



February 11, 2021

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Cc: Madalynn Conner; Samuel.Charron@iga.in.gov; Lawrence.Hemphill@iga.in.gov;
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Subject: Opposition to SB 392

Good morning, Senator Young and all,

I am reaching out to document our opposition to Senate Bill 392, in advance of second reading this afternoon. As written, this bill raises several concerns respective to the efficiency of municipal government processes, public transparency, and comprehensive planning and zoning. While targeting Marion County, there are damaging long-term implications for other counties and communities throughout the state.

Since 1970, Indianapolis and Marion County have functioned as a consolidated city-county under Indiana Code's Unigov provision. In the more than 50 years since Unigov's start, the community has grappled with and acknowledged negative policy implications, both intended and unintended. However, SB 392 will only serve to exacerbate challenges, not actually solve perceived problems. One of Unigov's enduring strengths has been the consolidation of duplicative city and county agencies, streamlining public services, and approaching matters with a unified vision. In effect, this bill would dismantle a piece of that vision by retreating to a fragmented, patchwork of planning and zoning jurisdictions across the 2 county. This puts Indianapolis residents, property owners, developers, and countless others with a stake in the planning process at a disadvantage, unnecessarily complicating land use issues with several new boards of zoning appeals, each with competing interests.

The diligent work of Department of Metropolitan Development staff, partners, and volunteers is built on intentional community engagement, as demonstrated in recent planning successes. For example, both the Indianapolis/Marion County Pedestrian Plan and the formation of the city-county's first integrated transportation plan, Indy Moves, secured community input from all nine townships, identifying priority projects, and feeding into the countywide Comprehensive Plan update.

If passed, Senate Bill 392 will greatly hinder internal and external coordination between the public and decisionmakers. Most citizens find planning and zoning confusing and overwhelming. Extraneous layers of bureaucracy will further erode transparency and trust in the planning process with procedures that are burdensome and onerous for landowners, private developers, and others to navigate.

For these reasons and others, we request your withdrawal of this bill before full Senate action. Please let me know if I can provide any additional information or answer questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kim Irwin

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