



**NORTHEAST CORRIDOR
ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS/
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

SCOPING DOCUMENT

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MARCH 2010

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LIST OF ACROYNMS

| | |
|-------------|---|
| AA/EIS | Alternative Analysis/Environmental Impact Statement |
| BRT | Bus Rapid Transit |
| CIRTA | Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority |
| ConNEctionS | Northeast Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement (2001) |
| CRT | Commuter Rail Transit |
| DiRecTionS | Indianapolis Northeast Corridor Preliminary Alternatives Analysis |
| DMU | Diesel Multiple Unit |
| EPA | United State Environmental Protection Agency |
| FRA | Federal Railroad Administration |
| FTA | Federal Transit Administration |
| HHPA | Hoosier Heritage Port Authority (former Nickel Plate Railroad) |
| IndyGo | Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation |
| LPA | Locally Preferred Alternative |
| MPO | Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization |
| NEPA | National Environmental Policy Act |
| NOI | Notice of Intent |
| PMT | Project Management Team |
| ROD | Record of Decision |
| ROW | Right of Way |
| SAFETEA-LU | Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users |

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS/ ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT SCOPING DOCUMENT

MARCH 2010

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the project management team (PMT), consisting of the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA), the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (Indianapolis MPO) and Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation (IndyGo), intend to prepare an Alternatives Analysis/Environmental Impact Statement (AA/EIS) relating to proposed fixed guideway transit improvements in the Northeast Corridor located in the Indiana counties of Marion and Hamilton. As defined by the FTA, a “fixed guideway” refers to any transit service that uses exclusive or controlled rights-of-way or rails, entirely or in part.

The study area (See Figure 1) is an approximately 23-mile long travel corridor extending from downtown Indianapolis to the northern parts of Noblesville, including the community of Fishers. Options to be considered include No-Build, Transportation System Management (TSM), Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), and Commuter Rail. Upon selection of an Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), the project sponsors will request permission from FTA to enter into preliminary engineering per requirements of New Starts regulations 49 CFR Part 611. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) will be issued after FTA approves entrance into preliminary engineering.

1.1 Purpose of the Scoping Document

This Scoping Document for the Northeast Corridor Alternatives Analysis/Environmental Impact Statement (Northeast Corridor AA/EIS) is one part of a process required under the regulations and guidelines issued by the FTA to implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 in conformance with Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) implementing regulations, as amended. The purpose of the Scoping Document is to provide information to the public and agencies regarding the Northeast Corridor AA/EIS process, issues, and alternatives. The broader purpose of the scoping process is to provide an opportunity for the public and agencies to comment on and provide input to the Northeast Corridor AA/EIS as it is initiated.

This Scoping Document for the Northeast Corridor AA/EIS discusses the following topics:

- **Overview:** outlines the history of project planning, describes the scoping process for the study, defines the study area, identifies related projects and studies, and presents the project schedule and contacts.
- **Purpose and Need for the Project:** describes the purpose and need for improved transportation services in the Northeast Corridor and identifies the related goals and objectives of the study.
- **Alternatives:** summarizes the preliminary alternatives that will be examined in this Northeast Corridor AA/EIS.
- **Social, Economic and Environmental Impacts:** identifies the types of environmental issues that will be analyzed in the Northeast Corridor AA/EIS.

- **Public and Agency Involvement:** summarizes the public and agency participation program and identifies the public participation program elements. The public and agency plan will remain flexible throughout the study to accommodate changing public needs.

2.0 STUDY OVERVIEW

2.1 *History of Project Planning*

The Central Indiana region has recognized the need for transportation improvements in the Northeast Corridor for several decades. In 1980, a planned extension of I-69 between I-465 and the I-65/I-70 junction on the northeastern edge of downtown Indianapolis (I-165) was cancelled by the mayor of Indianapolis and the governor of Indiana due to concerns about community impacts. As population and employment in the corridor continued to grow through the 1980s and 1990s, existing arterial and expressway routes experienced increasing levels of congestion. In 2001, the ConNEcTionS study recommended an alternative that included a combination of highway and transit improvements. The highway element, including added travel lanes and interchange improvements on SR 37, I-69, and I-465, was advanced to the preparation of a Final Environmental Impact Statement, with issuance of a Record of Decision in February, 2002. At the most critical locations, some of these highway improvements have been implemented. Others are currently in the design phase, to be implemented during the next five years. Proposed transit improvements, including peak-period commuter rail service on the Hoosier Heritage Port Authority (HHPA) Railroad (former Nickel Plate Railroad) between Indianapolis and Noblesville, more intensive all-day light rail service on the HHPA Railroad inside I-465, and supporting bus improvements, were deferred pending further study.

Additional transit studies were initiated by the Indianapolis MPO in the DiRecTionS study, initiated in 2003. Phase 1 of the DiRecTionS study evaluated transit improvements at a regional system-wide level, with consideration of three transit technology options in six radial corridors extending from downtown Indianapolis. Phase 2 evaluated alignment options in each corridor and considered system-wide implementation strategies and phasing. In 2004, the policy committee of the Indianapolis MPO affirmed the Northeast Corridor as the highest priority corridor for fixed guideway transit investment. Four alignment options and four technology options were evaluated for the Northeast Corridor in Phase 3 of DiRecTionS. In 2008, the MPO policy committee unanimously selected the HHPA Railroad alignment and rail technology as the preferred strategy for fixed guideway transit in the Northeast Corridor.

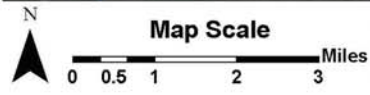
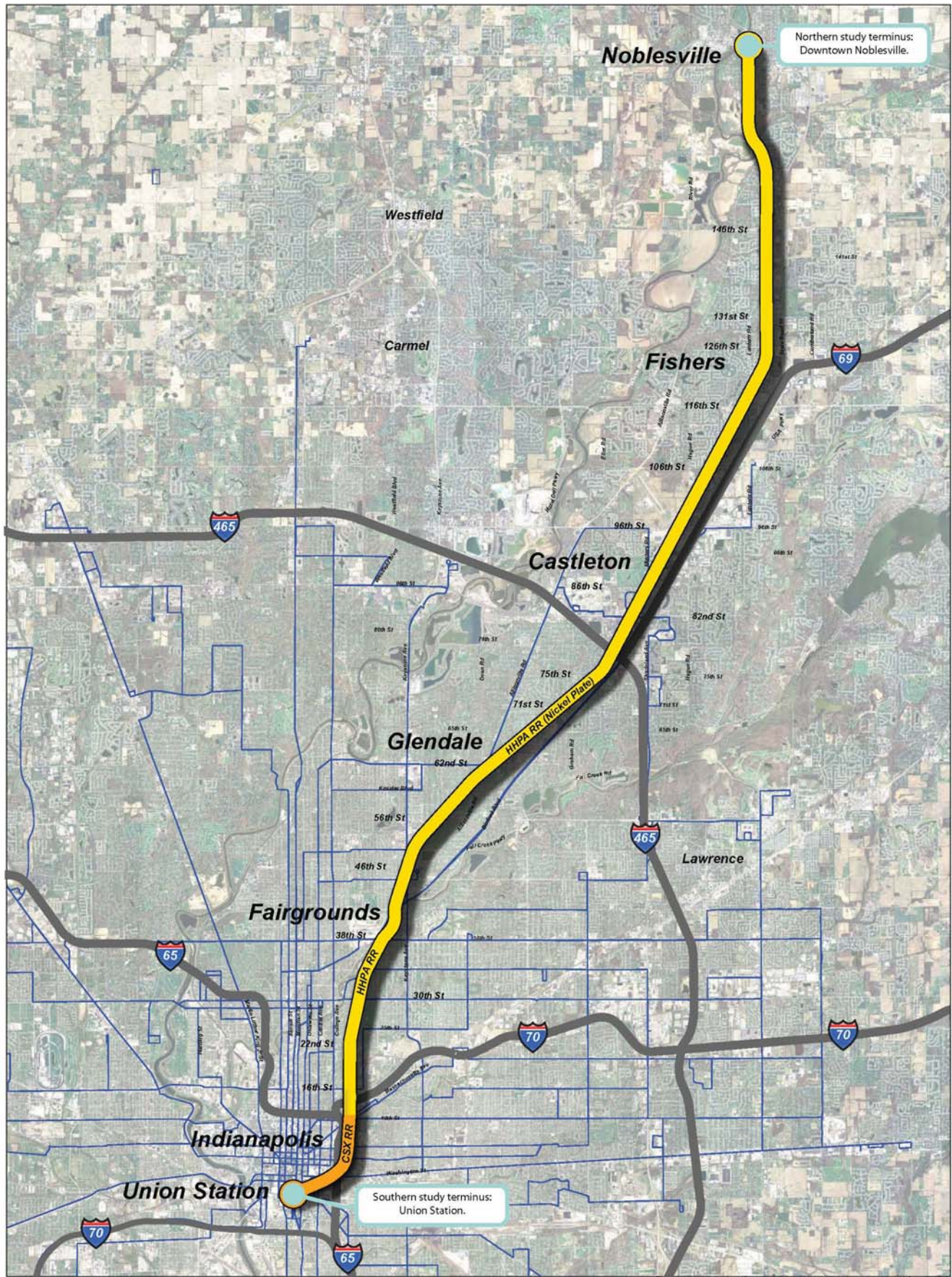
In 2009, IndyGo explored alternative sites for a downtown transit center site and associated bus circulation options. A site adjacent to Union Station was identified as the preferred location. A concentration of downtown transit services on the Capitol Avenue / Illinois Street one-way pair was also identified as a preferred operational improvement to the current transit loop.

Concurrently through 2009, the Central Indiana Transit Task Force (CITTF), a partnership of private-sector business leaders and community foundations and public-sector planning and transportation agencies, studied regional transportation strategies using an economic cost-benefit analysis approach. The results of the study, released in February 2010, identified a combination of highway improvements, managed lanes, and expanded transit service as the regional investment strategy with the greatest return on investment.



INDY CONNECT
CENTRAL INDIANA'S
TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVE

Northeast Corridor Alignment



Legend

- Yellow line: HHPA Corridor
- Orange line: CSX R.R.
- Thick grey line: Interstate Highways
- Thin blue line: Existing Bus

In the Northeast Corridor, a combination of peak-period commuter rail service to 116th Street in Fishers, all-day frequent service south of 38th Street, and enhanced bus service was recommended. The study also underscored the economic development, community livability, and regional competitiveness opportunities that the multi-modal investment strategy could generate.

In February 2010, the Indianapolis MPO initiated a year-long process known as Indy Connect to update the Long-Range Transportation Plan. The CITTF recommendation is being used as the starting point for the development of the transit element of the plan. The Northeast Corridor EIS is being prepared consistent with and in coordination with the Indy Connect initiative.

2.2 Environment Impact Statement

The AA/EIS will be prepared in accordance with NEPA and its implementing regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR Parts 1500–1508) and with the FTA/Federal Highway Administration regulations “Environmental Impact and Related Procedures” (23 CFR Part 771). In accordance with 23 CFR 771.105(a) and 771.133, FTA will comply with all Federal environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders applicable to the proposed project during the environmental review process to the maximum extent practicable.

These requirements include, but are not limited to, the environmental and public hearing provisions of Federal transit laws (49 U.S.C. 5301(e), 5323(b), and 5324), the project-level air quality conformity regulation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (40 CFR part 93), the section 404(b)(1) guidelines of EPA (40 CFR part 230), the regulation implementing section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR part 800), the regulation implementing section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (50 CFR part 402), section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act (23 CFR 771.135), and Executive Orders 12898 on environmental justice, 11988 on floodplain management.

2.3 Scoping Process

The purpose of the scoping process is to provide an opportunity for the public and agencies to comment on and provide input to the Northeast Corridor AA/EIS as it is initiated. On March 9, 2010, FTA published a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register to initiate the Northeast Corridor AA/EIS, the subject of this Draft Scoping Document. This effort builds upon the planning and public outreach activities previously conducted as they relate to development of goals and objectives, screening of alternatives, and evaluation of impacts. Analyses will be updated as necessary to reflect conditions that may have changed since the previous scoping process was concluded.

This draft Scoping Document is prepared as one part of the scoping process to provide information to the public and agencies on the Northeast Corridor AA/EIS process, issues, alternatives and methodologies. This document will be mailed to pertinent federal, state, and local agencies and provided upon request to any interested party. Comments on the draft Scoping Document may be made orally at the public scoping meetings, or in writing throughout the scoping process. A Final Scoping Document will be prepared based on the comments received from the public and agencies during the scoping process.

Agency and public scoping meetings will be held to review the study scope and approach and to receive comments and suggestions for consideration from agencies and the general public. Both groups will be asked to comment on the purpose and need for the Northeast Corridor improvements; the study’s goals and objectives; alternatives to be evaluated; social, economic or environmental issues of concern;

and the proposed public involvement plan. The general public and interest groups will be invited via various advertising and outreach mechanisms, and federal, state, and local agencies will be invited by letter to participate in the scoping process.

The public scoping meetings for the Northeast Corridor AA/EIS will be held:

Wednesday, March 17, 2010
7:00 to 8:30 p.m.
Julia Carson Government Center
300 E Fall Creek Parkway
Indianapolis, Indiana

Wednesday, March 24, 2010
7:00 to 8:30 p.m.
Hamilton County Government Center
One Hamilton County Square
Noblesville, Indiana

Information and scoping materials can also be found on the project website, www.indyconnect.org. The formal scoping comment period closes on April 30, 2010. Formal scoping comments can be provided at the above scoping meetings, or may be submitted to the attention of Anna M. Tyskiewicz, Project Manager, Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization, City County Building, Suite 1922, 200 E. Washington Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204, Phone: (317) 327-5487, Fax (317) 327.5950, Email: atyszkie@indygov.org.

2.4 FTA Program Guidance

2.4.1 FTA New Starts Criteria

SAFTETEA-LU Section 3011(a) (49 USC 5309(d)) requires that projects proposed for New Starts funding be justified based on comprehensive review of the following criteria:

1. Mobility improvements;
2. Environmental benefits;
3. Operating efficiencies;
4. Cost effectiveness; and
5. Transit supportive land use policies and future patterns.

2.4.2 Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities

In June 2009, the U.S. Department of Transportation (of which the FTA is an element), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced an interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities to help families in all communities — rural, suburban and urban — gain better access to affordable housing, more transportation options, and lower transportation costs, while protecting the environment in communities nationwide.

The Partnership has identified six principles that will guide it:

1. Provide more transportation choices: Develop safe, reliable and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote public health.
2. Promote equitable and affordable housing: Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
3. Enhance economic competitiveness: Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers as well as expanded business access to markets.
4. Target resources to existing communities: Target federal funding toward existing communities – through such strategies as transit-oriented, mixed-use development and land recycling – to increase community revitalization, improve the efficiency of public works investments, and safeguard rural landscapes.
5. Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investments: Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.
6. Value unique characteristics of communities, no matter their size: Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe and walkable neighborhoods – rural, urban or suburban.

The Partnership principles are currently being implemented through existing federal funding programs, including the FTA New Starts program. Specific guidelines for incorporating the principles in the New Starts process have not been released, but are expected during the timeframe of this AA/EIS. In anticipation of these guidelines, the principles are being considered in the development of goals and objectives for the Northeast Corridor transit improvements.

2.5 Schedule and Contacts

The schedule for completion of the Northeast Corridor AA/EIS is attached. The contact people for the FTA and the Indianapolis MPO are listed below:

Reginald Arkell
Federal Transit Administration, Region 5
200 W. Adams Street, Suite 320
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Phone: 312-886-3704
Email: reginald.arkell@dot.gov.

Anna M. Tyskiewicz, Project Manager
Indianapolis MPO
City County Building, Suite 1922
200 E. Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
Phone: (317) 327-5487
Email: atyszkie@indygov.org.

3.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

3.1 Purpose and Need

The Northeast Corridor includes the main travel corridors between downtown Indianapolis and the rapidly growing areas of Hamilton County, including the communities of Fishers and Noblesville, as well as the intervening high-density residential and commercial areas of northeastern and central Marion County. As currently identified, the purpose of the Project is to improve mobility within the Northeast Corridor of Central Indiana through the development of improved transit options.

This part of Indianapolis contains the region's most severe travel and mobility challenges. Previous studies have shown that the Northeast Corridor, particularly I-69 north of I-465, continues to face the worst mobility challenges in the region. Given growing mobility challenges, forecasted population and employment growth, and a strong urban center near downtown Indianapolis, a potential promising alternative is investment in transit to supplement and enhance the existing Indianapolis bus system (IndyGo) and to extend services to new markets throughout this regional corridor.

Consistent with the purpose of the project, the AA/EIS will address the need to:

- (a) Improve mobility, accessibility and travel options within the Northeast Corridor;
- (b) Support sustainable, long-term economic growth and livability; and
- (c) Support local transportation plans and policies.

3.2 Project Goals and Objectives

Based on the purpose and need identified above, the FTA New Starts criteria, and the livability principles previously described, the goals and objectives for the Project are as follows:

Goal 1: Provide a quality transit option for travelers in the study area.

Objectives:

- **Provide more travel options for travelers.** According to the 2007 Urban Mobility Report, Indianapolis ranks among the top 25 cities in the United States in terms of average delay per peak-period traveler, with more than 24 million person-hours per year in congestion.¹ Traffic congestion has continued to increase over the past three decades on the three Interstate routes that traverse the Northeast Corridor: I-69, I-465 and I-70. Transit strategies can provide a useful new travel alternatives for travelers trying to avoid congestion.
- **Improve air quality in the Indianapolis Metropolitan Region.** Increasing vehicle emissions are expected to continue to contribute to deteriorating air quality in central Indiana. The eight-county Indianapolis metropolitan planning area lies within or partly within two-non-attainment areas as classified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Within the Northeast

¹ Texas Transportation Institute. *The 2007 Urban Mobility Report*. September 2007.

Corridor, in July 2004, Marion and Hamilton counties were classified as non-attainment for the ground level pollutant ozone (O₃) under the 8-hour standard. In April 2005, Hamilton and Marion Counties were also classified as non-attainment for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) under the annual standard.²

- **Improve travel time and convenience.** Like many large cities, Indianapolis is served by a “beltway” and an arterial network to provide access around the city. With IndyGo’s current bus systems and more recently introduced IndyGo Commuter Express (ICE) services to Carmel and Fishers, travelers continue to put a high value on their time and continue to look for new travel options that will make traveling in the region more convenient.
- **Attract new riders to transit.** The goal of introducing fixed guideway transit is to encourage transit ridership and provide a viable alternative to personal automobile use.
- **Improve services for low-income/minority/transit dependent travelers.** Transportation equity is an important consideration for future transportation investments. Transit dependent residents in the study area need good transit options to more of the region’s employment areas as well as trips to recreation and community facilities.

Goal 2: Support economic development and positive regional growth patterns.

Objectives:

- **Provide transportation capacity to support growth.** Population and employment growth in the region and within the study area are expected to continue in the future. From 1970 to 2000, Hamilton County increased 234% in population alone, and is expected to continue to lead the region’s population growth. Additional transportation capacity and travel options will be needed to support this growth, providing access between employment centers in Marion and Hamilton Counties and surrounding residential areas.
- **Help attract new businesses and employment.** Marion County is the dominant county for regional employment, with Hamilton County having the second largest employment concentration and 2035 employments forecasts continue this trend. Companies looking to relocate to new facilities or expand existing facilities will be looking for assurances that steps are being taking to provide the area with improved transportation services and new travel alternatives.
- **Stimulate infill development and redevelopment.** The increased accessibility associated with fixed guideway transit can stimulate infill or redevelopment of station areas. The urban form of new transit-supportive development can be significantly more walkable than the existing patterns of development and can introduce higher density products to the real estate market that recently have not been built widely in the region, such as residential units over shops or mixed use development with integrated parking.

² Indianapolis MPO. “Air Quality and Congestion Management System.” 2005.

Goal 3: Support local plans and policies

Objectives:

- **Contribute to the development and adoption of the transit component of the Long Range Transportation Plan.** As this AA/EIS is being prepared, the Indianapolis MPO is in the process of updating its Long Range Transportation Plan. A significant element of this update is the preparation of the transit component of the plan. Further definition of transit options in the Northeast Corridor and public dialogue of its benefits and impacts will support the refinement of this plan.
- **Contribute to the evaluation and adoption of transportation policies.** A significant element of the FTA New Starts process is the definition of a continuing funding source and management plan for proposed actions. As these elements are defined for this project, systems and strategies will be put in place that will provide a policy structure for potential advancement of similar or related initiatives throughout the region.

4.0 ALTERNATIVES

The proposed alternatives and service variations to be evaluated in the AA/EIS are described below. Within the major alternatives, a range of service levels and operating plans will be evaluated to identify the transit service strategy that best meets the Northeast Corridor goals and objectives. Representative characteristics of the alternatives, including service frequency, vehicle capacity, station locations and route terminals will be provided in the AA/EIS.

Each alternative runs between Union Station (or an adjacent downtown transit center) in downtown Indianapolis and Conner Street in downtown Noblesville. Proposed alternatives, which will be refined based on public and agency input received during scoping, include the following:

- **No-Build Alternative:** The No-Build Alternative, which is defined as the existing transportation system plus any committed transportation improvements, is required as part of the NEPA evaluation process. Committed transportation improvements include projects that are already in the Indianapolis MPO and Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which includes added travel lanes and interchange improvements on I-69 and I-465. The No-Build alternative includes no changes to IndyGo bus service or other transit services.
- **Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative:** A TSM Alternative, which reflects the best that can be done for mobility without constructing a new transit guideway, is required as part of the New Starts evaluation process. Bus service would operate in mixed traffic along Conner Street, SR-37, I-69, Binford Boulevard, Fall Creek Parkway, and the Capitol Avenue / Illinois Street one-way pair between Noblesville and South Street in Indianapolis. The alternative includes features to improve the attractiveness of the transit service, such as enhanced bus stops with sheltered waiting areas, real-time next bus arrival information, low-floor diesel-electric hybrid vehicles with enhanced on-board passenger amenities, the ability for buses to use highway shoulders to avoid traffic congestion, traffic signal priority technology to reduce travel times and improve schedule reliability, and dedicated lanes for buses and turning vehicles in downtown Indianapolis.
- **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternative:** A dedicated busway with on-line stations and other related capital improvements would be constructed in the HHPA Railroad right-of-way between Noblesville and approximately 10th Street in Indianapolis, then operate on-street in mixed

traffic via the Capitol Avenue / Illinois Street one-way pair to South Street. The alternative includes features such as stations with sheltered waiting areas, real-time next bus arrival information, low-floor diesel-electric hybrid vehicles with enhanced on-board passenger amenities, traffic signal preemption technology to give buses the right-of-way at busway-street crossings, and dedicated lanes for buses and turning vehicles in downtown Indianapolis.

- **Commuter Rail Transit (CRT) Alternative:** In the commuter rail transit alternative, two different train technologies will be considered – FRA compliant vehicles (suitable for mixed traffic with freight trains) and non-FRA compliant light rail vehicles. FRA compliant vehicles, such as heavier diesel multiple units (DMUs), would operate on improved tracks in the HHPA Railroad right-of-way between Noblesville and approximately 10th Street in Indianapolis, then in the CSX Railroad right-of-way to Union Station. Non –FRA-compliant DMU light rail vehicles would operate on improved tracks in the HHPA Railroad right-of-way between Noblesville and approximately 10th Street in Indianapolis, then in the CSX Railroad right-of-way to Union Station. As an option for reaching a downtown transit center at or adjacent to Union Station, an alignment through the street network of downtown Indianapolis will be analyzed to avoid potential freight conflicts and to allow opportunities for additional stops in the core downtown employment district.

5.0 SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The EIS will consider potential direct, indirect and cumulative effects of the project alternatives upon the social, economic and environmental resources in the project area. Generally, the project area has been defined as 150 feet on either side of the HHPA railroad corridor from Noblesville to approximately 10th street in Indianapolis, then on the CSX railroad right-of-way to Union Station in downtown Indianapolis (approximately 23-miles).

The study areas for identified rail stations will vary according to area of potential effect. Resources such as contaminated materials and archaeology, which can be directly affected by project construction, will have study areas defined by the limits of disturbance. The impacts will be evaluated for the construction period and for the long-term period of operation. Measures to mitigate significant adverse impacts will be considered. The analysis areas will include:

1. Transportation Impacts

- Air Quality
- Noise and Vibration
- Traffic, Parking, Transit, Pedestrians, and Freight Rail
- Energy and Potential for Conservation
- Safety and Security

2. Impacts to the Natural Environment

- Water Quality
- Wetlands
- Flooding
- Waters of the U.S.
- Farmland
- Ecologically Sensitive Areas
- Endangered Species
- Hazardous Waste

3. Impacts to the Social, Economic and Built Environment

- Environmental Justice
- Community Cohesion
- Neighborhood impacts
- Land Acquisition and Displacements
- Land Use, Zoning and Economic Development
- Consistency with Local Plans
- Historic Properties and Resources
- Parkland
- Archaeology
- Aesthetics
- Construction impacts
- Indirect and cumulative impacts

6.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

As required by the FTA and in accordance with Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU legislation, a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for the Northeast Corridor AA/EIS has been prepared. The overall mission of the PIP is to create an atmosphere of openness that builds trust with the public. Community input is vital to the project's success, and the FTA and PMT will be committed to providing meaningful public involvement opportunities throughout the process.

The PIP outlines the approach to engage the public. Outreach will be focused on both the general public and targeted audiences. The PIP details the activities designed to ensure that members of the public receive the information they want, have opportunities to provide input to decisions that could have long-term effects on their communities, and feel confident that their views are considered in future transit decisions. This plan is intended to be a working document that can be adapted based on the project and public needs. The PIP details various communication mechanisms to assist in establishing an appropriate role for the public in the Northeast Corridor AA/DEIS process. More specifically, the purpose of the Public Involvement Plan for the Northeast Corridor AA/DEIS is to:

- Foster consensus and informed consent among all stakeholders in terms of understanding corridor challenges and opportunities
- Achieve common knowledge of the alternative ideas and concepts being considered
- Reach firm stakeholder commitments toward implementing selected transit and land use improvements in the corridor through a preferred economic strategy.

Establishing a common understanding of transit and its potential benefits and costs is a challenge in virtually all communities, including Central Indiana. The need for public education regarding transit is clearly understood by the FTA and PMT for this project.

Public involvement goals for the Northeast Corridor AA/EIS include:

- Educating the public on the AA/EIS process;
- Informing the public about the work in progress and regularly monitoring community concerns;

- Conducting an extensive public outreach effort to gather input from all populations along the project corridor;
- Ensuring meaningful participation for all stakeholders;
- Providing information in a manner that is easy for the public to access and understand;
- Working with local businesses, community groups and other organizations to obtain comments from a broad cross-section along the corridor;
- Ensuring the federal, state, regional and local government agencies within the project area are well informed at every stage; and
- Utilizing local residents, business owners, and vendors throughout the community to the extent feasible and practicable to provide services that support the outreach process.

Based on the identified public involvement goals, several principles provide the foundation for the PIP. These principles support the goals of the PIP and ensure that the environmental and alternatives analysis processes serve the public interest. These principles include:

- Facilitating early involvement by agency and public stakeholders in identifying corridor issues and opportunities;
- Building an understanding of the project and credibility in decision-making for the environmental process;
- Establishing and maintaining productive partnerships with individuals and organizations who are interested in the project;
- Providing assistant services at corridor-wide meetings (e.g., court reporters, translators, etc.) so that all interested residents can participate in the process;
- Providing information to the media proactively throughout the environmental process; and
- Maintaining an administrative record that clearly tracks all residents and stakeholders' input into the decision-making process.

These principles support the goals of the PIP and ensure that the environmental processes serve the public interest. Components of the PIP are described below.

6.1 Stakeholder Interviews

These one-on-one meetings will provide key stakeholders an opportunity to express desires, issues or concerns regarding transit planning for the Northeast Corridor. These stakeholder interviews will supply valuable information and insights for defining the detailed PIP as the project moves forward, and will provide significant relationship-building/enhancing opportunities with individuals whose understanding and potential support will be important as the project moves forward.

6.2 Public Involvement Meetings & Public Hearings

Corridor-wide public involvement meetings will be held to discuss issues from a larger geographical perspective. These meetings will be coordinated with the requirements of the NEPA process as public informational meetings and public hearings. These corridor-wide meetings will be conducted within both Hamilton and Marion County and will be held during the day and evening to maximize public attendance. The purpose of these meetings will be to bring together all of the issues from the various neighborhoods and to provide a corridor-wide understanding of similarities and differences. These meetings will include a short slide presentation and open house for the public to interact with the project team.

Meeting materials, including comment forms, will be available in both English and non-English formats, if applicable, and interpretation services will be provided as required. Meeting summaries will be prepared to document the advertisement of the meeting, meeting logistics and materials, and comments received.

6.3 Newsletter Support Services

Newsletters will be provided to provide status updates and information throughout the project. They will be mailed or emailed to those on the project mailing list at specific milestones. The purpose of these newsletters will be to inform interested citizens and to solicit their comments on ideas or decisions associated with the project. Newsletters will be sent to third-party groups such as neighborhood associations, business associations, faith-based organizations, and other similar groups/organizations with readily accessible distribution lists for their memberships.

6.4 Fact Sheets

Fact Sheets will be provided provide project facts and information throughout the AA/EIS process. Topics to be included in the fact sheets will be identified as the project evolves based on public questions and comments. In the beginning, they will provide: a brief project overview, a corridor map, a description of technology options, and opportunities for stakeholder input.

6.5 Frequently Asked Questions about NEPA and FTA Process

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) handouts with information specific to the NEPA and FTA processes will be developed for use at the onset of the AA/EIS process. The FAQ handouts will provide an overview of past studies and answer basic questions, such as: what is NEPA; who is the FTA and what is their decision making process; why is the study being done; who will decide the preferred alternative; what factors determine the preferred alternative; and what is the public's role in the process?

6.6 Website Support Services

An external project website, www.indyconnect.org will be used to disseminate information and provide a schedule of events. The website will supplement pertinent project status information disseminated via project newsletters, emails, and other project related materials at the direction of the PMT. The website will be updated regularly with timely project information.

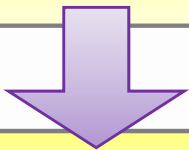
6.7 Environmental Justice Outreach

To effectively address Community and Environmental Justice (EJ) concerns and Executive Order 12898, the social and community impacts of the Northeast Corridor alternatives will be evaluated through an extensive public involvement program. The Community and EJ outreach approach will incorporate various participation and information exchange tools and techniques and the results will be documented in the AA/EIS.

SCHEDULE MILESTONES

Public/Agency Scoping Meetings

March/April - 2010



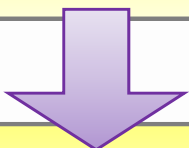
Alternatives Analysis Report

March - 2011



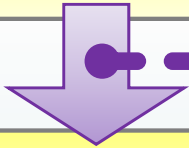
Preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement

June - 2011



Public Hearing

August - 2011



Draft Environmental Impact Statement

October - 2011

New Starts Application
September,
2011

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Additional Comments:

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**Please contact us if you have any questions
or would like more information:**

Our phone number is: 317-327-5487

Our email is: atyszkie@indy.gov

Our office hours are: Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm EST

Or Visit our website: <http://indyconnect.org/>

2. Fold along this line, tape close, and mail with proper postage.

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| <p>Place Stamp Here</p> |
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**Attn: Anna Tyszkiewicz
Indianapolis MPO
City County Building, Suite 1922
Indianapolis, IN 46204**

COMMENTS

Event: Northeast Corridor AA/EIS Scoping Meeting

Date: March 17, 2010: 7:00 – 8:30 pm

The Project Team requests your opinions, ideas, and comments on the project scope so they can be given full consideration during the Northeast Corridor AA/EIS. Please return this form to a comment box prior to leaving the event **or** mail the form to the address on the back of this sheet.

All comments are welcome! We appreciate your participation!

Optional Name: _____
Address: _____
E-mail: _____

1. In your opinion, what should be the purpose for this project? What needs should the project address?

2. Are we looking at the right options (alternatives)?

3. What is the best transit technology for our needs?

4. Are we considering the right social, economic, and environmental impacts?

5. Do you have any additional comments?
