

US 231 Relocation Study Public Information Meeting



US 231 Relocation Study (between State Street (SR 26) and US 52)
Lafayette, IN - Tippecanoe County

Purdue University
Stewart Center, Room 206
January 17, 2002
5 - 8 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA

5:00 - 6:00 p.m. - View Display Boards & Speak with Project Team Members

6:00 - 6:15 p.m. - Project Presentation

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. - Public Comment Period

7:30 - 8:00 p.m. - View Display Boards & Speak with Project Team Members

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In 1992, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), Tippecanoe County, Lafayette, and West Lafayette jointly initiated a project to relocate US 231 and construct a new bridge over the Wabash River. The project's Preferred Alternative (PA), as identified in the 1985 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the 1992 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), consisted of "Line A" from south of CR 500S to Harrison Bridge (including a Wabash River crossing), and "Line 1" from South River Road to US 52. Since the September 1992 Record of Decision (ROD), Line A and the Wabash River Crossing have been constructed. Line 1 of the PA has not been constructed at this time.

In the interval between the ROD and the current period, there have been noticeable changes in the landscape due to new construction and development within the original Line 1 Project Area. The original Project Area is experiencing a period of rapid development that is primarily confined to the eastern third of the area. In that area, there are several new subdivisions under construction. Because of this development, FHWA and INDOT have decided to reevaluate the build alternatives for the area north of the Wabash River and initiate an environmental document in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended.

INDOT, on behalf of the FHWA, is also reinitiating the Section 106 Review and Coordination process with the Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology (IDHPA) in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's current regulations of 36 CFR 800, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and other applicable laws and regulations.

2.0 PROJECT HISTORY

In September 1978, the Transportation Plan for the Lafayette area was documented in a report entitled Greater Lafayette Area Transportation and Development Study. This plan, which was adopted by the Area Plan Commission of Tippecanoe County (TCAPC), included a project to construct a new highway (US 231) with a new Wabash River crossing. The road was envisioned to begin near CR 350S, cross over the Wabash River, pass between the Purdue University Airport and the campus, and tie into the west side of West Lafayette. According to the report, "this highway would alleviate congestion on two principal Wabash River bridges and improve access to West Lafayette and Purdue University."

In 1981, a Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Tippecanoe County was adopted. The 1978 Study was included in this plan.

In 1984, the City of West Lafayette, supported by the Tippecanoe County Commissioners and the City of Lafayette, obtained an agreement with the Indiana Department of Highways to proceed with the US 231 project.

In 1986, a proposed relocation of US 231 with a South River Bridge crossing was included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) of the TCAPC and Indiana Department of Highways Improvement Program (HIP). In addition, the 1981 Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Tippecanoe County was updated by the TCAPC in response to an announcement that the

Subaru-Isuzu partnership would build and operate a major automobile assembly plant in south Lafayette. The increased employment from this plant with its associated growth required an improved highway system. The Subaru-Isuzu Site Impact Study, Levee Plaza Business Area Transportation Plan, and Strategic Plan for West Lafayette also stressed the importance of the highway system. The relocation of US 231 with a Wabash River crossing was considered to be an integral part of those plans.

In 1987, a DEIS for the relocation of US 231 was developed and approved for circulation. The DEIS discussed a No-Build alternative; a Transportation System Management (TSM) plan; and five Build alternatives which included three alternatives for segments south of the Wabash River and two alternatives north of the river. All of the alternatives south of the river began at either County Road 350S or 550S and, following an approximately 2,000-foot bridge constructed over the Wabash River, ended at South River Road in West Lafayette. The two north alternatives began at South River Road and ended at US 52 and Cumberland Avenue.

In addition to the Build alternatives, the DEIS addressed several system improvements. These improvements were deemed crucial for the success of the Build alternatives in reducing traffic flow problems in Lafayette, West Lafayette and Tippecanoe County. The improvements included: extending CR 350S between US 231 and CR 50E; widening South River Road from the Conrail overpass to Harrison Bridge; extending Harrison Street from Chauncey Street to South River Road (.25 miles); and constructing new ramps at the Harrison Bridge Interchange.

The DEIS concluded that the Build alternatives improved traffic conditions over the No-Build alternative by: "providing a safer and quicker route between the Purdue Campus/West Lafayette and the south side of Lafayette; reducing congestion and delay on US 231, Fourth Street, State Street and Grant Street; improving access to the south part of Purdue using the Harrison Street extension; opening up the Harrison Bridge and River Road interchange to access from all directions; and reducing accidents on State Street, Fourth street, Third Street and US 231."

In 1992, a FEIS was developed and approved. A preferred alternative was selected based on four evaluation criteria developed in the Purpose and Need section of the DEIS. These criteria were: 1) conformity to existing transportation plan(s); 2) existing traffic and accident characteristics; 3) future land use developments; and 4) future traffic assignments.

The preferred alternative identified in the FEIS consisted of "Line A" from south of CR 500S to Harrison Bridge and "Line 1" from South River Road to US 52. Construction of the southern section was slated to begin in 1993, while construction of the northern section was not planned to "occur in the immediate future."

In September 1992, the FHWA issued a ROD for the project. The ROD summarized the FEIS and concluded that the preferred alternative better met the purpose and need for the project than the other Build alternatives, the No-Build and TSM alternatives, while minimizing social, economic and environmental impacts to the area.

In 1997, the TCAPC adopted the Transportation Plan for 2015, a part of the Comprehensive Plan for Tippecanoe County. The plan called for the completion by 2000 of the southern segment of the US 231 project from south of CR 500S to SR 25; the segment from SR 25 across the Wabash River (including the new bridge) to South River Road; the segment from South River Road to Harrison Bridge; and the exit and on ramps at Harrison Bridge. For the period

between 2001 and 2010, the plan called for extending US 231 from South River Road north, east around the Purdue Airport, then north and west around the Purdue University campus to a northern terminus at US 52. Finally, for the period between 2010 and 2015, the plan called for upgrading and widening of McCormick Lane from US 52 to CR 500N to create an "outer loop" for West Lafayette and a connection to the new US 231.

In May 2001, the TCAPC adopted the Transportation Plan for 2025. With the southern segment, new bridge, and northern segment up to the Harrison Bridge having been completed, the remaining work called for by the plan includes: taking US 231 from South River Road to US 52, as described in the 1997 Plan; the improvements previously described for McCormick Road; and the extension of Intramural Drive south through the Purdue University campus to meet realigned US 231. For the period between 2011 and 2025, the plan calls for continued construction northward from US 52 to a new interchange at I-65 in order to complete a circular by-pass around Lafayette and West Lafayette. US 231 between Bloomington and Lafayette, Indiana is part of the National Highway System. It also has been identified as a Statewide Mobility Corridor in INDOT's 2000-2025 Long-Range Plan.

In June 2001, the southern segment 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 project segment between South River Road and US 26 (around the Purdue Airport) is undergoing final engineering review.

Also in June 2001, further environmental documentation for the northern segment of the US 231 Relocation Project was initiated by the Project Coordination Team consisting of FHWA, INDOT, TCAPC (MPO) and Michael Baker Jr., Inc. (consultant). The purpose of the environmental documentation is to determine if there are changes in the proposed action that would result in significant environmental impacts that were not evaluated in the EIS, or new information or circumstances relevant to environmental concerns and bearings on the proposed action or its impacts that result in significant environmental impacts not evaluated in the EIS.

3.0 SYNOPSIS OF ALTERNATIVES TO BE CONSIDERED

Currently, alternatives to be considered include the "No-Build" alternative, TCAPC alignment from the 2025 plan, three "Build" alternatives carried forward from the previous EIS, two improvements to existing roadways and two to three additional "Build" alternatives to be determined west of the Kankakee, Beaverville and Southern Railroad tracks.

The "No-Build" alternative includes no new construction for upgrading or realigning US 231 north of SR 26. This alternative takes into account the completed southern segment of the project, including the new bridge crossing the Wabash River as well as improvements to South River Road; and the segment between South River Road and SR 26, which is slated for construction.

For the "Build" alternative, seven alignments are under consideration (See Figure 1). Of these, two correspond to alignments carried forward from the 1987 DEIS and 1992 FEIS.

- Line 1 corresponds to Line 1 from the DEIS, which was selected as the Preferred Alternative for the FEIS. Beginning at SR 26, approximately 800 feet east of the Kankakee, Beaverville and Southern Railroad, Line 1 heads in a northwest direction to just past SR 126 (Cherry Lane) where it turns north crossing CR 200N (Lindberg Road)

at McCormick Road. Continuing north for approximately 1.0 mile, Line 1 turns east and terminates with existing US 231/52 in line with Cumberland Avenue. The total length of Line 1 is 18,039 linear feet (approximately 3.4 miles). A 300-foot right-of-way and depressed grass median were assumed on this alignment.

- Line 2 corresponds to Line 2 from the DEIS. The southern terminus of this alignment was proposed to connect with the northern terminus of Line B (as described in the DEIS) at SR 26 and SR 526 (Airport Road). From there it heads northerly, parallel to the east of the SR 526 right-of-way, to an intersection with SR 126 (Cherry Lane). It then heads northwest crossing CR 200N (Lindberg Road) approximately 1,570 feet east of the McCormick Road intersection. It then heads northeasterly to its termination perpendicular with existing US 231/52 at the Cumberland Avenue intersection. The total length of Line 2 is 14,353 linear feet (approximately 2.7 miles). A 300-foot right-of-way and depressed grass median were assumed for this alignment.

Additional Alignments currently under consideration include:

- Line 3 corresponds to Discarded Line 3 from the DEIS: Beginning at SR 26, approximately 800 feet east of the Kankakee, Beaverville and Southern Railroad, Line 3 heads northwest along the eastside right-of-way of the Kankakee, Beaverville and Southern Railroad for approximately 2 miles to where it crosses CR 200N (Lindberg Road). From there it heads northeast for approximately 0.5 miles where it ties to existing McCormick Road. It then travels existing McCormick Road for approximately 0.3 miles, terminating at existing US 52 across from CR 250W. The total length of Line 3 is 17,277 linear feet (approximately 3.3 miles). A 300 foot right-of-way and depressed grass median were assumed for this alignment, with the center line of Line 3 assumed to be 800 feet east of the center line of the Kankakee, Beaverville and Southern Railroad to meet the required 800 to 1,000 feet clear zone.
- Line 4: New Alignment. Beginning at SR 26, approximately 800 feet east of the Kankakee, Beaverville and Southern Railroad, Line 4 heads northwest where it crosses the Kankakee, Beaverville and Southern Railroad tracks approximately 1,400 feet north of the SR 26 railroad crossing. It then runs northwest along the western side of the railroad right-of-way crossing both CR 200N (Lindberg Road) and CR 250N. Approximately 1,820 feet north of CR 250N, Line 4 crosses the Kankakee, Beaverville and Southern Railroad tracks again and continues northward for approximately 0.7 miles, terminating at US 52 approximately 1,800 feet west of the intersection of US 52 and CR 300W. The total length of Line 4 is 18,487 linear feet (approximately 3.5 miles). A 300 foot right-of-way and depressed grass median were assumed on this alignment, with the center line of Line 4 assumed to be 800 feet west of the center line of the Kankakee, Beaverville and Southern Railroad to meet the required 800 to 1,000 feet clear zone.
- Line 5: New Alignment. Beginning at the intersection of SR 26 and CR 300W, Line 5 heads northwest along the centerline of SR 26, upgrading SR 26 from a two lane facility to a four lane divided facility with a concrete median barrier, and also upgrading the existing railroad crossing on SR 26. Line 5 continues along existing SR 26, intersecting and/or crossing CR 250W, CR 300W, CR 325W, CR 400W, CR 200N and CR 475W and improving the radii of three existing horizontal curves before turning northeast approximately 0.6 miles past the intersection of CR 475W. Line 5 then crosses CR 350N

were it terminates with US 52. The total length of Line 5 is 25,874 linear feet (approximately 4.9 miles). A 150-foot right-of-way and concrete median barrier were assumed on this alignment.

- Line 6: New Alignment. Beginning at the intersection of SR 26 and CR 300W, Line 6 follows the same path as Line 5 for approximately 0.4 miles, crossing the Kankakee, Beaverville and Southern Railroad. It then turns in a westerly direction crossing CR 250W and running along the northern edge of the Purdue University Horticulture Farm. It then crosses CR 350W, turns and heads north for approximately 0.5 miles where it turns northwest crossing CR 400W. Line 6 then continues in a northwesterly direction for approximately 1.4 miles, crossing SR 26. Prior to crossing CR 600W, Line 6 turns north crossing Jackson Highway, CR 350N, Hoover Road and US 52. It then turns west and terminates with SR 53/US231 approximately 1,550 feet north of US 52. The total length of Line 6 is 35,389 linear feet (approximately 6.7 miles). A 300-foot right-of-way and depressed grass median were assumed on this alignment.
- Line 7: TCAPC Alignment from 2025 Plan. Beginning at SR 26, approximately 800 feet east of the Kankakee, Beaverville and Southern Railroad, Line 7 heads in a northwesterly direction to just past SR 126 (Cherry Lane) where it turns north until it ties in with McCormick Road, north of the McCormick Road Lindberg Road intersection. Line 7, as an improved McCormick Road from this point onward, turns northwest, improving four horizontal radii along McCormick Road until finally turning north and terminating at US 52. The total length of Line 7 is 16,357 linear feet (approximately 3.1 miles). A 150-foot right-of-way and a concrete median barrier were assumed on this alignment. McCormick Road will be improved to a four lane divided facility northward from the point where Line 7 ties into it.
- Line 8: New Alignment. Beginning at the intersection of SR 26 and CR 300W, Line 8 heads northwesterly along the centerline of SR 26, upgrading SR 26 from a two lane facility to a four lane divided facility with a concrete median barrier. Line 8 will also upgrade the existing railroad crossing. Line 8 continues along existing SR 26 for approximately 2 miles, intersecting and/or crossing CR 250W, CR 300W, CR 325W, CR 400W, CR 200N and CR 475W. Line 8 improves the radius of one existing horizontal curve before turning north and crossing CR 200N (Lindberg Road) and CR 250N. Line 8 then turns northeast, crosses the Kankakee, Beaverville and Southern Railroad and terminates at US 52. The total length of Line 8 is 20,407 linear feet (approximately 3.9 miles). A 300-foot right-of-way and depressed grass median were assumed on this alignment.

All alternatives considered will be evaluated during the Alternative Analysis Screening process to determine which alternatives will be carried forward for detailed study in the Environmental Document (See Figures 1 and 2).

4.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

The purpose of the Public Involvement Plan is to encourage and facilitate public participation in the US 231 Relocation Study in order to aid the process of selecting the best alternative to meet the surrounding community's needs. Specific objectives include:

- Providing timely information to the public about the study process and project alternatives.
- Soliciting input from citizens on the resources of concern, impacts of alternatives, and preferences with regard to alternatives.
- Involving environmental justice communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- Developing an understanding of local issues that will enable the environmental document to best provide the information needed for decision-making while also fulfilling NEPA requirements.

A Community Advisory Committee (CAC) will be assembled for this project to assist in the 'Community Impact Assessment & Mitigation' portion of the US 231 Relocation Study.

- The committee will meet on a bi-monthly basis to solicit information back to their respective communities
- One member from this committee will participate in the Public Hearing to answer questions concerning the Community Impact Assessment Report.

The committee will be composed of the following members:

- City-elected representatives
- County-elected representative
- City Administrators
- Parks & Recreation representative
- Neighborhood Leaders (up to 6)
- Purdue University representative
- Others as deemed appropriate

The Public Involvement Kick-off meeting will take place on Thursday, January 17, 2002 at Purdue University, Stewart Center, Room 206, from 5 - 8 p.m. The public involvement process will continue throughout the life of the project. Information will be provided on the project web-site www.relocate231.com, in newsletters and through other media.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The information provided in this packet is preliminary in nature and intended to provide a framework for the study. Public involvement is essential in ensuring the success of this project. Therefore, your comments, as well as opportunities to discuss the project and available information are encouraged.

Thank you for your interest in the US 231 Relocation Study,

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