



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Region 5
Indiana Division

575 North Pennsylvania Street, Room 254
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

September 21, 1992
HA-IN

Mrs. Katherine Lyon Davis
Deputy Commissioner, Development
Indiana Department of Transportation
Indianapolis, Indiana

Attention: Mr. Edward J. Cox

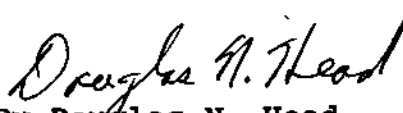
Dear Mrs. Davis:

Subject: Indiana Project F-071-2(001) - US-231
Relocation and Wabash River Crossing -
Tippecanoe County - Record of Decision
FHWA-IN-EIS-87-01-F

Enclosed is a copy of the signed Record of Decision for the subject highway project. The final EIS was approved on June 8, and published in the Federal Register on July 31, 1992. The 30-day comment period on the final EIS ended on August 31, 1992. The project may be advanced, subject to further project approvals.

Sincerely Yours,

Arthur A. Fendrick
Division Administrator


By Douglas N. Head
District Engineer

Enclosure

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
WETLAND FINDING/RECORD OF DECISION
US 231 RELOCATION & WABASH RIVER CROSSING
TIPPECONOE COUNTY, INDIANA
FHWA-IN-EIS-87-01

This document is a combined Wetland Finding and Record of Decision. The document sets forth the basis for a determination that the proposal includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the wetlands and that all practical measures to minimize harm to the wetlands have been included. This document also sets forth the reasons for the record of decision for this project. The decision is based on the material contained in the final environmental impact statement for this project.

Description of Project

The proposed project has been initiated to relocate U.S. 231 and construct a new bridge over the Wabash River. Beginning at the south termini on existing US 231 at approximately 0.75 miles south of CR 500S, the preferred alternative swings northwest, crossing the Wabash River and continuing along South River Road to the Harrison Bridge (US 231) Interchange. North of the Wabash River at South River Road, the preferred alternative provides for the future construction of an additional connection to US 231 which swings northwest between Purdue Airport and Purdue University along the western edge of West Lafayette joining U.S. 52/US 231 at Cumberland Avenue.

South of CR 350S, the typical section calls for two 12-foot lanes with 10-foot paved outside shoulders. North of CR 350S to the Wabash River Bridge, the section has four 12-foot lanes with a 26-foot median and 10-foot paved outside shoulders. From the Wabash River Bridge to the Harrison Bridge Interchange, the road will have four 12-foot lanes with curb and gutter, a 16' flush median, a 5'-6" bicycle lane on each side, and a 5' sidewalk on each side. Beginning just north of the Wabash River Bridge and heading northwest to U.S. 52/US 231 at Cumberland Avenue, the typical section is two 12-foot lanes with 10-foot paved outside shoulders.

Alternatives Considered

Seven alternatives were developed in the DEIS, including "No Build", "Transportation System Management" (TSM) plan, and five build alternatives. The FEIS evaluated the social, economic, and environmental effects to the area while keeping within the scope of the desired intent of the project.

The "No Build" alternative was not considered acceptable. It did not resolve any of the existing roadway deficiencies nor did it

provide any contingencies for future traffic increases. Opposition to the "do-nothing" approach was clearly stated in the public hearing. The "No Build" alternative was discarded for these reasons.

The "TSM" alternative was designed to alleviate traffic problems by upgrading Fourth St. and Salisbury St. Even though the "TSM" alternative would reduce traffic on several major streets, the resulting increase in traffic on Fourth and Salisbury would have major adverse impacts on intersections throughout the corridor. The upgrading of this section would also require the relocation of many businesses and residences along each street. The upgrade would also require that land be taken from an existing city park and a local cemetery. The "TSM" alternative received no support during information meetings and public hearings. For these reasons, the "TSM" alternative was discarded.

The build alternatives were divided into a southern corridor and a northern corridor. The southern corridor begins at existing US 231 near CR 500S, crosses the Wabash River, and extends along the river to the Harrison Bridge Interchange (US 231). The northern corridor extends from the new Wabash River crossing at South River Road to U.S. 52/US 231 at Cumberland Avenue.

Three lines (A, B, and C) were proposed for the southern corridor. The preferred southern alignment was determined to be line A. Line B was rejected due to the impractical construction costs associated with the removal of a bridge structure over Elliott Ditch and an excessive number of relocations. Lines A and C vary very little in terms of social, economic, and environmental impacts. Due to the overwhelming support of the local community, line A was selected as the most appropriate alternative.

There were three alternatives proposed for the northern corridor. The DEIS considered only two alternatives (Lines 1 and 2), but a third option was suggested during the Corridor Public Hearing. The third alternative consists of elements of both Lines 1 and 2 with a "cross-over" between the two. The environmental impacts of this third alternative are detailed in the FEIS, but the alternative was ultimately discarded. The impacts of the three alternatives did not significantly differ from each other except for the following: Line 2 and the "Crossover" alternative have three times the wetland impacts as Line 1, impact the cleft phlox, and cross through the center of the Blackbird Farms subdivision. Line 2 goes between the Married Student's Housing Complex and the Purdue intramural fields. Line 2 also exceeds noise abatement criteria. Line 1 was selected as the preferred northern alternative because it has the least environmental impacts.

Measures to Minimize Harm

The FEIS documents the environmental consequences for each of the build alternatives. It is acknowledged that most of the environmental consequences are not unique to a particular alternative but are common to all the build alternatives. To reduce the environmental impacts as a result of the construction of the project, the following measures to minimize the effects of the impacts as defined in the FEIS have been developed.

1. Transportation Impacts: Bisected local roads will be connected.
2. Wetland Impacts: Wetland impacts have been minimized in selection of the preferred alternative and during design. Other measures include: preservation of existing drainage patterns, diversion of salts and other pollutants, jurisdictional wetlands will be replaced, revegetation with trees and shrubs, strict siltation and erosion control measures during construction, minimize tree clearing, and placement of "Do Not Mow or Spray" signs near wetlands.
3. Archaeological Impacts: Data recovery on known sites before construction. Archaeologist monitoring of earthwork within the limits of the floodplain.
4. Water Quality: Include strict erosion control measures. Avoid the PCB contaminated Wea Creek and Elliott Ditch by completely spanning each.
5. Visual Impacts: Consideration of plantings.
6. Construction Impacts: Includes measures to control dust, noise, and excessive delays in and near the construction zone.

Coordination

A total of nine agencies returned comments on the draft environmental impact statement. Details regarding the comments are found beginning on page 96 with the responses following each agency's comments.

Monitoring or Enforcement Program

Before construction, the project plans and contract documents will be reviewed to ensure that all environmental concerns have been incorporated. Any special measures discussed that will reduce environmental impacts will be emphasized to ensure compliance from the project personnel.

Summary

Based upon the above consideration and discussions in the final EIS, it has been determined that there is no practicable alternative to the proposed construction in wetlands and that the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands which may result from such use.

September 10, 1992

Date

Lionel H. Wood

Lionel H. Wood, Director
Office of Planning & Program Development
Region 5 FHWA