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UPDATE: Bright/I-74 Study survey shows that respondents want minimal or no action regarding roads

FEATURED IN THIS MONTH'S EDITION



EC FAA wins state horticulture contest

October 15, 2016



EC student is National Merit Semifinalist

October 15, 2016



3 EC students National Merit Commended Students

October 13, 2016

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The results from the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments' latest public-comment survey for the Bright/I-74 study show that most people who responded want minimal or no action regarding roads in the Bright area.

A majority – or 54 percent — of those responding that recommendations regarding “enhanced maintenance” of existing roads in the study area is unimportant to them. When the survey question



NoBright74 organizer Brian DeBruler, center, meets with Phil Darling and Les Finn at a public open house in September.

was narrowed to recommendations for specific roads – North Dearborn and Whites Hill — a much larger majority – 74 percent – considered those options unimportant. Others, however, mentioned roads outside the study area.

Many said there was no need for the study and to leave the area alone, and 82 percent said they would not be open to future public review and consideration of a local funding increase to implement the study recommendations.

During a 30-day comment period which ended Oct. 14, a total of 568 surveys were submitted through various sources, including a poll at a Sept. 14 Open House, online, and paper surveys collected at the North Dearborn Library. About 70 percent of the respondents live in the survey area.

As a result of earlier surveys and an online petition by NoBright74 in opposition to any new roads, options for connector roads between the Bright area and I-74 were eliminated from further study. The latest public comment period focused on fixing, repairing, maintenance or improvements to existing roads.

According to the summary provided by OKI:

Of the maintenance items listed in the survey, the public mentioned most frequently the need for repairing potholes, repaving, repairing slides/crumbling/deteriorated roads, addresses drainage/flood-prone areas, replacing guardrails and addressing sight obstructions.

Of the more than 100 maintenance-related comments:

- About a quarter stated a priority need for roads outside the scope of the Bright 74 Study
- No need for study, disagree with everything, leave area alone, not needed, etc.
- Don't widen was often accompanied by one or more of the following concerns, including: Proximity of road to homes and the safety of families and children, Increased taxes (do not support), negative impact to properties, land, homes, trees, property value, etc.;

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negative impact to rural quality of life, country feel, peace and quiet, etc.; increased vehicle speeds and/or traffic; increased commercialization of the area.

- The idea of roundabouts at various intersections was overwhelmingly opposed.

Specific proposals and more details about the survey can be found here: <http://bright74.oki.org/phase-3-alternatives-and-recommendation/>

The survey will be considered at the final meeting of the Bright Study Advisory Board on Wednesday, Oct. 26 at 6 p.m. at the North Dearborn Branch Library.

PRIOR STORY: (Aug. 18)

By Amanda Harper

UPDATE: All proposed options for new roads linking the Bright area with I-74 have been eliminated from consideration, while proposals for improving existing roads remains under study. The Bright/I-74 study is being conducted by the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) to find ways to mitigate transportation issues in the area.

The Bright/I-74 Advisory Committee on Aug. 17 heard results of a second community survey, which, like a prior survey, showed that most respondents do not want a new road and want to protect the rural character of the area. More than 500 people completed the second survey, said Dearborn County Commissioner Kevin Lynch, who serves as president of OKI. The survey results led to the elimination of a proposed Carr Road connector, a State Line Road connector and a Whites Hill connector. Options for upgrading current roads will continue to be studied. (See below for graphics and details for Concept 1.) The roads improvement option is estimated to cost between \$15 million and \$20 million.

An online petition in opposition to any new roads has been signed by 748 people and has 371 comments that they do not want this to happen, Brian DeBruler, who is organizing the effort, told the advisory committee on Aug 17. UPDATE: The petition number is 1,063 signatures and 462 comments as of Sept. 12. Here is the link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/nobright74group/>

Mr. DeBruler said the OKI surveys were “geared toward moving forward” and that the only spot to oppose was simply an empty box at the bottom and people are intimidated by that. He said

there is widespread opposition to the idea of a new road.

“Many moved here to get away from what you are trying to build up. This is the country — let it stay that way. This is a bedroom community and people know what they are moving into,” Mr. DeBruler said.

Other local residents attended the meeting to express opposition to a new road as well.

Regarding improvements to existing roads, Dearborn County Engineer Todd Listerman noted that some survey comments suggested roundabouts, perhaps at North Dearborn and State Line Roads. He wanted to see if there is any public interest in that.

A third Open House for people to view and ask questions about the remaining option was held on Sept. 14 at the East Central High School. Those attending asked questions about the impact of proposed changes to roads, particularly North Dearborn and Whites Hill.

A third survey online survey is in progress and ends Oct. 14. The results of the 2nd survey can be viewed at <http://bright74.oki.org/>. You can also participate in the 3rd survey at the link.

(Check back for updates.)

ORIGINAL STORIES:

UPDATE JULY 22: The Phase 2 Public Comment survey for the Bright/74 Study has been completed by the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Council of Governments. The survey sought public



At the Sept. 14 Open House, North Dearborn Road resident TJ Jacobs points out how proposed road changes may have an impact on homeowners and traffic.

comment on 3 possible options for new roads and 1 plan for improving existing roads. (See below for all 4 plans.)

According to OKI, the most frequently mentioned topics have been summarized to the following general, reoccurring “themes:”

- No new roads
- Priority should be given to straightening, improving, repairing existing roads (this was frequently accompanied by written support for Concept 1) (See below for Improve Existing Roads graphic)
- Preserve the rural, quiet, small town feel of the Bright Area
- Improvements are not worth the financial costs
- Improvements needed to other roadways not included in the four concepts
- Do not want more traffic, speeding, noise
- Concerns regarding negative impact to environmental/natural resources
- Concerns regarding safety for people, children, families, horses, bicyclists
- Concerns regarding proximity of concepts to residential properties and risk to property values

The entire report can be found here:

<http://bright74.oki.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/FINAL-Public-Comment-Summary-Report.pdf>

(Check back for updates on the next Public Open House date.)

UPDATE June 23:

Those who attended the Bright/I-74 Open House at East Central High School on Wednesday, June 22 saw three concepts for possible connector routes and one for improvements to existing roads. The Bright/74 Study is being conducted by the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Council of Governments (OKI) to find possible solutions to transportation deficiencies in the area.

Robyn Bancroft, OKI Strategic Planning Manager, emphasized during presentations at the Open House that the options reflect only general concepts for routes or road improvements and are in no way set in stone. Ms. Bancroft urged those attending to participate in a survey, which is also available online through July 22 <http://bright74.oki.org/>. She said the survey is important so OKI knows what community members are thinking and future options or recommendations reflect that sentiment.

An initial survey taken during a February Open House and online for 30 days showed many respondents either want no action taken, or wanted the focus to be on maintaining or improving existing roads and rather than building a new thoroughfare to improve travel safety and shorten travel time.

Many survey responders expressed concerns about the possibility of a new road for a number of reasons, including impact on the rural character of the area and the cost to the taxpayer. Current cost estimate for a connector road is more than \$50 million.

The idea of a connector was advanced in the context of discussions about shorter emergency response time to the I-74 corridor, where economic development is taking place; and shorter commutes for local residents who work elsewhere. Several survey respondents suggested that another firehouse be built nearer to the corridor, and that Dearborn County paying about \$100,000 annually to the City of Harrison for emergency response in the I-74 corridor is preferable to the costs associated with a connector. Others said that the estimated time saved for commuters was not worth the impact and expense of a new road. Some newer residents said they moved here for the rural feel of the area.

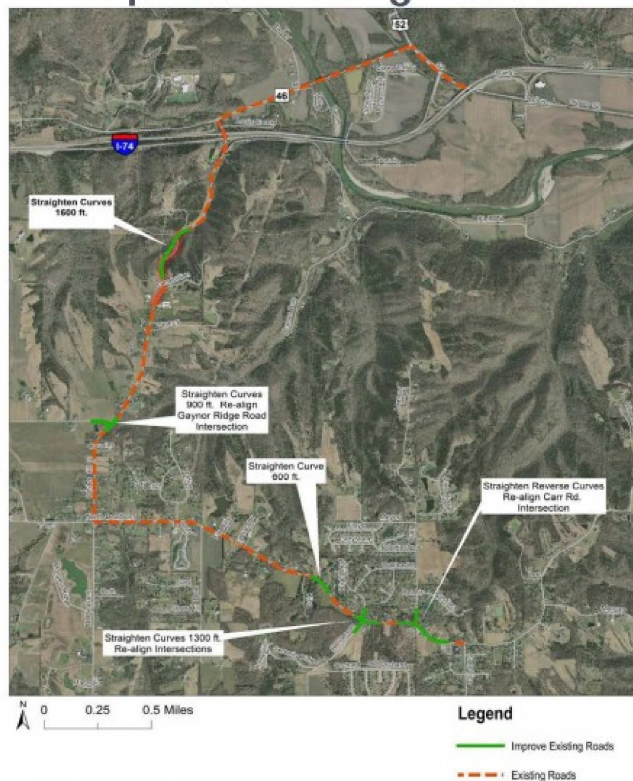
A timeline for further studies and Open Houses can be found at <http://bright74.oki.org/>. You can take the survey online until July 22.

One option presented on June 22 would focus on improving existing roads, including North Dearborn Road and Whites Hill Road. Another is construction of a new road between North Dearborn Road and Whites Hill Road. A third option shows a road from Carr Road to Harrison-Brookville Road at the I-74 access points. The fourth option is a new connector road from the intersection of State Line and North Dearborn Roads to Harrison-Brookville Road near the I-74 exit.

To view preliminary maps and notes on the proposed options, go to
<http://bright74.oki.org/phase-2-conceptual-solutions/>.



Concept 1: Improve Existing Roads

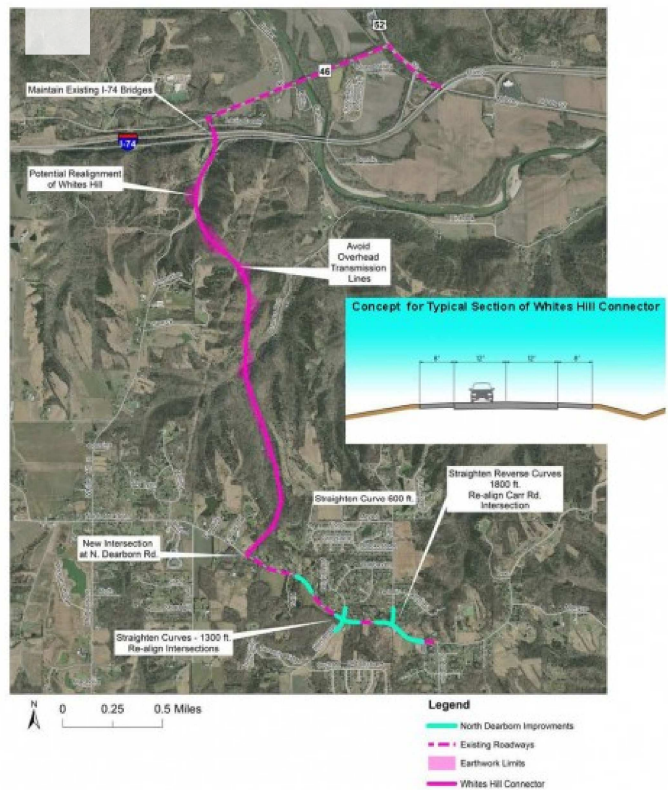


Includes spot (green) and general (orange) improvements to both existing Whites Hill Road and North Dearborn Road:

- Straighten Sharp Curves
- Flatten Steep Grades
- Intersection Re-alignments
- Widen for shoulders where possible
- Remove Roadside Obstructions (trees, poles, fences etc.)
- Add mailbox turnouts
- Replace or add guardrail as needed
- Improve signage
- Address drainage or slippage



Concept 2: Whites Hill Connector

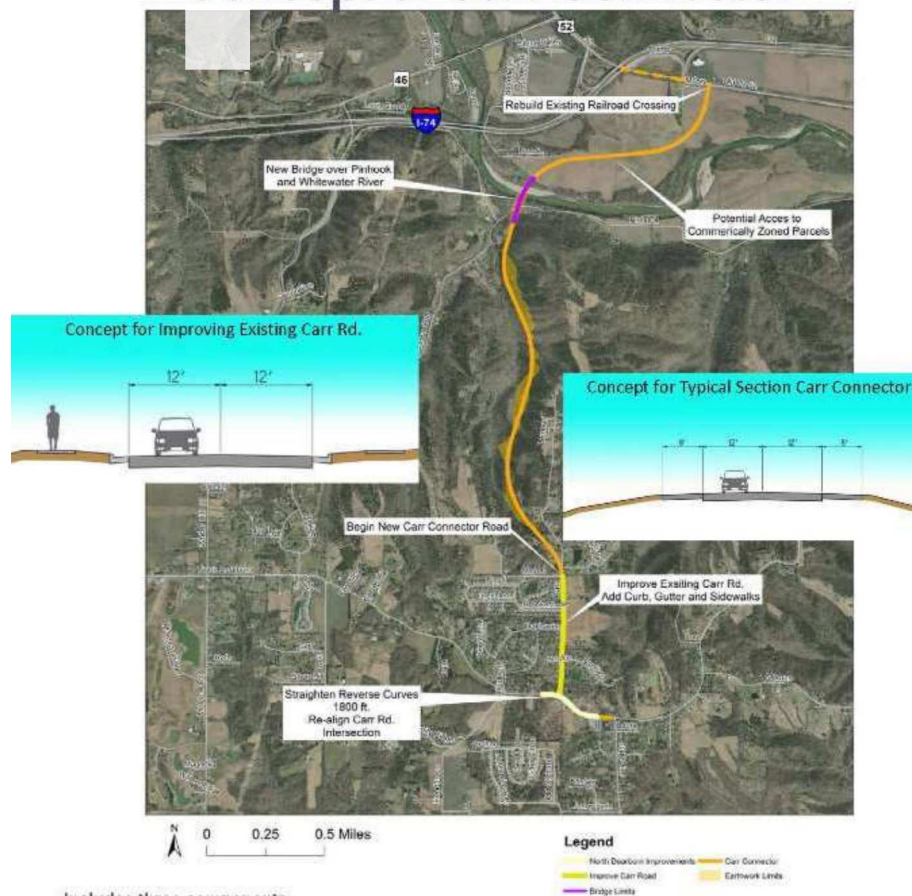


Includes two components:

- Improvements to existing North Dearborn Road described in Concept 1 (teal lines on map)
- The construction of a new roadway (Whites Hill Connector) from North Dearborn Road to Whites Hill Road (pink line on map)
 - Slopes vary depending on location
 - INDOT and Dearborn County permit use of 8 foot shoulders by bicyclists and pedestrians
 - 45 or 55 mph Design Speed
 - The Whites Hill Connector is proposed to have limited access
 - Potential realignment of a portion of Whites Hill Road as noted on map



Concept 3: Carr Connector



Includes three components:

- Improvements to existing North Dearborn Road from State Line Road to Carr Road
- Improvements to existing Carr Road from North Dearborn Road to Meyer/Pine Ridge Roads
- The construction of a new roadway (Carr Connector) from Meyer/Pine Ridge Roads to Old US 52

Carr Road improvements

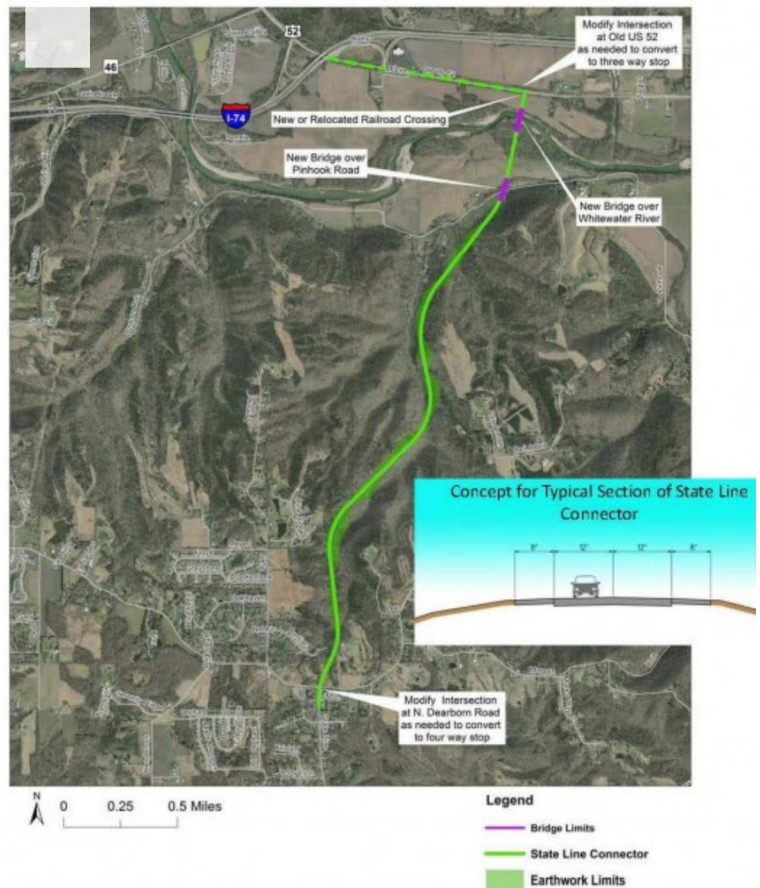
- Generally follows existing alignment
- Minor Widening
- Construct curb and gutters
- Construct sidewalks
- 35 mph Design Speed
- Maintain Existing Driveways

Carr Connector

- Slopes vary depending on location
- 45 or 55 mph Design Speed for new connector
- INDOT and Dearborn County permit use of 8 foot shoulders by bicyclists and pedestrians
- The Carr Connector is proposed to have limited access.
- Carr Connector spans over existing Pinhook Road without providing access
- Utilizes existing at grade railroad crossing



Concept 4: State Line Connector



Includes two components:

- Construction of a new roadway (State Line Connector) from North Dearborn Road to Old US 52
- Improvements as needed at North Dearborn and Old US 52 Intersections
 - Slopes vary depending on location
 - INDOT and Dearborn County permit use of 8 foot shoulders by bicyclists and pedestrians
 - Concept does NOT identify locations for future driveways; The State Line Connector is proposed to have limited access
 - Concept shows the State Line Connector spanning over existing Pinhook Road and not providing a connection or access
 - Requires relocation of an existing at grade railroad crossing
 - Includes construction of two bridges (Pinhook and Whitewater River)
 - 45 or 55 mph Design Speed

PREVIOUS STORY

Bright/Sugar Ridge November 2016

NEXT STORY

Hidden Valley Lake November 2016



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