

#010 Regional Interstate Accessibility

April 2011

Opportunity: Improve access to our business and manufacturing centers in Northeast Indiana in order to reap the full economic benefit of existing transportation corridors

Background: Northeast Indiana's economic vitality and ability to remain competitive depend on the efficient transport of people and goods to the nation and the world. The Interstate Highways connects Northeast Indiana to numerous markets throughout North America and to vital ports critical for exporting our products to international destinations. Access to Interstate 69 and Interstate 80/90 is critical for efficiently moving raw materials, people and services to our production facilities, and moving the products and refined materials to market. The Interstate Highway System provides the level of mobility necessary to compete in today's global business climate.

The interstate highway system is the "work horse" of the nation's highway system that serves major population centers, international border crossings, ports, airports, public transportation facilities, and other intermodal transportation facilities and major transportation destinations; meet national defense requirements; and serve interstate and interregional travel. Representing just over one percent of the nation's highway system mileage, the interstate highway system carries nearly one quarter of all roadway traffic.

A region's industrial and employment base is closely tied to the quality of the transportation system. Good, dependable transportation infrastructure allows businesses to receive inputs to production facilities and to transport finished goods to market in an efficient manner. An efficient transportation system allows companies to lower transportation and production costs that result in higher productivity and profits.

Funds invested to upgrade or maintain the quality of access to the Interstate system enable firms to ship and receive goods more cheaply (as trucks can reach destinations without major delays) and to improve service (as delivery schedules become more reliable). Subsequently, more timely and reliable deliveries allow firms with efficient Interstate access to minimize their stationary inventories, thereby saving inventory and storage costs and enhancing productivity. Collectively, this translates into higher productivity for the entire region.

Update – September, 2011:

The Regional Chamber announced on August 26, 2011 that it has begun to concentrate efforts on the Lafayette Center Road extension project (#2 potential project below). The effort includes the establishment of a multi-county, public-private taskforce that will serve as the chief advocate and public voice of the proposal. Its goal is to enhance infrastructure along four miles of county road between I-69 at the General Motors cloverleaf and US 24 at the town of Roanoke. While the Regional Chamber's top priority is the Lafayette Center Road extension project, their policy committee is continuing to prioritize other regional transportation projects (many of which are included below).

Citizens Advisory Panel Feedback – September 28, 2011

Impact

- Would have the ability to distribute product through Midwest/get materials into region
- Could attract new business – increase jobs

Difficulty

- Hard to accomplish because of housing additions
- Need to improve maintenance of roads – costly
- Economy – convincing people it's important

Possible Opportunity Strategies:

1. Prepare feasibility studies to estimate economic benefits and real costs for specific highway projects that improve interstate access.
2. Work with the Indiana Department of Transportation to assist in financing roadway projects that improve access between industrial and business centers in Northeast Indiana and the Interstate system.
3. Identify other funding strategies for projects that provide efficient interstate access.

Potential Projects:

Interstate 69

1. Bluffton-State Road 124 (Super 2)
2. Wabash, Huntington and Roanoke – Road 900 W (Huntington County) and Lafayette Center Road (Allen County)
3. New Haven and Fort Wayne – Ryan Road/Bruick Road Interchange @ US 24
4. New Haven, Woodburn and Fort Wayne – US 24 and I-469 interchange
5. Ossian – US 224
6. Markle – US 224
7. Kendaville-US 6
8. Waterloo – US 6
9. Garrett – SR 8
10. Churubusco, La Otto, Ari, Garrett and Auburn-County Road 11 A, County Road 56 and State Road 205
11. Ashley/Hudson and Hamilton – State Road 4 and County Line Road/800 South

Interstate 80/90

12. Orland – State Road 327
13. Shippshewana – State Road 5
14. Kendaville, Mongo and Brighton–State Road 3

Options:

- A. Pursue opportunity
- B. Obtain further information
- C. Realign/Refocus the opportunity
- D. Put aside for future consideration