

Program. Beyond 2020 to the 2035 planning horizon, the plan will contain a listing of identified corridors where long-term needs and priorities will be identified. Needs will primarily be defined as those congested segments of the transportation network and those areas where safety related issues have been identified.

Future Congestion Needs and General Discussion

The SIDC Director stated that the biggest local issues resulting from the construction of I-69 would be the provision of adequate housing and infrastructure to meet the anticipated growth demands associated with economic development related to the expansion of the West Gate Crane Technology Park and the opening of the I-69 corridor. He explained that economic development was already taking place and that the pace of growth was only expected to increase as the construction of the interstate neared and the Technology Park expanded. The new comprehensive plans (the funding for which was provided under the I-69 Community Planning Program) have gone a long way towards assisting the surrounding counties in preparing for the new interstate and related economic growth. The I-69 Community Planning Program grew out of the I-69 Tier1 environmental impact statement. The program was a mitigation step intended to provide planning resources to cities, small towns and the counties within the I-69 corridor to protect resources and prepare for the anticipated economic growth that the new interstate would bring to the region.

Discussion of future traffic congestion and safety-related issues revolved around spot (bottleneck) locations, county road corridors and some of the State Highways. SIDC staff thought that County Road 800S (Davies/Greene County Line Road) and 1600N (Davies County) would need future upgrades, possibly widening. The CR 800W entry into the Crane Naval Weapons Support Center would also be affected. Land-use controls would probably be needed around the new interchange at I-69 and US 231. Also SR558, the connector roadway from US 231 into the Westgate Crane Technology Park and the Crane Naval Weapons Support Center was identified by SIDC as a roadway that will require improvements.

A brief discussion took place related to traffic patterns to Crane, whether I-69 or US231 would attract more of the traffic from the nearby counties. It was thought that traffic originating on the east side of Washington would use I-69, the shortest and fastest path to get to the Crane area. Traffic originating south of Jasper would have to contend with traffic congestion on US 231 in Jasper. Until the US231 Jasper Bypass is completed, northbound traffic might be attracted to I-69 using SR 56. But that pattern would shift back to US231 after the bypass was completed.

It was noted by the District that there was a federal aid project in place for Cannelburg Road.

The Statewide Travel Demand Model output maps indicated poor levels of service (LOS) in the future on SR 54 east of the Town of Linton in Green County. The District confirmed that there was some limited, spot congestion east of Linton in the vicinity of SR 54 and Lone Tree Road.

SIDC staff noted that the rail network needed updating in Lawrence County in order to keep freight using rail instead of the highways. The Hoosier Line and CSX may abandon lines which would result in more truck/freight traffic in and near Mitchell, Indiana.

The casino at French Lick, Indiana was contributing marketing funds to various organizations in and around Orange County. SIDC staff felt that the marketing programs were producing results. It was observed that the US 150 corridor from the east side of Shoals, Indiana to the French Lick area was beginning to experience increased traffic, possibly in the range of 500 to 600 additional trips per day.

The construction of the new Duke Energy Plant near Edwardsport in Knox County is currently affecting only construction-related traffic. When completed and operational, coal truck traffic will need to be monitored for patterns and impact. Currently, there is a mine near Oaktown that will serve the plant. However, it was noted that traffic patterns for commodities such as coal are subject to frequent change based on market conditions and choice of shipping modes: rail, barge or truck. This makes it difficult to predict and plan for the long-term transportation patterns for the commodity.

Economic Growth

SIDC staff noted that the combination of the Crane Naval Weapons Support Center, the West Gate Crane Technology Park and start of I-69 construction have all combined to result in positive increases in economic activity for the region. They expect that trend to continue the trend and increase as the overall economy improves and the I-69 corridor is built out.

Major Moves Program Update – November 2009

INDOT Planning staff provided a brief update regarding developments in the Major Moves Program. Adjustments were made to the Major Moves Program in late 2009 to reflect Indiana's changing economic environment and to take advantage of more favorable construction pricing where project delivery costs had been declining. Lower construction costs permitted INDOT to advance project construction and delivery schedules for many of its projects. However, a select few projects have also been delayed due to factors such as an overall reduction in the need for the project, a corresponding reduction in traffic volumes and, or changes to local economic conditions. The updated Major Moves Program has been published on INDOT's website where it can be accessed under the Major Moves icon. Clicking on the Major Moves icon brings up an interactive corridor map which also has links to up-to-date fact sheets for each corridor.

Identification and discussion of the long-term, 2020 and beyond needs

Improvements to the US 50 corridor continued to be identified as a long-term need. This is particularly true for the segment beginning on the east side of the Washington and ending at the intersection with US 231 in Loogootee. While the US 50 corridor had been listed in the 2007 INDOT Long-Range Plan, it had been listed as an unfunded future need. However, it was noted that a smaller US 50 reconstruction project in the Town of Montgomery that provided dedicated turn lanes and intersection improvements resulted in more efficient traffic flow in and around Montgomery. Also, an intersection improvement on US 50 west of Montgomery has improved spot congestion and safety where gravel and coal trucks entered US 50. There is an I-69 interchange planned at US 50, just east of Washington. The US 50 segment from the interchange east of Washington to Loogootee is approximately ten miles in length.

INDOT is currently expanding US 231 to a four-lane limited access highway from the Natcher Bridge over the Ohio River to just north of Jasper at the Town of Haysville. From Haysville

north to Loogootee, US 231 will remain a two-lane roadway. Considering its proximity to the West Gate Crane Technology Park and the Crane Naval Weapons Support Center, SIDC indicated that it would like to see improvements to the remaining two-lane segments of US 231 from Haysville through Loogootee to Crane. The Vincennes District said that it had programmed reconstruction projects for parts of those segments, but that due to budget constraints, the project were likely to be downscoped into a series of resurfacing projects.

Other items of discussion

The Vincennes District staff noted that there had been lower attendance at some of the Employee in Responsible Charge (ERC) training sessions for the smaller communities. This is a relatively new requirement where applicants for local federal aid projects must first take part in training sessions that cover the application and project administration process. This may be in part due to local level personnel changes, a lack of immediate project need or, tight local budgets that cannot presently spare funds for a 20 percent local match requirement. There is some thought about having the rural planning organizations attend training and act as facilitators for the local communities in the application preparation process.

Since SIDC is a one of the Regional Planning Organizations that is a grant recipient from the INDOT Rural Planning Program. The INDOT Planning staff asked SIDC for a quick update regarding its transportation planning activities and SIDC staff responded with an overview of the transportation planning activities that it was engaged, including the traffic counting efforts in its counties.