

News

from the Office of Mayor Leigh Morris, City of La Porte

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Contact:	Leigh Morris	Release Date	June 28, 2007
Subject:	New Economic Development Corridor		

La Porte may be inching toward a solution to the problems of excessive truck traffic and congestion in the downtown area. Under the direction of the City of La Porte, Bernardin•Lochmueller & Associates, the consulting firm that has been working on a feasibility study for the past year, will share its major roadway improvement options for alleviating these problems at a public open house to be held in the Civic Auditorium, 801 Ridge Street, from 7:00pm to 9:00pm on Tuesday, July 24.

Mayor Leigh Morris indicated that five objectives were set for the study, which was funded totally by a \$250,000 Congressional grant:

- Reduce congestion in the downtown area
- Improve vehicular and pedestrian safety
- Enhance access to existing major industrial and commercial sites
- Facilitate access to new industrial and commercial development sites
- Enhance regional transportation development, including connectivity between La Porte and Michigan City

The consulting team has been reviewing data, surveying traffic patterns, gaining input from others and evaluating alternative solutions. Among key conclusions reached:

- The downtown intersection of Lincolnway (State Road 2) and Pike Lake Avenue (U.S. Highway 35) that experiences backups today will experience gridlock by the year 2030 unless traffic is diverted regardless of the addition of an intermodal facility in the La Porte area.
- The accident rate on Lincolnway (State Road 2) between Pine Lake Avenue (U.S. Highway 35) and Monroe Street (State Road 4) is among the top five percent in the State of Indiana.
- Truck traffic in the downtown area is increasing faster than other vehicular traffic, and will double by the year 2030, even without the addition of an intermodal facility in the La Porte area.
- Traffic flow is impeded by the large number of traffic signals on State Road 2 (16) and U.S. Highway 35 (8).
- Traffic congestion in the downtown area has been increasing; and, if an intermodal facility is developed, the rate of increase will grow dramatically for autos and particularly trucks.
- Truck access to major industrial sites is already seriously impeded.
- Highway access between La Porte and Michigan City is inadequate now and will be an even bigger concern in the near future.

The consulting team has identified and evaluated several alternatives that could be considered:

- Widening of existing roadways.
- Creating "one way pairs" of streets to expand capacity.
- Developing a new "Inner Loop" roadway (4 variations).
- Developing a new "outer loop" roadway.

David Ripple, PE, Senior Project Manager for Bernardin•Lochmueller for this project, indicated that the consulting team will be ready to recommend a preferred course of action to the city by the end of September. “This public meeting is an important step in the process of determining what is preferable from an environmental and social perspective, as well as what is economically possible. Whatever our recommendation, we want to help assure that it is something that can actually happen, not just another study that gathers dust. We hope that many, many people will attend the meeting and share their opinions and insights with us,” Dr. Ripple said.