

The I-69 Evansville-to-Indianapolis Study
Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement

Task 1.3
Public and Community Outreach,
January - June 2001

July 27, 2001



Community Outreach Summary, January through June, 2001
I-69 Evansville-to-Indianapolis Study

Community outreach continued to be an important part of the I-69 Evansville-to-Indianapolis study in the first half of 2001 with Jim Dittoe of Winning Communities holding meetings with many people and groups interested in the project's status. First-person summaries of those meetings are contained in this report, followed by an index.

Along with INDOT and study consultants, Dittoe met 11 times with varied community service groups, such as Kiwanis, Rotary and Exchange clubs. They held nine meetings with several chambers of commerce, providing updates and answering questions. Also, Dittoe met with local, county and state officials. And he met with the advocacy group Voices for I-69 to answer concerns on the timetable of the study.

Dittoe worked with the Issue Involvement Team and worked closely with the Corporation for Educational Communications, which successfully led to completion distance learning projects with three public schools, participating in the collaborative effort between INDOT and CEC .

Students at Decatur Middle School in Indianapolis, Owen Valley Middle School in Spencer and South Spencer High School in Rockport teamed up in "I-69:Making Connections." They researched the Southwestern Indiana I-69 issue, learning about transportation needs, goals and issues, while relaying information they gathered to the study team.

At INDOT Commissioner Cristine Klika's request, efforts to inform people about the I-69 study in regions outside the 26-county-study area were begun. Dittoe and INDOT officials attended these meetings, providing background, an update and a timeline on the project, in addition to answering questions.



Meeting: Mayor Jimmie K. Wright - Linton

Date: Jan. 15, 2001

Time: 1 p.m.

Location: Linton

Major Topics: Information about the study

Summary: I met with Linton Mayor Jimmie K. Wright and informed him of the status of the study. He is very interested in the study and informed me that he supports some kind of action. He told me of the difficulties of his community and the entire county. The coal mine companies and many of the local industries “have left” and unemployment is rising. He believes that an improved transportation system will help a great deal. He will encourage the citizens to attend the public meetings and follow the progress of the study.



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Meeting: *Spencer Evening World*

Date: Jan. 31, 2001

Time: 3 p.m.

Location: Spencer

Major Topics: Update of the study and future process

Summary: Lyle Sadler, project manager for the Indiana Department of Transportation, Mike Grovak, project manager for Bernardin, Lochmueller, and Associates, and I met with Editor Tom Douglas and a reporter for the *Spencer Evening World* newspaper. Mr. Douglas expressed interest in hearing about the status of the study. He has been a proponent for the community educating itself about the study and the potential impact upon Owen County. He sought information because supporters of various positions have had meetings in the community. We distributed the 14 alternative routes and other information to them. Mr. Grovak and Mr. Sadler gave an overview and projected timetable for the study. Mr. Douglas expressed appreciation for the visit and the update.



Meeting: Corporation for Educational Communications

Date: Feb. 8, 2001

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Location: Decatur Middle School - Indianapolis

Major Topics: Introduction to the study via distance learning

Summary: The CEC began its involvement with students in three locations via their Athena fiber-optics connection. Steve Cecil and Mike Grovak and participating schools had discussions with the students from Decatur Middle School and South Spencer High School. A connection could not be made due to technical difficulties with Owen Valley School. After opening comments from Mr. Cecil and Mr. Grovak, they received questions from the students about the project. It is anticipated that a school from Vincennes will soon be connected. It is expected that this dialogue will stimulate conversations in the communities where the schools are located and that the use of the facilities will enable people to have easy access to updates from the study team.



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Meeting: Voices for I-69

Date: Feb. 19, 2001

Time: 1:30 p.m.

Location: Bloomington

Major Topics: Status and timeliness of the study

Summary: I met with Mr. Paul Tedesco, who is active with the Voices for I-69. He informed me that the board of I-69 and others interested in the study met that morning and had many questions and comments for the study team. I took notes and told him that I would get responses as quickly as possible and that he should send other points to me. He told me that Commissioner Klika was being asked to their next meeting and that she had credibility with the group.



Meeting: Mayor's Office – City of Indianapolis

Date: Feb. 20, 2001

Location: Indianapolis

Major Topics: Status of the study

Summary: I met with Melina Kennedy, who is Mayor Peterson's, Deputy Mayor for Policy, and gave her a status report about the study. She asked which of the areas of Indianapolis would be most affected. I told her that at this time the southwest section of I-465 would be most directly impacted, but that the entire portion of central Indiana would be affected. She will attend the Indianapolis MPO meeting with the mayor and will brief him before the next meeting of that group. I told her I was going to be there also.



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Meeting: Martinsville Chamber of Commerce

Date: March 6, 2001

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Martinsville

Major Topics: Study update and traffic modeling

Summary: The Martinsville Chamber of Commerce held a membership meeting that was also open to the public. Mr. Steve Cecil from INDOT and Mr. Vince Bernardin spoke to the group and addressed the issue of the modeling use in the Purpose and Need Statement and of its importance. The meeting stimulated conversation from various positions of the study.



Meeting: Princeton Chamber of Commerce

Date: March 7, 2001

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Location: Princeton

Major Topics: Status of the study

Summary: I met with Chamber President Helen Hauck and gave her an update on the status of the study. She had the same question, comments, and concerns as the Voices for I-69. I told her that a response was being prepared that will answer their questions. She said that her members are in support of the study, but they don't understand the timetable for achieving a decision. She asked for a simplified message of accomplishment of the study items.



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Meeting: Association of Indiana Counties

Date: March 13, 2001

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Location: Indianapolis

Major Topics: Status report

Summary: I met with Matt Brooks. He is executive director of the association and a member of the IIT, who has been very involved with the Indiana General Assembly. I asked him to advise his members of the coming public involvement meetings. He said he would do that by e-mail. He also told me of the interest of some individual members. I will follow up with them.



Meeting: Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce:

Date: March 14, 2001

Time: 10 a.m.

Location: Indianapolis

Major Topics: Introduction to the study and status

Summary: I met with DeVonne Richburg-Pollard, who has replaced Christopher Swatts on the Issue Involvement Team as a representative from the Chamber. She is new to Indiana, and I gave her a briefing about the project and the study being conducted by the Indiana Department of Transportation and BLA. She has had background on the staff of a Congressman who was on the Transportation Appropriations Committee. She is willing to assist in the dissemination of information to her membership. I invited her to the next meeting of the Issue Involvement Team.



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Meeting: CEC and the Statehouse Rotunda Day

Date: March 14, 2001

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Location: Indianapolis State Capitol

Major Topic: Live connection to schools

Summary: The Corporation for Educational Communications had a live feed from the State Capitol connecting with schools participating in the study. The schools were prepared to ask questions of Sen. Steve Johnson of Kokomo and Rep. Vern Tincher of Terre Haute. Mr. Sadler was in attendance also from INDOT. I was able to explain how the participation was working to get more involvement with the public through this network. Sen. Johnson hopes that the system will be used in future INDOT projects.



Meeting: Voices for I-69 Board of Directors

Date: March 19, 2001

Time: 10 a.m.

Location: Petersburg

Major Topics: Responses to their questions

Summary: I met the board at Mr. Schwartz's invitation and gave them responses to the questions that had been posed by Mr. Tedesco. These dealt with timetable issues, the possibility of "losing it" to Illinois, which they fear, funding issues, and other concerns. I gave them the responses on behalf of Mr. Cecil, which were contained in a letter to Mr. Tedesco. They wanted me to know of their continued interest and concern with the pace of the study. They have invited Mrs. Klika to a meeting in April at Crane.



Meeting: Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization

Date: March 21, 2001

Time: 9 a.m.

Location: Indianapolis

Major Topics: Status report and update

Summary: I met with the Indianapolis MPO, which is chaired by Indianapolis Mayor Peterson. Many surrounding counties and municipalities are members. I gave them a status report, which included the dates of the next round of Public Involvement Meetings. I asked them to spread word to their communities and encourage everyone to attend to express interest and receive information about the Purpose and Need Statement.

I had the route alternative map and showed them the various options. I explained that these would be reduced to five or fewer this summer.



Meeting: Issue Involvement Team

Date: April 10, 2001

Time: 1:30 p.m.

Location: Indianapolis

Major Topics: Status of the study and communications

Summary: Commissioner Klika welcomed all in attendance and said that she appreciated that there is so much interest in the project. We announced that the “draft” Purpose and Need Statement would be on the website and that there would be public involvement meetings on May 7, 8 and 9 at Martinsville, Oakland City and Sullivan, respective, to hear comments on the Purpose and Need Statement. Mr. Michael Grovak gave some technical information regarding the study and how decisions are made for the recommended route concepts. Mr. Bryan Nicol, Deputy Commissioner, reported on the status. He said the study is 40-45 percent completed and that INDOT is on target for a decision to be made on a route concept by the end of 2002.



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Meeting: Bedford Exchange Club

Date: April 11, 2001

Time: Noon

Location: Bedford

Major Topics: Study status

Summary: Steve Cecil, INDOT Deputy Commissioner, spoke to the club. I introduced him for the update and the future timetable of meetings and events dealing with the study. He answered questions and heard comments dealing with construction time and when decisions would be made. Michael Grovak, of Bernardin, Lochmueller, and Associates, who is the project manager for the study, also attended and responded to questions from the group and was available for follow-up comments.



Meeting: Vincennes Kiwanis

Date: April 12, 2001

Time: Noon

Location: Vincennes

Major Topics: Study update

Summary: I introduced Lyle Sadler, the project manager for INDOT on this study. Mr. Sadler gave the members of Kiwanis an update of the project status and a timetable of how the 14 alternatives will be reduced to three to five over the next several months. He told them the study is on schedule. He said the Purpose and Need Statement public meetings will take place in May in Sullivan, Oakland City, and Martinsville.



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Meeting: Indiana Legislators' Briefing

Date: April 17, 2001

Time: 5 p.m.

Location: Indianapolis

Major Topics: Project update

Summary: Indiana Department of Transportation Commissioner Cristine Klika met with House of Representatives and Senators who were invited to a briefing to learn of the status of the study. Also assisting in the presentation and responses were Steve Cecil and Bryan Nicol, deputy commissioners for INDOT, and Mike Grovak, project manager from Bernardin, Lochmueller, and Associates, and Lyle Sadler, project manager from INDOT. The issues ranged from timetables of the process to funding questions. The commissioner urged the senators and the representatives to promote the public involvement meetings coming up in May.



Meeting: Indiana Department of Commerce

Date: May 1, 2001

Time: 12:30 p.m.

Location: Indianapolis

Major Topics: Project status and impact on economic development

Summary: I met with the Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Commerce Tom McKenna to brief him on the study and to alert him that economic development would be a significant portion of the draft Purpose and Need Statement. We discussed the issue of highways and their importance in developing that region of the state. He was interested and will pass on information to the regional directors for the department. I informed him of the meetings to be held next week in various cities in the study area.



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Meeting: Jasper Kiwanis

Date: May 8, 2001

Time: Noon

Location: Jasper

Major Topics: Study update

Summary: I introduced INDOT Deputy Commissioner Bryan Nicol to the Kiwanis Club. He gave a study project update to the members and responded to questions. Many people were interested in the connection, if any, to U.S. 231 and the timetable for improvements. Mr. Nicol also spoke of the importance of the draft Purpose and Need Statement. He mentioned that this week public involvement meetings were underway and that tonight there is a meeting in Oakland City and tomorrow night in Sullivan. He took questions and comments.



Meeting: Linton Rotary

Date: May 9, 2001

Time: Noon

Location: Linton

Major Topics: Study update

Summary: I introduced, INDOT Deputy Commissioner Bryan Nicol to the members of the Linton Rotary Club. Mr. Nicol gave a progress report of the study and told the members that the study was 40 percent complete and that a decision would be forthcoming at the end of 2002 for a recommended route concept. He spoke of the importance of the draft Purpose and Need Statement that was the subject of a meeting for the Public tonight at Sullivan High School. He urged all to attend and keep informed about this very important issue and to voice their opinions. He responded to questions and comments from the members.



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Meeting: Corporation for Educational Communications

Date: May 15, 2001

Time: 5 p.m.

Location: Indianapolis

Major Topics: CEC student presentations

Summary: Michael Grovak, of BLA, Steve Cecil and Lyle Sadler, of INDOT, and I attended a dinner meeting of the Corporation for Educational Communication. At the event, students for Decatur Middle School, Owen County schools, and South Spencer High School gave a presentation to teachers, parents, CEC officials and us, about their I-69 study projects. They have used classroom projects under the supervision of teachers to learn more about the study and to develop communication skills and reasoning capacities while being creative. We were asked to comment upon the presentations that showed objectivity and hard work.



Meeting: Rockport Chamber of Commerce

Date: May 17, 2001

Time: 7:30 a.m.

Location: Rockport

Major Topics: Study update

Summary: I introduced Bryan Nicol, Deputy Commissioner for the Indiana Department of Transportation, who gave a project update. He commented that the draft Purpose and Need Statement is on the website and urged all to look into it. He also stated that the study was on schedule at 40 percent complete. He said that a decision will be made for a recommended route concept at the end of 2002. He responded to questions and comments from the members.



Meeting: Mooresville Chamber of Commerce

Date: May 17, 2001

Time: Noon

Location: Mooresville

Major Topics: Study update

Summary: I introduced Steve Cecil, Deputy Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Transportation, who gave the chamber members an update of the project. He spoke of the Purpose and Need Statement and how it is used as a measurement to reduce the alternatives to 3 to 5 over the next several months and to a final recommendation at the end of 2002. He responded to questions and comments from the members who expressed great interest in the study.



Meeting: Spencer Exchange Club

Date: May 17, 2001

Time: Noon

Location: Spencer

Major Topics: Study update

Summary: I had set a meeting for Bryan Nicol, a Deputy Commissioner for the Indiana Department of Transportation, with the Spencer Exchange Club but had a conflict with a similar one in Mooresville. Mr. Nicol explained to me that he reported upon the status of the study to the members. There was interest and questions were many from the members.



Meeting: Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce

Date: May 22, 2001

Time: 11 a.m.

Location: Terre Haute

Major topics: Study status

Summary: I arranged for a meeting of the Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee and members of the Transportation Committee with Bryan Nicol, Deputy Commissioner for INDOT. It was an informal exchange of comments with Mr. Nicol giving a status report and explaining how the Purpose and Need Statement fit into the decision-making. There was open and productive dialogue. He assured all present that this study was an open and unbiased, scientific study that had only the best interest of the citizens in mind.



Meeting: Terre Haute Rotary Club

Date: May 22, 2001

Time: Noon

Location: Terre Haute

Major Topics: Study update

Summary: I introduced Bryan Nicol, Deputy Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Transportation, to the Terre Haute Rotary Club. He gave a status report of the study and outlined the steps taken to decide on the route that will be recommended to the Federal Highway Administration. He talked about the Purpose and Need Statement and its value in that decision-making process. He stated that all routes are getting fair and balanced consideration in the study. He said that the study is 40 percent completed and that it is on track for a decision to be made at the end of 2002. He responded to questions and comments from members of the club.



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Meeting: Bloomington Exchange Club

Date: May 23, 2001

Time: Noon

Location: Bloomington

Major Topics: Study update

Summary: I introduced Mr. Bryan Nicol, Deputy Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Transportation, who addressed the club and gave status report of the study. He gave a historical report and talked about the future process including the reduction of the current 14 alternatives to three to five by the fall and that a final recommended route concept will be made to the Federal Highway Administration by the end of 2002. He responded to questions and comments from members of the club.



Meeting: Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce

Date: June 5, 2001

Time: 7:30 a.m.

Location: Indianapolis

Major Topics: Study update

Summary: I was invited to speak with the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce Infrastructure Committee by DeVonne Pollard who is a member of the Issue Involvement Team. The group is composed of business people interested in the development of roads and highways. I gave updated them on the project and them the 14 alternatives would be reduced to three to five by fall. A final recommendation for a route concept will be made by the end of 2002.



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Meeting: Evansville Rotary Club

Date: June 5, 2001

Time: Noon

Location: Evansville

Major Topics: Study update

Summary: I introduced Bryan Nicol, Deputy Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Transportation, who addressed the Rotary Club. Mr. Nicol gave a status report of the study and talked about the three points of emphasis for the draft Purpose and Need Statement. He also commented that the study is 40 percent completed and that a recommendation will go to the Federal Highway Administration by the end of 2002 for a single route concept. Mr. Nicol responded to questions and comments from the membership of the club.



Meeting: Daviess County Chamber of Commerce

Date: June 6, 2001

Time: 10 a.m.

Location: Washington

Major Topics: Study update

Summary: I met with Ron Arnold, Executive Director of the Daviess County Chamber of Commerce, to discuss the status of the study and answer his questions. He will spread word about the draft Purpose and Need Statement and help promote participation by his members. He said that he believes that the study team is conducting a fair and unbiased analysis.



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Meeting: Vincennes Chamber of Commerce

Date: June 6, 2001

Time: Noon

Location: Vincennes

Major Topics: Study update

Summary: I met with Troy Woodruff, President of the Vincennes Chamber of Commerce, and gave him an update about the status of the study. He commented that many of his members want to see something resolved. I assured him that the study is 40 percent completed and that a final recommendation will be made to the Federal Highway Administration by the end of 2002. He will encourage his members to keep involved.



Meeting: Owen County Banking Representative

Date: June 6, 2001

Time: 1:30 p.m.

Location: Spencer

Major Topics: Study status

Summary: I met with Brad Meloche of Owen County State Bank following a meeting that Bryan Nicol of the Indiana Department of Transportation had with the Spencer Exchange Club. Mr. Meloche is a member and requested a follow-up meeting. I informed him of the history of the study. We discussed the future and how important public involvement is. He mentioned that this project study is very important to the small banks in the study area. I asked him to be a member of the Issues Involvement Team. He will check with his supervisor at the bank but expressed interest. I will follow up when we schedule another meeting.



Meeting: Corporation for Educational Communications

Date: June 7, 2001

Time: 11:30 a.m.

Location: Indianapolis

Major Topics: Wrap-up for spring 2001 project

Summary: I met with Steve Cecil, Deputy Commissioner for the Indiana Department of Transportation, Lyle Sadler, project manager for INDOT, and representatives for the Corporation for Educational Communication. We discussed the success of this past school year project involving three schools in the study area. We discussed expanding the program to five or six schools. The students and the teachers like the program, and the INDOT officials like the way it is getting so many young people involved. A meeting will be held in September for us so that we can prepare to meet with teacher/advisors and plan for projects for the 2001-2002 school year.



Meeting: Frankfort Rotary Club

Date: June 8, 2001

Time: Noon

Location: Frankfort

Major topics: Study update

Summary: In order to inform regions outside the study area about the I-69 project, Commissioner Cristine Klika asked me to establish speaking engagements. The first one was held in Frankfort at the Rotary Club. I introduced Bryan Nicol, Deputy Commissioner of INDOT. He gave a brief historical analysis of the study and an update, including what the draft Purpose and Need Statement is all about. We showed the 14 alternatives and he commented that these will be reduced to three to five by the fall and that a recommendation will be made to the Federal Highway Administration at the end of 2002. He responded to questions and comments from club members who expressed great interest in the project.



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Meeting: Washington Rotary Club

Date: June 13, 2001

Time: Noon

Location: Washington

Major Topics: Study update

Summary: I introduced Steve Cecil, Deputy Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Transportation, to the Washington Rotary Club. Mr. Cecil gave an update about the study and commented that there are numerous connections for the Daviess County community. INDOT appreciates the involvement of the people and organizations within the county and encouraged continued activity and interest. He said that the study is 40 percent complete and that a recommendation to the Federal Highway Administration will be made for a route concept by the end of 2002. He responded to questions and comments from the members.



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