximize the efficiency of our current transportation system.

These are the "broad strokes" of what *conNECTions* is all about. For more detailed information, or for answers to specific questions, call Mike Peoni, MPO Manager/Master Planner, at 327-5133.

Did You Know?

**Over the last ten years, the
number of vehicles registered in
the nine counties included in
the Indianapolis Metropolitan
Planning Area has nearly tripled
— from 482,244 to 1.3 million!**

STAYING CONNECTED *(from page 14)*

impact analysis. “I think some people lost interest during this period. I know the media did,” says Whitman. “Other people got frustrated and assumed we were withholding information.”

“We still deal with that because we’re not the only ones talking to the media about *conNECTions*,” agrees Peoni. “We probably should be since the MPO is responsible for overseeing the study and insuring its objectivity. Besides, when planning partners with a specific agenda to push talk publicly about *conNECTions*, the study’s objectivity can be called into question.”

And, that makes conducting a Public Involvement Program more difficult. “Corridor residents may come to meetings angry because of something they’ve read,” says Whitman. “Or, worse, they may not come at all because they believe decisions have already been made without their input.”

Recent evidence suggests these problems have been largely overcome. “Our program has been so comprehensive, responsive and inclusive that I think all but the hard-core cynics are convinced of the importance the MPO places on informed public input in the transportation planning process,” Peoni says. “We continue to do everything in our power to share information in a timely fashion, and consider public comments and suggestions. Through our newly re-designed web site (www.indy.gov.org/connections) and IVR system (1-877-NEC-LINK), through more than 80 personal presentations, even via e-mail messages (mpeoni@indygov.org). We intend to stay *conNECTed* and keep the public involved.”

PAGE TWENTY



Printed on paper with recycled content

Metropolitan Planning Organization

City-County Building
200 East Washington Street
Suite 1841
Indianapolis, IN 46204-3310



teMPO

is published quarterly by your Metropolitan Planning Organization, part of the Department of Metropolitan Development. If you know of anyone who would like to receive *teMPO*, or if you have any questions concerning its publication, please call:

Mike Peoni at 327-5133

Department of Metropolitan Development
Metropolitan Planning Organization
1841 City-County Building
200 East Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

teMPO was written and prepared for publication by Whitman Communications, Inc.

Did You Know?

Over the next 25 years,

regional traffic is

projected to increase

53%, or more!