

To: INDOT
From: B-TOP
Date: August 13, 2007
Subject: East 10th Street Project

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is planning to widen East 10th Street to four lanes from the 46 Bypass to Pete Ellis Drive. This letter opposes the proposed design and recommends a design that focuses on improvements for transit and pedestrians.

Historically, our local transportation planning agencies have focused on moving people by car, commonly at the expense of moving people by alternative modes such as transit, bicycle, or by foot. This has caused a serious reduction in walking and transit use and an increase in car use, which has been detrimental to our cities and to public health. INDOT has historically dealt with inter-city transportation, which also has trended toward moving cars and trucks at high speeds. Designs have commonly excluded alternative modes of transportation. In urban areas this policy can be quite devastating to these preferred alternative modes of travel and the dense urban form that would accommodate them.

The Bloomington community has asked for a change in transportation policies via the *Growth Policies Plan*. The Plan reads:

Bloomington must strive to reduce the number of vehicle trips traveled per resident. Reducing automobile trip-making not only reduces congestion but improves air quality, saves energy, and increases bicycle and pedestrian safety within the transportation system. (GPP, p. 14)

It continues:

Bloomington... has an opportunity to change the pattern of automobile trip-making over time by embracing alternative forms of transportation. Walking is a widely underestimated mode of alternative transportation. Walking trips generally outnumber biking and transit trips by about ten to one. In an effort to mitigate traffic, support for walking should be paramount. Additionally, trip-making patterns can also be altered through increasing mixed land use development, pursuing a compact development strategy, and achieving more interconnected street systems. (GPP, p. 14)

The design of the proposed East 10th Street project gives priority to car traffic at the expense of pedestrian traffic. INDOT's plan calls for widening the road from two to four lanes and increasing the turn radius from around 25 ft to 53 ft. As a result, the pedestrian crosswalk lengths at Pete Ellis Drive and 10th Street would increase from the current range of 30-50 ft to 85-90 ft, and vehicles would make turns at higher speeds. Thus, accommodations for the preferred modes of transportation would actually be worse. The design would induce car and truck traffic, making the traffic environment more hostile to those using preferred modes of transportation.

INDOT's primary goal is to accommodate inter-city travelers, thus, INDOT may not see local traffic as the segment of the community it should serve. However, if the local travel needs can be satisfied by the preferred modes of walking, biking, and transit use, the reduced local vehicular

traffic will leave additional capacity for inter-city vehicle travel. This is an opportunity for INDOT to accommodate both inter-city and local travelers by focusing the design on the locally preferred modes of travel. This could be a context sensitive solution that actually benefits the community and meets INDOT’s goal of moving inter-city travelers.

As currently designed, the East 10th Street modifications are not “improvements” and we strongly oppose them. The current plan is unacceptable. In the following section, there is evidence that the traffic counts do not warrant this project in the first place. However, we do recommend improvements to the corridor that are focused on transit and walkability. If the current design is not changed drastically, then we recommend the project be cancelled.

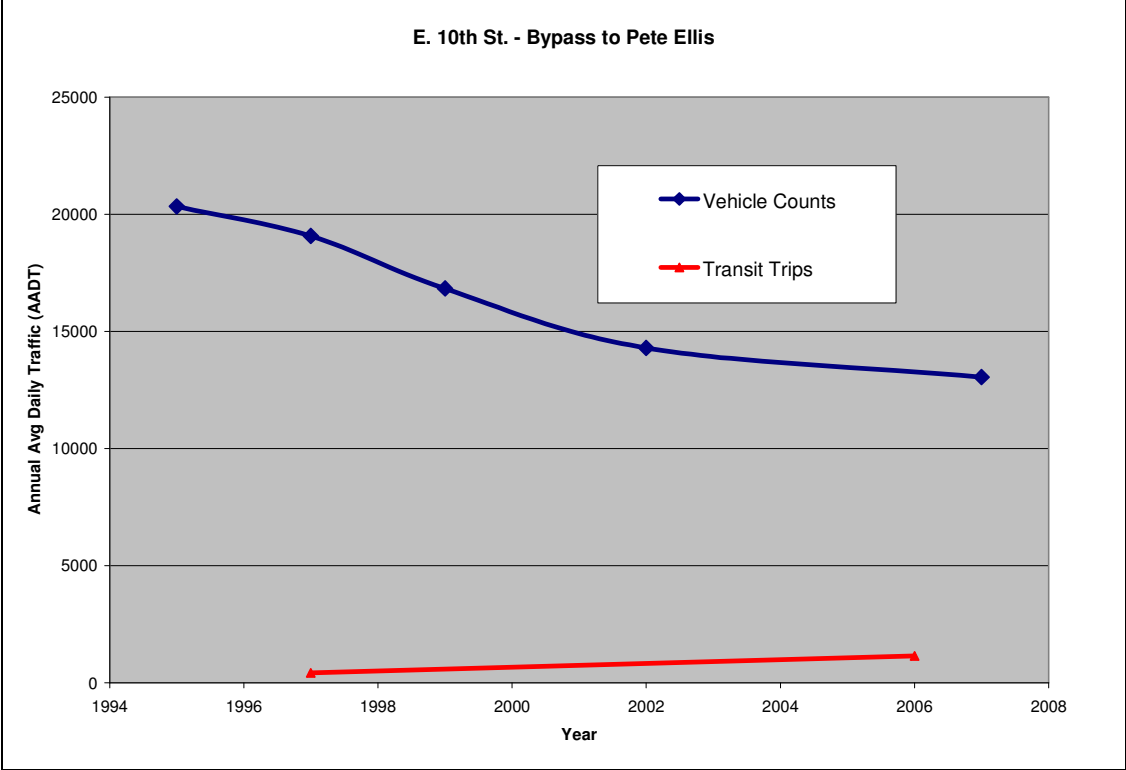
Transit Corridor

East Tenth Street (State Road 45) is a densely populated area. Around Pete Ellis, it is almost exclusively high density apartments. These are highly populated with IU students, faculty, and staff. Many take the Bloomington Transit Route 6 in to the university. Route 6 is a city transit route that runs very frequently, currently at 20 minute intervals. It runs from 7 am to midnight, and it runs on Saturday and Sunday with shorter hours. Often, Bloomington Transit will need to send an extra bus in the mornings to handle the excess passengers. It currently carries around 1150 trips per day on that corridor. This is approximately 7% of the total person-trips made on this corridor. The chart below shows the efficiency of Route 6, which is exceeded only by that of Route C, which goes from campus to the College Mall.

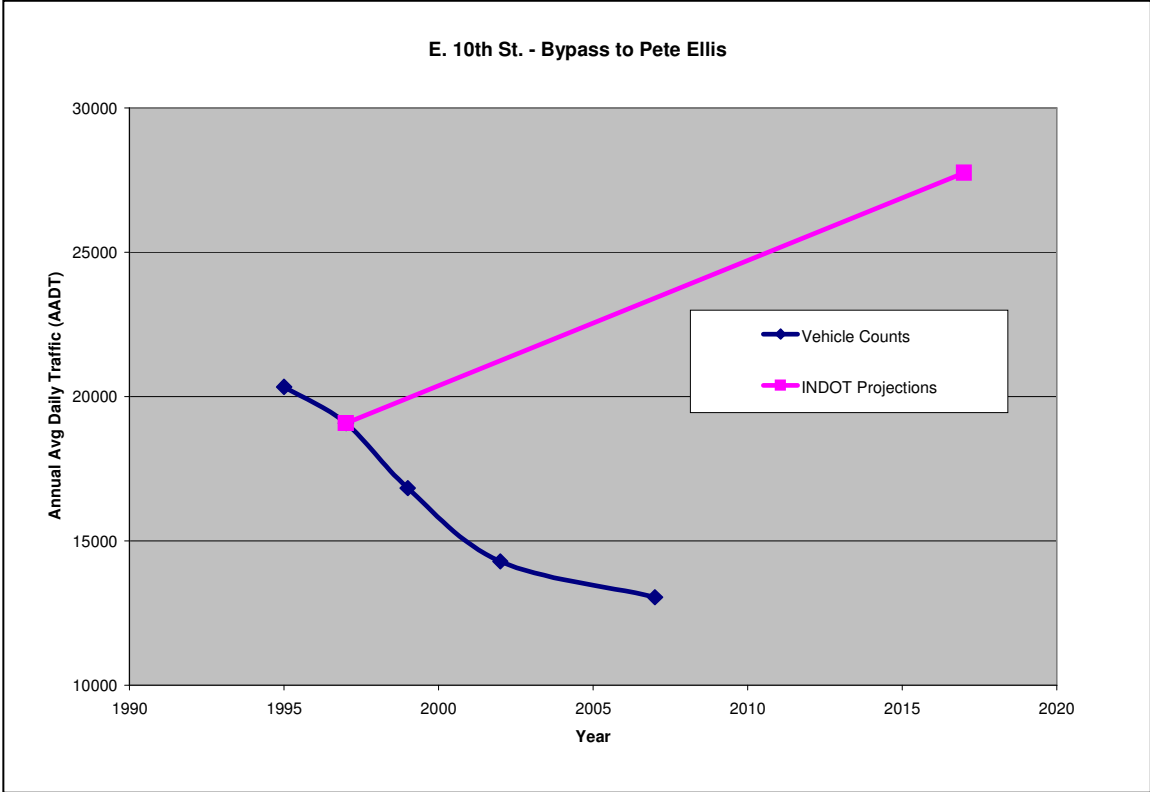
Route	Revenue Hours	Revenue Miles	2006		
			Total Passengers	Passengers Per Hour	Passengers Per Mile
1 BHS North/S.Walnut	11,344.00	130,083.70	190,770	16.82	1.47
2 W.11th St./S.Rogers	7,337.20	80,277.50	166,434	22.68	2.07
3 College Mall/Highland	15,971.70	205,511.00	363,839	22.78	1.77
4 High St./Bloomfield Rd.	8,280.20	100,388.20	144,786	17.49	1.44
5 Sare Road	3,810.60	41,590.90	46,724	12.26	1.12
6 Campus Shuttle	12,871.80	122,657.10	596,629	46.35	4.86
7 Henderson/Walnut	4,147.90	54,165.00	103,233	24.89	1.91
8 Eastside Local	3,465.90	45,166.10	27,473	7.93	0.61
C Route	12,438.30	111,972.30	723,518	58.17	6.46
Other	11.5	160	120	10.43	0.75
Total	79,679.10	891,971.80	2,363,526	29.66	2.65

As noted, there is an interest in Bloomington to focus on pedestrian, bike and transit development rather than continuing to build to accommodate more vehicle traffic. This is the perfect corridor to focus movement on transit since the transit service is already well developed, and the land-use/development is already Transit-Oriented. Also, INDOT and Bloomington Transit data show that car trips are dropping and transit trips are increasing on this segment (see graph below¹).

¹ The vehicle count data in the graphs came from an INDOT website except for the 2007 counts, which were done by the city of Bloomington in late July 2007 and were adjusted using standard INDOT procedures for calculating AADT.



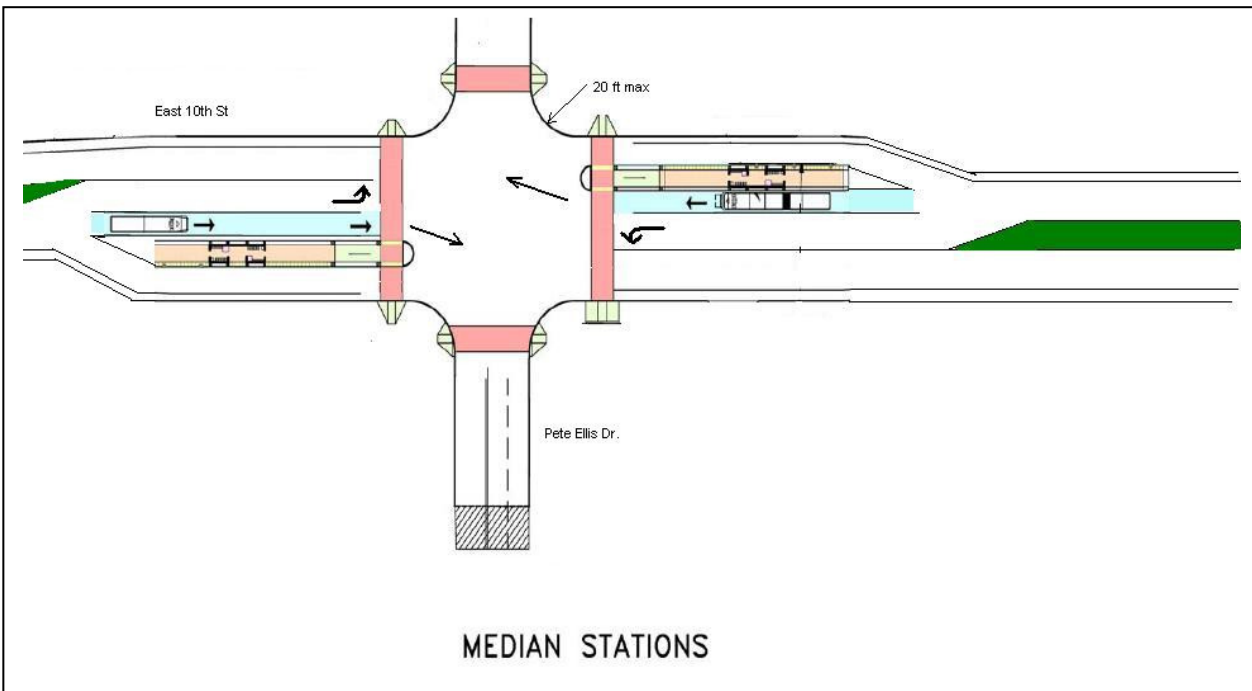
INDOT is undertaking this project based on inaccurate projections. The magenta line in the graph below shows INDOT’s expected growth in the corridor. The blue line shows the Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) as calculated by INDOT from actual traffic counts (see footnote on previous page).



The community's interest is to develop the corridor to make walking more comfortable and easier, and make transit a higher priority and more efficient than driving. IU is planning a very large expansion of the facilities on the NE corner of 10th and the 46 Bypass. It would be preferred that most of the employees and students that will frequent this facility take the bus rather than drive. This will require infrastructure that provides efficient transit and safe boarding areas, and safe pedestrian facilities.

INDOT's proposed design will shift these trends toward more car use by increasing pedestrian crossing distances, will increase car speeds and volumes, and will do nothing to prioritize transit use. However, with moderate changes to the current intersection and street design, along with priority signalization, transit and walkability could be prioritized.

We propose that the travel lanes of East 10th Street be maintained at two lanes, with an added median. At the intersection of Pete Ellis and East 10th Street, we propose that East 10th include a dedicated bus lane with an adjoining raised boarding platform. The bus lane should receive priority signalization at the stoplight, which will decrease the travel time for bus passengers relative to cars and thus enhance the incentives for drivers to shift to transit, improving the overall efficiency of travel along this corridor. The design for this project should also include sidewalks on both sides of East 10th Street and highly visible crosswalks at the intersection to promote pedestrian use. Curb radii should be minimized to reduce turning speeds and pedestrian crossing distances. See the drawing below:



We are aware that Lew May, General Manager of Bloomington Transit, requested in June that INDOT consider a design with features similar to that proposed above. We support Mr. May's request.

Summary

B-TOP believes that the project described above is more appropriate for the urban context of the East 10th Street corridor than INDOT's proposed design. INDOT's proposed design conflicts with Bloomington's Growth Policies Plan and should be abandoned immediately. It is not justified by observed traffic trends and will adversely affect the pedestrian safety and walkability of the area, and will invite more car travel. By contrast, the transit and pedestrian improvements proposed above constitute a context-sensitive solution that will capitalize on and increase the strength of the existing transit service in this area, decreasing car use and improving the local environment. This is a much more efficient way to move people along this corridor, freeing up capacity for inter-city travelers. We request that INDOT hold a public meeting in Bloomington regarding this corridor as soon as possible, and we urge INDOT to embrace this win-win solution for the Bloomington community and southern Indiana drivers.

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