
Appendix A: Stakeholder Outreach

This Appendix presents the approach, findings and recommendations from the rail stakeholder outreach activities conducted by Indiana Department of Transportation for the development of this Indiana State Rail Plan. It includes four sections and two attachments:

- A.1 Description of the Stakeholder Outreach and Involvement Plan for the State Rail Plan
- A.2 Outreach Activities and Participation
- A.3 Summary of Stakeholder Comments, Concerns and Issues
- A.4 Recommendations from Outreach Comments

Attachment 1 to Appendix A: Outreach session handouts, sign-in sheets and comment forms.

Attachment 2 to Appendix A: Rail and shipper survey questionnaires and cover letters, list of individuals that were contacted, method of contact.

A.1 Stakeholder and Public Involvement Plan

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is committed to engaging rail stakeholders and the public in rail planning activities. To accomplish this, a *Stakeholder and Public Involvement Plan* was developed which describes the approach, activities to engage stakeholders and the public in the development of the *Indiana State Rail Plan*.

Based on current Federal requirements, a State Rail Plan must include adequate and reasonable notice and opportunity for comment and other input from a variety of stakeholders, including the public, rail carriers, commuter and transit authorities operating in, or affected by rail operation within the state; local governments; and other interested parties. INDOT has sought comment and the involvement of these stakeholders and the public through rail planning forums and questionnaires, interviews, as well as an online survey.

Outreach activities were conducted as part of the 2009 *Indiana Rail Plan*. These activities sought input and comments on the overall vision and direction for Indiana's multimodal transportation system from Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), the Indiana Logistics Council, academics, transportation providers, economic development officials, and a developer.

Additional transportation outreach was conducted as part of the 2010 Long Range Plan Update, comprised of meetings with MPOs, regional planning organizations (RPOs), and all INDOT district offices. This update determines long-range transportation system improvement needs and integrates the long range plan with the Indiana Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the Major Moves construction program.

The approach for stakeholder and public involvement for the State Rail Plan focuses on the role that freight and passenger rail transportation have in future and current Indiana life and STIP.

A.1.1 Goals for Stakeholder and Public Involvement:

The goals for stakeholder and public involvement for the State Rail Plan:

- Gain an understanding of the need, the potential impacts of and opportunities for rail transportation to improve the overall efficiency and sustainability of Indiana’s transportation system;
- Solicit input relative to rail policies, projects, and programs to better meet transportation needs while also making Indiana a more attractive location to conduct business and a better place to live; and
- Provide input for developing a strategy for making rail investment decisions.

A.1.2 Role and Responsibilities of Steering Committee:

A Steering Committee has been named to guide the planning study and outreach approach, development of the plan, and recommend the final draft plan to Indiana Department of Transportation. The names of steering committee members are included as **Exhibit A-1**.

Throughout this study various Steering Committee members:

- Participated in meetings, telephone, face-to-face discussions, and, when possible, individual interviews to discuss ideas, vision, and concerns about the study;
- Reviewed and commented on the project approach, key findings, and first drafts of all recommendations and documents prior to review by the stakeholders, the public, INDOT leadership;
- Notified Federal, state and local governments as appropriate and railroads operating in Indiana of the development of the Plan, its status and how they can have input;
- Shared information with INDOT leadership;
- Collected leadership’s feedback and used it to direct the study; and
- Approve the final draft document prior to submission to FRA.

Exhibit A-1: Steering Committee Members

Individual	Representing
Venetta Keefe	INDOT Rail Office
Mike Riley	INDOT Rail Office
Mike McGathey	INDOT Rail Office
Keith Bucklew	INDOT Director, Multimodal Planning and Programs
Steve Smith	INDOT Office of Long Range Planning and Modeling
John Jordan	INDOT Economic Development

A.1.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Consultant Team:

Wilbur Smith Associates (WSA) has been contracted as the Consultant Team, and as directed by the Steering Committee, gathered data, assisted with the rail planning forums, conducted interviews, performed analyses and summarized comments from all stakeholder and public outreach activities.

A.1.4 Outreach Approach

Stakeholder and public input for the Indiana State Rail Plan focuses on complementing, integrating, and filling any gaps in the other activities completed for the Plan. Input for the Rail Plan was gathered in a number of ways. **Exhibit A-2** presents the methods used and the purpose for each.

Exhibit A-2: Outreach Approaches

Outreach Methods	Purpose
Stakeholder interviews	To individually inform stakeholders of the study and obtain their input by interview.
Stakeholder questionnaires	To individually inform stakeholders of the study and obtain their input by having them complete a questionnaire.
Rail planning forums, meetings	To meet with, inform and obtain input from stakeholder groups, agencies, and members of the general public on the purposed of the State Rail Plan, as well as to solicit specific issues which impact rail operations.
Government agency and railroad coordination	To inform government agencies and the railroad companies doing business in Indiana of study, its status and activities and provide them a forum for review and comment.
INDOT website	To provide information on the Plan and give stakeholders and general public the opportunity to complete an online survey and provide input on the Plan.

A.1.5 Identification of Stakeholders

WSA and INDOT identified stakeholders that would have an interest and/or insights that are relevant to railroad transportation in Indiana. These stakeholders include:

- Metropolitan Planning Organizations within the state
- Railroads within the state
- Passenger rail entities operating within the state
- A sample of railroad shippers
- Trade associations of railroads, shippers, or other entities that would have an interest in rail transportation
- Academics with a railroad focus
- Port authorities that interact with railroads
- Government officials with an interest in railroads

As part of the effort to identify stakeholders, the Indiana Department of Transportation identified a subset of stakeholders to be directly contacted based on their involvement in rail transportation.

A.2 Outreach Activities and Participation

A.2.1 Rail Planning Open Houses/Meetings

INDOT held three rail planning open houses. At each open house, a short presentation was given at 4:00 PM and another was given at 6:00 PM, depending upon attendance. Following each presentation was a brief question and answer period. In addition to the formal presentation, easel boards provided information on the rail plan, and the presentation slides were displayed on a projector in continuous loop. Attendees were also provided with a preliminary executive summary of the Plan and survey forms which could be completed onsite, mailed, or scanned and sent to INDOT or the consulting team. At each open house, attendees were encouraged to complete surveys either through the paper surveys that were provided or online on the INDOT website.

In addition to the open houses, INDOT and consulting staff also attended and made a presentation at a meeting by the Indiana Railroad Transportation Group (IRTG). A summary of the open house and IRTG meeting is shown in **Exhibit A-3**. Copies of all handouts, the presentation used, sign-in sheets and survey forms are included in **Attachment 1** to this appendix.

Exhibit A-3: Summary of Open Houses/Meeting

Meeting	Date	Location	Attendance (excl. INDOT, WSA staff)
Rail Planning Open House	June 1	Vincennes	Nine including a representative of a railroad, local government representatives, general public
Rail Planning Open House	June 2	Indianapolis	49, including representatives of railroads, interest groups, government, general public
IRTG Meeting	June 2	Indianapolis	14, including representatives of railroads, professional services firms associated with railroad industry
Rail Planning Open House	June 7	LaPorte	18, including representatives of railroads, interest groups, government, general public

A.2.2 Stakeholder Interviews/Questionnaires

One hundred and one key stakeholders were contacted directly, either by phone, email or mail. Of these, 30 were invited to either complete a survey or be interviewed by WSA staff. Most often, the 30 individuals were first contacted by email. If there was not response, they were called. The remaining 71 were asked to complete a survey and/or provide comments directly to WSA staff by email or mail. Those stakeholders that were directly contacted were sent one of three versions of the INDOT Rail Plan survey. Railroads were sent surveys that asked not only questions about overall rail issues in Indiana and INDOT's role, but also questions about specific issues and needs on their systems. Rail shippers were similarly sent surveys that not only queried these individuals about rail issues within Indiana overall, but also their specific company's usage and interaction with the rail network. Other stakeholders, such as academics, government representatives, associations, special interest groups were sent a version of the survey that was similar to that which was distributed to the general public. A list of stakeholders that were contacted and a copy of each version of the questionnaire is provided in **Attachment 2** to this appendix.

A.2.3 INDOT Website

INDOT has established a web page for the State Rail Plan, which provides information about the Rail Plan, such as the Preliminary Executive Summary, the Rail Plan Outreach Presentation. The site also included an online survey tool, which was on the INDOT website between May 23, 2011 and July 7, 2011. One hundred and seventy one surveys were submitted through INDOT's online survey tool.

A.3 Stakeholder Outreach Findings - Opportunities, Comments, Concerns, Issues

This section presents a summary of the comments and opinions received through the outreach conducted as part of the State Rail Plan development. Comments are presented in general terms to protect the proprietary and competitive nature of the private sector shippers, businesses and Indiana-based railroads interviewed.

A.3.1 Overarching Themes

A number of consistent themes were received from multiple stakeholders from various parts of the state throughout the outreach process. These overarching themes include:

- The rail mode in Indiana provides transportation efficiency and competitiveness as well as reducing fuel usage and reducing congestion on highways
- Rail freight service was seen as essential to Indiana's economy and will have to contribute to the future increase in freight
- Rail passenger service has significant support but must have more convenient schedules and better reliability to be effective
- Current INDOT funding mechanisms (IRSF) are effective and well managed but are not large enough to address current rail needs
- Indiana should be more aggressive in identifying and acquiring rail funding from available sources

A.3.2 Statewide Comments, Concerns and Issues

This section summarizes comments received which addressed rail issues in a general manner and which applied to the rail network on a statewide basis.

Recognition of the Role of Rail in Indiana

- Stakeholders recognize that rail plays a critical role in Indiana's economy and provides transportation, environmental, energy and quality of life benefits to Indiana residents
 - Rail service is critical to the production and manufacturing of many commodities including agriculture, steel, chemicals, coal, and automobiles
 - Rail service reduces fuel usage and emissions as well as congestion on highways
 - The availability of rail service is critical to economic competition and economical transportation
- Stakeholders were also supportive of the State's efforts to improve rail service in Indiana
 - INDOT's Industrial Rail Service Fund is beneficial and administered well but is funded at a level well below statewide needs

Proposed Passenger Service

- Stakeholders were supportive of intercity rail passenger service, but recognized its current shortcomings

- Current rail passenger services require more convenient schedules and better reliability
- Current rail passenger service is slow and inconvenient
- Passenger service plays an important role, especially with current high fuel prices and roadway congestion
- Passenger service can be convenient, cost-effective, save energy, and reduce highway usage
- Passenger service must be reliable with schedules comparable to driving times to be competitive
- Stakeholders saw opportunities for improved rail intercity and commuter services but also recognized the need to avoid conflicts with rail freight operations
 - There are significant opportunities for rail passenger service between Indianapolis and Chicago
 - There are opportunities for new or improved services between Indianapolis and Bloomington, Terre Haute, Muncie, Evansville, Logansport, Louisville, Batesville, and Cincinnati
 - High speed rail links between major cities and airports are desired
 - Support the South-of –the-Lake Re-route
 - Passenger routes should travel over as few freight carrier lines as possible and use rights-of-way with less freight to improve trip times and reliability
 - There is potential for significant commuter rail growth (NICTD) between northwest Indiana and Chicago
 - Support the Indy Connect Plan to increase service to northeast and metropolitan Indianapolis
 - There was concern by freight railroads of being forced to accommodate passenger trains. With too many passenger trains, freight could be forced onto highways. One carrier was also skeptical that passenger rail operations could operate at speeds over 79 miles per hour on freight lines.
 - At least one stakeholder was concerned over the cost efficiency of passenger rail, contending that bus service could be a more efficient way to serve those dependent upon mass transportation.
 - Some stakeholders were careful to point out that certain groups such as the disabled, poor and elderly do not have cars and rely on decent public transportation.
- Stakeholders suggested a number of passenger rail services for consideration
 - Between Muncie and Indianapolis
 - Bloomington to Indianapolis; Bloomington to Evansville
 - Chicago to Evansville with stops in Terre Haute, Vincennes and Princeton
 - Into Noblesville
 - Between Logansport and Indianapolis
 - HSR service between Chicago, Indianapolis and Cincinnati via Lafayette
 - From Batesville to Indianapolis and Cincinnati

Rail-Related Business Opportunities

- Stakeholders recognized the existing and potential economic advantages of rail freight service
 - Rail freight service is essential to Indiana’s major commodities such as coal, steel, chemicals, automotive products, and agriculture
 - Rail service contributes to growth in manufacturing production due to its cost advantages over other modes such as trucking. Trucking will face challenges due to higher fuel prices and increased highway congestion
 - The availability of rail service is a benefit in marketing industrial property and negotiating transportation rates
 - There is potential for increased imports and intermodal traffic to the region with the widening of the Panama Canal and increased shipments to Atlantic ports

- The potential business benefits of commuter rail service were also recognized
 - Commuter rail service provides an economic development tool enabling commuters to work in Chicago and bring paychecks back to Indiana

Rail Infrastructure Issues

- Stakeholders identified a number of safety-related infrastructure issues
 - Grade crossing concerns included railroad maintenance practices and damage to crossings caused by trucks
 - Efforts should be increased to separate rail-highway crossings and to close lightly used crossings on commuter rail routes
 - Railroads sometimes raise the at-grade crossings without raising the approaches, so that emergency vehicles bottom out on the crossings.

- A number of issues regarding rail efficiency were also identified
 - Short line railroad interchanges with Class I railroads are inefficient
 - There is a lack of intermodal ramps in Indianapolis with service to the West Coast
 - There is a lack of intermodal access in Indiana in general
 - Indiana coal trains need better interchange options, since trains that must interchange between NS and the CSX are often routed through Chicago
 - Short line railroads require 286,000 lb weight capability, especially with regard to bridges

Rail Operations and Competition

- At least one shipper was concerned over the lack of competition to their location.
- Several shippers considered their rail service to be unreliable. Carriers do not provide equipment or crews in a timely manner.

Funding for Rail

- A number of stakeholder comments addressed Indiana’s Industrial Rail Service Fund
 - The IRSF is administered fairly
 - The Fund is beneficial but provides a level of funding far below what is needed; \$100 million is required to attain 286,000 lb. service on all short lines
 - In the short-term, the IRSF could be used for passenger rail capital project matching funds

- Stakeholders also provided more general comments regarding rail funding
 - A larger share of the transportation budget should be directed to rail
 - Passenger rail operating support is necessary but current policy is not conducive to providing it
 - Potential sources of rail funding could include federal programs, statewide taxes, increased gas taxes, the state general fund, and public-private partnerships
 - Commuter rail investment could be provided through local taxing authority

Regulations

- A number of stakeholder comments addressed potential changes to policies or transportation regulations that would benefit rail
 - Government policies such as taxation, import/export tariffs and fuel taxes, together with rail partnerships, can promote domestic manufacturing and agriculture and change petroleum consumption habits
 - User fees for overweight trucks should be increased to reflect the true cost to highway maintenance
 - Rail carriers are generally opposed to any increase in truck size and weight standards
 - Indiana/roadway owners should take on increased grade crossing maintenance responsibilities

Miscellaneous Comments

- Public perception of rail is inaccurate. Freight rail is invisible to the public except as a nuisance

A.3.3 Location Specific Comments and Concerns

Specific rail-related needs and concerns were provided by stakeholders by specific location, by railroad, and by rail line. These are summarized below.

Railroad-Specific Comments

- NICTD (Chicago, South Shore & South Bend RR)
 - Relieve bottlenecks at interchanges with CSX at Miller and with CN at Gary
 - Provide power switches at CSS turnout on NICTD mainline

- Provide improvements at Michigan City and the west side of South Bend
 - Improve stations at Carroll Ave. and Michigan City
 - Provide a multimodal station at the Gary/Chicago Intl Airport
 - Improve the station at Kensington
 - Provide high level boarding platforms at heavily utilized stations
 - Relocate the storage yard at Michigan City
 - Expand services to Valparaiso and Lowell
 - The NICTD plans to relocate rail lines that currently run along 11th Street in Michigan City received numerous comments. Some are concerned about plans to close crossings and create a barrier along the tracks, others favor alternate routings, or an elevated viaduct.
- Louisville & Indiana RR
 - Relieve bottlenecks at Indianapolis and Jeffersonville terminals
 - Ohio Valley RR
 - Restore the switch connection
 - Indianapolis Belt RR
 - Study rehabilitation of the railroad to route traffic around downtown
 - CSX
 - Improve signals on Fort Wayne-Chicago Line
 - Address crossings without proper signaling on Cardinal Route between Chicago and Munster
 - Norfolk Southern
 - Address freight congestion and delay on Chicago Line between Chicago and Porter

Specific Locations

- Port of Indiana
 - Improve connection with the Evansville & Western RR due to increased traffic at the port
- Lafayette
 - Provide rail access to industrial parks
 - Rehabilitate NS rail bridge
- Porter
 - Address NS/CSX high density crossing
- Evansville
 - Construct an intermodal facility north of Evansville
- Fort Wayne
 - Construct an intermodal facility
- Kingsbury
 - Construct a logistics park

- Vincennes
 - Address bottleneck conditions
- Batesville
 - Construct a rail spur
- Kokomo
 - Reactivate connection between Kokomo and Tipton

Grade Crossing Locations

- Michigan City
- US 30 at Hanna
- Lexington Ave, Evansville
- CR 200 and 300, Orestes
- SR 25, Carroll and Cass Counties
- Lake County
- Rt. 29 north of Michigantown
- CFE Line
- SR 26, Greenbush
- US 52 Kossuth

A.4 Recommendations Based on Outreach

The following recommendations are based on comments, concerns and suggestions from the stakeholders who participated in rail outreach activities. These recommendations have not been subjected to a rigorous evaluation of their relative or absolute merit. However, they may be worth consideration.

A.4.1 Recommendations - Role of Indiana DOT

- A number of rail stakeholders expressed appreciation to INDOT for its State Rail Plan outreach effort. They also expressed a desire for continuation and expansion of outreach efforts, including,
 - Interact more with NICTD
 - Continue to focus on seeking public input and learning public concerns
 - Make presentations to Economic Development Association conferences
 - Hold consumer relation workshops and have focused and dedicated outreach
 - Form a citizens advisory committee
- Stakeholders also offered recommendations on the INDOT's planning process and structure, including,
 - Adopt a much longer planning horizon (30-50 years)
 - Develop strategic plans for both rail passenger and freight
 - Take a leadership role in transportation planning and development
 - Think more in terms of an integrated transportation system, rather than focus separately on each mode

- Create a High Speed Rail Division
 - Create a Rail Division
 - Plan for 2025 and 2050 needs and economic realities
- A number of recommendations also focused on existing funding programs, future funding sources and the use of funds
 - A larger IRSF is needed. A low interest loan program should be added.
 - A higher percentage of funding should be provided for rail
 - The percentage of sales tax used for IRSF should be increased
 - Should be flexible about funding private sector projects; funding projects if they yield sufficient public benefits
 - Form a rail authority to buy rail lines threatened with abandonment

A.4.2 Recommendations - Passenger Service

- Stakeholders offered a number of recommendations on implementing improved passenger rail service to the state
 - HSR should start with a small pilot program which has a high likelihood of success to create good public relations, education and support
 - Complete the NEPA assessment of the Midwest Regional Rail System proposed routes in Indiana
 - Accommodate bicycles on passenger trains
 - Create an Indianapolis Hub commuter service to gather patrons for intercity passenger routes
 - Serve airports and universities
 - Improve scheduling of trains between Indianapolis and Chicago
- Specific passenger routes were also recommended by stakeholders
 - Restore service to Warsaw and Fort Wayne from Chicago and Cleveland
 - Provide service between downtown Indianapolis and: the Indianapolis Airport; Lafayette, Noblesville; Muncie; Marion; Anderson; Fishers; Evansville; Louisville; Carmel; Bloomington; Brownburg; Greenwood; Kokomo; Pendleton; South Bend; Fort Wayne; St. Louis through Terre Haute; and Columbus
 - NICTD service to Valparaiso and the Gary Airport
 - Expanded commuter service in northwest Indiana

A.4.3 Recommendations - Business Opportunities

- Stakeholder recommendations for rail-related business opportunities included the following:
 - Reactivate the Muncie Belt Railway
 - Promote single carrier service between Indianapolis and the West Coast
 - Promote road-railer service
 - Consider rail as an option in the I-70 Corridors of the Future

A.4.4 Recommendations – Rail-Highway Grade Crossings

- A number of infrastructure recommendations also focused on rail-highway crossings
 - INDOT should establish a crossing maintenance and repair fund
 - Crossing costs should be split between the railroad and the roadway owner
 - The number of at-grade crossings should be reduced through grade separation and closures where prudent

A.4.5 Recommendations – Infrastructure Investment Decisions

- Stakeholder offered the following recommendations on rail investment decisions:
 - Rail access should be incorporated into economic development projects aimed at new industrial locations
 - Rail freight investments should consider the impacts on highway congestion
 - INDOT should consider the full costs of trucks on Interstates when making funding decisions
 - Base investments on benefit/cost analysis
 - Consider public-private partnerships
 - Base investments on key performance measures, benefit/cost analysis, economic impact, quality of life, increased access, future expandability, and other indirect impacts

A.4.6 Recommendations – Taxes

- The following recommendations were received with regard to transportation-related taxes:
 - Create tax incentives for railroads
 - Reduce inventory taxes to promote economic development
 - Increase gas taxes