



Transportation Times

Adams-Allen-DeKalb-Wells

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Next Level Trails

On September 4, 2018 Governor Eric Holcomb announced the Next Level Connections program which included a new \$1 billion investment in infrastructure projects throughout Indiana. The goals of this program were to expand broadband services in rural Indiana, grow the state’s systems of trails, create more nonstop international flights, and move up the completion of major highway projects. Out of this program a new funding source for trail development throughout the state was born called the Next Level Trails (NLT) program.

Next Level Trails will invest \$90 million – the largest infusion of State trail funding in Indiana history – toward the development of regionally and locally significant trails throughout Indiana. Next Level Trails is designed to incentivize collaborative efforts to accelerate trail connections. The DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation administers the program in conjunction with the Indiana Department of Transportation. The program provides grants up to 80% with a maximum request of \$5 million per application for regionally significant projects and a maximum request of \$2 million per application for locally significant projects.

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The first round of the NLT grant program, which totaled \$25 million, announced the grant awards in May 2019. Here in Northeast Indiana there were multiple trail projects from the United Trails Plan that applied for funding. Out of a substantial number

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Community Development Updates



Did you know that NIRCC is available to assist communities within Adams, Allen, DeKalb, and Wells Counties with community and economic development activities? We can assist communities with projects receiving funding through a myriad of sources such as grants and loans from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA), the State Revolving Fund (SRF), the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and other State, Federal, and private programs. The NIRCC community development team has the capabilities to assist with project development and to provide grant writing, grant administration, and labor standards administration services. Information regarding available funding opportunities and the community development services provided by the NIRCC community development team is available by contacting Matt Vondran at Matt.Vondran@co.allen.in.us, Kristine Christlieb at Kristine.Christlieb@co.allen.in.us, Kyle Quandt at kyle.quandt@co.allen.in.us, or calling (260) 449-7309.

The NIRCC community development team has been working on a number of projects recently. The following gives a little information about a few of the projects that have been worked on:

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant – Two Years Down; One to Go

On September 1, 2017 the Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council was awarded a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grant in the amount of \$367,438 to implement the Maumee River Basin: Urban Pollution Management and Education Program. The project's goal is to reduce the amount of excessive storm water and nutrients from the urbanized areas of Fort Wayne from entering our rivers. The total project cost, which includes the implementation of green infrastructure and water quality improvement practices, and public education and outreach, is estimated to be nearly \$1 million. To date, four of the eight planned projects have been completed and there have been significant reductions in storm water and pollution loading to our open waters and storm sewers. The following is a list of the accomplishments of the project since it began on



September 1, 2017.

- Storm water Management Practices:
 - 5,100 sq. ft. bioswale at the new Promenade Park
 - 240' of streambank stabilization in Bloomingdale Park on the St. Marys River
 - 870' of stream restoration and aquatic habitat improvement in Spy Run Creek
 - 7,218 sq. ft. pervious parking lot at the Ludwig Rd Trail trailhead
- Outreach Accomplished:
 - 4,414 volunteer hours donated by the public on river clean-up events to pick up trash and pull invasive vegetation along the banks of Fort Wayne's rivers.
 - Had one-on-one communication with 2,232 individuals at various outreach events.
- Total Load Reductions of potential pollutants into Ft. Wayne's Rivers:
 - Storm water runoff reduction = 1,107,050.37 gallons/year
 - Total Suspended Solids reduction = 426.85 Tons/year
 - Total Nitrogen reduction = 860.9 lbs/year
 - Total Phosphorus reduction = 427.4 lbs/year

The accomplishments listed and shown above already exceed the projected results of the project and with one year still to go, we are excited about the water



quality protection this project will produce. These results would not be possible without the help of partners including Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation, Fort Wayne Public Works-Greenways, and the Tri-State Watershed Alliance.



St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative Contracts with NIRCC to Manage an IDEM Water Quality Grant

NIRCC was contracted by the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative (SJRWI) to manage a Clean Water Act Section 319 grant in the amount of \$274,500 which they received from the IN Department of Environmental Management in April 2019. Grant funds will provide cost share assistance on public and private property for a variety of water quality improvement projects within the urbanized area of the Lower St. Joseph River and Bear Creek Watersheds and fund educational workshops and events.

The SJRWI is a non-profit partnership whose mission is to improve water quality in the St. Joseph River by promoting economically and environmentally compatible land uses and practices. NIRCC will help them by providing an experienced project manager who has worked in the water quality improvement field, specifically with Section 319 grants, for over a decade.

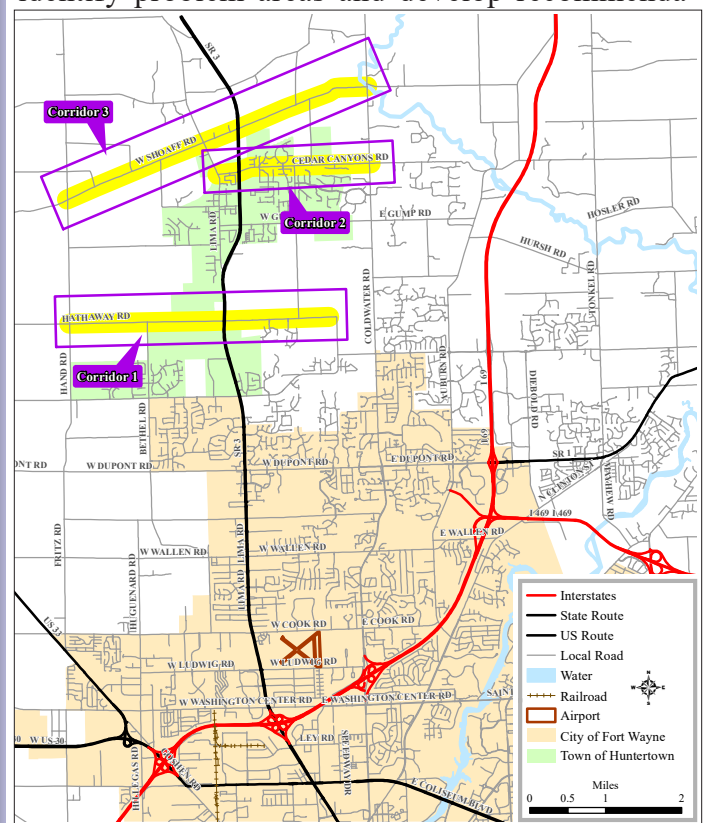
The money received from IDEM will pay for 60% of the total project investment of \$457,500. Projects committed to date include the installation of pet waste receptacles at local parks and the construction of a covered hitching post in the Town of Grabill both of which will reduce the amount of animal waste being washed into local waterways when it rains; a goose deterrent/shoreline naturalization project, vegetated swale and rain garden to demonstrate a best management practice “train” to the public and local developers in Leo-Cedarville’s Riverside Gardens Park; rock lined channel and vegetated swale at Salomon Farms Park; and bioswales and tree planting at two large scale road projects in Fort Wayne. After these projects are completed there will still be nearly \$35,000 in cost share dollars available which will be used primarily for backyard conservation efforts.

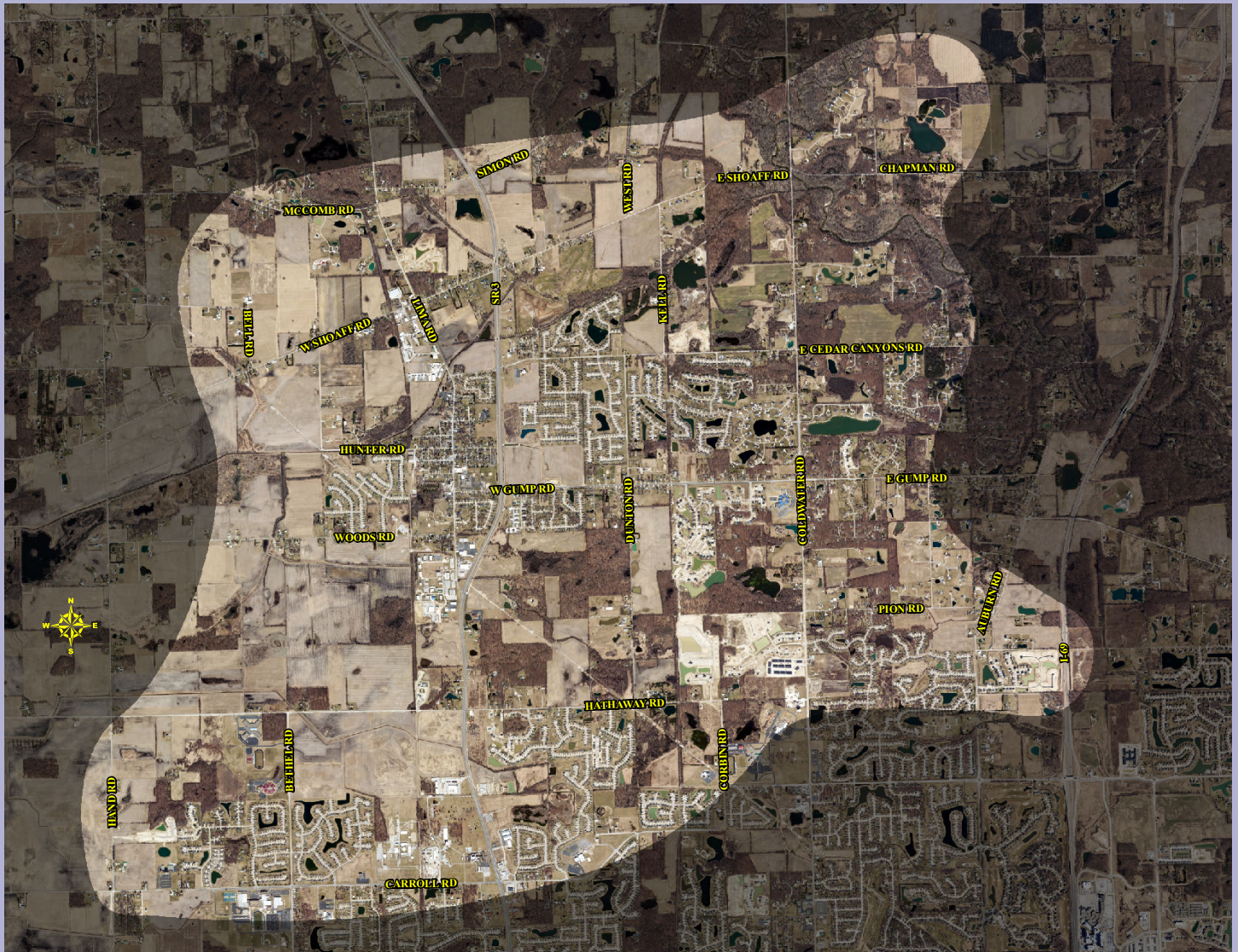
If you would like more information about the project, to learn if you are eligible to take advantage of the available cost-share incentives, or if you are interested in learning more about environmental grants contact Kyle Quandt at 260-449-4226 or kyle.quandt@co.allen.in.us.

Huntertown Sub-Area Analysis

Besides the traditional corridor studies which often only analyze one corridor or set of continuous corridors, NIRCC also performs a study called a sub-area analysis. A sub-area analysis analyzes a number of corridors within a given area or development. Information and materials produced by this type of analysis provide local policy-makers with an additional tool for assessing the impacts of new and expanding development to an area. The analysis focuses on assessing the current and future operating characteristics of the corridors and develops alternative strategies to improve safety and mitigate congestion. Staff looks at highway, transit, pedestrian and bicycle access as the major components of the analysis. Staff also evaluates how facilities, both within and outside of the analysis area, interact with each other and impact the current and future traffic patterns.

The most recent Sub-Area Analysis NIRCC completed was in the Huntertown area and comprised a study area that included parts of Allen County and the Town of Huntertown. The purpose for this Sub-Area analysis is to evaluate traffic impacts of future developments, both currently proposed and with future potential, to identify problem areas and develop recommenda-





tions for roadway improvements that may be needed. The study not only takes into consideration the study area shown in the map above, but also how this area interacts with the surrounding areas and anticipated development. For this study, the focus was on three main corridors in the area that are experiencing significant amounts of development and have potential for future development as well. These three corridors include Hathaway Rd, Cedar Canyons Rd, and Shoaff Rd and also the surrounding areas.

To complete a successful Sub-Area Analysis NIRCC performs studies of three different levels of development in the area to see what types of traffic patterns and congestion may occur based on existing conditions. Once these traffic patterns are assigned to the system NIRCC is able to see where problems occur with regard to traffic congestion and then test different project alternatives that could alleviate these problems.

Once project alternatives are selected NIRCC makes these recommendations to the appropriate agencies or boards.

The three different levels of development used in the Sub-Area Analysis include an existing condition level, a Phase I development level, and a Phase II development level. Using the existing condition level is just as it sounds. NIRCC analyses what developments that are currently existing and what the existing traffic patterns are in the area. The Phase I development level focuses on proposed, or already approved, developments that will be built or are currently in some stage of development. The Phase I developments are used to calculate estimates for new traffic patterns and trips added to the existing roadway infrastructure based on what will occur in the near future. Then the final phase, Phase II development, is added to the analysis. Phase II uses a five to ten year horizon and the existing vacant land

and land use patterns in the area to estimate what could potentially develop in the future.

Once the added traffic and trip patterns are determined based on this estimated growth from Phase I and Phase II, NIRCC can begin assigning Levels of Service (LOS) to existing infrastructure and determine what improvements may be needed to accommodate these development patterns. LOS is defined alphabetically A through F, A being the best LOS and F being the worst. This rating A through F represents a measure of driver discomfort, frustration, fuel consumption, and lost travel time. LOS is based upon the average stopped delay per vehicle for various movements within intersections and along corridors. For example, LOS “A” describes operations with very low delays, LOS “C” describes operations with longer delays where stopping vehicles are significant but many still pass without stopping, and LOS “F” describes operations with delays unacceptable to most drivers and roadways are exceeding capacity.

Through this study NIRCC analyzed a total of twelve intersections along three corridors base on the existing infrastructure and three levels of development previously discussed. Two of the intersections were signalized and ten of them were stop controlled intersections only. The extents of these three corridors and the intersections studied were as follows:

- Corridor 1: Hathaway Rd from Hand Rd to Corbin Rd.
 - Intersections: Hathaway Rd at Hand Rd, Hathaway Rd at Bethel Rd, Hathaway Rd at SR 3, and Hathaway Rd at Dunton Rd.
- Corridor 2: Cedar Canyons Rd from Lima Rd to Coldwater Rd.
 - Intersections: Cedar Canyons Rd at Lima Rd, Cedar Canyons Rd at SR 3, Cedar Canyons Rd at Dunton Rd, and Cedar Canyons Rd at Coldwater Rd.
- Corridor 3: Shoaff Rd from Hand Rd to Coldwater Rd.
 - Intersections: Shoaff Rd at Hand Rd, Shoaff Rd at Lima Rd, Shoaff Rd at SR 3, and Shoaff Rd at Coldwater Rd.

The finalized analysis found that six of the intersections will need improved in the future based on the projected development patterns in the area. Two of these intersections (Shoaff Rd at Lima Rd and Shoaff Rd at SR 3) will need signalization. The remaining four intersections (Hathaway Rd at SR 3, Hathaway Rd at Dunton Rd, Cedar Canyons Rd at Lima Rd, and Cedar Canyons Rd at SR 3) all need improvements such as additional turn lanes and/or through lanes. To find out more about this study and more about specific results send a request for additional information to Jeff. Bradtmitter@co.allen.in.us.

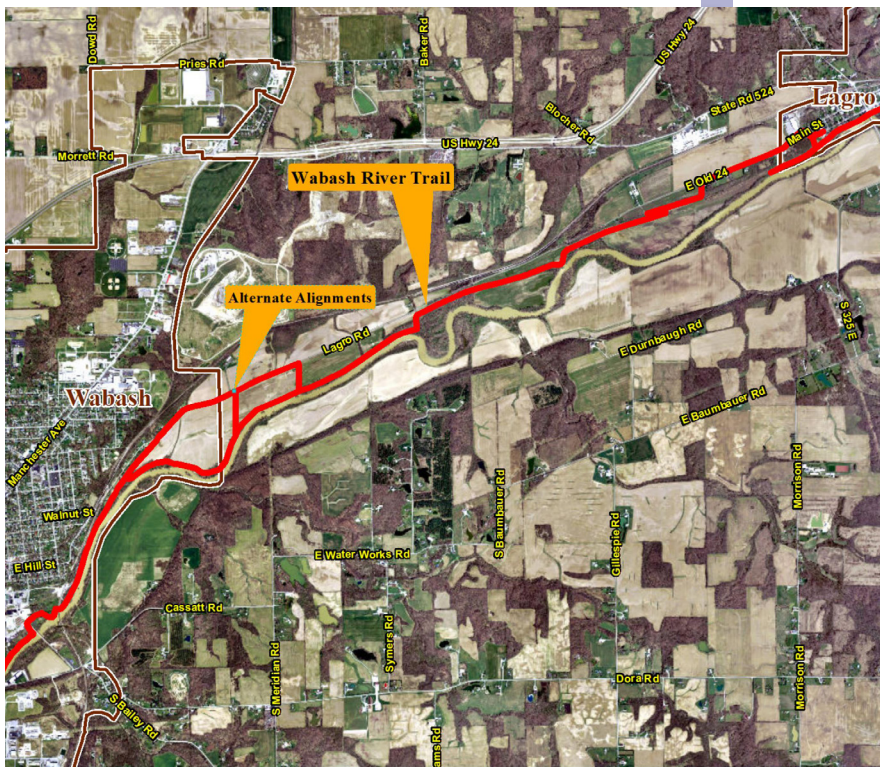
Next Level Trails continued...

of applications, two applications for projects from the Northeast Indiana United Trails Plan were selected! The Wabash River Trail in Wabash, Indiana received a grant award for \$1,444,897 and the Pufferbelly Trail (part of the regional trail called the Poka-Bache Connector) in Hometown and Allen County Indiana received an award of \$3,294,742.

Wabash River Trail

The Wabash River Trail has been identified as a “Regional Priority” on the Northeast Indiana United Trails Plan and a “Potential Visionary Trail” on the 2016 DNR Visionary Trails System Map. This project will be an extension of the existing Wabash River Trail and connect the City of Wabash with the Town of Lagro. This project, which will stretch just over 4 miles, will fill in a significant gap in the regional trail system connecting the existing Wabash River Trail to the west in Wabash with the existing Wabash River Trail in Lagro to the east. Once this section is complete there will be almost 7 miles of trail extending along the Wabash River through parts of Wabash, Lagro, and Wabash County.

The Town of Lagro and the City of Wabash have both recently built sections of the Wabash River Trail. The existing trail extending though Lagro has been extremely popular and has already had a significant impact on the community. Increased business and redevelopment has occurred there as a direct result of building this trail in their community. Right near downtown Largo, and adjacent to the Wabash River Trail, a trail head was built with bathrooms and a pa-



Wabash has also just recently built an extension to the Wabash River Trail extending towards the eastern edge of their city. There are a number of destinations that will be accessible utilizing existing sections of the Wabash River Trail and the planned project. Destinations include Paradise Spring Historical Park, downtown Wabash and Lagro, a large number of restaurants, shopping, parks, and residential areas through the connected sidewalk networks.

The Pufferbelly Trail (Poka-Bache Connector)

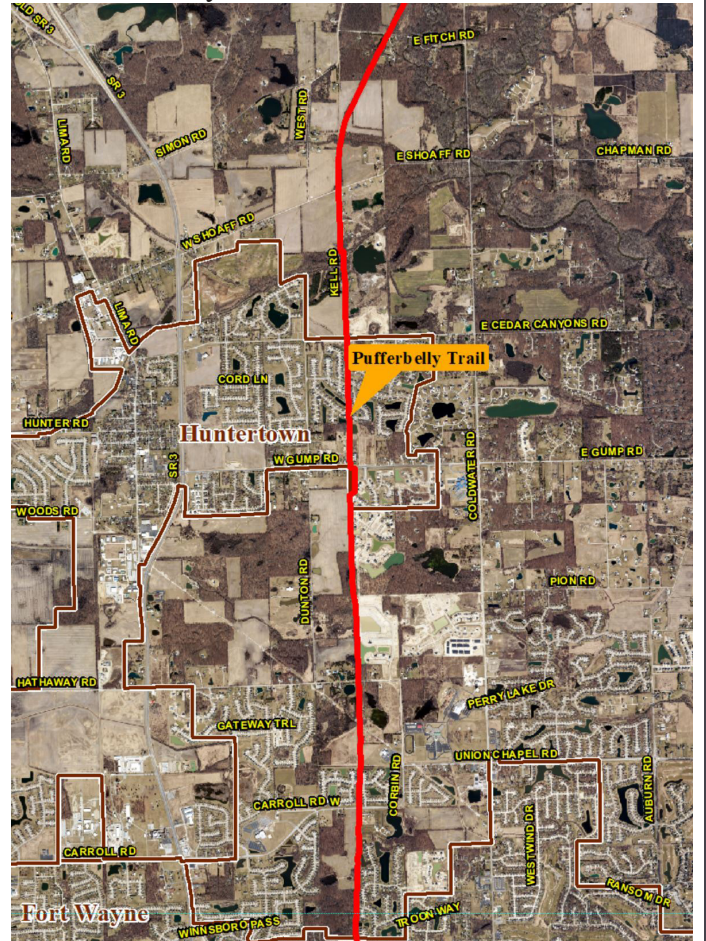
The Pufferbelly Trail is identified on the Northeast Indiana United Trails Plan as a regional priority trail corridor and a State Visionary Trail. The section of the Pufferbelly Trail that was awarded the NLT grant is located on the north side of Fort Wayne and stretches almost to the northern limits of Allen County which will eventually make its way into DeKalb County and the City of Auburn in the future. This project is especially important as it is also part of the Poka-Bache Connector trail system which is the 81 mile state visionary trail corridor that will eventually connect Pokagon State Park near the City of Angola to Ouabache State Park near the City of Bluffton.

There have been significant investments in making this trail corridor a reality. Allen County, Fort Wayne Trails Inc, the City of Fort Wayne, and the Town of

Huntertown have all become partners in advancing the Pufferbelly Trail in northern Allen County. In recent years there have been several sections of the Pufferbelly Trail constructed north of downtown Fort Wayne thanks to Fort Wayne Trails Inc, the City of Fort Wayne, and Allen County. This includes the recently completed Federal Aid project along Dupont Road which included a grade separated crossing for trail users on the Pufferbelly Trail. There has been a substantial amount of right of way secured along unbuilt sections of this corridor extending into northern Allen County and volunteers have worked to clear future sections as well. Fort Wayne, Allen County, and Huntertown have also constructed, or planned, trails along roadways within their jurisdictions to connect people and destinations to the Pufferbelly

Trail Corridor.

The Pufferbelly Trail in Allen County is part of the State Visionary Trail which has been a focus for



Northeast Indiana. The Pufferbelly Trail will help create connections to a number of schools, parks, and neighborhoods, as well as extend the regional trail system. Once this project is complete the Pufferbelly Trail will extend over 9 continuous miles in northern Fort Wayne and Allen County. In fact, the City of Fort Wayne recently submitted another application for round 2 of the NLT grant process for another project totaling 1.75 miles along the proposed Pufferbelly Trail corridor. This proposal would connect these 9 miles on the north side of Fort Wayne and Allen County with other parts of the Pufferbelly Trail/Poka-Bache Connector that exist through Fort Wayne and would create nearly 20 miles of continuous trail along this corridor within Allen County. This 20 mile corridor would stretch from Fitch Rd just south of the northern Allen County boarder all the way to Lower Huntington Rd in Waynedale. Parts of the Poka-Bache Connector utilize the Rivergreenway Trail through Fort Wayne and the newly constructed trail along Bluffton Rd that was completed just a few years ago.

To see the United Trails Plan just visit NIRCC’s website and navigate to the Maps tab and then click on Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning (<http://www.nircc.com/bicycle-pedestrian-planning.htm>). Here you can find a number of maps showing bicycle and pedestrian plans throughout the region.



The conference was held at the Grand Wayne Center in downtown Fort Wayne. This location gave attendees the opportunity to walk around and experience downtown Fort Wayne. The conference theme was “Linking



Transportation to Community”. A number of the sessions at the conference focused on the theme with session topics covering Downtown Redevelopment, the Poka-Bache Trail – Regional Collaboration, Pedestrian Mobility in Work Zones, and Transit and Community Development. Many of the sessions were conducted



2019 MPO Conference

2019 Indiana MPO Conference

REINVEST
REVITALIZE
RECONNECT



Fort Wayne
September 24 - 26, 2019
Grand Wayne Center

“Linking Transportation with Community”

The annual Indiana MPO Conference was hosted by NIRCC in September. The conference rotates each year to one of the MPO host cities in Indiana. It had been thirteen years since the conference had been held in Fort Wayne.

by personnel from INDOT, FHWA, MPOs, the City of Fort Wayne, Allen County, and local organizations.

One of the highlights of the conference every year is the mobile workshop sessions. Typically these workshops allow the attendees to choose their workshop and experience something local and unique to the host city. This year's mobile workshops consisted of two walking tours, a trail bike tour, and a river kayak tour. The two walking tours were the "Art and Cultural Tour" and the "Downtown Development and Riverfront Development Tour". The other two tours were the Riverfront Recreation and Conservation Tour (kayaking on the river), and the Trail – Bike Tour (biking on the River Greenway).



- The Art and Cultural Tour highlighted the public art downtown with murals, sculptures, innovative bike racks and new public space improvements in the alleyways.
- The other walking tour showcased Downtown Development from Parkview Field to the St Mary's River, highlighting public and private development along the way.
- The Riverfront Recreation and Conservation Tour began at Promenade Park with discussion on riverfront development and the Northeast Indiana Water Trails. Then, people enjoyed kayaking on the St. Mary's River with stops along the river at multiple parks and the confluence of the three rivers.
- The Trail – Bike Tour also started at Promenade Park and then went north on the River Greenway. The Tour went through several parks and to the Purdue Fort Wayne Campus to visit three signature pedestrian bridges. The group also stopped at Old

Crown Coffee and learned about North Anthony Blvd corridor improvements.



Other highlights of the conference include the awards given out to MPOs for outstanding achievements. This year five awards were given out.



- The Madison County Council of Government (MCCOG) received the Outstanding Transportation Project for the Eisenhower Veterans Memorial Bridge in Anderson.
- The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) received the Outstanding Public Involvement award for the endeavors of the Northwest Indiana (NWI) 2050 Plan and Engage NWI. These are NIRPC's Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan and newly adopted Participation Plan.
- The Outstanding Planning Project went to KIPDA (Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development

Agency) for their Project Evaluation and submittal Process. This process allows potential project sponsors to access a considerable amount of data prior to submission for inclusion in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

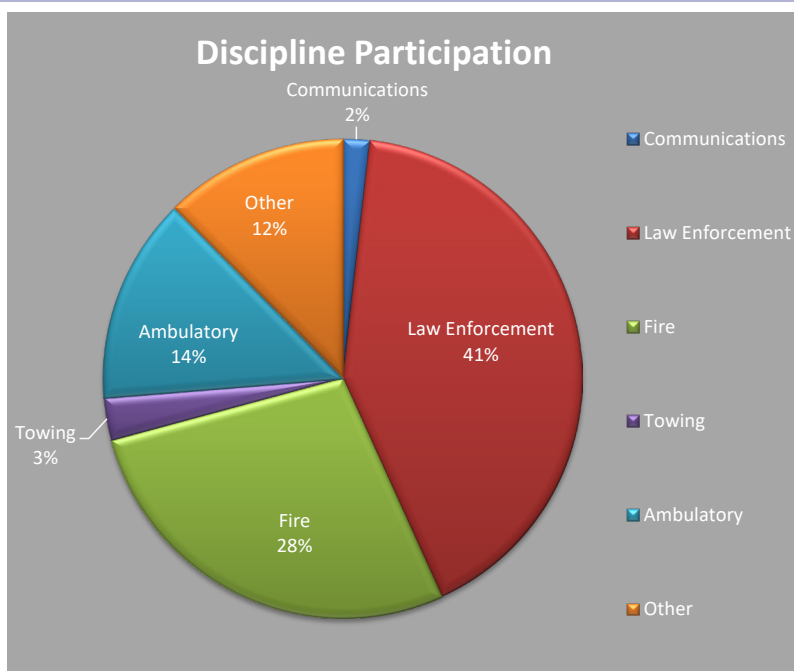
- The second Outstanding Planning Project went to the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) for their Regional Complete Streets Process. This process promotes a safe and accessible transportation system for all users.
- The last award was the Meritorious Service by an Individual which went to Pam Drach from the Evansville MPO. Pam has improved operations for

both the MPO's and INDOT. She is always ready to help, assist, and solve problems, exemplifying cooperation and collaboration.

It takes a lot of time and effort to host a conference like this, but it was a huge success. The conference is a great way to interact and learn from others that are working towards improving transportation and their communities. We are looking forward to next year's conference in Lafayette!

Traffic Incident Management (TIM)

In 2013 the Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC) assisted in forming a committee of local representatives to implement Traffic Incident Management (TIM) strategies in Northeast Indiana called the Northeast Indiana Traffic Incident Management Committee (NE IN TIM). NIRCC identified local public and private sector stakeholders that were interested in the concepts and fundamental mission of the initiative. The purpose of the committee was to develop and recommend policy and operational protocols for the safe and efficient mitigation of traffic incidents through training and education of all first responders. The primary focus being the "Open Roads Philosophy" reflects the ideals of having all First Responders, after ensuring their own personal safety and the safety and security of any incident victims, to have as their top priority reducing congestion and the increased risks of secondary incidents for public/motorist safety.



So far the Northeast Indiana Traffic Incident Management Committee has been a success! Since 2013, the Northeast Indiana Traffic Incident Management Committee has held 47 training sessions. The training has reached 1,735 responders from various disciplines that represent 120 agencies. In the chart below you can see a breakdown per discipline, since 2013, of the participation in TIM training in Northeast Indiana.

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