

Executive Summary

This is the five-year Strategic Plan for CityBus, providing a strategic vision for operating transit services and enhancing services in the future. The purpose of this plan is to refine CityBus' mission and present a common vision of public transit's role in addressing local and regional transportation needs. This vision includes supporting goals/objectives, a timeline and recommended actions for meeting that vision.



Transit-oriented development is a priority for CityBus. High density housing, retail and employment sites near CityBus lines translate to increased transit ridership and the ability of the agency to offer more frequent services.

The plan was executed in three phases. The first phase included a review of existing conditions and issues. Issues were identified through meetings with CityBus staff and Board members, and an array of community stakeholders representing the business community, Purdue University, local government, schools, senior groups, and social services. It also included a review of the transit network, transportation issues throughout the region, and peer transit agencies.

An analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) was carried out during the second phase. Based on a Board workshop, the existing conditions data and issues identified in the SWOT analysis, a series of goals and objectives were developed. For each of the objectives, several specific actions were also identified.

In the final phase, the actions were refined and a series of Action Plans were developed. The Action Plans represent a variety of activities that CityBus can carry out to address the goals and objectives.

Issues and Findings that Informed the Strategic Plan

There is no question that CityBus is dedicated to providing quality transit service for the community. The agency's challenge is to modify services and identify the new markets that will result from shifts in employment centers, densification downtown, new residential growth on the outskirts of the CityBus service area and a less centralized retail core.

Over the years, CityBus has worked closely with both cities, Purdue University and a large number of regional partners to revise service plans as needed to address changes in

demand. In 2007, CityBus completed planning for new routes and service extensions to the east and south of the current service area, two of which are scheduled for implementation in 2008.

Several key issues were identified in the first phase of the plan.

CityBus provides a very high quality transit service to many portions of the service area.

CityBus has targeted its ridership groups and put service on the streets where demand is highest. As much as the agency would like to better serve some of the outlying portions of the service area, the vast majority of riders are traveling to and from Purdue University. Through its agreement with Purdue, CityBus addresses the local travel needs in West Lafayette by providing routes that are heavily used by Purdue students, faculty and staff. The distances are relatively short and the frequencies are good.

Hypothetically, if CityBus only wanted to enhance the performance of its overall services, it might operate trips exclusively around the Purdue campus. However, aside from the Purdue community, most of CityBus' riders are transit-dependent, with few other transportation options available to them to commute to jobs, seek medical services and go shopping. CityBus provides an essential service to these members of the community, and does so with limited resources. The challenge is that CityBus has a mix of riders with an excellent incentive to ride the bus (Purdue students whose fares are prepaid through the University's arrangement with the agency and who enjoy short headways and extended service hours) and a large number of riders who have no other option, so even if fares were to rise, travel times increase and headways were reduced, they would still ride the system. Several of these riders see the Wabash Trolley, which provides frequent free service for the general public in an area with a large concentration of Purdue students, faculty and staff, as an example of the agency's bias toward a particular segment of the population.

In lower density portions of the CityBus service area, bus routes operate with less frequency. Along some routes, including Route 8 and portions of Routes 6 and 3, the bus travels in long one-way loops. This can make a trip in one direction much longer than a return trip. Some of the fixed route services are described as "circuitous."



CityBus' passenger facility at Riehle Plaza provides a central transfer point. The facility is due for an update and requires improved bus circulation.

Some stakeholders talked about the need for better service for employers and others said that the Trolley is a better example of a tourist-oriented service than something focused on people “residing” within the CityBus service area.

CityBus staff is dedicated to providing quality service.

CityBus’ staff is one of its greatest assets. Stakeholders, including political leaders and community members, lauded CityBus’ staff for providing a quality service, for being responsive and for doing their best with limited resources. CityBus’ administrative staff was described as being proactive, innovative, helpful, cooperative and accessible. Not only do consumers express their appreciation of the drivers, but the consulting team observed friendly, knowledgeable drivers providing good customer service in the field (for example, drivers will inform dispatch of a requested passenger transfer). In a meeting with the consultant, drivers voiced a number of complaints, but overwhelmingly offered constructive feedback to make CityBus a better service for the customers who use it. CityBus’ future strength will come from supporting its solid customer-oriented staff and building upon a good work environment. Improvements to driver morale may come about with closer attention to their input, the implementation of regular staff meetings, and periodic training meetings.

CityBus has an excellent public image.

User-friendly marketing and useful public information are key elements of successful transit systems. CityBus has an attractive logo, recognizable color scheme, a user friendly website with extensive information on-line, a colorful brochure with a system map and schedules and information. Buses are clearly marked with the logo and most buses

include brochures and other information. CityBus’ once stale image as GLPTC has been replaced with one people identify as forward-thinking, innovative, colorful and appropriate for the Greater Lafayette area.



Many people are unaware of CityBus’ technology tools that provide on-line trip planning and real-time bus arrival information. The agency has an opportunity to educate the public about these tools.

Even with a great brand and high visibility, specific knowledge about transit in Lafayette and West Lafayette remains somewhat elusive. Many stakeholders were very familiar with the Wabash Trolley routing and could speak generally about the large number of routes serving Purdue, but few could specify routes serving major destinations or even their own neighborhoods. Some were unfamiliar with ACCESS, and a couple of stakeholders perceived the service as limited or inefficient. Many stakeholders said they liked the fact the CityBus provided real-time information,

but some said they thought many riders may not be familiar with this service.

Although CityBus bus stop signs can be seen in many portions of the service area, the system's flag stop policy means that signs are limited in some areas. In one stakeholder meeting, attendees talked about whether they had ever seen a sign in their neighborhoods, noting that they had no idea along which streets the buses traveled in their community.

Policies and standards are important to plan and operate efficient service.

Designing transit services to meet community transit goals, to operate efficiently and to meet existing and changing public mobility needs is critical. Monitoring system performance also remains an important task for transit operators. Design standards can be set by federal, state and local regulatory requirements, but they can also be established in relation to goals, objectives and service priorities adopted by CityBus. Other than its adopted mission, CityBus did not have an updated systemwide vision or an adopted set of service standards or policies prior to the development of this Strategic Plan. Thus, CityBus was unable to take a proactive, holistic planning approach and often found itself trying to respond to a wide array of changing needs. Part of the focus of this plan it to define standards and bring on additional staff resources to monitor data and evaluate CityBus' performance.



Many jobs are located in suburban areas. CityBus provides good service to most portions of the service area.

Transit service performance is good, but could be better in some areas.

Performance measures show that overall, CityBus is operating a relatively efficient system. Based on 2005 NTD records, the system carried 35 passengers per hour on its fixed route services at a cost of \$1.64 per passenger. With farebox recovery between 20 and 25% of operating costs (including fares directly paid through contracts with Purdue and other entities), the system performs better than many transit systems of this size at the national level, and is in line with — or more efficient than — most of the peers.

ACCESS service's performance is weaker. Averaging fewer than three passengers per hour, the service is less productive than most urban paratransit operations and less productive than any of the peers except the system in Fort Collins, Colorado. Lower demand for paratransit, dispatching procedures that allow for a number of single rider trips and policies that allow for trips to be scheduled far in advance may contribute to lower ridership. Given that cost per rider on ACCESS is close to \$24.00, it certainly benefits

CityBus when riders, who are able to do so, are encouraged to use fixed route services when possible.

CityBus thrives on innovating and being a unique type of transit provider.

CityBus' hybrid vehicles, real-time transit information, funding partnerships with Purdue and Ivy Tech, childcare centers, useful printed information and website, and close relationships with policymakers from both cities make it a dynamic organization. The agency's interest in leading or playing a key role in transit-oriented development is an example of CityBus' ability to understand the community's potential and take a proactive approach to change the transit operating environment.



CityBus successfully partners with organizations in the Lafayette-West Lafayette area. CityBus' innovative efforts paid off in the development of child care centers in Lafayette.

The Board provides good overall direction for CityBus.

Board members say their objective is to make the agency as efficient as possible. They also want to maintain high levels of employee retention, and keep taxpayers and riders happy. Most Board members said CityBus does better than its peers overall in terms of efficiency and service coverage. Board members also applauded the agency's staff, specifically complimenting each member of the management team. The General Manager was noted as being a good educator, keeping agency Board members apprised of the latest technologies, inviting them to transit conferences and reminding them of their responsibilities. Most Board members suggested that the agency almost ran itself, with minimal oversight needed on the part of Board members.

Board members say they do not need to micromanage, and instead focus on the policy issues only. The congenial CityBus Board has short meetings, with few public comments and complaints. Most Board members see this as a sign of the system's good customer service and overall effectiveness, but more opportunities for public involvement are worth consideration. Re-instating a consumer advisory panel, carefully managed and moderated, that makes recommendations to the Board would facilitate a stronger relationship between CityBus and its riders.



Riders like CityBus' clean, modern vehicles. Some of CityBus' vehicles have exceeded their recommended lifespan. The Strategic Plan calls for vehicle replacement.

Equipment improvements will be necessary to maintain and enhance the quality of service.

Much of CityBus' fleet is at or beyond the recommended age of retirement. Fleet replacement is necessary for a transit system to improve service reliability, but is also of value for CityBus to improve the experience of riders, comfort of drivers and visibility of the system. CityBus has been praised for its hybrid buses, which riders like to ride and non-riders like to tout as an example of progressive thinking.

In addition to vehicles, investment in an improved downtown transfer facility, improvements to the administrative and vehicle facility, more shelters and bus stop signs, and an expansion of the real-time public information electronic signs are some of the improvements expected by members of the community.

Purdue University and CityBus enjoy a cooperative working relationship.

In recent years, cooperation between Purdue and CityBus has been excellent, and has yielded significant improvements in both transit service and ridership. In particular, the contract with Purdue University that allows Purdue students, faculty and staff to ride the bus "free" has been very successful and has resulted in higher transit ridership and lower on-campus traffic volumes.

Purdue officials look forward to expanding the cooperative relationship with CityBus. The 2005 Transportation Plan Amendment laying out the perimeter boulevard concept, the bus mall and other transit-friendly changes are the result of continuous consultation between the University and the transit agency.



The loop (or Oval) on the Purdue Campus is a major boarding location. CityBus has an excellent partnership with Purdue.

CityBus has opportunities to work with cities and the University to adopt measures to influence private developers' decisions about the location of student residence complexes. Currently, the existence of rental housing geared for students has compelled CityBus to offer transit service to outlying areas, particularly northwest of Purdue. These residential complexes benefit neither Purdue nor CityBus. The practice of granting parking permits only to students living more than a mile and a half from campus may have the unintended consequences of discouraging students from living closer, and creating an incentive to develop student housing complexes further away.

Growth and changes to the road network will mean changes for CityBus.

The nature of suburban land use patterns in the United States means that mobility needs are largely met by personal private automobile use. High levels of auto ownership and reliance, along with development that is not oriented to pedestrians (bus riders) has reduced the availability and perceived need for public transportation in many communities.

CityBus has already evaluated service expansions to the east and south, including portions of residential communities where some officials say the agency is unlikely to attract many local residents. The agency has identified the need to extend its service area, but specific performance measures have not been adopted to allow the CityBus to evaluate the services once they are in place. With ongoing development on the outskirts of the service area — as well as annexation — the agency will be under further pressure to provide additional regional services in the future.

A host of roadway widenings and reroutings are planned in the service area. CityBus has an opportunity to ensure that these changes will meet the needs of the transit system by working closely with planners. The agency has the ability to influence land use decisions by establishing service policies, working with developers and city officials, and carefully managing its own growth.



Growth on the outskirts of the Greater Lafayette area is putting pressure on CityBus to expand services. CityBus will provide services to key destinations in the taxing district, but seeks opportunities to improve service levels along dense corridors.

Goals, Objectives and Actions of the Strategic Plan

Mission and Vision

The Strategic Plan identifies a new mission statement for CityBus:

CityBus is a proactive community partner. The organization strives to improve the quality of life by (1) operating safe, reliable and environmentally friendly transit services and (2) partnering in local economic development activities. With employees who take pride in their work, CityBus provides excellent customer service and offers efficient, convenient access to destinations throughout Lafayette and West Lafayette.

It also identifies a vision as follows:

- CityBus has an important role in making the Lafayette/West Lafayette area a better place to live, work, go to school and visit.
- With safe, reliable and convenient transit services, the agency will offer a viable transportation choice for residents and visitors.
- CityBus will be recognized as a valuable resource for the community.
- The agency will provide high-frequency transit services in areas with greater densities.
- The agency will operate efficiently, giving taxpayers the best service possible for their investment.
- The agency will be a leader in transit-oriented development efforts.
- The agency will bring together developers, local governments and planning agencies to address land use decisions that impact mobility.
- The agency will be a leader in bringing environmentally sound transit technologies to the Lafayette/West Lafayette area.

In support of this vision statement, and as a next step, CityBus is initiating an effort to increase ridership systemwide to seven million annually by 2012. Although it is a robust goal, many of the elements of this plan — in addition to other strategies defined by CityBus staff and the Board — can be carried forward to help CityBus reach this ridership level.

Goals and Objectives

A number of goals are defined for CityBus, along with a series of objectives. These include the following:

1. Address the mobility needs of transit-dependent persons in the CityBus service area.
 - Provide service to neighborhoods within the CityBus service area with higher proportions of residents without automobiles, residents with lower incomes and persons with disabilities.
 - Provide opportunities to educate the public about CityBus.
 - Expand partnerships.
2. Provide CityBus service in a friendly, courteous and professional manner.
 - Foster a high quality work environment in which employees feel valued.
 - Improve customer service at CityBus.
3. Increase the accessibility and convenience of public transportation in the CityBus service area.
 - Enhance service transparency and reliability.
 - Offer an array of services tailored to CityBus' broad markets.
 - Provide quality information about the availability and accessibility of transit services.
4. Integrate transportation, economic development and land use planning in the Greater Lafayette area.
 - Develop transit-oriented housing and other services near CityBus lines.
 - Take a central role in regional/local planning related to land use, transit, roadways and pedestrian access.
 - Focus resources on improving transit services in areas with transit-supportive land uses (existing and planned).
 - Implement transit programs that contribute to the economic well being of the Greater Lafayette area.
5. Operate an environmentally sound transit system.
 - Explore opportunities to implement alternatively fueled vehicles.
 - Advertise and promote CityBus' efforts to operate an environmentally friendly transit system.
6. Maintain facilities that meet the day-to-day operating needs of CityBus.



Downtown Lafayette's economic viability is tied to a number of factors. CityBus' frequent service and hub of activity contributes to the strength of the core.

- Upgrade CityBus administrative/office facilities.
 - Upgrade facilities and technologies to improve operations.
 - Upgrade passenger facilities.
 - Improve safety at bus stops.
7. Provide efficient and effective transit service.
- Ensure efficient use of tax revenues.
 - Identify strategies for additional funding.
 - Monitor efficiency and effectiveness of transit service.

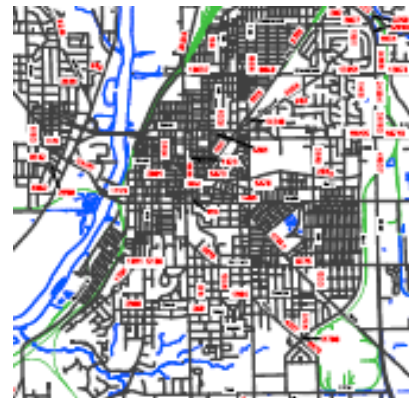
Strategic Plan Actions

The Strategic Plan presents a series of 43 Action Plans to address CityBus' goals and objectives. The plan provides a justification for CityBus to move forward in the short-term on specific types of activities, and to hold off on acting in other areas.

Actions were evaluated and prioritized based on a number of factors including ease of implementation, funding, and strategic value. Twenty actions were identified as CityBus' top priorities. These top 20 include the following:

Top Priority Actions

- Continue to operate services in communities where services are currently available. At a minimum, maintain a basic level of service (at least 60-minute headways) that provides coverage throughout the CityBus taxing district.
- Work with the Area Plan Commission to identify areas with the greatest need. Identify services and programs that can be included in Human Service-Public Transportation Coordinated Plan for potential funding. Work with Area Plan Commission to complete Human Service-Public Transportation Coordinated plan.
- Maintain existing partnerships with Ivy Tech, College Station, YMCA, etc.
- Develop intranet communications program; purchase computers for employee access.
- Encourage driver participation in CityBus activities. Maintain service advisory group which includes drivers.
- Conduct driver training.



The Human Service-Public Transportation Coordinated Plan provides an opportunity for CityBus to address transit needs for seniors, people with disabilities and low-income residents through coordination with human service agencies.

- Establish, maintain and monitor on-time performance standards. Develop policies and standards that address CityBus' role in serving future sprawl. Monitor and control costs to ensure services are financially sustainable. Develop and adhere to transit performance standards.
- Restructure routes as proposed in the CityBus Transit Needs Study.
- Implement marketing or information campaign about CityBus' technologies, including availability of real-time information. Integrate and apply new technologies. Develop a marketing campaign around CityBus' environmental efforts.
- Incorporate information about all CityBus routes serving Purdue into materials distributed to the Purdue community.
- Initiate development projects, working with partners in the Lafayette area.
- Participate in transit-oriented residential development projects in the downtown area targeting Purdue students and faculty and in key transit corridors.
- Promote transit-oriented development as a tool for densifying the core of the CityBus service area.
- Meet regularly with cities, Tippecanoe County, and the APC. Continue to attend Area Plan Commission Technical Transportation Committee meetings.
- Work with Purdue University on Master Plan process to ensure transit considerations are incorporated into plan, including potential bus mall along 3rd Street.
- Conduct office space feasibility study.
- Maintain high-frequency trolley service link. Update The Economic Impact of CityBus Trolley Benefits Analysis.
- Replace CityBus fleet with efficient conventionally fueled vehicles and hybrid vehicles.
- Restructure trolley tax as "Transit Improvement Levy" for jurisdiction-wide projects.
- Develop and implement plan of bus stop safety improvements at key locations. Clarify bus stop locations for drivers. Convert bus stops to fixed-stop locations rather than flag-stops.
- Develop procedures for efficient and consistent record keeping and reporting.

Top Priority Actions

The remaining 23 actions were identified as secondary priorities. Many of these are effectively high priorities for the agency, but due to cost or the need for additional resources, these do not fall in the first category above. Nevertheless, many of them are absolutely critical for CityBus to address its mission.

- Develop a travel training program for new riders. Approach local Bureau of Motor Vehicles to provide transit information and resources to seniors.
- Consider hiring of full-time staff for public relations/transit training/complaints. Conduct customer service training. Hire additional customer service staff.
- Conduct outreach to a wide range of organizations and user groups. Identify opportunities to expand public input.
- Work with Purdue University to develop incentives for faculty and staff to use CityBus, including possible disincentives to driving.
- Develop new procedures for employees to share concerns with management and have their concerns addressed.
- Evaluate new fare options including a day pass and simplified transfer policies.
- Identify opportunities to provide evening service, improved headways, and alternatives to fixed-route service in low-density areas. Identify transit service enhancements in areas with higher levels of pedestrian activity. Increase service headways as development becomes channeled into higher density areas and corridors. Improve transit amenities in areas with good pedestrian access and higher ridership.
- Expand indoor vehicle storage space. Replace garage doors to allow safer entry/exit. Improve lighting in vehicle storage areas. Evaluate potential for off-site facilities.
- Work with employers, including retailers like Target, Meijer and Wal-Mart, to promote employer-sponsored benefits, possibly in exchange for transit service. Consider programs that provide incentives for using transit. Consider implementation of a ridesharing/TDM program overseen by CityBus.
- Increase budget of CityBus advertising program. Continue to use low- and no-cost targeted advertising strategies.
- Consider implementation of disincentives to parking in central Lafayette and West Lafayette (parking fees, limits, permits).
- Conduct a study of fuel alternatives for CityBus.
- Expand Riehle Plaza transit facility. Enhance passenger amenities at Riehle Plaza. Expand real-time information system to additional transit stops. Expand bench/shelter program to bus stops with high ridership.
- Develop improved transit stops along loop at Purdue Mall.
- Improve cul de sac turnaround on Tower Acres to allow easier access to fraternities and sororities.



A reconfiguration of Riehle Plaza is a high priority for CityBus, but due to costs and complexities, is ranked as a second-tier action in the Strategic Plan.

- Conduct feasibility study for developing park-and-ride locations.
- Identify revenue enhancement opportunities through special event transportation and other special services.
- Emphasize the role of CityBus in the community and funding sources for CityBus.
- Evaluate opportunities for traffic signal priority/pre-emption for CityBus on certain arterials.
- Implement live video feeds from Purdue to allow CityBus staff to monitor passenger volumes.
- Work with City and County engineers to modify roadway designs as needed at State and Northwestern and on the Purdue University campus.
- Conduct efficiency analysis of ACCESS services.

The Strategic Plan provides a basic timeline for implementation of the prioritized actions. Nevertheless, it is up to CityBus and its partners to define a detailed implementation strategy, especially with the agency's new initiative to focus on increasing ridership. Examples of key features of the Plan include a summit hosted by CityBus to unveil its plans for development and seek partnerships, new travel training programs, a proposed systemwide operations analysis, and completion of the Tippecanoe County Human Services-Public Transportation Coordination Plan.

The Plan assumes some additional staffing may be required, including (1) and Administrative Analyst, with responsibilities in planning, data analysis, service monitoring and outreach; (2) Customer Service staff; and (3) short-term staff with a focus on Real Estate Development/Construction Management to oversee potential transit-oriented development projects, lead the reconstruction effort for Riehle Plaza, and oversee evaluation and construction for vehicle storage expansion and office space needs.



The Strategic Plan offers tools and justification for CityBus' actions.