

Could U.S. 30 become a freeway? Advocacy group announces plan to study the possibility

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WANE.COM

Posted: Feb 16, 2021 / 07:20 PM EST / Updated: Feb 17, 2021 / 09:03 AM EST

COLUMBIA CITY, Ind. (WANE) – The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) will commission a study to improve the U.S. 30 corridor from Valparaiso to the Ohio state line according to the U.S. 30 coalition.

“On behalf of the locally elected officials and representatives that make up the US-30 Coalition, we applaud the decision to initiate a designed solution to improve this critical roadway through our communities,” said Mayor Joe Thallemer, President of the US-30 Coalition in a press release issued Tuesday.

The Coalition has long advocated that a freeway is the best and only option for improving US-30 because of the considerable safety and economic disadvantages with its current structure, the press release said.

In this study, known as a Planning and Environment Linkages study, INDOT said it will examine various options to improve the safety, traffic flow, freight movement and economic development potential of the corridor, including the construction of a freeway. INDOT has agreed that the study will recognize the importance of US 30 remaining a consistent type of roadway and not a mixture of improvements and it will not be designed to merely examine the quickest or least expensive solution.

“We look forward to studying the long-term needs for U.S. 30 and engaging with businesses, local leaders, and communities along the corridor as we consider all options for the future,” said INDOT Commissioner Joe McGuinness. “The Planning and Environmental Linkage study will take a fresh look at the route and consider community, economic and environmental goals as we evaluate how to best improve safety and mobility on U.S. 30.”

INDOT said it will institute a ban on j-turns on the US-30 corridor except for the one currently under contract at CR500E in Whitley County. Any projects that are currently underway on US-30 will not detract from the ultimate purpose of the study.

The Coalition will work with INDOT through the study process, making sure that the communities' interests are well represented.

Rep. David Heine said, "The commitment from our Governor and INDOT Commissioner did not happen by accident. This got done because of the collaboration between our business leaders, our US 30 coalition and our State Representatives and Senators along the corridor. This commitment is great news for economic development in northern Indiana!"