

Marcela:

So good morning, hello, and thank you for joining us for our first interview of our second season of Next Stop: Transit Tech. Really excited to chat today about the Northwest Indiana transit map. We have our special guests here. So if you don't mind, please introduce yourselves. And while you're doing that, tell us about your journey into the transportation industry.

Peter:

So I'll go first. My name is Peter Kimball, and I am a regional planner, spatial analyst at NIRPC, which is a metropolitan planning organization in Northwest Indiana here. My primary job is data analysis, and I do a lot of mapping, a lot of spatial data. So that's my day-to-day is a lot of map making. I guess I started my journey into the transportation world at the end of undergrad. I started taking geography courses after I finished my first major, which was digital media. And one of those happened to be a city planning course, which I really enjoyed. So from there, I applied to grad school and went to Boston University and got my master's in city planning there where I was able to live and participate in internships within Boston that were good experience.

Peter:

And then I knew I wanted to move back to the Chicago land area, so I found a job open at NIRPC, which ironically enough the boss that I had when I first joined NIRPC was one of the bosses that a colleague of mine in grad school had as a boss at his internship at MassDOT. So it's kind of a small world situation where I ended up moving back where I went to undergrad and close to Chicago land.

Kevin:

And I am Kevin Polette, I also work at NIRPC. I am the technical assistant, which means that I collect all of the data that NIRPC wants to collect that goes along with Peter's maps. And my journey to the transportation industry was through, I also went to Valparaiso University along with Peter, and I majored in geography. Post undergrad, I had a few jobs here and there, but then I ended up at NIRPC working alongside Peter. And that's how I got into the transportation industry.

Marcela:

That's awesome. A lot of connections there. I'm so glad to have y'all here. And I just wanted to start off by saying congratulations on the launch of your transit map, sounds like an amazing tool for folks to be able to plan their trips throughout Northwest Indiana. So NIRPC launching this map to be a trip planning resources for its riders living in the area as well as a planning tool for all of the systems across municipal and regional transit agencies. So huge congrats.

Kevin:

Thank you.

Marcela:

Could you tell us a summary about what were the factors that influenced the creation of the map and also just a general description from the eyes of its creators?

Peter:

Sure. So this map came out of a couple of ideas. I think the first thing being that all of our transit operators needed to update their bus stop inventory along with its level of ADA compliance to send to FTA. So our transit planner at the time saw this as a good opportunity to have NIRPC be able to offer technical support because I think there is a lapse of technical support because of staffing and other availability throughout the years at NIRPC. So we were working to build that program up. But this also fell really well into some guiding documents that basically lead the path for all of our projects at NIRPC. One of them in particular was our transit plan, which had just been updated for 2019. And while writing the transit plan, we noticed that there was a gap in information and availability to those riders who may be persons with disabilities or need to know if there's ADA access.

Peter:

So that kind of fell into our transit plan. And then we have a larger guiding document that every MPO does, it's called our long range plan. And within that, we talk about what the plans could be for the future of the region, but then we also have hard-term strategies that are actual projects and outcomes that we can do to make sure that we're actually following the plan as an organization. And two of those strategies that we came up with were to improve regional connectivity by assisting in the identification of key coordinated stops where our transit operators overlap and connects because there was really no overall guiding map that shows how you can get from point A to point B using two different transit operators. NIRPC is unique because there's several different transit operators within our region rather than one overlying operator that runs throughout all three counties that we serve.

Peter:

And then another one of these goals was to make sure that we were staying on top of ADA transition plans and to create transparency where we need to improve our ADA infrastructure within the region. So we kind of worked closely with our transit operators and reminded them of the strategies that we had put into our long-range plan and bounced off ideas with them to figure out how we can make this the most effective projects when we were going to be going out into the field anyway to look at the ADA status of the stops.

Marcela:

That's great, it's definitely an asset to have that. I think the thing that stood out to me was improving the connectivity especially between those stops that connect different agencies because people don't really live their lives within a service area. You end up going out for whatever reason, whether that's meeting a family or a medical appointment that just happens to be outside of a county or municipality. ~~That's great.~~ And you touched on working with those different transit operators. So during that bus stop inventory process, were you able to collaborate with them to help facilitate your own data collection process? I know you mentioned that there were 500 plus stops that y'all were working on.

Peter:

Yeah. So I'll just talk about the preliminary planning into this and then maybe Kevin can expand on the actual field work part of it. But we have a group, I guess it's labeled as more of a task force now. But it's our transit operators round table where all the transit operators get together once a month to talk about funding or issues they may be having and brainstorm together. And that's where it at first came up that we could be a technical service to go ahead and do this work for them to help them compile their reports. So one of the agencies, Gary Public Transportation Corporation was very involved with this. And we sat down with them, and we're talking about, "Well, if we're going to go into the field and

look at ADA compliance, is there anything else you want us to keep an eye out for with these transit stops?"

Peter:

So they helped us create some additional aspects to look at such as the amenities or even just the status of what information is available, whether it be a printed map or a phone number to call at each one of the shelters or whether or not there's even a shelter at the location. So that was pretty useful to coordinate with them ahead of time in the planning process. And then the other operators chimed into if they had any thoughts, but they thought that what Gary has suggested was a pretty good idea for the most part I think.

Kevin:

So yeah, building along with what Peter said, we talked about that Gary Public Transportation Corporation, they were the main partner in all of this because they have also the biggest transit network in our Northwest Indiana area. But we also partner along with East Chicago transit, which is in the city of East Chicago, Valparaiso V-Line, which is the city of Valparaiso, Indiana. Michigan City, which they call their transit system the Wave, which is in Michigan City, another city in Indiana. And then also Triangle Transit which actually connects three different cities in Northwest Indiana. So we partnered with all three of them to go and get all of the bus stops like we talked about, the 500 plus bus stops in the area. And it was really good to partner with them. As Peter said, they were able to tell us a lot of things about what we need to be looking out for there, which is great.

Kevin:

So part of it had to do with the ADA compliance, the Americans with Disabilities Act and making sure that we could collect data that would help people with disabilities be able to use their systems better. But it also helps that it was just overall a better way for people to get one transit map for the entire region. Building upon that, just another partnership that we were able to develop while we were out there, and Peter touched upon it was the transit operator from Gary told us that they were also looking into a facade rejuvenation program in part of their city.

Kevin:

And while we are out there, he asked if we would be willing to sit around for a little while while we were collecting the data and look and see if there was foot traffic in certain areas, what areas we felt like were being the most used and which areas were not as well used. And that way, he could figure out where the best way to start the facade rejuvenation would be the best place to start and where he could wait longer because it's not quite as heavy on foot traffic. So along with doing the ADA bus stop inventory that we did with the transit map, there was a lot of other things that we were able to supply our transit operator partners with, which is really good.

Marcela:

I think it's great when initiatives can have co-benefits and you can accomplish other things for other projects, especially when it's field work that is pretty labor intensive and you're already out there. So I guess going off of that point that you all were out in the field for quite some time getting a lot of this really valuable data for not only NIRPC but also the other operators in your area. Do you plan on annually updating this information or will transit agencies participate and take over their own data

collection efforts or do you anticipate that this data will be used in their future bus stop planning and investment priorities?

Peter:

I can speak to that. I think we're trying to probably work with the transit operators to keep that maintained so that it's not an annual project at least because that's four months of the year for a project. So we wanted to provide them a tool so they know the status of their ADA compliance with their bus stops without telling them what they need to do or what order. So we're leaving that up to them. But we're hoping that they can take this information and now prioritize funding to address the ADA needs from level A to C whatever you think is most important. Maybe compile that with some other data such as which stops are getting the most foot traffic, which stops are in worse repair.

Peter:

But we tried to make that a more hands-off, and we were there to guide them or maybe give them some information on how we may prioritize it. But we are really trying to leave it up to the agency to figure out how they want to use the data. But hopefully now that we've established these good relationships with this project too, they can let us know when a project is going in or after a project, maybe we'll be able to send Kevin out there and he can get updated photos and we'll change the data on the status of the transit stop.

Kevin:

Yeah. Some of these things change so quickly. They'll go out there and they'll improve a bus stop or whatever, which means that we'll be behind from the data that we collect on the transit website. But if we need to go out there and collect some extra data and walk them along all the stuff we did because we gave them a really good base with this transit website of everything that we collected. We provided them with all of the information that we collected while we were out there. They can just mirror what we did and expand upon what we worked on from the beginning. I think that it should be a good partnership going forward, and they should be able to, for the most part, keep improving their stops based on what we started with.

Marcela:

For sure. And I think going through some of the things we talked about earlier, especially around the transit operators round table and having that group of people come together and talk about what information they need to collect. And you all being able to set up those data standards really puts everyone off at a good starting point to continue maintaining this information. And I imagine that it would be really valuable for grant applications like FTA's bus and bus facilities grants or other opportunities for infrastructure upgrades.

Peter:

Yeah, I think it's definitely a positive note than now there's a standardization to the data and the metadata between all our different transit operators when we're looking at the region as a whole with that information.

Marcela:

I'm a fan from both sides, from the rider perspective and just having that tool at your fingertips and then from the operator side and being able to get more funding or just understand where there's gaps in shelters or seating, understanding that money is a finite resource and prioritization is super important.

Kevin:

Absolutely. The transit operators talked to us about that several times when we were going through this project about, well, where's the best place to put the resources? Like I talked about with the foot traffic, where's the best place to use the resources, and where's another spot where we can wait longer to maybe update this? But priority always lies with where the people are needed most and where the people are using it most.

Marcela:

Yes, definitely. Actually, out of curiosity, on the map, I don't remember if I saw this or not, but are you able to see some of the adjacent buildings or land uses to determine something that may be a transit trip generator like a hospital?

Kevin:

Not exactly. When we were doing it, we decided to take multiple pictures. And the main thing of the picture is we did stand back and we took a picture getting the area around it so that way if you're walking up to it, you'd be able to see what it looks like. And we also prioritized, for the most part, the signage that was available. And also if there was any issues with it such as a really bad sidewalk where it was all cracked up and then there was no way for a person with disabilities to be able to get there, we prioritized taking pictures of those to show that this is where it needs to be improved the most. So I understand what you're saying by getting the hospitals and stuff like that, but we did not get pictures of the areas around it, the buildings around it to show where it's at. But most of the hospitals and places like that, that's what the bus stop is named as. So that would be a good way to know that it would be next to a hospital.

Peter:

I think that's also what led my decision to embedding it into a Google Map because then you do have that feature of being able to see what's around through the map. And I also just thought that was a much more user friendly interface, especially if you're trying to get directions from point A to point B from some of the other mapping platforms.

Marcela:

Definitely. I guess collaboration of platforms like mapping data and Google Maps because they provide all of that information. And if you're a planner for a certain municipality, you generally know the area that you're planning for. So what platform did you all use to collect data?

Peter:

So I do most of my work using Esri products, so an Arc Pro. And they actually have an application called Arc Collector which Kevin was able to put on an app on his phone. So he was able to go up and pin the bus stop location as he went ahead and checked it out and filled in the information. What we did ahead of time was a lot of prep work, and we formed a standardized template where he was able to just go in and enter data for each of the fields, whether that be landing a platform. He'd measure it and enter that in relative it was something that was a yes or no or there's a quality level that was good, moderate,

poor. He was able to have those as drop downs within the app for each location to fill it out as efficiently as possible. And then that then goes back onto Arc Online. And in the office, I'm able to see where he's pinning for that day.

Kevin:

It was really well done by Peter, he had everything set up for me. I was just able to go out there, everything was set up on a template already where I was just able to drop down and then put in there while I was in the field looking at these bus stops what the data was that I needed to collect. It was very well done. You go out to a bus stop and you get everything collected, take all the pictures, all the information collected. And probably no more than five minutes after, we really got the hang of doing this.

Marcela:

That's awesome and super convenient to have the mobile app on your phone. I've used Arc Collector before, and it's a very powerful tool. And I think that seamless integration through the cloud to a different server so that you can view data across different platforms is really important especially-

Kevin:

And I will add real quick that it was also really easy when if I was out in the field and say that I made a mistake or something like that, even if I submitted it, it was really easy to go back on the computer, go back on the Arc Collector, Arc Online and just go ahead and edit everything on the computer back in the office too. Super easy to do all around, just to make edits all around.

Marcela:

That's great. I guess through the criteria that Peter set up, you know what you're looking for, you know what ...

Kevin:

Yes. Everything was set up very easily for me to just go right down the list of everything that he had set up in the drop-downs for me. And it was, is the sidewalk in good condition? Yes or no? Yes. Is it accessible within two blocks? Yes. Is there a shelter? Yes or no? No. It was very, very easy all around. He had it set up really easily for me. And when we were out there made just our jobs so much easier.

Marcela:

Awesome. I think that it speaks to how this process can be replicated. And I think as much as I want to get off my smartphone, it's really great that you can have these data collection tools ready to go and you're not using some big clunky tablet as I imagine technology probably looked like 20 years ago.

Kevin:

I was just going to add, just even being able to take pictures just with my smartphone was obviously just something that was, everything was all in one, very easily done.

Marcela:

Definitely, instead of I guess picking through the tablet. At my prior employer, I had found a binder from a bus stop inventory. And it was a pen and paper checklist, there were no pictures. But I could see where

the planner had sketched what a stop looked like if they thought it was important or I guess different. Yeah, it was very old school. But I think it was still in 2000 something, so we've come very far in a short amount of time.

Kevin:

Yeah. There would have been some issues if you had me drawing anything, that art is not one of my skills.

Marcela:

You all collected a wealth of data about bus stop amenities, accessibility information, connections to other transportation modes or transit operators. Could you speak more in depth about the process that NIRPC went through to select what data was essential to collect?

Peter:

Off the bat, we knew we needed the ADA compliance data. So in our initial meetings, we had ADA compliance coordinator there with all the specifics where Kevin was literally needing to measure the landing to make sure it was 48 inches and up to compliance. But this was the part where we were able to pull in the other transit operators and ask them what they thought was important for that data. So beyond the ADA compliance requirements, I think that some of my colleagues at NIRPC, Kevin and I and our transit planner brainstormed what may be useful and threw those out to the transit operators. And they would tell us if they either had the information or that wasn't that important to them. And then they came with what they wanted.

Peter:

So I think we probably thought, is there a shelter? We should probably put that. But then they wanted to know more about amenities, I believe GBTC suggested one of our fields was, is there public parking nearby or is this transit stop located at a headquarters where there's a physical building you can go in? So all of that information is a direct collaboration between ADA requirements and then the transit operators on what information they wanted to know.

Kevin:

Some other things to add in some of the other amenities that he talked about was something very simple just as, is there a trash can at the bus stop? Because if people are going to be standing there maybe having a snack or something like that, is there a trash can just to put the trash in? And also like if someone's taking their bike to the bus stop and wants to take the bus from there, is there a place for them to leave their bike and park it and come back to later? All this stuff that is just really good stuff to have from a transit operator standpoint as well as just being part of the public, amenities that are there at every bus stop.

Marcela:

All of that information feeds into having an ecosystem of choice from the perspective of a rider. You can know that you don't want to bike all the way to work for whatever reason, it may be really hot outside or you're not comfortable riding in really car heavy areas. So you just want to ride your bike to the bus stop and hop on and be like, "All right, I'm going to hop on my bike on the way home and call it a day." And I think that's amazing to be able to facilitate more of those multimodal trips and just understanding your options.

Marcela:

I guess speaking to the ability for either transit operators or transit departments to be able to plan if someone's looking at bike share or where to add extra bike racks, all of that information is really valuable beyond just the scope of transit and helping transportation departments work in a more holistic and synchronous way. So one question that I'm actually really excited to ask, when I was reading your press release, you had mentioned that when you were out in the field, you were able to collect public comments from riders as you were taking photos and explaining what you were doing while you were in the field. So what were some of the insights that you got or good anecdotes or stories from riders in Northwest Indiana?

Kevin:

So yeah, we were out there for, like Peter said earlier, about four months collecting all of this data for the bus stops. And while we were out there, if we saw that there was someone waiting at a bus stop that we were at, we stopped and talked to them. And we told them what we were doing and saying that, yeah, we're trying to make all these bus stops better, and I'm in direct communication with the operator of all these bus stops. Is there anything you would like me to say or relay a message about from the user itself? And I will say that most of what the riders had to say wasn't very positive, which I mean all public comment is public comment, we're all trying to get better.

Kevin:

So for the most part, like I said, it wasn't very positive. It was mostly negative stuff about how they don't know when the bus is coming because there's no time tables set out. If you didn't have a cell phone on with data, then you couldn't look up when the next bus was coming on the website and stuff like that. But it was just all of this insight that is just really good to know. We had one man in Gary come up and give us a whole host of things that he wanted to be said to the transit operator. I took notes on all of it and was able to relay all of this to the transit operators. When you get to the people who are using it, that's the best feedback you can get.

Marcela:

Even though public comments can be negative sometimes, it's really valuable to just know the pain points of the service you're providing because everyone's experiences in life are different. And as much as people want to empathize and be able to relate when it's not part of your everyday life, it's a little harder to envision. So it's always great to get it out of the bubble and have those channels of communication open.

Kevin:

For sure. And it's also good that, say the transit operator had a plan for the next five years of how he can improve the system or whatever. But also with me talking to the riders and getting their feedback, making sure that his plan or her plan as the transit operator is exactly what the people want in the next five years. It's very important to know that for sure.

Marcela:

Yes, definitely. As our communities are changing so much, especially after COVID 19 and just generally the fact that people are moving more and our communities often change faster than we do long-range plans.



Kevin:

Absolutely. It's very important to get the public comment because that's going to drive what you do in the future.

Marcela:

Yes. And especially when it comes to technology, which is what our center focuses on to understand your audience and your users and be able to, if you select the platform for the example that you were giving on arrival information, to maybe replace having timetables at every stop. Do people have the ability to access a service? Do we need to digital signs out to bus stops? Do we need to have a public education campaign to show people how to use Google Maps or transit app or whatever app might be, the method for accessing arrival information? All of that is key components I think of having a really successful transit technology implementation or just generally any implementation because if you're implementing a service change, you almost have to do all of those same things.

Kevin:

Like you said, some of the complaints we got from the riders themselves is just not having the information available. When you're standing out at a bus stop, not being able to access it because it's not there. So that's why we are looking at whether there were timetables or maps at this bus stops, even if there was a hotline for them to call or something if they were standing out there.

Marcela:

Cool, thank you. It's been a little over two to three months since the launch of the Northwest Indiana transit map, how has the rollout gone? And I was curious about what data points you were using to measure usage, success or adoption?

Peter:

I think we're going to be looking forward to getting the feedback from the transit operators since they're the ones that actually track ridership and the numbers, box fare revenue, all of that that they have to send to FTA. So it'll be interesting to do a before and after this transit map is out. I think it might be useful in the future to maybe conduct a survey or work with the transit operators to use a survey to figure out if people have seen the map or know that it exists. As far as the map itself, we're able to track how many views the map has through our website. Do you remember what it was last time we checked, Kevin?

Kevin:

It was nearing a thousand. But that was a few weeks ago now, so hopefully it's more than that at this point.

Peter:

Right. And then I would just like to keep on top of the technology. I know it seems like ESRI is coming out with a new update or beta version for their products and online services. So I guess we'll see how that interacts with Google Maps or if there's a way to make this even more user-friendly. So I think just staying on top of the changes as well as looking to feedback from the operators we'll be able to monitor the success of our transit map. And then of course any public comment or feedback, there's always a way for the public to reach us at NIRPC and tell us what they think.

Kevin:

Yeah, that was one of the main things is that we can always open to public comment that's from the website, from the transit website. And we made sure that was on there. And if we get any going forward, we're happy to keep adapting to what the public needs along with this transit website.

Marcela:

Very cool. Also congratulations on hitting a thousand of views on the map.

Peter:

Thank you.

Marcela:

But yeah, I think all of that makes a lot of sense since your audiences are spread across different operators and different places. I guess I have a side question, and it's about having all the data points on these different bus stops, for any of the operators that don't have a GTFS feed active, do you think that collecting this information for them would be helpful in establishing that feed?

Peter:

Yeah, I think so. Because there was discussion about that I believe even before this project was started. That's just a coordination issue to tackle between the operators themselves as far as funding goes and getting into the weeds of all that collaboration between different operators within the region. But I think now that we have updated points and accurately plotted points because who knows how some of the operators don't have a GIS department to use or haven't been able to get out there other than creating maps with older techniques. So I think this is definitely a great starting point for that. If anything, all the stops are accurately updated and mapped, like I said. So hopefully that's something we can look forward to in the region here.

Marcela:

Yeah, that's a huge asset. Just thinking through my last position as a service planner, a lot of times bus stop locations would change based on developments as a requirement of an apartment building or something going up. And then a couple months later after we'd established this bus stop is here, they've moved it several hundred feet, which happens. And it's helpful to have a fresh slate, a new slate to know that everything you have accessible to you is updated and very current.

Peter:

Yeah, I think it was useful too with all the turnover that's happened at our agency and the other operators' agencies throughout the year as people retire, move on.

Marcela:

True, true. The other thing that I'd be interested to see, and you brought this up earlier is the number of transfers at those bus stops that I guess were part of the push to develop this. Will inter agency transfers increase because of this tool? So I'll be very excited to see how that goes for you all.

Kevin:

Yeah, we will see. It is interesting. And something that we haven't really brought up yet because it's involved but not also directly involved is we also have a train system that takes us from Northwest Indiana into downtown Chicago. And some of our bus stops actually are the same place as the train stations. So once again, just adding in the logistics and making sure that they know that this bus stop takes them and this route takes them to the train station if they wanted to go to downtown Chicago also is another thing that we put in there to make sure that people knew was a resource they could use.

Marcela:

So finally, if a regional transit system, MPO or other organization was interested in creating a similar map, what were your greatest takeaways or a piece of advice that you'd like to give from the Northwest Indiana transit maps creation and launch?

Peter:

I can say the biggest piece of advice that I would give is preparation. Do as much prep work as you can because it's a pretty extensive field project. Because this was Kevin going out all day, his entire workday was pretty much in the field for four months straight, it wasn't just mornings or something like that. So we had a good amount of meetings before the field work actually started where we had probably three sit downs with GBTC and other transit operators as well as our sit down with our ADA compliance manager just to make sure we are collecting all the correct data. And then there was all the prep that we did ahead of time in creating the form itself on that backend before Kevin went out in the field to make sure it was going to be a pretty seamless data collection.

Kevin:

Yeah. Just make sure you have the plan, make sure everything is prepped beforehand. Make sure everyone involved, whether that's ... Like Peter talked about, he was the one who did a lot of the backend things beforehand to make sure everything was prepped correctly. But also at the same time, I had to make sure that I understood what my role was and I was doing everything the way that he wanted it and that everybody was on the same page. So also planning and making sure everyone understood is also a good chunk of the preparation.

Marcela:

Definitely. So I'm hearing a lot of really great takeaways, including being prepared, having a plan and thinking through what the process will look like, what the information you're going to collect is. And especially when you're collecting that information, having the insight from transit operators and visioning the users of the product and figuring out what are their needs so that when you're out in the field understanding that it's a very time intensive process, you want to do it once and collect all the information you have on the first go around.

Kevin:

Absolutely, yeah. We made sure to connect with the transit operators, with the ADA coordinators, with everyone we could before even going out in the field to make sure that I had all the information I needed, everything was ready to go. And like you said, we are only going out there once or maybe having to go back one other time if we did miss something. But it wasn't go out, do the whole project once and then come back and do it all again because they wanted to add another piece of data that we didn't collect the first time. No, we just made sure that everything was done the first time we went out there and we collected all the data that was needed from everyone involved.

Peter:

I think also making sure that even getting more into the technical outcome, asking the transit operators how they want the data and how they're going to use the data because we knew we were going to put it in this transit map. But just finding out who had the capacity to run their own GIS, who doesn't really have a background in GIS. So I was able to package up an Excel sheet with all the data in it, the shape files in a zip GDB or give them a KMZ if they just wanted to be able to throw it on Google Earth, and they were familiar with that. And then just the PDF overall copy of the project. It was good to get those data packages out to the transit operators also so everybody's coming from the same angle here.

Marcela:

Yeah. And especially having it accessible in those different mediums since GIS can be tricky if you don't already work in it. Then Google Earth is I feel like a happy medium between Esri products and then Google Maps. It's always fun to get lost on Google Earth to zoom in to random areas. Awesome, I think that was all the questions that I had. I don't know if you all have any parting words for us or anything else you'd like to share about what's next for NIRPC and transit in Northwest Indiana.

Peter:

I can speak to that. This can be seen as part of a starting point for another project that we have, which is ADA beyond the transit stops. So it's looking at ADA compliance and the ADA plans of all the municipalities within our region to help do a similar thing where we provide the data on where maybe they might want to improve their ADA compliance. But that's an absolutely huge project to tackle when you think of it. It's where do I even start if I need to look at every curb cut in a municipality?

Kevin:

All the sidewalks on every street.

Peter:

So I think the plan would be if you were to do something like that, what our approach is going to be is start within the couple of blocks outwards from these transit stops and then work with already established ADA coordination plans that the municipalities have created, incorporate that into one project. So that is what we can do with this even further.

Kevin:

Going forward for my part of the job, which is not really related to this but related to transportation other ways is we're going to start collecting traffic counts throughout Northwest Indiana to see what the vehicle counts are in different areas and try to collect data using those kinds of, collecting data in that way and having that data available. Another one that we've been doing for a while is we have an expansive trail network here in Northwest Indiana. And I have trail counters put out in different areas that collect the number of people using trails, which I think is kind of cool.

Marcela:

I mean, data is power. And making planning decisions and having that data to back it up is extremely valuable, especially when you're communicating to the public. Because numbers are something that can be universally expressed whether that's through a map or whether that's through different data visualization tools. So that sounds like really exciting work. I'm glad that this map exists and that it

especially created another jumping off point for some bigger initiatives going on. So congratulations again on the work done thus far on this transit map. And thank you for joining us and walking us through your process and some of the things that you all learned and what it means for transit in Northwest Indiana. I think that's all I've got, so thank you so much.

Peter:

Yeah, thank you for having us.

Kevin:

Yeah, thank you very much for having us.