



## Expanding Public Transit Legislative Brief

**Public transit – buses, subways, and light rail – is clean, efficient, and economical.**

- Public transit makes cities and towns more desirable by offering workers cost-effective ways of getting to and from their workplace.
- Public transit also boosts a community's attractiveness by improving its air quality, reducing congestion and reducing carbon emissions.



**What legislation is needed in Indiana to improve and expand public transit?**

- Regional transit authority legislation will enable local governments to establish a regional authority to build, operate and fund regional public transit systems offering bus and light rail service.
- It will include a dedicated, permanent funding source that significantly increases funding for public transit in Indiana, by providing local governments with local option taxing authority dedicated to support public transit.

**With the economic downturn, why focus on public transit?**

- Increased investment in public transit will lead to additional investments by new and existing

companies – and that means job growth when we need it most.

- Public transit improves a community's quality of life by providing transportation choices, and can revitalize struggling neighborhoods.
- Mass transit also makes it easier for workers to reach employers – thereby increasing a company's potential pool of employees.
- Finally, mass transit is a more energy efficient and less polluting form of transportation than automobiles.

**What are the environmental and social benefits of public transit?**

- Public transit reduces transportation-related air pollution.
  - 60% of the smog-forming pollution in Central Indiana comes from motor vehicles.
  - Public transportation produces 95% less carbon monoxide, 90% less volatile organic compounds, and half as much carbon emissions and nitrogen oxide per passenger mile as private vehicles.
- It reduces transportation-related energy consumption, helping move us along to energy independence.

**Who is supporting HEC in this?**

- The Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, the Indiana Transportation Association, the Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA), and the Northwest Indiana Regional Bus Authority, among others.

## Is the public willing to pay for improved public transit?

- A recent public opinion poll commissioned by the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce and Indianapolis Board of Realtors indicates that local residents are willing to pay more for better transit:
  - 87% of metro Indy residents agree that need exists for more transportation options including mass transit.
  - Of the 9 most important local issues, mass transit ranked 1st in need for more funding.
- Using transit is cheaper than owning and driving a car, which costs the average family about \$9,100 a year.

## Will people use mass transit?

- Americans took 10.7 billion trips on public transit in 2008, the highest level in 52 years.
- IndyGo ridership increased 14% in 2008.
- Bloomington, Gary, Lafayette, and South Bend all recorded bus ridership increases in 2008.

## What are some examples of public transit systems in Indiana?

- Local bus systems, such as IndyGo in Indianapolis, Transpo in South Bend, and the Metropolitan Evansville Transit System (METS)
- The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District – the South Shore railroad system that connects South Bend and Chicago

## What is “public” or “mass transit?”

- Mass transit comprises passenger transportation services which are available for use by the general public, as opposed to modes for private use such as automobiles or vehicles for hire. Some services are free though most charge some sort of fare.
- Public transportation can consist of buses, subways, trolleys and light rail, commuter trains, van pool services, paratransit services for senior citizens and people with disabilities, ferries, water taxis, or monorails.



## How does I-69 factor into our push for additional public transit funding?

- HEC supports the selection of the least damaging and least costly route for the I-69 highway extension, which is unquestionably the U.S. 41/I-70 route that uses existing roadways. If this route is built, it can be completed more quickly, at only half the cost (or less) in construction expenses.
- If the state were to pursue the less costly U.S. 41/I-70 route, the money that was saved could be used to fund mass transit initiatives.

## What about “Major Moves” and public transit initiatives?

- Local bus systems in Indiana will receive about \$42 million in state support in 2009, through the public mass transportation fund. In contrast, from state transportation funds and Major Moves, local and state roads will receive about \$1.5 billion of state support this year.
- While a majority of the state’s Major Moves funds are dedicated to new road construction, those funds could be re-prioritized and directed to public transit, high speed passenger rail and road repair.