

Regional transportation plan intelligent choice for county

Two years ago, the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority conducted public meetings in Johnson County to talk about improving our region's system for connecting people and places.

In those meetings and follow-up conversations, you shared with us your ideas for better links to the metropolitan area, concerns about access and mobility and thoughts on congestion, the environment and more.

Now, we're coming back with new ideas and a request for more feedback.

What brings us back is the multifaceted regional transportation plan recently unveiled by Indy Connect: Central Indiana's Transportation Initiative.

The draft plan includes such things as an expanded bus service with more and quicker service beyond Marion County, cross-city routes and increased frequency; an in-street light-rail train on or near Washington Street; a ground-level commuter rail train that could run from Indianapolis south to Greenwood and north to Fishers with multiple stops in Indianapolis; and expanded roadways and bike and pedestrian paths that connect to bus and train stops.

The plan also outlines how these modes of transportation could work together.

Under this plan, residents of Johnson County would benefit from a ground-level commuter rail line that could run from Greenwood to Indianapolis and



Ron Deer

then on to Fishers, with multiple station stops and more frequent light-rail service within the urban core.

In addition, Johnson County would see new bus routes that improve travel within the county and access to the metro area.

The expanded service could decrease wait time between buses, increase cross-city service, require fewer transfers and provide more and quicker service.

The bus service would connect with other modes of transportation, including rail and pedestrian walkways and bikeways.

The draft plan also calls for reviving the Greenwood express bus service using a different route and adding a new express lane on Interstate 65.

Those of us who have been advocating for improved transit for years see this announcement as an encouraging development that adds momentum to the progress made in recent years.

We also like the way this plan is taking shape. Driven in part by a private-sector study, the plan is being brought to the public by

Indy Connect, a collaboration among three of the region's public transportation and planning agencies — the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization, IndyGo and Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority.

You'll find details of the plan, including a map showing Johnson County, at indyconnect.org.

We encourage you to visit the Web site and review the document.

Then let us know what you think by leaving your comments on the Web site or, even better, attending one of the public meetings planned for the next few months.

For your convenience, Indy Connect has scheduled two meetings in Johnson County: At 3 p.m. Feb. 20 at the Greenwood Public Library, 310 S. Meridian St., and at 7 p.m. March 10 at the Johnson County Public Library, Franklin branch, 401 State St.

As a member of the Greenwood City Council and a regional transportation authority board member, I hope to see you at one of those meetings.

Please join me in sharing feedback on the draft plan and specific ideas and comments. We need everyone's input in order to create a transit system that best meets the needs of our community and the region.

Ron Deer is a member of the Greenwood City Council and board member of the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority. Send comments to letters@dailyjournal.net.