

RBA

REGIONAL BUS AUTHORITY



October 2006

NEWS

A monthly newsletter from the RBA

President's Column



RBA Focus: Regionalism!

As we anticipate the forthcoming legislative session, the Lake and Porter County Regional Bus Authority (RBA) is interested in obtaining formal voting membership for La Porte County in the RBA. Recent news regarding La Porte County's decision not to join the Regional Development Authority does not adversely affect our plans.

In fact, look for a newspaper column in October featuring Michigan City Mayor Chuck Oberlie in which he supports membership in the RBA and expresses his willingness to raise funds that will be needed to implement expanded transit services in his community.

We are very pleased that although we started as the Lake County Authority, representatives of Porter County were, in fact, interested in joining with us. Initially, ex-officio members were invited to participate, and in 2005, three formal voting members were added by state statute. In 2006, Porter County's membership was expanded to five. We envision using the same strategy for LaPorte County. Currently, there are three ex-officio members: Mayor Morris, Mayor Oberlie, and Commissioner Marlow Harmon, and in the 2007 legislative session, we intend to put forward an amendment providing formal voting membership for LaPorte County.

We are very pleased with this good-faith effort at regionalism. We understand that people do not live their lives inside municipal, county, township or state boundaries. Regionalizing transportation has always made sense, and we are proud that our friends in Porter and LaPorte Counties see it the same way as we do in Lake County.

Dennis C. Rittenmeyer



Speaking Out at RBA Meeting

At the Sep. 20th board meeting of the Regional Bus Authority held at the Merrillville Municipal Center, representatives from community groups attended and participated in the "public comment" session, including Cora Robinson representing Everybody Counts (standing, front). A "Listening Session" followed the meeting for the public to comment on the RBA study (turn over for Ken Dallmeyer's column on the RBA study).

RBA to Address Regional Transit Services on Oct. 18

The RBA will conduct its monthly meeting at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, October 18, at the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, Portage, announced Ken Dallmeyer, Project Director, RBA. Discussed will be the Regional Bus Study and a communications strategy for the RBA.

Meanwhile, the RBA will conduct "Listening Sessions" on Monday, Oct. 23 at the Porter County Administrative Center, Valparaiso, and on Wednesday, Oct. 25 at the Library Conference Center, Indiana University Northwest, Gary. Both sessions run from 3:30 to 6 p.m.

RBA Board Members

Officers

Dennis Rittenmeyer, PhD., RBA President
Kathy Willman, RBA Vice President

Rev. Asher Harris, RBA Secretary
Jeanmarie Baker, RBA Treasurer,

Lake County Representatives

Daryl E. Lampkins

Corey Surrett

Keith Matasovsky

Tom O'Donnell

Robert Crossk

Michael Troxell

Dan Klein

Ruby Powell-Flowers

Mark Kalwinski

Tim Brown

Roosevelt Allen, Jr.

Renee Iovino

Mike Chirich

Porter County Representatives

Jeff Chidester

Tim Sullivan

Lynn Duttlinger,

Robert Wichlinski

Ex-Officio

Marlow Harmon

LaPorte County

Charles Oberlie
Michigan City

Leigh Morris
LaPorte

Chris Curry,
Gary/Chicago International Airport

Project Director

Kenneth E. Dallmeyer

(219) 762-4767



Director's Corner

Three Lessons from RBA Study

Here are three important findings that will be shaping the character of the RBA and of public transportation for Northwest Indiana.

Residents, Policy Makers want Accountability

Riders, residents and public officials want accountability for service provided and want the RBA to be the one accountable. This is a major conclusion of our talks and public meetings. Riders want the quality of service to improve in reliability, customer focus and information provided. Public officials seek efficient and effective services.

Public Transportation Service in NWI is Low

Compared to similar regions as noted in the top right graph, the investment in bus and van services is very low. Correspondingly, the number of rides taken is also lower than in better served regions. Our consultant, TranSystems estimates that it would require \$9 million in additional annual expenditures to meet efforts of the closest regions and \$19 million to meet the average efforts of comparable regions. Current annual expenditures are \$12 million.

The consequence of poor service is much greater auto dependence for all of us, much greater dependence on parents, adult children and others for those who are too young, old or disabled to drive, and isolation for many.

Poor public service increases costs for agencies that help people. Many pay to provide transportation so that their clients can receive help, but only for transportation for that help and not for other things that the client needs or wants to do.

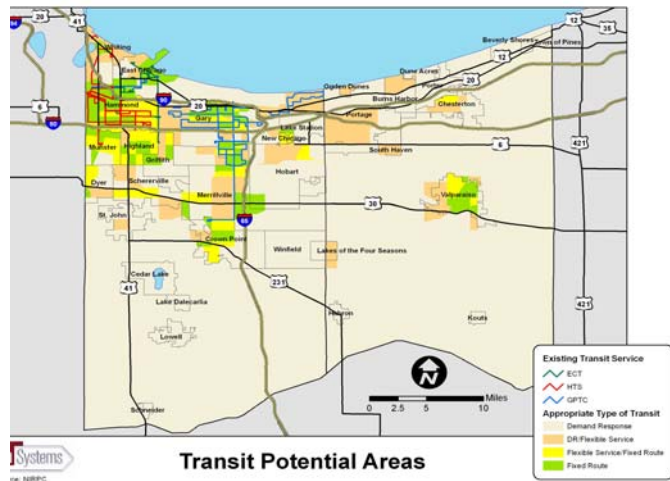
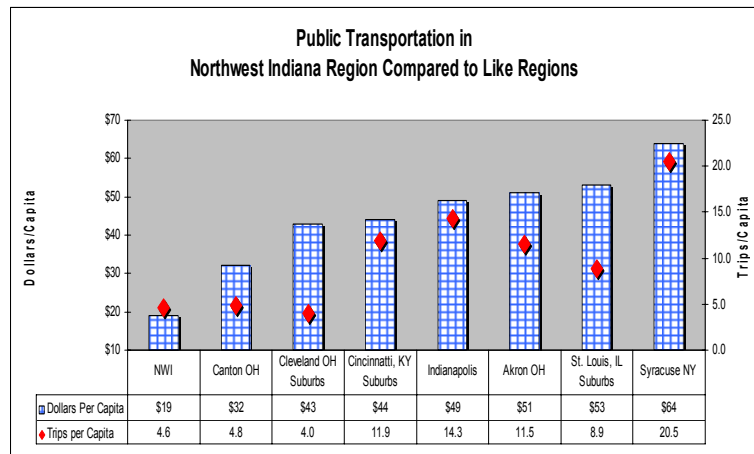
Good Public Transportation Has Variety

The future for public transportation will be a mix of types of service that are appropriate for the area served as noted in the map above:

- Fixed routes are regularly scheduled service on routes.
- Flexible Services merge features of fixed route and demand response and serve a corridor.
- Demand Response is door to door service and requires the customer to call in advance for a ride.

Stay tuned for more insights as we gather even more information to help us deploy resources efficiently and effectively in support of needed regional bus services.

Kenneth E. Dallmeyer, RBA Project Director



RBA Calendar

Two "Listening Sessions" for the RBA Bus Study Give Input to Project Team

Monday, October 23rd

3:30 to 6 p.m.—Open House

Porter County Administrative Center

155 Indiana Avenue, Valparaiso

Wednesday, October 25th

3:30 to 6 p.m.—Open House

Indiana University Northwest Library

Conference Center

3400 Broadway, Gary

On October 25, from 3:45 to 4:15 p.m.

Special Guest—Congressman Peter Visclosky