

INDIANAPOLIS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

2 0 1 7 A N N U A L R E P O R T



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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



In some ways, 2017 was like any other year for the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization. We allocated funds, executed projects, managed improvement initiatives, and tracked progress on a number of projects.

In other ways, though, it was a unique year in that it allowed us unusual opportunities to sharply highlight attributes that define the MPO's identity and vision for the future. As you read this annual report, you'll learn about the details of our work in 2017. In this space, I'd like to point out those attributes that rose to the top through the work of the MPO's amazing team.

Sound fiscal and project management

This is our foundational responsibility, and the MPO team handled it especially well in 2017 as it obligated \$51.7 million and bid 37 projects – all within required time frames and without unnecessary complication.

Technological advancement

At every opportunity, the MPO team embraces opportunities to use technology to increase our effectiveness and efficiency. This year, that included continuing to strengthen MITIP, an interactive project database that supports the management of TIP funds and projects, so that it better integrates with the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and a Pavement Management System.

Long-range vision

The MPO team strives to go beyond what's expected to focus strategically on both the immediate and distant future. As such, the MPO hosted the region's first autonomous vehicles summit in 2017, bringing together experts and area businesses to discuss the impact autonomous vehicles will have on the region's movement of freight and people.

More broadly, the MPO launched a strategic planning process focused on issues that affect the region. We convened expert panels with MPO members and regional leaders to address water, land use, housing, transportation and economic development. As part of this process,

MPO staff and members of the Indianapolis Regional Transportation Council (IRTC) Administrative Committee visited the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Denver Regional Council of Governments to learn about their structure and services.

Regional mindset

The MPO is by definition regional, but the MPO team worked hard in 2017 to show that being regional is more than simply a directive. The MPO worked closely in the past year with regional representatives on long-term planning, and it issued nearly \$450,000 in federal funding to local planning projects. Most important, however, it forged and strengthened relationships with regional leaders so that communication and collaboration are ongoing.

Collaboration

The MPO could not do its work without its partners. As always, we worked closely with the Indiana Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration in 2017, but the team also strengthened relationships with municipalities throughout the region. In addition, by holding public meetings and offering opportunities for public input, the MPO showed citizens that it is eager to collaborate with them as well.

Growth and development

The MPO always seeks to strengthen its capabilities, and 2017 showed how this can work to the region's benefit. For example, the MPO team completed the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan mostly in-house – increasing the team's knowledge and expertise along the way – and the MPO launched an internal professional development initiative designed to help employees grow and to increase the retention of talented employees.

In these and other ways, 2017 allowed the MPO to demonstrate some of its greatest strengths. We are proud to have the opportunity to put those strengths to work for the people of Central Indiana – we believe they will be the foundation for planning that will bear fruit for decades – and we appreciate your interest in our work.

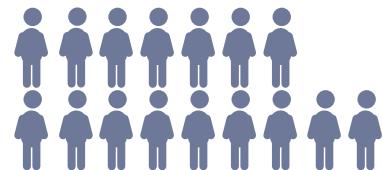
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna M Gremling".

Anna Gremling
Executive Director

OUR REGION

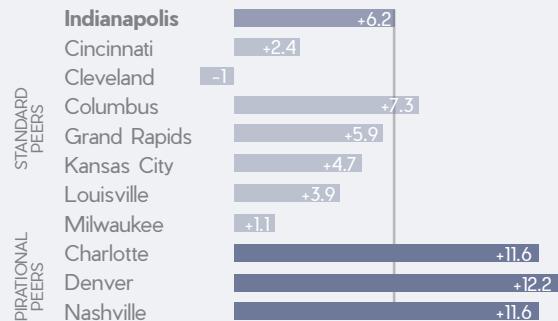
The Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the regional entity that plans and programs federal transportation funds for highways, transit, non-motorized transportation, and other means of moving people and goods. The MPO works within federal transportation requirements to guide the development of a multi-modal transportation system within the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). The MPA includes the urbanized area plus areas expected to urbanize over the next 20 years.

The MPA covers an area of 1,520 square miles over eight Central Indiana counties. The region's transportation network is dynamic, from serving rural towns to accommodating 300,000 spectators for the largest single-day sporting event in the world. As Central Indiana continues to grow, the MPO strives to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves the economic and mobility needs of the 1.5 million Hoosiers who call this region home.



MPA Pop.: 1,558,201

Population Change (2010-2016 % rate of change)



8 COUNTIES

Boone • Hamilton • Hancock • Hendricks • Johnson • Marion • Morgan • Shelby

11 CITIES

Beech Grove • Carmel • Fishers • Franklin • Greenfield • Greenwood • Indianapolis • Lawrence • Noblesville • Southport • Westfield

22 TOWNS

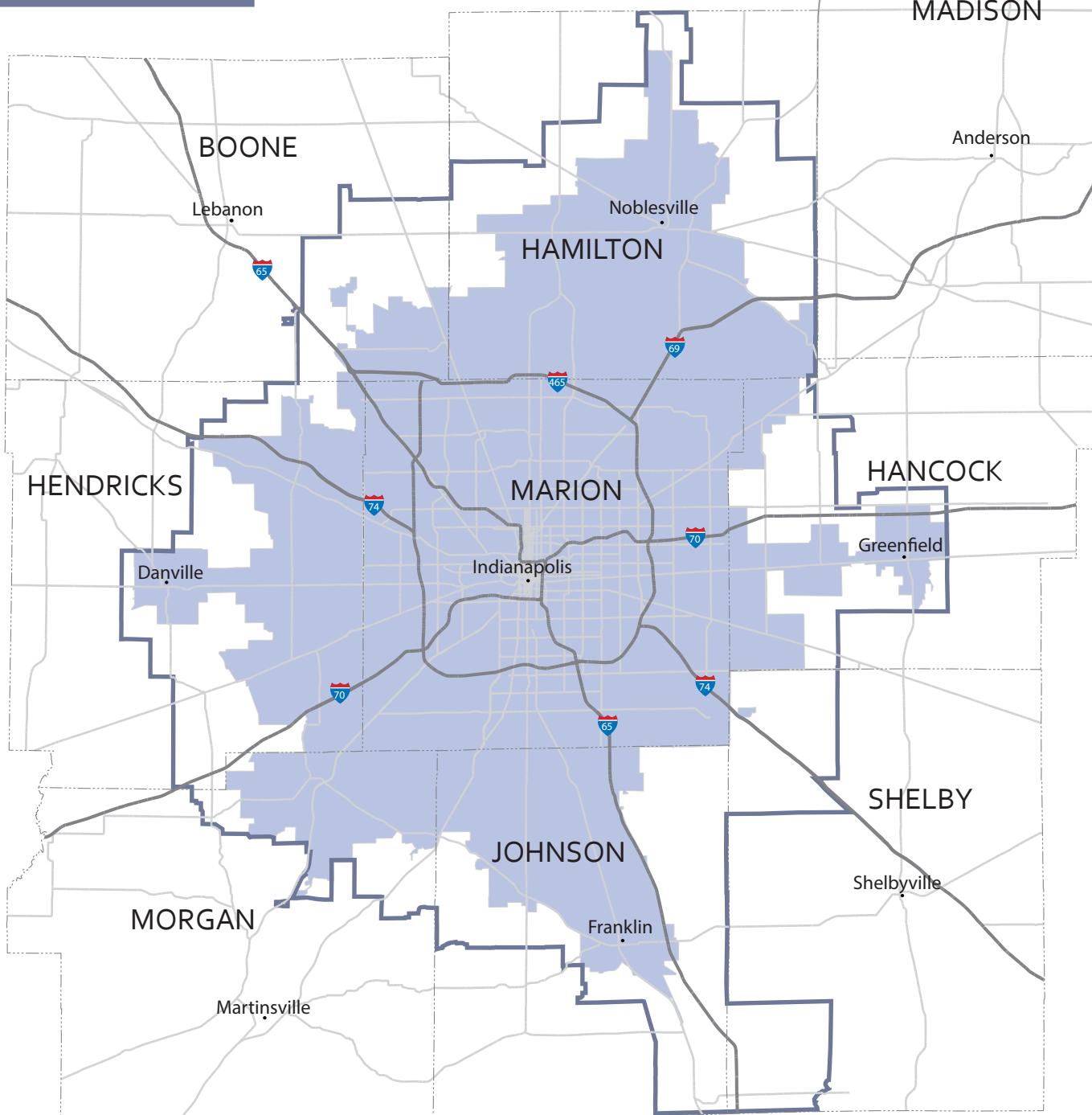
Arcadia • Atlanta • Avon • Bargersville • Bethany • Brooklyn • Brownsburg • Cicero • Cumberland • Danville • Edinburgh • McCordsville • Mooresville • New Palestine • New Whiteland • Pittsboro • Plainfield • Speedway • Spring Lake • Whiteland • Whitestown • Zionsville

MPA

1,520
square
miles

975
square
miles

Urbanized
Area



Indianapolis Urbanized Area
Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Area

0 4.5 9 18 Miles

This map was created by the Indianapolis MPO for graphic display purposes and does not represent a legal document.





ADMINISTRATIVE

planning for regional needs

Strategic Plan

In recent years, the MPO has received a number of member and partner inquiries about regional collaboration and the scope of the MPO, likely as a result of the MPO's success leading Indy Connect and Regional Development Authority partnerships. In response, the MPO has launched a strategic planning process focused on issues that affect the region and could limit its potential.

As part of this process, MPO staff and members of the Indianapolis Regional Transportation Council (IRTC) Administrative Committee visited the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Denver Regional Council of Governments to learn about their structure and services. In addition, expert panels were convened with MPO members and regional leaders to address issues regarding water, land use, housing, transportation, and economic development. Co-chairs from each panel presented their findings to the Administrative Committee on Dec. 1, 2017.

Based on the information gathered from these findings, the Administrative Committee will craft a vision and seek to resolve the question of the most appropriate structure for the organization. Early in 2018, the Administrative Committee will package all of its recommendations for the full IRTC Policy Committee to consider.

Government Relations

As the Indiana General Assembly continues to weigh legislation concerning the recent transportation funding bill, the IRTC has stated clearly that it wants a strong regional/MPO voice at the table. As it pursues this objective, the MPO will continue to pay for its government relations contract entirely with local funds, and the government relations contractor will track transportation- and region-related conversations at the Statehouse and make regular reports to the IRTC.

Awards and Recognition

- American Planning Association (APA) Indiana Chapter 2017 Award for Outstanding Economic Development Plan: Central Indiana TOD Strategic Plan
- Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) 2017 National Award for Excellence in MPO Coordination and Partnership for Indy Connect
- Deputy Director Sean Northup was recognized in *Mass Transit* magazine's "2017 40 Under 40"

How Are Decisions Made?

The MPO's plans and recommendations are developed in cooperation with the Indianapolis Regional Transportation Council (IRTC), the governing body of the MPO. The IRTC consists of Policy, Technical, and Administrative committees that are represented by officials from jurisdictions within the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA).



Project Highlight: MetroQuest

As part of the Indianapolis MPO's focus on improving public engagement in the transportation planning process, the MPO partnered with MetroQuest on two innovative and highly-interactive surveys. The user-friendly platform proved valuable in assisting the City of Indianapolis Near North Village Center Plan and Indy Connect Let's Talk Transit surveys in Hamilton and Johnson counties. In total, the MPO engaged more than 1,800 Central Indiana residents utilizing MetroQuest in 2017. The projects were so successful, MetroQuest invited MPO staff Jen Higginbotham and Taylor Firestone to share survey findings and experience in a webinar that reached nearly 500 attendees across the U.S. and Canada.



Figure 01



Figure 02

The Indianapolis MPO conducted site visits to metropolitan planning organization peers, including the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), as part of its Strategic Plan. **Figure 01** – Craig Parks, Boone County; Mayor Mark Myers, City of Greenwood; Mayor Andy Cook, City of Westfield; Melody Park, City of Indianapolis; Sean Northup, Indy MPO; and Anna Gremling, Indy MPO meet with DRCOG staff. **Figure 02** – Jeff Hill, City of Fishers (left); and Craig Parks, Boone County (center right) listen to a presentation about the Atlanta BeltLine.



PROGRAMMING

using technology to support implementation

IRTIP Update

Thanks in part to its interactive project database, the MPO not only bid dozens of projects and obligated millions of dollars in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2017, but it also strengthened its management of the area's Transportation Improvement Plan.

As the organization responsible for the development, maintenance, and implementation of the four-year Indianapolis Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Programming Section is currently focused on the TIP covering SFY 2018-2021 and illustrative year 2022. The MPO pursues this responsibility by working cooperatively with multiple agencies and under the guidance of Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), Federal Transit Authority (FTA), and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations. As legislation, guidelines, and policies evolve, Indianapolis MPO staff adjusts the program accordingly.

In SFY 2017, the Indianapolis MPO bid 37 projects and obligated \$51,670,779.36 under INDOT's third year of implementing the Annual Allocation Policy, which requires all federal funding to be issued on a purchase order by May 30 or risk returning unobligated funds to the State. With the cooperation and hard work of Central Indiana's local planning agencies (LPAs), the MPO spent down the entire allocation for the Indianapolis region by April.

MiTIP, the MPO's interactive project database, continues to be integral

to this process, helping MPO staff and LPAs successfully manage the TIP. In early 2017, staff began to develop the 2018-2021 TIP in coordination with INDOT. The new TIP included recommended projects in three categories: those from the SFY 2022 call for projects, new INDOT projects in SFYs 2020 and 2021, and projects carried over from the 2016-2019 TIP. The draft 2018-2021 TIP was issued for a 14-day IRTC review-and-comment period and subsequently for a 30-day public review-and-comment period. After this process, the 2018-2021 TIP was approved by the IRTC on May 24, and by the Federal Highway Administration on July 3.

The MPO and its consultant, Ecolneteractive, continue to refine MiTIP to make it as efficient and user-friendly as possible. Refinements in 2017 included improving the connection between the TIP and the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) in MiTIP, as well as strengthening imported pavement data to move closer to implementing a Pavement Management System.

As MPO staff continued to address new performance-measure regulations, a subcommittee was charged with reviewing the MPO's current TIP project-selection criteria. The subcommittee is comprised of both MPO staff and IRTC Technical and Policy Committee members in order to facilitate both technical and policy-related changes to project-selection criteria. The subcommittee meetings kicked off in September and will continue into 2018, with a target approval date of May 2018.



1 road widening project



14 miles of bike and pedestrian projects



7 bridge rehabilitations or replacements



13.6 lane miles of roadway resurfacing and rehabilitation



8 safety projects and 8 intersection upgrades

2017 by the Numbers

37 PROJECTS TOTALING NEARLY \$168 MILLION

The MPO monitors each project from the TIP, through construction to completion, ensuring schedules and budgets are maintained, with cooperation from all 36 of our LPAs, INDOT, FTA, and FHWA.

The MPO committed \$168M in federal funding to 37 projects in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for 2017.

**624 QUARTERLY REPORTS
396 CONSTRUCTION STATUS REPORTS
16 QUARTERLY TRACKING MEETINGS**





PLANNING

looking ahead regionally and locally

2045 LRTP

In 2017, the Indianapolis MPO continued work on the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), establishing priorities and engaging the public to help shape the plan.

This ongoing project is part of the MPO's responsibility as the transportation planning agency for Central Indiana. When completed, the 2045 LRTP will serve as a regional blueprint for allocating federal funding based on anticipated and desired population and employment growth.

Over the past 12 months, work on the LRTP focused on prioritizing projects based on goals, objectives, and performance measures established in 2016. In addition, the MPO held 15 public meetings in the fall of 2017, gathered online feedback from Central Indiana residents and opened the plan to a period of public comment. All of this input was used to improve the 2045 LRTP and conclusions and recommendations.

MPO staff will present the plan to the Indianapolis Regional Transportation Council (IRTC) for approval in December. Following approval, MPO staff will work with the IRTC to review the planning process and implement 2045 LRTP recommendations.

Finalization of Federal Performance Measures

With the passage of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) and Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the federal government sent a clear message to state departments of transportation and metropolitan planning organizations: Start tracking how your expenditure of federal funding affects the network's performance.

To this end, in 2016 the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) promoted final rules on performance measures in three broad categories: Safety, System Condition, and System Performance. The MPO will be required to identify benchmarks and performance targets for each performance measure. This process will require close collaboration with our planning partners, especially INDOT and IndyGo. In 2017, safety targets will be established; in 2018, condition and performance targets will be needed. As the Indianapolis MPO staff establishes the process, additional information will be provided to IRTC members and the general public.

A/V Summit

The Indianapolis MPO co-hosted its first Autonomous Vehicle Summit with the Transportation Active Safety Institute (TASI) at IUPUI. Guest speakers from Indiana University, Purdue University, the University of Southern California, Cummins Inc. and HNTB engaged IRTC members, consultants, and academics with exciting new autonomous vehicle research. Presenters shared the latest information about crash-data analysis, safety improvements for the movement of freight and people, autonomous vehicle research facilities in the Midwest, and how to consider the impact of autonomous vehicle technology when developing long-range transportation plans. The MPO looks forward to extending the summit into 2018 and beyond.

Crash Data Cleanup

In the fall of 2017, MPO staff launched a project to "clean up" location information in crash records, seeking to provide more accurate and reliable information as an aid to transportation planning decisions. The project includes location information for all fatality and serious-injury records from 2012 through 2017. This major undertaking will result

in the cleanup of about 18,000 crash records, which have become increasingly important as the basis for performance measures and safety target setting.

Another development with crash data is the new Crash Location Improving Program (CLIP) tool. Developed by the Purdue University Center for Road Safety, the tool corrects crash locations using an ArcGIS geodatabase and user-selected geocoder, giving staff the ability to correct crash location information at a faster rate. The combination of the crash-record cleanup project, CLIP tool, and continued ARIES system improvements will give the MPO access to greater locational accuracy in crash records for the past, present, and future.

Transit Update

On Feb. 27, the Indianapolis City-County Council approved the transit referendum passed by Marion County voters in November 2016 to help fund major improvements to IndyGo. The additional 0.25% income tax will provide \$54 million annually to the city's transit service, and will also help fund the planning and construction of three bus rapid transit lines, transit stop amenities, new buses, increased route frequencies on all bus lines, and other public infrastructure improvements. Groundbreaking for Central Indiana's first bus rapid transit route—the Red Line—is anticipated for spring 2018.



Figure 03 – The MPO co-hosted its first Autonomous Vehicle Summit with the Transportation Active Safety Institute at IUPUI.



Figure 04 – MPO staff Stephanie Belch (far left) and Ward Kennedy (far right) present Long Range Transportation Plan 2045 findings to receive public input in Zionsville.

After the successful 2016 Marion County transit referendum, the MPO shifted to a review-and-support role as IndyGo leads efforts to vastly improve transit service in Marion County. In the summer of 2017, Indy Connect: Central Indiana's Transit Initiative continued public outreach and engagement in Hamilton and Johnson counties to educate residents on public transit and gauge interest in improving or expanding transit throughout Central Indiana. The MPO, IndyGo, and the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA) have created a three-year plan of public dialogue (2018), planning (2019), and awareness/education (2020) to support possible education around a 2020 referendum in four suburban townships.

While IndyGo is now the sole source for the Marion County transit build-out, MPO staff will continue to maintain IndyConnect.org to provide the most recent information on public engagement and transit planning efforts.

Local Planning Studies

The Indianapolis MPO provides federal dollars to help fund local planning projects within the Metropolitan Planning Area. Funded studies are chosen via a competitive project-selection process. In 2017, the MPO logged a key milestone in this process, and another will be achieved in 2018:

- > In 2017, the MPO provided nearly \$450,000 in federal funding for seven local planning projects.
- > In 2018, a ranked list of planning studies will be funded, in order, as funding becomes available. (Two projects tied for 7th place and two projects tied for 9th place.) Summaries of the seven funded projects are provided below.

Town of Avon Thoroughfare & Transportation Improvement Plan

Update

The Town of Avon will update its 2006 Thoroughfare and Transportation Improvement Plan, which addresses transportation needs for the community and provides a foundation for planning efforts in the Town of Avon. With the help of creative financing and the leveraging of local resources with federal funds, over the last 10 years the Town has used the plan to guide investments of more than \$100 million in trails, capacity improvements, safety improvements and preservation of the existing transportation system. Avon plans to build on the foundation and momentum created in the last decade.

City of Lawrence Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan

The City of Lawrence will create a citywide Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan to assist in improving mobility/accessibility for both bicyclists and pedestrians. Home to Fort Harrison State Park – which attracts visitors from across the state but predominantly from Central Indiana – the City

of Lawrence recognizes that this major recreational destination will be better served when the bicycle/pedestrian network within the City of Lawrence is improved and expanded. In addition to serving the needs of the City of Lawrence, the improvements would also benefit the Town of McCordsville, City of Indianapolis, City of Fishers, Hamilton County, and Hancock County.

City of Indianapolis Transportation Integration Plan

The City of Indianapolis, through its Department of Public Works (DPW) and Department of Metropolitan Development (DMD), is undertaking a first-of-its-kind Transportation Integration Plan to establish a comprehensive and coordinated transportation program guided by overarching community values, transparent and data-driven decision making, and fiscal realities. Currently, the City of Indianapolis plans for transportation investments by mode (a thoroughfare plan for roadway capacity expansion, a greenways trail plan, a bicycle plan, a pedestrian plan, and – through partners at the MPO and IndyGo – freight and transit plans). Each of these plans is derived from different values and all were developed at different times.

The Transportation Integration Plan will address the strategic-planning aspects of transportation – the development, implementation, and administration of transportation policies and projects – and the capital aspects of transportation, which includes integrating and prioritizing modal plan investments. In this way, the plan will serve as a “virtual Department of Transportation” for the City of Indianapolis, coordinating responsibilities, policies, and investments across the city’s many local transportation players. The integration plan will act as the primary transportation component in the Comprehensive Plan for Indianapolis and Marion County.

City of Westfield 191st St. Corridor Programming Study

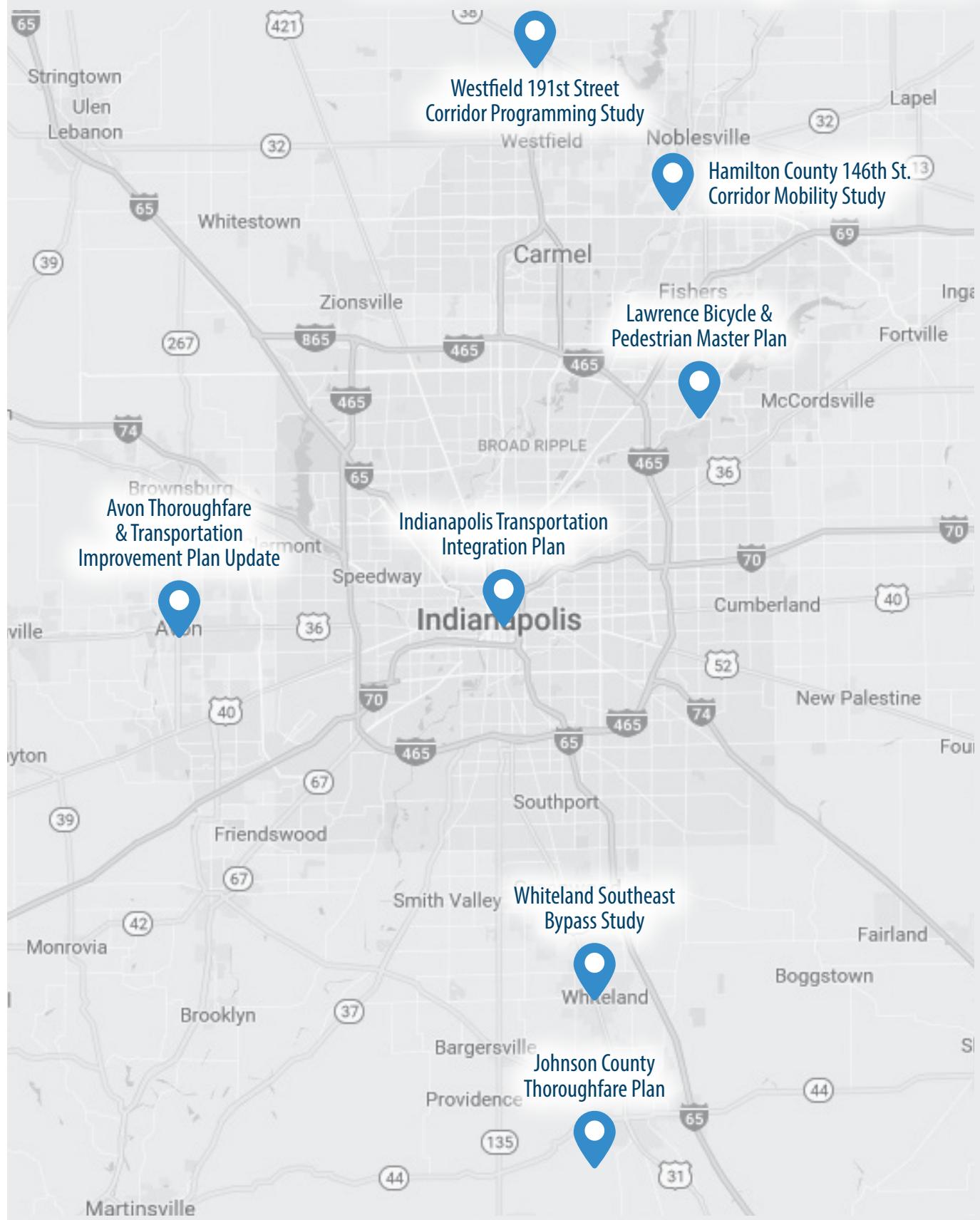
191st Street is considered a primary arterial in Westfield’s Thoroughfare Plan and a major collector by INDOT. With the reconstruction of US 31, usage of 191st has been amplified and that, coupled with the success of Grand Park, has generated significant traffic as well as commercial interest.

With this study, Westfield will establish right-of-way requirements for new development and identify and design a typical roadway cross-section that accommodates not only the traffic demands, but also multi-modal demands, including bike lanes, pedestrian trails, and future Red Line bus rapid transit accessibility and usage.

Town of Whiteland Southeast Bypass Study

The purpose of this study is to identify a preferred alternative for a bypass corridor through the southeast portion of the Town of Whiteland. Components of the study include the study of an overpass bridge to

2017 Local Planning Projects





PLANNING

alleviate truck and rail freight traffic while benefiting pedestrians and bicyclists with a new southeast-side trail system. This project would extend the service life of existing Whiteland Road by reducing traffic volume, including heavy-truck traffic volumes by as much as 75%. In addition, it will reduce traffic volumes and extend the service life of the roadway network in downtown Whiteland. Once the preferred alternative is identified, it is intended that it will be adopted into the town's Thoroughfare Plan.

Johnson County Thoroughfare Plan

This project will create a usable Thoroughfare Plan document for the unincorporated areas of Johnson County. Utilizing existing traffic volumes and thoroughfare planning information from other local government agencies in the region, the plan will:

- > identify general improvements needed to the roadway network to accommodate both current traffic volume and future growth

- > provide general cost estimates for typical roadway sections
- > prioritize road projects based on anticipated need.

As part of this process, the plan will identify current traffic volume and patterns in order to direct future capital investment into right types of projects that provide the most benefit to traffic movement, future development, safety issues, and multi-modal need.

Hamilton County 146th St. Corridor Mobility Study

This planning project will analyze 146th Street from Lowes Way/Greyhound Pass to Hazel Dell Parkway to provide recommendations for maintaining and improving the roadway's level of service over a 20-year timeframe. This study will seek to preserve the existing system's safety while enhancing transportation mobility in this regionally significant corridor.



Figure 05 – The City of Indianapolis Transportation Integration Plan kicked-off with its first public meeting in October 2017. The MPO is helping fund Phases I and II of the Integration Plan as part of its Local Planning Studies.

2017 in Photos



Figure 06 – A ribbon cutting ceremony in October 2017 signalled completion for the Churchman Ave. Sidewalk Project in Beech Grove. The \$975,000 sidewalk installation on the south side of Churchman from Emerson to Arlington avenues was funded by the MPO.



Figure 08 – Officials in Hendricks County cut the ribbon on the newly completed section of Ronald Reagan Pkwy. between CR 300 N and US 136. The MPO provided \$10.1 million in federal funding.



Figure 07 – Officials cut the ribbon on a \$1.4 million roundabout at Smith Valley and Yorktown roads in Greenwood.



Figure 09 – Construction was completed in August 2017 on a \$3.7 million roundabout at the intersection of 116th St. and Hazel Dell Pkwy. in Carmel.



Figure 10 – Supporters of IndyGo's expanded service plans filled the Indianapolis City-County Council Chambers on February 27, 2017. Council voted to approve the Marion County Transit Plan, which was initially approved in a voter referendum by Marion County residents on November 8, 2016. The plan was a result of a partnership of public and private organizations called Indy Connect, including the MPO, IndyGo, and the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA).



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2018

supporting the needs of the future

Looking Ahead to 2018

The U.S. Department of Transportation issues Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs) to guide consistent metropolitan transportation planning across the nation. The most recent PEAs, released jointly by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Offices of Planning in January 2017, include National Performance Management Measures and Title VI Program Management.

National Performance Management Measures

National Performance Measures have been issued for key areas such as safety, infrastructure conditions, congestion, system reliability, emissions, and freight movement as well as public transit safety and state-of-good repair. We commend the INDOT and the MPOs for establishing a committee to set safety targets, and recommend this format be continued for the other performance areas.

Title VI Program Management

In the coming year, the MPO will continue its emphasis on the Title VI Program Management. Under this program, the MPO is charged with ensuring that Local Public Agencies (LPAs) comply with Title VI nondiscrimination requirements for the use of federal-aid highway funding in local transportation projects. To this end, the MPO will survey local governments to determine whether they have current Title VI Plans and supporting processes. If a plan is not in place, the MPO will provide technical assistance for the development and implementation of a plan. (FHWA or INDOT provide for training needs.) This process ensures that programs and projects adhere to required principles of nondiscrimination and that the MPO's nondiscrimination self-certification is accurate. Any LPAs that do not adhere to Title VI requirements risk having their funding limited.

Data Analytics & Modeling Plan

In recent years, the Indy MPO made significant improvements to the data and modeling capabilities that support its long-range planning, air quality, pavement management, and transit planning. In 2018, it will continue these improvements by developing a Data Analytics & Modeling plan to identify the tasks, data sources, and tactics that are critical to core transportation functions. The plan will be developed using the Indianapolis Regional Transportation Council (IRTC) Administrative Committee's vision for the organization as a key input, and it will offer the flexibility to expand as needed to support the MPO's evolving and possibly expanding scope.

Completing the 2045 LRTP mostly in-house helped the MPO staff grow in knowledge and experience.

Long-Range Planning Tools

By completing the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan mostly in-house, the MPO staff grew in knowledge and experience and recognized the need to improve the array of planning tools used to illustrate and compare the impacts of long-range planning decisions. In 2018, the MPO staff will begin building sketch and scenario planning tools so they are calibrated and high-functioning for the next long-range plan update.

Performance Measures

The adoption of the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) has made viable performance measures essential for the MPO, and the federal government continues to emphasize performance measures and data-based performance targets. As such, in 2018 all three sections of MPO staff will be engaged in the process of building performance measures into the long-range plan, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the MPO's regular course of business.

Cost Estimating

With improved cost estimation being a 2015 Planning Emphasis Area, the MPO began the process of creating a tool that could improve the way it develops and evaluates cost estimates and schedules. MPO staff and consultants will continue evaluating current cost estimating procedures and recommend or develop a consistent cost-estimating process that local planning agencies (LPAs) can use for all project types.

Local Planning Projects

Building on a process launched in 2017, in 2018 the Indy MPO staff and LPAs will use FHWA and FTA planning funds to support local planning projects. The shortage of funds for forward-looking planning studies has been a long-standing challenge that puts a strain on the project pipeline and good planning coordination. To address this challenge, in 2017 the MPO used FHWA planning funds to support local planning projects. It expects to continue this practice in 2018, as local planning project applications have already been accepted and scored, and funding has been dedicated to the program in the 2018 United Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Retention and Professional Development

Having experienced an uptick in turnover since 2014, particularly among planners and senior planners, the MPO is taking steps to retain its best people. Some of the recent turnover can be attributed to increased professional mobility among younger planners, and much of it can be attributed to the strengthening job market and increased planning and development activity among regional planning partners. However, Indy MPO salaries have been mostly stagnant over the past decade, so MPO management has been reviewing compensation rates for comparable positions around the region and state.

In addition, the MPO is continuing to focus on professional development to help improve retention, innovation, and the overall strength of staff. As part of this effort, staff members have been encouraged to attend and present at local, statewide, and national conferences, which not only gives them professional-development opportunities but also helps bolster awareness of Central Indiana's accomplishments. The best practices, resources, and relationships staff brings back from these events have made the MPO's processes stronger and helped the organization earn awards and accolades.

The best practices, resources, and relationships staff members gain from industry events strengthen the MPO's processes and help to earn the organization awards and accolades.



OUR TEAM

New Hires

Two new faces joined the organization in 2017:

James Rinehart joined the Programming Section to support the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) among other responsibilities. **Ward Kennedy** joined the Planning Section to assist with tasks relating to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

Rinehart, a native of Fort Wayne, worked as an intern with the Indianapolis MPO in 2014 while pursuing his masters in Urban and Regional Planning from Ball State University. Previously, Rinehart worked with the City of Indianapolis Department of Business & Neighborhood Services.

Kennedy, a native of Indianapolis, served in the Indiana Army National Guard while pursuing his bachelor's degree in geography and certificates in urban studies and business at Indiana University Bloomington. Kennedy holds a master's in city and regional planning from the University of Memphis and previously worked for the Tennessee DOT and Collier MPO in Florida.



Ward Kennedy
Planner



James Rinehart
Planner



Chris Meulbroek
Intern



Nathaniel Simmons
Intern /
Graduate Assistant

Internship Program

Chris Meulbroek and **Nathaniel Simmons** joined the organization as interns in 2017. Meulbroek graduated in May 2017 from Indiana University Bloomington with his bachelor's in economics and geography, with minors in mathematics and urban development. Simmons is currently pursuing his masters in urban and regional planning at Ball State University and previously worked as an AmeriCorps member in localities across the U.S.

Meulbroek and Simmons assisted with public outreach and engagement on behalf of Indy Connect in Hamilton and Johnson counties. Both interns provided valuable information to residents regarding the current state of mass transit in the Indianapolis region and surveyed residents' preferences to measure needs for future transit investment. Their efforts included attending numerous public events to help engage some 1,500 residents in the process. Of that total, 474 members of the public were surveyed directly by Meulbroek and Simmons, resulting in the collection of more than 26,000 data points.



Figure 11 – MPO staff and their families enjoyed an afternoon at Holliday Park in Indianapolis for the annual summer picnic.



Figure 12 – MPO staff attended an end of year retreat at Eagle Creek Park. The day-long event included exercises that focused on 2018 goal-setting, communication, and team-building.



Figure 13 – Anna Gremling (right) checks out an autonomous vehicle. The presentation was part of the MPO's tour of the Transportation Active Safety Institute (TASI) at IUPUI.



INDIANAPOLIS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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