

LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING – DES # 1800082, 2001610, 1800272
Proposed corridor improvement project on US 31 in the City of Franklin, Johnson County

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) will host a public hearing on August 1, 2022, in the Franklin Community Middle School Auditorium, 998 Grizzly Cub Drive, Franklin, IN 46131. The hearing will be held from 6-8 pm. The purpose of the public hearing is to offer all interested persons an opportunity to comment on current preliminary design plans to modify the US 31 corridor through Franklin. The project will begin at the southern terminus of Franklin, approximately 1.25 miles south of Jefferson St (SR 44/SR 144), and will extend to the northern terminus of Franklin, approximately 4.45 miles north of Jefferson St. The project will extend a total of 5.63 miles. The purpose of this project is to reduce congestion, improve traffic flow, and improve the overall safety of the US 31 corridor included in this project by minimizing the number of intersections with a level of service (LOS) E or F during at least 1 of the peak traffic hours and by reducing the potential points of conflict between vehicles in busy intersections. An additional purpose of this project is to improve the non-motorized connectivity in the City of Franklin. For the structure carrying US 31 over Canary Ditch, the purpose of the project is to provide a structure with a condition rating of at least 7 (good) out of 9.

This project plans to construct reduced conflict intersections (RCIs), including restricted crossing U-turn (R-CUT) and median U-turn (MUT) intersections, throughout the section of US 31 included in this project. One signalized green-T style intersection will be constructed at S. Main St. At this intersection, S. Main St and northbound US 31 will be controlled by a traffic signal while southbound US 31 flows freely. An acceleration/merge lane will be constructed on southbound US 31 for traffic turning left from S. Main St. RCIs are intersections that rely on U-turns located in medians past the intersection to complete certain left turn and through movements. In R-CUT intersections, left turns will be allowed from US 31 to cross streets, but traffic from cross streets will only be allowed to turn right onto US 31. Left turns onto US 31 and continuing on the same cross street by traveling through the intersection will be restricted by a concrete median. R-CUT intersections will be constructed at Nineveh Rd, Franklin Lakes Blvd/South St, King St, Mallory Pkwy, Westview Dr/N Main St, Earlywood Dr, and Christian Blvd/Oakville Blvd. Two intersections, Jefferson St and Commerce Dr, will allow left turns from the cross street to US 31, but left turns from US 31 will be restricted. In MUT intersections, left turns from all approaches of the intersection will be restricted by a vegetated median. MUT intersections will be constructed at all other intersections in the project. Traffic loons will be constructed opposite each dedicated U-turn location. A traffic loon is pavement that is constructed outside of normal traffic lanes to allow for larger vehicles to safely make a U-turn on a divided roadway. New curb and gutter will be installed along the roadway throughout the entire project. Roadside drainage will collect in new gutters and curbside inlets adjacent to the roadway, then collect in a combination of shallow ditching and storm sewers.

Improvements to non-motorized and pedestrian infrastructure in the project area will be made by adding new infrastructure that ties into the existing network of multi-use trails and sidewalks. On the east side of US 31, a 10-foot-wide multi-use trail will be constructed beginning at the terminus of an existing trail on the north side of S. Main St. On the west side of US 31, a 10-foot-wide multi-use trail will be constructed starting in the northwest corner of the US 31 and Nineveh Rd intersection. Both trails will extend north to the end of the project area. New ADA compliant curb ramps will be constructed at all intersections throughout the project. Pedestrian handrails will be installed to the outside of the multi-use trails along areas where steep roadside

embankments exist or where the trails will cross waterways. A total of 4 structures carrying US 31 over waterways will be widened or lengthened in order to accommodate the trails.

At the structure carrying US 31 over Youngs Creek (Structure No. 031-41-07875, Des 2001610), this project will remove the outside portions of the existing bridge superstructure and will install a new portion of concrete deck with sidewalk and concrete railing with new aluminum guardrail mounted on top. The travel lane widths will remain the same, and a concrete median will remain. The shoulders crossing the bridge will be narrowed to 2 feet wide, and 8-foot-wide concrete sidewalks elevated from the travel lanes by an 8-inch curb will be placed on each side of the bridge. Riprap will be installed as needed for erosion control.

At the structure carrying US 31 over Canary Ditch (Structure No. 031-41-03534, Des 1800272), this project will replace the existing structure with a new 3-sided concrete structure with a height of 16 feet, a width of 23 feet, and a length of 164 feet. New wingwalls will be constructed in all corners of the structure. Riprap will be installed as needed for erosion control.

It is anticipated that the project will require 6.8 acres of new permanent right-of-way (ROW) in order to construct traffic loons and the multi-use trails and to make improvements to the storm drainage system. A total of 6.37 acres of temporary ROW will be required to grade roadside ditches to ensure positive drainage and to reconstruct cross street approaches. A small amount of permanent and temporary ROW will be acquired from properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). From the Tearman Motel, 0.091 acre of temporary ROW will be acquired, and from the Daily Journal Building, 0.086 acre of temporary ROW and 0.022 acre of permanent ROW will be acquired. While no ROW will be acquired from the Greenlawn Cemetery (NR-2278), which is listed on the NRHP, a small amount of land associated with the Cemetery will be converted to a transportation use in order to widen the approach of South St. The Tearman Motel, the Daily Journal Building, and Greenlawn Cemetery are resources afforded protection under Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act, which includes protections for parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic resources. Coordination with INDOT and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) determined that this project will temporarily occupy the Tearman Motel property and a *de minimis* finding was issued for the Daily Journal Building and Greenlawn Cemetery. No relocations of residents or businesses will be required for this project. Some entrance/exit drives to businesses will be relocated or removed. Three streams are present in the project area: Youngs Creek, an Unnamed Tributary (UNT 1) to Youngs Creek, and Canary Ditch. No work will take place in Youngs Creek; therefore, no impacts to Youngs Creek are anticipated. Approximately 3 linear feet of UNT 1 to Youngs Creeks will be permanently impacted in order to replace the small drainage structure from which the stream originates. Approximately 217 linear feet of Canary Ditch will be permanently impacted by replacing the structure and placing riprap in the stream for erosion control. Approximately 27 linear feet of Canary Ditch will be temporarily impacted in order to place a temporary dewatering system. A total of 15 wetlands, totaling 1.42 acres in area, were identified within the project area. A total of 0.982 acres of wetlands will be impacted by this project in order to install new storm sewer, to construct the new multi-use trails, to construct traffic loons, and to re-grade ditch flowlines. A total of 1.88 acres of trees will be removed in order to complete this project.

The total cost estimate for the project, including construction, right-of-way, and engineering, is currently \$50,137,974. The project is scheduled for letting in December 2022. The maintenance of traffic will include an alternate detour route using I-65 and I-465 for through traffic on US 31. For local traffic, US 31 will remain open for the duration of construction. Construction will take

place in phases with a total of 6 phases planned. Construction is expected to begin in March 2023 and extend until August of 2025. Safety signage will be placed along the route and provisions will be made for access by local traffic and will be posted. School corporations, local officials, and emergency services will be notified of closures prior to construction.

The FHWA and INDOT have agreed that this project falls within the guidelines of a Categorical Exclusion (CE) Level 3 environmental document. No significant adverse impacts to the human and natural environment were found during the creation of this environmental document.

Preliminary design plans along with the CE document are available for review at the following locations:

- INDOT Seymour District Website, www.seymour.indot.in.gov
- INDOT Seymour District Office, 185 Agrico Lane, Seymour, IN 47274
- Johnson County Public Library, 401 State Street, Franklin, IN 46131

In addition, project information, including the environmental document, may be mailed upon request.

A public hearing will be held in the Auditorium of Franklin Community Middle School, 998 Grizzly Cub Dr, on August 1, 2022 from 6pm to 8pm. Attendees are advised that face coverings and adherence to CDC guidelines for social distancing are recommended. 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 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 Victoria Veach, Ecologist, SJCA Inc., 1028 Virginia Ave, Suite 201, Indianapolis, IN 46203, 317-566-0629, or vveach@sjcainc.com. The public is also invited to provide comment on the Section 4(f) *de minimis* use of the NRHP-eligible Daily Journal Building and the NRHP-listed Greenlawn Cemetery.

With advance notice, INDOT will provide accommodations for persons with disabilities with regards to participation and access to project information as part of the hearing 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 accommodation be required please contact the INDOT Project Manager Terry Summers at tsummers@indot.in.gov or 812-524-3749.

This notice is published in compliance with the Code of Federal Regulations approved by the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation on July 7, 2021. Title 23, Section 771 (CFR 771.111(h)(1) 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."