

## 6.0 Market Research Implications for Policy Plan

This section provides some thoughts as to how the market research findings might influence the policy plan. In the subsections below, we have reflected on the main findings of each of the market research topic areas, and indicated how these findings could be reflected in INDOT's Policy Plan. A markup version of the Policy Plan showing how these might be made is included in Appendix G.

For some of the actions raised by either the general public or other stakeholders, INDOT already has policies reflecting the desired action. In these cases, we indicate which INDOT policy covers that concern, and reference the appropriate page number in the Policy Plan.

It is important to note that these suggestions and the accompanying markup of the Policy Plan in Appendix F represent Cambridge Systematics interpretation of how to implement policies and actions that arose from the market research. They do not represent agreement by INDOT to adopt these policies. Any modification to INDOT's Policy Plan would occur through an open public process.

### ■ 6.1 General Market Research

The general market survey revealed that the nine policy areas are still relevant. In addition, the survey found that people think INDOT should focus on:

1. **Congestion Management.** A CMS is included in the Transportation System Effectiveness portion of the policy plan (page 1-6).
2. **Improved Highway Maintenance.** Direction to “implement roadway management systems to protect the state’s investment in the existing highway system through a maintenance and preservation program that provides the best level of service and minimizes long term costs” is included in the plan (page 1-7).
3. **Scheduling of Construction and Maintenance Projects.** Respondents were concerned about construction projects being completed on time. Timely completion of projects is not specifically referenced right now in the plan. One could argue that this is not a planning issue; however it could reasonably be added to the Transportation System Effectiveness portion of the plan, under Highway Strategies. A potential strategy

might be: “INDOT will use all reasonable means of completing construction projects in a timely fashion.” (Draft language has been added to the Transportation System Effectiveness section.)

The survey also probed into how Hoosiers viewed some emerging issues. The emerging issues that were most important and ways to address them in the policy plan are discussed below:

- 1. Land Resources (i.e., preserve open spaces, farmlands, forests).** Land resource and preservation issues are not explicitly discussed in the Policy Plan. A strategy addressing farmland preservation could be included in the Demographic Changes and Quality of Life section (draft language has been added). There are already policies related to open spaces and forests in the Natural Environment and Energy section (e.g., “INDOT will minimize disruption of environmentally sensitive areas, communities and aesthetics”).
- 2. Improve Homeland Security.** Homeland security is not explicitly addressed in the current plan. It might be appropriate to change the Transportation Safety section to be Transportation Safety and Security. Wording of the policy statement could be changed, and a strategy included to address security. (Policy and strategy text have been added.)
- 3. Treat All Parts of the State Fairly.** There are no policies or strategies that address this. An appropriate place would be in Demographic Changes and Quality of Life. We agreed that INDOT needs to consider whether it wants to consider such a policy – geographic fairness is not now a criteria for project selection. No changes to the policy plan have been suggested.

## ■ 6.2 Environmental Justice

Section 3.0 of this report identified 12 potential actions to improve the manner in which potential issues of environmental justice are addressed in agency decision-making. The twelve actions, and how they might be reflected in the Demographic Changes and Quality of Life section of the Policy Plan, if appropriate, are discussed below.

- 1. Establish a Department-Wide Environmental Justice Policy.** The section Demographic Changes and Quality of Life would be the appropriate place to state this policy. Draft text has been added to the policy statement. Particular strategies could be built upon the other recommendations discussed below.
- 2. Continue to move toward customer orientation in all aspects of INDOT’s planning and operations.** A strategy to take a human and community view in all aspects of agency decision-making would be appropriate. This would encourage context-sensitive solutions and “thinking beyond the pavement.” This strategy has been added.

3. **Assess environmental justice for INDOT policies and system plans.** Include environmental justice in the set of performance measures being developed by INDOT. A strategy has been written to accomplish this.
4. **Move away from using threshold-based approaches to identifying environmental justice populations.** This might not work well as a policy or strategy, but may be something that INDOT would want to work towards. No changes have been made to the Policy Plan.
5. **Establish a department-wide working group, including representative of other state agencies, to identify potentially important environmental justice issues and to coordinate approaches.** This has been made a strategy in the Demographic Changes and Quality of Life policy section.
6. **Expand the multimodal program orientation of the department, especially with respect to the availability of public transportation services and the means these services can be accessed by persons of limited income.** This has been addressed in the Public Transit Strategies subsection of the Transportation System Effectiveness policy section.
7. **Develop more in-house professional expertise, including consideration of hiring and promotional practices so as to broaden employee diversity.** This is an internal operations issue, and is not needed in the Policy Plan.
8. **Provide additional training to help mainstream considerations of environmental justice throughout all aspects of planning, maintaining, and operating Indiana's transportation system.** This training should extend to MPOs and transit agencies, and include issues associated with working and living in a multicultural environment. A strategy in the Demographic Changes and Quality of Life policy section has been added.
9. **Broaden the usage of community impact analysis in developing transportation system plans as well as for project-level planning and design.** Learn to understand and work within the informal structures that exist within all communities rather than relying primarily or even exclusively on formal structures. We have drafted a strategy under Demographic Changes and Quality of Life.
10. **Broadly communicate to people, organizations, and agencies the opportunities that are available to provide input to the transportation planning process, and the different approaches that can be used in achieving this interaction.** We agreed that this is not something that should be added to the Policy Plan.
11. **A number of the interviewees recommended that INDOT work cooperatively with MPOs to jointly develop guidelines for the conduct of environmental justice analyses, building upon already existing resource materials.** We agreed that this is not something that should be added to the Policy Plan.
12. **Continue to implement the practice of Context Sensitive Solutions, for systems planning as well as for project planning and development.** A strategy to look for context sensitive solutions has been added based on item 2, above.

## ■ 6.3 Land Resources

Section 4.0 of this report on land resource issues had several potential actions that INDOT might take. All of the potential actions listed below might become strategies in the Policy Plan under the Natural Environment and Energy policy. We have annotated the strategies that have been included in the markup of the policy plan.

### **Coordination, Outreach, and Training**

1. Conduct more extensive outreach and coordination with local officials, stakeholder groups, and the general public, starting at the early stages of the transportation planning and project development processes. (Added.)
2. Assist local jurisdictions, through coordination and training, in establishing appropriate land use policies to maximize positive impacts and minimize negative impacts related to transportation investment. (Added.)
3. Improve the visibility and treatment of land resource issues in the statewide planning process. (Excluded. Can be considered part of items 1 and 2.)

### **Analytical Capabilities**

1. Complete the implementation of a uniform, comprehensive, and accessible GIS system at the state level for use in project design and impact assessment.
2. Develop and apply tools for evaluating the impacts of transportation projects on land resources/land use and urban growth, both at a micro level (e.g., interchange) and a macro level (city/region).

The above suggestions were added as one strategy.

### **Design, Operation, and Management of the Transportation System**

1. Implement access management policies, to maintain traffic flow on arterial roads. (Added to the Transportation System Effectiveness section.)
2. Revise landscaping and roadside maintenance practices to reduce the spread of invasive species. (Added.)

3. Protect right-of-way for future new transportation facilities, facility expansion, and interchange development. (Not included. This is not consistent with INDOT current practice.)
4. Acquire development rights in selected impact areas, such as wetlands adjacent to an improved highway. (Not included. This is not consistent with INDOT current practice.)

In addition, we had a potential action that said:

*“Work to overcome an image as an adversary or an agency that acts without considering feedback from others, and instead work to build a reputation as a collaborator.”*

This is probably not the kind of language that would become a strategy in the Policy Plan. However, it does highlight the perception of those interviewed as to what INDOT has to do to be more responsive and proactive with regards to land resource issues.

INDOT may also want to reword the Natural Environment and Energy policy to embrace land resource planning issues – it is silent on that right now. This is something we can discuss.

## ■ 6.4 Freight

Section 5.0 of this report identified shortcomings and challenges, as well as suggested improvements. Each of the items raised, and how they might be handled in the Policy Plan are provided below.

1. **Gap in the North-South I-69 Corridor and Poor Access to Southwest Indiana.** Specific projects are not mentioned in the Policy chapter of the plan. The I-69 project has clearly been an INDOT priority, and is in the Long Range Plan.
2. **Limited Capacity to Cross the Ohio River.** Again, this is a project specific recommendation.
3. **Substandard physical geometries at older interchanges and ramps.** There are several strategies that would support this:
  - a. INDOT will identify and work in partnership with Indiana transportation system users to strengthen intermodal transportation connections for people, goods, and freight to intrastate, interstate, and international markets (page 1-17).
  - b. INDOT will pursue the expansion, improvement and intermodal solutions necessary to ensure that the transportation system supports growth of the state’s economy, demand for mobility of people and goods, and improvement of the environment (page 1-7).

4. **Non-interstate roadway system not as well maintained as the interstates.** There is plenty in the policy plan that covers this. For example: the Highway Strategy on page 1-7 related to roadway management systems. This issue is one of implementation, rather than policy.
5. **Not enough rest areas for long-distance truckers.** There is nothing that specifically covers this. It may be appropriate to add a strategy to the safety policy dealing with rest areas. A potential strategy has been added.
6. **High cost of truck litigation and damages.** This is not necessarily something that should alter the policy plan, and would fit well within the safety policy.
7. **Short lines need to accommodate larger bulk rail equipment.** This includes upgrading track to accommodate 286 thousand pound-per axle standards, as well as longer sidings. There are several strategies under the Economic Development policy that would support this:
  - a. INDOT will encourage the development and preservation of the existing rail freight network in Indiana... (page 1-17).

The actual actions to carry this out might involve loans to the short lines or shippers for the upgrades.
8. **Shortage of covered hopper cars.** This was identified as a national problem, and could be covered under the same policy noted above.
9. **Winter closure of Indiana ports.** This was identified as a shortcoming/challenge. No specific changes were suggested.