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**Funds sought for Bright/I-74 connector study**

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A request for $40,000 will move forward to Dearborn County council to match federal funds for a possible feasibility study for a Bright/Interstate 74 connector road.

County administrator Terri Randall, asked county commissioners during their Tuesday night, Jan. 20, meeting for permission to request the money from council, in the absence of county engineer Todd Listermann.

Indiana Department of Transportation would provide $160,000 in federal funds to the Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Council of Governments for the feasibility study. The county would then need to provide a match of $40,000 for a total of $200,000.

The study can hopefully move forward, depending on the funds, said commissioner Kevin Lynch, who also is the OKI Board of Directors president.

According to the OKI 2040 Regional Transportation Plan, the Bright to I-74 connector would involve the construction of a new two-lane roadway from North Dearborn Road to I-74.

The estimated cost is listed as $54,601,300. The OKI 2040 plan was completed in June 2012.

Also included in the OKI 2040 plan, is a section discussing the potential environmental effects of the various listed projects.

The discussion regarding the proposed Bright to I-74 connector mentions concern for “the effects of a new roadway over the Whitewater River (for impacts from the bridge and new facility and the effects of additional development; the Whitewater River is classified by OKI as a Regionally Significant Stream.)”

According to the OKI 2040 plan, regionally significant streams are “high quality streams or stream segments identified for conservation or protection by the states” based on one or more listed criteria.

The criteria can be seen in the plan, available for online viewing at <http://www.oki.org/transportation/2040-plan/>

The study will help see if the connector road is a worthwhile project. As details develop, there will probably be some type of town hall meetings to gather public input.

The Bright/I-74 connector is not the only road plan being explored that may impact Dearborn County.

Over in Franklin County, a Brookville bypass has been mentioned in connection with that county’s proposed new comprehensive plan.

According to the *Brookville American-Democrat*, several Franklin County business owners expressed concerns about the bypass idea during the county’s January area plan commission meeting.

APC member Curtis Ward said the proposal for a byway is based on an INDOT proposal from around 25 years ago. He said INDOT found an easy way to connect Ind. 101 to U.S. 52, and Ind. 1 toward St. Leon that would allow heavy traffic to access I-74, according to the *Brookville American-Democrat*.

*Brookville American-Democrat* staff told the *Register*  they have not seen the route, although they requested a map.

The Franklin County APC will hold a public hearing at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11.