Date

Governor Eric Holcomb

Office of the Governor

200 W. Washington St., Rm. 206

Indianapolis, IN  46204

OR

Joe McGuinness

Commissioner

INDOT Management Team

100 N. Senate Ave., IGCN 755

Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Holcomb or Commissioner McGuinness:

As someone who **[LIVES / WORKS / OWNS PROPERTY]** in downtown Indianapolis, I take great pride in our city, and am directly affected by developments that alter the aesthetic, livability, security, cleanliness, and convenience of our neighborhoods.

Fifty years ago, Interstates were built through an Indianapolis downtown that was dramatically different from today’s city center. Construction decisions made at that time divided neighborhoods, exacerbated public safety problems, and delayed the commercial and residential redevelopment of downtown.

Thanks to the proposed INDOT lane-widening and bridge reconstruction project, we have an opportunity to dramatically improve this decaying and dysfunctional system. A thoughtful revamping can improve traffic flow, restore community connectivity, spur economic development that significantly adds to the downtown tax base, and create a new “front door” to our city.

It is rare that we get an opportunity like this. Whatever decisions are made now will be with us for at least fifty to sixty years, so it is critically important that the proposed project be consistent with the city’s quality of life and transportation goals.

So that a range of alternatives can be evaluated effectively, **I urge the appointment of an independent panel** -- comprised of representatives from the City of Indianapolis, the State (INDOT), and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) -- **to focus on a broader vision that goes beyond vehicular travel and includes economic development, environmental and social justice considerations that achieve a great vision for Indianapolis and Central Indiana**.

Then, I urge the Independent Panel to analyze and consider a range of alternatives seen as best practices by our peer cities. Alternatives could free up considerable acreage for commercial development, adding to the tax base. I hope any plan would avoid outcomes that would substantially reduce the assessed value of a large number of properties, as well as the desirability of significant portions of downtown’s residential and historic neighborhoods.

When the current interstate routes were determined, Historic Districts had not been designated; today, interstates abut five such districts, which have generated an enormous amount of investment. Property values have continued to rise due to the walkability and residential character of those districts. Any evaluation of alternatives should include the extent to which they protect these municipal assets.

I urge the Independent Panel to consider design alternatives to include livability and community vision. I request they consider the following evaluation criteria as they proceed with project design:

1. Congestion mitigation strategies that lead to reduction of vehicle miles traveled and urban sprawl
2. Regional/local traffic distribution balancing
3. Noise and air quality mitigation
4. Repair of impacts caused by the 1960’s-70’s interstate overlay on the urban core.
5. Neighborhood impacts [property values, walkability, environmental] and Social Justice
6. Consideration/valuation of both local and regional economic benefit and cost analyses
7. Creative funding options for preferred alternatives
8. Ability to adapt to anticipated future transportation and logistics technologies
9. Integration of regional and local mass transit
10. Improved crosstown multimodal mobility (bike/pedestrian/transit)
11. Mitigation of traffic impacts over multi-year construction phases

I believe that the criteria for evaluating the proposed reconstruction should include, in addition to delay reduction and safety, the effects of each plan on currently troublesome issues of noise pollution and air quality, and compatibility with the transit improvements currently underway and planned.

This project has the capacity to greatly enhance our community aesthetics, economic development and quality of life in the urban core. Please consider all options before proceeding with an investment that will last another 50 years.

Sincerely,

**[YOUR NAME and ADDRESS]**