

Case Study

Bringing Big-City Innovation to a Small Community

*New Haven, Indiana experience using
TRAINFO's Rail Crossing Information System*



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1. THE CHALLENGE

The City of New Haven, Indiana, faced a familiar but deeply frustrating problem: frequent rail crossing blockages caused daily delays, safety concerns, and widespread public frustration. But unlike larger cities, **New Haven couldn't consider grade separation** due to local geography and infrastructure constraints — a solution that would have cost millions and wasn't even possible in key locations.

As Mayor Steve McMichael put it:

“We knew we couldn't just raise our arms and say we can't do anything. We turned to technology to put the power in the hands of our residents and businesses.”



2. THE SOLUTION

TRAINFO's Rail Crossing Information System (RCIS)

In search of an innovative, cost-effective alternative, New Haven partnered with TRAINFO to deploy a **Rail Crossing Information System (RCIS)** — a technology-forward solution previously seen in larger cities.

TRAINFO provided:

- **Solar-powered roadside signs** that deliver real-time alerts about approaching trains and expected delays.
- **Train detection sensors** and **AI-powered analytics** that accurately estimate when a blocked crossing will reopen.
- **Live integration with public safety and school transportation dispatch** systems, allowing rerouting before vehicles ever leave the station.

“We’re putting information in the hands of residents, businesses, schools, and first responders.”

— Mayor Steve McMichael





Train sensors are installed on light standards and other poles next to rail crossings and off rail property.



Signs with flashing beacons that activate when rail crossing is blocked are effective and affordable alternatives to dynamic message signs.



Real-time rail crossing information is provided to emergency dispatchers (top left screen). This enables dispatchers to select units and routes to emergencies that avoid delays due to blocked crossings.

3. THE RESULTS

- ✓ **Greater Visibility & Predictability:** Residents can now check rail crossing status before leaving home. What used to be a guessing game — “Will I be stuck for 1 minute or 10?” — is now informed by real-time data.
- ✓ **Enhanced Safety & Routing:** First responders and school buses can reroute *before* hitting a blocked crossing.
- ✓ **High Community Adoption:** Rail status updates are shared regularly via the city’s social media and public feeds.
- ✓ **Funding Made It Possible:** New Haven secured grants from Indiana DOT and rail agencies to cover most of the investment — making RCIS accessible even to small municipalities.

Recognition

New Haven’s success with TRAINFO earned it the **2024 AIM Innovation Award**, giving the city a national platform to show that **rail data isn’t just for major metros**.

“TRAINFO is now being deployed in a number of communities across the country based on results here in New Haven.”



4. THE IMPACT

Why This Matters for Small Cities

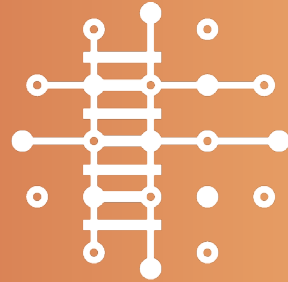
New Haven proves that **you don't need a big budget or a big city to make a big impact**. TRAINFO's RCIS is scalable, grant-eligible, and designed to work with — not replace — existing infrastructure.

But don't take our word for it – click the link on this page to hear New Haven's Mayor Steve McMichael describe their experience.

If your city is struggling with blocked rail crossings and looking for an alternative to grade separation, **TRAINFO's RCIS offers a practical, proven path forward.**



[City of New Haven - TRAINFO Technology - YouTube](#)



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