

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can items from properties acquired by INDOT be salvaged by the public?

For people interested in salvaging anything from State of Indiana properties that were acquired from local residents for the U.S. 31 project, the most expedient way is to visit the construction trailers that are set up on the project sites. It is the responsibility of the contractors that are awarded the bids to dispose of the properties. If you need help locating a construction trailer please contact:

Harry Maginity
Customer Service Manager
INDOT Greenfield District office
317-467-3949

2. How much travel time will the new bypass save?

If the existing US 31 was not improved, traffic congestion and, therefore, travel time would increase over time. By 2030, studies show that the new bypass will reduce average corridor travel time by more than 10 minutes.

An accurate evaluation of travel times requires that the five alternatives considered for the US 31 bypass (Alternatives E, F, G, I, J, and J Modified) be compared with an equivalent design year "No-Action" alternative.

It is projected that a "No-Action" alternative would result in a 25.3 minute travel time through the project area in 2030. Below is a comparison of year 2030 travel times for the preliminary alternatives that have been identified as being carried forward for further analysis in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement DEIS:

Alternative	2030 Travel Time	Travel Time Difference
No-Action	25.4 minutes	n/a
E	14.3 minutes	-11.1 minutes
F	14.2 minutes	-11.2 minutes
G	15.6 minutes	-9.8 minutes
I	15.3 minutes	-10.1 minutes
J	15.2 minutes	-10.2 minutes
J Modified	15.2 minutes	-10.2 minutes

Reduction in travel time is only one performance measure for the project. Other performance measures include reducing accidents and ensuring consistency with state and local long-range transportation plans.

3. How will the new bypass be different from the existing US 31?

The bypass will resemble interstate-type facilities such as I-65, I-69, and I-465. Interstate/limited-access standards specify that access is only provided at interchanges rather than direct access at adjacent driveways or business entrances. The original bypass (existing US 31) is not a limited access facility and, as a result, there are approximately 140 uncontrolled access points along the 9-mile segment of US 31 between SR 26 and the US 35 northern junction.

4. Why not just upgrade the existing US 31 route to interstate standards?

Upgrading the existing US 31 facility will result in far more relocations when compared to the new alignment alternatives. Upgrading the current US 31 route would have displaced almost 100 more residences and businesses than any of the new alignment alternatives and would have had a disproportionate impact on commercial businesses. The number of displacements, the limited access to remaining businesses, and the loss of retail tax revenue were the major considerations in the evaluation of this alternative. Other factors included: residential relocations, the number of hazardous waste sites impacted, the need for new access roads, the disruption and displacement of grave sites, the disruption to existing business access, and the significantly higher cost of land acquisition.

5. Were lower cost improvements, such as closing some access points or adding a through lane, considered?

Yes. Although improvements such as closing some access points may resolve short-term safety concerns, they alone would not have provided long-term solutions to current and future congestion concerns. Furthermore, closing some access points may have also resulted in an increase in sporadic traffic movements, such as U-turns, which would have negatively affected safety. Widening US 31 by adding an additional lane was also considered in the preliminary alternatives screening. Although this alternative would have added capacity and reduced delays, three intersections would have functioned at substandard levels of service in the future. In addition, the Widened US 31 (Expressway) Alternative would not have resulted in modifications to the characteristics of US 31. Accident rates through this area would likely have remained above the statewide average and the long-term goals of the US 31 corridor would not have been met.

6. Can existing US 31 traffic signals be retimed/synchronized to improve traffic congestion?

The existing US 31 traffic conditions were evaluated using current INDOT Greenfield District signal system timings. The 13 US 31 intersections between SR 26 and Morgan Street are interconnected as a traffic signal system. The US 31 intersections with CR 300 North and the US 35 northern junction currently operate independently of this system. The allocation of signal green times and the coordination between signals were updated in June 2001. Based on existing signal equipment and traffic patterns, signal timing plans are used to improve traffic flow through the US 31 corridor and improve levels of operation.

Fiber-optic interconnect cable installation and associated signal system timings were programmed for the 15 US 31 signalized intersections between SR 26 and the US 35 northern junction in 2004. The improved signal and signal system timings alone have not adequately

reduced traffic congestion and improve safety. It is important to note that the evaluation of signal timings in the Preliminary Alternatives Analysis and Screening Report incorporated optimized traffic signal/signal system timings.

7. Why doesn't INDOT regulate or restrict trucks since they seem to be the biggest safety concern?

US 31 is designated as a Statewide Mobility Corridor from Indianapolis to South Bend. The objective of such corridors is to provide safe, free flowing, high-speed connections between metropolitan areas of Indiana and other states. More specifically, Statewide Mobility Corridors accommodate large volumes of through traffic and heavy commercial vehicles.

Aside from this designation, an appropriate series of connected state roads does not exist to facilitate a designated truck route separate from the segment of US 31 through Kokomo and Howard County. In addition, many trucks using US 31 do business along US 31. These local stops are considered when evaluating appropriate interchange locations so that a bypass will more efficiently distribute such truck traffic.

State roads are intended for heavy vehicle (truck) traffic and, therefore, INDOT cannot prohibit or restrict trucks on its highway system. All INDOT roads in the state highway system are intended for trucks unless a height or weight restriction is located along the roadway.

While the perception is that trucks are dangerous, accident data confirm that the safety issues associated with US 31 in Howard County extend beyond truck traffic. Only two of the six fatal accidents that occurred during a three-year period from 1998 to 2000 involved trucks. During the same three-year period, trucks accounted for only 4.8 percent of the vehicles involved in all accidents despite accounting for approximately 12 percent of vehicles on US 31.

Removing all truck traffic would not have solved the current or projected congestion and safety concerns. Traffic analysis reveals that it is the interaction of through and local traffic that creates the safety problem.

8. Will the new bypass reduce congestion and improve safety on the existing US 31?

Yes. Evaluation of bypass alternatives revealed that it will attract both through and local traffic away from the existing US 31 corridor. To be successful, the bypass must improve traffic congestion and safety on the existing US 31 corridor by reducing traffic volumes. Although there would still be local traffic on existing US 31, the removal of the mix of local and through traffic will reduce congestion and improve safety on the existing US 31 corridor.

9. How were interchange locations decided?

Interchange locations were determined in part by State and Federal design standards and by local traffic patterns. In order for a new bypass facility to meet limited-access standards (freeway standards), interchanges could not be spaced closer than one mile in urban settings such as the US 31 Kokomo Corridor Project area. The new bypass also had to be conducive to the existing State highway system, thus not disrupting traffic on highways such as SR 26, SR 22, and US 35.

A third important factor considered is local traffic patterns and access back to existing US 31 and its retail centers and employers. Consideration is also given to social and environmental factors, such as bus routes, emergency service, and natural resources, at particular locations.

10. If an existing road doesn't have an interchange with the new bypass, will access across the bypass be eliminated?

Not in all cases. In many cases, overpasses or underpasses will be designed to maintain traffic on existing roads. However, depending on the volume of traffic, environmental impacts, and cost, some local roads may be dead-ended. Key east/west roads were identified with the help of local officials, such as school transportation directors, police and fire personnel, and major employers. Citizens were also encouraged to comment on east/west connectivity throughout the project planning process.

11. Were noise impacts considered?

Yes. Noise studies done as part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) determined current and projected noise levels for each alternative and identified any areas that might receive noise-abatement measures, such as noise barriers or walls, based on federal and state guidelines. For information about INDOT's noise policy, [click here](#).

12. How was bypass alternative selected?

The bypass alternative was offered as the "preferred" alternative for the project in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS). This option was reached after public and agency input recommended changes to one of the five "build" alternatives presented in the DEIS. These six alternatives, along with a No-Action Alternative, were assessed by INDOT, and the preferred alternative presented in the FEIS was ultimately approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in the Record of Decision.

13. Did the public have a say in which route was selected?

Yes. The publication of the DEIS and the SDEIS were followed by 45-day comment periods that included public hearings. Citizens took the opportunity to ask questions of the project team staff and provide formal comment during these hearings. Public input was considered in the FEIS and used to help determine a preferred route.

14. Can the public still comment on the project?

Public comments can be submitted via the [Contact INDOT](#) page but the official comment periods for the study have expired. Public involvement, however, remains an integral part of this project, and the public is encouraged to stay involved and updated on the project via this website.

Click on the link below to sign up to receive periodic updates about the US 31 Kokomo project.

15. How does INDOT compensate for lost property or property value?

Property that is impacted by a State road project is typically acquired at fair market value. Through a well-defined land acquisition process, the State assesses the level of impact to a particular property, performs an appraisal, and, where appropriate, formulates a relocation package for the impacted residents or business. For more information, see the FHWA's Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and related U.S. DOT brochures.

- [U.S. DOT Property Acquisition Information](#)
 - [U.S. DOT Relocation Information](#)
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16. How was the project funded?

The US 31 Kokomo Corridor Project is funded by money raised through Major Moves, a plan by Governor Mitch Daniels to lease the Indiana Toll Road (ITR) in exchange for an upfront payment of \$3.8 billion. Major Moves has provided for construction and/or preservation of more than 200 road and bridge projects across Indiana. Additionally, through reinvestment of lease proceeds, using proceeds to match other funding, and coupling Major Moves funding with other revenue streams, INDOT has leveraged Major Moves funding into a more than \$10 billion program through 2015.