

WABASH COLLEGE

Wabash Democracy & Public Discourse Initiative

Post-Deliberation Report

CONVERSATION ON TRANSPORTATION IN CRAWFORDSVILLE

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Report Outline

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I. Background

On Tuesday April 3rd and Thursday April 5th, 2018, from 6:30-8:30 p.m., members of the Crawfordsville community assembled at the Crawfordsville District Public Library to participate in a deliberative discussion on transportation in Montgomery County. Upon arrival, members of the Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse team assembled groups of 4-6 participants each. Each participant was equipped with a participant guide and a writing utensil to use as a resource throughout the conversation.

The event began each evening with Senior Democracy Fellow Deonte Simpson introducing three panelists to speak on the issue of transportation. These individuals provided helpful background of their individual experiences with transportation in Crawfordsville, details on the current happenings with transportation, and what the future held for transportation at that point from their perspectives.

Following the panel and a brief Question & Answer Session, Democracy Fellows at each table began their role as facilitators and notetakers. Each participant's guide outlined the central question of the conversation: **How do we improve transportation for citizens of Crawfordsville?** Furthermore, the guide outlined the three parts of the conversation: *Establishing the Issue*, *Discussion of Hypothetical Cities*, and *Addressing our Communities*.

In the *Establishing the Issue* section, participants discussed their view on the issue of transportation within Crawfordsville from their individual perspectives. Participants were encouraged to address who in the community faces transportation issues, when those issues are most common, and where in Crawfordsville they tend to occur. Participants were also asked which groups of community stakeholders were not at the conversation and how their perspectives might change the conversation.

In Part II, *Discussion of Hypothetical Cities*, participants read and discussed the ways three different hypothetical cities of the same size and location as Crawfordsville went about addressing transportation issues in their

communities. These solutions implemented by these hypothetical cities were generated by community stakeholders and WDPD project team research on possible solutions for a community like Crawfordsville. For each hypothetical city, participants evaluated its benefits, tradeoffs, and groups that would benefit the most and least from the proposed solutions. Participants were also invited to bring in their own ideas to improve the cities that were not included in the discussion guide.

In Part III, *Addressing our Communities*, participants shifted their focus to the Montgomery County communities. From the prioritized actions of each city from Part II, along with new ideas not included in the cities, participants prioritized a list of three action items that should occur to address transportation. In doing so, each facilitator encouraged group members to consider factors such as feasibility, degree of impact, and stakeholders required to begin the work.

To conclude, each group reported on prioritized action steps. Participants were thanked for their attendance and encouraged to fill out the event post-survey that WDPD used to gain demographic data on our event participants. This information on the event attendees is available in the following section.

The event schedule went as follows:

1. Introduction: 6:30-6:35 p.m.
2. Panel: 6:35-6:55 p.m.
3. Part I Establishing the Issue: 7:00-7:15 p.m.
4. Part II Discussion of Hypothetical Cities: 7:15-8:00 p.m.
5. Part III Addressing Our Community: 8:00-8:15 p.m.
6. Report Out/Conclusion: 8:15-8:25 p.m.

This report analyzes information collected from the facilitator table notes, participant surveys, and easel notes from both conversations. This report is not meant to serve as a complete indicator of public opinion in Crawfordsville, as the data is only limited to those who came to these events. Instead, this report summarizes the deliberative conversation undertaken by community members from these specific events.

II. Stakeholder Information

A variety of interests brought 54 stakeholders from throughout Montgomery County, as well as from Lafayette, Indiana. The occupations of the participants were very diverse, representing city officials, coordinators, directors, volunteers, and other perspectives.

Participants of the conversation came to engage in discussion for a variety of reasons. Many participants came to voice the concerns of the elderly and disabled in the communities, while others came as the voice of residents with children, employers, transportation services, and concerned citizens. All were encouraged to attend and actively participate in the event regardless of their reason or residence. Based on the comments from the surveys after the deliberation, participants shared that the conversation had provided an opportunity to hear different perspectives from other concerned individuals as well as a chance to collaborate with others on potential solutions.

Of those who completed the survey (n=39), the demographic breakdown of community members who completed surveys at the event was as follows:

Age	Count
20-29	2
30-39	3
40-49	6
50-59	10
60-69	4
70-79	11
80-89	1
Average	54

III. Part 1: Establishing the Issue

During each of the two events, the participants mentioned a wide variety of different concerns relating to transportation. Each table discussed what they felt the issues were and who they thought was experiencing those issues. Community members named the following stakeholders as most impacted by transportation issues: mothers and children, individuals with a disability, residents living in rural areas, undocumented citizens, and those with lower incomes.

Six significant issues emerged across the two events:

1. The lack of immediate and consistent transportation for individuals who did not qualify for other modes of transportation;
2. The distance of resources such as grocery stores and jobs being too far away from residential areas;
3. The need for cheap forms of transportation which can be used for appointments and regular events in community;
4. The lack of availability of transportation to medical appointments which do not require an ambulance;
5. Struggles with insufficient road fixtures such as traffic and street lights; and
6. Health impacts (physical and mental) on citizens lacking transportation.

IV. Part 2: Discussion of Hypothetical Cities

After reviewing the problem, community members in the conversation then began to deliberate the potential scenarios of hypothetical cities with different transportation systems.

Hypothetical City A

This city set out to address the costs of owning a vehicle, lack of transportation for shift workers and non-traditional hours, and transportation for disadvantaged citizens of the community. To address these challenges, members of the city started a 24/7 independently-owned cab company, a bike sharing program, and a donation and grant-based van system for disadvantaged citizens. From the conversation, many groups felt that the bike sharing program was a viable option that addressed transportation needs for a limited number of the population and could be quickly implemented. Furthermore, many groups also felt the donation and grant-based van system was necessary for the elderly and disabled, but there were concerns about its sustainability and availability. Finally, most groups felt that the 24/7 taxi service was infeasible, but that the on-demand nature of the service would be beneficial for the city. The conversation results for City A are below.

- **Benefits:**
 - Bike sharing program
 - Addresses the issue of transportation for a small number of people in community
 - Requires more bike lanes and safety measures around the community

- “cheapest fix” and first fix to this complex community issue
 - Placing baskets on the bikes would allow for individuals to use them for more purposes (i.e. grocery store trips)
 - Donation-based van system
 - Seeking out funding for an expansion of the van system under 5311 status through the Indiana Department of Transportation
 - This would alleviate some of the burden on the current van system
 - Taxi service would provide an option for those working non-traditional shifts in a factory-based community
 - Cab service is an on-demand and fast mode of transportation around-the-clock
 - One person could be “on call” at night with cab company to try to mitigate as much of the cost for the 24/7 service as possible
- Concerns:
 - Taxi service is not affordable to many individuals in the community for everyday transportation
 - Cold weather issues make bike sharing infeasible during certain parts of the year
 - Bike-sharing also requires safe places around the community that allow for bike-riders to get to their destinations
 - Concerns on who will own the bike-sharing program in the community
 - Van service on a donation-based system is difficult to maintain
 - Grant money is not always attainable
 - A 24/7 business model of the cab service would not be possible in a small community
 - Safety of the service and prices would both be challenges the company would face
 - Vans and taxis would require subsidies to be able to operate on a greater scale
 - Money allocated to the vans could be allocated to the taxis instead to reach a larger possible group of community members
 - Van system would have to work non-traditional hours to get community members to doctor’s appointments and other necessary daily activities
 - State and local limitations on funding may not allow these programs to all exist at once
 - Have to choose one and focus on it with resources

- These solutions are not as collaborative between city entities as they need to be in order to be effective
- **Areas of Impact:**
 - The bike-sharing program only helps a small part of the population
 - College-age students and physically active citizens
 - Youth
 - Van service helps the elderly and disadvantaged
 - The cab service assists those who work non-traditional shift hours
 - This option does not provide a feasible option for those working from out-of-town

Hypothetical City B

Hypothetical city B focused on including more transportation services in an area such as Crawfordsville. Community members noted many benefits and concerns to the approach, as well as areas of the community that would be impacted if the discussed strategies were to be employed in the Crawfordsville area. Data analytics report more concerns than benefits about the implementation of programs such as Uber, Lyft, or a non-profit transportation program in the area. Despite the concerns outweighing the likes, community members were willing to discuss how to address those concerns. The most reoccurring comments/topics are listed below.

- **Benefits:**
 - College students are able to help transport community members
 - Students have another part-time opportunity
 - Uber/Lyft programs may help people travel to and from appointments.
 - Retired drivers and school bus drivers are reliable people who can help with non-profit transportation programs.
 - Uber/Lyft and non-profit transportation programs are cost effective
 - Drivers use their own vehicles versus a company providing those vehicles.
- **Concerns:**
 - Volunteerism drives these programs, but there may not be enough volunteers.
 - Gas reimbursement is not enough of an incentive.
 - Those in need of community service may be able to achieve their hours through these programs.

- Students may not be reliable/accountable drivers.
 - Background checks, licensing, and insurance need to be addressed in order to have a reliable staff.
- Uber/Lyft nor a non-profit program address how to transport a family or children.
- Uber/Lyft are expensive programs that assume high volume in a given area, and Crawfordsville is not a high-volume area (in terms of population).
 - Including surrounding areas may help increase numbers.
 - City can apply for grants to help fund these programs.
 - A grant overseeing program may be able to help with costs.
- Uber/Lyft do not address the needs of the disabled.
 - How can a person in a wheelchair access one of these resources?
- Liability is a major concern in implementing these programs (insurance was the most common concern raised).
- Crawfordsville may not be ready for programs like Uber or Lyft yet.
 - More research needs to be done.
 - How do these programs operate within a given area?
- **Areas of Impact:**
 - Corporations
 - Corporations benefit by having more employees who can be transported to and from work, as well as have community members actively purchasing more from local businesses as a result of having transportation.
 - Students
 - Students are able to make extra money while transporting community members around the area.
 - Low income community members
 - Members of this socio-economic status may be able to afford rides through the non-profit transportation program.
 - Families and Children
 - Families and children are not supported by these programs.
 - City
 - The city must actively look for avenues to fund these programs.

Hypothetical City C

Hypothetical City C focused on creating a culture shift in a community similar to Crawfordsville. In this city, a carpool initiative and co-op shuttle program for employees were implemented along with the expansion of routes in the areas (I.e. addressing one-way streets, making the city more pedestrian friendly with bike paths and cross walks). Most of the conversations revolved around addressing the ideas of the carpool initiative and co-op shuttle program. Dialogue about addressing routes in the area were generally brief, the comments are still listed below along with the most reoccurring comments/topics.

- **Benefits:**
 - Co-op Shuttle by employers
 - Helps workers and companies (mentioned multiple times)
 - Benefits/favors large businesses
 - They can actually afford to implement the program.
 - Politically feasible
 - Large corporations can afford the program if they work together, or city can institute a large corporation tax to sustain the program.
 - Makes for a more fluid economy
 - People can participate in local businesses.
 - The program helps cover costs insurance for individual transportation.
 - The shuttle can increase timeliness of employees in the area.
 - Carpool Initiative
 - Community relationships may develop.
 - HR departments can incentivize able employees to help.
 - City can give tax incentives to able employees that help.
 - Positive culture shift may occur in the city in the long run.
 - Carpooling already happening on a smaller scale.
 - Routes
 - A few groups were concerned about the different routes.
- **Concerns:**
 - Co-op shuttle
 - Will corporations work together to implement these programs?

- How can we ensure that people will know about a co-op shuttle?
 - Advertisements in the community and on social media will help.
 - Co-op shuttle only favors work related activities.
 - What do community member do if they are unemployed? Disabled? Need to get to the grocery store?
 - Traffic may hinder co-op possibilities.
 - This may be addressed by inputting pick up locations rather than going to every single home.
 - Is this approach affordable to those who need help most?
 - This plan is not comprehensive.
 - Data collection needs to occur to better address who needs help and where.
 - Carpooling
 - May not be sustainable
 - Depends on relationships and trust
 - Much responsibility is place on the drivers without a plan B. There needs to be incentives for the drivers.
 - Does this fit the culture of the community?
 - How can it be known that this initiative is happening?
 - Rideshare app
 - Routes
 - How can route expansion be accomplished?
- Areas of Impact:
 - Employers
 - Employers will benefit by having employees that can arrive to and from work on a daily basis.
 - Employees
 - Employees will benefit by having transportation on a daily basis to and from work.
 - Disabled and Unemployed
 - This two groups do not benefit from the proposed ideas because they are not supported by these approaches.

Other Proposed Solutions

The facilitators encouraged participants to bring their own ideas to improve transportation. Citizens proposed the following ideas:

- Van system or non-profit offering a grocery delivery service to those who are not able to go get their food;
- Focusing on sidewalk improvements around the community as a first step;
- Government initiative to research potential areas for transportation grants and donations;
- City-wide research program to gain specific data on this issue;
- Work with car dealerships in the community about donating vehicles to those in need;
- Collaborate with organizations in other communities like Lafayette about best-practices that can be replicated in a smaller community; and
- Start advertising campaign to demonstrate the current transportation options to community members;
 - Use city website, newspaper, and television.
 - Create a website to connect those with transportation and those without.



V. Part 3: Establishing our Communities

In the final section of the conversation, each table prioritized which actions should be taken by Crawfordsville and the broader communities to address transportation needs.

Prioritized Actions:

- Conduct City/ County Wide Research
 - Before initiating solutions to address transportation problems in our community, community members thought that the first step to address this issue is for the city to conduct a survey of the community in order to determine important factors such as who is affected by this issue, where, how many, and when. After conducting this survey, members of the community believed that the city should then establish different types of transportation needs and encourage community stakeholders to get involved in the execution of such solutions.

- Uber/Lyft with Student Drivers
 - Most tables agreed on incorporating an Uber/Lyft student-driver program that incorporates students from Wabash College. Many viewed this approach as a great way for the college to connect with the community. This approach can also help provide income to students who are struggling financially.
 - Most agreed that this approach can be helpful in the long-run if insurance costs and safety procedures are tackled within the Wabash-student drivers before proceeding with the Uber/Lyft program

- Co-op Shuttle System
 - The co-op shuttle system was a highly favorable approach. Community members believed that employers and the city should join forces to expand a shuttle system.
 - Community members believed this could address employment issues. One community member noted that these vehicles can be used for medical trips if it was not being used for work-related purposes.
 - Another idea expressed was for car dealers to raffle a car for this co-op shuttle system.

- BikeShare Program
 - Many participants expressed interest for the city to establish a bike sharing program due to its 24/7 accessibility. Some participants claimed this could make daily travels more feasible and can reduce over-reliance on cars.

- Carpool +Ride Sharing within companies
 - Community members recognized the need for carpooling and ridesharing for employees travelling to similar destinations. This approach could help develop relationships among community members.
 - Some ideas expressed within this solution is for companies to post a list of all drivers who can carpool and have people sign up for carpooling time slots.
 - Others believed that employers should give out a survey for employees to determine if they need transportation the moment they get hired.
 - Another idea expressed is for the city to create a local app, similar to Uber and Lyft, that alert community members with who needs rides to certain destinations.

- Cab Company
 - Community members believed that a cab company in town can be an effective way of addressing the transportation needs of the community.
 - Community members expressed the importance for the cab company to be both affordable and available. Thus, many wanted an expansion on the number of employees and hour availability for the current VIP Taxi Services.
 - One particular individual suggested that the city could subsidize the cab company for medical services or any immediate source of transportation.
 - Another individual thought it would be beneficial for the city to subsidize taxi services for buying groceries to community members who can't afford transportation.

- Donation Based Vans System
 - Community members liked the Donation Based Vans system we have here in town, the Sunshine Vans Service, due to its role in providing transportation to the elderly and people with disabilities.

- Some community members did express the need for expanding these services for emergency services and to help the women and children.
 - Due to its unavailability on the weekends, some community members thought that having a fixed route on the weekends is another way the vans service could be expanded to address the needs of the disadvantaged population.
- Enhancing Accessibility via routes
 - Community members also expressed interest in improving infrastructure in Montgomery County such as sidewalks, streets, and lights in order to make the city more pedestrian and bike friendly.

Stakeholders Necessary

- Employers for the co-op shuttle system
- Clergy
- Government, including city, county, and state
- Medical community and industrial communities
- Churches
- Non-profits (MUFFY/United Way, Montgomery County Community Foundation, Youth Service Bureau, etc.)

Concerns

- Funding and costs
- Bringing companies together for the co-op shuttle system
- Lack of sidewalks and street lights a barrier for making Crawfordsville a bike and pedestrian friendly city
- Will the student-drivers be safe and reliable drivers?
- Will the cab company and co-op shuttle be affordable?
- Challenge with finding the data
- Cost of insurance for student-drivers
- Bike-sharing program does meet the needs of women and children
- Accessibility to community members who don't own technology

VI. Conclusion and Special Thanks

The event concluded with Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse fellow Deonte Simpson reminding Crawfordsville community members that our organization will be making this report publicly available on our website: <https://www.wabash.edu/plus/democracy>. Our post-surveys indicated that community members enjoyed the opportunity to get together and discuss such a salient community issue and hope that more conversation and work will be done as a result.

*On behalf of Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse (WDPD) we would like to give special thanks to Dr. John Van Nuys and the **MontCares** organization for bringing the issue of transportation to our organization. We would also like to thank the **Crawfordsville Public Library** for their continued support in providing us with the space to execute our deliberative conversations. The Initiative was pleased with the turnout and community buy-in on this issue. We hope this report will create further deliberative conversation and positive change for the community of Crawfordsville.*