

Meeting: Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting #4

Time and Date: August 6, 2024, 2:00 – 3:30 PM CT

Location: Student Union Library Building, Room 327 | PNW Hammond Campus

Attendees:

Name	Organization & Role
LaLosa Burns	City of Gary, director of communications
Kevin Elmore	IU Northwest, executive director
Nate George	City of Gary, public works
Eman Ibrahim	NIRPC, planning manager
Steven Kaminsky	Robinson Engineering, project engineer
Eric Kurtz	City of Hammond Schools, assistant superintendent
Gary Langston	Indiana Motor Truck Association, president
Scott Rakos	Hammond City Council, 6 th District
Michael Suggs	City of Gary, chief operations officer
William Allen	City of Gary, city engineer
Mike Yacullo	INDOT, project manager
Terri Fair	INDOT, environmental
Laura Hilden	INDOT, environmental
Sarah Ford	INDOT, technical services director
Scott Mason	INDOT, project manager
Kari Carmany-George	FHWA
Abell Gelaye	FHWA
Toby Randolph	Parsons, project manager
Mindy Peterson	Parsons, public involvement director
Tim Kent	Parsons, senior project engineer
Bill Montgomery	Parsons, traffic
Berry Craig	Parsons, public involvement specialist
Craig Moore	Parsons, traffic lead
Jennifer Graf	Parsons, environmental lead

Meeting Purpose: The meeting served as an update on the 80/94 FlexRoad project and next steps for the project.

1. Welcome and introductions
 - a. Mindy Peterson (MP), Parsons public involvement director, welcomed the group.
 - b. Self-introductions were made.
2. Project Presentation
 - a. The project presentation was led by MP and Toby Randolph (TR), Parsons project manager. It was interactive with discussion, as needed.
3. Role of CAC/Recap

- a. CAC members serve as liaisons between their organizations and the Project Team.
- b. The last CAC meeting was in late 2022; previous meetings in 2021.
4. Project Overview
 - a. 80/94 FlexRoad is expected to improve traffic flow and safety along Indiana's busiest corridor. The project extends from the I-65 interchange in Indiana to IL 394 on the west.
 - b. Innovative strategies are being developed to reduce travel time, increase reliability and improve safety.
 - c. Two primary needs have been identified for FlexRoad: congestion and safety.
 - d. The purpose of the project is to identify corridor improvements that will:
 - i. Increase the operational efficiency of the corridor by reducing travel times and increasing travel time reliability, and
 - ii. Improve safety in the corridor by reducing crashes.
5. Public Meetings
 - a. Two public meetings are scheduled next week: Wednesday, August 14, at the Hammond Sportsplex & Community Center and Thursday, August 15, at the Irwin Community Center. Both are 5:30 to 7pm with a 6pm presentation.
 - b. A recorded project update will also be posted to the website on August 14.
6. Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO)
 - a. Innovative TSMO strategies focus on operational improvements by maximizing the efficiency and safety of existing transportation systems.
7. Anticipated Improvements
 - a. Several improvements are planned including inside median shoulder reconstruction, concrete pavement restoration, and improvements to the Broadway and I-65 interchanges.
 - b. TSMO Strategies under consideration include ramp metering, variable speed limits, dynamic lane control, dynamic shoulder lanes, event management strategies and improved signage.
 - c. Combining all TSMO strategies and the modifications at the two interchanges are anticipated to provide the greatest benefits to safety and mobility.
 - d. Digital gantries will be placed about every half mile to provide key information to drivers.
 - e. Two alternatives are under consideration at Broadway, including a Modified Signalized Intersection and a Multi-Lane Roundabout.
 - f. Improvements to fiber optics are expected to begin in 2025 and be complete by 2026. Minimal impacts to traffic are anticipated.
 - g. Existing fiber cables will be replaced with cables on both sides of the corridor, offering additional communications capacity and redundancy.
 - h. Construction on FlexRoad improvements is expected to begin in early 2026 and last three years.
8. Maintenance of Traffic (MOT)

- a. Four lanes of I-80/I-94 will be open in both directions most of the time. A minimum of three lanes will be open in both directions during overnight work.
- b. The ramp from I-80/I-94 East to I-65 South is expected to maintain two lanes at all times.
- c. Short-term closures will be needed for entrance and exit ramps. The Broadway exit ramp is anticipated to close for 60 days.

9. Talking TSMO

- a. An educational Talking TSMO campaign is planned to help share inform drivers of the nature of TSMO strategies and their effectiveness elsewhere.

10. Contact Channels

- a. The project website, IndianaFlexRoad.com has project information, maps and more. CAC and public meeting materials will be posted there.
- b. Sign up for project updates via email on the project website or by text by messaging "INDOT 8094FlexRoad" to 468311.
- c. INDOT4U contact channels are used with all feedback shared with the Project Team. Be sure to mention FlexRoad when contacting INDOT4U.

11. Group Discussion

Q: E. Ibrahim asked if anticipated traffic counts had been considered for the next 5-10 years.

A: C. Moore responded that improvements were designed for 2040 and anticipated traffic.

Q: E. Ibrahim indicated truck traffic is the main issue and wondered if a truck-only lane had been considered.

A: T. Randolph indicated it had been considered, but it was not a feasible option.

Q: S. Rakos asked if meeting notices had been shared for the upcoming public meetings.

A: M. Peterson said legal notices are not required for the public meetings, but several efforts have been made to publicize the meetings including a meeting release shared with a distribution list that includes nearly 5,000 people and the media, flyers in more than 20 community locations, digital flyers shared with project stakeholders, and boosted social media posts.