I-65/I-70 North Split Interchange Reconstruction Project Frequently Asked Questions

General Overview

- **What is the I-65/I-70 North Split Reconstruction Project?**
  The I-65/I-70 North Split Reconstruction Project includes:
  - Complete reconstruction of the North Split interchange
  - Rehabilitation, replacement and/or widening of 32 bridges
  - Pavement reconstruction
  - Reconfiguration of the I-65 exit/entrance ramps along 11th & 12th Streets
  - Addition of through lanes on I-65 and I-70

- **What are the goals of the project?**
  The I-65/I-70 North Split interchange was built 50 years ago and is nearing the end of its useful life. Reconstruction is necessary to decrease congestion and improve overall operations and efficiency for drivers.

- **What portions of the interstate will be affected?**
  This project includes mainline pavement and bridge rehabilitation, replacement and or widening on:
  - Approximately one mile of I-65/I-70 from the North Split to the Washington Street interchange (northern and southern limits)
  - I-65 from Meridian Street to the North Split (western limit)
  - I-70 from the North Split to just west of the Keystone/Rural interchange (eastern limit)

- **What is the project schedule?**
  Anticipated project milestones include:
  - Early 2018 – First public open houses
  - Mid 2018 – Preliminary design; draft project information published for contractor team review
  - Late 2018 – Final project information advertised
  - 2019 – Public Hearing held; Environmental Assessment completed; final contractor proposals submitted; and INDOT selects winning contractor team
  - Late 2019 to 2021 – Construction anticipated to begin
• **Why is this happening now?**
  The I-65/I-70 North Split interchange was built 50 years ago, is operating at full capacity and is at the end of its useful life. Specifically:
  o Many of the existing 32 bridges in the area need rehabilitation or replacement due to structural conditions.
  o Deteriorating pavement conditions require constant repair and patching for the roadway and shoulders.
  o The current I-65/I-70 North Split interchange has many complex lane change configurations that create “weaving” patterns and decrease safety.

• **How will the project benefit drivers in the area?**
  The interchange is operating at full capacity and traffic often slows or stops during peak travel times. The reconstructed interchange will minimize the number of lane changes drivers must maneuver to get to their destination, reducing congestion for motorists.

• **How will the region benefit?**
  The I-65/I-70 North Split is one of the most heavily-traveled interchanges in the state of Indiana, accommodating about 170,000 vehicles per day. Reconstructing the interchange; rehabilitating, reconstructing and widening the bridges; and adding capacity will ensure the interchange operates at current design standards through 2040. This decreases congestion, improves operations and efficiency for all motorists who use this busy area.

**Current Interstate**

• **Didn’t INDOT just fix the bridges downtown?**
  INDOT reconstructed the mainline pavement between the North and South splits – dubbed HyperFix – in 2003. Other projects near the North Split only addressed specific ramps or bridges that needed immediate repair. This is the first project to completely reconstruct the interchanges, bridges and pavement along the North Split since it was built in 1968.

• **How many vehicles travel this section of I-65/I-70 each day?**
  The I-65/I-70 North Split is one of the most heavily-traveled interchanges in the state of Indiana, accommodating about 170,000 vehicles per day.

• **How old are the current bridges?**
  Many of the 32 bridges in the project area were originally constructed in 1968.
• **How many bridges will be demolished and completely replaced?**
The project includes the reconstruction, rehabilitation or widening of 32 existing bridges and the addition of new bridges.

• **What will the new interchange look like?**
While the interchange will be reconstructed within the same general footprint, INDOT and the Project Team are in the preliminary design phase, so the exact configuration isn’t available yet. The team hopes to present the proposed configuration in 2018.

• **How will bicycle and pedestrian access be incorporated into this project?**
Maintaining bicycle and pedestrian connectivity will be part of the design and environmental review process. The Project Team will work closely with the Department of Public Works and local neighborhoods to consider the best approach to maintaining access during and after construction.

**Environmental Study**

• **What type of environmental analysis is required before construction can begin?**
INDOT and the Project Team will conduct an Environmental Assessment, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Environmental Assessment includes:
  o Projected changes of noise levels and their effects on local neighborhoods
  o How to maintain connectivity to local roads, trails, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities
  o Impacts to cultural resources, as required by the Section 106 process, which includes historic districts and properties
  o Feedback from state, local and federal resource and permitting agencies, e.g. IDNR, IDEM, et al.

• **What is NEPA?**
NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act, requires the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to assess environmental effects before making decisions concerning the construction of highways and other publicly-owned facilities.

• **How long is the NEPA process expected to take?**
INDOT and the Project Team estimate the NEPA process can take approximately two years. A public hearing on the Environment Assessment is anticipated in 2019.

• **Is there a way to expedite this project to make construction earlier?**
The Project Team has expedited the process as much as possible within NEPA guidelines. The NEPA process is comprehensive and assesses all impacts to homes, businesses and the natural environment.
- **What happens when the environmental process is over?**
  Once the Environmental Assessment is completed and a public hearing is held, INDOT will finalize the procurement documents and select the winning contractor team. To allow for final design, construction should begin approximately one year after the winning team is selected.

**Construction**

- **When will specific impacts to residents and businesses be identified?**
  Preliminary design is expected to be completed in 2018. This will identify impacts to specific properties and utilities.

- **What utilities will be impacted?**
  There are numerous utilities in the North Split project area. INDOT and the Project Team will work closely with these utilities to locate their facilities and design relocation plans.

- **How long will it take for utilities to relocate throughout the project area?**
  Until all utilities are located, the plans for relocating them in the project area are not available.

- **Will any businesses or homes be purchased for permanent or temporary right-of-way needs?**
  INDOT anticipates that only a handful of properties might be impacted by this project, and will do everything possible to keep right-of-way impacts to a minimum or avoid them entirely.

- **When will construction begin?**
  The Project Team is developing the procurement documents that will allow INDOT to select a contractor in 2019. Construction may not begin until late 2019 to 2021.

- **How do you plan to maintain traffic downtown?**
  The Project Team will consider many maintenance of traffic options to accelerate construction and provide the safest and most efficient operations in this heavily traveled area. Temporary closures of portions of the interstates will be considered based on:
  - Travel demands of regional commuters within the I-465 loop
  - State and local construction projects scheduled for the same time period
  - Safety of motorists and workers during construction
  - Public input
Financing and Funding

- **Is this part of Governor Holcomb’s Next Level Road initiative?**
  Yes, this project is part of Next Level Roads and is fully funded.

- **How much is project construction expected to cost?**
  Preliminary design and the Environmental Assessment will include developing a cost estimate for:
  - Utility relocations
  - Right-of-way acquisition
  - Engineering services
  - Construction materials and labor

- **How will local traffic flow be maintained during the construction?**
  INDOT is currently working on traffic modeling and will work closely with the Indianapolis Department of Public Works to analyze potential impacts to local streets. Specific impacts won’t be available until the Project Team further refines potential maintenance of traffic plans.

- **What procurement process might be used?**
  INDOT will use the Design-Build Best Value design and construction approach.
  - Design-Build accelerates the project schedule by allowing the successful contractor team to finalize design plans and construct the project simultaneously.
  - Best Value encourages contractors to propose value-added construction solutions that may accelerate construction and reduce costs.

- **Does this project have funding? Will it be owned and maintained by INDOT**
  The project is included in the Next Level Roads initiative and is fully funded. It will be owned and maintained by INDOT.
Public Involvement

- **How will local officials, stakeholder groups, and the public be involved?**
  
  A robust public involvement plan includes numerous stakeholders, including employers, local/state officials and neighborhoods. Tactics include:
  
  - Project website, social media, texting and e-newsletters
  - Media relations
  - Public meetings
  - Advisory committees
  - Presentations to local groups

- **How can the public stay informed?**
  
  INDOT and the Project Team plan to hold the first public open houses in early 2018. Those meetings will be promoted broadly via media relations, state listservs, INDOT social media, public legal notices and word-of-mouth. At that time, the project website ([www.in.gov/indot/3663.htm](http://www.in.gov/indot/3663.htm)) should be launched and residents can sign up for updates via social media, text messaging and e-newsletters.