

# INDIANA

BRINGING BETTER *PASSENGER RAIL*  
TO  
THE CROSSROADS OF AMERICA



Tod K Bassler  
President, Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA)  
Indianapolis, IN

# TOPICS:

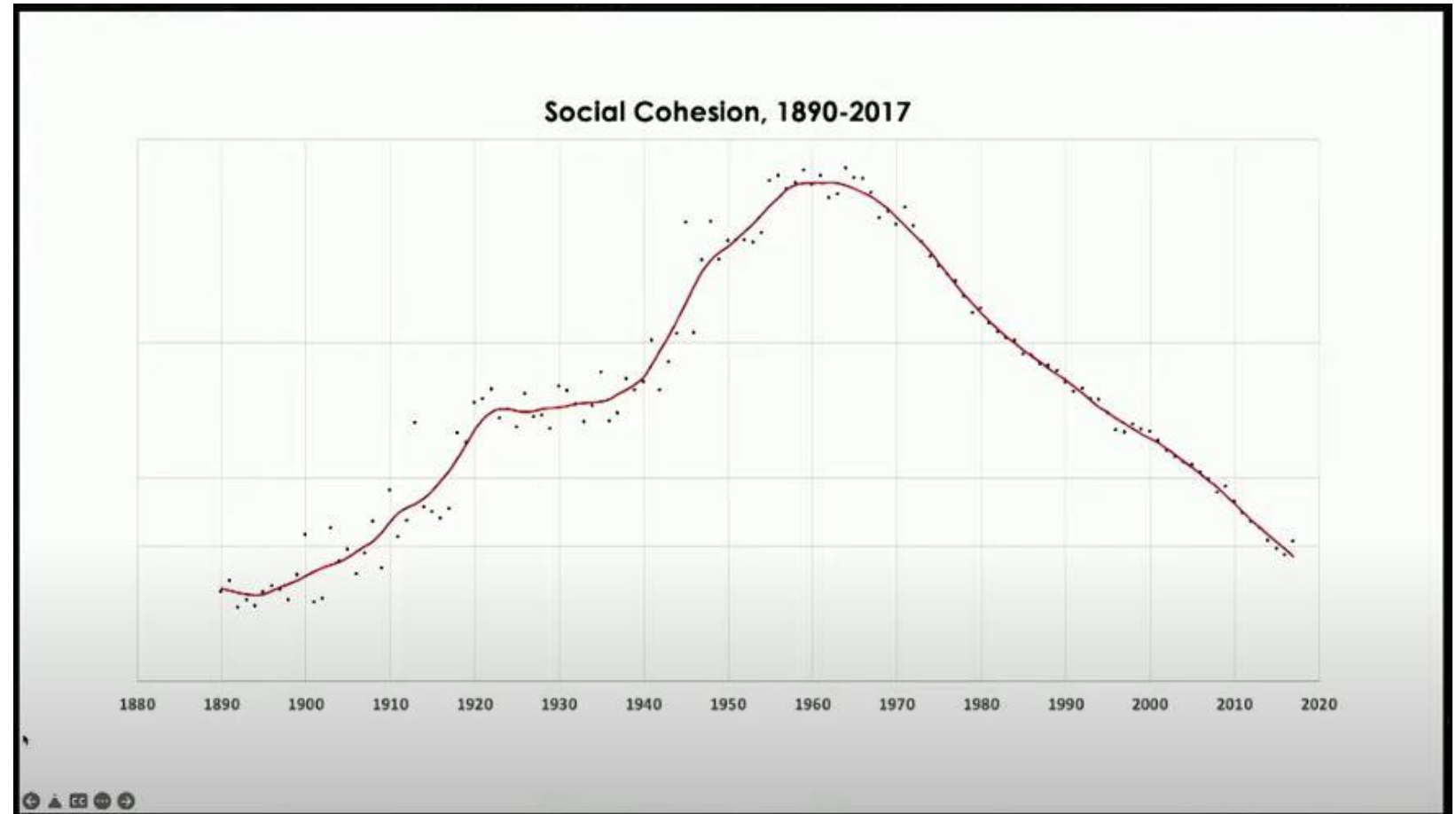
- 1) Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA)
- 2) Social Capital (Are we as “connected” as we used to be?)
- 3) Driving is Back with a Vengeance
- 4) Villages vs Stroads
- 5) Corridor ID Program for Indiana & Michigan
- 6) Partner with Indiana Mayors & Lawmakers
- 7) “Boilermaker Express” Commuter Rail Proposal
- 8) Amtrak’s Legal Right to Preference
- 9) South of the Lake Bottleneck
- 10) Paying for This Much Needed Work
- 11) Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART)
- 12) Hoosier Environmental Council (HEC)
- 13) Other People Worth Listening To

# INDIANA PASSENGER RAIL ALLIANCE (IPRA)

- The IPRA is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation established in 1994
- The IPRA is a grassroots volunteer citizen organization dedicated to making available to both the general public and state and local governments information about the issues and benefits of the development of modern 21<sup>st</sup> Century passenger rail systems for the State of Indiana
- The IPRA has *10 Board Members* who meet monthly
- Our mail list has about *1600 active interested parties*
- <https://allaboardindiana.org>

# SOCIAL CAPITAL

- Humans are Social Creatures
- The **Third Place**
- Family vs Village
- Adult vs Child Spaces
- Reasons for Decline:
  - Suburbanization
  - Technology/Media
  - Demographic Changes
  - Work/Economic Pressures
  - Generational Change
- Use public transportation to better enable access to Third Places for all



On YouTube: **We Build Lonely Places. Can We Get Out?**

➤ [https://youtu.be/pmf\\_JIGQecE?si=pXU9zqP0IfiVzz1D](https://youtu.be/pmf_JIGQecE?si=pXU9zqP0IfiVzz1D)

▪ Thanks to: Strong Towns

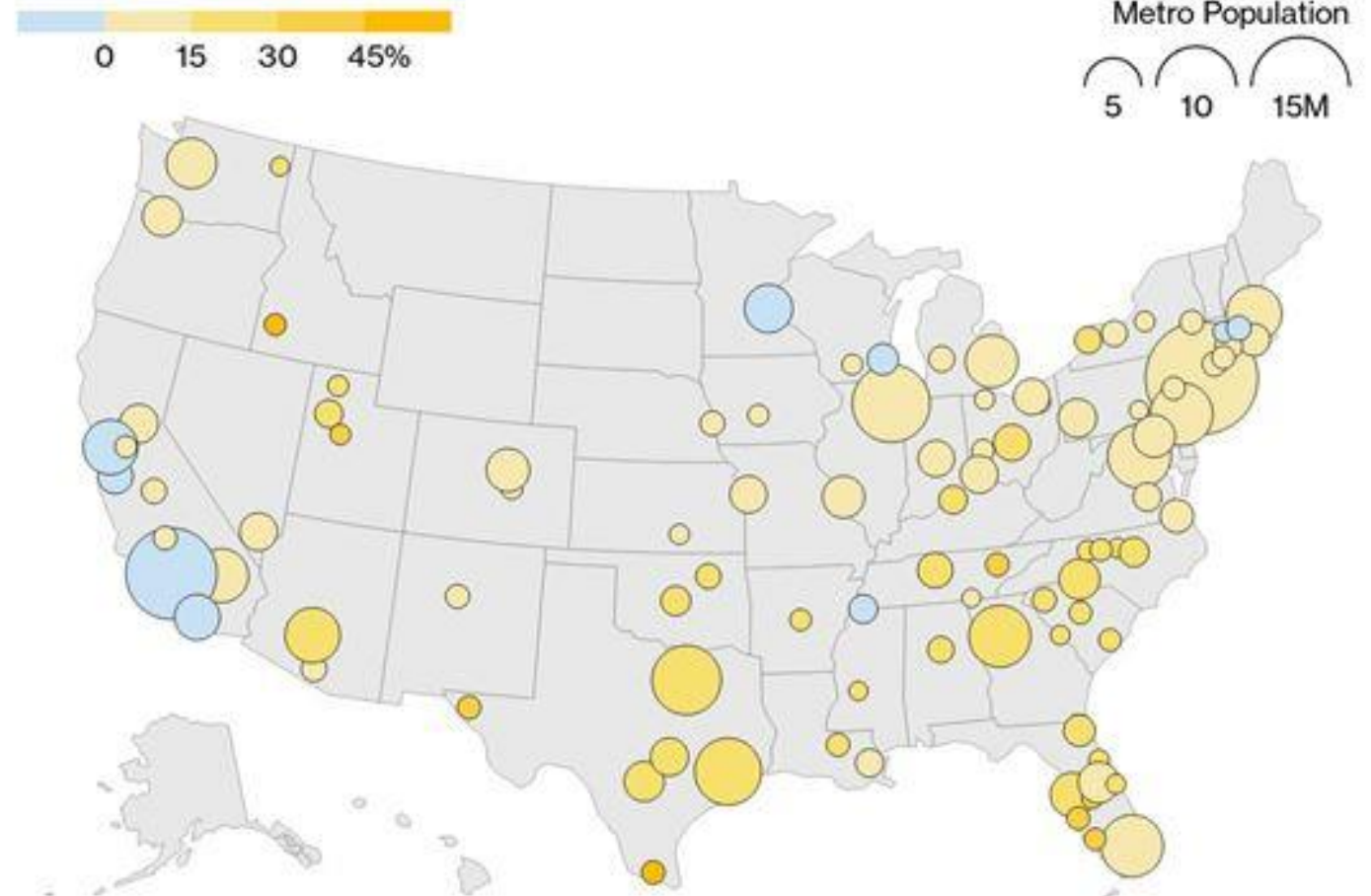
# DRIVING IS BACK WITH A VENGEANCE

- In the 20th Century, being "modern" meant bringing cars into the center of the cities.
- In the 21st Century, it means keeping them out.
- European cities used to be as car clogged as those in North America, but they changed.
- ...and we can as well.

Credit to: *Taras Gescoe*, Canadian Public Speaker

## Changes in Driving Since Covid in Top 100 US Metros

Only 10 metros kept VMT, or the total miles traveled by vehicle, below pre-pandemic levels over the last five years.

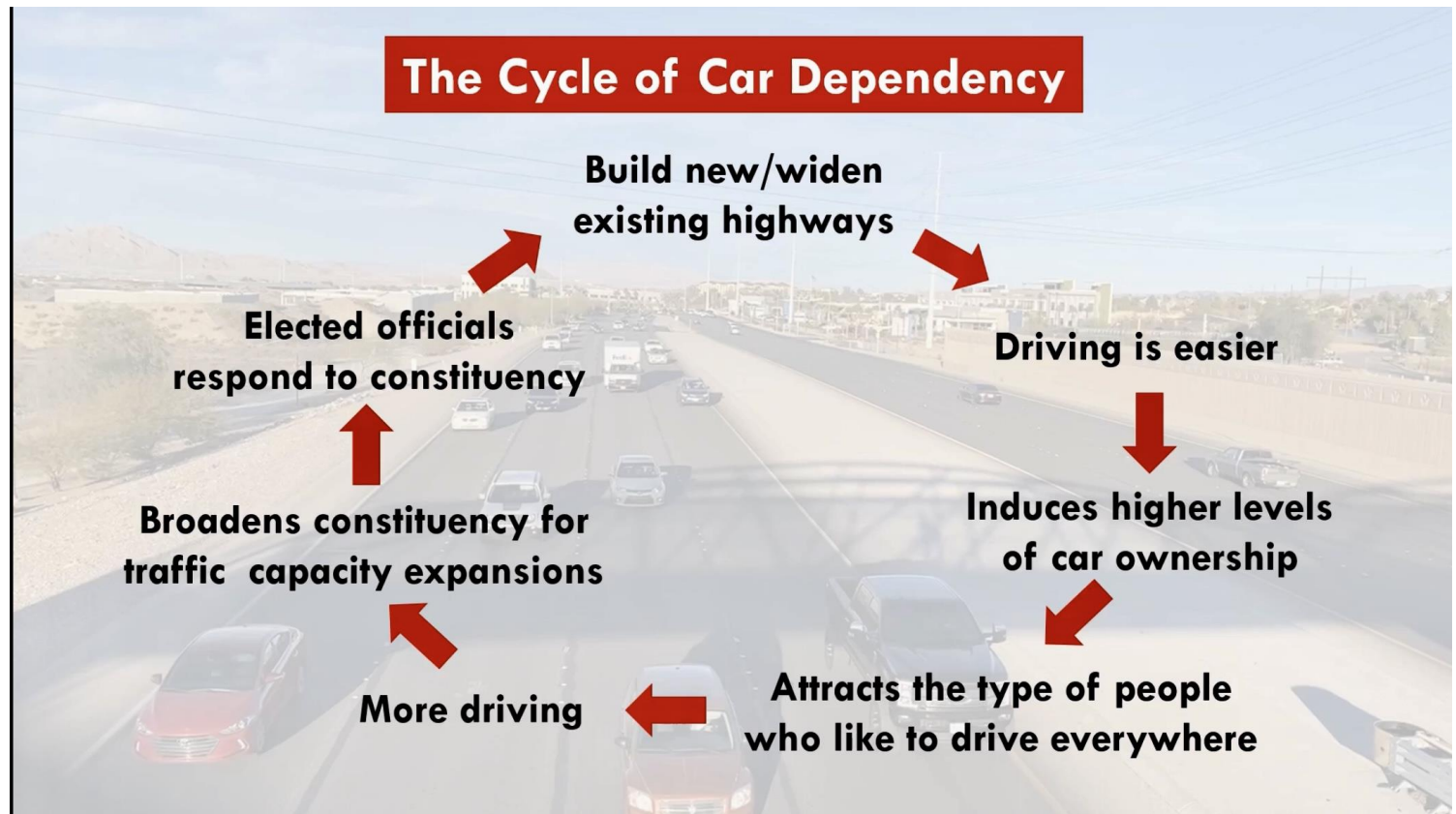


Source: StreetLight Data

Note: Data shows percent change in average daily VMT between May 2019 and May 2024. All but one metro area – Poughkeepsie, NY – are shown on the map.



# ➤ Villages vs Stroads... which model will prevail?



This distinction has gotten a lot of attention over the past decade as cities attempt to heal the scars of planning around cars. Charles Marohn, the founder of the Strong Towns movement, coined the term “stroad” to describe these hybrid thoroughfares, which strive to simultaneously offer the high speeds of a country road with a street’s density of roadside destinations. This model is “the futon of transportation,” he wrote: “just as a futon is neither a particularly good bed nor a particularly good couch, a stroad is neither a particularly good road or a particularly good street.”

## Typical High Costs (Dollars per Lane Mile)

Add lane to flat rural highway	<b>3.5 Million</b>
Add lane to small urbanized freeway	<b>15.1 Million</b>
Add lane to large urbanized freeway	<b>25.8 Million</b>
Add lane to Major urbanized freeway	<b>64.2 Million</b>

# HOW DID WE GET HERE? (TRANSPORTATION WISE)

- As our country's population continues to grow (it's doubled in my lifetime), the choice of low-density transportation (i.e., 1 to 2 sometimes 4 people in an automobile) continues and is unsustainable since there is only so much room in densely populated locations like cities.
- Our time on this Earth is finite and valuable. Not only are we isolating ourselves from one another by our transportation choice but we're losing irrecoverable time waiting in traffic jams. Wouldn't you rather enjoy your trip?
- I see our society's decisions & technology continuing to *isolate* people from one another each day/year/decade:
  - Drive throughs (usually false urgency)
  - Automobile travel as an isolator
  - Automobile ownership as a class separator/status symbol
- In the movies, the future has frequently been depicted with citizens travelling in state-of-the-art trains. I think they're correct. A favorite movie of mine: **Tomorrowland** with George Clooney.
- So, how can we get from our current *second half 20th Century transportation experiment* back to transportation choices that are more equitable?
- Better **TRANSPORTATION CHOICE!**

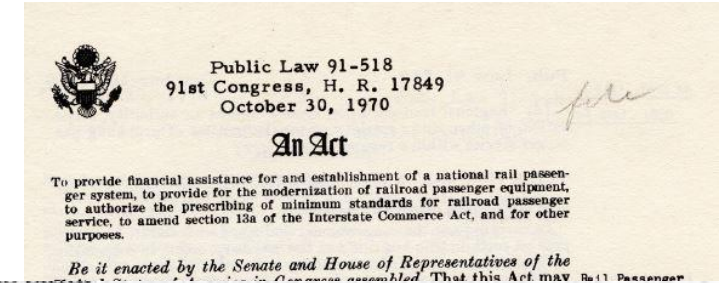
# CHALLENGES FOR USA PASSENGER RAIL

## ➤ Amtrak's **Legal Right to Preference**

### ➤ Laws:

- Create Amtrak – Public Law 91-518 (10-Oct-70)
- Give Amtrak Preference – Public Law 93-146 (3-Nov-73)
- Amtrak Improvement – Public Law 93-496 (28-Oct-74)
- Amtrak Improvement – 94-1168 (19-Oct-76)
- Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act – Public Law 114-94 (4-Dec-15)
- Rail Passenger Fairness Act – Bill H.R.2937, S.1500 in 117<sup>th</sup> Congress (29-Apr-21) & reintroduced in 118<sup>th</sup> Congress (11-Oct-24)

## ➤ **Enforce the Laws!**



Intercity passenger train preference.

80 Stat. 383.

Accelerated

“(e) (1) Except in an emergency, intercity passenger trains operated by or on behalf of the Corporation shall be accorded preference over freight trains in the use of any given line of track, junction, or crossing, unless the Secretary has issued an order to the contrary in accordance with paragraph (2) of this subsection.

“(2) Any railroad whose rights with regard to freight train operation are affected by paragraph (1) of this subsection may file an application with the Secretary requesting appropriate relief. If, after hearing under section 553 of title 5 of the United States Code, the Secretary finds that adherence to such paragraph (1) will materially lessen the quality of freight service provided to shippers, the Secretary shall issue an order fixing rights of trains, on such terms and conditions as are just and reasonable.

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**S. 1500**

To permit Amtrak to bring civil actions in Federal district court to enforce the right set forth in section 24308(e) of title 49, United States Code, which gives intercity and commuter rail passenger transportation preference over freight transportation in using a rail line, junction, or crossing.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 29, 2021

Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation



# AMTRAK'S LEGAL RIGHT TO PREFERENCE

## CY 2023 Host Railroad Report Card & Route On-Time Performance

Amtrak grades host railroads based on delay-minutes, but the government's Metrics and Standards for On-Time Performance (OTP) are the best measure of passenger experience. Federal law requires that Amtrak trains receive preference over freight— but hosts often ignore this requirement and favor their own trains. As a result, most Amtrak National Network routes don't meet OTP standards.

	Host Railroad	2023 Grade	4-Year GPA
1	CPKC	A	4.11
2	CSX	B+	3.2
3	Canadian National	B+	3.31
4	BNSF	B	3.33
5	Norfolk Southern	B-	1.81
6	Union Pacific	C-	1.99

Long-Distance: 15/15 Routes Fail			
Route	Class I Host(s)	Customers on Time	Meets 80% Standard?
City of New Orleans	CN	75%	Fail
Capitol Limited	NS, CSX	70%	
Lake Shore Limited	CSX, NS	69%	
Palmetto	CSX	67%	
Auto Train	CSX	66%	
Texas Eagle	BNSF, UP, CN	60%	
Coast Starlight	BNSF, UP	58%	
Cardinal	NS, CSX	58%	
Crescent	NS	57%	
Silver Meteor	CSX	53%	
Empire Builder	BNSF, CPKC	51%	
Silver Star	CSX, NS	49%	
Sunset Limited	BNSF, UP	44%	
Southwest Chief	BNSF	34%	
California Zephyr	BNSF, UP	33%	

State-Supported: Most Routes Fail			
Route	Class I Host(s)	Customers on Time	Meets 80% Standard?
Keystone	Amtrak	94%	Pass
Pere Marquette	CSX, NS	87%	
Hiawatha	CPKC	86%	
New York - Albany	Amtrak	85%	
Capitol Corridor	UP	85%	
Downeaster	CSX	81%	
Pacific Surfliner	BNSF, UP	80%	
Carl Sandburg / IL Zephyr	BNSF	80%	
Illini / Saluki	CN	80%	
Pennsylvanian	NS	79%	
Ethan Allen Express	CPKC	74%	
New York - Niagara Falls	CSX	74%	
Missouri River Runner	UP	74%	
Maple Leaf	CSX	73%	
Vermont	(other hosts)	70%	
Adirondack	CPKC, Amtrak	69%	
Wolverine	NS, CN	69%	
Piedmont	NS	68%	
San Joaquins	BNSF, UP	66%	
Blue Water	NS, CN	66%	
Heartland Flyer	BNSF	64%	
Cascades	BNSF, UP	64%	
Lincoln Service	CN, UP	63%	
Carolinian	CSX, NS	61%	

Host Railroads are graded based on "host-responsible delay per minutes per 10,000 train-miles." 900 host-responsible delay minutes per 10,000 train-miles generally correlates with performance that results in Amtrak trains that are 80% on-time.

# FRA'S CORRIDOR IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (**CORRIDOR ID**) STUDIES

## Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Corridor ID Study Categories:

- New High-Speed Rail (up to 186 MPH) (7 studies)
  - Texas (2), Brightline West, CAHSR, Cascadia, North Carolina, Link CAHSR & Brightline West
- New Conventional Rail (79 to 125 MPH) (34 studies)
  - [Midwest Connect](#) (City of Fort Wayne & OH, PA cities)
  - [Indianapolis <-> Louisville](#) Corridor reinstatement (KIPDA)
- Existing Routes with Extensions (79 to 125 MPH) (13 studies)
  - [Wolverine](#) Corridor (MDOT) extension to Windsor, ON (MDOT)
- Existing Routes (15 studies)
  - [Pere Marquette](#) & [Blue Water](#) improvements (MDOT)
  - Daily [Cardinal](#) Service (Amtrak)
  - [Indianapolis <-> Chicago](#) Corridor improvements (INDOT contracted [WSP USA Inc](#))

# OTHER FRA GRANTS & STUDIES

- Federal-State Partnership (National) grants (**FSP-National**)
  - 2 grants for Chicago Union Station (CUS) = platform improvements = up to \$93.6 million
- Federal-State Partnership (Northeast Corridor) (**FSP-NEC**) grants = \$16.4 billion
- Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (**CRISI**) grants
  - Indiana: grants for two short lines:
    - Louisville and Indiana Railroad Company (**LIRC**)
    - Toledo, Peoria & Western Railway Corporation (**TPW**)
- Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (**RAISE**) grants = \$1.5 billion
  - Indiana: 5 miles track in Lafayette, 14 miles track near Tell City, Indpls 1-way to 2-way streets
- Amtrak Daily Long-Distance Service Study
  - 4 meetings to date
  - 15 proposed preferred routes (not daily *Cardinal* - covered by Corridor ID study)

# PARTNER WITH INDIANA MAYORS & LAWMAKERS

- In 2024 IPRA has partnered with Amtrak to visit Mayors and Statehouse Lawmakers to ensure:
  1. They know about the Corridor ID program
  2. Plan appropriately for “phase 2” (Service Development Plans (SDPs) (90% Federal/10% Local match))
  
- Most visits were with former Amtrak Government Affairs Senior Manager *Derrick James*
- Our contacts now are with Senior Government Affairs Specialist *Christine Damian* and Chicago native *Marty Sandoval*
  
- Visits in Indiana to date:
  - Rensselaer Mayor
  - Lafayette Mayor
  - West Lafayette Mayor
  - Tippecanoe County MPO
  - Cities of Gary (planned), Valparaiso, Warsaw, Plymouth, Fort Wayne, Lima OH (for [Midwest Connect](#))
  - Crawfordsville Mayor
  - Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development (DMD)
  - Columbus Mayor
  - Kentuckiana Regional Planning & Development Agency (KIPDA)
  - Indiana Chamber of Commerce
  - Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce
  - Tourism (Indianapolis, Columbus, Louisville)



# “BOILERMAKER EXPRESS” COMMUTER RAIL

Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance



## ***HARD TECH CORRIDOR COMMUTER RAIL STUDY PROPOSAL*** Efficient connections between West Lafayette, Frankfort, LEAP-Lebanon, and Purdue Indy

There's a growing need for enhanced connectivity between Purdue's West Lafayette and Indianapolis campuses, along with the challenge of providing an efficient mass transit alternative to alleviate single-passenger vehicle traffic. The goal is to ensure on-time arrival for students and employees throughout this developing tech, manufacturing, education, and research corridor in central Indiana.

A rail option exists between West Lafayette and downtown Indianapolis that, with proper planning and development, meet the on-time needs of all parties. This transit alternative would, with infrastructure enhancements, provide frequent reliable commuter service throughout the Hard Tech Corridor at speeds up to 79 miles per hour.

The proposed Hard Tech Corridor route involves cooperation with three rail companies:

1. The Kankakee, Beaverville & Southern Railroad Company (2.6 mi) between Purdue University Airport and downtown Lafayette with...
2. Norfolk Southern Corporation (25 mi) between downtown Lafayette (by SIA & Frankfort industry) and Frankfort with...
3. CSX Transportation (47.9 mi) between Frankfort (past LEAP Lebanon & Purdue Indy) and downtown Indianapolis

- Purdue University supports proposal!
  - President Mung Chiang
  - Purdue for Life (Alumni) Foundation
- Metrolink/SBCTA's ARROW Service will use Stadler ZEMU in 2025



# SONOMA-MARIN AREA RAIL TRANSIT



- **SMART** is a commuter rail system established in 2002 and located in California wine country north of San Francisco
- It has 70 miles of railroad right-of-way and has currently 12 stations with 4 more planned
- The SMART rail corridor parallels Highway 101 and is accommodates feeder bus & shuttle services as well as park & ride facilities in some locations
- The system promotes more walkable downtowns near 3 city station locations
- Like Indiana's South Shore, SMART has passenger rail & freight service with the added bonus of a **bicycle/jogging trail**
- <https://www.sonomamarintrain.org/>



- SMART celebrating September 2024 Transit Month
- <https://youtu.be/PjfFi3lbkPc?si=I0E6GEIzpubL9Ssr>

# “SOUTH OF THE LAKE” BOTTLENECK

- IPRA Board Member (& past President) *Steve Coxhead* is Indiana’s **Private Sector** representative for the [Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission \(MIPRC\)](#)
- The most current information that IPRA has about this issue comes from the **MIPRC** via *Steve*
- At last year’s 2023 MIPRC Annual Meeting in Bloomington, IL...
  - Amtrak was supposed to take the lead
  - No funding has been allocated
- This year’s 2024 MIPRC Annual Meeting will be in St Paul, MN on 18->20 Nov 24 (Thanksgiving week)
  - This will be a very good time to request an update and *Steve* will be there



# PAYING FOR THIS MUCH NEEDED WORK

- Build America Bureau (USDOT)
  - <https://www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/>
- Coalition for the National Infrastructure Bank (NIB)
  - <https://www.nibcoalition.com/>
  - H.R.4052 – National Infrastructure Bank Act of 2023
  - Historically an NIB has helped our nation:
    - First Bank of United States (Washington)
    - Second Bank of United States (Adams)
    - National Banking System (Lincoln)
    - Reconstruction Finance Corp (FDRoosevelt)

**[Brother, Can You Spare A Billion? The Story of Jesse H. Jones](#)** (narrated by Walter Cronkite)

congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/4052/cosponsors

Adobe Acrobat

CONGRESS.GOV Advanced Searches Browse Legislation

Legislation Examples: hr5, sres9, "health care" MORE OPTIONS

Home > Legislation > 118th Congress > H.R.4052 Citation

### H.R.4052 - National Infrastructure Bank Act of 2023

118th Congress (2023-2024) | [Get alerts](#)

**BILL** Hide Overview

Sponsor: [Rep. Davis, Danny K. \[D-IL-7\]](#) (Introduced 06/13/2023)

Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means; Transportation and Infrastructure; Financial Services; Education and the Workforce; Natural Resources; Budget

Latest Action: House - 06/16/2023 Referred to the Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, and Commerce. ([All Actions](#))

Tracker: **Introduced** Passed House Passed Senate To President Became Law

Summary (1) Text (1) Actions (13) Titles (2) Amendments (0) **Cosponsors (39)** Committees (7) Related Bills (0)

**Cosponsors: H.R.4052 — 118th Congress (2023-2024)**

<a href="#">Rep. Dingell, Debbie [D-MI-6]</a>	12/04/2023
<a href="#">Rep. Kildee, Daniel T. [D-MI-8]</a>	03/19/2024
<a href="#">Rep. Thanedar, Shri [D-MI-13]</a>	08/29/2023
<a href="#">Rep. Tlaib, Rashida [D-MI-12]</a>	09/01/2023



# HOOSIER ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL (HEC)

- The HEC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization
- <https://www.hecweb.org/>
- IPRA has a long-standing relationship with the HEC
- We work together for Indiana



# OTHER PEOPLE/ORGANIZATIONS WORTH LISTENING TO...

- *Rick Harnish*, High Speed Rail Alliance, Chicago
- *Jim Mathews*, Rail Passengers Association, Washington DC
- *Jason Slaughter*, Not Just Bikes\*, Urbanism, Amsterdam
- *Ray Delahanty*, CityNerd\*, Urbanism, moves a lot
- *Reece Martin*, RMTransit\*, Urbanism, Toronto
- *Hayden Clark*, Transportation Engineer & Planner, New York City
- *Jerome Horne*, Manager MTA Maryland, Baltimore (5 yrs with IndyGo)
- *Thom ----*, Trains are Awesome, Dutch rail advocate (lives in Washington DC)
- Strong Towns, 501(c)(3) Advocacy, Minnesota
- Wendover\*, Culture
- Nebula, Online Platform for organizations with “\*” above (also on YouTube with ads)

# QUESTIONS?

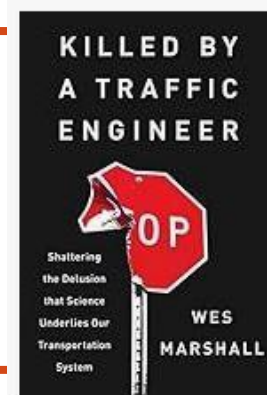
- For follow up, I can be reached @:

Tod K Bassler  
+1-317-997-1381  
[tkbassler@gmail.com](mailto:tkbassler@gmail.com)  
Indianapolis, IN

NOTE: While I monitor social media, I choose not to participate often, since I am an Information Security professional.

- Next **Tuesday, October 22nd**, the FRA will host a **Corridor ID webinar** at **1:00 pm EDT**. Please consider registering and attending online. The question I posed to them is "**How can the FRA increase their interaction with Indiana's government decision makers in order to increase the likelihood of success for the 4 Corridor ID Studies currently affecting Indiana?**" I'll be interested in seeing their response!

- The book I'm currently reading...



- Many advanced countries around the world have within the last 30-ish years made great progress in providing transportation choice. Let's push for the same choice in North America.