

**Rapid Transit for the Indianapolis Region:
Resolutions and Recommendations
of the Greater Allisonville Community Council (GACC)**
(June 2008)

Resolutions Approved by the GACC Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of the Greater Allisonville Community Council (GACC) has voted on the following rapid transit policy resolutions and recommendations for the Indianapolis region:

Supports a Regional Rapid Transit System: The Central Indiana Regional Transit Authority (CIRTA) should begin immediately to create a rapid transit system for the Indianapolis region. The transit system should include the core transit technology as well as the supporting infrastructure, including a feeder bus system, sidewalks, paths, and bicycle lanes.

The initial system should be in the northeast corridor identified by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) *Directions* study “Northeast Corridor Rapid Transit Alternatives Analysis Completion Study” (draft report, December 5, 2007).

1. The rapid transit system should follow one of two routes in Marion County identified by the MPO *Directions* study:
 - A.) **The Hoosier Heritage Port Authority (HHPA)** route, also called the “Nickel Plate Railroad route”, from Noblesville across the Hamilton-Marion County line in Castleton to downtown.
 - B.) The **HHPA-North Keystone Avenue** route to downtown using a combination of the Nickel Plate route and Keystone Avenue in Marion County.
2. CIRTA should use one of the three transit technologies identified in the *Directions* study as being suitable to the rapid transit needs of the Indianapolis region: light rail (LRT), bus rapid transit (BRT), or automated guided transit (AGT).

Supports a Regional System to Finance Rapid Transit: Recognizing that no rapid transit system in the world is paid for solely by fare box revenues, the GACC Board recommends that CIRTA establish a long-term regional revenue system for building and operating a rapid transit system in the Indianapolis region. This funding system should include federal, state, regional, and local funds for building and operating the regional transit system. The revenue system should be equitable in the sense that the those areas receiving the greatest benefits should pay a largest share of the costs.

CIRTA should work with the affected neighborhoods in the region to address the unique problems

that a transit system may pose for them. GACC believes that any regional transit system that does not share the advantages proportionally with the disadvantages will fail.

Opposes the Use of Commuter Rail (heavy rail): GACC opposes any use of *commuter rail* (heavy rail) technology as a startup system along the Nickel Plate railroad corridor.

- **Not Suited for the Indianapolis region:** Commuter rail transit technology is not suited to the demographics and distances in the Indianapolis region. It has been rejected by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) *Directions* study “Northeast Corridor Rapid Transit Alternatives Analysis Completion Study” (draft report, December 5, 2007) as suitable to the demographics and land use patterns of the region.
- **Opposed by Neighborhood Organizations:** Commuter rail is strongly opposed by the neighborhood organizations represented by GACC along the Nickel Plate railroad corridor covering an area from 82nd Street on the north, Binford Boulevard on the east, Kessler Boulevard on the south, and Keystone Avenue on the west. These neighborhood associations oppose commuter rail (heavy rail) because it magnifies the problems that currently exist with the running of the Fair Train during the State Fair (the “Fair Train Problem”). These problems include *increased traffic disruptions and congestion* at the major rail-street intersections along the railroad corridor, *increased noise* from the heavy diesel locomotives and passenger cars, *increased vibrations* transmitted by the heavy rail equipment to the residences and businesses along the right-of-way, *increased safety issues* for people living along the railroad corridor or crossing the railroad at grade, and *increased intrusions into the privacy* of the residences whose backyards are along the right-of-way. Because of these problems, the *property values* of homes close to the Nickel Plate right of way *have been affected negatively*.

Other GACC Board Recommendations

The GACC Board recommends that CIRTA consider the following options to ease the transit crisis facing the Indianapolis area:

Expand Intercounty Bus Service (ICE): The bus service now operating between Hamilton and Marion counties should be expanded. CIRTA should also promote car pooling and explore other options to reduce congestion in the northeast corridor, including the use of the use of dedicated lanes for vehicles with higher occupancy rates (HOV lanes).

Expand the IndyGo Bus Service (IndyGo): The IndyGo bus service should move immediately to implement its proposal to add up to 300 new buses to create a bus grid system in Marion county. This system of buses could then be used as a feeder system to the rapid transit system once it is completed.

Build a Pedestrian and Bicycle Ways to Connect Indianapolis Neighborhoods: The city of Indianapolis should begin building a system of pedestrian ways and bicycle lanes using the pedestrian master plan developed for the county.

About the Greater Allisonville Community Council (GACC)

GACC, a 501c(3) not-for-profit organization, provides a neutral public forum for members of the GACC community to discuss and establish a consensus about policy issues of general concern to the Indianapolis region. The Council's guiding philosophy is to *work toward consensus* among neighborhood groups, businesses, and local governments that are represented at GACC's public meetings. The Council has been active for 11 years in matters of *zoning and land use; transportation*, including pedestrian ways, roadways, and rapid transit; and *quality of life issues*, such as healthy life-styles, environmental quality, public safety, and beautification. GACC represents 22 neighborhood associations in northeast Marion County (city of Indianapolis) in an area bounded by 82nd Street on the north, Binford Boulevard on the east, Kessler Boulevard on the south, and White River/Keystone Avenue on the west.

Comments, suggestions, or questions about this statement should be addressed to Dr. Bob Lehnen, Vice-President, Greater Allisonville Community Council at robert_lehnen@att.net. Please include the phrase ***"Rapid Transit Comments"*** in your subject heading.