

**Meeting:** Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting

**Time and Date:** July 23, 2025, 9 to 10:15 a.m. CT

**Location:** Purdue University Northwest | Student Union Library Building, Room 353

**Attendees:**

Name	Organization	Role
Felix Gonzalez	City of Hammond	Director, Public Works
Scott Rakos	City of Hammond	Council President
Jesse Elam	Cook Co. Transportation & Highways	Director, Strategic Planning
Irene Pantoja	FHWA - IL	Transportation Engineer
Jay DuMontelle	FHWA - IN	Project Delivery Team Leader
Maria Castaneda	IDOT	Public Information Officer
Sean Martschinke	IDOT Bureau of Program Project & Safety Outreach	Chief
Mike Yacullo	INDOT	Project Manager
Brian Shattuck	INDOT	Project Manager
Betsy Whitmore	INDOT	Communications
Amy Stanley	INDOT	Customer Service Manager
Cindy Nunley	INDOT	Environmental Services
Cassandra Bajek	INDOT LaPorte District	Director, Public Relations
Tom Vanderwoude	NIRPC	Transportation Director
Scott Weber	NIRPC	Planner - Data Analytics & Modeling
Eman Ibrahim	NIRPC	Planning Manager
Toby Randolph	Parsons	Project Manager
Timothy Kent	Parsons	Senior Project Engineer
Mindy Peterson	Parsons	Director, Public Involvement
Berry Craig	Parsons	Public Involvement Specialist

**Meeting Purpose:** The meeting served as an update on the 80/94 FlexRoad project, provided a project overview, information on TSMO strategies, and discussed the role of CAC members.

1. Welcome and introductions
  - a. Mindy welcomed the group.
  - b. Self-introductions were made.
2. Project Presentation
  - a. The project presentation was led by Mindy Peterson, Parsons public involvement director, and Toby Randolph, Parsons project manager. It was open for discussion throughout.
  - b. Topics included the role of the CAC, a public hearing overview, a project overview, environmental impacts, anticipated improvements, Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) Strategies, and the next steps for the project.

3. Community Advisory Council (CAC)
  - a. CAC members discuss project-related issues or concerns and serve as liaison between community or organization and Project Team.
  - b. CAC members share views and identify local concerns in two-way communications with Project Team, serving in advisory role and share project information with others.
4. Public Hearing Overview
  - a. An open-house portion of the hearing will occur before and after the 6 p.m. presentation.
  - b. Verbal comments will be heard following the presentation and responses will be provided in the final environmental document expected later this year.
  - c. Both hearings will be streamed live ([bit.ly/FlexRoadIndianaHearing](http://bit.ly/FlexRoadIndianaHearing) and [bit.ly/FlexRoadIllinoisHearing](http://bit.ly/FlexRoadIllinoisHearing)). Comments will be recorded as feedback received during the formal comment period.
  - d. A recorded project update will also be posted to the website after both hearings have concluded.
  - e. The public hearings were publicized through e-blasts to stakeholders and the public, publishing a legal notice in Indiana and Illinois, as well as sharing flyers at 19 community locations.
  - f. Formal comment period: Tuesday, July 8 – Friday, Aug. 8, 2025
  - g. The draft Categorical Exclusion Level 4 document is available at 6 community locations.
  - h. Hearing materials – including a project handout, comment form, and comment box - are shared at 8 community locations.

<b>Borman Expressway Traffic Management Center</b>	7701 Melton Rd., Gary IN	CE 4 Document & Hearing Materials
<b>Homewood Illinois Public Library</b>	17917 Dixie Hwy, Homewood, IL	CE 4 Document & Hearing Materials
<b>IDOT Region 1 Office</b>	201 West Center Ct., Schaumburg, IL	CE 4 Document & Hearing Materials
<b>Indiana University Northwest Anderson Library</b>	130 W 35th Ave, Gary, IN	CE 4 Document & Hearing Materials
<b>Irwin Community Center</b>	18120 Highland Ave, Homewood, IL	CE 4 Document & Hearing Materials
<b>Lansing Public Library</b>	2750 Indiana Ave, Lansing, IL 60438	Hearing Materials
<b>Lincoln Community Center</b>	2450 Lincoln St, Highland, IN 46322	Hearing Materials
<b>Purdue University Northwest Library</b>	2233 173 <sup>rd</sup> St., Hammond, IN	CE 4 Document & Hearing Materials

5. 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 in Illinois.
  - b. Transportation Systems Management and Operation (TSMO) strategies are proposed to reduce travel time, increase reliability, and improve safety.

- c. They are a set of strategies focused on operational improvement to maximize the efficiency and safety of existing transportation systems.
  - d. They are typically deployed as a set of strategies and operate with flexible options that can be utilized throughout the corridor.
  - e. These include ramp metering, variable speed limits, dynamic lane control, dynamic shoulder lanes, event management strategies, and improved signage and queue warnings.
  - f. Improvements to the Broadway Avenue interchange and the I-65 interchange are also planned.
  - g. Construction is expected to start in 2026 and last three years.
6. Environmental Impacts
- a. All environmental studies and documentation have followed the protocol of both the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).
  - b. There are no major environmental impacts associated with FlexRoad including impacts to right-of-way, displacements, streams, tree clearing, historic/archeological resources, Section 4(f) or Section 6(f) resources. The limited wetlands impacts are due to gantry installations and grading for ramp construction.
7. Anticipated Improvements
- a. TSMO strategies include ramp metering, variable speed limits, dynamic lane control, dynamic shoulder lanes, event management strategies, and improved signage.
  - b. Combining all TSMO strategies and the modifications at the two interchanges are anticipated to provide the greatest benefits to safety and mobility.
  - c. Digital gantries will be placed about every half mile to provide key information to drivers.
  - d. Improvements to fiber optics are expected to begin in fall 2025 and be completed by summer 2026. Minimal impacts to traffic are anticipated.
  - e. Existing fiber cables will be replaced with cables on both the north and south sides of the corridor, offering additional communications capacity and redundancy.
8. Maintenance of Traffic
- a. Four lanes of I-80/I-94 open in both directions most of the time
  - b. Minimum three lanes of I-80/I-94 open in both directions during overnight work
    - i. 20-minute overnight closures of I-80/I-94 for overhead sign installation
  - c. I-80/I-94 East to I-65 South ramp to maintain two lanes at all times
  - d. I-80/I-94 Ramp Closures:
    - i. Closures needed for entrance and exit ramps within the corridor
    - ii. Short-term ramp closures expected to last up to two weeks
    - iii. I-80/I-94 eastbound to Broadway exit ramp expected to close for 60 days
  - e. Local roads adjacent I-80/I-94 requiring work to remain open with short-term lane restrictions
  - f. Shoulder closures and short-term lane closures anticipated during fiber optic cable replacement in 2025 and 2026

9. Follow Our Progress

a. Timeline:

- i. Summer 2025: Draft Environmental Document/Hearing
- ii. Fall 2025: Fiber Optics Work Begins
- iii. Late 2025: Final Environmental Document
- iv. Spring 2026: FlexRoad Construction Begins
- v. Late 2028: Construction Ends

b. The project website, [IndianaFlexRoad.com](https://IndianaFlexRoad.com) has project information, maps and more. CAC and public hearing materials will be posted there.

c. INDOT4U contact channels are used with all feedback shared with the Project Team. Be sure to mention FlexRoad when contacting INDOT4U.

10. Group Discussion

Q: J. Elam asked if alternate routes for events had been discussed?

A: T. Randolph discussed that those were initially considered but didn't fit with feasibility of the FlexRoad project.

Q: T. Vanderwoude asked if gantries could be fitted with tolling equipment later on?

A: T. Randolph noted tolling equipment could be fitted, but there are no discussions to do so.

Q: J. Elam asked if more power be needed to add tolling equipment to new gantries?

A: T. Randolph noted that tolling on the Borman Expressway is not part of the project. There are no plans to toll the Borman Expressway.