

INDIANAPOLIS METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION



2020

ANNUAL
REPORT





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CEDS	Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy	MiTIP	The MPO's interactive project database
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration	MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
IMPO	Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization	MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan
INDOT	Indiana Department of Transportation	RACs	Regional Activity Centers
ITDM	IMPO Transportation Demand Model	SPMS	INDOT's project / finance database
LPA	Local Planning Agency	TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
LRTP	Long-Range Transportation Plan	UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program
LUAP	Land Use Advisory Panel		
MDL	Manufacturing / Distribution / Logistics		



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Top Left

Director Gremling, Mayor Cook (Westfield), and Rick Cockrum (Capitol Assets) testifying in the Indiana Statehouse

Bottom Left

Strategic Report Cover, symbolizing IMPO expansion into economic development, housing, land use, and the environment.

Right

Zoom Call from Separation.



A NEW ORGANIZATION FOR CENTRAL INDIANA

SEAN NORTHUP

The Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (IMPO) celebrated one of the most significant events in its 50-year history when it officially became an independent organization on June 1, 2020.

introduc



The IMPO's 2018 Regional Strategic Plan identified three main phases: Create an Independent MPO, Expand the MPO's Planning Scope, and to Formalize the MPO's role as a regional convener. After the Indiana General Assembly approved the statute necessary for the IMPO to operate as an independent organization in early 2019, staff's attention turned to building the administrative and operational foundation needed to successfully run the new organization.

Establishing sound financial practices, responsible approval processes, and a meticulous system of documentation was staff's first priority. With the help of local firms KSM Consulting and Prophet One Solutions, the IMPO built out Oracle's NetSuite as a cloud-based financial system. This was a major task that took about a year to finalize, but the result is a process.

Staff also drafted a financial policies manual that included audit paths, travel policies, and a new procurement policy that received federal approval.

A new human resources handbook, implementation of human resources management system, and an array of new human resources policies were also a major focus in 2020. The local HR consulting practice of Gregory & Appel Insurance helped management establish new job descriptions, advancement paths, salary bands, and a 360-degree feedback processes, all documented in a new employee handbook. The cloud-based NeoGov human resources system has been implemented to manage payroll, onboarding, hiring, benefits, and reviews.

Most of this work took place during COVID-19 pandemic, while staff was working remotely. Celebrations were muted because of required social distancing, but standing up a new organization on such a compressed timeline was a huge, significant accomplishment. Whereas behind-the-scenes operations were the IMPO's major focus throughout 2020, 2021 will bring an exciting emphasis on convening regional partners and developing major regional transportation and economic development plans.

VIDEOS EXPLAIN THE UNEXPLAINABLE

JEN HIGGINBOTHAM, AICP

“**W**hat is the MPO?” It’s a question the Indianapolis MPO (IMPO) team gets often. Making the answer short and simple is a challenge planners have faced for decades. In an effort to answer this question and make the information memorable, the IMPO created the “What is the MPO?” video. Using cartoon graphics and upbeat background music, the video explains what the IMPO does and how it’s funded. The response has been so positive that the IMPO has added a link to the video in its email signature lines and encouraged its Transportation Technical and Policy Committee members to keep it handy, in case they get questions from community leaders or residents.

The IMPO has found the video to be so useful that it has added three more videos to the series: “What is the LRTP?”, “What is the TIP?” and “What is the UPWP?” explain the IMPO’s three core documents and planning requirements. So far, two of the four videos – “What is the MPO?” and “What is the LRTP?” – have been posted to the IMPO website and can also be found on the organization’s YouTube and Facebook pages. The other two are in production and coming soon. Residents are urged to check the teMPO newsletter to get the first look at these videos when they are completed.



Top
Screen capture from
“What is the MPO?”

Screen capture from
“What is the LRTP?”
Bottom



inform

ASSET MANAGEMENT REPORT

INFORMS REGIONAL PLANNING

JENNIFER DUNN

A report addressing more than 10,000 miles of pavement and nearly 2,000 locally maintained bridges and culverts is completed and ready to inform decisions about the management of area assets.

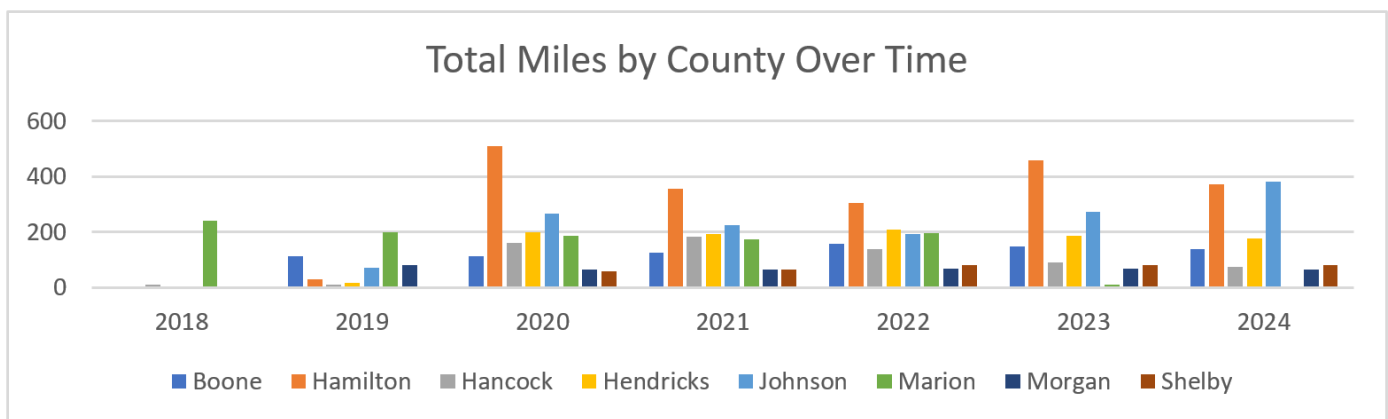
In fall of 2020, the Indianapolis MPO (IMPO) released an Asset Management Report that compiles and summarizes the 2019 asset management plans of its local public agency (LPA) members. Completed pursuant of Indiana Code 36-7-7.7-11, the Asset Management Report can be found on the IMPO's website at www.indympo.org/maps-resources/data-studies/technical-studies.

A compilation of each LPA's pavement asset management plans as well as the counties' bridge asset management plans, the asset management plans are living documents that provide a structured framework of the asset information to help determine when it is most appropriate to repair, replace or rehabilitate a particular

asset. The plan also informs the scheduling of a long-term funding strategy to ensure sufficient funds will be available to implement improvements as needed.

Each LPA must create an asset management plan each year and have it accepted by the Local Technical Assistance Program at Purdue University to be eligible for Community Crossings Matching Grants.

Covering 10,873 centerline miles of pavement and 1,939 locally maintained bridges and culverts in the eight-county region, the IMPO's Asset Management Report has been shared with the city and county councils of its LPA members as well as the State Budget Committee. In fall of 2021, the IMPO will release an Asset Management Report of the 2020 asset management plans.



Top

Display of miles of roadway slated for repair per county by year

THE VISION ZERO TOOLKIT SUPPORTS COMMUNITY EFFORTS

JEN HIGGINBOTHAM, AICP

A world-wide initiative focused on the belief that every transportation-related death or serious injury is preventable, “Vision Zero” champions efforts to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries on our roadways to zero. While many communities in the United States have taken up this vision, they often find themselves with no real template for pursuing it.

The Indianapolis MPO (IMPO) has sought to fill that gap with its Vision Zero Toolkit.

Many communities have created their own Vision Zero action plans and goals to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on roadways by 2025, 2030 or whichever year they’ve identified. But no rules compel communities to create a plan or identify a target year to accomplish “zero,” and a community can choose to apply the many learned concepts of the Vision Zero Movement in several ways.

The IMPO’s Vision Zero Toolkit offers a resource to our communities in the form of a “choose your own adventure” guide and materials that allow communities to pursue a reduction in transportation deaths and serious injuries in whatever way fits that community best. With educational materials, short, information-packed brochures and an inspiration guide of design ideas, the Vision Zero Toolkit can be applied to existing trouble areas in a community or community-wide to prevent future deaths and serious injuries. All of the toolkit materials are brand-customizable, allowing each community to take full ownership of its own approach.

The IMPO hopes communities and partner organizations find the toolkit useful, and encourages them to view it after its release in early 2021.



Top

Vision Zero document cover page

inform

DASHBOARDS PROVIDE QUICK, EASY ACCESS TO DATA

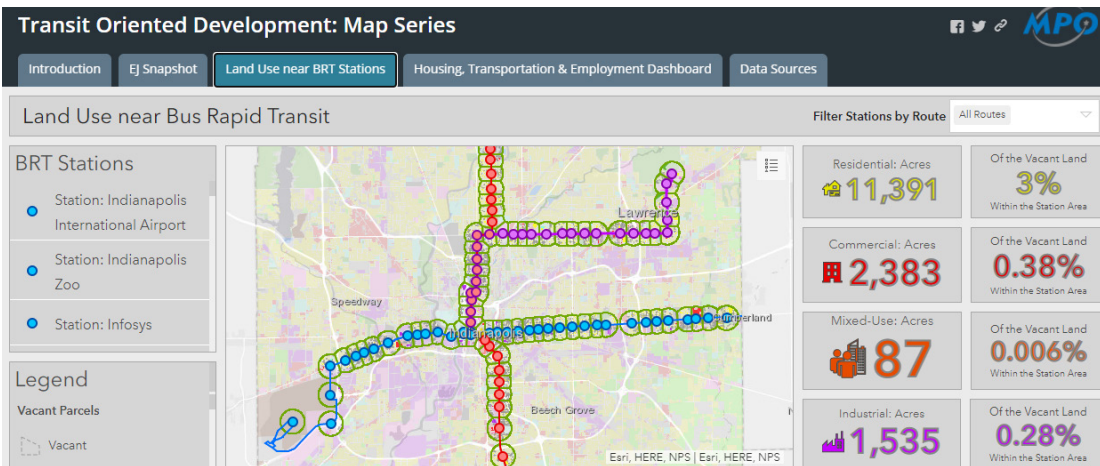
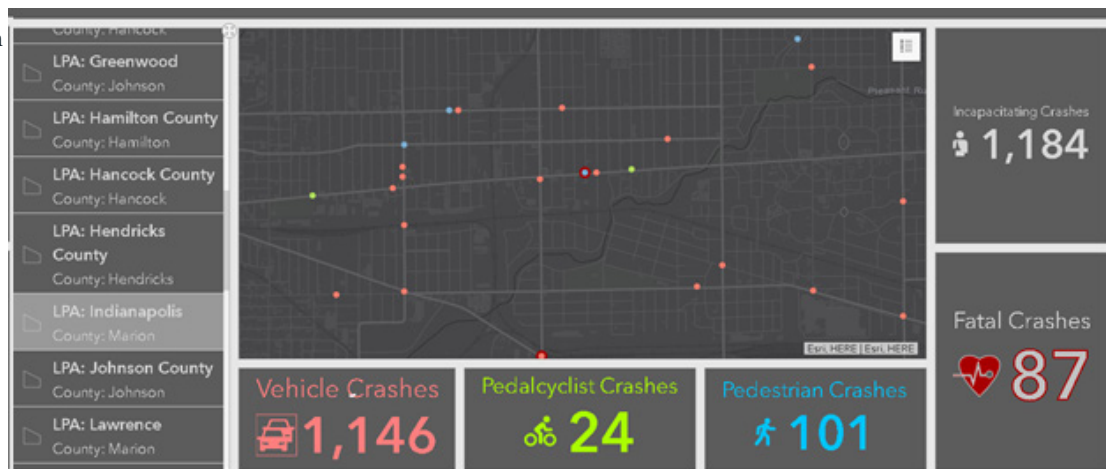
JENNIFER DUNN AND SEAN NORTHUP

Two dashboards on the Indianapolis MPO (IMPO) website are providing a powerful tool to help the organization explain large amounts of data to the public and local public agency (LPA) members.

The Crash Data Dashboard and Transit Oriented Development Dashboard (<https://www.indympo.org/maps-resources/dashboards-reports>) are powered by ESRI's ArcGIS Online's Dashboard plug-in, which creates interactive maps with a series of filters, data indicators and charts. The IMPO introduced the Crash Data Dashboard in 2018 and has updated it each year with the latest fatality and serious injury crash records for the eight-county region.

Crash records come from the ARIES (Automated Reporting Information Exchange System) database, which is the official crash repository of the Indiana State Police. Crash locations have all been checked and corrected for locational accuracy. With interactive features that allow a user to select a specific town or city to see only those crash locations, the dashboard also allow users to filter data by year and by crash type (vehicle, pedestrian or bicycle) and to view data from an individual crash location.

The Transit Oriented Development (TOD) dashboard also debuted in 2018 and has been updated each year since. Utilizing ESRI's StoryMap technology, the TOD dashboard allows users to interactively "walk through" Central Indiana's TOD story. The TOD StoryMap begins with an overview of TOD and its relevance to regional mobility and economic competitiveness, then lists demographic data of residents, employees, and business. It also includes a land use inventory within a half mile of IndyGo's 100 new bus rapid transit stations. The TOD dashboard is a useful and engaging way of seeing who is benefiting from closest proximity to the new transit stations, and how the bus rapid transit lines are helping to shape land use and economic development in Central Indiana.



Top
IMPO Crash Dashboard

Left
IMPO Transit Oriented Development Dashboard

REGIONAL FREIGHT MODEL UPDATE

CATHERINE KOSTYN AND ANDREW SWENSON

A module being integrated into the freight-movement planning tools used by the Indianapolis MPO (IMPO) will allow the organization to more accurately simulate freight truck travel patterns, a key factor in planning for the impact trucks have on congestion and traffic flow.

Since at least the 1990s, the IMPO's Travel Demand Model (ITDM) has used a freight-model component to forecast the number of trucks in the nine-county modeling area in order to include the impact of trucks on congestion and general traffic flows. The recent availability of passively obtained, mobile truck location data has allowed the IMPO to develop an ITDM freight module that more accurately simulates freight truck travel patterns. IMPO is nearing the completion and integration of this module into the ITDM, and expects it to be ready in time to support next year's Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Truck Tours and Stop Types

One major improvement made possible by this new module is that IMPO now can model different types of truck "tours," or types of delivery patterns. While IMPO can't gather data on every delivery and the vehicles being used, this improvement does allow the ITDM to more robustly factor freight tours and stops into the overall model forecasting process.

Recalibrating Freight Data

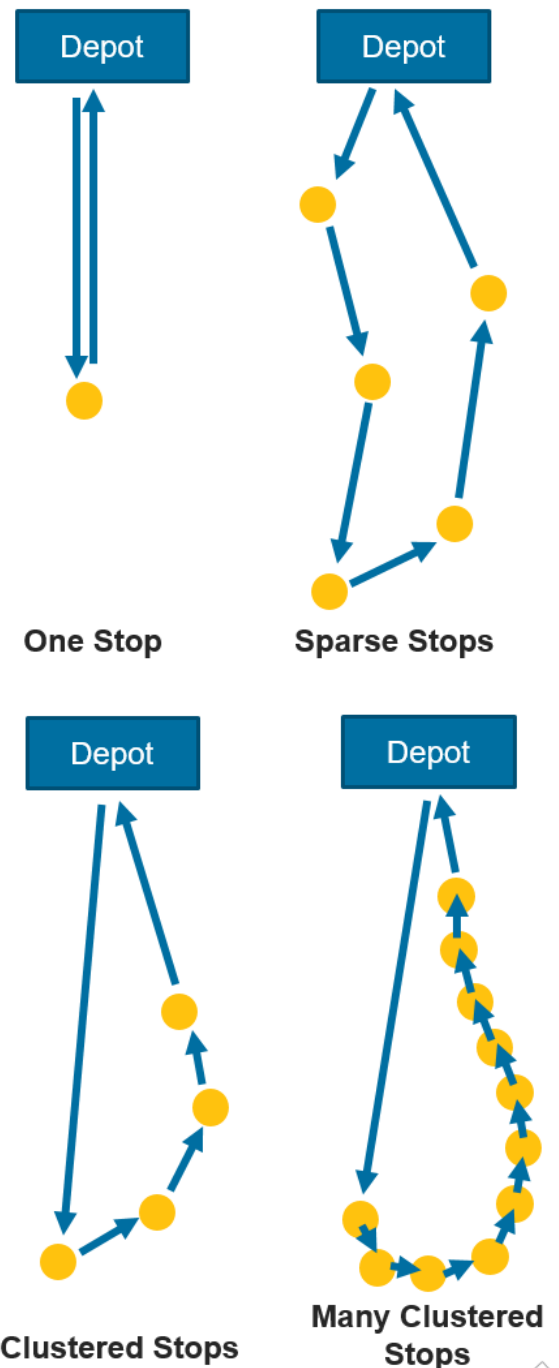
With commercial freight deliveries being made in a wide variety of vehicles of all sizes, it is necessary to use a variety of mobile data sources to track them.

For Heavy Commercial Vehicles, the IMPO's principal source of movement information was data collected by the American Transportation Research Institutes (ATRI). For Light Commercial Vehicles, the IMPO uses data aggregated from various location-based service (LBS) providers, with most LBS data coming from applications that run on individual cell phones.

ATRI and LBS data were used to calibrate ITDM model results to match travel in the real world (measured using traffic counts). Because freight travel generated by the new freight module of the ITDM interacts with congestion generated by other vehicles, the entire ITDM has been recalibrated.

A Better Understanding of Impact

The IMPO's new ability to include a better representation of truck travel in the ITDM, the IMPO can better understand the changing nature of freight and home delivery in Central Indiana, and better incorporate freight's impact on travel into its planning.



[Top](#)

Different tour types modeled in the ITDM, illustrated.

2020 SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

DANIELLE GERLACH

Public engagement is an essential pillar in the Indianapolis MPO's planning process, ensuring that both Local Planning Agencies and the general public are aware of the organization's operations. The IMPO is always working to identify new platforms and strategies for engagement, expanding its presence on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube in 2020.

TeMPO (IMPO Newsletter)

TeMPO Issues: 43
Total Sent: 68,745
Open Rate: 22%
Total Opens: 15,424

Instagram

Posts: 173 (+104)
Followers: 148 (+46)
Likes: 671 (+272)
Comments: 5 (+2)

Facebook

Posts: 379 (+76)
Followers: 1,166 (+57)
Reactions: 3,852 (-719)
Comments: 711 (+175)
Shares: 579 (-283)

Twitter

Tweets: 348 (+79)
Followers: 343 (+90)
Likes: 612 (+103)
Retweets: 331 (-29)
Replies: 29 (+9)

YouTube

Uploads: 14
Subscribers: 40

REGIONAL BIKEWAYS PLAN

SUPPORTS SAFE CYCLING

JEN HIGGINBOTHAM, AICP

With bikeway investment increasing dramatically in the Central Indiana region in recent decades, the Regional Bikeways Plan seeks to track completed bikeway investments and create a comprehensive inventory of bikeways proposed throughout the region.

This process was launched with an update of the regional inventory of open bikeways within the Metropolitan Planning Area, followed by a review of all available regional bicycle, comprehensive and thoroughfare plans in order to map every publicly approved proposed bikeway. This map of open and proposed bikeways will support a variety of purposes, including providing an easy resource for communities to refer to when trying to see “what’s going on next door.”

The IMPO Regional Bikeways Plan used this inventory primarily to update the scoring methodology from the 2015 Regional Bikeways Plan, which established a way to compare all proposed bikeways in the region and apply that comparison to funding opportunities from the IMPO. For the 2020 plan update, staff updated the scoring methodology using the results of a public survey combined with information from focus groups, conversations with community stakeholders and feedback from the IMPO’s Transportation Technical and Policy Committees. This resulted in an updated, prioritized map of all proposed bikeways that can be used as a planning tool or to influence future federal bikeway funding.

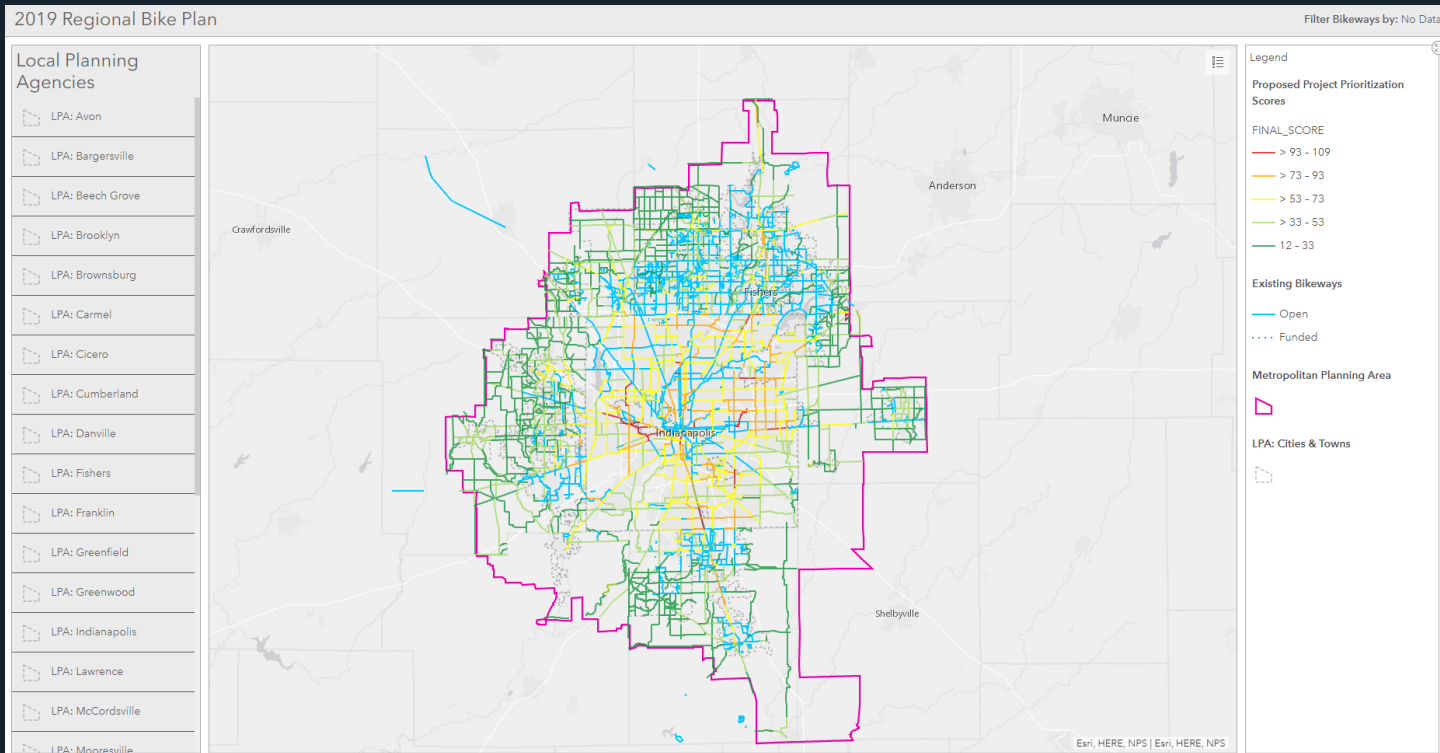
A second main component of the Regional Bikeways Plan was an analysis of every roadway in the eight-county area to identify the level of bicycle stress on each road and in each direction, including turning from one roadway to another. This map can be used as a resource for local community bikeway planning. For example, if a community has large, connected areas of low-stress streets for bicycling, but those areas are divided by streets identified as very high-stress, that community could target specific investments to better connect the low-stress bicycling network. A map of bicycling stress and description of how it can be applied to planning activities can be found in the links provided here.

Other Regional Bikeways Plan components available for communities to use and reference include a document with guidance information on creating a bicycle counting program. The IMPO conducted bicycle counts at 20 regional sites chosen based on crash data, IMPO project funding or community preference.

The IMPO’s Transportation Policy Committee approved an update of the Regional Bikeways Plan in December 2020.

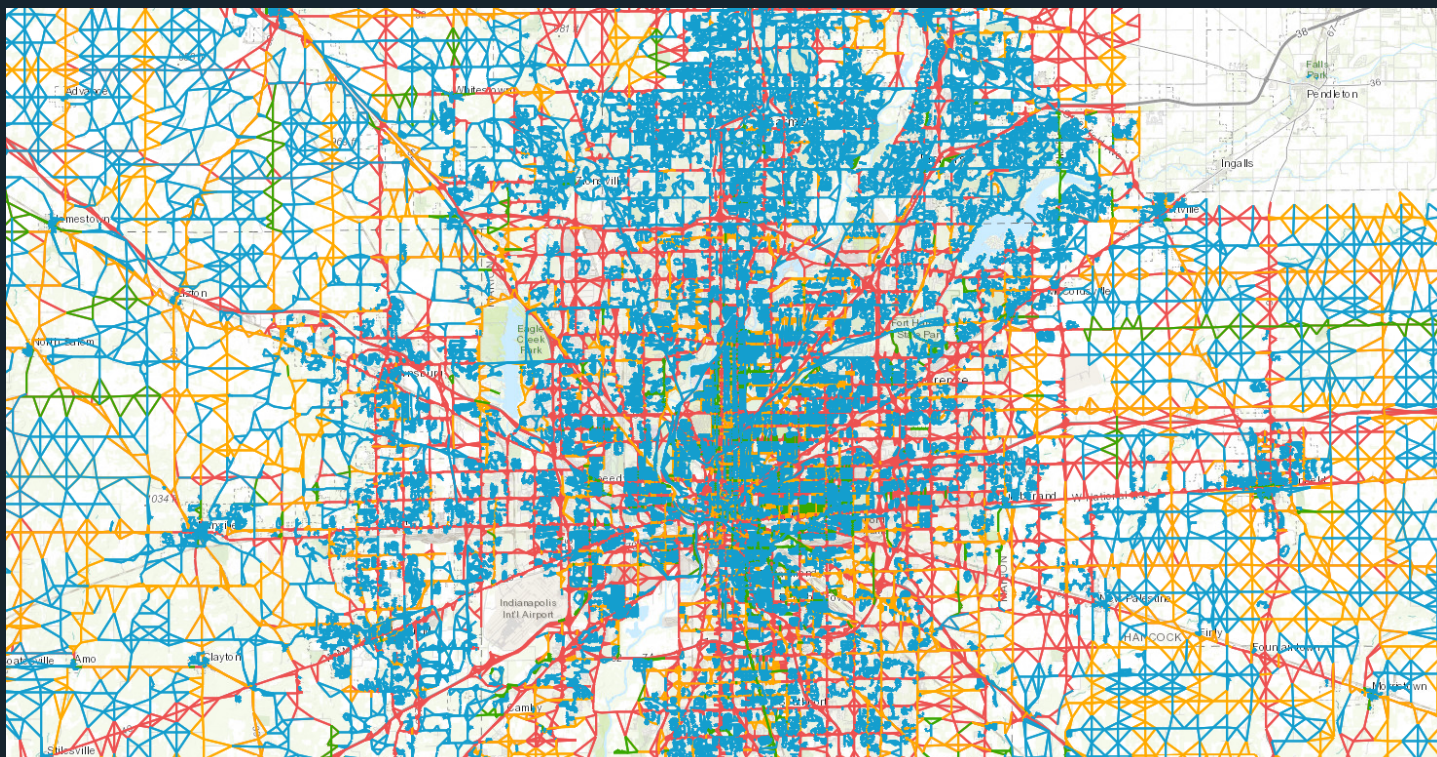
plan

REGIONAL BIKEWAYS PLAN PRIORITIZATION MAP



LINK: [RB.GY/NLNM50](https://rb.gy/nlnm50)

BIKE NETWORK ANALYSIS MAP



LINK: WWW.INDYMPO.ORG/BNA

PEDESTRIAN PLAN PROVIDES COMMUNITY TOOLS

JEN HIGGINBOTHAM, AICP

In most communities throughout the country, the condition of roads, bridges, streetlights and public safety take priority over pedestrian investments. The Regional Pedestrian Plan urges communities to embrace a new way to think about pedestrian facility investments in the Central Indiana region, and provides tools for putting that new thinking into action.

The focus on non-pedestrian assets typically is not intentional, and it is not because communities do not value sidewalks or are not aware of their benefits. It often comes down to a case of limited available funding and higher-priority needs. In many cases, sidewalks are added by property developers, or funded by state or other grant opportunities, and not funded entirely with local dollars.

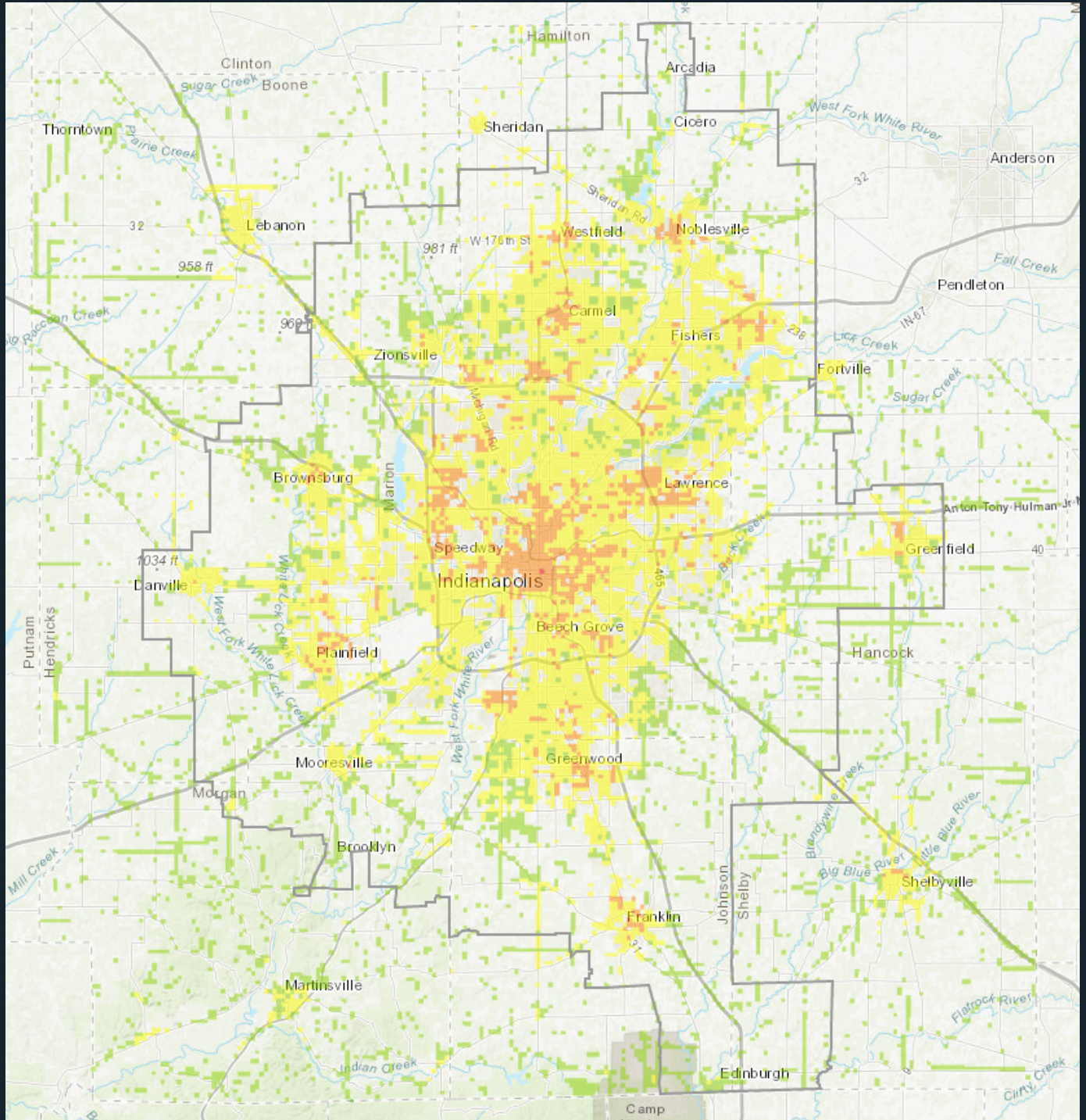
The IMPO's Regional Pedestrian Plan provides a tool that communities can use to establish their priorities when it comes to sidewalk investment and then apply those priorities to gaps in their sidewalk networks. Building on the methodology of the

Marion County Walkways Plan, the IMPO Regional Pedestrian Plan identifies priorities for sidewalk investment at the regional level (within the Metropolitan Planning Area), and then applies those priorities to an inventory of where sidewalks do and do not exist throughout the region. The resulting "heat map" shows gaps in the sidewalk network and where improvements are most necessary for the sake of public safety, demand, comfort, equity and wellness.

While used primarily for regional planning, the methodology can be adjusted to apply to a specific community, using that community's sidewalk inventory and established investment priorities. To support this process and encourage communities to engage in it, the IMPO provides special training materials.

The IMPO's Transportation Policy Committee approved an update of the Regional Pedestrian Plan in February 2020.

REGIONAL₁ PEDESTRIAN PLAN COMPOSITE MAP



STORY MAP LINK: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/C667F8A436844F10A0505CB197FBAE81>

2050 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

JEN HIGGINBOTHAM, AICP AND ROSE SCOVEL, AICP

It's that time again! The IMPO must update the regional, long-range transportation plan every four years. The current plan, the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan, was approved in late 2017. As the IMPO prepares for the next update, it has received a new name, the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2050 MTP), and there are a few new components.

SCENARIO PLANNING

In order to understand how a community might grow and how different decisions can drive different outcomes, many MPOs engage in scenario planning. Typically, this consists of creating a thorough set of existing land-use and transportation conditions, then projecting those out into a future “base scenario.” This tells planners what could happen in 30 years if a community keeps doing what it's already doing. Planners then gather community input to create a few “alternative scenarios.” If the region decides that it would rather achieve one of the alternative scenarios in the future, the MPO provides recommendations of choices that should be made in how the community invests in its transportation network. For the 2050 MTP, the results of this scenario planning effort may impact the plan's goals, objectives and performance measures.

OTHER PLAN UPDATES

The IMPO is also making a few additional changes for the 2050 MTP. These include updated scoring criteria, to incorporate new information and reflect improvements to the IMPO's travel demand model; minor changes to the plan's Performance Measures, to better match the data available for annual reporting; and minor changes to the IMPO's spending goals, which reduces the goal for funding new and widened roads and increases the goals for funding roadway and bridge repair and maintenance. The regional information throughout the plan will also be updated, to provide the most current data.

The IMPO hopes to provide a complete draft of the new 2050 MTP to the Transportation Policy Committee at their August 2021 meeting, for review and approval. Keep an eye on the IMPO's teMPO for opportunities to provide feedback on the plan and its proposed projects next year!

REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTERS

Built on work previously performed by the Indianapolis MPO (IMPO) staff, a Regional Activity Centers project completed in 2020 provides insights that will aid in planning and guiding growth across the Central Indiana region.

In addition to driving efficient and predictable growth, the classification of activity centers helps to differentiate unique places and set expectations for how they should look, feel and operate. Providing standards for target activity, performance, development or transportation in an area, activity centers help to reduce vehicle miles traveled, support placemaking and community identity, and encourage stronger connections between transportation and land use.

The Regional Activity Centers project examines areas of population and economic activity within the Central Indiana region in order to identify existing and emerging regional activity centers and involve those centers in long-range planning efforts. Consultant MIG, Inc. helped the IMPO develop a data framework to support this work.

MIG Inc. also worked with the IMPO staff and the Land Use Advisory Panel (LUAP) to develop an activity centers typology for the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). Through this process, the following Indianapolis MPA activity center types were identified:

Downtown Indianapolis: Downtown Indianapolis is a unique place in the region with by far the most density and regional draw. It is unique in its transportation system, with significant use of transit, walking and biking. While many people might drive to get Downtown, parking is often less convenient and might be paid, unlike other centers in the region. For this reason, many people choose to drive here, park once and then walk or use transit to get around.

Regional Mixed-Use Centers: Regional Mixed-Use Centers are the highest-intensity activity center type (besides Downtown Indianapolis). Characterized by an existing mix of uses tending toward shops, restaurants, employment and/or housing, this center type has a regional draw and should be accessible via transit and driving. Once within the center, the primary mode of transportation is ideally walking and potentially other micromobility options.

Main Street Centers: Main Street Centers are the lowest-intensity activity center type, filled primarily with shops and restaurants and a small degree of employment and/or housing. Main Street Centers often have a linear orientation and a historic origin, and they tend to include small walkable blocks, storefronts with limited or no building setbacks, and dense-but-small buildings. They tend to be surrounded by low- to medium-intensity housing, feature a small footprint and draw from a local population, primarily being accessed by walking and biking.

Lifestyle Centers: Lifestyle Centers have a medium-average intensity of activity relative to the other center types, with activity tending to increase on evenings and weekends. Land uses within Lifestyle Centers are primarily shops and restaurants, but usually with some supporting employment and/or housing. The urban form of a Lifestyle Center is typically more walkable and pedestrian-oriented than a Shopping Center. Lifestyle Centers have a sub-regional draw, with many people driving to them, parking their cars, then walking around.

Shopping Centers: Shopping Centers have a low- to medium-intensity concentration of retail and service shops with some supporting restaurants. These can vary in scale and have regional, sub-regional or local draw. Although Shopping Centers can host a lot of activity, they often are auto-oriented with ample surface parking.

Special-Use Centers: Special-Use Centers are often unique from each other and can include educational and medical campuses that are not part of another activity center and meet a certain threshold for size and level of activity, as well as large event grounds, entertainment districts, municipal assets (such as the Indianapolis International Airport), and more.

Manufacturing/Distribution/Logistics (MDL) Centers : Manufacturing/Distribution/Logistics (MDL) Centers are low- to medium-intensity concentrations of light- to heavy-industrial uses, warehousing and distribution centers. They typically have a lower employment density and focus on moving freight.

Employment Centers: Employment Centers can vary from low- to high-intensity concentrations of employment, sometimes with supporting service shops and/or restaurants. They vary in scale depending on their context and can come in the form of high-density clustered buildings in an urban setting or a more suburban-style office park. They can have a regional, sub-regional or local draw.

Some areas in the Indianapolis MPA fit multiple activity center descriptions. For this reason, a hierarchy was determined to establish the order in which the activity center types should be considered. The intent behind allowing an area to be classified as multiple activity center types is to provide the maximum amount of information.

The process identified both existing and emerging centers, and data will be updated ahead of each Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) update to adjust the activity center boundaries and identify emerging centers and previously emerging centers that have become activity centers.

CEDS: COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

ROSE SCOVEL, AICP

The Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (IMPO) has been awarded \$120,000 through the CARES Act to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Boone, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Madison, Marion and Morgan counties.

The development of a CEDS not only will allow the Central Indiana region to access more federal funding, but also will drive the creation of a plan for a resilient economy as the region emerges from the pandemic.

The Indy Partnership and Indiana Economic Development Corporation are supplementing the federal dollars with \$30,000 grants and providing input on the project.

“This is a significant step for Central Indiana because better regional collaboration will allow our region to have greater access to tools and funding through the Economic Development Administration,” said Anna Gremling, IMPO executive director.

In part, the funds will support the hiring of a consultant to work with the IMPO project manager and a new committee on the development of a strategy for the future. The committee will begin meeting in March, and, once completed, the draft CEDS plan will be shared publicly and submitted to EDA, followed by an application for the region to be designated as an Economic Development District (EDD).

From 2012 to 2013, in an effort to get one step closer to establishing the Central Indiana Region as an EDD, Indy Chamber partnered with the City of Indianapolis, the Central Indiana Council of Elected Officials and other regional partners to pursue a CEDS-like process. The document resulting from that process offers recommendations designed to engage community leaders, leverage the involvement of the private sector and establish a blueprint for regional collaboration.

As part of its ongoing effort to make the metropolitan area attractive and supportive for small-business growth, existing-business expansions and new-business relocations, Indy Chamber turned several of the document’s key recommendations into the September 2015 “Accelerate Indy” plan. This plan set forth tactical action steps that included the establishment of an online dashboard offering a snapshot of the Indy Region’s economic state and a storybook series providing insight into what’s happening behind the region’s economic indicators.

The new CEDS process will replace this CEDS-like strategy as a regional economic development strategy, support local applications for EDA grant awards, and provide the basis for Central Indiana’s being designated as an EDD.

convene

LAND USE ADVISORY PANEL

ROSE SCOVEL, AICP

A panel formed as a steering committee for long-range projects such as the regional activity centers, scenario planning and Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP – formerly the Long Range Transportation Plan), the Indianapolis MPO (IMPO) Land Use Advisory Panel is comprised of planners, public health professionals, community development professionals and representatives from counties and municipalities in the MPA.

The panel met in person in 2019 and early 2020 before shifting to online meetings in the spring. The online meetings worked well for the group, encouraging participation from members in

the larger geographic area who might have been unable to travel to Indianapolis for in-person meetings. ArcGIS online maps also allowed panel members to provide input and feedback on products in development.

The IMPO thanks everyone who participated in the Land Use Advisory Panel, and looks forward to more work with the panel as we advance the MTP through 2021.

SURVIVING THE PANDEMIC THROUGH TEAMWORK

DANIELLE GERLACH

In early 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic took its toll on the world, including Central Indiana, the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (IMPO) staff packed up their desks, scrambled for laptops and headed home to spend the remainder of 2020 working remotely. The staff handled the conversion to working from home well, collaborating on Zoom meetings seemingly every day, helping one another, providing support and, in many cases, learning new software on the fly.

While staff members miss being in the office and downtown, IMPO staff and leadership made the best of this situation and refused to let the pandemic get in the way of moving the organization forward. As 2021 begins, the staff looks back at the pandemic and remembers all that it accomplished as a team, including transitioning the IMPO into its own standalone organization. Without the contributions of each staff member, the transition – and pandemic-restricted operations as a whole – would not have been as smooth or successful.

FEDERAL EXCHANGE AGREEMENT

STEVE CUNNINGHAM

Since 2015, the Indianapolis MPO (IMPO) has operated under a policy requiring it to spend its full annual allocation of Federal dollars or risk losing funds to the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). While this “use it or lose it” policy has generated some positive results, it also has limited flexibility and created inefficiencies.

Thanks to an agreement finalized in 2020 between the IMPO and INDOT, that policy has been replaced with one permitting greater flexibility and efficiency.

While the IMPO – with the cooperation and hard work of its member Local Public Agencies (LPAs) – successfully spent all of its federal allocation each year since the policy was put in place, this “use it or lose it” practice significantly inhibited the IMPO’s and LPAs’ business and project-delivery processes. Seeking to remedy these issues, over the last couple of years the IMPO worked with its partners at INDOT to introduce greater flexibility to the policy.

As part of this collaborative process, in 2019 INDOT proposed a full exchange of the IMPO’s federal funds for state funds. The first exchange of its kind in the state of Indiana, this approach would give the IMPO and its member agencies increased flexibility in project development and implementation. After a lengthy research-and-discussion process, a subcommittee formed to study the proposal concluded that the IMPO should move forward to develop a mutually beneficial exchange agreement with INDOT.

Continued research, discussion and negotiations with INDOT led to a final agreement being presented to the Indianapolis Regional Transportation Council (now the Transportation Policy Committee). Approved on June 1, 2020, the final Federal Funds Exchange Agreement was executed on August 28.

Delivering the flexibility in the development and delivery of regional transportation projects that the IMPO and LPAs were seeking, the new policy promises to improve project efficiency and timeliness. With an exchange rate of 90 cents of state funds for every \$1 of federal funds (compared to similar programs, this is considered a good rate), the agreement applies to all IMPO annual allocation funds, including Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds, Highway Safety Improvement Program funds, Surface Transportation Block Grant funds and Transportation Alternative Program funds. The agreement’s three-year term can be renewed by mutual written agreement.

The IMPO will begin working with a consultant early in 2021 to develop a Federal Funds Exchange Program Guidance Document under which the IMPO and our member LPAs will operate. This will represent a significant change to the IMPO business processes and the process LPAs use to move projects from concept to completion. The efficiencies and savings from this new way of doing business will set central Indiana on a new course for the future and improve the way important projects are delivered to the region’s residents.

fund

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

STEVE CUNNINGHAM

The programming section of the Indianapolis MPO (IMPO) is responsible for the development, maintenance and implementation of the four-year Indianapolis Regional Transportation Improvement Program also known as the TIP. The IMPO works cooperatively with multiple agencies to accomplish this and is guided by Indiana DOT (INDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations. As legislation, guidelines, policies, priorities and personnel change, IMPO staff work to adjust the program to meet these challenges and changes.

The current TIP covers the years 2020 through 2023 including future, or illustrative years 2024 and 2025. The program currently includes over 850 projects or project phases totaling over \$5 billion. The projects range from smaller pedestrian safety improvements to large scale projects such as the repair and rebuilding of the I-65/I-70 interchange in downtown Indianapolis. Late in 2020 the Programming Section began work on a new four-year Indianapolis Regional Transportation Improvement Program covering the years 2022-2025. The new TIP will be presented to the Transportation Policy Committee in the second quarter and is anticipated to receive final approval by July 1st, 2021.

The Programming Section obligated (spent) the full Federal annual allocation again this year, the sixth year in a row with the help and hard work of our local public agencies and our partners at INDOT. Beyond this, the most significant accomplishment in 2020 was the execution of a Federal Funds Exchange Agreement with the Indiana Department of Transportation. This agreement exchanges federal funds for state fund which will be instrumental in delivering regionally important projects to Central Indiana faster and cheaper.

Because the IMPO staff was still in on-going negotiations with INDOT on the Federal Funds Exchange agreement, the IMPO did not issue a call for projects in 2020 and did not recommend any new projects from the previous call for projects in 2019. With the development of the Federal Funds Exchange Program Guidance Document moving forward in 2021, it is the IMPO's intent to issue a call for new projects in mid-2021.

It was another productive year and some samples of the work that was accomplished this past year can be seen on the following pages.

BRIDGE 202, BOONE COUNTY



The reconstruction of Bridge #202 in Boone County was completed using IMPO STBG funds. Photo Credit - Boone County.

PLEASANT RUN TRAIL ENHANCEMENTS, INDIANAPOLIS



Pleasant Run Trail enhancements from Irvington to Garfield Park were completed using IMPO TAP funds. Photo Credit - Steve Cunningham.

PENNSYTRAIL EXTENSION, INDIANAPOLIS



The Pennsy Trail was extended from Irvington to Cumberland using IMPO TAP funds. Photo Credit - Steve Cunningham.

MONONTRAIL BRIDGE, INDIANAPOLIS



The Monon Trail bridge over 38th Street was installed using IMPO CMAQ funds. Photo Credit - Doug Day.