



*Non-Metropolitan Local  
Official Consultation  
Guidebook 02/22/21*



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# LOCAL CONSULTATION OVERVIEW

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is responsible for conducting planning activities, ranging from comprehensive long-range transportation plans, State Transportation Improvement Programs (STIPs), and mode-specific plans. INDOT is committed to conducting these activities in an open and transparent manner, providing the public and stakeholders with



opportunities to learn about transportation issues and participate in planning processes.

Indiana is a socially, culturally, and economically diverse state that is facing exciting and challenging times for transportation. Indiana covers 35,826 square miles, with a 2019 estimated population of 6,732,219. Over 14% of Indiana's population or 1,459,274 persons are living in rural Indiana (*Rural Health Information Hub*). INDOT values the participation of local officials and works to continuously improve collaboration with local governments in all aspects of statewide transportation planning and programming.

Local elected and appointed officials represent units of county, municipal, or special-purpose local government entities. The planning process begins at the local level with involvement from the business community, residents and local officials within Indiana.

INDOT encourages cooperation with rural, non-metropolitan local governments through other avenues as well, such as the metropolitan planning program's emphasis areas, participation in the Rural Economic Development Initiative, and the department's various grants for local governments. Some of these grant programs provide opportunities for local governments to address transportation planning project priorities.



# FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

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The Code of Federal Regulations under section Title 23 §450.210(b) states that:

*“The State shall provide for non-metropolitan local official participation in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The State shall have a documented process for consulting with non-metropolitan local officials representing units of general-purpose local government and/or local officials with responsibility for transportation that is separate and discrete from the public involvement process and provides an opportunity for their participation in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP.”*

- 1. At least once every five years, the State shall review and solicit comments from nonmetropolitan local officials and other interested parties for a period of not less than 60 calendar days regarding the effectiveness of the cooperative process and any proposed changes. The State shall direct a specific request for comments to the State association of counties, State municipal league, regional planning agencies, or directly to nonmetropolitan local officials.*
- 2. The State, at its discretion, shall be responsible for determining whether to adopt any proposed changes. If a proposed change is not adopted, the State shall make publicly available its reasons for not accepting the proposed change, including notification to nonmetropolitan local officials or their associations.*

This document addresses the requirement per 450.210(b) that the consultation process that INDOT undertakes with rural local officials will be reviewed at least once every five years. It was created as a resource that represent rural areas that are not part of a large metropolitan planning area.

In developing plans and programs, INDOT also follows a process that is “continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive to the degree appropriate” (23 United States Code [USC] §135) and involves a wide range of stakeholders. INDOT uses the input gathered from the public along with data to identify the issues, needs, and priorities for a better multimodal transportation system. This information is used to make informed decisions regarding transportation improvements and strategies while working under the reality of funding limitations. These collaborative and inclusive discussions during the planning process result in planning and programming that consider all transportation modes, both construction and non-construction-based solutions, and the needs of all users of the system. This process also emphasizes the broadening of engagement to include as many stakeholders as possible. This is accomplished by conducting broader outreach to different groups, including traditionally underserved communities.



## INDOT PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Transportation planning involves examining the long-term and strategic transportation goals of the state and specific areas within the state. It involves studying respective demographic characteristics and travel patterns; assessing existing and possible future transportation assets; looking at how these considerations and factors interrelate; forecasting possible changes over multiple years; estimating resources and funds potentially available to address transportation concerns; and evaluating alternatives for meeting current and future transportation needs to bring the area closer to achieving its vision. In coordination with our planning partners and stakeholders, INDOT identifies current and projected transportation challenges and propose discussed solutions to those challenges in the statewide long-range transportation and mode-specific plans.

Transportation planning is a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive process. It establishes a vision for transportation investments, examining critical trends, issues, and future-year needs to provide Hoosiers the highest level of mobility and safety possible to meet the needs of economic development and quality of life.

All INDOT plans must meet Federal and State requirements for public involvement, but otherwise the approaches to engaging the public vary depending on the plan's unique objectives and the particular needs of the target audiences. The INDOT [Planning Public Involvement Plan](#) provides the guidance to obtain sufficient public engagement as required by Federal and state regulations, while allowing for the flexibility to adapt public outreach approaches that are most appropriate for each individual plan.

- Asset Management Plans
- Corridor Vision Studies (Planning Level)
- Long-Range Transportation Plan
- Statewide Freight Mobility Plan
- Statewide Aviation Management Plan
- Strategic Highway Safety Plan



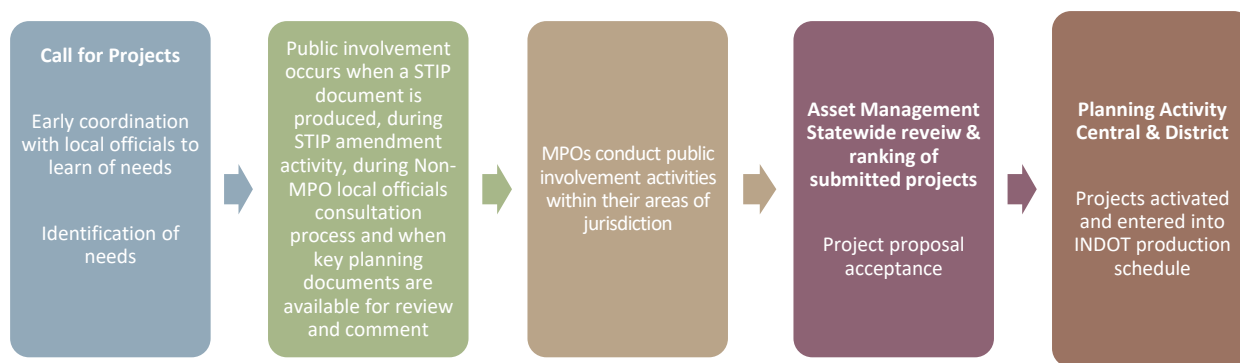
- Statewide Bicycle & Pedestrian or Active Transportation Planning Documents
- State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP)/Construction Program
- Transit Plans and Reports

Document Type	Prepared By	Contents and Public Involvement
<p><b>State Long-Range Transportation Plans</b></p>	<p>INDOT Transportation Planning Division  <a href="https://www.in.gov/indot/3714.htm">https://www.in.gov/indot/3714.htm</a></p>	<p>Minimum of 20-years of identified needs or high priority corridors. Plans are typically updated every 2-4 years or as needed.</p> <p>Requires public involvement activities; a 30-day comment period once draft is made available for public review</p>
<p><b>Statewide Transportation Improvement Program</b></p>	<p>INDOT Transportation Planning Division  <a href="https://www.in.gov/indot/2348.htm">https://www.in.gov/indot/2348.htm</a></p>	<p>Federally mandated and required at least once every 4 years; INDOT produces an updated STIP every 2 years.</p> <p>INDOT requires a 45-day public comment period and public involvement activities (including public meetings) to solicit input on STIP</p>
<p><b>Statewide Bike and Pedestrian Reports/Documents</b></p>	<p>INDOT Planning Department MPOs, RPOs, State Department of Health, Natural Resources, and Tourism as well as special interest groups</p>	<p>Links to regional and local bike and pedestrian plans/reports, state trails, recommendations, goals, and objectives specific to non-motorized forms of travel.</p> <p><a href="http://www.in.gov/indot/2828.htm">http://www.in.gov/indot/2828.htm</a></p>
<p><b>Americans with Disabilities Act Program and Initiatives</b></p>	<p>INDOT ADA Office in coordination with local towns, cities, and counties  <a href="https://www.in.gov/indot/3583.htm">https://www.in.gov/indot/3583.htm</a></p>	<p>Identifies improvements and schedules for addressing transportation accommodation issues and obstacles that limits the accessibility to all users of the transportation system.</p>
<p><b>Freight Mobility Report/Plan</b></p>	<p>INDOT Multimodal Division  <a href="http://www.in.gov/indot/3198.htm">http://www.in.gov/indot/3198.htm</a></p>	<p>Various recommended improvement strategies on roadways, rail lines, and marine ports to address freight bottlenecks. Plans are typically updated every 2-4 years or as needed.</p>



# PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Transportation planning and programming processes are to consider the desires of communities and include both the natural and human impacts to the environment. Transportation plans help regions and communities reach their goals. Therefore, involvement of local communities, primarily through their elected public officials, is essential to developing INDOT’s long-range plans and Indiana’s STIP. INDOT works through its six district offices and develops the agency’s long range and multimodal transportation plans and various federally required planning documents. INDOT cooperates, coordinates, and consults with the 14 Metropolitan Planning Organizations and 15-Regional Planning Organizations on the development of various planning documents.



## INDOT Annual Call for State Projects

A Call for Projects is the beginning of a process by which proposals for new projects can be presented, reviewed, and prioritized. If approved, these projects are programmed or accepted into a production schedule. Although changes to existing projects can occur at any time, proposals for new projects can be submitted only in response to a Call for New Projects. Separate Call for Projects processes are held for local projects and multiple calls may be issued each year.

The purpose of the call is to give the opportunity for submittal of identified transportation needs, which can originate from cities, towns, counties, Regional and/or Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Those needs are then reviewed and prioritized and may be pre-scoped as potential projects at the District level and passed onto the state level for final refinement and project selection. The state level groups that evaluate the projects are referred to as Program Management, Asset Management Teams, and each has a different area of focus. When projects make it through



the selection process and receive final approval, they are programmed into the STIP by project phase (preliminary engineering, right-of-way, and/or construction) for the year in which the work is intended to be done.

Non-metropolitan local officials (including elected or appointed), transportation stakeholders, and the general public outside of MPO areas are encouraged to meet with their respective INDOT district office or RPO office between April-June to discuss transportation needs and challenges. RPOs and INDOT Districts will document discussions and meet with INDOT Planning Team to discuss challenges and needs.



### Early Consultation Meetings

INDOT District offices work with a number of groups, including engineering, asset management, technical planning, bridge, pavement, traffic engineering, MPO, Local Public Agency (LPA) and Grant Administration division, and State Transportation Improvement Program business units. The Districts in coordination with the Central Office (CO) Technical Planning Team may arrange and host meetings in each District in the spring and early summer to discuss proposed projects, needs, the INDOT Long-Range Transportation Plan, STIP and other transportation-related issues. Although a District may hold any number of meetings throughout the year, there will generally be one meeting in each District focusing on consultation with local elected officials, key stakeholders, and Rural or Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs), MPO representatives, and representatives from other INDOT divisions, as warranted.



**Annual Program Development Process (General)**



## CONSULTATION PROCESS

INDOT is continually looking for new ways to engage with local leaders and the public in the development of our transportation planning documents and construction programs. Developing these documents and INDOT’s planning process involves continual consultation and coordination with stakeholders, the general public, local officials, Federal agencies, and non-profit organizations. Each voice is vital to the development and implementation of these



planning documents that addresses the transportation needs and priorities through the development of transportation improvement on Indiana state facilities.

INDOT conducts a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3C) multimodal transportation planning process in accordance with federal and state requirements. The process reflects a performance-based approach to planning and incorporates extensive use of data and analysis to inform decision-making. Included in the 3C process is the development of both short-term and long-term goals and performance objectives for the multimodal transportation system, the identification of strategies to achieve these performance objectives, and priorities for investment in programs and projects.

*Non-MPO area  
local officials are  
consulted to  
ensure  
transportation  
needs are*

Starting from Feb. 24, 2016 and every 5-years thereafter, INDOT formally solicits comment on current procedures created to ensure non-metropolitan local officials are included in an established consultation process, affording them the opportunity to comment on and participate in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP.

- INDOT gathers input from rural local officials in the statewide planning process
- Consultation process with local officials must be documented
- Consultation process should be collaborative to ensure priority issues are addressed through statewide and regional planning

#### Process Must Include:

- Key transportation stakeholder engagement
  - A letter explaining the process is mailed or sent electronically to rural, non-metropolitan elected officials, mayors, town board presidents, and/or county commissioners
  - INDOT District and Central Office contact information must be included in letter
- District Technical Services Directors are key points of contact
- A required public comment period of 60-days
- A summary report explaining steps taken
- An accounting of public comments and responses prepared
- Posting process content onto INDOT website



## Consultation Process Goals

The goals for conducting a comprehensive consultation process for non-metropolitan local officials are to continue to:

- Ensure the voices of rural elected officials and stakeholders are placed on equal footing as those in urban areas
- Support non-metropolitan local officials by providing information to make informed transportation planning and programming decisions and help shape the future of the transportation network in Indiana
- Develop opportunities for increased non-metropolitan local official involvement in the planning and programming process
- Seek comments and ideas on how participation in the planning process can be increased by non-metropolitan local officials.
- Build an ongoing relationship between the INDOT and non-metropolitan local officials

## PLANNING RESPONSIBILITIES

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### INDOT Central Office

INDOT Central Office Planning includes a team of individuals from the Technical Planning and Asset Management, Grants Administration, Statewide Technical Services, Communications, Multimodal, and Traffic Engineering Divisions. Collectively these groups are responsible for various transportation planning, asset management, and local coordination activities. The Central Office serves a supporting role to INDOT District Offices and oversee planning, asset management, program/project development processes. Central Office Planning Teams:

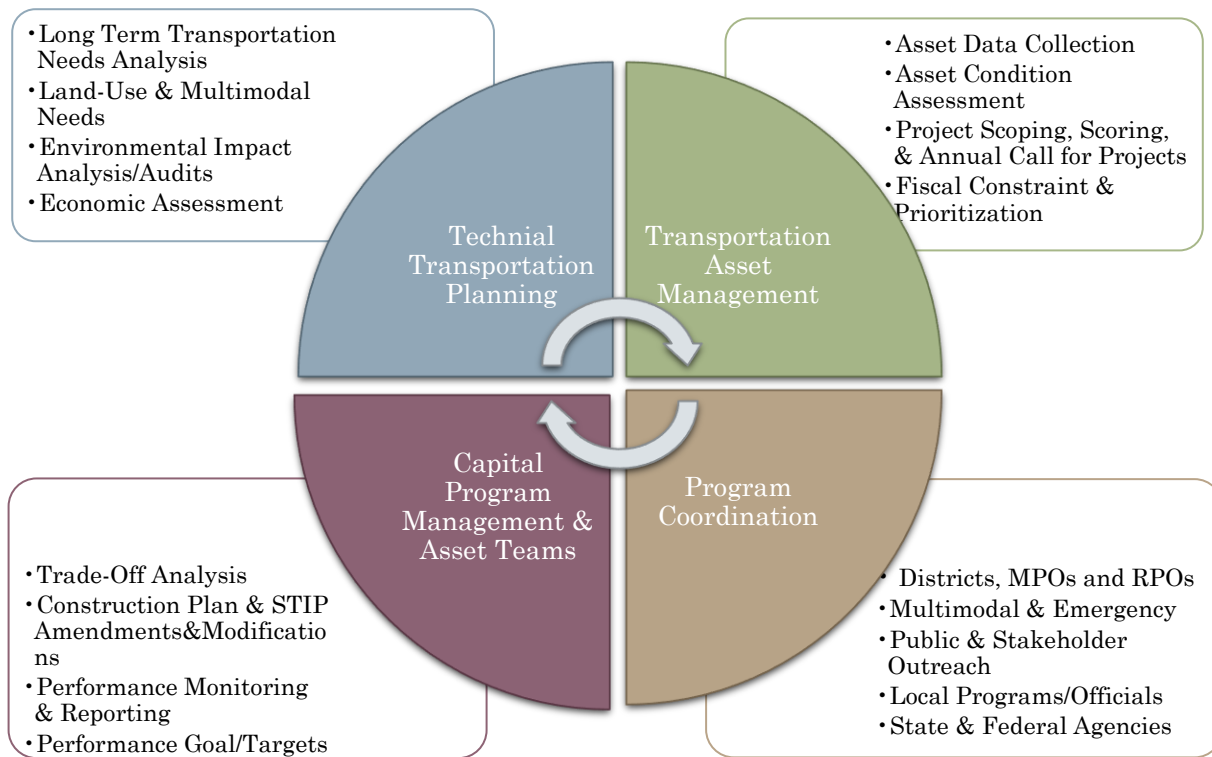
- Provide transportation systems level analysis to aid in project development and asset management: technical modeling (bridge, pavement, travel demand, economic, traffic forecasting, freight flows, and air quality conformity)
- Oversee, track, monitor, and report the collection of asset inventory and conditions data (traffic counts, pavement conditions, bridge conditions/inspections, safety data, and tracking of small road structures), and performance metrics as it relates to agency and national goals.
- Establish and implement agency goals, standards, and business rules
- Oversee and coordinate statewide programs and initiatives: Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), transit grants, congestion mitigation air quality



(CMAQ), railroad crossing program, Stellar Communities, TIGER Grants, and other programs.

- Statewide coordination: Freight Advisory Committees, Economic Development Corporations and/or Agencies, Joint Transportation Research, Department of Natural Resources, State Department of Health, Department of Environmental Management, Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), and others).
- Statewide prioritization of identified transportation needs based on established funding targets, executive direction, and agency policies
- Coordinate multi-modal considerations for all modes of travel.
- Ensure a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) transportation planning process between INDOT, planning partners, and transit operators, through information sharing.
- Performing MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) reviews (e.g. ensuring compliance with federal requirements, comparison with MPO long range plans, project information/cost accuracy, and impacts to state air quality conformity goals), TIP approvals, and administering the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) (e.g. STIP amendments, modifications, public outreach, planning partner coordination, and MPO TIP consistency.
- Facilitating agency public involvement and outreach activities
- Provide support and awareness to designated District staff who serve as voting members on MPO Technical Committees and Policy Boards as it relates to long-range planning, TIP, STIP, air quality conformity, work program activities, and other required planning actions.





## INDOT District Offices

INDOT’s six District Offices are responsible for short-term project planning, programming, local coordination, project management, and construction activities. The District Offices serve as INDOT’s front line for interaction with the public and local elected officials.

District Office Staff participate in MPO Technical/Advisory Committee and Policy Board meetings; select public hearings; and are active members of the Asset Management Teams.

The Districts are responsible for submitting projects/needs for the annual call for projects for all assets within their respective district. The Districts and the Program Managers will also work with the MPOs for TIP amendments activities. INDOT’s Technical Planning and Programming and Statewide Technical Services Divisions provide technical support to aid in call for project submittals and coordination of TIP modifications and amendments.

## INDOT DISTRICT OFFICES

### INDOT Customer Service: 1-855-INDOT4U (1-855-463-6848)

INDOT LaPorte District  
 315 E. Boyd Blvd.  
 LaPorte, IN 46350  
[LaPorteDistrictCommunications@indot.in.gov](mailto:LaPorteDistrictCommunications@indot.in.gov)

INDOT Fort Wayne District  
 5333 Hatfield Road  
 Fort Wayne, IN 46808  
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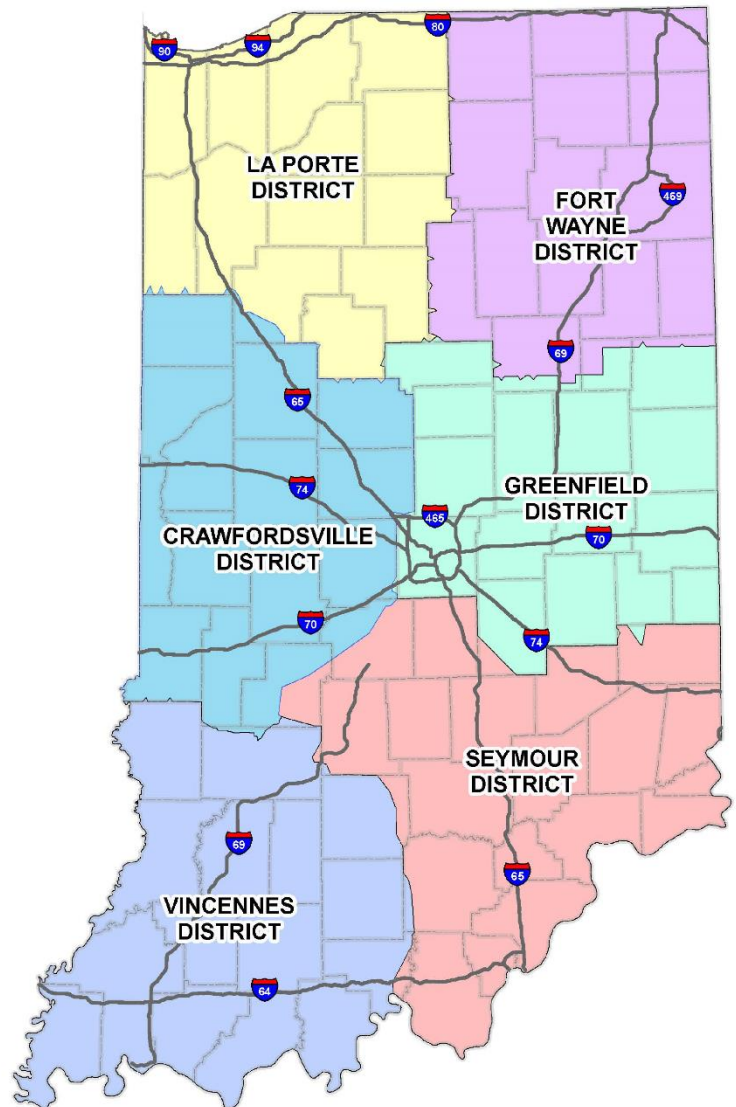
INDOT Crawfordsville District  
 41 West 300 North  
 Crawfordsville, IN 47933  
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INDOT Central Office  
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## Regional Planning Organization Consultation

Also known as Rural Planning Organizations, RPOs serve the transportation planning needs of small urban and rural areas of the state. RPOs perform eligible planning activities in order to provide planning support to local communities. The planning activities of RPOs are aimed at supporting INDOT Central and District Office Planning Staff with public outreach, technical assistance to local officials and the collection of transportation-related data. Non-MPO areas include small towns, cities, and counties not included in an MPO area. In non-metropolitan areas, INDOT District offices conduct transportation planning and develop partial lists of specific projects to be advanced in the STIP. INDOT consults with RPOs, rural area local elected officials, local government representatives, special interest groups, and other key transportation stakeholders.

INDOT cultivates relationships with its transportation planning partners by working cooperatively to identify solutions to transportation challenges statewide. The activities performed by planning partners such as RPOs enable INDOT to acquire the data and information necessary to make well-informed transportation infrastructure investment decisions.

RPOs serve the transportation planning needs for small urban and rural areas and perform eligible planning activities that support local communities. In addition, RPOs provide support to INDOT planning teams in several key areas, including public outreach, technical assistance to local officials, and transportation-related data collection.



The Small Urban and Rural Planning Transportation Program seeks to enhance the capabilities of RPOs by providing expanded resources to RPOs as they perform transportation planning activities in non-metropolitan areas. For more information regarding the Small Urban and Rural Planning Transportation Program, view [INDOT's online presentation](#). Also see Indiana Association of Regional Councils (IARC) jurisdiction map: <http://www.iarc.cc/index.html>.



**1 Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana**

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**2 East Central Indiana Regional Planning District**

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**3 Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission**

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**4 Kankakee - Iroquois Regional Planning Commission**

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**5 Madison County Council of Governments**

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 jerry@heartlandmpo.org  
 www.mccog.net

**6 Michiana Area Council of Governments**

James Turnwald, Executive Director  
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 P: 574.287.1829 F: 574.287.1840  
 jturnwald@macog.com - www.macog.com

**7 Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council**

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 Ft. Wayne, IN 46802  
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 Dan.avery@co.allen.in.us - www.nircc.com

**12 Southern Indiana Development Commission**

Greg Jones, Executive Director  
 PO Box 442, Loogootee, IN 47553  
 P: 812.295.3707 F: 812.295.3717  
 gejones@sidc.cc  
 www.sidc.cc

**13 West Central Indiana Economic Development District**

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**8 Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission**

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**14 North Central Indiana Regional Planning Council**

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**15 Eastern Indiana Regional Planning Commission**

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 401 East Main Street  
 Richmond, IN 47374  
 P: 765.977.3907  
 jeffplasterer@gmail.com

**9 Region III-A Economic Development District & Regional Planning Commission**

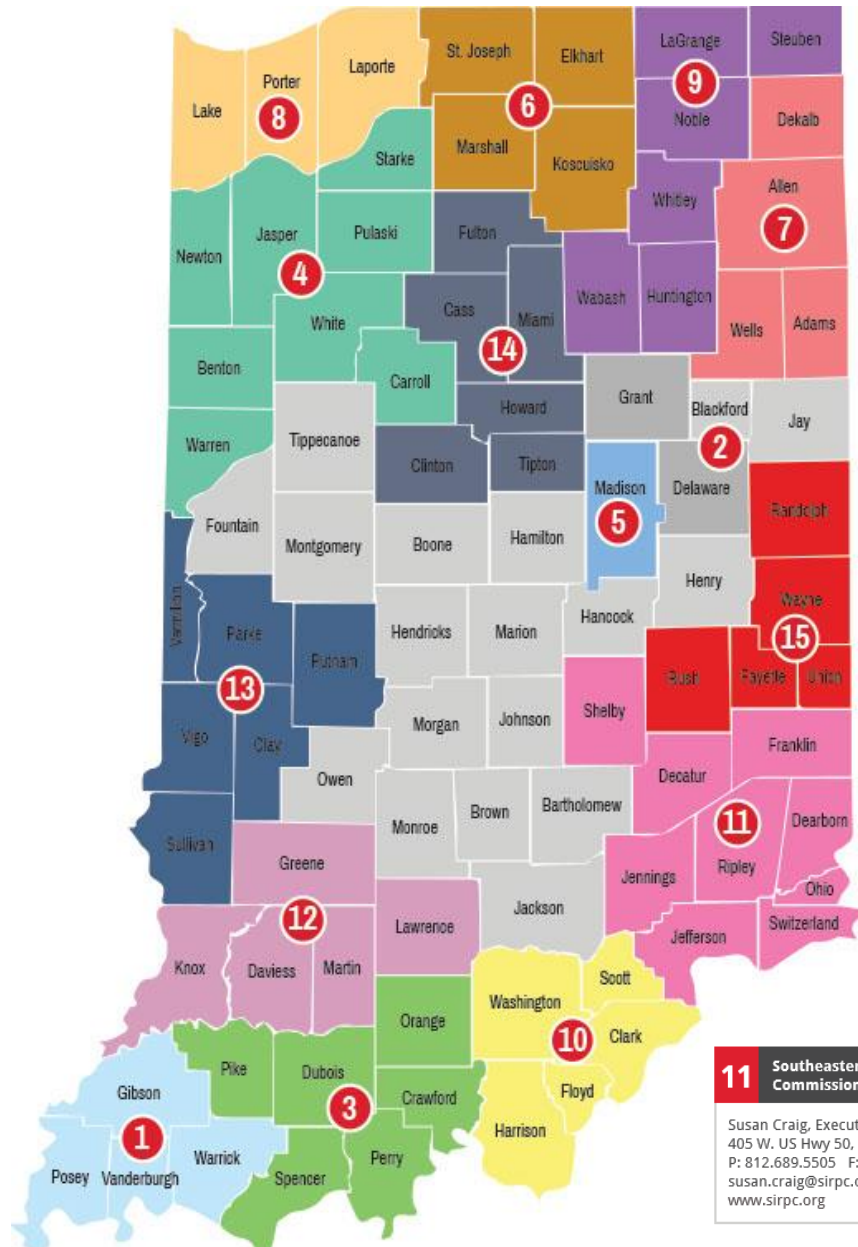
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**11 Southeastern Indiana Regional Planning Commission**

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 susan.craig@sirpc.org  
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**10 River Hills Economic Development District & Regional Planning Commission**

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 www.riverhills.cc





# GET INVOLVED IN THE INDOT PLANNING PROCESS

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INDOT utilize a number of outreach strategies in the development and major updates of our various long-range transportation and multimodal planning and STIP documents allowing the public and stakeholders to have a voice in the process. The most effective way to get involved is to participate in the project discussion early, frequently, and strategically.

- Local officials, transportation stakeholders, and the general public outside of MPO areas are encouraged to meet with their respective INDOT district office or RPO office between February-May to discuss transportation needs and challenges. RPO and INDOT Districts will document and meet with INDOT Planning to discuss challenges and needs.
- Annual Regional Planning Coordination meetings held with our district, MPO, RPO, economic development representatives, appointed local officials, business leaders, and other key stakeholders. These meetings are typically held between May-July.
- Virtual and in-person Public District Meetings, Open Houses, Town Hall, or Statewide Transportation Forums specific to major transportation plan updates
- INDOT publishes the STIP for a 45-day public comment period every 2-years (typically on the odd years). Public comments may be submitted by mail, email, or via public comment form.
- INDOT solicits public input regarding draft STIP document amendments. Draft amendments are posted to the INDOT [STIP Public Comment Webpage](#) for a minimum period of 7-days (may be extended in some cases). Draft amendments are posted monthly (typically during the third week of each month) onto the INDOT website. Announcements are also posted onto the website [public involvement calendar](#).
- Visit [INDOT's Public Involvement Website](#) for access to public involvement procedures, events, documents, and links to various related resources.
- Visit the INDOT website Agency News website to sign up to agency list serve ([GovDelivery](#)) to receive news, updates, program and project correspondence to learn of opportunities for participation.



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR NON-METROPOLITAN LOCAL OFFICIALS

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- **Indiana Local Technical Assistance Program ([LTAP](#))** - Serves as the local clearing house of information related technology transfer, training, technical assistance, development of local asset management plans, and effort of the FHWA's Office of Technology Partnership Programs. The program serves state, county, and local highway and transportation personnel. The LTAP is sponsored by FHWA, INDOT, and Purdue University.
- **Office of Community Rural Affairs ([OCRA](#))** - Works with local, state and national partners to provide resources and technical assistance to aid communities in shaping and achieving their vision for community and economic development. OCRA provides services that assist with Community Development Block Grant, Main Street Improvement Grants, and other resources.
- **Purdue Center for Regional Development ([PCRD](#))** - Serves as Indiana's Economic Development Administration University Center with Ball State University. PCRD provides programs and resources to support the work of Economic Development Districts, Regional Planning Organizations, and local community and economic development entities across the state.
- **Indiana Department of Natural Resources ([DNR](#))** – Division of Outdoor Recreation provides resources for trails (motorized, non-motorized, and water) planning and park development.
- **INDOT Rural Transit Program ([RTP](#))** - Provide public transportation in non-urbanized areas (population of 50,000 or less). The purpose of the program is to provide transportation to people living in rural areas.
- **INDOT Websites**
  - [Public Involvement](#)
  - [Major Projects](#)
  - [Next Level Roads Projects](#)
  - [Transportation Asset Management Plan](#)
  - [Local Public Agency Programs & Project Delivery](#)

