

Letter to the editor

To the Editor:

Two years ago, CIRTA — the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority — held public meetings in Hendricks 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 multi-faceted 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 north to Fishers and south to Greenwood 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 Hendricks County would benefit from new bus routes that improve travel within the county and access to the metro area; express commuter bus service; and the Washington Street light rail, which would run from near the Indianapolis International Airport to downtown Indianapolis and the city's east side. You can see a detailed map at www.IndyConnect.org/map.htm.

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 (MPO), IndyGo, and the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA).

You'll find details of the plan at www.IndyConnect.org. We encourage you to visit the website and review the document. Then let us know what you think by leaving your comments on the website 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 Hendricks County. One was held Feb. 20 at the Plainfield-Guilford Township Public Library. The second is 7 p.m. March 16 at the Avon Town Hall.

As Hendricks County residents who were elected to represent you and who are CIRTA board members, we hope to see you at the March 16 meeting.

Please join us 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.

Larry Hesson,
Hendricks County Council president

Bill Kirchoff
Plainfield Town Council vice president