

# Transportation News



## Northeast Indiana Trails and Greenways Charrette

The Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC) along with Region III-A Economic Development District and Regional Planning Commission, City of Fort Wayne, the National Park Service, and Aboite New Trails organized the first charrette to be held in Northeast Indiana. Close to 100 people from 11 counties including Adams, Allen, Dekalb, Grant, Huntington, Lagrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells, & Whitley Counties took part in the Northeast Indiana Trails and Greenways Charrette which was held at the World War II Victory Museum in Auburn, Indiana.



What is a charrette you ask? It's a fancy French word meaning organized planning and brainstorming session. The Northeast Indiana Trails and Greenways Charrette was organized specifically for bicycle and pedestrian planning. The goals of the charrette were to explore regional coordination of trail and greenway development throughout northeast Indiana. The purpose of bringing together people from 11 different counties was to better coordinate the regional development of trails and greenways across county boundaries connecting communities and people by alternative means of transportation and to provide a plan that will add continuity throughout northeast Indiana.

(Continued on Pg. 4)

## Community Development Updates



### Town of Monroeville

NIRCC is currently providing grant administration services to the Town of Monroeville in Allen County, Indiana. During the summer of 2006, Monroeville was awarded a \$38, 880 Community Focus Fund (CFF) Planning Grant to finance a study of their sanitary sewer and storm water utilities. The funding is federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money that is allocated from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and administered by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA). This study is being completed to identify problematic sanitary sewer and storm water issues that the town has been experiencing over time. The overall cost of the project is \$43,200, with the town providing a local match of \$4,320 (10% of the total project cost).

The town contracted with DLZ to complete the study. The study began in September 2006. The preliminary engineering report (PER) will be submitted to OCRA in April 2007. The town plans to apply for a CFF Construction Grant to fund projects identified in the PER.



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## Urban Transportation Advisory Board

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Federal Highway  
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(Non-voting members)

## Transportation News

Spring 2007

### **Safety Management System: Part One of Two** *Identifying and Ranking the Communities Most Hazardous Crash Locations*



Safety in transportation planning and project development is a high priority. The increase in available funds for safety improvements supports the importance of safety projects. Improved crash information sources and new analytical tools have created better evaluation tools to identify problematic areas. NIRCC is responding to these changes with additional resources applied to crash data analysis and GIS applications. The goal for transportation planners is to find where the problems exist, make recommendations for improvements and seek funding to implement projects. The first step is often the most difficult, which is to identify what locations are most hazardous within the community.

NIRCC evaluates crash data to identify high crash locations. The primary source for this data is crash reports generated from state and local law enforcement agencies in Allen County. Concerns from area citizens, media and transportation officials are also used in creating a comprehensive listing of locations that have a high crash **frequency** (total number of crashes at a location in one calendar year).

Crashes reported by the Indiana State Police (ISP), New Haven Police Department (NHPD), Fort Wayne Police Department (FWPD) and Allen County Sheriff's Department (ACPD) are all input into databases. NIRCC processes and summarizes crash data from all agencies except FWPD which are processed by the Fort Wayne Engineering Department. Approximately 75% of all crashes in Allen County are investigated by the FWPD. The processed data is then combined to provide a complete list of crash locations in Allen County. Locations can be ranked by frequency and a list of high crash locations is developed.

The frequency listing has some drawbacks and limitations. Low frequency crash locations are often discounted even though a potential safety issue may be present and high frequency locations are not necessarily the most dangerous. The number of crashes at a location may increase or decrease based on additional analysis that associates and/or disassociates certain crashes to a particular location. These issues create confusion and uncertainty in the process. In addition, the general public often has a preconceived notion of high crash locations. These notions are based on personal experience and media attention paid to high crash frequency locations, and may not account for the correlation between traffic volume and crash frequency. This can easily lead to false assumptions that locations are hazardous based on frequency alone.

A second way of evaluating and ranking crash locations is by utilizing a crash rate. The crash rate, or **Rate per Million Vehicles, (RMV)**, is the average annual number of crashes divided by the traffic volume multiplied by 365 and divided by 1,000,000. This is used to compensate for the wide discrepancy in traffic volumes between locations. The RMV levels the playing field and is more accurate in comparing multiple locations. The drawback from simply using crash rates is that low

volume and low frequency crash locations can indicate an unusually high rate that over estimates the actual hazard level. The crash rate can also lead to false assumptions of hazardous locations without proper review and evaluation.

The following examples demonstrate how utilizing crash frequencies, crash rates and conducting site specific analysis can lead to confusion and varied conclusions when identifying and evaluating hazardous crash locations.

Example 1. A request is received to evaluate a specific location for crash information. The crash information and traffic data are reviewed and evaluated. It is determined that the location has only one crash and a traffic volume of 500 vehicles per day. The calculated rate based on the crash frequency and traffic volume is 5.48, a high rate by comparison to most locations. Based on the rate, this location would rank as one of the highest crash locations in Allen County. This is an example of how locations with low traffic volumes and low crash frequencies can display an unusually high crash rate.

Example 2. The Transportation Technical Committee requests a site specific analysis for an intersection that may have a safety problem. A quick review of crash and traffic information indicates a three year history of sixty crashes within twenty-five feet of the intersection and a total traffic volume of 25,000 vehicles per day. The calculated rate is 2.19 ranking it number five. A site inspection determines that vehicles are stacking over three hundred feet east and west of the intersection. Further analysis identifies forty-five additional crashes (rear-ends and side swipes) in the three year period that are directly attributed to the operation of the intersection. The revised three year crash history is now 105, with an annual average of 35 crashes and crash rate of 3.84. The location moves up to number one based on crash rate.

In the next newsletter we will discuss NIRCC's safety management system process and demonstrate how the process can help address the issues shown in these examples.




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## **Transit News**

### **Allen County**

The 2005 SAFETEA-LU legislation included a requirement for local areas to develop a coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan for all FTA human service transportation programs that provide funding for transportation services. These programs include the Section 5310 Elderly and Individuals with Disabilities Program, the Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program and the Section 5317 New Freedom Program. If not already in use, these programs will be utilized by providers within Allen County. The plan must identify the available transportation services, needs of the targeted populations, gaps in services, develop strategies to address the gaps, and prioritize the strategies. Projects selected for funding under these programs must be supported by the plan and the plan must be "developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public."

In the spring of 2006, NIRCC began the development of a local coordinated public transit- human services transportation plan, with the assistance of the Transit Planning Committee (TPC). The plan is expected to be completed in the spring of 2007.

**(Continued on Pg. 5)**

## Trails and Greenways Charrette continued...

People attending the charrette had a full day of activities scheduled to keep them busy. The agenda broke the day into about 4 working sessions along with several guest speakers including representatives from Ohio and Michigan, the INDOT Director of Greenways and Bikeways Ray Irvin, and the Streams & Trails Coordinator from the DNR Steve Morris.

As the day began people enjoyed a continental breakfast followed by a brief welcoming speech from the day's moderator Rory Robinson of the National Park Service. Participants had the opportunity to meet everyone participating in the day's event. Important contacts were made, connecting corridors were talked about, and successful stories of trail development and how they were accomplished were shared. People were able to gather ideas from a variety of people, groups, elected officials, communities, and other governmental entities.

The first session allowed people to sit down and talk with each other about their own plans within each county. Each of the county groups had a map of their county and a set of markers to illustrate proposed, planned, or existing trail and greenway corridors. The second session allowed time for each county to sit down with one another and with representatives from Ohio and Michigan. This session allowed for adjoining counties, and states, to discuss connecting corridors and make important contacts. Other counties who may not have been bordered each other were able meet and talk about ideas, problems, and solutions they have encountered or overcome. The third session gave people a chance to actually visualize the plans and realize the connections they made throughout the region. All county plans were hung on a wall so that everyone could see the regional significance of corridors they identified. Each county gave a brief presentation of what was portrayed on their maps and what their plans entailed. The final session of the day allowed everyone to discuss implementation strategies, ask questions, and make comments about the day's event.

Results from the charrette are still being finalized and mapped. Once results are final they will be displayed on NIRCC's website ([www.nircc.com](http://www.nircc.com)) and on Region III-A's website ([www.regioniiiia.org](http://www.regioniiiia.org)). The results will also be adopted by the appropriate boards as a regional bicycle and pedestrian plan. Groups, organizations, and governmental entities will be able to use the plan as a reference when applying for funds to develop trails. A brochure will be developed displaying the regional plan.

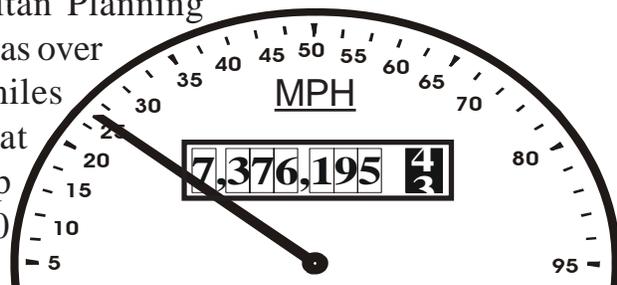
### Northeast Indiana Trails & Greenways Charrette



*November 17, 2006*

### Did You Know.....

In 2006 the daily Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) for the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) was over 7.3 million miles traveled. That number is up about 45,000 from 2005.



**Transit News continued...****DeKalb County**

In January 2007, NIRCC began working on a rural transit feasibility study for DeKalb County. In the fall of 2006, the DeKalb County Commissioners were awarded a Feasibility Study Assistance Grant from the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) to conduct the study. The application for this grant was submitted on behalf of the Commissioners by the DeKalb County Council on Aging (DCCOA).

Over the years the DCCOA has been able to provide transportation throughout the county for elderly individuals and persons with disabilities, as well as individuals with general transportation requests. However, based on the increased cost of gasoline, reduced funding, growth of the elderly population, and the increasing needs of younger riders, the transportation needs within DeKalb County have outgrown the reach of services that DCCOA can provide. Public transit can provide the opportunity to address these needs and to provide an enhanced level of service to all residents in DeKalb County.

The study will lay the framework for operating public transit in DeKalb County. It will identify both the transportation needs of the residents and the capital and operational costs needed to provide the service. Currently, information is being gathered through surveys, interviews, and research of demographic data for DeKalb County. Surveys were distributed at the beginning of January to social service and government agencies, medical facilities, apartment communities, nursing facilities, and employers in order to collect information on the needs of the community. Once all the information is collected and analyzed, it will be included in the final report that will be submitted to INDOT. The study must be completed and submitted to INDOT prior to April 2007 in order to be eligible for rural transit funding in 2008.

**Redesignation**

Congratulations Allen County! You have officially improved the quality of air you breathe. On January 11, 2007 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published the final rule to upgrade Allen County from a nonattainment area for the 8-hour ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) to an attainment area.

Last spring the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) in coordination with NIRCC and other air quality partners, submitted a petition to redesignate Allen County as an attainment area. Allen County was designated nonattainment in June of 2004 for failing to meet the 8-hour ozone NAAQS. IDEM submitted this petition to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Allen County had become eligible to petition for attainment status in 2006.

Originally, Allen County was designated nonattainment in 2004 as a result of the three year average of air quality pollutants generated between 2001 and 2003. Since then, NIRCC, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) have been teaming up with IDEM to develop implementation steps and improve Allen County's air quality. New averages of air quality pollutants generated during the three year period between 2003 and 2005 made Allen County eligible to become an attainment area.

Now that we are an attainment area what does this mean? Well, for mobile emissions there are still strict rules and regulations. But, for economic development, there is a less restrictive permitting process. Rules and regulations on permitting will be less demanding for new developments or expansions to existing businesses. Although economic development activities will become more accommodating, NIRCC is still be required to follow specific guidelines for implementing transportation improvements as they did under the nonattainment designation and show conformity.



# NIRCC

630 City-County Building  
One East Main Street  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802-1804

Telephone: (260) 449-7309  
Fax: (260) 449-7682

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## 2006 Annual Indiana MPO Conference

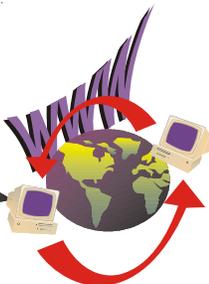


NIRCC hosted the 2006 Annual Indiana MPO Conference this past October. The conference was held at the Grand Wayne Center in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The conference was a success! The main sessions of the conference included presentations on bicycle and pedestrian planning, SAFETEA-LU planning regulations, coordinated public transit planning, safety planning, and the inner workings of the LPA INDOT process. Smaller breakout sessions offered topics covering access management, air quality and CMAQ project evaluation, connectivity planning and land use, VMT, project cost estimation, sub area and corridor planning, GIS, and rural planning.



***WE HAVE UPDATED  
OUR WEBSITE!!!***



Your source for transportation planning information for the Fort Wayne-New Haven-Allen County Metropolitan Area.

**[www.nircc.com](http://www.nircc.com)**