



MEETING MINUTES

Date: June 26, 2018
Time: 3:00 to 4:30 p.m.
Meeting: RCAC Meeting 5
Location: I-69 ORX Evansville Project Office

Attendees:

Name	Organization
Tara Barney	Southwest Indiana Chamber
John Blair	Valley Watch
Gale Brocksmitth	Community Action Program of Evansville
Jack Hogan	Methodist Hospital
Ellen Horan	Growth Alliance for Greater Evansville
Bill Hubiak	Henderson County
Mike Linderman	Angel Mounds Historic Site
Ben Payne	Henderson County Schools
Mike Schopmeyer	BridgeLink
Seyed Shokouhzadeh	EMPO
Catie Taylor	University of Evansville
Jeff Troxel	US 41 Business Owner
Michelle Allen	FHWA
Amanda Rice	FHWA
Eric Rothermel	FHWA
Paul Boone	INDOT
Janelle Lemon	INDOT
Jim Poturalski	INDOT
Gary Valentine	KYTC
Tim Foreman	KYTC
Mindy Peterson	C2 Strategic Communications
Erin Pipkin	Compass Outreach Solutions
Steve Nicaise	Parsons
Amber Schaudt	Taylor Siefker Williams
Diane Hoeting	Parsons
Maria Wainscott	Taylor Siefker Williams
Ron Taylor	Taylor Siefker Williams

- 1) Welcome and introduction – The meeting began at 3:02 p.m. with 12 members and 15 Project Team members in attendance. Each member received a packet of handouts:
 - a. Tolling handout
 - b. Updated preliminary alternatives handout, including an updated map
 - c. Visual Impact Assessment handout
- 2) Presentation –
 - a. Public involvement update – Public meetings have been well attended and we’ve received a lot of feedback since February. This includes 570 public survey responses, 59 business survey responses, 255 attendees at the Community Conversations and 450 visitors to our booth at Tri-Fest.
 - i. Surveys:
 - (1) We mailed a public survey to 4,700 residents in the EJ block groups, which included a stamped envelope, and posted it online. It was also shared via media and social media. We received 570 responses: 335 via mail, 235 online
 - (a) 463 from Kentucky, 101 from Indiana
 - (b) 75 self-identified as low-income, 38 as minority
 - (c) Approximately half cross the US 41 bridge one to four times a week
 - (d) Top reasons for travel include entertainment/shopping (32%), doctor’s visits (25%) and traveling out of town (25%)
 - (e) When asked about mitigation that could be included to address the impacts of tolling:
 - (i) Low-income respondents said the states should provide at least one toll-free crossing (55%), offer free or discounted tolls (18%) or have no tolls at all (12%)
 - (ii) All respondents suggested providing at least one toll-free crossing (44%), free or discounted tolls (13%) and no tolls at all (18%)
 - (2) A postcard asking owners/managers to take our business survey was mailed to about 900 businesses. We followed up with in-person visits to almost 90 businesses along the US 41 strip. We received about 60 complete responses
 - (a) Half depend on walk-up or drive-by traffic
 - (b) One-half expressed concern that Central Alternative 1 could take traffic away from the US 41 commercial strip

- (c) Some believe Central Alternative 1 could improve traffic flow to their business and improve the local economy
 - (d) Several businesses are concerned about the relocation process
 - (e) Two-thirds believe tolls would negatively affect their business
- ii. Community Conversations – We also hosted Community Conversations at six locations (three each in Evansville and Henderson) in EJ block groups. We received good, candid feedback there. The events in Henderson had more attendees, although the last meeting in Evansville – at McCollough Library – had more than 40 in attendance. A total of 255 people signed in at these meetings.
- (1) 6,000 direct-mail postcards were mailed to residents in EJ block groups
 - (2) We also sent fliers home through the schools, promoted via media and social media, and sent fliers to community groups and churches
 - (3) Tolling and financial feasibility
 - (a) Many people believe taxes should pay for construction of the new bridge and I-69
 - (b) Many residents in Henderson are concerned they will be shouldering more of the burden than Evansville residents
 - (c) Most accept a tolled I-69 crossing if one US 41 bridge remains free and in service
 - (4) US 41 bridges
 - (a) Many residents in both cities believe both US 41 bridges should remain in service
 - (b) However, when asked, most agreed keeping only one US 41 bridge in service is acceptable if it is not tolled
 - (5) Alternatives
 - (a) Most attendees in Evansville favor Central Alternative 1 with one toll-free crossing

- (b) Residents in Henderson are passionate about which alternative is selected:
 - (i) Some are concerned that West Alternative 1 and West Alternative 2 would hurt the character and quality of life in Henderson
 - (ii) Many residents do not believe any road project should impact homes or businesses, so they favor Central Alternative 1
 - (iii) Some believe the Central Alternative 1 would negatively affect US 41 corridor by creating a bypass, and motorists to miss Henderson
- b. Updated alternatives – DEIS alternatives were updated based on public input and additional engineering and environmental analyses:
 - i. West Alternative 1 and West Alternative 2:
 - (1) Connection between US 41 and US 60 modified to reduce ROW impacts
 - (2) Retaining wall added to avoid impacts to a small cemetery in the Merrill Place development
 - ii. West Alternative 2:
 - (1) Intersection of Elm Street and Watson Lane modified to improve safety and access in the interchange
 - iii. Central Alternative 1:
 - (1) Connection between I-69 and US 41 modified to improve access to US 60 and the commercial strip
 - iv. Updated costs

Updated Cost Estimates

	No Build	West Alternative 1	West Alternative 2	Central Alternative 1
Design, approvals, right of way, mitigation, procurement, construction inspection	\$17 M	\$312 M	\$352 M	\$200 M
Construction cost (roadway, bridge, toll system, utilities)				
Construction (2017\$)	\$0	\$879 M	\$874 M	\$807 M
Construction inflation	\$0	\$367 M	\$347 M	\$255 M
Subtotal - construction	\$0	\$1,245 M	\$1,221 M	\$1,062 M
Roadway and bridge operations and maintenance (35 years)	\$270 M	\$252 M	\$107 M	\$234 M
Total	\$287 million	\$1.81 billion	\$1.68 billion	\$1.497 billion

v. Updated relocations

- (1) West Alternative 1 – 242 residences, 27 businesses
- (2) West Alternative 2 – 96 residences, 64 businesses
- (3) Central Alternative 1 – 4 residences, 0 businesses

vi. Tolling

- (1) Funding - This project will be more than \$1 billion and the traditional funding of 20 years ago is no longer an option. There will be some traditional state and federal funding. Tolling will also be used, although it won't pay for the entire project. The new I-69 bridge will be tolled. The US 41 bridge may also need to be tolled
- (2) Modern tolling – We learned at the Community Conversations that a lot of residents are not familiar with modern tolling. They envision to toll plazas where you throw quarters in the machine to pass. These systems are still in use, but I-69 ORX will use modern tolling technology similar to what is used on the Ohio River Bridges project (ORB) in Louisville. Traffic doesn't slow down or stop to pay a toll.
- (3) Tolling rates – A lot of people want to know how much tolls will be. That won't be decided by the Project Team, but to provide a frame of reference, we presented the toll rates in place in Louisville.

c. Group discussion

i. Are the transponders movable from one vehicle to another?

The E-ZPass can be moved from one to another, for up to four vehicles per transponder. E-ZPass is accepted in 16 states. There is a one-time \$15 set-up fee for the E-Z Pass transponder. No setup fee is needed for the RiverLink sticker transponder.

ii. Do the local vs. long-distance traffic counts remain the same whether US 41 is tolled or not?

The 35% through-traffic forecast is based on the assumption that both bridges will be tolled.

3) Visual Impact Assessment

- a. Ron Taylor and Maria Wainscott lead the Visual Impact process for I-69 ORX
- b. Process and methodology

- i. The team looked for a quantifiable visual impact caused by the project to compare the alternatives. It also measured the degree of impact being made and potential mitigation measures to reduce those impacts
 - ii. Used 2015 FHWA guidelines with a four-phase process:
 - (1) Establishment – What’s there now
 - (2) Inventory – Visual quality
 - (3) Analysis – Degree of impact
 - (4) Mitigation – How can we sustain or maintain the existing qualities
 - iii. The Area of Visual Effect is identified and broken down into landscape units
 - iv. Inventory is broken down by landscape units and viewer groups
 - v. Visual quality is analyzed based on natural harmony, cultural order and project coherence. Rated from 0 (very low) to 7 (very high)
 - vi. Visual impacts can have three types of scores: positive, negative or zero
 - (1) West 1 – there is a change of 10 points
 - (2) West 2 – there is a 3-point difference
 - (3) Central 1 – there is a 5-point difference
- c. Group discussion
- (1) What is bridge type’s effect on the VIA? Beautiful bridges that may attract people to the area. No matter how attractive the bridge is, if you can’t see the landscape beyond it, the score goes down, right?
Bridge type analysis is part of FHWA’s VIA guidelines. It wasn’t discussed during this meeting because bridge type hasn’t been determined
 - (2) What about whether the alternatives will face the back of properties vs. front of properties, which are always more attractive?
The VIA takes that into account
 - (3) Does the DEIS look at impacts to the tax base along the alternatives?
Yes, there is a socio-economic portion of the DEIS that looks at impacts to the tax base
 - (4) Was Eagle Slough one of the viewsheds?
No, but the area immediately north is. It isn’t included because you can’t see any of the alternatives from Eagle Slough.

- 4) Next steps for the DEIS – The DEIS schedule has not changed
 - a. We plan to publish the DEIS in the fall, which will identify a preferred alternative. We'll hold one public hearing each in Evansville and Henderson. They will be similar to our previous open houses, but the hearing portion will allow residents to make formal comments in front of attendees and the Project Team
 - b. The FEIS and Record of Decision (ROD) are expected by late 2019
 - c. Tolling policy will be set after the ROD during development of the project's financial plan.
- 5) Closing – The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.