



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

100 North Senate Avenue
Room N642
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Eric Holcomb, Governor
Joe McGuinness, Commissioner

LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING – DES# 1383615

Proposed intersection improvement at S.R. 55 and 73rd Avenue Merrillville, Lake County

The Troyer Group, in coordination with the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), will host a public hearing on Thursday October 22, 2020 at Merrillville High School: 276 E. 68th Place, Merrillville, IN 46410; Freshman Center Lecture Hall - Entrance J. The hearing will begin at 6:00 p.m. Prior to the official public hearing, project representatives will be available during a project open house from 5–6 p.m. Following the public hearing, a second project open house will occur from 6:45–7:30 p.m. The purpose of the public hearing is to offer all interested persons an opportunity to comment on current preliminary design plans to modify the intersection at State Road (SR) 55 and 73rd Avenue Merrillville, Lake County. The need for this project stems from the intersection's inability to safely handle current and projected traffic. The intersection sees a high rate of traffic accidents due to the large volumes of traffic that pass through. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase operational safety at the intersection and to reduce the frequency and severity of vehicular accidents that occur at the intersection, while maintaining the operational efficiency in both the construction year and the horizon year.

The public hearing will follow Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) guidance health and safety protocols, including project team members wearing face coverings and attendees wearing face coverings, providing hand sanitizer, providing ample access to handwashing facilities, implementing social distancing, and including monitoring the number of attendees participating to comply with local ordinances. Face coverings will be available for attendees who arrive without one.

For those wishing to participate in the hearing, but not attend in-person, the public hearing will be streamed live over the internet via Facebook Live from INDOT Northwest's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/INDOTNorthwest/>).

As proposed, the project involves the conversion of the existing signalized intersection into a hybrid single-lane/dual-lane roundabout. The center of the roundabout would be shifted slightly southeast of the existing intersection's center. This will minimize impact to the businesses adjacent to the northeast, northwest, and southwest intersection quadrants.

All improved roadway surfaces along SR 55 and 73rd Ave within the proposed roundabout will be surrounded by concrete curb and gutter, which will drain into a new storm sewer system. The storm sewer system will drain stormwater generally from northwest to southeast where it will be collected into a proposed detention basin immediately southeast of the proposed roundabout. The basin will then empty eastward toward an unnamed tributary of Turkey Creek. Lighting improvements are also proposed as part of the project. All driveway aprons adjacent to the improved roadway will be reconstructed within proposed construction limits.

As proposed, the maintenance of traffic (MOT) for the project will be phased. Two-way traffic will be maintained along SR 55, while 73rd Ave. will be closed during some phases of construction.

During Phase I, the eastern portion of the project area will be closed, including 73rd Ave. east of the intersection. One northbound and one southbound lane of SR 55 will remain open and will be routed to the western side of the existing intersection. Eastbound 73rd Ave. traffic will be able to turn left or right onto SR 55, while westbound traffic will utilize the detour route. In Phase II, the intersection will be reopened entirely while portions of the SR 55 median are constructed. SR 55 will still consist of one northbound and one southbound lane, and 73rd Ave. will utilize the previously constructed portions of the proposed roundabout. Phase III will mirror phase I, with the SR 55 travel lanes being shifted to the eastern portion of the intersection, and westbound 73rd Ave. being closed to construction. The intersection closures will be in place for approximately one construction season, with a break in the middle for Phase II in which the intersection will be reopened. A detour will be implemented during Phases I and III. The official State detour will involve US 30, SR 53, and W. 61st Ave. and will be approximately 5.4 miles long. This will add roughly 2.9 miles of travel. The proposed improvement will require acquisition of approximately 1.72 acres of new permanent right-of-way, in addition to some temporary right-of-way needed during construction.

Additional project details will be presented during the public hearing and will be also made available via the INDOT website.

Construction is anticipated to begin June 1, 2022. Federal and state funds are proposed to be used for construction of this project. INDOT and the Federal Highway Administration have agreed that this project poses minimal impact to natural environment. A Categorical Exclusion (CE) environmental document has been prepared for the project. The environmental documentation and preliminary design information is available to view prior at the following location:

Lake County Public Library, Merrillville Branch - 1919 81st Ave, Merrillville, IN 46410. Please call ahead for an appointment to access the library (219-769-3541). Please be aware of limited hours: 12pm–6pm Mon, Tues, Thurs; 9am–3:30pm Fri, Sat; Closed Wed, Sun.

Community members may wish to visit the project webpage at <https://www.in.gov/indot/4090.htm> to view project information, including the public hearing presentation and submit comments to the project team via mail or email. Persons with limited internet access may contact the project team to request project information be mailed to them. Please contact Troyer Group, Attn: C.J. Cunningham, 3930 Edison Lakes Pkwy, Mishawaka, IN 46545, (574) 259-9976 or cjc@troyergroup.com.

Public statements for the record will be taken as part of the public hearing procedure. All verbal statements recorded during the public hearing and all written comments submitted prior to, during, and for a period of two (2) weeks following the hearing date will be evaluated, considered, and addressed in subsequent environmental documentation. Written comments may be submitted prior to the public hearing and within the comment period to Troyer Group, Attn: C.J. Cunningham, 3930 Edison Lakes Pkwy, Mishawaka, IN 46545, email address: cjc@troyergroup.com or to Tim Hollandsworth, INDOT Project Manager at INDOT LaPorte District, 315 E. Boyd Rd., LaPorte, IN 46350, email address: thollandsworth@indot.in.gov. **INDOT respectfully requests all comments be submitted by 5:00 PM CT, November 6th, 2020.**

With advance notice, INDOT will provide accommodations for persons with disabilities with regards to participation and access to project information as part of the hearings process, including arranging auxiliary aids, interpretation services for the hearing impaired, services for the sight impaired, and other services as needed. In addition, INDOT will provide accommodations for persons of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requiring auxiliary aids, including language interpretation services and document conversion. Should an accommodation be required, please

contact Lisa Shrader, INDOT Consultant Service Manager at INDOT LaPorte District, 315 E. Boyd Rd., LaPorte, IN 46350, email address: lshrader@indot.in.gov.

This notice is published in compliance with Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Section 771 (CFR 771.111(h)(1), which states: “Each State must have procedures approved by the FHWA to carry out a public involvement/public hearing program.” 23 CFR 450.212(a)(7) states: “Public involvement procedures shall provide for periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all and revision of the process as necessary.” approved by the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation on August 16, 2012.