



**I-69 Subcommittee Meeting Minutes**

**February 29, 2012 1:30pm**

**McCloskey Room (#135), City Hall, 401 N. Morton St., Bloomington, IN 47404**

*I-69 Subcommittee minutes are transcribed in a summarized outline manner. Meetings are not recorded.*

**I-69 Subcommittee:** Jack Baker (Bloomington Plan Commission), Richard Martin (Monroe County Plan Commission), Kent McDaniel (Bloomington Public Transportation Corp.), Bill Williams (Monroe County Highway Dept.), Dan Swafford (Ellettsville Town Council), Andy Ruff (Bloomington City Council), Mark Kruzan (Bloomington Mayor), Robert Tally (FHWA Indiana Division), Samuel Sarvis (INDOT).

**Others:** M. Allen, D. Goldblatt, C. Ayers, B. Layton, M. Ahearn, L. Jacobs, A. Reid, M. Hutton, D. Owens, C. Sorensen, V. Sorensen, T. Tokarski, L. Wishor, S. Walls, R. Thompson, M. Orton, S. Wells, R. Spaw.

**MPO Staff:** Josh Desmond.

Introduction of Sub-committee members and guests - The meeting opened at 1:35 PM.

Purpose of the sub-committee meeting – R. Martin gave a brief background report and identified the purpose of the meeting to update members on recent activities and discuss concerns identified on the list prepared after the January meeting. The previous meeting was devoted to the Participating Agency opportunity for 3 LPA participants of BMCMPPO.

R. Martin asked for comments and revisions of the BMCMPPO I-69 Sub-committee February 10, 2012 meeting minutes and receiving none and declared unanimity for approval.

R. Martin gave a brief overview of his report to the recent BMCMPPO Policy Committee meeting.

M. Allen, FHWA, gave a brief summary of the Participating Agency status and reported a schedule of monthly meetings through May 2013, to address progress and concerns during the Section 5 NEPA process including design elements, community importance of features, alternative screening, and document review. She indicated that the deadline for officially responding the Participating Agency opportunity was March 7, 2012.

R. Martin identified an initial response to the 'discussable concerns list' received from INDOT.

J. Desmond indicated that a special BMCMPPO meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2012 and 1:30PM to address the proposed Section 4 Construction amendments into the TIP. The room will be prepared with two podiums to allow more speaking opportunity for the public.

S. Sarvis stated that INDOT would submit a request to add Section 5 as a TIP amendment at the appropriate time in the Section 5 process.

R. Martin asked S. Sarvis to address the first item on the 'discussable concerns list' under agenda item 5 titled Conceptual designs for I-69/SR37 interchange. S. Sarvis stated that INDOT has decided not to install a traffic signal at the interchange as mentioned in the FEIS document and asked R. Thompson, Deputy Project Manager for Section 5 and URS employee, to explain the current two designs under consideration.

R. Thompson displayed a conceptual design called a 'trumpet' configuration that is fully directional, i.e. all ramps go to established routes. He also displayed a conceptual design called a 'diamond with double roundabout'. R. Martin asked him to explain the primary advantage of each design. R. Thompson stated that the 'trumpet' would move traffic at a higher speed and would be considered a system-to-system design that could even be used for the interchange of two interstates. The 'diamond' would move traffic at a lower speed and would be considered a system to arterial or collector design. SR37 is classified as a rural arterial. R. Tally noted that part the decision has to do with their approach to interstate design and development. The 'trumpet' was expected in situations with higher traffic volumes – 10's of thousands per day like I-465/US31. State highway interchange types vary widely. The Keystone Ave. interchange in Carmel is a 'diamond with double roundabouts'. S. Sarvis commented that roundabouts reduce crashes and the severity of crashes. R. Martin commented that the lower speed required by roundabout configurations reduce crashes and severity of crashes. R. tally stated that they tend to go to lower volume for system to arterial interchanges. S. Sarvis indicated that they do have operational concerns at Victor Pike for the 'trumpet' design and it cost about \$1.5 million more to build. Both options move the intersection away from the current SR37 alignment to ease construction congestion.

R. Martin asked about the assumption of lower traffic volume on SR37. We already have a projection for between 20 and 30 thousand vehicles per day on SR37 at this intersection. That seems to be approaching system-to-system traffic. We have thousands of Lawrence County residents that work in Bloomington every day that now use SR37. Why should we place another low speed impediment in their path to and from work?

R. Tally stated that there will need to be a ROD re-evaluation process to change from a Stop light to either of the other conceptual designs. That process will provide an opportunity for public comment. The more input the better and definitive, quantified input is better.

K. McDaniel asked if one or the other was better for Section 5 and was the choice a permanent part of the infrastructure. R. Tally stated that neither was "better" and that either would be a permanent solution. S. Sarvis stated that the 'trumpet' extends far enough North to impact the Fullerton Pike intersection because of ramp access lane and on-off traffic considerations. The 'diamond' give more options for the Fullerton Pike intersection.

R. Martin asked about the significant disadvantages of each design. R. Thompson stated that for the 'trumpet' is was driver expectation. The driver will expect to continue moving forward off of the interchange and not expect the stoplight at Victor Pike. S. Sarvis added that the roundabout does cause traffic mixing at low speed. R. Thompson stated that the 'trumpet' gives free flow traffic going south of SR37 but has more barrier rail to separate traffic. K. McDaniel asked about design speed. R. Thompson stated that the 'diamond with double roundabout' had a 20 mph entering speed limit and the 'trumpet' had a 45 mph entering speed. R. Martin asked about the reason for the cost difference and R. Thompson stated that the 'trumpet' required curved bridge supports and additional barrier rail. R. Tally stated that the design speed going north was 45 mph for both options. The reason to use the slower design speed is the need to stop at Victor Pike coming off of the higher ramp.

R. Martin asked about the drop from top of bridge to Victor Pike. B. Williams stated that it would be about 3% up and down to meet Federal requirements, confirmed by R. Thompson. Mr. Martin asked if there were other places on SR37 with similar grades – what about southbound a Tapp Road. B. Williams stated that the grade there was probably 5%. R. Martin noted that in any case the intersection at Victor Pike would be better than the current intersection at Tapp Road. In fact all of the grades on SR37 should be brought up to Federal interstate standards.

R. Martin asked B. Williams to report on traffic counts in the Victor Pike area. The most recent data is from 2009 when the work was done concerning road closures for Section 4 as previously reported to the BMCMPPO. North of Bolin Lane on Victor Pike was about 1500. Victor Pike is also a stone truck route. As part of the Section 5 work he plans to recount all intersections in the next several months. R. Martin asked about the impact of closing That Road sine it had a count of 1035. B. Williams stated that the traffic would be routed to Rockport Road and R. Martin noted that there was no intersection with I-69. B. Williams commented that while examining the Fullerton Pike project plan one of the engineers got the impression that Road was used to by-pass Bloomington's south-east side. S. Sarvis stated that he had just received information showing Victor Pike west of SR37 at 2500 and east of SR37 at 4600. R. Martin noted that these values likely included the commercial activity near the intersection. K. McDaniel ask what other roads might be closed. S. Sarvis stated others will be the result of the Section 5 process. B. Williams noted he has a concern for trucks on tight roundabouts and wanted to know if the size could be increased. R. Thompson stated that would increase the risk but they do have a truck apron. R. Tally stated that driver expectation is better managed by roundabouts. There are pro's and con's on both sides.

R. Martin stated that because of the change in travel profile for people in Lawrence County we will need to reach out to them in particular during the public comment period. R. Tally stated that models of people behavior as roadways change are not precise. Time of travel will likely reduce time going south for those entering I-69 on the west side of Bloomington but there is no way to measure what people will do. R, Martin stated that the traffic design specification for traffic flow over the life-time of

use could be 30-40K. R. Tally stated that their design criteria use 20 year time horizons. R. Thompson added that both designs have a level of service A over the 20 year life.

R. Martin moved on to the next item dealing with noise mitigation and asked R. Tally to explain the Federal Policy. R. Tally stated that each state develops noise policy that must be applied consistently and it is often complex and controversial. The policy is on the INDOT website with 2011 the latest update. Appropriate analysis is conducted with appropriate receptors identified. He stated that he was aware that some property owners were concerned about the FEIS and ROD decisions but that some of those properties are being acquired for other reasons. Policies for noise walls must be applied consistently but there are other options like context sensitive solutions, line of sight barriers, and vegetative buffers. FHWA is open to discussion with INDOT on approaches. To consider changes in land use policies where we have zoned and planned lots in a timeframe, we can consider them as receptors but future potential actions are not considered. New development needs to be the responsibility of developers. In particular, plantings and other barriers that are not noise walls might be considered. S. Sarvis stated that INDOT has the same position. R. Martin commented that the policy tends to force local action to plat prior to market need to protect future growth patterns. What about using adjacent property for noise mitigation? R. Tally indicated that narrow strips were to be considered adequate for mitigation purposes. Ms. Flum stated that in several cases INDOT had purchased larger parcels next to I-69 as part of the mitigation activity. M. Allen commented that they were giving more thought to ROW mitigation. R. Tally stated that agencies look for contiguous areas rather than strips.

R. Martin asked M. Allen to report her recent involvement with the Karst MOU process and drainage issues. M. Allen stated that while FHWA is not a signatory of the Karst MOU, it did have oversight of the process as part of its responsibilities. She reported on a recent design review meeting that started with feature identification and discussion of treatments possible followed by field visits to verify situation and recommendations for treatment. This is a continuing process all along the corridor to identify features, analysis options, and prepare design specifications for treatment. They discuss water treatment options for each feature and each design contract. J. Baker asked about the origin of the MOU and list of participants. M. Allen indicated that it resulted from the SR37 process several years ago and included both State and Federal agencies (IDEM, Section 401 staff, storm water staff, Fish and Wildlife, groundwater specialists, DNR, INDOT and Karst specialists – partial list). Ms. Flum stated that the MPOU was signed in 1993 and since then any karst must have an agreement specific to the project in which it occurs. State and Federal agencies are the signatory bodies.

R. Martin moved the discussion to item 5.d. regarding the schedule for completion of Section 4. S. Sarvis stated that INDOT expected to let the contract for Segment 9 of Section 9 in October 2012 with construction to start in early 2013 and open to traffic by the end of 2014.

R. Martin moved the discussion to item 6.a. regarding the relationship between Section 4 traffic and Section 5. R. Tally stated that safety was FHWA's highest priority. They have seen an uptick in crash

reports in Indiana after successive decreases. Section 5 is in the NEPA process with design appropriate to making an informed decision. There will be no final design without BMCMPPO TIP inclusion. They have an aggressive plan to get ROD by June of 2013 so that improvements are determined and the sequence of improvements is established. SR37 is an existing facility. They are carrying forward the Tier I effort and adding a new template. At the end of the NEPA process they will have a preferred alternative. Their concern is to identify most vulnerable pieces of Section 5 and the impact of that improvement on other aspects of the sequence. Appendix QQ talks about some of those safety issues. The intent is to do as much as possible to address the issues in QQ. They need the Participating Agencies there and proceeding in a timely fashion. INDOT could advance specific improvements but do not want to segment Section 5 planning. They will consider only a complete Section 5 plan. S. Sarvis stated that R. Tally did a good job of explaining the goals. We were successful in letting contracts after ROD in other Sections. We sometimes work with at-risk funds to address highest priorities first. R. Tally stated the goal of USDOT is to expedite projects and they will use every option possible to advance a project.

R. Martin asked how to we manage the TIP and safety improvements. R. Tally replied that focusing on the EIS preferred or best performing alternative and hope the draft in September will accomplish that objective. He expects reports from the Participating Agencies to BMCMPPO on progress and in the time window between September 2012 and March 2013 there will be the opportunity to amend the TIP so the project is ready to proceed. S. Sarvis added that he expects a request for PE and ROW after public comments is complete this summer. Delay until March for PE and ROW would make it unlikely to set a contract for safety issues in Section 5 prior to Section 4 opening.

R. Martin moved the discussion to item 7.a. concerning actions going forward. He requested a recap of the timeline for Section 4 and S. Sarvis stated that it would take two construction seasons to complete work with opening by the end of 2014. R. Martin asked for clarification of amendment requests from INDOT. S. Flum stated that Section 4 is the only outstanding issue. R. Martin charged INDOT to clarify that Section 5 TIP inclusion was not an impediment to State approval of the 2012 – 2015 BMCMPPO TIP prior to the March 9 meeting.

R. Martin agreed to take on the task of preparing a summary of the Section 4 and Section 5 timelines discussed for review by FHWA and INDOT.

R. Martin asked sub-committee members if they felt it desirable to make a recommendation regarding the Section 4 interchange. K. McDaniel stated that he did not feel qualified to do that. R. Tally stated that they do need to get public input through the re-evaluation process. You are asking the right questions and can aid in getting the information out to those interested. S. Sarvis added that they may need to do some ad-hoc review of outstanding Section 4 issues going forward and indicated that it would be best to do that with MPO staff.

R. Tally stated that the BMCMPO needed to use the TAC as a resource to perform continuing communication. R. Martin requested the media attending to help make the public aware of re-evaluation process – particularly those using SR37 to go to work. R. Tally stated that they expect the re-evaluation to be released in late March. S. Flum stated that INDOT expected a 15 – 30 day comment period. R. Martin suggested that since many of the IU employees used SR37 it would be good to target them for awareness of the interchange re-evaluation process.

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 PM.

Minutes prepared by Richard Martin and Josh Desmond.

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