

Indiana Department of Transportation
I-69 Evansville to Indianapolis Tier 2 Studies
Attn: Mary Jo Hamman, P.E.
Michael Baker Corporation
Project Manager
Section 5 Project Office

To Whom It May Concern:

Bloomington Transportation Options for People (B-TOP) expresses its support for a dedicated bicycle/pedestrian bridge over the State Road 37 and/or I-69 highway between the 2nd Street and 3rd Street interchanges. B-TOP is a non-profit organization working to bring about a more sustainable culture, better urban form, and enhanced quality of life to people in the Bloomington area by increasing use, funding, and development of alternatives to auto transport. As such, we are very interested in improving connectivity for bicyclists and pedestrians between the center and west side of Bloomington.

Benefits of the bridge include:

- With the bridge, a route with low-volume streets and separated paths would connect central Bloomington to the residential areas west of Bloomington. Such a route is necessary in order to make the majority of cyclists feel comfortable that they can ride safely. Pedestrians also need a safe way to cross the highway.
- This route would link to many significant destinations along the way, including residential, recreational, retail, educational, and employment destinations. Increasing connectivity between these locations would stimulate economic activity.
- Many would be induced to engage in their east-west trips by walking and bicycling.
- The City of Bloomington has bound itself to become a Platinum-level Bicycle Friendly Community by 2016. In order to achieve this, cyclists need a safe way to cross the city between east and west.
- The Bloomington trail system would be connected to the Monroe County trail system.
- The Monroe County Alternative Transportation Plan, the Monroe County State Road 37 Corridor Plan, and the I-69/SR 37 Alternative Transportation Corridor Study have all identified crossings of SR 37/I-69 between 2nd Street and 3rd Street as the highest priority for further study.

The bridges over the highway at both 2nd Street and 3rd Street also require sidewalks for pedestrian safety. Both bridges are currently very dangerous for pedestrians, and yet many pedestrians have no choice but to walk across them.

It is imperative that all the bicycle and pedestrian improvements discussed above be built to cross the highway, regardless of whether I-69 Section 5 is completed as planned or not; if Section 5 is not completed in the near term for any reason, then the bicycle-pedestrian bridge should be built across State Road 37, and the existing bridges upgraded with sidewalks for pedestrian safety.

Sincerely,

The members of Bloomington Transportation Options for People

Cc: Mayor Mark Kruzan, City of Bloomington