LEGAL NOTICE OF PLANNED IMPROVEMENT

INDOT Des. No. 1700190

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) with partial funding and oversight from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) proposes adding auxiliary passing lanes along three, non-contiguous segments of US 231 in Montgomery and Tippecanoe Counties, Indiana (INDOT Des. No. 1700190).

Segment 1 of the project is located in Sections 19, 20, 29 and 30, Township 20 North, Range 4 West, in Madison Township, Montgomery County as illustrated on the *Linden* Indiana 7.5-minute United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic quadrangle. Segment 2 of the project is located in Sections 29 and 32, Township 21 North, Range 4 West, Randolph Township, in Tippecanoe County as illustrated on the *Linden* Indiana 7.5-minute USGS topographic quadrangle. Segment 3 of the project is located in Sections 5, 6 ,7 and 8, Township 21 North, Range 4 West, Randolph Township, in Tippecanoe County as illustrated on the *Romney* Indiana 7.5-minute USGS topographic quadrangle.

The need for the project is based on the undesirable Level of Service (LOS) along the project corridor and the need to lower driver frustration by reducing the percentage of traffic following slower vehicles. LOS is a term used to qualitatively describe the operating conditions of a transportation facility. Vehicles travel at different speeds and due to oncoming traffic and existing horizontal curves and hills, they do not have the opportunity to pass slower moving traffic. The LOS quantitatively measures this in terms of traffic delay, travel time and speed which can be linked to driver frustration and higher accident rates. There are six LOS levels, and each level is assigned a letter designation from A to F, with LOS A representing the best operating conditions, and LOS F the worst. The LOS for the project corridor is a D and the time spent following is at an unacceptable rate of 70.2% because of current traffic volumes, and the lack of passing opportunities. This contributes to congestion along the corridor as US 231 only provides one travel lane in each direction.

The purpose of the project is to improve the LOS, reduce the time spent following and reduce travel time between Lafayette and Crawfordsville via US 231. Goals for this project would be to reduce travel time by 5%, reduce time spent following by 10%, and improve the LOS by one letter grade. These cost-effective goals while modest bring a benefit that that is not outweighed by the cost of the project and minimized the environmental impacts that a four-lane divided highway would create.

Segment 1 in Montgomery County begins approximately 475 ft. north of the intersection of CR W 700 North and continues north approximately 4,800 ft. to CR W 800 North for 0.91 miles. Improvements within Segment 1 will include the construction of a 12 ft. southbound passing lane on the west side of US 231 and will be 4,800 ft long. The passing lane will taper and vary in width from 2 ft. to 12 ft. The auxiliary passing lane will be bordered by a 2 ft.  paved shoulder. US 231 will continue to provide one 12 ft. travel lane in each direction. The reconstructed roadway will be milled and re-surfaced and the side slopes of the passing lane will be re-graded to a 4:1 slope. There are four small drainage structures that will be replaced and one that will be extended in place to accommodate the widened roadway within Segment 1.

Segment 2 in Tippecanoe County begins approximately 100 ft. north of the intersection of Bennett Road and US 231 and continues north approximately 6,700 ft. to approximately 425 ft. south of CR E 1200 South for 1.27 miles. The segment limits were moved away from Bennett Road to limit driver confusion at the intersection. The segment limits were also lengthened 700 ft. to maximize the benefit of the passing lane. Improvements within Segment 2 will include the construction of a 12 ft. northbound passing lane on the east side of US 231. The east side of the roadway was selected for the placement of the added passing lane in this segment to minimize impacts to nine houses/buildings and several trees and wetlands located along the west side of the roadway. The passing lane will be bordered by a 2 ft. shoulder. The southbound travel lane will be bordered by a 4 ft. shoulder. The existing roadway will be milled and re-surfaced and the side slopes along the edge of the added passing lane will be graded to a 4:1 slope. There are four existing small drainage structures within this segment that will be extended to accommodate the widening of the roadway.

Segment 3 in Tippecanoe County begins approximately 3,200 ft. south of the intersection of CR W 925 South and continues north approximately 9,150 ft. to approximately 350 ft. south of CR W 800 South for 1.73 miles. Improvements within Segment 3 will include the construction of both a northbound and southbound passing lane. To minimize impacts to several residential properties and existing utilities located along the east side of US 231 through Segment 3, the proposed roadway centerline will be shifted 12 ft. to the west. The road shift to the west will also eliminate the need to remove approximately 31 trees on the east side of US 231. The existing northbound lane will become the added passing lane northbound. A 4 ft. shoulder is needed along the east side of the existing roadway to provide additional width for maintaining traffic during construction. The pavement will be widened 24 ft. from the west edge of the existing pavement with an additional 2 ft. for the shoulder southbound. The total width of the pavement will provide one 12 ft. through travel lane in each direction plus an added 12 ft. passing lane in each direction. The existing roadway will be milled and re-surfaced and the side slopes of the added passing lanes will be graded to a 4:1 slope. There are six existing small drainage structures within this segment that will be extended to accommodate the widening of the roadway.

The total project length is approximately 3.91 miles. The construction of the added passing lanes will meet the purpose and need of the project by improving the LOS which will cause a reduction of the time spent following and reduce travel time between Lafayette and Crawfordsville via US 231. Traffic will be maintained on US 231 during construction in all three segments, and a detour will not be necessary. Access to all residential and commercial properties will be maintained during construction.

The letting date for the proposed project is currently scheduled for July 13, 2022, and construction is likely to begin in Fall 2022/ Winter 2023. The construction will likely extend two construction seasons. The cost of construction is estimated at $9,169,915.00.

Additional permanent and temporary right-of-way will be required to complete the project. The project will require approximately 10.15 acres of new, additional permanent right-of-way. Approximately 9.79 acres of the new, additional permanent right-of-way consists of agricultural land adjacent to US 231 and approximately 0.36 acre consists of residential land. The project will also require approximately 0.29 acre of temporary right-of-way; 0.09 acre consisting of residential land and approximately 0.20 acre consisting of agricultural land for construction access and driveway re-grading.

The FHWA and the INDOT have agreed that this project falls within the guidelines of a Level 3 Categorical Exclusion (CE-3). No significant adverse impacts to the human or natural environment were identified as part of this environmental documentation.

There will be no significant wetland or waterway impacts and there are no endangered species of plants or animals that will be impacted. The project will result in a total of approximately 0.288 acre of permanent wetland impacts to construct all three segments of the project.

Preliminary design plans and the draft CE-3 are being made available for review at the INDOT Crawfordsville District Office, located at 41 W 300 N, Crawfordsville, IN, 47933 and at the Tippecanoe County Public Library, Wea Prairie Branch located at 4200 South 18th Street, Lafayette, IN, 47909. The CE-3 and preliminary plans can also be viewed at the following web link <https://www.in.gov/indot/4304.htm>.

Accommodations for persons with Limited English Proficiency can be requested, if necessary. In accordance with the “Americans with Disabilities Act”, if you have a disability for which INDOT needs to provide accessibility to the above documents such as interpreters or readers, please contact Ms. Elayna Stoner at (317) 315-3322 or elaynas@metricenv.com. Furthermore, if you require hard copies of project information to be mailed, please also contact Ms. Elayna Stoner and accommodations will be made for mailing of project documents, upon request.

All interested persons may request a public hearing or express their concerns or comments on the project by submitting written comments to the attention of Mr. Chuck Sims at First Group Engineering Inc., 5925 Lakeside Boulevard, Indianapolis, IN 46278 or csims@firstgroupengineering.com or Mr. Arshad Ahmed, at the INDOT Crawfordsville District Office at ArAhmed@indot.IN.gov.

All comments or requests for a public hearing should be submitted before September 4, 2021. If a hearing is determined to be in the best interest of the public, the community will be notified. Otherwise, any comments or materials received as a result of this legal notice will be considered in the decision-making process. The design plans are not yet final until after these public involvement requirements are finalized. The CE-3 will be updated to reflect all public comments and inquiries.

This notice is published in compliance with: 1) Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Section 771 (CFR 771.111(h)(1) stating, “Each State must have procedures approved by the FHWA to carry out a public involvement/public hearing program.”; 2) 23 CFR 450.210(a)(1)(ix) stating, “Provide for the periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all interested parties and revise the process, as appropriate.”; and 3) The INDOT *Public Involvement Policies and Procedures* approved by the Federal Highway Administration on July 7, 2021.