

**Public Comments Concerning
I-69 Section 4 (May Creek to State Road 37 segment)
11-1-10**

Note from MPO staff: All public comments have been arranged in the order they were received. The comments have been copied verbatim with the following exceptions: email addresses have been removed from the "From:" line; the "To:" and "cc:" lines have been eliminated; and extra line spacing has been removed to condense the overall length of this document.

From: Linda Greene
Date: Sat, Oct 2, 2010 at 2:46 PM
Subject: I-69 & TIP

I urge you to omit I-69 from the TIP. The highway is a disaster and should be kept out of the TIP. I also urge you to read the attached article, which will give an picture of local opposition to the highway.

<http://www.bloomingtonalternative.com/node/10570>

Linda Greene
7487 N. John Young Rd.
Unionville, IN 47468

From: Grey Larsen
Date: Tue, Oct 26, 2010 at 7:57 AM
Subject: I-69 amendment to MPO TIP

Dear Members of the MPO.

I am totally opposed to the construction of a new-terrain I-69. It is just plain nuts and corrupt to build a new-terrain highway. Whose interests would it serve? It would be far too expensive as well.

We need to use and upgrade our existing roads instead, not running people off of the land.

Please stand up to InDOT's threats. Please vote NO to including I-69 in the TIP! Please continue to support our quality of life in Bloomington and Monroe County!

Thank you,

Grey Larsen

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Grey Larsen

<http://www.GreyLarsen.com>

Author of The Essential Guide to Irish Flute and Tin Whistle

Irish Flute Concerts and Educational Programs

Producer, Mastering Engineer, Recording Engineer, Music

Editor

PO Box 2652, Bloomington, IN 47402-2652, USA

From: **Rupp, Robin F**

Date: Tue, Oct 26, 2010 at 5:20 PM

Subject: no to I-69, please

To all on the MPO,

I would like to add my opinion to the mix. Please support local roads and oppose I-69!

Thanks for your hard work,

Robin Rupp

From: **James R. Pennell**

Date: Tue, Oct 26, 2010 at 5:46 PM

Subject: New terrain I-69

As someone who dearly loves the southern part of our state and its natural beauty, please DO NOT SUPPORT the new terrain route between Evansville and Bloomington. This will result in destruction of forests, farmland, and natural beauty that we can never reverse. We also don't need the added expense, and have existing roads that could use the attention and funds.

James and Greta Pennell

Indianapolis

From: **Heidi Zurcher-Neely**

Date: Tue, Oct 26, 2010 at 7:14 PM

Subject: Stop I-60

Hello,

I am opposed to the I-69 plan as it now stands. It seems to be a complete waste of money. There are certainly other ways to improve the compute from Evansville to Indianapolis than by wiping out so much of our farmland and communities.

I've been opposed to this proposed plan since it was first suggested years ago. I can not understand why our Indiana government continues to push for it, when it is clearly opposed by so many. It continues to make me wonder if there are some in the decision making process who will profit from this, because it doesn't seem logical.

Please consider using/improving local roads and highways.

Thank you,

Brian and Heidi Neely

(Greenwood)

From: **Cheek, Amy M**

Date: Wed, Oct 27, 2010 at 7:29 AM

Subject: oppose new terrain I-69

Hello,

Please support local roads and oppose the new terrain I-69. The construction costs, destruction of farmland and forest, and limited road access are excellent reasons to oppose I-69.

Sincerely,

Amy Cheek

410 Eastside Dr.

Bloomington, IN 47401

From: **Kercheval, Aaron Christopher**

Date: Wed, Oct 27, 2010 at 12:38 PM

Subject: I-69 amendment to MPO TIP

To whom it concerns,

My wife and I have lived for 18 years in a two-story, brick, Greek Revival farmhouse built in 1865. We chose the house because of its historical significance and bucolic location. Currently, I-69 will run 300 yards from our home. Of course, impact studies have concluded that the superhighway will not affect us. (Who makes up the criteria by which that is decided?!) Aesthetics are of the highest value to my wife and me. Our quality of life will be immeasurably harmed by the construction of this interstate highway, the stated need for which is still unconvincing. Sadly, I realize that for people who will profit from this endeavor, aesthetics is an abstract and insignificant issue. So let me address the harm that I-69 will do to us in terms that have more meaning for the money-minded.

My wife and I will be cut off from Bloomington and Indiana University where we both work. We will have to drive two to three times as far every day to get to work as well as the social and arts events that were an important factor in our decision to move to Bloomington in the first place. This will triple our fuel costs, increase auto maintenance and repair costs and reduce the life span

of our cars. That is a lot of money coming directly out of our pockets! Also, spending triple the amount of time driving in increased traffic on local roads not designed for heavy traffic will rob us of an hour every day. (I realize increased driving time may fall into the aesthetics category for those who measure value only in terms of money, so feel free to move the last sentence to the first paragraph.)

Regardless, building I-69 will cost my wife and me real money. Abstract projections of envisioned economic prosperity resulting from such projects are rarely realized. So I must conclude that someone is going to make money now. What I want to know is, who, (specific individuals and groups), is going to make money from our loss?

Aaron Kercheval

Aaron Kercheval, Ph.D.
Indiana University School of Education
akerchev@indiana.edu
812.825.7506

From: **Venstra, Elizabeth**
Date: Fri, Oct 29, 2010 at 3:06 PM
Subject: I-69 in TIP for MPO

Dear folks of the MPO,

I would like to share my concerns about INDOT's request for you to include I-69 in the TIP, which I understand will come up at the meeting on November 5, which I will, unfortunately, be unable to attend. To be fair, I will admit up front that perhaps you ought not to consider my comment, since I do not live in Monroe County (and I am speaking here as a private individual and not for B-TOP). However, I do spend a great amount of time on a daily basis in Bloomington, so I am concerned about the future of the community, broadly defined. Moreover, I-69 will impact residents of Greene County as well, so I am glad that so far the local leaders in the Bloomington/Monroe County government have been more enlightened on this matter than the local leaders in Solsberry seem to be!

I hope you will resist INDOT's pressure and vote no. I do not believe I-69 will be a benefit to this area, but a detriment. It will divide the areas it passes through and close local roads, forcing people to drive long distances around in some cases. It will likely make it more difficult to promote alternative transportation in this area. It may bring high volumes of heavy truck traffic, increasing emissions that could impact our health (not to mention increasing global warming) and decreasing safety due to the high speeds. On the other hand, in the long run, it is likely to prove unnecessary, as the world will, perforce, be moving away from this type of transportation when we pass the point of 'peak oil'.

In my view, INDOT has consistently shown a disregard for the desires of our community. Please don't give in.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Venstra
Knowledge Management team
UITS Online Support
(812) 855-0459
erytting@indiana.edu

From: **Chris Doran**

Date: Sat, Oct 30, 2010 at 11:48 AM

Subject: Please do not include I-69 in TIP

Dear Metropolitan Planning Organization:

Please do not include I-69 in your Transportation Improvement Plan. There is nothing about I-69 that will improve transportation for Monroe County or Bloomington. It will wreak irreparable damage on the quality of life in the region, and it is quality of life that makes Bloomington and the surrounding area unique and wonderful versus anywhere else in the state, or possibly even the entire country.

As you are aware, residents of Bloomington and Monroe County are strongly opposed to this highway being built. Also as you are probably aware, the highway is by no means a done deal, and INDoT has not adequately disclosed how they are going to pay for it. Already they have cheapened many aspects.

Also as you are aware, by INDoT's own rules, Section 4 does not have to be built. Each section must prove its own independent utility. On that basis alone, there is clearly no utility for Section 4, which is overwhelmingly opposed by the very citizens it is supposed to benefit.

I understand the state and INDoT are putting a great deal of pressure on the MPO and the mayor to include I-69 in the TIP. This is blatant bullying and should be denounced publicly. The citizens of the city and county will support you, as evidenced by the support shown for and leading to resolutions passed by both the city and county governments opposing I-69.

Including I-69 in the TIP will help facilitate billions taken from other areas of the state that are already desperately underfunded. Indiana as a state is shameful in its provision of basic life amenities to the poor, unemployed, and those families with physical or mental disabilities. Again, Bloomington and Monroe County are different. And it is these differences in values that is the dominant reason Bloomington and the area is so cherished by its citizens, and so admired by so many others who wish they could live in a similar community.

And it is why you should not only do the right thing, but do the thing expected and demanded by the overwhelming number of your constituents: VOTE NO TO INCLUDING I-69 in the TIP.

Please!

Regards,

Christopher Doran
Tecumseh House, 817 North Jackson
Bloomington, Indiana 47404

From: **CARR**
Date: Sun, Oct 31, 2010 at 4:56 PM
Subject: Comments on MPO I-69 amendment

Mr. Hess,

Please distribute these comments to the members of the MPO.

Thank you,
Thomas Tokarski

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Thomas & Sandra Tokarski
CARR
PO Box 54
Stanford, IN 47463
carr@bluemarble.net
812-825-9555
800-515-6936

29 October 2010

Comments by Thomas Tokarski for Citizens for Appropriate Rural Roads (CARR), to the Bloomington/Monroe County MPO concerning the request to amend the TIP to include Section 4, in whole or in part, of the proposed I-69 extension.

I have respect for all members of this MPO. You are, indeed, serving the people. And that is all we ask of you. You are not required to be an underwriter for the political ambitions of the Governor. Nor are you expected to be pawns in the service of any other state or federal agency. We ask no more than that you do your job intelligently and honestly and in the best interest of the people of this MPO district. Thank you for your service.

It is obvious that INDOT and FHWA, working hand in hand, with no other oversight, want very badly to have I-69 endorsed by this MPO. This will negate the overwhelming opposition to this highway among the citizens of this area. It will be used to show that Bloomington and Monroe County have finally gotten in line with I-69. It will also be used to get funding for the highway. If you put I-69 in the TIP you are, in fact, endorsing and asking that I-69 be built. It will not be a meaningless formality. INDOT will see to it that a vote to put I-69 in the TIP will cancel out any other actions that have been taken to object to I-69.

I-69 is a politically driven highway that will prevent responsible transportation planning in this community. It is so expensive, even in its cheaper version, that other more desirable transportation plans for this community will go unfunded. I-69 is a money sink that will eliminate funding for many other projects here and in the rest of the state. This is already happening.

INDOT's threat of extortion must not be condoned or surrendered to. If INDOT cuts funding for other projects because this MPO does not do its bidding, that is extortion. It is absolutely contrary to the spirit and the law that underpins this body. It is also undemocratic and offensive to the principle of equality among partners in this MPO. We ask you not to give in to threats and become a pawn doing INDOT's bidding. That is not your responsibility.

Section 4 must be fiscally constrained or it cannot be in the TIP. Based on the chart in the agenda/packet for the September 10th MPO meeting, Section 4 will cost \$546 million. \$192 million of the funding for construction is listed as "Illustrative" and will be spent after 2013. This nebulous funding category, beyond the time requirements of the TIP, does not demonstrate fiscal constraint. As far as we can tell, all of this money will come from the pots of money INDOT uses for all of its projects in the state. There is no special pot of federal money for I-69. Sections 1-3 are being built with the money from the long-term lease of the northern toll road. The balance of that fund is unknown and efforts to find out how much is left have been rebuffed. We do know that 19 projects that were to be funded by Major Moves have been delayed beyond 10 years. We also know that gas tax revenues are down.

If regular gas tax dollars are to be the source of funding for I-69, Section 4, then ironclad verification of this funding must be given to the MPO before including Section 4 in the TIP.

Indeed, it is our contention that the entire I-69 project should be fiscally constrained. It clearly is not. Since the project has been segmented, at a very minimum, each section should be fiscally constrained. INDOT's/FHWA's attempt to avoid this regulation is as obvious as it is unacceptable. If the money were there, there would be no reason for INDOT/FHWA not to certify that it is in the bank.

INDOT's/FHWA's latest approach to including I-69 in the TIP by reducing the project to one interchange, included in a 1.8 mile segment, is a scheme to avoid having to show fiscal constraint. One interchange does not an interstate make. **Clearly, this small piece is not the entire project as it will impact Bloomington/Monroe County. This MPO should demand that the impacts of the entire Section 4 be addressed. Not to do so is to allow its hands to be tied in its consideration of the impacts on the citizens it represents.** Local control is a fundamental principle of the MPO process. This MPO cannot make informed decisions if it is not allowed to consider all the information associated with a project. INDOT/FHWA are not acting as co-equal partners in the MPO process. They are acting like dictators.

Given INDOT's current backlog of unfunded projects in the state, members of the MPO should demand that INDOT/FHWA show us the money to build Section 4. If Section 4 is not in the TIP then federal funds cannot be used to build it. Putting Section 4 in the TIP based on false or misleading information about funding is improper and disrespectful of this MPO. It appears that INDOT and FHWA will say anything to get I-69 approved by the Bloomington/Monroe County MPO. In the 2004, Tier 1, ROD, (see Technical Memorandum 1), FHWA assured us that normal funding levels would be sufficient to build I-69. The cost of I-69, at that time was estimated to be \$1.78 billion. The cost is now estimated to be over \$3 billion. Clearly, the earlier cost estimate and availability of funds were wrong. Now we are again being asked to believe that INDOT has the money to build I-69, even though the cost has shot up. INDOT's efforts to cut costs only makes the problem worse and still leaves the cost out of reach of normal funding mechanisms. The Governor's accelerated construction schedule makes funding using normal funding means even less probable.

According to INDOT, each of the 6 sections of I-69 has "independent utility", i.e., each is studied and funded independently of the other sections and will have usefulness as an independent unit. Within the Tier 2 procedures, there is no legal requirement to build Section 4. Segmenting the project by using SIUs was a tactic used so INDOT would not have to show all of the costs and impacts for the whole route. But this also means they don't have to build every section. By INDOT's own rules, Section 4 does not have to be built.

Sections 5 and 6 have no source of funding and are unlikely to be built in the foreseeable future. This means that if Section 4 is built, much more traffic will be dumped on SR-37 with no plan for improvements to that already stressed highway. This will cause SR-37 to fail, i.e. it will become greatly congested and unsafe. This condition is borne out by the conclusion in the first DEIS for this highway. That EIS was for a highway from Evansville to Bloomington only. The DEIS states clearly that in that situation, with the highway ending at SR 37, over 85% of SR 37 would experience "saturated conditions" with a Level Of Service of E or F. (Draft EIS, Southwest Indiana Highway Corridor, March 1996, page 19.) In short, it would fail. This was part of the reason the highway was extended all the way to Indianapolis. Now we are in the same situation we were in 1996.

Lack of funding is a major problem for INDOT. It is uncertain if Sections 1-3 can be completed with available funds. INDOT is building those sections in bits and pieces for a reason. There is uncertainty as to whether the first three sections can be completed on schedule and on budget. Their plan appears to be to get it started in several separated segments and then go back to funders and say: gee, we ran out of money. We have sunk so much into this project that you must give us the money to complete it. This is a well-known and deceptive tactic that should be rejected. . Until those sections are completed why is INDOT pushing so hard to get Section 4 started? If they can't show the money is available to build it from start to finish, on schedule, then it should not be started. There are bridges decaying in the middle of cornfields in Illinois that were built until plans were changed. Now they serve as a reminder of past mistakes, but are we paying attention?

Even after the ROD has been approved for Sections 1-3, significant design changes are being made in those sections. Interchanges are being "deferred", which means they will likely never be built, bridges are being shortened which will cause the backup of more water and more flooding, shoulders are being narrowed. Medians are being narrowed, access roads and grade separations are being eliminated, more roads are being closed, pavement is being thinned and could be asphalt instead of concrete, depending on which is cheaper at the time of construction. These changes will make the highway less accessible, less durable and will result in more accidents and fatalities. The highway is being cheapened because the state does not have the money to build it as planned. As currently being designed, this will be a substandard highway.

INDOT is, in reality, asking the MPO for a blanket endorsement of I-69, and the MPO, at this time, does not know what that means. This is unacceptable in any type of plan. If I had a contractor design and build a house I would expect that it would have the agreed upon number of square feet, the designated number of bathrooms and bedrooms and the heating and air conditioning unit would be of the proper size. I would not accept it if the contractor came back and said, well, I can't build it to your specifications so you're getting only one bathroom and 2 bedrooms instead of 3 and a smaller heating and cooling system. And it will cost you twice as much. No! That is unacceptable.

I-69 is antagonistic to, an in outright contradiction to, many of the principles in this MPO's vision statement (copied below). Indeed, all of these needs can be satisfied without including Section 4 of I-69. With I-69, many will fail to be achieved.

transPortatlon Vlsion Statement (See page 5, 2030 LRTP)

Consistent with the planning requirements of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and the input of community leaders and citizens on transportation policies and problems, future transportation goals and objectives were prepared to reflect a vision for the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, and the Town of Ellettsville. The Vision Statement highlights the need to:

- *Develop a truly multi-modal system;*
- *Create a fully developed network of alternative transportation facilities;*
- *Reduce the number and length of auto trips;*
- *Achieve a better relationship between land uses to reduce auto dependency;*
- *Achieve the widest possible range of alternatives to the automobile;*
- *Make transportation investments that are consistent with comprehensive plans;*
- *Make transportation investments that protect the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life;*
- *Increase safety for all users of the transportation system;*
- *Support economic vitality through strategic transportation investments;*
- *Improve the movement of goods through the transportation system;*
- *Promote fiscally sound transportation investments and maximize financial resources; and*
- *Preserve existing transportation investments through operational improvements.*

The comment period for the DEIS, Section 4 ends on September 28th. The FEIS will not be done until the end of this year or next year. Until then, we have no idea what this highway will look like. Unfortunately, INDOT's statements cannot be trusted because they are likely to change. It is premature to include Section 4 in the TIP until you have a much better idea of how it will be designed and how it will impact this MPO district.

We ask you to vote responsibly and not out of fear of retribution. If you really want I-69 to cut through this county and this city, regardless of how it may be designed, then vote yes to include I-69 in the TIP. If you don't want it here, or if you have doubts and unanswered questions then you should vote no, at least until all your questions and doubts are addressed. As policy makers who are deciding the fate of this community, we expect you to act in the best interest of our community.

Please, do not amend the TIP to include any portion of I-69; to do so is to accept I-69 in its entirety.

From: **Morgan Hutton**

Date: Sun, Oct 31, 2010 at 7:22 PM

Subject: public comment regarding I-69 TIP amendment

Please accept the attached public comment on behalf of The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce regarding the I-69 TIP amendment.

Morgan Hutton

Director of Advocacy

The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce

400 West 7th Street, Ste. 102

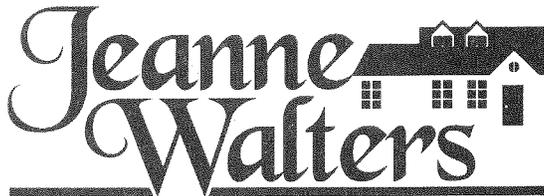
Bloomington, IN 47404

☎ 812.336.6381 📠 812.336.0651



The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce urges the Bloomington/Monroe County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to amend the 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include the Section 4 segment of I-69 from May Creek to State Road 37. The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) has requested this TIP amendment to maintain the accelerated schedule to complete sections of I-69 spanning from Evansville and into Monroe County. The Chamber recognizes that not all MPO members personally support I-69. This amendment is not intended to signify blanket approval of the project in its entirety or a specific route alternative or design. Construction is underway in Sections 1 through 3, and it is of critical importance that planning officials actively participate in the planning process to ensure a best case scenario for Sections 4 and 5 which fall in the MPO's planning jurisdiction.

I-69 will have a measurable effect on our community with impacts to traffic flow, shipment of goods, access to area businesses and neighborhoods, emergency response, school bus routes, the environment and the overall aesthetics of the gateway into Bloomington and Monroe County. Granting this TIP amendment will signify the MPO's intent to remain cooperative partners in the planning process and further the ability of the community to be involved in discussions and decision making as planning for the highway proceeds.



Real Estate

Mayor Mark Kruzan,

We are aware of your past efforts to retain the quality of life in Bloomington by opposing the construction of I-69 through the city. This highway would divide our city in many ways. We thank you for those efforts.

As members of the business community in Bloomington and Monroe County we now strongly urge you and the members of this MPO to resist including any portion of I-69 in the Bloomington/Monroe County MPO's transportation plans.

Dividing our community with I-69 will change the character of Bloomington and Monroe County in ways it will be difficult or impossible to control. This city and county are bright spots in Indiana's economy without I-69. As you know, we are part of a very special community which you helped to create.

INDOT is not being honest about the I-69 project--funding sources to complete this highway are vague or absent. Indeed, due to budget shortfalls, funding to complete the highway is in doubt.

INDOT cares less about the integrity of Bloomington than about finishing the highway for political ends. This could result in very negative economic impacts on Bloomington.

I-69 will have seriously negative environmental impacts in SW Indiana. As citizens of this state, we feel we cannot condone a destructive highway that will impair the quality of life for so many citizens and further degrade our environment.

We also recognize there is widespread opposition to I-69 in our community. In a democracy we think that should matter. We believe we can work towards a better future without this destructive highway.

Thank you again for your help in keeping Bloomington a special place to live and work.

Jeanne Walters

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Merubeth Under
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*Joni Canada
Howard's Bookstore
101 W. Kirkwood
Bloomington In 47404*