

CHAPTER THREE GOALS & OBJECTIVES/ PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

This chapter presents the results of on-going public participation that has been undertaken as part of the study process. Citilink and its Board of Directors have stressed that this is an important facet of the study process based on its efforts in recent years to reach out to the community and understand the changing needs in the community. The chapter presents each a summary of each strategy that was utilized for public participation as well as a set of goals and objectives that have been developed as a result of this process.

3.1 Goals & Objectives

Goals and objectives for the study have been developed based on the public participation that was performed in the early portions of the study process and then finalized. The 2003 management plan for Citilink presents five goals that were developed by the Board of Directors for Citilink. These are:

- To provide effective and useful transportation to the greatest number of people in the Fort Wayne Urbanized Area at the most reasonable possible taxpayer cost.
- To give special consideration to those whose transportation needs can often only be served by public transportation.
- To contribute and cooperate towards the economic and social improvement of the community with particular emphasis on providing transportation to workplace opportunity for citizens making the transition from public assistance.
- To contribute to livable community goals like pedestrian friendly design, traffic reduction, safety and security.
- To provide a working environment for Fort Wayne Public Transportation Corporation employees which is based on respect, dignity, and positive human values.

These goals, stakeholder interviews, and public input have provided some direction in terms of goals and objectives for the study. These goals will need to be reviewed by the Study committee prior to being finalized. The following are the recommended goals and objectives for the study:

GOAL: Examine effectiveness of Citilink and other services in Greater Fort Wayne

- Analyze service effectiveness
- Analyze service interaction and integration
- Analyze services based on geographic need and unserved areas and populations

GOAL: Develop community based service and strategic plan

- Offer opportunities for comprehensive public input
- Utilize survey data for service recommendations
- Match service recommendations to local needs
- Examine 10-year timeframe for service recommendations

GOAL: Establish Citilink as Fort Wayne transportation market

- Consider alternative service delivery methods

- Develop unmet needs and methods to address these needs
- Address desired increase in market share

GOAL: Provide sensible, implementable alternatives

- Recognize fiscal and regulatory limits and issues
- Match recommendations to stated needs
- Develop strategic approach to long-range planning

3.2 Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews were held with members of the Fort Wayne community that represent transit users as part of their constituency, either as an employer, a social service agency, a policy maker, an educational institution, or a government entity. In some cases interviewees were unaware of their “stake” in public transit in the Greater Fort Wayne area. Table 3-1 displays the stakeholders that have been interviewed as part of this process. The majority of interviews were conducted as one-on-one interviews, while others were performed as a telephone interview. Stakeholders comments are not provided individually in order to provide an assurance of confidentiality. The following provides a synthesis of those interviews.

**Table 3-1
Stakeholders**

Name	Title	Organization
Salvador Soto	Director	Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Lee Helmut h	Mgr. of Building Services	Sirva
Judson Chasey	Work Training Mgr.	Arc of NE Indiana
Jill Furniss	General Manager	Arc of NE Indiana
Becky Weimerskirch	Director of Community Access	Turnstone
Ranelle Melton	Executive Director	Allen County COA
Crystal Mussallem	Vice President	Goodwill Industries of NE Indiana
David Nelson	President/ CEO	League for the Blind & Disabled
Kathy Lyons	Peer Support & Advocacy Coord.	League for the Blind & Disabled
Ramona Copass	Operations & Mobility Specialist	League for the Blind & Disabled
Dr. A.V. Fleming	President/ CEO	Fort Wayne Urban League
Mary Musson	Head Start Director	CANI
Donald Weikle	Director of Rehabilitation	Fort Wayne Development Center
Brian Yoh	Planning & Ec. Dev. Director	City of New Haven
Edna Neill	Vice Chancellor Student Affairs	IPFW

The majority of stakeholders were not overly familiar with the intricacies of Citilink service, although some did have in-depth knowledge of the system. Stakeholders were generally very complimentary of Citilink management and their efforts in the past 4-5 years. When complaints arose about service and responsiveness, most people indicated a vast improvement in Citilink as an organization in recent years. In many cases, this was stated quite plainly by the interviewees. They view the agency as an increasingly responsive and progressive organization.

When asked about the perception of Citilink services in the city, responses were varied. Most interviewees indicated that Citilink is viewed primarily as a service for lower income persons, seniors, and persons with disabilities. A quickly growing immigrant population was displayed as a group that may have transportation needs when they arrive in the Fort Wayne area, although it was indicated that this group would look to the personal auto if possible. It was widely understood that the personal auto is the primary mode of choice in the area. With that, interviewees indicated that perception of Citilink had improved in recent years based on numerous factors. The new management and efforts such as renaming the system, changing the name of the service, and re-inventing the bus logo and color scheme had made the service more prominently known among the community. The perception among many representatives of the employment and government sectors was that transit faces challenges in the auto-dominated area.

Citilink fixed route service was viewed with a mix of compliments and the identification of needs that the system is not currently meeting or has not addressed. While the majority of stakeholders indicated an improvement in service delivery and destinations in the past 4-5 years, there are still many needs that are considered to be unmet. The interviewees that were more familiar with Citilink fixed route services tended to address the frequency, service span, and service days of Citilink as a major issue to be addressed by the system. The lack of Sunday service was mentioned, particularly by those representing people that need employment transportation. Service frequency was cited as an issue by numerous stakeholders. The fact that only two routes in the system currently run on 30-minute headways was considered to be an impediment to convenient mobility. Increased service frequency on routes that operate to major generators such as IPFW was identified as an important needs and there were interviewees that felt that 30-minute service should be provided system-wide.

Service span was also identified as a challenge for Citilink to address. Employers and those representing working persons identified service for second shift employment as a key need among transit riders in Fort Wayne. Employees can generally get to their employment sites within the service area to start a second shift job, but there are few alternatives for getting home after 10 PM. This was also a number of interviewees who identified Sunday as an important service day. There was also the consideration of the general lack of mobility on Sundays as Citilink does not operate.

The service area and current destinations for Citilink was another issue that interviewees tended to bring up during these sessions. Many persons pointed to the increase in regional job locations, and the need to get employees to these sites. Regional medical and shopping locations were also identified, but employment locations were considered key. The following locations were identified by stakeholders as unmet areas that should be addressed as part of this study effort:

- Fort Wayne Airport and surrounding employers
- Northeast Fort Wayne including a new commercial zone along I-469
- St. Joe's Township
- Aboite Township
- Dupont Medical Center
- Centennial Park

- I-469 at Mayville Road
- Route 30 (west of Fort Wayne)

Stakeholders were also asked about the role of Citilink in the community and the funding opportunities that should be made available to them. There were stakeholders that considered themselves under-informed to make judgments in this area, but other offered an array of answers. Many persons indicated that government sources would be a declining source of revenue in the future and felt that Citilink should look to alternative funding sources for operations. Fare increases were not viewed as a positive effort for the agency, but subsidized ridership arrangements with employers, universities, and cities and townships were viewed as positive steps in addressing future needs. This was viewed as a step to increase ridership and revenue as operations continue to become more expensive.

The study process is looking at a five to ten year timeframe for route and strategic recommendations. Stakeholders were asked about their view of the role of Citilink over this period. While many stakeholders simply did not feel comfortable providing an answer, others provided insight into their view of the role of the service in coming years. An increased level of service on Citilink routes, as well as efforts to increase the “family” of services provided by the agency was seen as an important effort. Regional links to employment and other services were viewed as a role for Citilink to provide enhanced services to transit dependent persons in the area. Meeting the increased needs in the community with service frequency and longer service days was also seen as a key to service improvement in the long term. As one stakeholder indicated, Citilink must meet its challenges, look for creative ways to fund operations and change people’s perceptions of service, looking to become the “premier” transportation provider in Fort Wayne and the region.

3.3 Drop-in Sessions & Initial Public Outreach

Drop-in sessions were held with riders at two key locations in the Citilink route network. These were the Superior Street Station and South Gate Plaza. Both sessions were held on Wednesday September 24th, and the South Gate Plaza session was held during the PM peak, at a location where riders transfer between multiple routes, and utilize Route 5, which does not travel to Superior Street Station. During the sessions, study team staff had contact with over 80 riders, some of whom gave a very brief perception of service and others who gave specific insight into their needs.

Riders were generally complimentary of service. Many of the persons approached by study team members indicated that service was “fine” or “good” or “it goes where I need it to”. These were recorded as part of an overall effort to view a balanced perception of Citilink service. Riders were appreciative of service and viewed efforts such as the deviated routes as good efforts to improving service destinations in the Fort Wayne area. Numerous riders cited the need for additional deviated routes and alternative services to provide more options for riders in the system.

Many riders were eager to point out what they considered to be deficiencies in the system or areas that needed to be addressed. These were typical and included service frequency, service span, and Sunday service.

The most common need identified by riders was service frequency. Riders felt that the 60-minute headways provided on most routes made trip times longer and reduced travel options for Fort Wayne residents. These long periods made travel to more than one destination difficult and create an environment where transit is an unattractive travel option. The most commonly identified routes for service frequency increases were Routes 2, 3, & 4.

Service span was another key issue among riders. Later hours would provide better opportunities for employment, and second shift work was often seen as a key challenge for Citilink to address. Saturday hours were also considered to be less than what is needed by the community at large.

Sunday service was an interesting issue to discuss with riders. Sunday service was a common need that riders identified for the study team members. When this answer was provided, study team members probed into the needs for Sunday transit riders. Employment was an over-riding theme, although not as dominant as expected. Trips to churches and shopping centers were mentioned by a relatively large share of the persons that identified Sunday service as a need. Employment tends to be the need that warrants the introduction of Sunday service in many areas, and it was surprising that this was not the case in Fort Wayne. Sunday employment needs must be better defined if recommendations for Sunday service are to be considered.

Riders also provided insight into destinations that require service. The northeast portion of Fort Wayne, home to a new Wal*Mart and other major retailers, was identified by riders as a key location for service. The airport and the southern portions of Fort Wayne that are currently unserved by Citilink were identified as key locations for connections in the future. Increased connections to IPFW were also seen as a service destination that warrant additional opportunities.

The drop-in sessions also garnered many comments that were specific to recent trips taken by riders or personal issues with particular routes or service aspects. These were recorded by the study team and will be considered as part of the analysis and recommendations portions of the study. Several comments were directed to the infrastructure of the service including Superior Street station and the bus shelters around the community. These and other issues will be considered throughout the study.

3.4 Public Outreach – Preliminary Recommendations

A series of public meetings were held after preliminary service recommendations were developed for the study. The purpose of the meetings was to provide the public opportunity to comment on preliminary plan elements and assist in shaping the plan in order to tailor recommendations to local needs. The drop-in session was held at Superior Street Station during the AM peak period in order to engage riders that could not attend a public meeting in order to include as many viewpoints as possible into the final stages of the planning process. In addition,

these meetings allowed Citilink and the study team to promote the preliminary results of the plan to the public and the media. The public meetings were well advertised through a press release to all local media, signs on Citilink buses and outreach to agencies and other stakeholders. The public meetings were held at the following locations:

Monday February 23 rd	3:30 PM	League for the Blind & Disabled
Tuesday February 24 th	2:00 PM	IPFW
Tuesday February 24 th	6:00 PM	City County Building

The meetings were well attended by riders and non-riders alike and much information was gathered in respect to the preliminary recommendations. The attendees were generally pleased with the recommendations that would provide more frequent service, evening service, and Sunday service. The efforts to provide services into new areas for employment and the addition of a new suburban mobility route were also well-received. Riders were anxious to see recommendations implemented as quickly as possible, but were generally understanding of the need to phase in changes based on available revenue sources. Attendees offered some suggestions in terms of routing changes and route preferences and these comments were reviewed and incorporated into the final plan.

The Drop-in session was held at Superior Street Station during the AM peak on Tuesday, February 24th. This session allowed study team members to engage riders directly to gain a broad viewpoint in terms of comments on the preliminary recommendations. The riders that offered comments were pleased with similar modifications to the public meetings – increased frequency, later evening service, and Sunday service. The session allowed the study team to spread the word about the study and further refine modifications to match local needs