

231

Relocation Study

Tippecanoe County, Indiana

As always, your comments on the project are welcome, as they help us understand how the relocation of US 231 could affect you.

Submit your comments to the project website: www.relocate231.com/feedback.asp or by mail:

Wendy L. Vachet, Project Manager
701 E. 83rd Avenue
Merrillville, IN 46410

Stay informed - visit the project website at www.relocate231.com.

Project Background

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), in association with the Federal Highway Administration is re-evaluating alternatives originally proposed as part of the 1987 environmental impact study for the relocation of US 231 from south of the Wabash River to US 52. That study was done in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In June 2001, the southern portion of the project, including the new bridge crossing the Wabash River as well as improvements to South River Road, were completed and opened for traffic. The planned middle portion between South River Road and State Street is currently undergoing final design by INDOT.

In June 2001, Michael Baker Jr., Inc. was provided official Notice to Proceed on preparing additional environmental documentation regarding the northern portion of the US 231 Relocation Project between State Road 26 (State Street) and US 52.

The northern portion of the project was planned to alleviate traffic congestion on the Purdue Campus by re-routing US 231 to the west. Several alternatives were studied as part of the 1987 study, and a preferred alternative was selected in a 1992 Record of Decision. However, significant developments west of the campus have necessitated that the original alternatives be re-evaluated. Therefore, INDOT is taking another look at the project to determine the best alternative to meet current needs while avoiding or minimizing environmental impacts to the area. ■

Public Kickoff Meeting

The first public meeting was held on January 17, 2002 at Purdue University's Stewart Center. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the eight initial alternatives for the continuation of the US 231 Relocation Project between State Street (SR 26) and US 52. Over 275 people were in attendance to collect information relating to the project history, potential alternatives, and the NEPA process. A brief presentation was given by Wendy Vachet (Project Manager for INDOT's project consultant, Michael Baker Jr., Inc.), about the history of the project and the current study, after which individual comments were heard. Comment sheets were included in the meeting handout packet for written questions and comments. The results of comments received thusfar are included in this newsletter. Comments will be accepted throughout the life of the project via the project website (www.relocate231.com) or mail (see newsletter return address). ■



Wendy Vachet speaks to the crowd of over 275 in attendance for the Public Kickoff Meeting.

Upcoming Public Meeting

The second public meeting will be held on June 6, 2002 from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. in the cafeteria of Klondike Middle School (3307 Klondike Road, West Lafayette). The first hour will be an open house during which attendees may review aerial maps of the study area including several potential alignments for the proposed road. From 6:30 - 7:30, representatives of INDOT's project consultant, Michael Baker Jr., Inc., will provide a presentation about the status of the overall project and the results of the preliminary alternative analysis and historic architectural resources within the project study area. The role and activities of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) will also be presented. During the third hour, residents will be allowed to present comments about the project, and additional time may be spent reviewing the maps and other materials presented. ■

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

The CAC is a group of citizens and representatives of several local community and neighborhood groups established by INDOT to act as an informational liaison between the community and transportation officials. CAC members have participated in workshops designed to assist in the evaluation of potential social, economic and environmental impacts of the proposed road. The Indiana Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration maintain final authority and responsibility concerning decision-making regarding the project; however, the CAC serves in an important advisory role. Information from the CAC workshops will be used to develop a Community Impact Assessment Report for the project. *Continued on reverse.*



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Community Advisory Committee

The CAC is comprised of community members and representatives with a variety of affiliations. A list of CAC members is located on the project website (www.relocate231.com).

The Committee held its first workshop on April 11, 2002. Representatives of INDOT's project consultant, Michael Baker Jr., provided CAC members with data and aerial maps of the project study area displaying current and proposed land use and development patterns in relationship to several potential road alignments. Committee members were asked to review and edit the data and maps and take their findings back to other members of their neighborhoods and organizations. Documents and photographs from that meeting, as well as a wealth of additional information about the overall US 231 study is posted on the project website.

The CAC's second meeting agenda included a review of the mapping and land use edits from the previous meeting, a discussion of historic resources located in the study area, and ideas for developing and distributing this newsletter for the local community. ■



Members of the CAC review maps of the project study area for important community resources. Clockwise: Patricia Mason, Kathy Dale, William Fitzgerald, Steve Clevenger, and James Lewis.



Comment Statistics:

A total of 65 comments have been received thusfar. Top concerns of commentors include possible impacts to neighborhoods, access for emergency services, limited access on SR 26, impacts to farmland, and increased noise and traffic.

Additional Information:

If you would like to receive information discussed within this newsletter and do not have access to the internet, please mail your request to Wendy L. Vachet, Project Manager (address is located in the return address portion of newsletter).

A repository will be established by June 1 in the Area Plan Commission offices (Tippecanoe County Building - 20 N 3rd Street, Lafayette). This will be a location where citizens can go to read through hard copies of various project documents and regulations.