



MEETING SUMMARY

To: I-69 ORX Project Team

From: Public Involvement Team

Date: January 23 and 24, 2019

Subject: DEIS Community Conversations

The DEIS Community Conversations were held:

- Henderson: Wednesday, January 23, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Housing Authority of Henderson
- Evansville: Thursday, January 24, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Central Branch of the Evansville-Vanderburgh Public Library

Doors opened at 4:45 p.m. with the events officially starting at 5:30 p.m. Visitors were encouraged to talk with team members and view the displays until the presentation started.

Thirty-four residents signed in at Henderson and thirty-two signed in at Evansville. Several Project Team members also attended both events.

Dan Prevost and Mindy Peterson presented an abbreviated version of the DEIS hearing presentation. Following are the comments and questions asked by attendees at the two events.

Questions and Comments about Tolling:

- How much will the toll cost? There are no jobs in Henderson, so I have to cross the bridge into Evansville for work.
- On I-70 around Denver, they have variable rates depending of the time of day. Is that an option?
- I remember when there was toll on the northbound bridge and it was a mess. Why would you put us in that position again?
- As an elected official, I hear a lot from the community. This route has changed so much from the initiation meetings. The biggest concern I hear is they don't want Henderson and Evansville to bear more of the brunt for paying for the bridge than others. Would it be possible to give Henderson and Evansville residents a transponder to allow them to cross the US 41 bridge(s) for free?
- How are low income and minority populations (EJ populations) identified?

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- I'm a farmer and I support I-69 and the US 41 bridges. We'll lose about 60 acres with this project. If we took all of our grain to Evansville or Newburgh, at \$10/crossing, it would cost me \$12,000 in six weeks to move 500,000 bushels of grain. That's why I support a lower rate on the US 41 bridge.
- Henderson and Evansville will be paying more for the I-69 bridge even if they never use I-69. Why should locals pay for a bridge they may not want to use?
- What about paying a toll on only one direction of US 41?
- Several people may be willing to pay a lower annual rate if they get to avoid the US 41 corridor. The new bridge will help alleviate some of that congestion and be used by more locals than we may anticipate.
- People who must travel the bridges for their jobs should have access to a lower rate than people from outside of the area.
- What's the possibility of getting free or reduced tolls for low-income populations?
- Why are there free bridges in Louisville? And why didn't they lose a bridge like is proposed here by removing the southbound US 41 bridge?
- Louisville has a frequent user discount for people who cross the bridge more than 40 times a month.

Questions and Comments about the US 41 Bridges:

- Did you consider the longevity of the US 41 bridges as it is now, or in the future, when some traffic is on I-69?
- What about removing heavy trucks? You can accommodate 10 times as many cars as opposed to semis if you limit truck using the bridge.
- When we built the US 41 bridges 50-60 years ago, we outpaced the growth that was forecasted.
- Why are you tearing down a bridge that's fine now? \$145 million is a drop in the bucket compared to the overall cost of building another bridge in the future.
- In the past 30-45 days, there have been seven or eight times that bridges were struck by barges along the Ohio River. What about the traffic that must be diverted when that happens and the bridges must be closed for inspection?
- We're shooting ourselves in the foot if we remove one of the Twin Bridges.
- What happens when there's an accident on the existing US 41? How would emergency responders get to them if you remove the other bridge?
- Have you heard residents say they want to keep both US 41 bridges?
- Given the need to upgrade bridges, repaving I-69 in areas throughout Indiana, how can you maintain traffic with only one bridge? When will the northbound US 41 bridge need to be replaced? Removing one puts us back at just two bridges for the region.
- Is there any chance to keep both US 41 bridges? I believe we're going to need eight lanes once the entire I-69 corridor is open from Canada to Mexico.
- It seems to me that making a bridge one lane in each direction compromises safety.

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- What about farmers who use US 41 to cross the bridge? They only travel 20 mph, and they can't use the interstates. Those crossings, plus the maintenance, result in slowing US 41 traffic. We need both US 41 bridges to keep traffic flowing.
- Are there plans to redirect trucks off US 41 except for local deliveries? They have considered it in other cities?

Questions and Comments about Financing:

- How much will the federal government pay for this bridge?
- What about the Brent Spence Bridge? How will it be paid for?
- Do you have plans in the future to remove tolls once the bridge is paid for?
- Is there any info about what a nickel or dime increase on gas tax for each gallon?
- Are there any studies being conducted about the economic benefit of having several crossings open? I think that tolling all crossings will result in separation of the two communities, especially for independent contractors who cross the bridge often and live paycheck to paycheck.
- What can residents do to put another option into consideration? Like an option 1C?
- Bridgeline believes that the project can be constructed for much less than \$1.5 billion.

Other Questions and Comments:

- When I go home tonight, it will be my eighth time crossing the river today. Whatever we can do to help traffic on US 41 is needed. We need to really believe this is a better, new and modern way to improve quality of life for all of us. I wouldn't look forward to eight tolls, but I'd be willing to pay something to make everything better.
- What about the comments made by the Native American at the Henderson hearing?
- There will be a major project to widen Watson Lane in the future. That will enable you to get to US 60 easier to access I-69.
- How does US 41 intersect with I-69 once it's built?
- Did you look at indirect and cumulative effects of the project?
- What about a "green" use for the southbound US 41 bridge, like use for cyclists and pedestrians?
- Can you use Green River Road, similar to the 2004 study, as the connection for I-69 instead of moving it to the west?