

Legal Notice of Planned Improvement – INDOT Des. No. 2003041

The Porter County Commissioners and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), with oversight by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), intend to proceed with a bridge project along CR 250 W in Porter County (Des. No. 2003041). The project involves Bridge No. 66 (Asset No. 64-00066, National Bridge Inventory (NBI) No. 6400044), which carries CR 250 W over Phillips Ditch. The project is located along CR 250 W from approximately 1.51 to 1.64 miles south of SR 8.

The preferred alternative for the Des. No. 2003041 project would involve the removal of Bridge No. 66 and the construction of a new replacement bridge over Phillips Ditch. The replacement structure is expected to be a single-span prestressed concrete box beam bridge featuring two 11-foot-wide travel lanes with 4-foot shoulders and standard concrete railing atop the bridge deck. Roadway approach work is expected to include full-depth pavement replacement and milling and hot mix asphalt (HMA) resurfacing. Pavement replacement will extend approximately 277 feet south and 214 feet north of the bridge. The roadway section will include two 11-foot lanes with 2- to 4-foot paved shoulders. Riprap drainage turnouts will be constructed in all four bridge quadrants. Riprap will also be installed along the banks of Phillips Ditch. The existing guardrail along CR 250 W will be removed, and 248 linear feet of new guardrail will be constructed along both approaches to the bridge. The total estimated length of the project is 710 feet (0.13 mile). Construction is anticipated to begin in the summer of 2026.

The maintenance of traffic (MOT) plan for the project will require a full closure of CR 250 W with detour route. The detour route will utilize CR W 1700 N, CR 125 W (S Baums Bridge Road), and CR W 900 S. The total distance of the detour is 8.6 miles, representing approximately 7 minutes of additional travel time. The MOT is expected to be in place for approximately 4 months. The detour will be limited to summer months to the extent possible to minimize impacts to local school bus routes. The MOT will be implemented per the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* guidelines.

This project is anticipated to require 0.87 acre of new permanent right-of-way (ROW) and 0.07 acre of temporary ROW along CR 250 W. A total of 140 linear feet of temporary impacts to streams are expected. No wetlands will be impacted. A total of approximately 0.44 acre of impacts to terrestrial habitat are expected, including 0.15 acre of tree clearing. Every effort to avoid and minimize impacts to environmental resources will be made to the greatest extent possible. Complete avoidance of these resources is not practicable to meet the purpose and need of the project. No mitigation is expected.

The cost associated with the project is approximately \$2,004,125 which includes engineering, construction, and ROW costs. Federal and local (County) funds are to be utilized for the construction of the project. The FHWA and INDOT have agreed this project falls within the guidelines of a Categorical Exclusion (CE) Level-2 environmental document. Preliminary design plans along with the draft CE-2 document are available for review at the following locations:

1. Kouts Public Library (101 E. Daumer Rd. Kouts, IN 46347)
2. Porter Co. Department of Development & Storm Water Management (155 Indiana Ave., Ste. 311, Valparaiso, Indiana 46383)
3. Porter County Website: (<http://www.porterco.org/highwayengineering>)

All interested persons may request a public hearing be held and/or submit comments to the attention of Carson Hoogewerf, Environmental Specialist, Lochmueller Group, 112 West Jefferson Blvd., Suite 500, South Bend, Indiana, 46601, 574-334-5491, or via email at CHoogewerf@lochgroup.com on or before March 7, 2024.

In addition, project information, including the environmental document, may be mailed to interested persons upon request. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), persons and/or groups requiring project information be made available in alternative formats are encouraged to contact Joseph Wiszowaty, Porter County ADA Coordinator, at 219-465-3329 or joseph.wiszowaty@porterco.org for the arrangement and coordination of services.

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, persons and/or groups requiring project information be made available in another language are encouraged to contact Rhonda Young, Porter County Title VI Coordinator, at 219-510-6075 or ryoung@porterco.org.

This notice is published in compliance with: 1) Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Section 771 (CFR 771.111(h)(1) stating, "Each State must have procedures approved by the FHWA to carry out a public involvement/public hearing program."; 2) 23 CFR 450.210(a)(1)(ix) stating, "Provide for the periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all interested parties and revise the process, as appropriate."; and 3) The *INDOT Project Development Public Involvement Procedures Manual* approved by the FHWA on July 7, 2021.