

THE CENTRAL INDIANA TRANSIT PLAN

YOUR INPUT, YOUR TRANSIT.



TRANSIT PLAN QUESTIONS. (TABLE OF CONTENTS)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The Central Indiana Transit Plan is a multi-county, multi-year vision for transit throughout the region, informed by more than a decade of planning and public input. This document contains regional transit goals and objectives and includes a summary of transit status and planning efforts in local communities within Central Indiana.

The plan was originally published in 2016 after hundreds of hours of public input on a series of proposals for a multi-county transit service. This updated version reflects progress, events, and changes that have occurred since the original plan, and it is presented here in a question-and-answer format. It can be read cover-to-cover or skimmed to look for specific questions and answers of interest. For those who wish to dig deeper, visit the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization's [Regional Transit Planning](#) web page for detailed planning and engineering studies, design guidelines, and transit economic impact information.

The case for improved transit

More than a decade ago, a group of Central Indiana elected officials and business leaders called the Central Indiana Transit Task Force (CITTF) recognized that transit investment would provide more economic return for the region than any other type of transportation improvement. The task force recommended a significant expansion of the regional transit system and the adoption of new transit funding sources.

A robust public transit network can help to recruit and retain a diverse and skilled workforce, as well as

provide increased access to jobs, healthcare, education, and recreation for at-risk populations. Transit helps us remain competitive with other U.S. regions, prepares us for future population growth patterns, and provides a better quality of life for many people. Finally, Central Indiana research indicates that every \$1 spent in transit investment will yield a \$3 economic benefit, making transit an asset for economic development.

Central Indiana has fallen behind peer regions in investments per capita, a trend Central Indiana is working to reverse with the passage of the Marion County transit referendum and subsequent local planning efforts. Transit systems are successful and widely used when they are reliable, have long hours of service, short wait times, and easy transfers. In densely populated areas, good transit service can effectively provide transportation options beyond the car.

Regional goals and recommendations

The Central Indiana Transit Plan seeks to provide a roadmap for improving public transit in Central Indiana. The goals of the regional plan are:

- To expand mobility options for Central Indiana residents by increasing the availability of public transit.
- To connect people to walkable places of employment, healthcare, education, shopping, and cultural amenities.
- To leverage public investment in transit to support economic growth, retain existing businesses, attract new businesses, expand housing choices, and stimulate redevelopment efforts.
- To honor the principles of the “Riders’ Seven Demands” for transit identified in the Plan.

- To upgrade transit service in areas with demonstrated demand and other supportive conditions.
- To ensure transit connects to other modes of transportation (e.g., sidewalks, bikeshare, carshare, trails, etc.).
- To support regional efforts to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions via reduced reliance on automobiles.
- To uphold rural demand response transit providers as crucial transportation options in Central Indiana.

Recommendations for Central Indiana include both new and improved local and rapid transit services. Through various studies and much public input, routes, service standards and county-specific governance plans are recommended, as well as strategies for financial and operational implementation. The Central Indiana Transit Plan recommends:

- Improving and increasing local transit services in Marion County. This means optimizing the services where funds have already been secured for transit.
- Establishing new local transit services in counties and townships adjacent to Marion County that have studied their needs. This means providing the right services to fit the goals and the needs of each individual area and community.
- Identifying next steps for other Central Indiana counties to implement transit. This means ensuring there's a seamless rider experience for individuals moving between counties.
- Continuously engaging the public throughout the planning, implementation, and operation of transit services.

Regional perspective, local implementation

Indiana state law requires that transit be funded locally, but best practices indicate that transit investments are most effective and efficient when coordinated regionally. This tension is managed by planning with a regional perspective but implementing to meet local needs.

Where local communities have worked to define their needs and create plans for improved transit, that work is summarized and referenced in this document. This includes a summary of the Marion County Transit Plan, as well as recently developed plans for Guilford Township in Hendricks County and northern Johnson County.

For communities that have not yet conducted this planning work, this document provides guidance and resources. All counties within Central Indiana currently provide some form of public transit, but this usually consists only of lower-capacity demand response service. These services will continue to meet a critical need in Central Indiana by providing transportation in low-density areas and to those who need door-to-door assistance. As the population and economy of the region grows, however, higher-capacity and higher-frequency transit options will be needed. Central Indiana's regional transit planning partners will continue to assist communities to develop these services:

- **Indianapolis MPO** – The Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization is a regional planning organization focused on transportation, economic development, housing, land use, sustainability, and equity in Central Indiana. The IMPO provides technical support, guidance, and funding for transportation planning in the metropolitan area.

- **CIRTA** – The Central Indiana Transportation Authority is a regional governmental organization focused on improving transportation options within Marion and surrounding counties.
- **IndyGo** – IndyGo is Marion County’s transit provider. IndyGo also provides regional guidance for transit operations and community engagement. IndyGo will operate the Red, Blue, and Purple rapid transit lines, forming the transit backbone of Central Indiana.

Funding the plan

Transit systems in Central Indiana are funded through a variety of revenue sources, including passenger fares as well as local, state, and federal assistance. Central Indiana leaders and elected officials have realized that any significant expansion of the region’s transit system will require new revenue. In 2014, the Indiana General Assembly passed legislation (**IC 8-25**) to enable a stable, dedicated funding source for transit investments, provided via a public referendum process. It allows certain Central Indiana counties and townships to ask for voter approval of a local income tax to fund transit within the community. These funds would supplement, not replace, existing local, state, and federal funding sources.

Marion County voters authorized a local option income tax for transit in 2016, and IndyGo now receives approximately \$60 million per year to improve local transit service and implement new rapid transit lines. Other surrounding counties and townships are now eligible to add dedicated income tax funding for transit through their own referendums. New revenue sources such as this will be needed to bring Central Indiana’s transit investment in line with peer regions across the United States.

When implemented, the Central Indiana Transit Plan will increase residents’ access to jobs, higher education, and healthcare, and position the region to compete with other metropolitan areas around the country.

INTRODUCTION & ASSUMPTIONS



What is the Central Indiana Transit Plan?

This plan is a broad, multi-county, multi-year vision for transit for all of Central Indiana. It was originally developed in 2016 by the Indianapolis MPO, IndyGo and CIRTAs as part of the Indy Connect regional initiative with significant public input. This updated version of the plan reflects the progress, events, and changes that have occurred since the original plan.

The initial version of the Central Indiana Transit Plan was published in 2016 as part of the Indy Connect regional transit initiative for Central Indiana. Indy Connect was originally a joint brand of IndyGo, CIRTAs, and the Indianapolis MPO, but the brand evolved to include additional partners and initiatives related to transit planning in Central Indiana. Between 2009 and 2016, the Indy Connect initiative pushed transit planning forward in Central Indiana through planning and engineering studies, financial analysis, research on national best practices, and numerous public input sessions. The Central Indiana Transit Plan attempted to distill all of these components into a single, unified resource. The plan served as a combined vision for the future of transit in Central Indiana, a summary of recommendations from the Indy Connect work, and a resource for answers to many common questions about transit in Central Indiana.

This second edition of the Central Indiana Transit Plan provides an update to the information in the original document. While the Indy Connect initiative no longer exists in 2023, the partnerships developed during Indy Connect continue today and have been critical for moving forward on the recommendations of the initial plan. The Indianapolis MPO presents the update to the Central Indiana Transit Plan to highlight the goals and components of the region's transit plan and the progress that has been made since its initial 2016 publication.

If you're reading this plan, you're probably looking for answers to specific questions. We've assumed that you aren't a transit expert, and we have tried to anticipate and answer your questions. If you can't find your answer here, visit Indympo.org to review detailed studies, submit comments, ask questions, or connect with a transportation professional.

The plan makes some assumptions based on the best information available:

1. The plan assumes that new, dedicated revenue streams would supplement, not replace, existing revenue streams in each county.
2. Based on the structure of state law, the Plan assumes that IndyGo will continue to operate in Marion County, and that other counties or townships will contract with transit service providers through their own selection processes.

REGIONAL TRANSIT PLANNING PARTNERS



Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority
CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PLACES

The Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA) is a regional governmental organization focused on improving transportation options and connections within Boone, Delaware, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Madison, Marion, Morgan, and Shelby counties. For more information: www.CIRTA.us



The Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (IMPO) is a regional planning organization focused on transportation, economic development, housing, land use, sustainability, and equity. IMPO plans for and distributes federal transportation funds for highways, transit, bikeways, trails, and sidewalks to move people and goods in Central Indiana. Established in 1972, the MPO has grown to include more than 35 members representing cities, towns, counties, and other transportation agencies throughout the Central Indiana region. For more information: www.IndyMPO.org

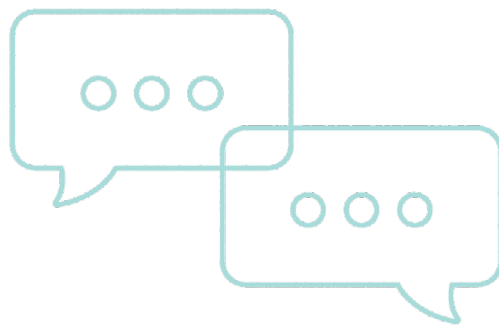


IndyGo is Indiana's largest transit provider, operating a fleet of 200 buses on 32 fixed routes in the cities and towns of Indianapolis, Lawrence, Speedway, Beech Grove, and Southport. IndyGo also operates an on-demand paratransit service known as IndyGo Access. For more information: www.indygo.net

MISSION

The Central Indiana Transit Plan shows how transit can better connect the people of Central Indiana to jobs, education, healthcare, and fun.

Central Indiana has seen an increased demand for frequent, reliable, and safe transit. Using data that identifies the major population, employment, and activity centers throughout Central Indiana, the Central Indiana Transit Plan proposes the best means of creating those essential connections for all residents. Using lessons learned from peer cities — Atlanta, Cleveland, Charlotte, Cincinnati, Columbus, Denver, Grand Rapids, Kansas City, Minneapolis, Salt Lake City, and many others — the Central Indiana Transit Plan has been 'right-sized' for Central Indiana, ensuring that the vision and goals are attainable. This plan presents a pathway to a better quality of life for all Central Indiana residents through this vital transit initiative.



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SECTION 1. TRANSIT BACKGROUND & BASICS

Local transit service typically has stops spaced every few blocks consistently along a defined route. Because of the closely-spaced stops, local service has the most access, but the slowest trip time. The amount of time between buses on the same route can vary from 10 minutes to an hour or more.

Rapid transit service uses the most direct route possible between two end points. Stations are spaced every half-mile to one mile for walkable access, frequent service, and faster trip times. Rapid transit lines provide the backbone of a transit network but need to connect to local routes for a network to be fully useful to people.

Express transit service typically has only a few stops at each end of a route, and no stops in the middle. Express service offers the least access overall and often the best trip time, especially when routes make use of interstates and other limited access roads.

Demand response services do not have set routes. They are used in many transit networks to provide service in areas of low population density, or for people who aren't able to use the other transit services due to age, health, disability, or other factors. These shared ride services are provided on a reservation basis or may be offered in an on-demand fashion using an app, which is known as microtransit. Some demand response services are available for all residents, while others are limited only to riders with special needs.

Other transportation services include intercity transit services (Megabus, Greyhound, Amtrak), and private demand response services such as taxis, Uber, and Lyft. Shared mobility services include carsharing, bikeshare and scooter programs; these are also known collectively as micro-mobility.

What is transit?

In this plan, “transit” refers to a regular, ongoing transportation service provided to the public in cities and regions throughout the world. There are many terms that can describe this form of transportation, including “mass transit,” “public transit,” “mass transportation,” and “public transportation.” For simplicity’s sake, this document uses only the term “transit.”

What are the various types of transit services?

Transit providers can supply various types of service depending on the size and layout of the service area, and the needs of transit riders. Most transit networks use one or two of the service types below, if not all of them.

TYPES OF TRANSIT SERVICE



What are the Seven Demands of Transit Riders?¹

1. It takes me where I want to go.
2. It takes me when I want to go.
3. It is a good use of my time.
4. It is a good use of my money.
5. It respects me in the level of safety, comfort, and amenity it provides.
6. I can trust it.
7. It gives me freedom to change my plans.

Who rides transit?

The short answer is people in our community who find it useful. When a transit system is improved to provide more reliable, more frequent, and more convenient service than was previously available, more people use it. The usefulness of a transit system varies depending on the individual and on the trip. We may think individuals who ride transit use it exclusively for all trips and vice versa for individuals who drive vehicles. However, individuals may use transit for some trips, vehicles for others, and walking/biking for still others. A 2022 survey of IndyGo riders showed that only 45% of transit trips are to and from work.² Using transit to connect to a variety of destinations is easier in areas with walkable development in close proximity to transit. Transit becomes a more viable option for more types of trips as the service improves in frequency, reliability, comfort, and convenience. IndyGo's Red Line rapid transit service demonstrates this, making up 18% of all passenger boardings on the IndyGo network, providing nearly one million rides in 2022.³

How do you measure success in transit?

Typically, the success of transit is evaluated in three ways.

COMMUNITY VALUES

There are many choices and tradeoffs when creating a transit network, and the best transit plan must correspond to community values. Through public meetings, community exercises, expert advice, and stakeholder meetings, we've developed a set of goals and expectations that reflect each community's values and needs, while keeping us all connected. Your Input, Your Transit.

RIDERSHIP VS. COVERAGE

***RIDERSHIP:** Refers to how many people use a transit system and how many trips they take with it.*

A successful ridership model focuses on providing frequent transit service along high density corridors. It connects people to the densest employment centers and operates for long hours each day. Ridership models allow for very effective routes but usually don't cover as much territory. Successful ridership models seek to maximize the number of trips served and minimize operating expenses per passenger trip.

***COVERAGE:** Measures how many people live within a half-mile of all transit lines, not worrying about issues like frequency of service, or operational hours. It simply strives to hit all geographic locations.*

Successful coverage models ensure that all residents live near transit, but these models usually are less cost-efficient in terms of operating expenses per passenger trip. Measurements of success focus on geography covered by transit, rather than number of trips provided.

No transit system is completely coverage- or rider-ship-based. Providers strive to blend the two values into systems that offer the highest number of trips possible, while still serving some of the less-dense areas in the community. Special efforts are made to reach areas where many vulnerable people live.

The Central Indiana Transit Plan strives for robust fixed route service in areas with strong ridership potential, treating IndyGo's bus rapid transit network as the backbone and prioritizing the development of suburban services that feed into the system. The plan also seeks to enhance basic transit options for other areas of the region and increase mobility for transportation-disadvantaged individuals.

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

Performance measures often tracked by transit agencies include the following. Agencies use these and other criteria to gauge how well they are meeting the success goals that were identified during planning processes.

Total Passenger Boardings – How many passengers get on, or board, a transit vehicle.

Revenue Miles per Capita – The number of on-duty, traveled vehicle miles that are generating revenue divided by the population of the service area.

Operating Expense per Passenger Trip – This metric can be calculated system-wide, or per route to see how effective a particular route is in the network.

Revenue Hours per Capita – This number divides the revenue hours (on-duty hours along a vehicle's route) by the service area population to determine how much service is available for residents. It is common to use this metric to compare transit systems in peer cities or regions to indicate if a transit system is well- or under-funded.



QUALITIES FOR GROWING RIDERSHIP

A TRANSIT AGENCY CAN GROW ITS NUMBER OF RIDERS BY INVESTING IN A
FREQUENT, CONNECTED NETWORK SERVING AREAS OF:

DENSITY

More people going to and from areas around each stop increases ridership.



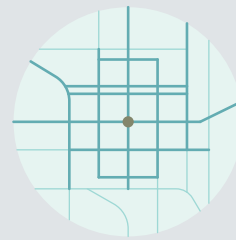
HIGH RIDERSHIP



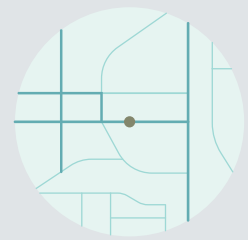
LOW RIDERSHIP

WALKABILITY

Ridership is higher among people who can easily walk to a stop.



HIGH
RIDERSHIP



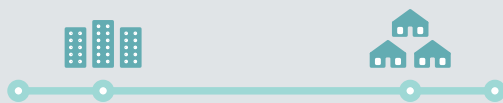
LOW
RIDERSHIP

CONTINUITY

Transit with a high density of a variety of destinations attracts more riders.



HIGH RIDERSHIP



LOW RIDERSHIP

LINEARITY

Transit that runs in straight lines attracts through-riders.



HIGH RIDERSHIP



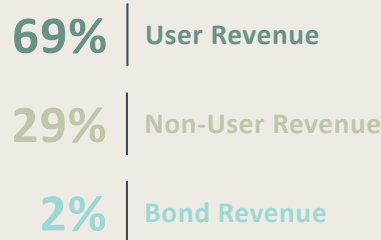
LOW RIDERSHIP

Why doesn't transit pay for itself?

Transit is a public good. Passengers typically pay a nominal fare to ride, but the majority of costs are covered by public subsidies. Similar to other public services – including schools, law enforcement, access to clean air and drinking water, and road maintenance – transit’s costs are outweighed by its many benefits.⁴ Many of the benefits of transit are described later in this section. These benefits include direct impacts on transit users, and indirect benefits that occur if transit, for example, increases employers’ labor pools, reduces congestion and pollution, ensures that people receive preventive medical care, or makes college accessible to students without vehicles.



USER FEES ACCOUNTED FOR ONLY 69% OF REVENUES USED FOR INDIANA ROADS AND HIGHWAYS IN 2019



Just like transit, roadway construction and maintenance require public subsidies beyond motor fuel tax revenues, tolls, and vehicle fees. User fees account for just over two thirds of spending on Indiana’s roads and highways,⁵ as shown in the following figure. Almost one third of road funding comes

from a combination of general fund appropriations, property taxes, other taxes and fees, bond revenue, and other receipts. Nationwide, this breakdown is approximately half user fees and half non-user fees.⁶

You can read more about transit financing in [Section 7. Money & Real Estate](#).

What are frequency, span, and service standards?

Frequency refers to how often a vehicle on a route arrives at a particular stop.

Span refers to how many hours per day a particular transit line is running.

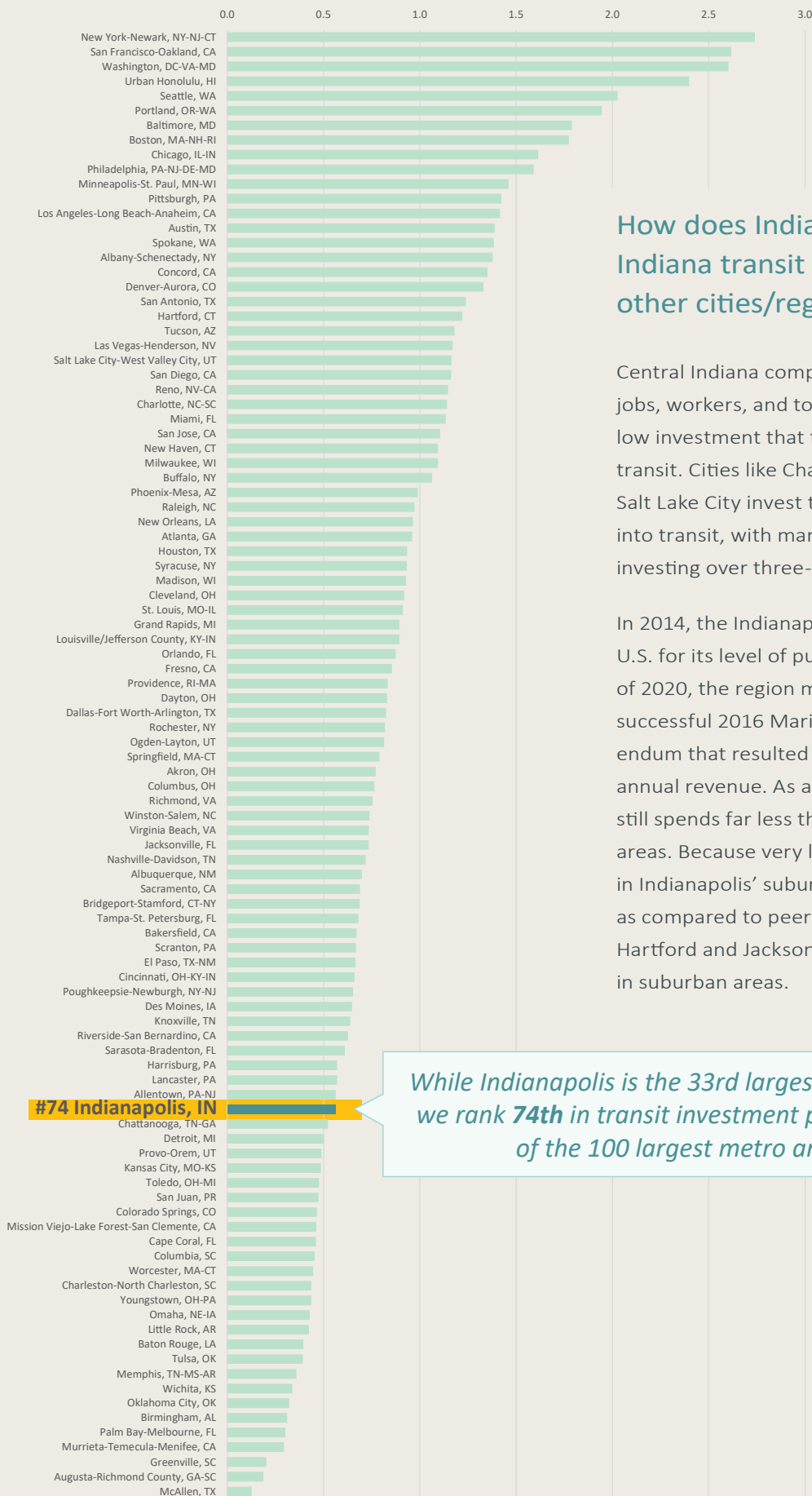
Service Standards include the goals set for frequency and span of service, based on the service type.

Knowing how often a vehicle comes and how many hours per day it operates is important. For example, you are far more likely to consider using transit if you know that a bus will come every 10 or 15 minutes (so you don’t have to refer to a schedule), and that it will still be operating when you are ready to go home, even if that is at 10 or 11 p.m.

Below is a simple example of a service standards schedule. Sometimes the frequencies and spans can vary greatly, and sometimes they are very similar. For detailed information on the service standards for a particular Central Indiana transit system, refer to the sections of this plan that describe local transit operators.

SAMPLE SERVICE STANDARDS SCHEDULE			
Service Type	Frequency	Span (hours/day)	
		Monday-Saturday	Sunday
BASIC TRANSIT	30 min.	5 AM–1 AM or 6 AM–12 AM (20hr or 18hr)	6 AM–10 PM (16hr)
FREQUENT TRANSIT	15 min.	5 AM–1 AM (20hr)	6 AM–10 PM (16hr)
RAPID TRANSIT	10 min.	5 AM–1 AM (20hr)	6 AM–10 PM (16hr)

100 LARGEST REGIONS IN U.S. -- REVENUE HOURS PER CAPITA⁷



How does Indianapolis/Central Indiana transit compare to other cities/regions?

Central Indiana competes with other regions for jobs, workers, and tourists. This graph indicates the low investment that the Indianapolis region makes in transit. Cities like Charlotte, Cleveland, Madison, and Salt Lake City invest twice as much as Indianapolis into transit, with many of the largest U.S. cities investing over three-times as much.

In 2014, the Indianapolis area ranked #86 in the U.S. for its level of public investment in transit. As of 2020, the region moved up to #74 due to the successful 2016 Marion County transit funding referendum that resulted in a near doubling of IndyGo's annual revenue. As a region, though, Central Indiana still spends far less than many similarly sized urban areas. Because very little transit service is provided in Indianapolis' suburbs, the region is underserved as compared to peer regions. Cities such as Raleigh, Hartford and Jacksonville have robust transit service in suburban areas.

While Indianapolis is the 33rd largest metro area,⁸ we rank 74th in transit investment per capita out of the 100 largest metro areas.

Do competitor cities invest in regional transit?

Central Indiana regularly competes with regions throughout the U.S. to attract businesses and grow the workforce. Central Indiana's competitor regions invest in transit, and most have been doing so for years, including:

Raleigh, NC: Voted in 2016 to implement a half-cent transit-designated sales tax to fund a 10-year transit expansion plan in Raleigh and its suburbs. New bus service in Raleigh and extended services to neighboring municipalities were implemented in 2019 using the new funding, as part of the Wake County Transit Plan.⁹ Two suburbs now have localized all-day services that provide access throughout each individual municipality as well as connections to high frequency, 15-minute routes to downtown Raleigh and other regional connections. Raleigh's systemwide ridership increased by approximately 12% following these changes and was growing until the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁰

Cincinnati, OH: Approved a sales tax levy of 0.8% and a new funding source for Metro in Spring 2020. With improved funding, Metro is offering the Greater Cincinnati region more frequent service, longer spans, more weekend service, new transfer centers and more suburban job connectivity with new demand response service.¹¹ Full implementation will make 740 more employers and 20,000 more jobs accessible by Metro. 50% of Hamilton County employers with 10,000+ jobs will be reachable through 24-hour service.¹²

Columbus, OH: Established a dedicated sales tax funding source in 1999, which was doubled through a 10-year levy in 2006. This levy was renewed for another 10 years in 2016.¹³ The Columbus area, a close peer to Central Indiana in population and geography, benefits from nearly twice the investment in transit and provided double the ridership (19.6 million rides) in 2019.¹⁴

Suburban Cleveland, OH: Adjacent to Cleveland, Lake County is a suburban county of about 230,000 with its own bus system. Voters there approved a 0.25% sales tax for transit in 2019.¹⁵ Over 75% of the funds from the tax are being used to sustain the county's demand response service and meet growing demand, while remaining funds are expanding fixed routes to improve job access.¹⁶ Laketrans provided over 700,000 rides in 2019, and by June 2021 had recovered 67% of its pre-pandemic ridership.¹⁷

Kansas City, MO: Voters passed sales and property tax referendums in 2018 to expand the city's streetcar system.¹⁸ Kansas City is roughly the size of Indianapolis but provides approximately 50% more transit trips (2019).¹⁹

Suburban Detroit, MI: In 2018, voters in Macomb County and parts of Oakland and Wayne Counties, Michigan, passed a renewal property tax levy to support SMART, the transit system for suburban areas outside of Detroit. SMART provides about 30% of the Detroit area's public transit, which carried over 26 million passengers in Fiscal Year 2019-2020.

Only 22% of the Indianapolis metro area's jobs can be accessed within 90 minutes on public transit by the area's working-age residents; in the suburban communities outside of Indianapolis, this rate falls to 7.6%.²⁰

In the midst of an ongoing hiring crisis experienced by many local businesses, expanding transit in our region means that employers will have access to a larger pool of potential employees.

Transit Funding Referendums²¹

Like Indianapolis did in 2016, many cities and regions have passed successful referendums in recent years to provide additional funding and support for their transit systems. Examples of places that have passed referendums in the last three years include:

- Toledo, OH (2021)
- Arlington, VA (2021)
- Flint, MI (2021)
- Austin, TX (2020)
- Portland, OR (2020)
- San Antonio, TX (2020)
- Denver, CO (2020)
- Seattle, WA (2020)
- Huntington, WV (2020)
- Cincinnati/Hamilton County, OH (2020)
- Anchorage, AK (2020)
- Oklahoma City, OK (2019)
- Tulsa, OK (2019)
- Lake County, OH (2019)
- Albuquerque, NM (2019)
- Houston/Harris County, TX (2019)
- Phoenix, AZ (2019)

What trends influence transit needs?

“The Central Indiana region also benefits from the state’s image of ‘Hoosier hospitality.’ Its communities offer a relatively affordable cost of living; cultural, arts, and entertainment options; and a wide range of outdoor recreational amenities. Recent infrastructure investments, including expanded public mass transit routes, help bolster this high quality of life.”

—CEDS REPORT, INDIANAPOLIS MPO²²

Economic trends, demographic changes, and shifting lifestyles are leading to greater demand for greater transportation options, including more transit and more walkable, mixed-use, transit-served housing. These trends are affecting communities across the country, and Central Indiana is no exception.

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The Central Indiana Transit Task Force (CITTF) found that expanding various transit options could do far more for the vitality of the regional core and enhancing regional competitiveness than highway improvements alone.²³ The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) created for Central Indiana indicated that an improved and expanded regional transit system would help bring workers to jobs.²⁴

Regarding the region’s workforce, various surveys have indicated that people in Central Indiana are dissatisfied with their current transit options. In some counties of Central Indiana, development and jobs are growing but the transit systems have little or no capacity to assist workers, especially those earning lower wages, in getting to work.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

About 310,000 people aged 65 and older live in Central Indiana, making up 14% of the region’s population.²⁵ The older adult population of the region is expected to increase to over 440,000 by 2035.²⁶ Studies show that total miles driven drops sharply after a person turns 65.²⁷ About 27% of Central Indiana’s population is between the ages of 25 and 44, falling roughly within the Millennial generation.²⁸ Millennials are beginning to dominate the workplace and marketplace. This generation drives less frequently than their parents²⁹ and prefers to live in walkable neighborhoods.³⁰

SHIFTING LIFESTYLES

Housing preferences are changing. A number of studies point to a national shift in preference to more connected, transit-served, mixed-use neighborhoods. A 2022 survey of housing preferences by MIBOR Realtor Association and American Strategies shows a 17% decrease in preference for single family detached housing as compared to 2018.³¹ However, 87.5% of homes approved for construction are in housing-only subdivisions.³²

The limited number of mixed-use, walkable projects that are being built in Central Indiana are generally located in “downtown” settings, like the Carmel

Arts & Design District, the Fishers Nickel Plate District, and downtown Indianapolis, where those walkable developments attract higher rents and lower vacancy rates. The residential population of downtown Indianapolis grew from less than 60,000 in 2000 to about 76,000 in 2019 and is projected to increase to 87,000 by 2024. Housing units in downtown more than tripled from 2000 to 2019 and are projected to rise to 40,000 by 2024.³³

In order for an area to be walkable, residences and businesses must be closer to each other, usually resulting in few parking spaces for the public and residents and therefore a stronger need for frequent, reliable transit options.

What are some of the benefits of transit?



STABLE WORKFORCE

People need reliable, affordable ways to get to work. Nationwide, about 50% of transit trips are trips to work,³⁴ and businesses located on transit routes have significantly less employee turnover.³⁵ In a recent focus group study in Chicago, 74% of participants stated that transportation was a barrier to keeping a job.³⁶ When comparing the number of jobs that can be reached in 30 minutes by transit, Indianapolis ranks 50th in the nation.³⁷ In addition, quickly developing counties like Hamilton County are adding jobs, but don't have enough workers³⁸ while high-population counties, like Marion, have workers looking for jobs. Transit brings workers to jobs and keeps business thriving.



RETURN ON INVESTMENT

In Indiana, transit typically returns \$3 in economic output for every \$1 invested, not including the real estate development that good transit service can attract.³⁹ Walkable places with good transit are in high demand but short supply in our region. From 2012 to 2016, median home sales price increases near public transit were 4% to 24% greater than in areas farther from public transit, with the highest gains near rapid rail transit, bus rapid transit, and commuter rail.⁴⁰ An even larger increase was seen in median sales prices per square foot for office properties near transit (5% to 42% higher than those further from transit).⁴¹

At the household level, owning and relying upon a single car costs an average of almost \$8,600 a year.⁴² Central Indiana households spend about \$13,800 per year on transportation.⁴³ The monthly fare for unlimited IndyGo rides costs \$60, or \$30 for individuals with disabilities and college students. The ROI of switching even one driver in a household to transit can be thousands of dollars.



REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

Central Indiana competes with other regions for talent. Many recent graduates and young professionals are choosing their cities before they find their jobs, and they're often choosing walkable neighborhoods with good transit access. Moreover, research has shown that reducing the commute burdens for the local workforce can help to attract large new employers.⁴⁴

According to the Central Indiana Housing Preference Survey conducted in April 2022, only 21% of respondents are very satisfied or satisfied with the level of transit in their communities.⁴⁵ Increasing the usefulness and appeal of the region's transit system can help the area compete for new residents.



CLEANER AIR AND LOWER ENERGY USE

More transit riders means fewer automobiles on the road and less air pollution from tailpipes. Personal vehicles deliver an average of 36.3 passenger miles (defined as one mile traveled by one person) per gallon of fuel (pmpg), while high-ridership bus routes deliver an average of 132 pmpg.⁴⁶ Energy efficiency is further improved as transit agencies convert their fleets to cleaner low- and no-emission vehicles. IndyGo added 24 electric hybrid buses to its fleet in 2021 and will soon add others with even more advanced fuel-saving technology.⁴⁷ Renewable energy sources, like solar panels, are being used by IndyGo to lower the cost and impacts of the energy it uses. According to the THRIVE Indianapolis Plan, emissions from the transportation sector in Marion County alone grew by 17% from 2010 to 2016.⁴⁸



FOOD AND HEALTHCARE ACCESS

All people deserve access to healthy, affordable food. About one in three very low-income and food-insecure families have to use a means other than their own car to get food.⁴⁹ Transit can connect residents in food deserts to grocery stores in other parts of town. Only 12.5% of eligible children participate in the federal Summer Food Service Program, which extends the free breakfast and lunch program for children from low-income families through the summer.⁵⁰ Not surprisingly, the primary cause of the under-utilization is lack of transportation to free meal sites.⁵¹ Public transit to and from more locations means better food access for those who need it most.

According to the American Hospital Association, transportation barriers prevent 3.6 million people from accessing medical care.⁵² Transportation issues cause 4% of children to miss a medical appointment each year, and for senior citizens, lack of transportation is the third leading cause of missed appointments.⁵³ About 79% of Indianapolis senior citizens have poor transit access, ranking 40th out of 46 mid-sized U.S. metros.⁵⁴ Without access to transit, people without cars are isolated, making 15% fewer healthcare trips, 59% fewer shopping trips and restaurant visits, and 65% fewer trips for social, family, and religious activities than drivers.⁵⁵



SAFER, HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Better transit access leads to better health and safety. Studies show that transit riders get more physical activity per day than non-riders by walking to stops and final destinations.⁵⁶ Transit passengers are safer while riding, too. Distracted driving is on the rise,⁵⁷ and convenient transit can provide an alternative for people who prefer to have conversations, do work, or use smartphones while traveling.

Metro areas with higher public transportation use have lower traffic fatality rates. Those metro areas with more than 40 annual transit trips per capita have around half the traffic fatality rate of metro areas with fewer than 20 transit trips per capita.⁵⁸



BUILDING AN EQUITABLE REGION

While Indianapolis is one of the top 10 cities for young professionals and entrepreneurs,⁵⁹ it is also the 6th most economically segregated region in the U.S.⁶⁰ A worker in the top 1% of earners in Indiana earns 17.3 times the average income of a person in the bottom 99%.⁶¹ Meanwhile, the city has seen an 80% increase in people living in poverty over the past decade.⁶² By providing residents with better opportunities for career advancement and wealth-building, strong transit access to employment and education can reduce the burdens disproportionately placed on an area's racial and ethnic minoritized people,⁶³ non-English speaking people, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes.⁶⁴

Public transit can provide a “ladder of opportunity” connecting disadvantaged individuals to jobs, healthcare, and other needs.⁶⁵ The relationship between transportation and economic mobility is stronger than that of crime, elementary school test scores, or the percentage of two-parent families in a community.⁶⁶ Only about 1 of every 20 kids born in poverty in Indianapolis can climb to the top of the economic ladder, making Indy one of the least upwardly mobile cities in the U.S. (ranked 46th of 50).⁶⁷

Transit is a key tool in the region's toolbox to build resistance to shocks and stressors by providing multiple options for mobility, increasing economic well-being, and improving safety and public health.

What did the COVID-19 pandemic tell us about transit?

The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light the extent to which transit operators were and continue to be essential workers. Transit operators are essential workers providing service to other essential workers whose jobs cannot be performed at home. While transit agencies successfully navigated the initial challenges of the pandemic, including controlling the distance between passengers on buses, installing operator barriers, or implementing mask-wearing policies,⁶⁸ they continue to face several long-term impacts from the pandemic.

Hiring adequate numbers of operators is an enormous challenge. The nation's transit bus operator workforce dropped from 179,510 in 2019⁶⁹ to 145,720 in 2021,⁷⁰ a decline of 19%. Transit ridership has been further impacted by difficulties with hiring and retaining bus operators. Some agencies have had to reduce hours on routes due to operator shortages, and less service means fewer customers. For example, IndyGo reduced the frequency of service on 15 bus routes in October 2021 due to staffing challenges.⁷¹ Similar measures have been taken by peer transit agencies such as Greater Dayton RTA,⁷² Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA),⁷³ and Metro St. Louis.⁷⁴

Additionally, the fuel and maintenance costs of providing service have risen, many parts and supplies are back-ordered or unavailable, and transit vehicle manufacturing has slowed, preventing agencies from replacing older vehicles, increasing maintenance costs. Funding for transit is critical in addressing these challenges. The funding gap associated with pandemic-related losses of ridership, fare revenue, and tax revenue is projected to be \$13 billion nationwide during 2023.⁷⁵

Does teleworking eliminate the need to invest in transit?

As Robbie Makinen, past director of RideKC (Kansas City), noted in an FTA webinar, “You may not use public transit, but you depend on people who do.”⁷⁶ Notably, retail workers quickly rose to the forefront of discussions of essential workers providing critical services to the individuals who shifted to a remote-work lifestyle. According to the National Center of State Legislators, “40% of retail workers are women, although the gender distribution varies widely by occupation within the sector. Cashiers, who earn an average of \$8.25 per hour, are predominantly women, whereas delivery drivers, who earn an average of \$16.20, are predominantly men.”⁷⁷

Additionally, Blacks and Hispanics tend to be over-represented in retail work.⁷⁸ Individuals occupying these critical, low-paying jobs are more likely to live in poverty, have Medicaid, and have an education that terminated with an associate's degree or high school. These essential workers were more likely to use public transit throughout the pandemic as they could not perform their duties from home. In this way, the pandemic demonstrated the extent to which the economy and society at large rely on transit.

Some transit agencies are shifting their emphasis to providing essential access for those who need it, rather than relying on ridership as the sole measure of success. For example, the Pittsburgh Port Authority recently moved resources away from commuter routes serving downtown employers to provide better service to low-income neighborhoods and add more weekend and off-peak service.⁷⁹ Acting on the lessons learned during the pandemic in this way, agencies can identify people and communities who are the most dependent on transit access and whose livelihoods could be most improved by expanding service. Changes like moving from a hub-and-spoke focused network to providing neighborhood-to-neighborhood access, and shifting from peak-period to all-day service, have the potential to boost ridership.⁸⁰ IndyGo has recommended similar improvements to its network by focusing on matching the right types of service with demand, as outlined in **Section 3. The Marion County Transit Plan**.

What is Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and why is it recommended for all rapid transit lines?

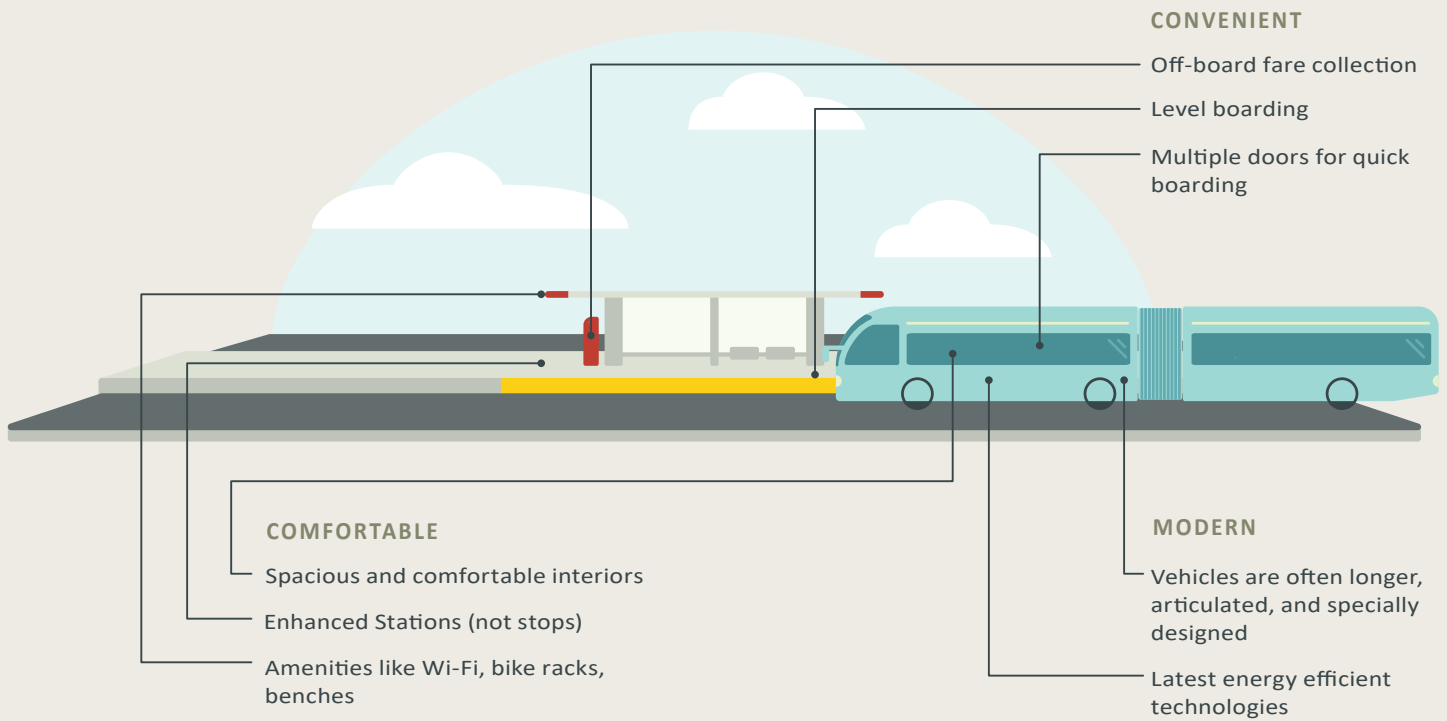
BRT is recommended on all of the proposed rapid transit routes in the Central Indiana Transit Plan because of its high level of service, reliability, comfort, convenience, its ability to generate transit-oriented development (TOD) where markets are

ripe, and because of its affordability when compared to vehicle types that require more expensive infrastructure, like light or commuter rail systems.

Rapid Transit is a specific type of transit service that provides a backbone for a transit system. These routes are complemented by the rest of the local transit network.

Local transit routes are very accessible, with stops every two blocks or so that range from simple signs to shelters with seating and trash cans. The vehicles are typically shorter and have on-board fare boxes that allow riders to swipe their transit passes or pay with cash as they enter. By contrast, a rapid transit service has:

- Large, comfortable stations with seating, wind protection, roofs, trash cans, real-time vehicle arrival information, maps and route information, heating, Wi-Fi, good lighting, and safety features like cameras and emergency call buttons
- Higher station platforms that are level with the floor of the vehicle making it easier and quicker to get on and off the vehicles
- A machine at the station where riders can pay for and receive tickets instead of paying on the vehicle, making it faster to load passengers
- Vehicles that arrive at the stations frequently for less waiting (at least every 15 minutes), and for up to 20 hours per day
- Long, straight routes, often from 10 to 40 miles or more
- Stations located generally every five blocks on a roadway (half-mile spacing between stations – there could be more space between stations if not on a road, like in a railroad corridor)
- The ability to operate in its own corridor, on a street in regular lanes of traffic, or on a street in dedicated lanes that are physically separated from other roadway traffic



What is an ideal corridor for rapid transit service?

To get good ridership numbers and good use out of the investment in rapid transit, a selected corridor needs to have higher concentrations of:

- Residences (like apartments and small-lot homes), and
- Jobs (like many shops clustered near one intersection, or a large business with hundreds of employees and little outdoor parking).

Corridors that were primarily developed for automobile access to businesses (large parking lots, buildings set far back from the street, limited or no sidewalks, and wide streets with uncomfortable or unsafe pedestrian street crossings) tend to have lower ridership on rapid or local bus routes than corridors that are more walkable. They may be necessary places to serve with transit, but wider streets and longer distances between the front doors of buildings make it difficult for people who must walk from transit stops through parking lots or cross wide, busy streets to get to where they're going.

The Indianapolis Interurban

Central Indiana may be behind in transit options today, but this wasn't always the case. A century ago, Indiana's interurban system operated more than 3,000 cars over the state's 2,100 miles of line, stemming from the Indianapolis Traction Terminal (the world's largest) in downtown Indianapolis and connecting most of the state's major villages and cities. In the early 1900s, 12 interurban lines met in downtown Indianapolis, as well as several electric streetcar routes ("City Car Lines") operating throughout the city. The system didn't survive the rapid expansion of automobile ownership and the advent of the highway system in the 1960s and 1970s, but the impact of the interurban system can be seen in the development patterns of corridors and places like College Avenue, Washington Street, Fountain Square, and Noblesville.



Why don't we just use shorter buses on routes where buses aren't full?

Standard size 40' to 60' long buses do not make sense for all applications. Smaller “cutaway” buses and even vans are used by many Central Indiana transit providers, including IndyGo, for demand response services and on routes that have lower ridership. However, many transit routes require buses with more capacity at peak periods of the day or along busier portions of the route. For these routes, the cost of owning, maintaining, storing, and scheduling a second set of smaller buses to operate during certain times of the day is significantly more than the nominal fuel cost increase required to operate a standard size bus all day long.

Why are electric transit vehicles being used?

Electric vehicles have many advantages, including low to no air pollution, lower cost to fuel, and quiet operation.⁸¹ Central Indiana has already made a significant investment toward electric and hybrid-electric transit vehicles. IndyGo's bus fleet has increased from 22% electric or hybrid-electric in 2016, to nearly 40% in 2022. IndyGo plans to continue to invest in fuel alternatives to diesel, and to minimize environmental impact.

The rapid transit vehicles being used on the IndyGo Red Line are fully electric. High-power chargers at the end of the line, paired with fast charge batteries, enable a 10-minute charge that gives a bus enough power for a full round-trip without the need for the overhead electric wires typical in light rail corridors. The Red Line currently has bus charging at IndyGo's maintenance facility and on North College Avenue near the northern end of the line. The Purple Line will also use fully electric vehicles, and the Blue Line will use hybrids.⁸²

CLEANER AIR

Electric buses operate using the charge from on-board batteries, so vehicles emit no pollution or fumes. This creates a healthier environment city-wide, but also for pedestrians walking adjacent to streets with many buses, riders waiting at bus stops to board, and patrons of sidewalk cafes who dine near the roadway.

A common challenge to the use of electric vehicles is that many cities use electricity created from burning coal, which can create its own level of pollution and energy inefficiency. But in Indianapolis, the main power plant transitioned to 100% natural gas power in early 2016.⁸³ Also in 2016, IndyGo installed a solar array on the roof of its vehicle maintenance facility and has since installed one at its new East Campus facility. These solar arrays offset the amount of power that IndyGo must purchase, provide a clean and renewable power source for charging its electric vehicles, and further increase the energy efficiency of using electric power.

QUIET VEHICLES

The rumble of a combustion engine transit vehicle can be disturbing and distracting. Electric buses are quieter, up to 30 decibels lower than a diesel bus, and quieter than a typical conversation.⁸⁴

LOWER COST

Despite their higher initial cost, electric buses often provide significant savings over the life of the bus due to lower costs of fuel and maintenance.⁸⁵ Studies have found battery electric buses to be four times more fuel efficient than diesel transit buses and have maintenance costs that are 27% lower.⁸⁶ While they currently have a higher initial purchase cost than diesel buses, the relative cost of battery electric buses is falling, as more buses are produced, and battery technology continues to advance.

Has the use of automated transit vehicles been considered?

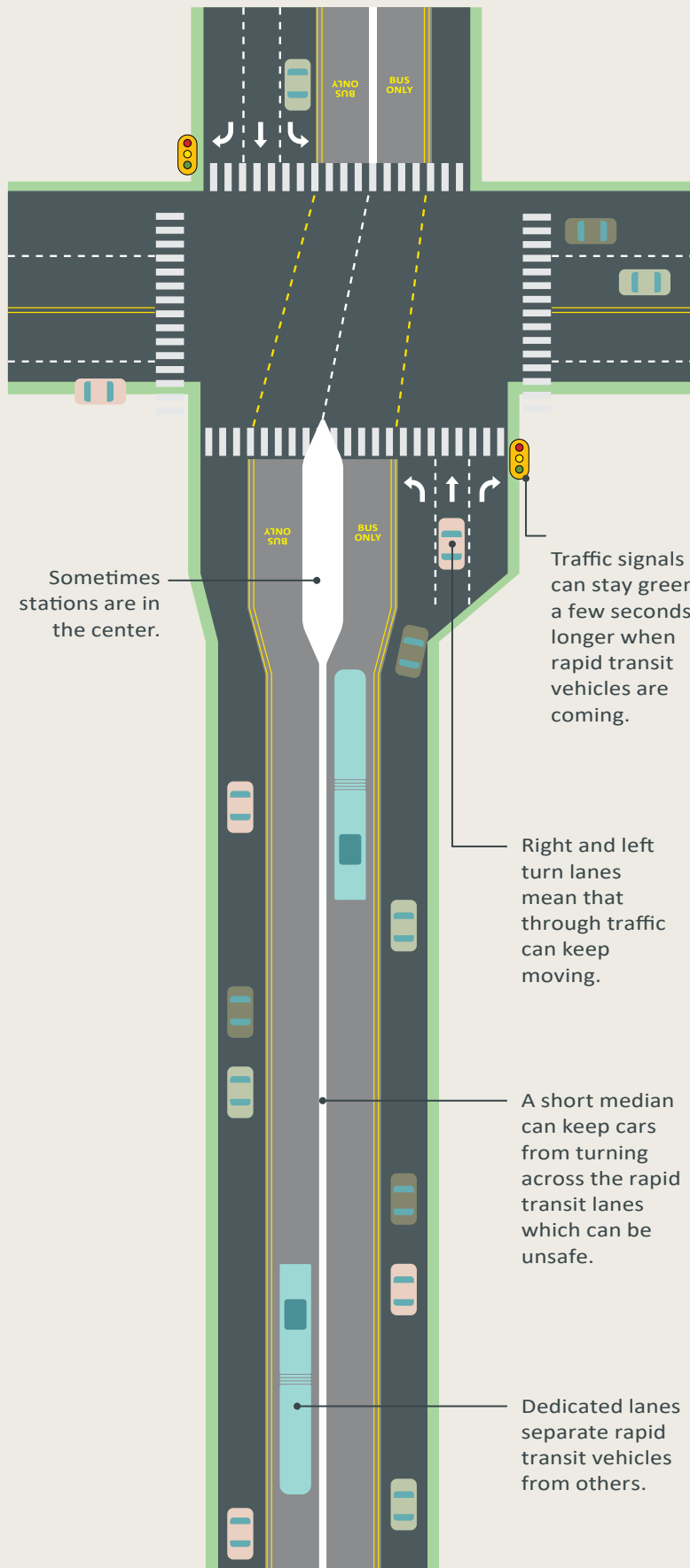
Advances in sensing, communication, and computing technologies have led to increased automation of driving tasks in today's vehicles. Vehicle automation ranges from driver assistance systems like lane changing warnings and automated emergency braking, which are commonly available in new cars today, to full automation of driving and navigation tasks. As with cars, the automation of transit vehicles offers potential safety, cost, and environmental benefits, and it could improve mobility for people who do not drive. A complete and fully automated transit system is still years in the future, but numerous tests and pilot projects are currently in progress throughout the U.S., including here in Central Indiana.⁸⁷ Transit providers and transit vehicle manufacturers will continue to monitor the development of automation technologies and will implement automated systems as they prove safe and effective.

Together in Motion Indiana was an automated vehicle pilot program conducted by a partnership of the Toyota Mobility Foundation, Energy Systems Network, the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, the City of Fishers, and May Mobility. Between June 2021 and November 2021, the pilot program operated automated vehicles in downtown Indianapolis, on a route circulating through the IUPUI campus and connecting to the IndyGo Red Line at the Vermont Street station. The pilot was then moved to Fishers, where the automated vehicles operated on a route in the downtown Nickel Plate district from December 2021 to June 2022. The vehicle fleet consisted of five hybrid sport-utility vehicles and one electric mobility vehicle equipped to accommodate passengers with wheelchairs. Each vehicle was outfitted to operate without a driver but had a trained attendant on board at all times. The automated vehicle service was free to the public and ran for 12 hours per day, Monday through Friday.⁸⁸

Why are dedicated lanes recommended for rapid transit lines?

In order for a transit service to be rapid, it needs to be able to avoid congestion. Using dedicated lanes allows rapid transit to provide fast and reliable service, with vehicles that arrive on schedule whether or not the adjacent street is congested. Having dedicated lanes also results in lower operating costs because the faster the vehicles move, the fewer of them are needed on the route.

In many locations, dedicated transit lanes can actually provide smoother flow for private vehicles as well. A dedicated lane allows the transit vehicle to pick up and discharge passengers without blocking traffic or merging into lanes used by other vehicles. Most streets recommended for dedicated lanes also have dedicated left turn lanes for private vehicles. Dedicated turn lanes and rapid transit lanes allow traffic in the regular lanes to keep moving.



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SECTION 2. THE CENTRAL INDIANA TRANSIT PLAN

What is the Central Indiana Transit Plan?

This plan is a broad, multi-county, multi-year vision for transit for all of Central Indiana. It was originally developed in 2016 by the Indianapolis MPO, IndyGo and CIRTAs as part of the Indy Connect regional initiative with significant public input. This updated version of the plan reflects the progress, events, and changes that have occurred since the original plan.

What are the goals of the Central Indiana Transit Plan?

- To expand mobility options for Central Indiana residents by increasing the availability of public transit.
- To connect people to walkable places of employment, healthcare, education, shopping, family, recreation, and cultural amenities.
- To leverage public investment in transit to support economic growth, retain existing businesses, attract new businesses, expand housing choices, and stimulate redevelopment efforts.
- To honor the principles of the "Riders' Seven Demands" for transit. ([see page 11](#))
- To provide service upgrades in areas with demonstrated service demand and other supportive data.
- To ensure transit connects to other modes of transportation (e.g., autos, bikeshare, carshare, trails, etc.).
- To support regional efforts to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions via reduced automobile emissions.
- To uphold rural demand response transit providers as crucial transportation options in Central Indiana.

What are the recommendations of the Central Indiana Transit Plan?

Recommendations for Central Indiana include new and improved local and rapid transit services. Through various studies and much public input, routes, service standards and county-specific governance plans are recommended, as well as strategies for financial and physical implementation. The Central Indiana Transit Plan recommends:

- Improving and increasing local transit services in Marion County. This means optimizing the service where funds have already been secured for transit.
- Establishing new local transit services in counties and townships adjacent to Marion County that have studied their needs. This means providing the right service to fit the goals and the needs of each individual area and community.
- Identifying next steps for other Central Indiana counties to implement transit. This means ensuring there's a seamless rider experience for individuals moving between counties.
- Continuously engaging the public throughout the planning, implementation, and operation of transit services.

When implemented, the Central Indiana Transit Plan will increase residents' access to jobs, higher education, and healthcare. It will reduce household transportation costs and position the region to compete well with other metropolitan areas around the country.

How was the Plan developed? (The Transit Timeline)

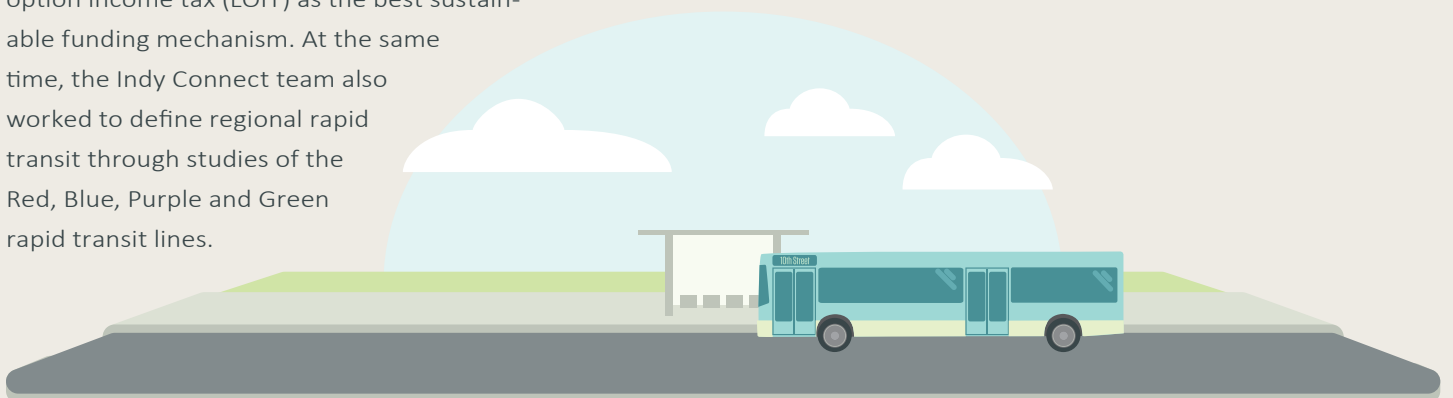
In 2009, a group of elected officials and business leaders studied a common question: How can Central Indiana's transportation investments best position the region for economic growth? Called the Central Indiana Transit Task Force (CITTF), its members represented groups that included the Central Indiana Corporate Partnership (CICP), Indy Chamber, MIBOR Realtor Association, and the Central Indiana Community Foundation (CICF). They studied highway and bridge expansions, trails and sidewalks, high-occupancy vehicle lanes, toll roads, and transit, and they prioritized projects based on detailed return on investment (ROI) calculations.¹

Task Force members were surprised by the results: transit projects far outpaced other modes of transportation in terms of return on investment. This led them to agree with the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization's Long Range Transportation Plan and its proposed infrastructure improvements. The task force built upon the infrastructure improvements and also recommended a significant expansion of the regional transit system and the adoption of new transit funding sources.

In early 2010, with the CITTF report as a starting point, Indy Connect was created as a partnership of the Indianapolis MPO, IndyGo, and CIRTa to advance regional transit planning in Central Indiana. Between 2010 and 2015, the Indy Connect team worked to explore options for additional local funding of transit service and ultimately to build support for a local option income tax (LOIT) as the best sustainable funding mechanism. At the same time, the Indy Connect team also worked to define regional rapid transit through studies of the Red, Blue, Purple and Green rapid transit lines.

In 2014 the Indiana State Legislature passed a bill² to enable opportunities for transit funding in Central Indiana. It made that funding possible only on a county-by-county basis, with certain townships adjacent to Marion County eligible independently from their county. Each county (or township) that wants to be part of the regional transit network will create its own vision for transit and may hold a referendum (a public question on a voting ballot) to determine whether local funding will help support transit in the community. In 2016, Marion County voters passed such a transit referendum, and IndyGo began moving forward with planned investments in rapid transit and local service improvements. The investments approved by the voters followed IndyGo's *IndyGo Forward* plan, that combined the Red, Blue and Purple rapid transit lines with a substantial overhaul of the local bus network.

2016 also marked publication of the first version of this document, the Central Indiana Transit Plan. The plan built on the work of Indy Connect, the CITTF, and others to create a unified vision for transit in Central Indiana. Since 2016, transit planning in Central Indiana has focused on building toward that vision in Marion County and on working with those outside of Marion County to determine what transit should look like. Since early 2020, transit agencies have also spent significant effort to refocus transit service to a post-pandemic environment.



2009-2011

CITTF Summary Report on Transportation Alternatives in Central Indiana (2009)

Study of the Green Rapid Transit Line begins (2009)

Indy Connect initiative forms to advance transit planning in Central Indiana (2010)

Transit Vision Plan adopted into IMPO 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (2011)

2012-2014

Studies of Red, Blue and Purple Rapid Transit Lines are conducted

Workforce connector transit service begins in Plainfield (2012)

Indiana General Assembly passes legislation to enable local income tax funding for transit by referendum (2014)

Red Line design begins (2014)

Transit-Oriented Development Strategic Plan completed to guide strategies and investment (2014)

2015-2016

Hamilton County Transit Forum completes draft plan for transit governance and routing (2015)

IndyGo Forward/Marion County Transit Plan completed (2015)

Additional workforce connector service begins in Plainfield and Whitestown (2015)

Indy Connect Economic Impact Analysis completed to show the economic benefits of transit investment in Marion County (2016)

IndyGo surveys riders to understand travel behaviors (2016)

Initial Central Indiana Transit Plan completed (2016)

Julia M. Carson Transit Center opens in downtown Indianapolis (2016)

Transit funding referendum approved by Marion County voters (2016)

2017-2020

Income tax for transit approved by the Indianapolis City-County Council (2017)

Red Line construction begins (2018)

Red Line Transit Impact Study baseline survey completed (2018)

Indianapolis Public Transportation Foundation begins operation as a 501(c)(3) organization (2019)

Red Line begins operation (September 2019)

IndyGo begins transition to MyKey digital account-based fare payment system (2019)

COVID-19 pandemic reduces transit ridership globally and affects transportation behaviors (starting March 2020)

Guilford Township Transit Plan created (2020)

2021-2022

Several transit systems outside of Marion County transition from rural to urban federal funding sources (2021)

City of Indianapolis approves transit-oriented development zoning overlay for rapid transit corridors (2021)

Northern Johnson County Transit Plan created (2021)

Construction of Purple Line begins (2022)

IndyGo Super Stops 1.0 project is completed to improve transit service and amenities in downtown Indianapolis (2022)

Central Indiana Transit Plan Update (2022)

What happened to Indy Connect?

The Indy Connect initiative was created in 2010 as a partnership of the Indianapolis MPO, IndyGo, and CIRTa to advance regional transit planning in Central Indiana. The Indy Connect partnership was instrumental in creating a vision for transit in Central Indiana, defining rapid transit corridors and service, and identifying a sustainable method of funding robust transit service through local option income tax adoption. The formal Indy Connect partnership ended in 2018, as the focus has shifted toward planning, funding, and implementation of transit service at the county and township level. The Indy Connect partners continue to work together today to help both transit agencies and local governments as they plan, implement, and operate transit in Central Indiana.



Learn More about the Plan

Section 3. The Marion County Transit Plan

Section 4. Guilford Township Transit Plan

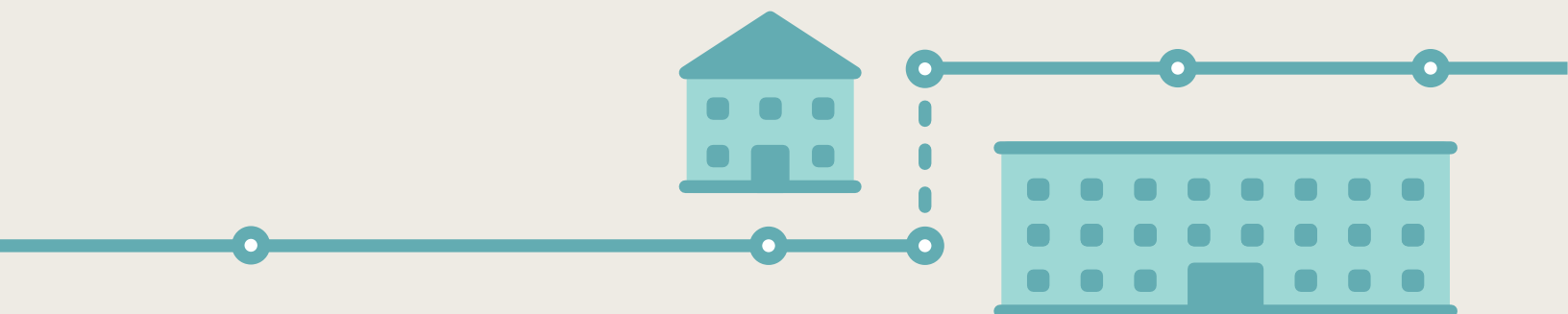
Section 5. Northern Johnson County Transit Plan

Section 6. Other Central Indiana Counties

Did the public have input in the Plan?

Indy Connect was one of the region's largest-ever public outreach campaigns. Collecting thousands of comments and educating tens of thousands of people on the transit planning process and studies, the Indy Connect public involvement effort won accolades from the Indy and Regional ADDY Awards, the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and Indiana Chapter of the American Planning Association. Each chapter of the CITP represents a local planning process with its own specific public engagement.

Between 2010 and the initial publication of the Central Indiana Transit Plan in 2016, transit experts worked with the community to discuss the plan and collect input. Public input and outreach during that time period included:



More than 10,000
social media
comments



More than 75 public
meetings reaching
over 2,500 individuals



More than 250
stakeholder group
presentations



Contact with 150,000 local
residents through dozens
of festivals and fairs

More than 110,000 visits
and over 300,000 page
views to IndyConnect.org



Will there be additional opportunities for public comment?

Absolutely. An overall vision for the Central Indiana Transit Plan is in place, but planning and design for individual counties, routes, and projects continues. Each local planning effort includes its own public engagement specific to that community. Gathering input from the public and community stakeholders is an integral part of developing these plan components. For instance, IndyGo provided many opportunities for public input during planning and design of the Red Line rapid transit line service in Marion County. Development of the Guilford

Township Transit Plan in Hendricks County in 2019 included numerous interviews and three meetings with local stakeholders, an online public survey, and two public input meetings. Development of the Northern Johnson County Transit Plan included multiple stakeholder meetings, a public survey, and transit rider surveys, with additional public meetings anticipated when specific routes and services are proposed in the future.

You can visit www.indympo.org/whats-underway/central-indiana-transit-plan to learn more about what transit studies and projects are underway.

How far along are individual projects?

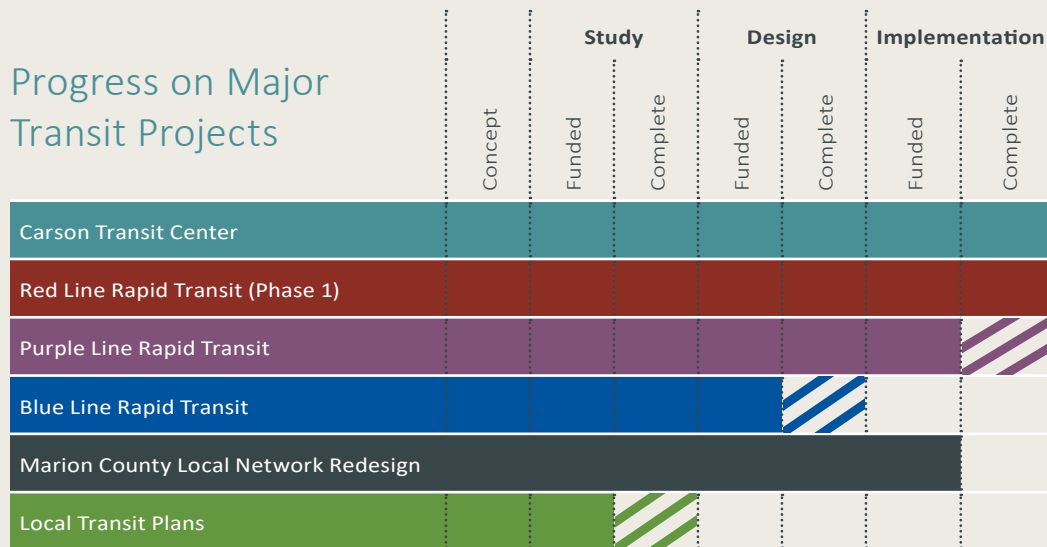
Transit projects in Central Indiana counties, whether they are local bus network improvements or the implementation of new rapid transit lines, go through a process to ensure that they are planned using the best data and information and meet the needs and desires of the public. As studies and plans progress, they may change in response to new information, public input, or funding availability.

Rapid transit corridor studies follow a federal process to ensure that the routes will connect the most people with the most destinations, without causing harm to residents or the natural environment. Each study must go through steps to make sure that the public is involved in the planning process and that the recommended route and service will best meet the transit service needs and the economic development potential in the corridor.

Local transit network improvements also include much public feedback, which helps the transit provider to understand the needs and concerns of riders. When planning local transit networks, it is vitally important to balance the needs of community access to transit with the cost of operating it.



Progress on Major Transit Projects



What happened to the Green Line?

The Green Line was a proposed rapid transit solution for the northeast corridor of Central Indiana, from downtown Indianapolis to downtown Noblesville, primarily using the Nickel Plate Railroad corridor. During the environmental study phase of the Green Line, feasibility issues including route and financial sustainability were identified. In 2016, the Federal Transit Administration encouraged the IMPO to put the remainder of the environmental study on hold until more specifics on the future of the Green Line could be determined.

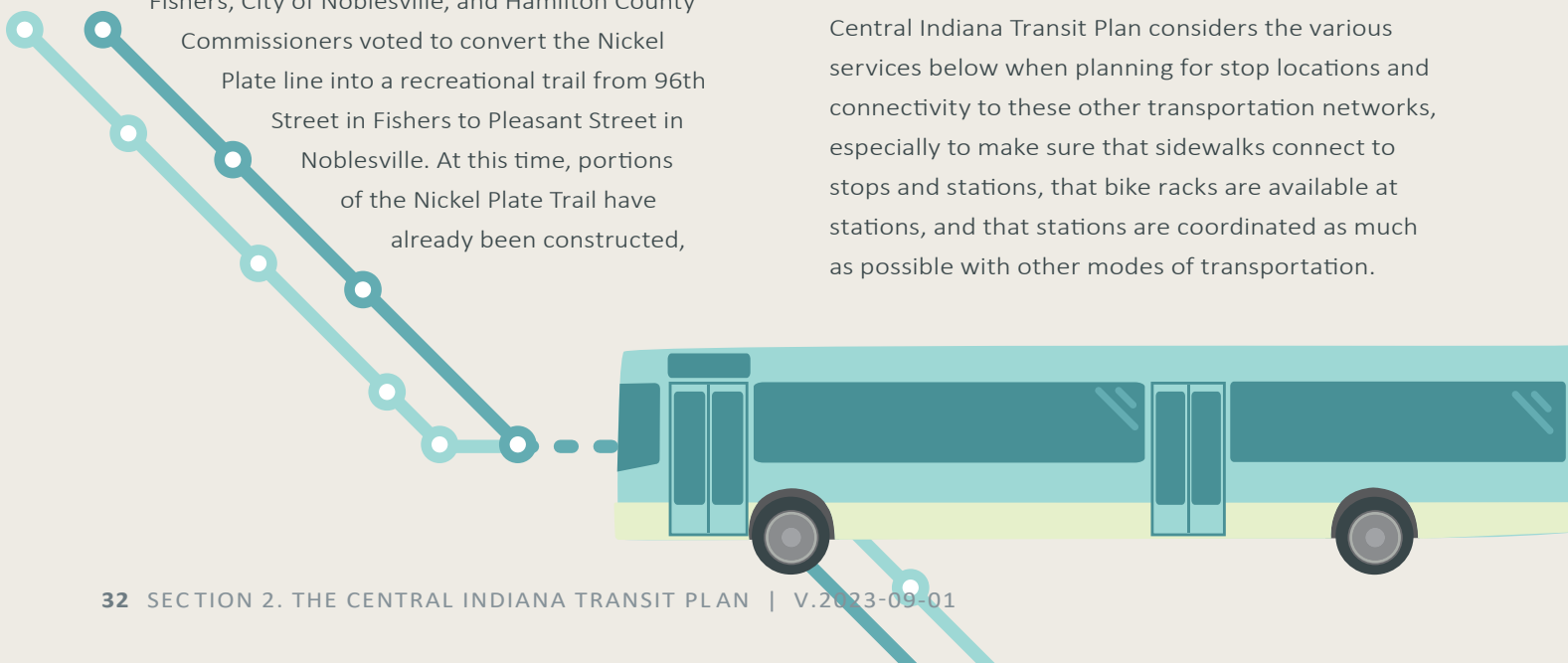
At a joint meeting on July 31, 2017, the City of Fishers, City of Noblesville, and Hamilton County Commissioners voted to convert the Nickel Plate line into a recreational trail from 96th Street in Fishers to Pleasant Street in Noblesville. At this time, portions of the Nickel Plate Trail have already been constructed,

and the cities of Indianapolis, Fishers, and Noblesville have received over \$12 million in combined funding for continued construction of the trail.³

With the rail corridor now not available for transit, and with funding questions remaining, the IMPO has no timeline for resuming Green Line planning.

How will transit integrate with other transportation options?

Every transit rider starts and ends his or her trip by walking or rolling (bike, mobility device, scooter, etc.); as such, infrastructure that makes it easier to walk or roll also makes transit more useful. The Central Indiana Transit Plan considers the various services below when planning for stop locations and connectivity to these other transportation networks, especially to make sure that sidewalks connect to stops and stations, that bike racks are available at stations, and that stations are coordinated as much as possible with other modes of transportation.



SIDEWALKS

Many cities and towns in Central Indiana have set priorities for maintaining and adding to their sidewalk networks. For example, Indianapolis constructed more than 60 miles of sidewalks from 2018 to 2022 and retrofitted older sidewalks with ADA-compliant improvements like ramps at intersections.

Communities also often have ordinances that require builders of housing or shopping developments to include sidewalks. For older neighborhoods, many communities have programs that will pay up to half the cost of sidewalk installation if property owners pay the rest. In addition, for general maintenance of existing sidewalks or installation of sidewalks in areas where they are most needed, some communities, like Indianapolis, are creating targeted pedestrian investment programs to rank and score potential projects to ensure that the areas of most need or highest demand for sidewalks (like connecting to new transit stations) are top priorities.

IndyGo has a specific transition plan to bring all of its approximately 2,900 Marion County bus stops into full compliance with ADA so that they are accessible to all users. Each year, IndyGo allocates a portion of its capital budget to make improvements to bus boarding areas, bus shelters and sidewalk connections at its bus stops. IndyGo expects to spend \$850,000 per year on bus stop improvements through 2025, with investment levels after that to be determined in future budgets.⁴

MULTI-USE PATHS AND TRAILS

Central Indiana has seen a huge increase in the number of multi-use paths and trails in the past decade. Trails include conversions of old rail corridors (Monon, Nickel Plate, Pennsy, B&O, Midland Trace, etc.), greenways (Franklin Gateway, Fall Creek, Pogue's Run, White River, etc.), and investments in downtowns (Cultural Trail, Nickel Plate Trail), as well

as the multi-use paths being created along new and reconstructed roadways.

BIKE LANES

Some Central Indiana communities are installing, or considering adding, on-street bike lanes alongside regular traffic. Bike lanes come in many forms; some are located next to traffic lanes and some are buffered from other traffic by painted areas or vertical posts.

Indianapolis has made the most significant investment in on-road bike

lanes. As of 2023, there

are approximately 116

miles of bike lanes maintained by the

City of Indianapolis with an additional 110 miles of planned bike lanes.



SHARED MOBILITY SERVICES

In the past several years, advances in computing, communications, and vehicle electrification have given rise to a range of new shared mobility services. These include bikeshare, ride-hailing services, and shared scooters. These services will continue to increase in importance as alternatives to make the “last mile” connection between transit and the doorstep.



As of mid-2022, Carmel, Indianapolis, Lawrence, Noblesville, and Plainfield all have active bikeshare programs. Other communities are considering or planning to create a bikeshare. The Pacers Bikeshare program is by far the largest, with 525 rentable bikes that can dock at 50 locations throughout downtown Indianapolis and as far north as Broad Ripple. Many of the stations are adjacent to transit stops. The other bikeshare systems offer anywhere from 8 to 50 bikes at multiple docking stations. Where located near transit stops, bikeshare programs can provide a viable “last mile” connection between transit and final destination.

Multiple rental scooter services operate in Indianapolis. The scooters are dockless and can be located and rented on demand using smartphone apps. They can be used to close the last mile gap by providing an option to access a transit stop that is quicker than walking. Scooter rentals are currently limited to areas in and near downtown Indianapolis.

Ride-hailing services like taxis, Uber, and Lyft, can fill in the gaps when transit services aren’t operating (very late or early hours) or when regular transit riders need to go somewhere that isn’t served by a transit route.



SECTION 3: MARION COUNTY TRANSIT PLAN

How was the Marion County Transit Plan developed and how has it been maintained?

What began as IndyGo's 2014 comprehensive operational analysis, the Marion County Transit Plan has been an ongoing planning effort to not only improve, but to redesign, the IndyGo bus network. Several scenarios were initially developed by transit planning experts, culminating in a set of recommendations including network changes funded by a referendum to shift IndyGo's network to an 80% ridership/20% coverage model.

The public had significant input into—and significant impact on—what is now called the *IndyGo Forward* plan. IndyGo engaged Indianapolis residents in a six-month public comment process with several public open houses and more than 80 community meetings reaching more than 4,300 people. Their comments were reviewed and integrated into the plan, and ultimately resulted in a final recommendation to the IPTC Board of Directors in March 2016. The public demonstrated their support of the final plan when they voted in favor of the referendum for transit in 2016 with 58% voting yes!

Six months after the Red Line started operations in 2019 and four years after the comprehensive operational analysis was completed, the COVID-19 pandemic brought the implementation of IndyGo's network redesign to a grinding halt. Operator shortages, reduced ridership, supply chain delays, and more ([see Section 1 Transit Background & Basics](#)) resulted in many agencies across the country scrambling to maintain their existing service. Like IndyGo, many agencies tasked with expanding or enhancing their networks were forced to reduce

DEFINITIONS

Marion County Transit Plan – a plan based on the vision, established in 2016, to shift IndyGo from a largely coverage-designed system to a system that focused on generating more ridership

Future Service Plan – the 2022 update to the Marion County Transit Plan, focusing on reflecting post-COVID changes in how people travel and future revenue projections

Comprehensive Operational Analysis – an in-depth evaluation of transit services for the purpose of increasing value and efficiency

service instead. In the spring of 2020, IndyGo shifted its focus to preserve as much service on the street as possible, something the agency anticipates having to do for several years to come.

Even though the agency was forced to halt its efforts to expand service, IndyGo saw an opportunity to evaluate the remaining local route improvements. In 2021, IndyGo initiated another comprehensive operational analysis that began with a route-by-route analysis and ultimately produced the 2027 Transit Network and a refined implementation strategy. Throughout 2021 and 2022, IndyGo, in partnership with the Indianapolis MPO, engaged stakeholders and board members in revisiting the

various tradeoffs that were part of the 2016 recommendations. In October 2022, IndyGo reignited the public conversation around the network redesign by introducing a new future service plan to replace the *IndyGo Forward* plan.

What has IndyGo implemented since 2016?

The successful referendum in 2016 allowed IndyGo to begin implementing its planned network redesign. IndyGo began to improve its local routes incrementally, increasing span (the number of hours and days that service is provided) so that all routes now run every day. IndyGo has also hired staff to support the transition of its current hub-and-spoke network, in which nearly all routes pass through the Carson Transit Center, to a connected grid network that allows faster cross-town service and more connections that don't require traveling downtown.

Independent of the referendum funding, IndyGo began construction on the Red Line using previously committed federal and local funds. The Red Line launched in September 2019. Planning and design for the Purple Line and Blue Line intensified following the referendum.

Since 2016, IndyGo has made significant upgrades to its buses and facilities. This includes procuring a fleet of fully electric BRT buses for the Red Line and constructing its first inductive bus charging location at the northern terminus of the Red Line.¹ IndyGo has also invested in a second headquarters location on the east side of Indianapolis and established a new Mobility Care Center on the near west side, which houses the ADA complementary paratransit team and customer service staff.

Working with the City of Indianapolis Department of Public Works, IndyGo finished the first of its Super Stops projects in 2022. Super Stops are enhanced bus stop areas that serve multiple transit routes. The first two Super Stops are located at the intersections of Delaware Street with Massachusetts Avenue and North Street. Each has extra seating and an elongated boarding area, a ticket vending machine, added safety and security equipment, real-time signage, and a large shelter canopy.

IndyGo has recently published an ADA transition plan, which identifies priorities and steps to make all IndyGo stops accessible for people with disabilities. The agency has programmed more than \$1 million per year to make these improvements and has worked with the City of Indianapolis to leverage millions of additional dollars to fund accessibility improvements.

PROGRESS SINCE 2016



LEGEND



With the launch of the Red Line in September 2019, IndyGo introduced a new electronic fare collection system. Branded as MyKey, this system allows users to purchase transit value and to use their account balance for bus fare by tapping a reloadable card or scanning a mobile QR code each time they ride. A more modern approach to collecting fare, the MyKey system offers balance protection, facilitates balance transfers, and automatically applies daily fare capping and IndyGo's new 2-hour fare free transfer window for all users. Registered MyKey users unlock even more benefits in the form of weekly fare capping.² Fare capping eliminates the burden of having to have enough money, upfront, to purchase a 31-day pass. MyKey users never pay more than \$4 a day, and registered MyKey users never pay more than \$15.75 a week to ride IndyGo.

IndyGo has also made efforts to right-size its service, meaning that the agency matches the service level (e.g., rapid, frequent, or local bus service) or service delivery method (e.g., 40' or 60' fixed route bus or wheelchair accessible microtransit vehicle) with the demand for public transit in a given area. For qualified individuals who are unable to ride fixed route services, IndyGo provides IndyGo Access, a door-to-door paratransit service for those traveling within ¾-mile of a fixed route, as well as premium door-to-door service for those traveling outside that boundary in Marion County. For areas with lower transit demand, such as places with low densities of population or jobs, IndyGo is piloting alternative service delivery methods. As of 2023, these methods include two community-based microtransit services for the Midtown and Far Eastside neighborhoods,

and one microtransit pilot marketed as IndyGo Connect.³ To keep service running quickly and smoothly, IndyGo Connect riders are asked to meet the driver at a nearby corner instead of the exact address of where they are coming from. This allows the driver to get everyone to their destination without making any detours. The technology platform automatically generates pick-up and drop-off locations and offers riders several options to choose from, including using fixed route service.

What is driving the need to redesign the local bus network?

The Marion County Transit Plan created a vision to shift IndyGo from a largely coverage-based system to a system that focuses on generating more ridership through increased span and frequency, with more crosstown options through a connected grid system. The public maintained their stance on investing and improving the local network in the update to the *IndyGo Forward* plan in 2022. Improvements to the local network will concentrate service in areas with the greatest potential to grow ridership while also serving critical populations such as environmental justice areas, employment centers, households without vehicles, and households in poverty.

IndyGo introduced BRT as the backbone of the connected grid, identifying three BRT lines—the Red, Purple, and Blue Lines—in the Marion County Transit Plan. The BRT lines offer both north/south and east/west connections where passengers on local



routes can make transfers quickly in areas outside of downtown. In 2016, Phase 1 of the Red Line was awarded a \$75 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration, which accelerated its implementation. Phase 1 runs from the University of Indianapolis to the Broad Ripple Village cultural district. The Red Line has the most jobs and residents within walking distance of the three planned BRT lines. The local bus routes that will be upgraded to become the Purple Line and Blue Line generate the highest ridership numbers of the current system's local routes. Since the Red Line's launch, this premium service has consistently generated between 16% and 22% of IndyGo's total monthly boardings.⁴ Annually, the Red Line generates more than 17% of the agency's total ridership.⁵

A grid network of local fixed routes will connect with the BRT system, offering first- and last-mile connections to passengers' trip origins and destinations. Currently, to get where they need to go, most people must first ride downtown to connect to another bus, which only increases their total travel time. Increased frequencies on some existing crosstown routes and the addition of new crosstown routes, in conjunction with the three BRT lines, will allow for faster, more direct travel (east and west, or north and south).

What does the referendum fund?

The referendum was instrumental in adding operating dollars to IndyGo's budget. Since the referendum, IndyGo has expanded service by extending hours on local routes, increasing frequency, and completing the construction of the Red Line. Every route (33 total as of 2023) now operates every day of the week, up from the 18 routes that operated seven days per week prior to the referendum. More runs were also added to increase service frequency along several routes. This increase in frequency is a key part of making the hybrid hub-and-spoke/connected grid network work by making transfers

outside of the Carson Transit Center something that riders can do without having to refer to a bus schedule.

The referendum will fund the implementation of the remaining changes to the local network as identified in the 2022 Future Service Plan.

What are the goals of the Marion County Transit Plan, as illustrated by the Future Service Plan?

THE PLAN'S GOALS INCLUDE:

- Improve service frequency
- Provide better service every day of the week
- Continue moving toward a more connected grid
- Rightsize IndyGo services
- Build out the entire bus rapid transit network
- Restore service to pre-pandemic conditions

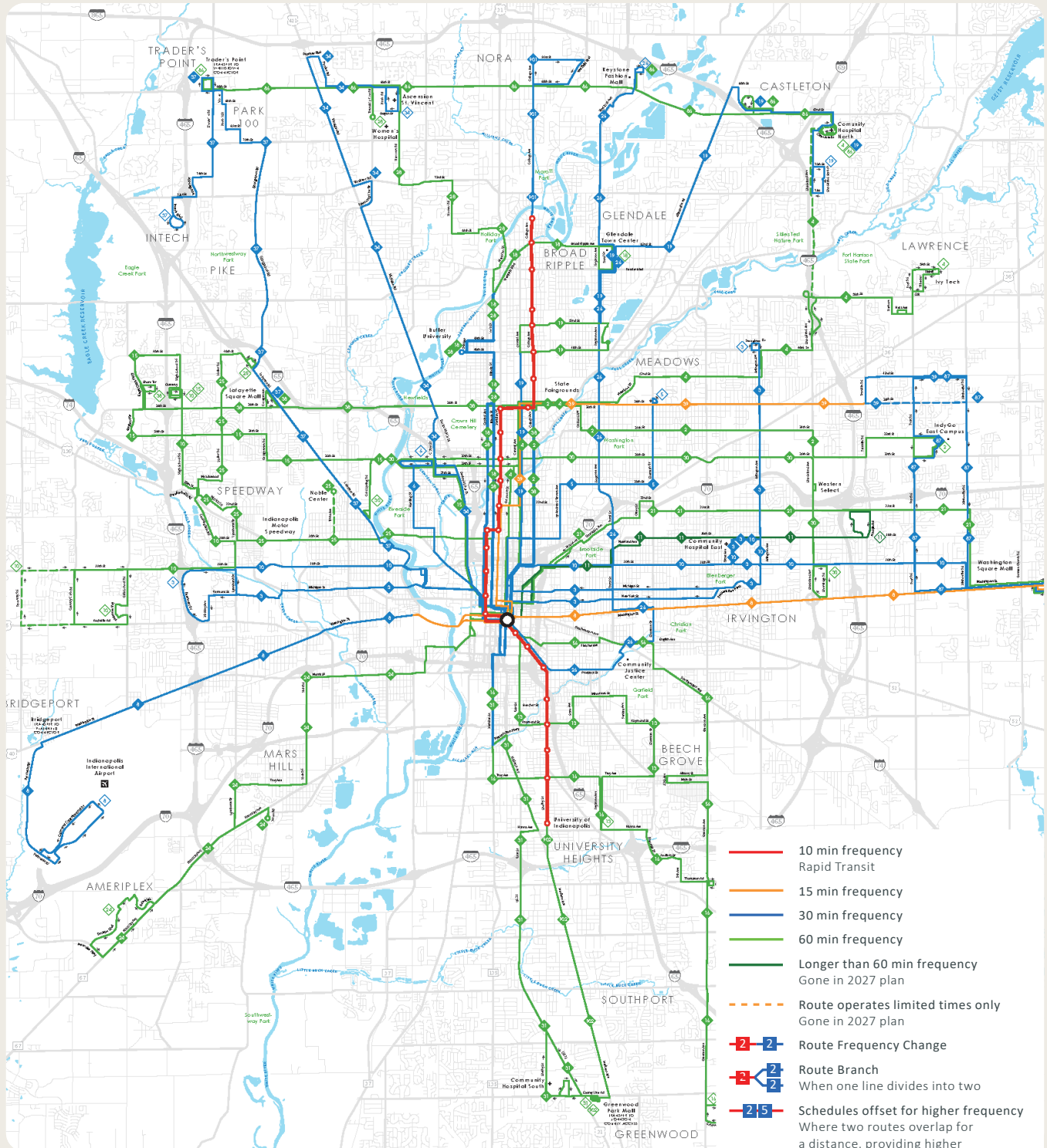
What are the recommendations of the Marion County Transit Plan, as illustrated by the 2027 Transit Network?

THE RECOMMENDATIONS, TO MAKE THESE GOALS INTO REALITY, ARE:

- Create a quality rider experience.
 - » Extend hours of service
 - » Shorten wait times
 - » Accommodate bicycles on transit vehicles
 - » Operate every route every day of the week

- Provide robust fixed route service in areas with strong ridership potential, while enhancing basic transit options for other areas of the region and for transportation-disadvantaged individuals.
 - » Use a mix of vehicles and services to best meet operational goals (e.g., BRT, fixed route, paratransit, microtransit)
 - » Provide higher levels of frequency, while providing as much coverage as is economically feasible
 - » Provide coverage service to at-risk and disadvantaged populations
- Dedicate most of the agency's resources towards service to retain and grow transit ridership, reserving coverage-based service for critical accessibility corridors
- Leverage transit investments to generate economic development.
 - » Prioritize service to established activity centers and other areas of economic development potential, including improved connections among regional activity centers.
 - » Ensure that local land use plans and ordinances maximize the opportunity for tax-generating developments in areas that are most likely to attract transit-oriented development.
- Use transit vehicles and energy sources that minimize environmental impact.
 - » Add vehicles that are low- or no-emission, depending on availability of reliable green vehicles in the marketplace and available federal grants (improve upon the current proportion of IndyGo's fleet that is electric or hybrid-electric, which is nearly 40%).
 - » Upgrade facilities to minimize environmental impact. IndyGo has existing solar arrays at their maintenance facility and the potential to install at other locations such as their new East Campus that provide renewable energy to power their electric vehicles and reduce dependence on other energy sources.

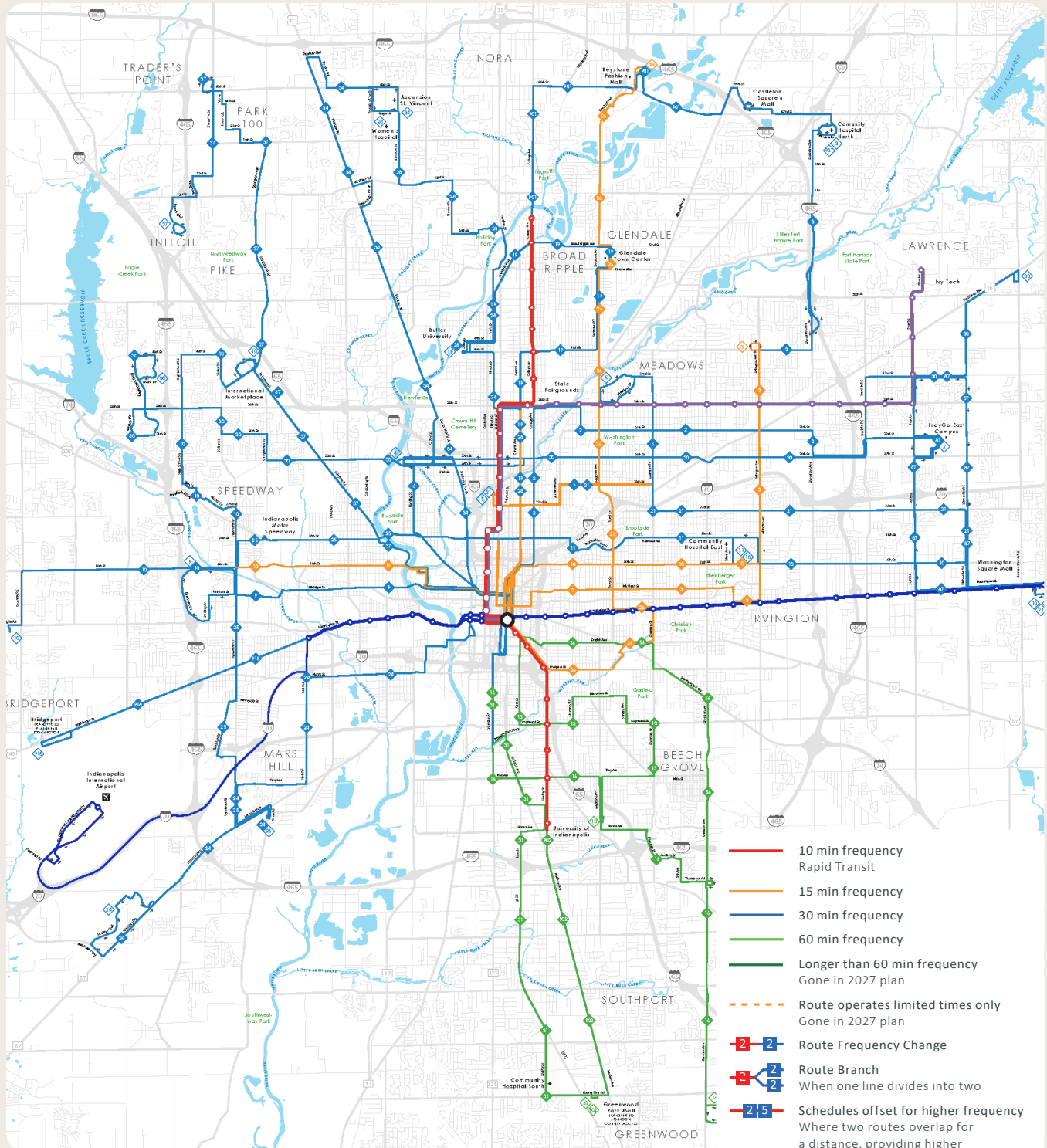
2023 TRANSIT NETWORK



v.6.30.2023

Most recent versions available at www.indygo.net

2027 TRANSIT NETWORK



v.6.30.2023

Most recent versions available at www.indygo.net

Has the Red Line been successful?

IndyGo's Red Line has demonstrated that BRT service not only generates significant ridership but offers productivity and cost-efficiency advantages over traditional fixed route bus service. In 2021, the Red Line saw 18.5 passenger boardings per revenue hour, as compared to an average of 7.5 boardings per revenue hour on local fixed routes⁶. The 2021 operating expenses per passenger-mile on the Red Line were \$2.83, compared to \$4.41 for local fixed routes.⁷ These metrics, which are improving as ridership recovers from the pandemic, prove that BRT is an efficient way to meet the transit needs of Indianapolis residents. The construction of the Purple and Blue Lines will bring even more cost-effective mobility to the community.

How is ridership in the post-COVID environment?

In late 2022, monthly total ridership exceeded 500,000 passenger boardings per month, a record high since the pandemic's beginning. Monthly ridership prior to the pandemic, during the initial months of Red Line service (following a fare-free pilot during the first two months of operation), totaled above 700,000.⁸ IndyGo's ridership recovery rate reflects nationwide trends.

The Future Service Plan's commitment to increased frequency and BRT build-out will speed up IndyGo's ridership recovery. While the systemwide ridership has increased by 5.2% from 2021 to 2022, the routes with highest frequencies, the Red Line and Route 39, have increased their ridership by 19.4% and 10.4%, respectively.⁹

Who will have access to transit in Marion County?

The Marion County Transit Plan, when fully implemented, will provide transit access within walking distance (a half-mile, generally a 10-minute walk) of the following Marion County populations (as of June 2023 design):

- **65.4%** of people*
- **72.4%** of minority people*
- **83.4%** of households without a car**
- **80.9%** of households with incomes below the poverty level**
- **70.9%** of households that have at least one person with a disability**
- **60.0%** of seniors, age 65 or over**
- **86.3%** of jobs (2023)

Along the frequent transit network (routes with buses coming every 15 minutes or sooner), the following populations would be within walking distance of transit:

- **25.6%** of people*
- **26.8%** of minority people*
- **41.9%** of households without a car**
- **35.3%** of households with incomes below the poverty level**
- **27.6%** of households that have at least one person with a disability**
- **22.5%** of seniors, age 65 or over**
- **42.3%** of jobs (2023)

*2020 Census

**2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

How much will the Marion County Transit Plan cost to implement?

As of June 2023, the full implementation of the network redesign will take place in fall of 2027. IndyGo anticipates that by 2027, IndyGo will have made more than \$885 million in capital investments and be required to sustain an annual operating budget of more than \$140 million.¹⁰

SECTION 4. GUILFORD TOWNSHIP TRANSIT PLAN

Why was a transit plan developed for Guilford Township?

Guilford Township in Hendricks County includes the Town of Plainfield, which is a fast-growing municipality that has seen an influx of residents and businesses in the past several years. Plainfield is a regional hot spot for manufacturing, distribution, and logistics partly attributable to its proximity to the Indianapolis International Airport. Most of Plainfield's population and employers are located within Guilford Township, so local leaders engaged with the Indianapolis MPO to develop the **Guilford Township Transit Plan** to explore the feasibility of expanded mobility options. Indiana Code 8-25 only allows townships or counties to authorize transit funding referendums, not cities or towns.

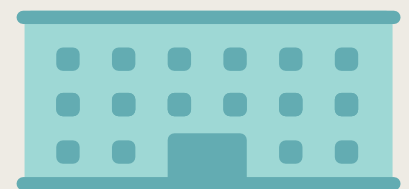
The Guilford Township Transit Plan is based on data analysis and public feedback for determining an effective transit service plan for the area, including recommendations on modes of service, potential ridership, system funding, network routing, and service parameters. Like the transit plans of Marion County and northern Johnson County, this plan is a chapter of the Central Indiana Transit Plan.

The plan was developed in 2019 and 2020 with a local stakeholder group informing the process. During the planning process, the IMPO and its consultant team informed Guilford Township/Plainfield residents about mobility needs, transit options, and related tradeoffs; and collected community input on various alternatives. A transit plan was presented to Guilford Township's board and interested residents in March 2020 to prepare for a November 2020 transit funding referendum. While Guilford Township's board of trustees ultimately decided to forgo a referendum, the plan is a valuable tool for examining options for public transit expansion in the event that community leaders opt to implement a transit system in the future.

How was the Plan developed?

The IMPO launched the planning process in October 2019. Baseline demographic information was compiled and a review of previous transit studies for the region was conducted. The IMPO initiated a public involvement process by forming the 20-member Plainfield-Guilford Township Transit Advisory Team. A public survey was conducted in November 2019, and stakeholder interviews were conducted with local groups and agencies familiar with the transportation needs of area residents and businesses. Information gathered from these interviews and the survey was compiled to provide a description of existing conditions and mobility needs.

The input revealed several unmet needs and gaps in service. The area's existing transit providers, LINK Hendricks County and CIRTAs Plainfield Connector, are meeting some of the needs. However, these providers' constrained resources are not adequate to fulfill the community's level of need for workforce mobility, medical transportation, and other types of service. Residents need transportation in the early morning and later evening hours, as well as weekends. LINK is only available



on weekdays until 6:00 p.m. The service receives more ride requests than it has capacity to provide, and it does not provide rides outside of the county. Plainfield Connector's schedules do not operate frequently enough to accommodate all work shifts. Plainfield Connector serves western Indianapolis and the Plainfield warehouse district; there are no stops serving residential areas of Plainfield, precluding local residents from using the service to get to jobs.

Community goals identified during the public input process and Transit Advisory Team meetings were:

- Help older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income residents.
- Connect people to work, both in town, particularly at industrial parks, and in Indianapolis.
- Maximize ridership, so that the system operates cost-efficiently in terms of rides provided per dollar spent.
- Build on LINK Hendricks County's existing demand response service.
- Create at least one convenient way for township residents to access the IndyGo Blue Line and/or downtown Indianapolis.

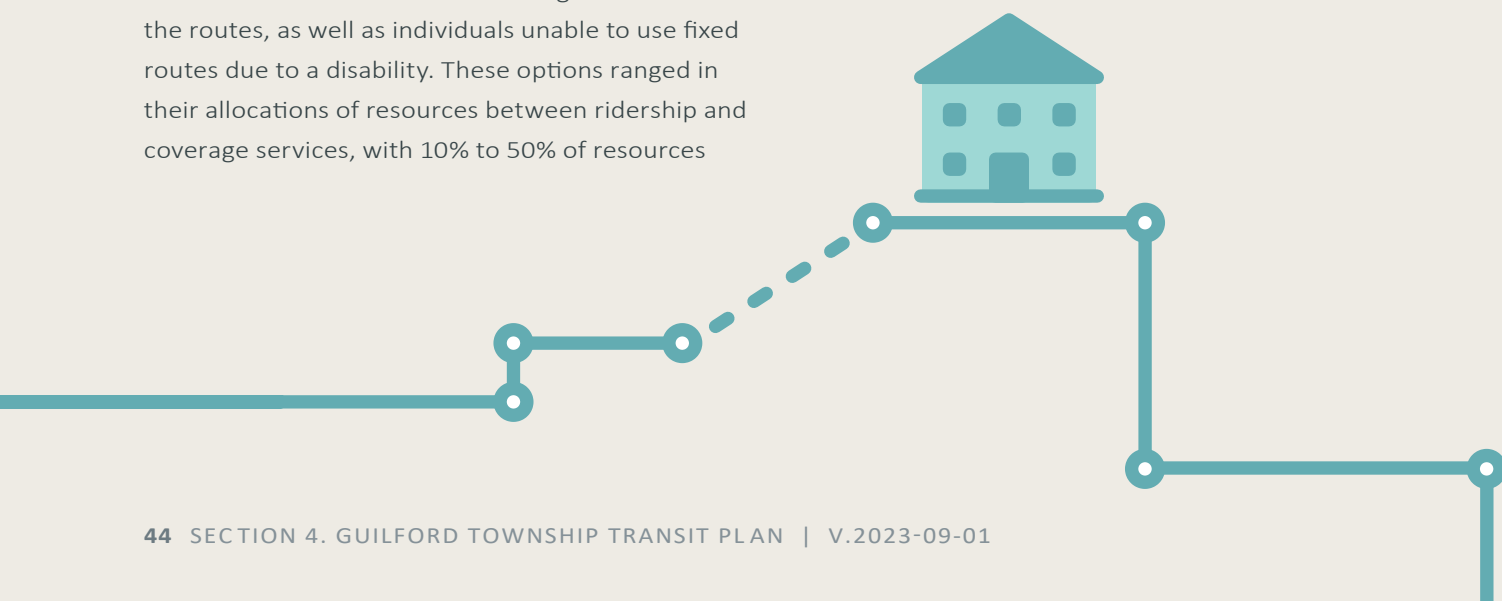
Four transit system options, designed to fulfill the identified priorities, were developed and presented to the public for input in January 2020. Three of the options included fixed route networks in Guilford Township and Plainfield that would be supplemented by demand response services for the benefit of residents who live outside of walking distance to the routes, as well as individuals unable to use fixed routes due to a disability. These options ranged in their allocations of resources between ridership and coverage services, with 10% to 50% of resources

focused on generating ridership. The fourth option did not include fixed routes but allocated all resources to a robust demand response transportation service. This option devoted 100% of resources to coverage service (0% for ridership).

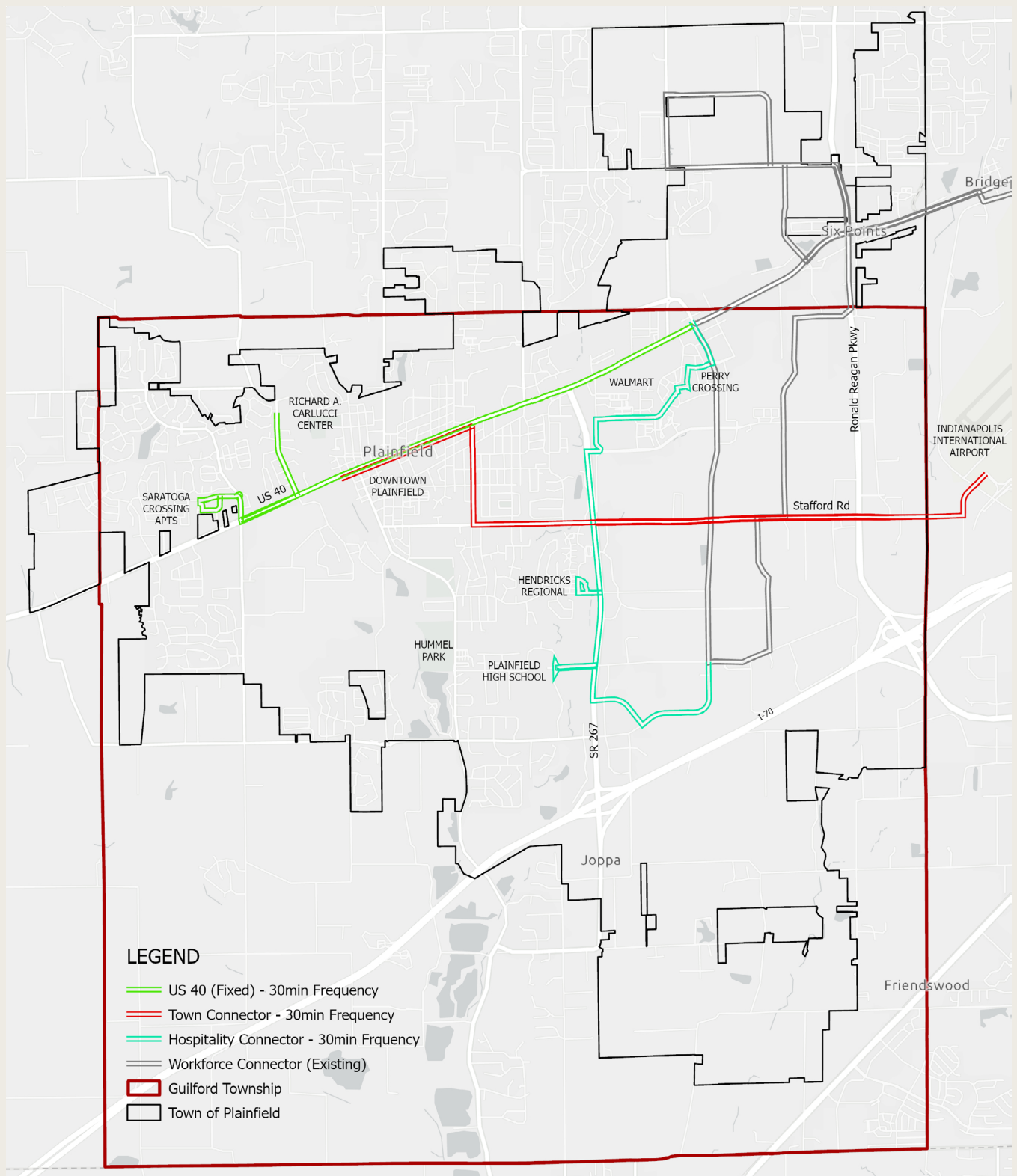
What are the Plan's recommendations?

A final plan and network were selected from the four options presented for public input in January 2020 for adoption by the Guilford Township Board. The recommended network consists of fixed route and demand response services that would operate within an annual budget corresponding to the amount of revenue that would be generated by a 0.25% local option income tax (LOIT) in Guilford Township.

The final plan's fixed route network is shown below. Three bus routes – U.S. 40, Town Connector, and Hospitality Connector – would operate on 30-minute frequencies for 16 hours per weekday, and on one-hour frequencies for eight hours on Saturdays and Sundays. CIRT's Plainfield Connector would remain in operation and is shown on the map.



Recommended Guilford Township Fixed Route Network



FIXED ROUTES

The fixed route network would serve key trip generators, including jobs, shopping locations, and dense residential areas, and connects people to work.

- The U.S. 40 route would operate from just west of South Center Street in Downtown Plainfield to Ronald Reagan Parkway. The route is about four miles long (eight miles round trip).
- The Town Connector starting point would alternate every other schedule between the Richard A. Carlucci Community Center and Saratoga Crossing Apartments, connecting to the Indianapolis International Airport via Vesta Road, U.S. 40, South Center Street, and Stafford Road. The length of the route is approximately 6.5 miles (13 miles round trip).
- The Hospitality Connector would begin at the Shoppes at Perry Crossing, operate along S.R. 267, and end at the intersection of Perry Road and Reeves Road. This route would serve the S.R. 267/I-70 interchange area, Plainfield High School, and Hendricks Regional Health. The route is approximately 6.5 miles long (13 miles round trip).

This network was the most cost-efficient of the four options, with 50% of resources focused on fixed routes that would maximize the system's ridership potential.

OTHER SERVICES AND CAPITAL EXPENSES

The transit network would also include three demand response services: enhanced LINK service in Guilford Township, complementary paratransit service required under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and a rideshare voucher program via a transportation network company (TNC). Some annual revenue would be reserved to support vehicle acquisition, facility construction, and reserves.

NETWORK SUMMARY

The transit network would meet all of the goals identified during the public input process.

It would prioritize older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income residents who have fewer transportation options and are often more transportation-cost burdened:

- 59% of Guilford Township's senior population live within ½ mile of one or more of the three recommended fixed routes.
- 67% of Guilford Township residents with one or more disabilities live within ½ mile of one or more of the three routes.
- 82% of Guilford Township residents living below the poverty level live within ½ mile of one or more of the three routes.

With 80% of working age residents living within ½ mile of the fixed routes, much of the community would be connected to employment opportunities through improved service to the industrial parks, retail centers, hospitality employers; and connection to the Blue Line for access to jobs in Marion County.

50% of the total budget would be dedicated to generating ridership.

Approximately \$358,000 would be dedicated to enhancing LINK's service and funding a TNC partnership for rides that cannot be provided through the fixed routes or LINK – for example, rides that are requested outside of LINK's hours.

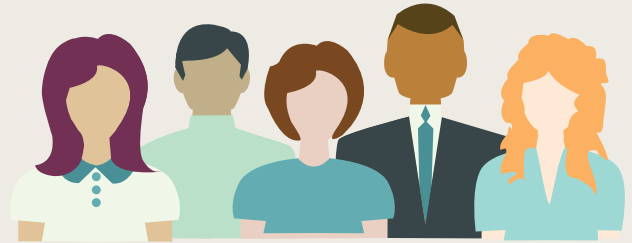
The Town Connector would terminate at the Indianapolis International Airport, providing an opportunity to connect to the Blue Line and travel to Indianapolis as well as providing access to the airport.

How was the public involved in developing the Transit Plan?

The plan involved multiple opportunities for public input. These efforts included stakeholder interviews, a public survey, a transportation planning workshop with stakeholders, advisory team meetings, and public input meetings.

- The one-on-one and small group interviews with stakeholders resulted in feedback from ten organizations including staffing agencies, human service organizations, Hendricks Regional Health, economic development agencies, transportation providers, and the Indianapolis Airport Authority.
- The IMPO conducted a public survey that was completed by 606 respondents. The survey was structured to encourage respondents to consider the tradeoffs associated with providing transit services and was designed to gather input to develop goals for transportation options in the study area. The IMPO promoted the survey on social media and visited local destinations to notify community members to provide input. The survey was deployed early in the planning process with the Transit Advisory Team reviewing the results during a workshop to discuss goal setting.
- IMPO staff members had a booth at the Plainfield Quaker Day Festival in September 2019 with information about the plan and a trip pattern mapping activity.
- The 20-member Plainfield-Guilford Township Transit Advisory Team met monthly between October 2019 and January 2020 to review data related to community needs and opportunities, become informed regarding transit planning principles, and provide input to the project team about conditions specific to the Plainfield and Guilford Township area, including the review of draft options for local transit networks.

- The planning team hosted public input sessions on January 14 and 15, 2020 at the Guilford Township Community Center. At these meetings, four transit system concepts were presented and multiple methods for the public to give feedback were provided.



Who would be the service provider?

The Transit Plan does not identify a service provider. Potential service providers include IndyGo, LINK Hendricks County, or a private vendor of transportation services. Guilford Township would also have the option of hiring drivers and other staff to operate the transit system.

How would this affect LINK Hendricks County riders?

Implementing the Transit Plan would not negatively impact LINK Hendricks County, whose revenue originates from the Federal Transit Administration and a number of sources of local matching funds. Under the plan, Guilford Township would provide funding to expand LINK's capacity to provide more rides in Guilford Township.



TRANSIT ADVISORY TEAM

These organizations participated in the Plainfield-Guilford Township Transit Advisory Team:

- **CIRTA**
- **Guilford Township Board**
- **Guilford Township Trustee**
- **Hendricks County Council**
- **Hendricks County Health Department**
- **Hendricks County Senior Services**
- **IMPO**
- **Indy Gateway, Inc.**
- **IndyGo**
- **Kelley and Associates**
- **MIBOR**
- **Plainfield Chamber of Commerce**
- **Town of Plainfield Council**
- **Town of Plainfield Economic Development**
- **Town of Plainfield Manager**
- **Sycamore Services/LINK Hendricks County**

Who makes decisions on how to spend the transit funds?

The Guilford Township Board would be responsible for administering the income tax revenue and for creating and monitoring the annual transit budget.

Why do we need a referendum?

The population of Guilford Township is growing, having increased by 21% between 2010 and 2020.¹ The input process for this plan demonstrated that existing transit options are unable to meet the community's mobility needs. The area has limited fixed-route transit with CIRTA routes concentrated on the east side serving manufacturing, distribution, and logistics employers. Investing in transit will allow Plainfield and Guilford Township to remain competitive regionally and nationally in attracting employers and supporting the workforce.

No stable funding sources currently exist outside of the FTA revenue provided to Hendricks County for LINK. Therefore, a new source of funds, dedicated to transit, must be identified if the recommendations in the plan are to be implemented.

What are the next steps after plan completion?

The IMPO presented the final recommended network and completed Transit Plan at the March 2020 Guilford Township Board Meeting. The board ultimately decided not to hold a referendum, meaning the residents of Guilford Township would not vote on introducing a 0.25% income tax for transit.

Local stakeholders could pursue other funding sources to improve transportation in Guilford Township, or the Guilford Township Board could certify a referendum for transit using the recommendations from the original transit planning process.

SECTION 5. NORTHERN JOHNSON COUNTY TRANSIT PLAN

Why was a transit plan developed for northern Johnson County?

Johnson County is served by Access Johnson County, a public transit system that has existed since the late 1990s. Over the past thirty years, the county's population has nearly doubled. The system provides a cost-efficient service that is highly personalized to the needs of its customers, primarily individuals with disabilities and older adults. However, it does not have the level of resources needed to keep pace with rapid population and employment growth. For this reason, the IMPO conducted the **Northern Johnson County Transit Plan** in 2021 to provide options for expanded public transit in Pleasant, White River, and Franklin Townships, which have driven most of the county's growth. This study's purpose was to identify the specific public transportation needs, desires, and opportunities of northern Johnson County; to evaluate Access Johnson County's service; and to identify opportunities to enhance and expand transit service to support the area's growth.

During the planning process, the IMPO and its consultant team informed northern Johnson County residents and stakeholders about mobility needs, transit options, and related tradeoffs; and collected input on various alternatives. The transit plan provides options for local authorities as they consider whether to pursue a transit funding referendums under Indiana Code 8-25. This plan does not provide a final recommendation but describes several options for the area to consider as local leaders and residents consider moving forward with referendums. If township or county officials determine that they want to pursue such a referendum, additional work would be required to identify and further develop a recommended transit service model and revenue requirements. Public engagement would also be extremely important prior to any referendum to ensure that voters know the recommendations for their specific township. Parts of this plan could serve as a baseline for a more specific study that identifies a final network or plan for transit within the specified boundary.

In addition to laying out options for future expansions of service, the transit plan analyzes the existing service provided by Access Johnson County and makes recommendations for modifications to improve efficiency and ridership.



How was the Plan developed?

The IMPO launched the planning process in January 2021. Baseline demographic information was compiled and a review of existing services and transit funding for the region was conducted. Surveys of local residents and Access Johnson County riders were conducted in February and March 2021, and two rounds of stakeholder interviews were conducted with local groups and agencies familiar with the transportation needs of area residents and businesses. A stakeholder group representing local governments, economic development organizations, and health and human service agencies met on three occasions to review the work performed by the study team. Data gathered during the interviews, stakeholder group meetings, and surveys were compiled to provide a description of existing conditions and mobility needs in the study area.

The study team developed several transit network concepts designed to fulfill goals identified during the public and stakeholder input process. These goals were:

- Expand transit.
- Focus expanded transit service on employment transportation.
- Evenly divide resources between a ridership-focused model and a coverage-focused model.
- Improve east/west connectivity.
- Expand Access Johnson County services for the benefit of individuals without a vehicle, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and individuals who cannot drive.

The plan includes concepts for improving Access Johnson County service and concepts for expanded transit service. The Access Johnson County improvements can be implemented within existing funding levels or with a moderate influx of new funding, while the expansion concepts would require a new source of dedicated transit revenue.

What locations were included in the study area?

The study area included Franklin, Pleasant, and White River Townships. These three townships have most of Johnson County's population and employment, and they have existing fixed route transit service. Since none of these townships or the county had certified a referendum, the study focused on the development of a variety of transit options for these townships and for Access Johnson County.

What are the Plan's recommendations for existing Access Johnson County service?

The recommendations for improving Access Johnson County include streamlining its bus routes to generate increased ridership and providing longer service hours. Six fixed route service options were developed that reach more population and employment than the current service, while continuing to operate at or near existing Access Johnson County budget levels (approximately \$1.24 million). Some options include service expansions based on potential new revenue of \$250,000 per year, an increase of approximately 20%. While no specific routing option is recommended for implementation in the plan, the identified options provide a framework for future decisions by Access Johnson County leadership in consultation with the public and stakeholders.

Access Johnson County has historically focused on providing demand response and deviated route service that is highly responsive to individuals' needs but limits the number of people that can be served. The network options in the plan are presented to illustrate what the service would look like under a new approach that prioritizes building ridership while continuing to offer some demand response service. The benefits associated with each of these two approaches are summarized below.

Benefits of Adopting a Ridership Approach	Benefits of Retaining the Current Approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacing deviated routes with fixed routes would increase the service’s reliability because buses would closely follow advertised timetables. Non-deviating fixed route trips are also faster because the timetables do not include “buffer” time to ensure that the vehicles have time to make deviations. • By offering fixed routes with expanded hours and reliable schedules, more people and businesses, including employers, healthcare providers, and stores, would have access to consistent, dependable service. • Higher-ridership service would allow Access Johnson County to serve more of the area’s growing population and employment opportunities within the constraints of its budget. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on deviated fixed route and demand response service better enables Access Johnson County to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and others who rely on the service today. • People don’t have to live near a bus route to use the service in its existing form. Access often picks people up in outlying rural areas, in spite of long travel times. • By providing deviated fixed route service, Access does not have to provide complementary paratransit service. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires public transit agencies that offer (non-deviating) fixed route service to provide complementary paratransit to people who cannot use a fixed route because of a disability.

ROUTING AND SERVICE OPTIONS

The plan includes six routing and service options for Access Johnson County. Each option includes a mix of fixed route and demand response service and offers longer operating hours than the existing service. The options’ fixed route networks were developed by the study team based on demographic data and input from stakeholders and the public about their priorities for transit. The networks were designed to maximize the numbers of people and jobs within walking distance of transit. The fixed routes would replace the existing deviated routes operated by Access Johnson County.

All six options include fixed routes networks that serve Franklin and Greenwood. The Greenwood networks provide transfer points at the Marion County line, so riders can transfer to IndyGo for travel to destinations in Indianapolis. Some of the options prioritize ridership-focused services more heavily than other options.

OPTIONS 1A-1D

Options 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d concentrate fixed route service in Franklin and the higher-density areas of Greenwood, which are located in Pleasant Township. Two of these options also include a route that serves S.R. 135 in White River Township, providing access to many of the township’s commercial destinations. Three of the options remove existing Access Johnson County deviated route service along U.S. 31 in order to extend operating hours on routes where population density is higher, increasing the ridership potential of the networks. Of the four options, three use existing funding levels, and one assumes a 20% revenue increase. The larger budget in this option would fund more general public demand response service than the other options.

OPTIONS 2A-2B

Options 2a and 2b offer the same Franklin fixed route network as Options 1a-1d. Greenwood fixed route service in these options consists of one bi-directional loop through Pleasant and White River Townships, roughly following Main Street, Emerson Avenue, County Line Road, and S.R. 135. The difference between Options 2a and 2b is that the fixed routes operate for more hours of the day. For this reason, Option 2b assumes a 20% revenue increase.

What are the Plan's recommendations for expanding transit service in Johnson County?

The plan provides several options for expanding transit in northern Johnson County to supplement the service provided by Access Johnson County. These options anticipate an expansion of transit funding based on successful referendums in one or more townships to implement a public transportation tax, or the creation of an economic improvement district (EID). No specific option has been recommended for implementation at this time, and more public input will be necessary to select and move forward with a final transit improvement plan, especially if additional revenue sources are required.

The plan presents regional transit network expansion concepts for Franklin, Pleasant and White River Townships, which would be implemented only if all three townships pass local option income tax (LOIT) referendums. Another set of concepts is provided for scenarios in which only Pleasant Township passes

a referendum. Lastly, CIRT developed potential I-65 corridor routes that could be funded through EID tax assessments on the benefitting property owners. These routes would be oriented toward connecting people to jobs at major employment sites.

The regional and Pleasant Township-only networks would provide a robust level of transit service as compared to the existing service provided by Access Johnson County. The availability of dedicated local revenue for transit would allow for frequent bus service that operates for more hours per day, including on Saturdays and Sundays. Access Johnson County does not have enough funding at this time to offer evening or weekend service. Additionally, several of the regional and Pleasant Township-only networks include the extension of the IndyGo Red Line into Johnson County, offering a fast, frequent method of travel to and from Indianapolis.

Full descriptions of the service expansion concepts, including maps, are available in the **Northern Johnson County Transit Plan** final report.

REGIONAL NETWORK CONCEPTS

The options provided for a regional three-township network are fiscally constrained to an annual budget of \$10,144,000, which is the medium growth LOIT revenue projection for the three townships. The total annual budget for each network option matches this total, although the proportion of budget dedicated to fixed route versus demand response service varies among the options. This budget does not include Access Johnson County's existing budget or other possible local revenue sources. It is assumed that in places where the Access Johnson County service and the expansion scenario routes overlap, the local stakeholders would work with Access Johnson County to determine how to allocate the overlapping Access Johnson County resources. Access Johnson County could choose to continue to operate service in conjunction with the new service and therefore increase frequency of the new routes, or they could



reallocate the funds they had been using to operate the prior service to other routes in their network.

Five regional network concepts were developed. Some of the options include the extension of the Red Line to Franklin and local fixed route networks that would connect with the Red Line. Others omit the Red Line and invest the freed-up resources into more fixed route or demand response service.

PLEASANT TOWNSHIP ONLY NETWORK CONCEPTS

A set of options are provided for a service area that is limited to Pleasant Township, with some options extending into White River Township to provide Pleasant Township residents with access to destinations along S.R. 135. These single-township network options were developed under the assumption that Pleasant Township could initiate the transit referendum process at the township level on its own. These alternatives are fiscally constrained to an annual budget of \$3,935,450, which is the medium growth LOIT revenue projection for the township.

Five Pleasant Township-only network concepts were developed. The networks include extending the Red Line to Whiteland, extending the Red Line only to Smith Valley Road, or not extending the Red Line beyond its existing terminus of Greenwood Park Mall. In some networks, fixed route service would be available within Pleasant Township limits only, while in others, service would be provided as far west as S.R. 135 to provide residents with access to the area's many businesses.

EMPLOYMENT ROUTES AND ECONOMIC IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

Both the Regional Network concepts and the Pleasant Township-only network concepts include an I-65 corridor route that would bring employees to manufacturing and logistics employers in the corridor. While it was assumed this route would be funded with tax referendum dollars, it could alternatively be funded either partially or entirely

with an EID, either with or without a local option public transportation tax in place. An I-65 corridor route could also be developed in a separate planning process without a referendum or other transit service improvements. As a stand-alone route, the annual operating cost would be \$296,100 to \$396,500, depending on the exact routing and frequency, with an additional \$74,025 to \$99,125 for paratransit and \$33,334 to \$66,669 for capital expenses. Maps and additional details are available in the Transit Plan final report.

CIRTA WORKFORCE CONNECTORS

CIRTA provided plans to the study team for four potential "Workforce Connector" bus route options to serve employers in the I-65 corridor in northern Johnson County. Maps are provided in the Transit Plan final report. CIRTA currently operates three such routes in Plainfield and Whitestown that are funded with EIDs. The routes are designed to connect from IndyGo stops and circulate through industrial developments.

The proposed CIRTA route options assume an extension of the Red Line along U.S. 31 but they could be adjusted to operate without this extension. The Workforce Connector options have multiple service areas including Pleasant Township, Franklin Township, and both townships. Proposed options follow the format of other existing Workforce Connectors in Central Indiana to serve the employers and employees in the area.

Costs for Workforce Connector routes are assumed to be covered by a combination of CIRTA funds and EID funds. CIRTA funds up to 60% of total costs for the first three years of operation, with the remainder covered by other funds or EID funds. EID revenue dollars are assumed to fund the service in full after three years.

How was the public involved in developing the Transit Plan?

The plan involved multiple opportunities for public input. These efforts included stakeholder interviews and meetings, a public survey, an Access Johnson County rider survey, and an input meeting for employers located in the I-65 corridor.

- One-on-one and small group interviews with stakeholders resulted in feedback from 18 organizations including elected officials and boards, economic development agencies, and health and human service agencies.
- Representatives of these organizations were invited to participate in three stakeholder meetings (two in March 2021, and one in July 2021) to discuss existing community conditions, review data collected by the study team, and review the service improvement concepts developed by the study team. Additionally, a smaller number of stakeholders were interviewed individually to provide more in-depth feedback on draft network concepts.
- The IMPO conducted a public survey that was completed by 319 respondents. The survey included multiple exercises to gain insight into the community's perception of transit and gauge how the public would make planning decisions. The IMPO also conducted a survey of Access Johnson County riders to obtain their feedback about the service and their opinions about desired transit improvements. A total of 40 survey responses were received.
- The IMPO, the City of Greenwood, and Aspire Johnson County held a meeting to gather information and input from employers with facilities located east of I-65 in Greenwood.
- IMPO staff members had a booth at the Greenwood Freedom Festival with handouts promoting the plan and educating residents on when the plan would be available for public review.

- The public had an opportunity to review and comment on the draft plan during the public comment period.

Although individuals varied in their opinions about issues like referendums and the Red Line extension, the majority of participants expressed support for the goals identified previously – a general expansion of transit; expansion of employment transportation; evenly dividing resources between a ridership-focused model and a coverage-focused model; improvements to east/west connectivity; and expansion of Access Johnson County services.

Who would be the service provider?

The transit plan does not identify a service provider. Potential service providers include Access Johnson County or a private vendor of transportation services. The participating townships would also have the option of hiring drivers and other staff to operate the transit system.



How would this affect Access Johnson County riders?

If a referendum passes, more transit service would be available to Access Johnson County's existing riders. In the absence of additional funding from a referendum, this plan provides options for Access Johnson County to reallocate its resources to provide more fixed route service and less demand response. More Johnson County residents would have access to reliable fixed route service under these options. However, some riders living in rural areas of the county might experience more trip denials for demand response rides if capacity to provide countywide demand response service is reduced.

Who makes decisions on how to spend the transit funds?

The Township Boards in Johnson County would be responsible for administering the income tax revenue and for creating and monitoring the annual transit budgets for their townships, if they decide to pursue a referendum. Access Johnson County's leadership has autonomous decision-making power over its service and where to dedicate funds.



STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

Representatives of the following organizations participated in stakeholder interviews and meetings:

- Access Johnson County
- Aspire Johnson County
- Center Grove Community School Corporation Board of Trustees
- Charlene's Angels
- CIRT
- City of Franklin
- City of Greenwood
- City of Greenwood Common Council
- Esperanza Ministries
- Franciscan Alliance
- Gateway Services Board of Directors
- IMPO
- IndyGo
- Johnson County Commission
- Johnson County Council
- Johnson Memorial Hospital
- Pleasant Township Trustee
- Pleasant Township Board
- The Social of Greenwood
- Town of Whiteland
- United Way of Johnson County
- White River Township Trustee

Why do we need a referendum?

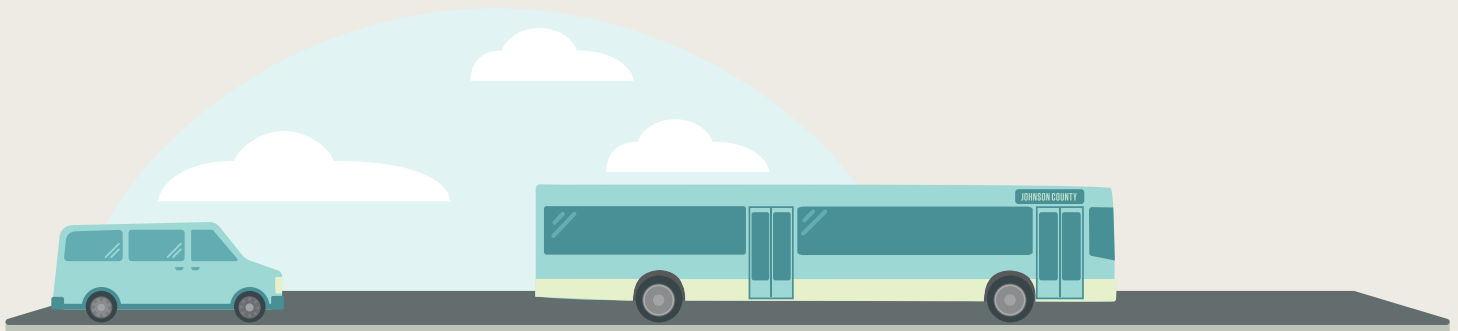
The population of northern Johnson County is growing, having increased by 17% between 2010 and 2020. Not only does the majority of Johnson County's population reside in Pleasant, White River, and Franklin townships, but these townships are also home to nearly 90% of the county's jobs, with more than 90,000 people commuting into or out of these townships for work each day. The area has limited fixed route and demand response transit options. Investing in transit would allow northern Johnson County to remain competitive regionally and nationally in attracting employers and supporting the workforce.

In Central Indiana, transit is currently underfunded when compared with other peer regions ([see page 15 to see how we compare](#)). No stable funding sources currently exist outside of the FTA revenue provided to Access Johnson County. Therefore, a new source of funds, dedicated to transit, must be identified if the recommendations in the plan are to be implemented.

What are the next steps after plan completion?

Access Johnson County could decide to make changes to the existing transit network based on information or scenarios presented in the plan. Local stakeholders could pursue funding sources to improve the existing service or add new services.

The northern Johnson County Transit Plan offers multiple networks for multiple study areas. The plan on its own is not enough to fulfill legislative requirements for a referendum, but local stakeholders in the eligible townships could build off of the planning effort to create a final network suitable for the township and acceptable under Indiana law.

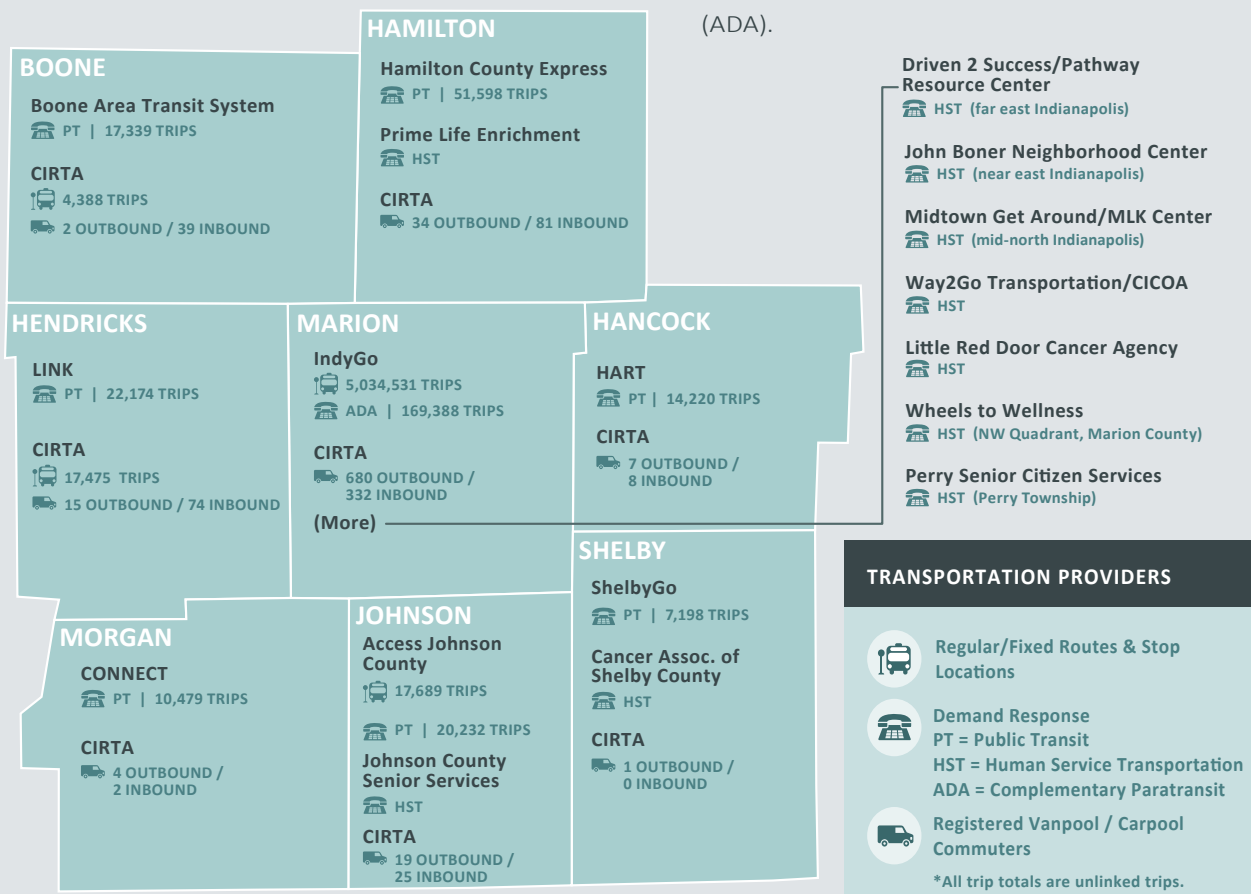


SECTION 6. OTHER CENTRAL INDIANA COUNTIES

What transit options currently exist in Central Indiana?

Central Indiana holds a significant competitive advantage when it comes to moving goods and raw materials around the nation and across the globe. Though some inter-city transit services exist (e.g., Greyhound or Amtrak), the capacity to move people within the Central Indiana region via transit is comparatively underdeveloped.¹ Indianapolis/Marion County's IndyGo now provides rapid transit and has expanded local bus service as part of the Marion County Transit Plan. However, several parts of the region are served only by small demand response operators with limited capacity, and IndyGo is the region's only large transit service provider. The map below provides a snapshot of public transit and human service

transportation activity in Central Indiana. While public transit serves the general public, human service transportation programs provide rides to specific groups, such as older adults or people with disabilities. The 2021 ridership figures, measured in one-way passenger trips, are provided for public transit operators. The numbers of registered CIRT Commuter Connect carpool/vanpool participants in 2021 are provided for each county (active inbound and outbound commuters). Complementary paratransit identified on the map is a specific type of demand response service to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to fixed route transit as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



How can other counties participate in regional transit?

The IMPO is ready to assist Central Indiana communities that are considering adding or expanding transit services. Staff can meet with key stakeholders to discuss opportunities and describe the transit planning processes used in Marion County, northern Johnson County, and Guilford Township (in Hendricks County).

It is noteworthy that all counties within Central Indiana offer some form of public transit service. In most cases this service consists of demand response transit that often must deny trip requests due to limited capacity. IndyGo, CIRTa and Access Johnson County offer fixed route service.

How do I get transit service to my neighborhood or business location?

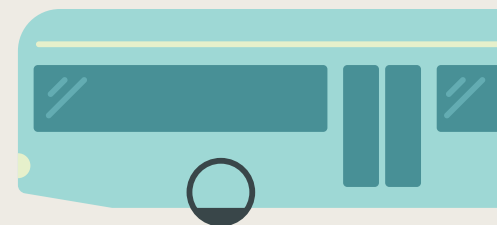
If your community already has a bus system, contact your transit agency and let them assess their ability to accommodate your request. Transit agencies are required by law to have a public outreach process that considers citizen input, including requests for expanded service. Input carries more weight when a number of like-minded individuals are making the same request, so working with your neighbors and finding community groups (like homeowner or business associations) to partner with will improve your effectiveness. Additionally, community members are encouraged to participate in the transit planning process to help set the goals of the transit system. These goals guide where and what kind of services are placed in the area.

If the transit agency cannot feasibly accommodate your request, or if there is no transit agency to talk to, then here are some options:

- Talk to local elected representatives about your desire for additional transit services. You can request a presentation by the IMPO on specific

transit planning efforts or how the planning process works. Several counties in Central Indiana have completed area transit studies, and the IMPO is available to share those experiences with your community.

- If transit service is available nearby or in an adjacent community, a short transit route to and from that community may be an option. Your community or business district would need to be willing to chip in at least part of the cost in order for this to be an option. IndyGo occasionally extends routes based on public or business feedback. CIRTa has implemented several routes of this type and is willing to assess requests from communities on a case-by-case basis. CIRTa currently operates transit routes that serve employment areas in Plainfield and Whitestown and connects them to IndyGo fixed route service in Marion County. Property owners in these service areas voted to pay taxes to fund these transit services by designating them as economic improvement districts.
- Ask your neighbors about their travel habits and assess the interest for consolidating these trips into carpools or vanpools. Vanpools organized for the purpose of commuting to and from work may be eligible for limited subsidies through CIRTa's Commuter Connect program. If you are able to get your employer(s) to participate (at no cost to them), the Commuter Connect free emergency ride home program (available for registered carpools, vanpools, transit riders, and bicycle riders) can prevent you from being stranded at work if an emergency occurs.



Who should I talk to in order to start new transit service?

Your local transit agency, if it exists, would be the first place to start. In the event that one does not exist, the IMPO can have a discussion with your community about what kind of transit options might be available in the short- and long-term. Eventually, the local elected leadership would be responsible for funding any such system, and would therefore have a large influence on what moves forward.

What technical assistance is offered for communities wanting to start transit systems?

The IMPO can help identify what providers already exist within or nearby your community and talk through the options available. They can also provide you with information that other communities have used to plan for and implement their local transit systems. The IMPO can assist in facilitating discussions and initiating the planning process.

How can my community get ready for a regional transit system?

There are plenty of things you and your community can do to prepare for the implementation of integrated and well-functioning regional transit.

- Transportation and land use support each other. Creating corridors with mixed destinations and housing encourages development. Having additional infrastructure like bike and pedestrian paths provides groundwork for a transit system that comes later. Most transit trips begin or end with walking or biking. Assessing the sidewalk and trail network within your community, and making sure that suitable policies are enacted to maintain and expand these networks (such as in the local planning and zoning codes) will help support your future system, as well as improve the quality of life in your neighborhood. Adopting a complete streets ordinance is a good place to start.
- Educate yourself on transit in general. If you are so inclined, visit a transit route near you to get the feel of it. Visit www.indympo.org/citp to see the current and recently completed transit planning initiatives in Central Indiana.



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SECTION 7. MONEY & REAL ESTATE

How is transit funded in Indiana?

The Indiana Public Transit Annual Report¹ identifies five general sources of revenue for public transit systems in Indiana:

Fares paid by passengers to use the system.

Other system revenue generated by the transit agency in addition to passenger fares, such as from private grants or by advertising on transit vehicles.

Local financial assistance provided by municipal, township or county governments from tax revenue or fees. Local property taxes are often a source of transit funding. Local financial assistance in Marion County also includes the local option income tax for transit that was adopted in 2017. In addition, there are two economic improvement districts in Plainfield and Whitestown, where property owners have voted to use additional property tax assessments to fund CIRT Workforce Connector transit service for employees.

State financial assistance provided by the Indiana state government. In 2021, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) distributed \$38.25 million to 63 transit systems from the Indiana Public Mass Transportation Fund (PMTF), which uses a performance-based formula to match direct revenues and local assistance provided to municipal transit agencies.

Federal financial assistance provided by the federal government, usually through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation. The FTA administers several grant programs to help pay for the capital and operating expenses of public transit agencies. Two large FTA grant programs are the Section 5311 program,

which supports transit agencies in rural areas, and the Section 5307 program, which supports transit agencies in urbanized areas with a population of 50,000 or more. Federal financial assistance to transit providers must be matched with funding from non-federal sources.

What changes have occurred in federal financial assistance?

The seven border counties around Marion County, including Boone, Johnson, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Shelby, and Morgan, have received federal funding for rural public transit service since they began to offer public transit in the late 1990s and early 2000s. However, over time, the U.S. Census-defined Indianapolis Urbanized Area (UZA) has expanded into portions of each of these counties through growth in population and density. In particular, significant portions of Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, and Johnson Counties are now located within the UZA. Transit service within the urbanized area is not eligible for rural transit funding. Therefore, these counties began receiving urban transit funding in 2022.

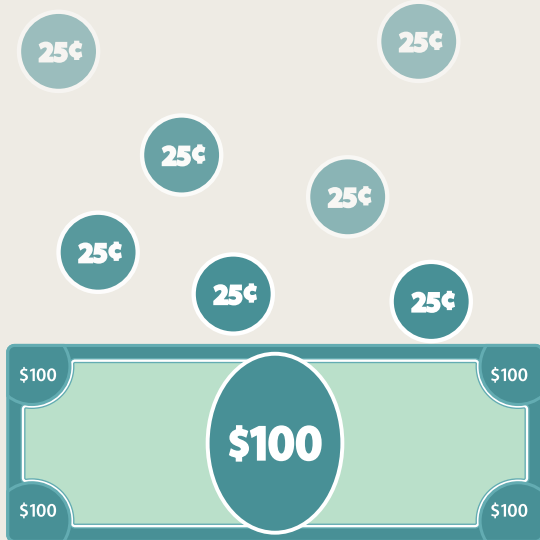
The change has had multiple impacts. Because the urban transit funding available to the counties is less than the former rural funding, IndyGo and the suburban systems are projected to lose about 9% of their annual FTA formula grant funding. IndyGo is expected to lose about \$1.4 million per year, while the county systems, which have much smaller budgets, are expected to lose approximately \$30,000 to \$66,000 per year. However, the effects of the changes may not be felt immediately due to the availability of pandemic-related funding and increases to the FTA formula grant programs

provided in the 2021 reauthorization of the federal government’s transportation programs. The timing of the impacts is yet to be determined.

A second impact of the transition relates to the procurement process for transit service. Under the rural program, the counties were allowed to pass funding through to non-profit organizations without a competitive selection process. The urban program requires transit agencies to either operate transit service in-house (with directly hired operators and staff) or select providers through open competition according to FTA procurement regulations. In 2021, the suburban counties awarded 2022 transit service contracts through competitive procurements. Suburban counties are now subrecipients of IndyGo who administers the urban funding.

How would the Central Indiana Transit Plan be funded?

Transit service in Central Indiana has historically been funded by a combination of local and state taxes, federal grants, and rider fares. Just as the members of each community should determine the mix of transit services that best meets the community’s needs and goals (see Sections 1 and 6), they should also consider the various funding options for providing those services.

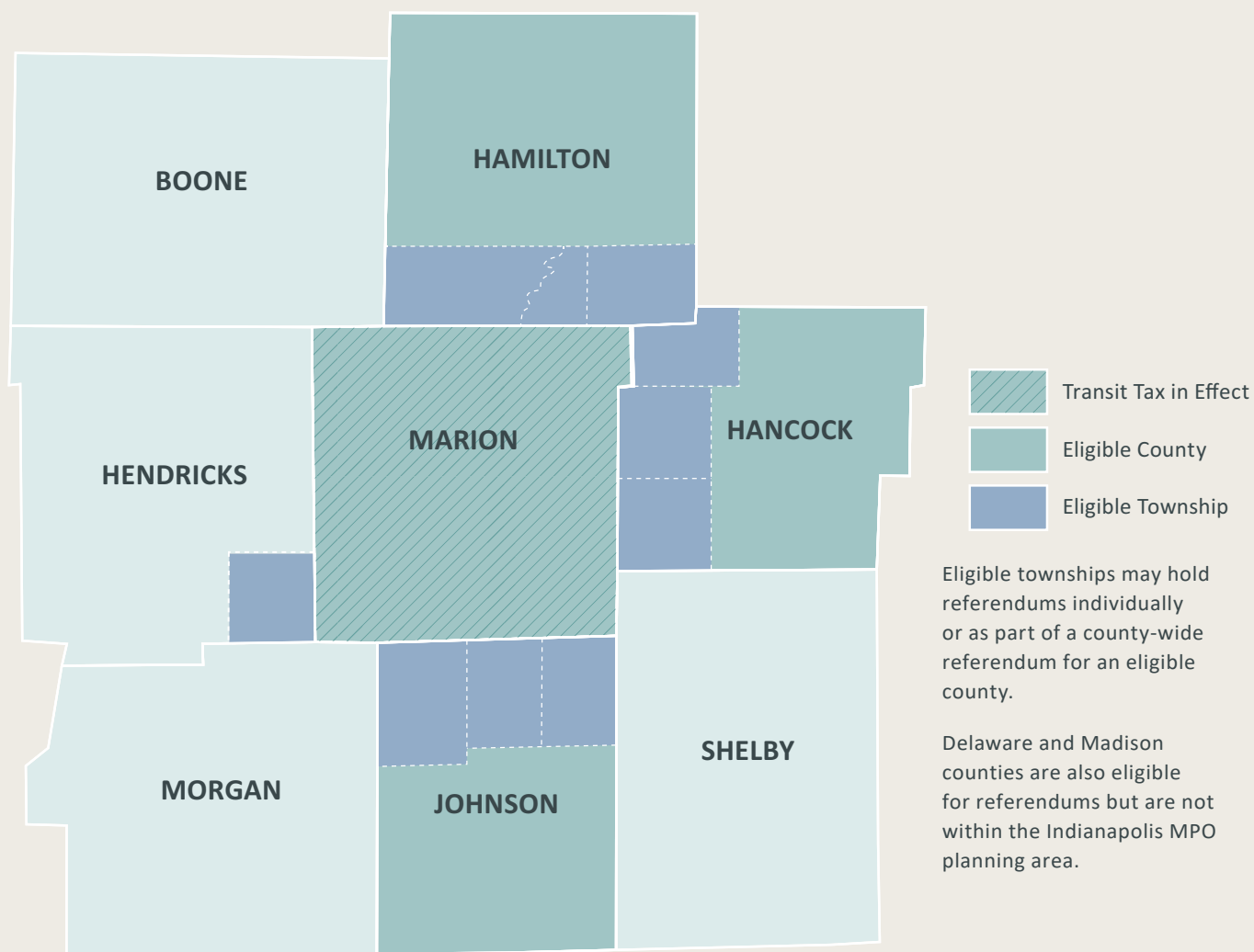


Central Indiana leaders have realized that for any expansion to take place, the region will need to tap into additional revenue sources. Various dedicated funding sources were evaluated by the Central Indiana Transit Task Force, the Indy Connect planning team, and the Indiana General Assembly in their consideration of transit-enabling legislation. In 2014, the General Assembly authorized **IC8-25-2**, which enables the dedication of a local option income tax for transit, if approved through public referendums. The General Assembly authorized Marion, Hamilton, Hancock, Johnson, Delaware, and Madison counties to certify referendums at that time, and in 2016 it authorized townships in those counties that are adjacent to Marion County to hold their own referendums. Neither Hendricks County nor its townships are authorized to certify referendums, with the exception of Guilford Township, where the town of Plainfield is located.

How much would a referendum cost per household?

State code allows an eligible township or county to implement a local option income tax to fund transit at a rate of up to 0.25%, if approved by referendum. A proposed tax rate of 0.25% of a resident’s income equates to 25 cents for every \$100 earned.

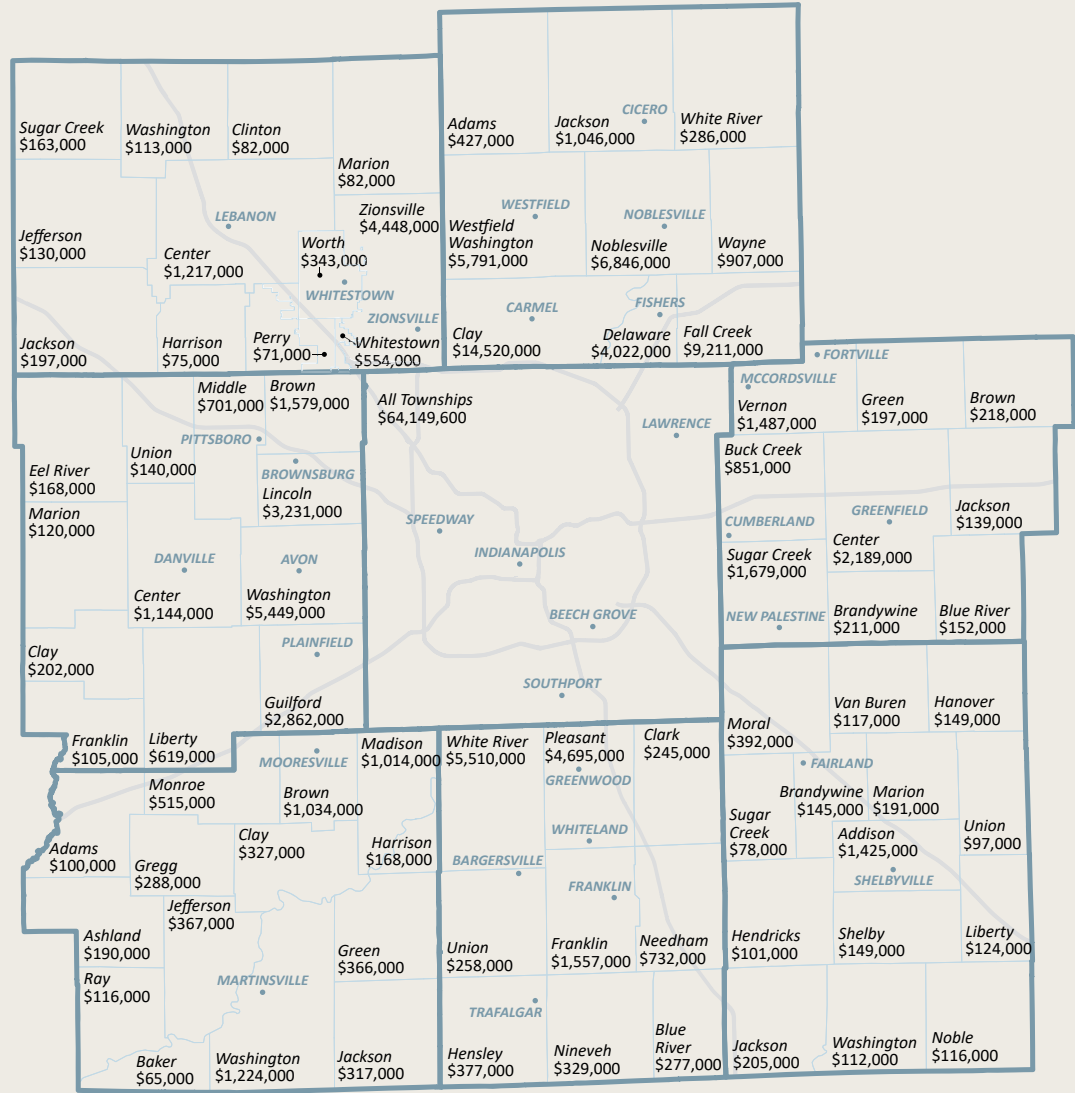
Counties and Townships Eligible to Hold Referendums



Marion County voters authorized a local option income tax for transit in 2016, and IndyGo is now receiving approximately \$60 million per year to improve local transit service and implement new rapid transit lines. Other surrounding counties and townships are now eligible to add dedicated income tax funding for transit through their own referendums. New revenue sources such as this will be needed to bring Central Indiana’s transit investments in line with peer regions, as discussed in [Section 1](#).

If referendums are passed with 0.25% income tax being collected, the graphic below indicates how much might be collected per year in each township. For communities initiating a referendum and subsequent planning work, the Indianapolis MPO recommends certifying the maximum 0.25% amount allowed by Indiana law. Communities may choose to certify a referendum for a lesser percentage, but if that same community wishes to increase the percentage to the full 0.25% later, the referendum process starts over. This means the entire community must vote a second time to increase the rate.

Potential Local Revenue for Transit in Central Indiana



Potential Revenue = [Total Population]x[Per Capita Income] x 0.25%

Estimated 2024 population and income from ESRI Community Analyst. Potential revenue reduced by 10% to generate a conservative estimate.

Johnson County: Franklin, Union, and Needham townships are estimated separately but have merged as of January 1, 2022.

How much would the Central Indiana Transit Plan cost?

Components of the regional plan will be developed by local and county governments to best serve their transportation and economic development needs in coordination with their citizens and employers. The kind of transit service each community recommends determines the associated costs of service. In some cases, the planning to recommend improvements to the transportation networks has not yet occurred. Where that planning has been done, the specific service improvements and financial projections for the study area covered by the plan have been incorporated as a chapter of the Central Indiana Transit Plan.

Marion County and Guilford Township in Hendricks County have both developed plans in sufficient detail to support local income tax funding referendums. Marion County anticipates that it will be able to fully implement its network redesign by 2027 based on budget projections that get updated annually (see [Section 3](#)). In 2020, the Guilford Township Transit Plan identified a transit network that could be implemented and operated using projected township annual local option income tax revenue of approximately \$2.4 million (see [Section 4](#)).

I doubt I'll ever use transit – why should I help pay for it?

A robust transit system benefits everyone who lives in, works in, or visits the region, whether or not they use the system. Transit creates stronger and more vibrant neighborhoods, improves air quality and safety, supports equitable access to jobs and health care, increases regional competitiveness and economic growth, and helps to create a stable and diverse workforce. Each of these benefits and several others are described in detail in [Section 1](#) of the plan.

While you might not use transit, it is likely that people you count on every day, to provide a variety of services, do need it. For example, many employees who work for the City of Indianapolis use transit for daily work trips. Add to that the number of industry, hospital, restaurant, shop, and other service workers who rely on transit to get to work. Like other transportation infrastructure, transit is publicly funded because it provides a public benefit. As with roads and highways, which rely on property taxes, bonds, and general revenues, transit users do not cover all the costs of system operation and maintenance. For the typical transit system in Indiana, fares cover less than 20% of the cost of operation and maintenance of transit.¹

In addition to the direct public benefit of connecting people with jobs, healthcare, and education, transit also benefits businesses through lower employee turnover rates, and it benefits those who never use transit through reduced traffic congestion and improved air quality. In fact, a 2020 study estimated that a steady investment in public transit over 20 years would generate five dollars in economic benefit for every dollar invested.² This means that Central Indiana will likely see a positive economic return on its investment.



What is the process for getting referendums scheduled?

As written, the enabling legislation **IC8-25-2** creates a three-step process to enact a local option income tax to fund transit improvements through a public referendum:

1. The fiscal body certifies a non-binding referendum,
2. the public votes in a general election, and then
3. the fiscal body has final approval or denial of the referendum vote.

The legislation enables Delaware, Hamilton, Hancock, Johnson, Madison, and Marion counties to hold a public referendum when the public and local leaders are ready. In addition, certain townships in those counties that are adjacent to Marion County may also hold public referendums independently from the rest of their county. Other Central Indiana counties were not included in the enabling legislation.

Marion County completed this three-step process in February 2017 and now has a 0.25% local option income tax assessment for transit in place. Other approved counties or townships that share a border with Marion County may now also choose to certify transit referendums during upcoming general elections.

Prior to holding a referendum, the legislation requires that each community develop a plan that details how the funds would be spent to support transit. The IMPO has worked with community leaders and transit providers to develop these plans for Marion County and for Guilford Township in Hendricks County. The IMPO has also worked with those in northern Johnson County to develop service and funding options for future refinement.

Without a dedicated funding source, building out a robust transit system in any community would

require diverting resources from existing services. Existing services currently decline rides when they cannot keep up with demand. Additional revenues are recommended for communities interested in improving transit to build upon the existing mobility network.

My county/township isn't authorized, so what does that mean?

Boone, Hendricks (other than Guilford Township), Morgan, and Shelby counties are not enabled via IC-8-25-2 to hold referendums to provide stable funding for transit service. In order for those counties or their townships to hold referendums for transit funding, the law would need to be modified by the state legislature. Additionally, municipalities, such as cities and towns, may not conduct referendums for transit. Allowing a referendum for transit at the municipal level would also require a law change. Otherwise, these governments must seek alternate funding sources if they wish to improve transit service.

How much will a trip cost on the local or rapid transit routes?

Each transit agency determines its own fares based on financial considerations and local input. The current fare for IndyGo's local bus routes and the Red Line bus rapid transit route is \$1.75 per trip. The current fare for Access Johnson County fixed route service is \$1.00 per trip, or \$2.00 per trip if a route deviation is requested. The current fare for CIRT Workforce Connector routes is \$1.00 per trip. Similar costs are expected for future services, with possible adjustments for inflation.

Will eminent domain be used, or any homes be taken, to accommodate new transit services?

No condemnation or eminent domain are anticipated for any local transit changes or rapid transit construction. Proposed construction will only require minor right of way acquisition, primarily in rapid transit station locations. It's less expensive and faster to design and build rapid transit lines within existing curbs.

Will transit be accessible to affordable/attainable housing?

In Indianapolis, the addition of a transit stop to a neighborhood does not mean that affordable housing will become a requirement in that neighborhood. However, location near a transit stop is an important priority for the city's affordable housing subsidies. The Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development (DMD) has a policy that prioritizes the use of federal affordable housing subsidies (Community Development Block Grant and the HOME Investment Partnership Program) to be spent on projects within a ½-mile of an existing or proposed transit line. Local program officers also work with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to identify properties that could serve as future affordable housing sites.

DMD will continue to work with neighborhoods on rapid transit station planning, and any zoning changes will be subject to the existing Metropolitan Development Committee approval process. Other communities will also maintain their approved land use procedures, though they generally do not have affordable housing policies or subsidies like Indianapolis.

The new bus rapid transit routes were selected partially because of their adjacency to high concentrations of housing and jobs. In 2019 the Indianapolis

Neighborhood Partnership (INHP) launched the Equitable TOD fund in partnership with other financial partners to build and preserve attainable housing along the BRT corridors.

How would real estate along transit lines be affected?

Transit lines can greatly influence real estate development, especially along frequent transit lines and at rapid transit stations. Companies looking for places to locate their businesses, whether retail, office, or industrial, are increasingly considering the availability of transit service in their decisions. In a recent interview, for instance, a local private developer cited proximity to the Red Line as a major factor in selecting the site of a proposed housing project.³

As Central Indiana's economy grows, having a variety of transportation options will be important to ensure employees across industries, places, and salary bands can reliably get to work, shopping, entertainment, and services. Businesses may choose to locate near transit to improve employee retention or access to customers, and people may choose to live near transit because of improved transportation connections and proximity to retail and employment options. A 2019 joint study of several successful transit systems by the American Public Transportation Association and the National Association of Realtors found that people living near transit have lower annual transportation costs, connections to more destinations, and access to more jobs within a 30-minute commute. The study also found that the presence of rail and bus rapid transit has a strong correlation with higher property values.⁴

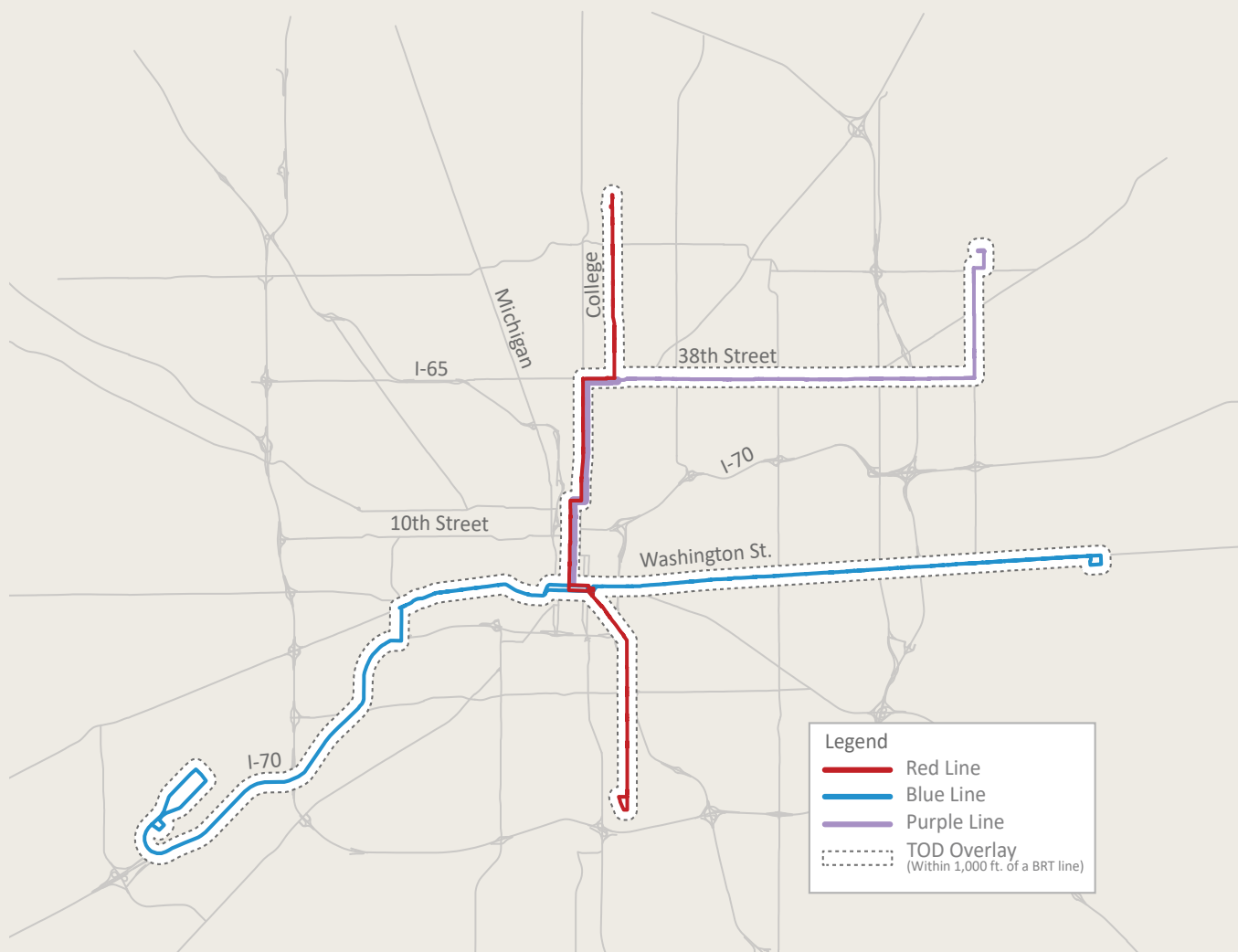
Transit is successful when it travels to a variety of destinations, and developments have more accessibility and foot traffic when they are served by high-quality transit. Both transit and developments are successful when they can be located in close proximity and benefit from supportive infrastructure like sidewalks. Compact and walkable developments

that are located in close proximity to transit and include supportive land uses like mixed-use housing and retail are called transit-oriented developments, or TOD. These types of developments benefit both the developments and the transit system.

The **Regional TOD Strategic Plan**⁵ was created to determine the potential for developing successful TOD along rapid transit corridors in Central Indiana. This work helps to identify the benefits of TOD and inform which rapid transit corridors have the greatest TOD potential.

In 2021, the City of Indianapolis implemented land use zoning changes to encourage compact, walkable development patterns along designated rapid transit corridors and restrict some land uses that prioritize access by automobiles. These TOD overlay districts apply to all new development within 1,000 feet of rapid transit lines and are intended to maximize the economic development potential created by transit.

City of Indianapolis Transit Oriented Development Overlay Zoning



THE CENTRAL INDIANA TRANSIT PLAN

YOUR INPUT, YOUR TRANSIT.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Access Johnson County (AJC):

The transit provider for Johnson County.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT):

A high-capacity fixed route transit service that uses buses to provide fast, frequent, and reliable service in corridors with high demand. BRT service typically operates in bus-only lanes or exclusive busways, and it often includes other features to improve the service, such as off-board fare collection, level boarding, and transit priority at traffic signals.

Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA):

A regional governmental organization established by Indiana Code (IC 36-9-3) and focused on improving transportation options to Central Indiana.

Central Indiana Transit Task Force (CITTF):

A group of business leaders who created strategic recommendations to increase the region's economic competitiveness by improving its transportation system. This included recommendations for significant expansion of the regional transit system. The CITTF 2009 report on transportation alternatives in Central Indiana was a precursor to the Central Indiana Transit Plan.

City-County Council:

Due to their governance structure, Marion County and the City of Indianapolis have a joint council called the City-County Council. Other municipalities and counties have a city council, a town council, or a county board of commissioners.

Coverage:

The amount of geographic space, proportion of people, or proportion of jobs that are within a certain distance of transit service. Coverage can be calculated for an entire transit system or for certain types of transit. An assumption about how far people will walk to a given transit service—often ranging from 1/4 to 3/4 mile—must be made to calculate coverage.

Demand Response Service:

Transit service that does not have a predetermined route or schedule but instead allows riders to request a specific origin, destination, and time for their trip. Demand response transit is often used to serve transportation-disadvantaged individuals and areas of low population density.

Deviated Fixed Route Service:

A hybrid of fixed route and demand response services. With this type of service, a bus or van stops at fixed points and keeps to a timetable but can deviate its course between two stops to go to a specific location for a pre-scheduled request.¹

Farebox Recovery:

Farebox recovery is a measure of how much of a transit system, network, or route's operating cost is recovered through rider fares.

Fixed Route Service:

A regularly scheduled transit service with a set fare that operates on a specific route, stopping regularly at sites marked by signs or fitted with seats or shelters.

Frequency:

The number of transit vehicles that follow a route in a given time interval, usually one hour. A frequency of four buses per hour means that a bus will arrive every 15 minutes. A frequency of four or more vehicles per hour is generally considered to be “frequent transit service.”

Federal Transit Administration (FTA):

An agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation responsible for federal support, funding, and oversight of transit systems.

Headway:

The length of time between successive buses that travel along the same route. If the time between buses on a route is 15 minutes, they are said to be operating on a 15-minute headway. Short headways correspond to high frequency and long headways correspond to low frequency. See also “Frequency.”

Human Services Transportation:

Transportation services designed to meet the needs of transportation-disadvantaged populations including older adults, disabled persons and/or those with lower income. Individuals may require different services depending on their abilities, their environment, and the options available in their community. Examples may include dial-a-ride (responding to individual door-to-door transportation requests), providing bus tokens and/or transit passes for fixed route scheduled services, accessing taxi vouchers, and/or mileage reimbursement to volunteers or program participants.²

IndyGo:

The Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation (a.k.a. “IndyGo”) is the transit operator in Marion County.

Land Use:

A term describing the type of development that either exists or is planned. For example, “residential land use” refers to housing, which could include single family houses, townhomes, duplexes, apartments, condos, etc.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO):

An organization responsible for coordinated and comprehensive transportation planning in an urbanized area. The Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (IMPO) is the designated MPO for the Indianapolis metropolitan area. The IMPO plans for and distributes federal transportation funds for highways, transit, bikeways, trails, and sidewalks to move people and goods in Central Indiana. The IMPO includes more than 35 members representing cities, towns, counties, and other transportation agencies throughout Central Indiana.

Microtransit:

Microtransit services are similar to traditional demand response services, but they have improved dispatching and routing capabilities enabled by GPS, mobile communication, and mobile computing technologies. Rides may be arranged with short advanced notice times through a smartphone app or by phone-based or web-based systems. These services may require passengers to walk to a nearby stop rather than providing door-to-door service.

Mobility as a Service (MaaS):

A customer-focused interface that incorporates multiple mobility options into a single, intuitive and seamless platform or application that allows for choosing the right option, and scheduling and paying for that option.³

Paratransit:

Specialized transit service required by the Americans with Disabilities Act to be provided in areas served by fixed route transit systems for use by individuals with disabilities who are unable to use the fixed route transit.

Person Trip/Passenger Trip:

A trip made by one person from one origin to one destination. Many transit statistics are based on “unlinked passenger trips,” which refer to individual one-way trips made by individual riders in individual vehicles. A person who leaves home on one vehicle, transfers to a second vehicle to arrive at a destination, leaves the destination on a third vehicle and has to transfer to yet another vehicle to complete the journey home has made four unlinked passenger trips.⁴

Ridership:

A measure of how many trips are taken on a transit route or system during a specific time period, often expressed in terms of person trips or passenger trips.

Transit:

A regularly operating transportation service that is open to the public and accommodates the movement of multiple people at once in a vehicle operated by a professional driver. Also known as public transportation, mass transportation, mass transit, or public transit

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD):

A type of community development that includes a mixture of housing, office, retail and/or other amenities integrated into a walkable neighborhood and located within a half-mile of quality public transportation.⁵

APPENDIX B. TRANSIT PLANNING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Summaries of public and stakeholder engagement activities associated with detailed components of the Central Indiana Transit Plan are identified below. This does not include engagement activities associated with specific transit projects or services. For example, IndyGo has held numerous public meetings regarding the Red, Purple, and Blue rapid transit lines. Consult the full planning documents for a complete description of engagement.

Marion County Transit Plan (Section 3)

- Eight stakeholder focus group meetings
- Public Surveys (MetroQuest)
 - » Survey #1: February 16 - December 16, 2022
 - Available in English, Spanish, French, Hakha Chin*
 - » Survey #2: October 11 - December 16, 2022
 - Available in English, Spanish, French
- Public Survey (individual route survey)**
 - » Deployed in 2022 and was still collecting feedback at time of plan update.
- Public meetings hosted in person and virtual
 - » Three in person open houses in October 2022
 - October 11-Community Justice Center
 - October 12- Carson Transit Center
 - October 13- P30
 - » One virtual open house
 - October 18, 2022
- One pop-up event- Julia M. Carson Transit Center

Guilford Township Transit Plan (Section 4)

- Transit Advisory Team
 - » October 24, 2019 - Plainfield Fire Station
 - » November 22, 2019 - Indianapolis International Airport
 - » December 11, 2019 - Guilford Township Community Center
- Ten stakeholder interviews
- Plainfield Quaker Day Festival Booth
 - » September 21, 2019 - Plainfield Friends Meeting
- Public Survey (MetroQuest)
 - » November 8, 2019 - December 6, 2019
- Public Meetings
 - » January 14, 2020 - Guilford Township Community Center
 - » January 15, 2020 - Guilford Township Community Center

*While both metroquest surveys were available in multiple languages, no survey offered in Spanish, French, or Hakha Chin received a complete response.

**The individual route survey was compatible with screen readers.

Northern Johnson County Transit Plan (Section 5)

- Transit Advisory Team
 - » March 16, 2021 - Virtual
 - » March 22, 2022 - Virtual
 - » July 21, 2022 - Virtual
- Stakeholder Interviews
 - » Sixteen interviews in Round 1
 - » Six interviews in Round 2
- Public survey (MetroQuest)
 - » February 11 - March 10, 2021
 - » Available in English, Spanish, Hakha Chin
- Access Johnson County rider survey
 - » February 2021
- Greenwood Freedom Festival
 - » June 26, 2021
- I-65 employer stakeholder meeting - Greenwood City Center
 - » May 26, 2021

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Appendix A. Glossary of Terms:

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