



January 24, 2018

Indiana Department of Transportation
100 N. Senate Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Commissioner McGuinness:

As the Indiana Department of Transportation begins in earnest to address the need for immediate-term bridge repairs along the north and south splits of I-70 and longer-term accommodations for downtown destination and thru-city traffic, I urge the state to consider a partnership between the City, INDOT, and the Metropolitan Planning Organization to craft a shared vision for the project that considers community impact and benefits of alternative design options.

Construction of the interstate highway system in the 1960s and 70s changed the character of downtown Indianapolis and its neighborhoods. Over the past 40 years the city reemerged as a national success story of urban revitalization, thanks to the work of the previous five mayors, strong civic leadership, and our partners in state government. As the late Mayor Hudnut used to say, “India-NO-place” is now “India-SHOW-place” —Amateur Sports Capital of the World, an international destination, a thriving hub for tech innovation, and home to passionate, thoughtful Indianapolis residents. But many fear a traffic solution that simply widens the existing elevated system could—for a second time—devastate our city’s historic core and the neighborhoods that line the right-of-way on all sides.

Over the last several weeks and months, residents from across Indianapolis have reached out to express their concerns and share with me and my leadership team a series of high-level alternative concepts that deserve thoughtful consideration. Many neighborhoods remember all too well the challenges faced in the wake of those original highway projects. These communities developed a remarkable level of resiliency, as well as a marked desire to ensure progress made is not lost.

Peer cities such as Austin and Dallas, Texas, and Columbus and Cincinnati, Ohio, have established national best practices, devising context-sensitive solutions to urban right-of-way challenges. I would encourage the state to consider at-grade alternatives that would sufficiently move traffic and meet INDOT’s needs while reconnecting our neighborhoods and street grid. Such alternatives may have a residual benefit by potentially opening up valuable state-owned downtown right-of-way for development. We have the opportunity to learn from best practices and work collaboratively to strengthen Central Indiana’s connectivity and showcase our state’s culture of innovation.

I will make my leadership team available to you, and I would also be happy to meet in person to discuss. The City of Indianapolis values its relationship with the State of Indiana, and I look forward to continuing to work together.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Hogsett
Mayor
City of Indianapolis

