



I-65/I-70 North Split Project: Myth vs. Fact

Updated May 2018

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is preparing to rehabilitate the I-65/I-70 North Split Interchange to address bridge and pavement conditions in the project area. The public interest and conversation around the project have resulted in some misinformation being disseminated. This document aims to dispel some of that confusion.

Condition and Need

MYTH	FACT
INDOT can delay the North Split Interchange project until an independent study of the entire downtown interstate system is completed.	Public safety is the main reason the North Split Interchange project must move forward. There are 32 bridges in the project limits with varying levels of structural and safety issues, the pavement is beyond its lifespan, and frequent merges, weaves and lane changes over short distances lead to many crashes. There were over 1,600 recorded crashes in the North Split project area during the 5-year period from 2012 to 2016. To address these issues, construction must begin before 2021.
INDOT is rushing the project due to the condition of the bridges.	INDOT is continuing to move the project forward while adding time to consider broader interstate system-level concepts presented by the community.
INDOT recently repaired this section of the interstate.	INDOT's 2003 "HyperFix" project replaced pavement and bridge decks between the North and South Splits, but not the North Split interchange itself.

Alternatives and Design

MYTH	FACT
The Project Intent Report reflected INDOT's initial design for the interchange.	The Project Intent Report was a preliminary study of traffic issues and potential solutions in a given area. While it serves as a starting point, it does not represent a preferred alternative or final design. Additional project-level studies will be conducted through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process to determine the preferred alternative.
INDOT has released drawings and renderings of the reconstructed North Split interchange.	Renderings that began circulating in late 2017 were not created by INDOT, nor do they represent INDOT's direction for the North Split interchange.
When the bridges are rebuilt, the streets/sidewalks underneath will stay exactly as they are or be in worse shape.	Bridge technology has greatly improved and rebuilding the bridges to today's standards will result in underpasses that include options for pedestrians and cyclists, and increased opportunity for lighting upgrades, public art, native plantings, and aesthetic features that promote neighborhood identity.
INDOT has selected a preferred alternative.	A preferred alternative has not been studied, designed or selected.
INDOT's need to rebuild the bridges is in opposition to community groups' desire to redesign the complete downtown interstate system.	The 32 bridges in the North Split interchange project limits are in varying stages of disrepair. INDOT's need to rebuild them soon is driven by structural and safety concerns and does not preclude future redesign or reconstruction of downtown interstates.
INDOT has chosen to compare the potential redesign project to other cities' high-priced projects to make the redesign projects look unrealistic.	Until Indianapolis-specific data from the System-Level Analysis was available, INDOT used examples from other cities to show the importance of cost in the discussion. Each project has unique features that significantly impact cost and will be outlined in the System-Level Analysis.
INDOT is one of the only departments of transportation wanting to keep interstates in a major city.	As part of its System-Level Analysis, INDOT is taking a close look at what other cities have done. There are many factors, however, that determine what solutions will work in any specific metropolitan area.

Traffic

MYTH	FACT
Most traffic using the North Split interchange is traffic traveling through Indianapolis and can be rerouted along I-465.	Of the total vehicles that travel the interchange in the morning and evening peaks, only a small percentage is traveling through (outside I-465 to outside I-465). This is based on traffic modeling and has been confirmed by real-world location based services data from smart phones.
Future transit options and vehicle innovations, such as autonomous vehicles, will reduce the demand for driving significantly and are not being considered.	All components of the Marion County Transit Plan and the Indy Connect regional transit vision are considered in the System-Level Analysis. In addition, INDOT has met with, and will continue to meet with the MPO, IndyGo, and CIRT. There are currently no standards for considering autonomous vehicles in highway design.

Beyond the Interchange

MYTH	FACT
The North Split interchange project will determine the future of the entire downtown interstate system.	The North Split interchange project does not limit future system-level options. Utilizing data from the System-Level Analysis, INDOT can advance the North Split Interchange project with an understanding of these larger system-level options.
The System-Level Analysis will determine what happens with the entire downtown interstate system.	The System-Level Analysis does not recommend a particular future downtown interstate system concept. It is designed to inform current public dialogue and allow for an educated decision regarding the North Split Project.
If INDOT invests in rehabilitating the North Split Interchange now, it will preclude any subsequent construction of the interstates for generations to come.	INDOT's reconstruction and repair of the North Split interchange still leaves an opportunity to study and develop other long-term alternatives for the area.
Economic development is not a priority for INDOT and they do not want to take the time or spend the money conducting an economic analysis.	INDOT is open to reviewing any outside studies or economic analyses presented to them, to help ensure that transportation design is helpful and not detrimental to current and future economic development.

Public Involvement

MYTH	FACT
INDOT is not soliciting or accepting meaningful stakeholder and public input on the project.	Since September 2017, INDOT and the Project Team have met with three separate advisory committees, with local elected officials, with transportation partners and with 24 local groups or organizations. INDOT will continue to engage stakeholders and accept public input on the project throughout the NEPA process.
The NEPA process requires the public to agree on the design of a project before it can be constructed.	The NEPA process requires public comments be collected and that INDOT and the Federal Highway Administration take the public comments into consideration when determining the approach for the project. It does not require public agreement on the final design.
The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for INDOT's project is not representative of the entire North Split user base.	The CAC for the North Split interchange project consists of more than 60 members representing government agencies, municipalities, neighborhoods, community organizations and more, from both downtown Indianapolis and from four of the counties surrounding Marion County. A list of the organizations invited to participate as a part of the CAC is available at: https://indynorthsplit.com/public-outreach/community-advisory-committee/ .
The CAC has no value in the project because INDOT and FHWA make all final decisions.	INDOT and FHWA consider the CAC's feedback when evaluating alternatives and the final design.
Every group with whom the Project Team has met to discuss the project is opposed to INDOT's plan to rebuild the existing bridges.	There is a consensus that the bridges be repaired soon to ensure public safety. Beyond that, there are differing opinions on how the interstate should look and function in the future.