



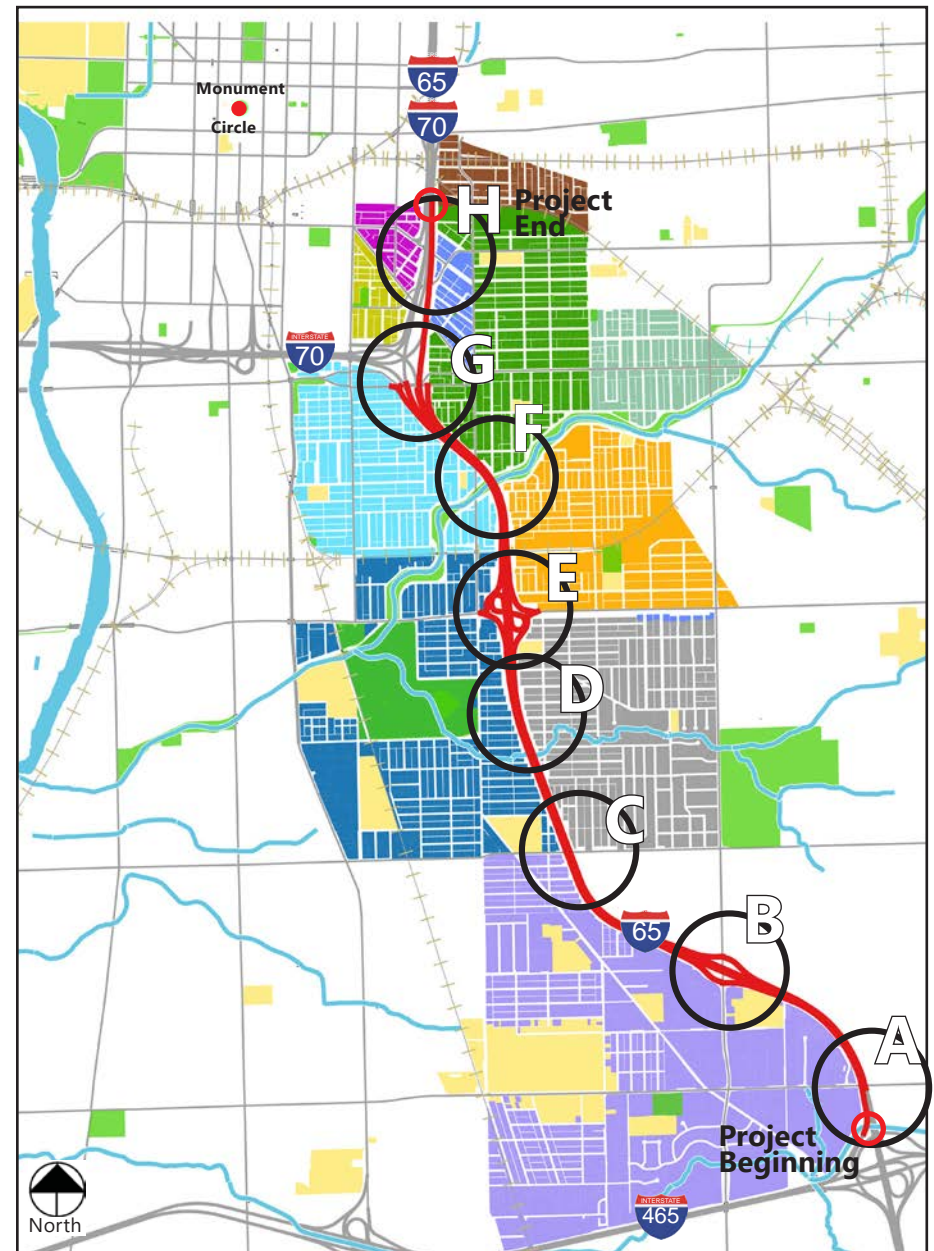
Consulting Party Comprehensive Report of Observations and **Requests** regarding the *I-65 Safety & Efficiency Project [I-65 SAFE] Indianapolis, Des No. 1400073*

Note:
These comments are intended to be helpful to all parties, including INDOT, City and adjacent neighborhoods. It may be that some comments are more applicable to either INDOT or the City - but the jurisdictional responsibilities are unclear, therefore the intent is to discuss the recommendations and then determine responsibility and implementation.

ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE
August 22, 2023

UPDATE: September 20, 2023
(subsequent to INDOT Public Information meeting held 8/29/23) .

Note: A future update may be released before the September 29, 2023 comment period closure.



LOCATION, INTERFACING NEIGHBORHOODS & PORTALS

INTRODUCTION

Rethink Coalition appreciates the opportunity to submit this follow up to our May 14, 2023 consulting party letter regarding the I-65 SAFE project. It is in the form of a comprehensive report of observations and requests. As stated in the letter, we support the safety, efficiency and mobility objectives of the I-65 SAFE project.

Rethink Coalition qualifies that support by recommending:

- *That the Purpose & Need statement for the project be updated to reflect the recently awarded Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program grant and ProPEL Indy projects.*
- *That the project neither widen bridges nor expand pavement beyond the existing outer shoulder. The purpose of expansion can be achieved more efficiently through strategies developed in this report that stay within the bounds of an interim vs major project and reduce project environmental effects on adjoining neighborhoods.*
- *That cost savings that result from the recommendations in this Report include rather than exclude safety, mobility and efficiency improvements beyond the Interstate mainline to benefit those that passover or under the Interstate to access employment, education, and local multimodal transportation opportunities.*
- *That the project employ a noise reduction strategy that avoids the high cost of noise barrier walls while creating multiple safety and life-cycle cost benefits for the overall system.*

The impacts of the original interstate construction half a century ago persist, still affecting neighborhoods with safety, economic and environmental justice burdens. This Rethink Coalition report demonstrates how many of those continuing impacts can be

mitigated by the SAFE project without compromising project purpose.

Recommendations focus on I-65 bridge and interchanges as portals between separated neighborhoods, and range from broadly schematic to fairly detailed. They convey reasonable, pragmatic and cost effective alternatives and strategies to achieve safe and equitable connectivity. They have been informed by extensive neighborhood engagement that revealed a collective need for multimodal safety and mobility for all interfacing modes of travel within the I-65 SAFE project influence area.

The recommendations demonstrate how an urban interstate can leverage investment in infrastructure in a collaborative and multi-jurisdictional way that serves multiple purposes and needs.

Rethink Coalition and its community partners look forward to partnering with the INDOT project team on the development of a community-responsive and fiscally responsible interim project, delivered on time and on budget as a shared commitment.

Rethink Coalition's approach allows recently inaugurated planning processes for rebuilding the Inner Loop to advance, informed but not constrained by this important I-65 interim project.

*Sincerely,
Rethink Coalition, Inc.*

*Charles T. Richardson
Co-Chair, Rethink Coalition Board of Directors*

*Russell Menyhart
Co-Chair, Rethink Coalition Board of Directors*

*Brenda Freije
President and CEO, Rethink Coalition Inc*

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Appendix

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Corridor Stakeholders

I-65 SAFE PROJECT CORRIDOR NEIGHBORHOODS & DISTRICTS

- Bates-Hendricks Neighborhood Association
- Bean Creek Neighborhood Association
- Big Car Collaborative
- Fountain Fletcher District Association
- Fletcher Place Neighborhood Association
- Fountain Square Alliance Neighborhood Association
- Fountain Square Neighborhood Association
- Garfield Park Neighborhood Association
- North Square Neighborhood Association
- Prospect Falls Neighborhood Association
- Reconnecting to Our Waterways
- University of Indianapolis
- University Heights Neighborhood Association

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This report was prepared with engagement, ideas and insights from the Rethink Coalition's I-65 SAFE Project Advisory Team and members of the thirteen I-65 SAFE project corridor's neighborhoods and districts listed above. Its general scope and purpose took shape through early conversations with the Agency Partners listed on this page as part of the environmental review phase of the I-65 Safety & Efficiency Project.

Analogy, Opportunity, Imperative

An Analogy

The riverine terrain of Indianapolis has been shaped by glaciers, streams and rivers over epochs of geologic time to form the places and connections of the city. The unintended consequences of urbanization and industrialization on that terrain prompted the *Commercial Club* [now Indy Chamber] to sponsor the early 20th century transformation of the city's compromised waterways into a now-celebrated amenity of open space and connectivity corridors. It is known as the *Indianapolis Historic Park and Boulevard System*, now Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Indianapolis Greenways and the Indianapolis Cultural Trail built on that legacy to create a ubiquitous urban network of open space connectivity along Fall Creek, Pleasant Run and the White River into downtown. That still-growing system continues to transform how the city is experienced, perceived and *grows*.

That analogy informs the Rethink Coalition vision.



The Opportunity and Imperative

Rethink Coalition views the interstate corridors that flow to and through the city as a *constructed* terrain embedded into the fabric of the city fifty years ago. It is analogous to the Indianapolis riverine terrain that was disrupted by industrialization and urbanization but since transformed.

Achieving that same potential is both opportunity and imperative. It can begin with the I-65 SAFE project, as a model for other I-65/70 spokes that will be studied through INDOT's *ProPEL Indy* process for their optimal synergy between transportation infrastructure purpose and the interfacing community.

Rethink Coalition recommendations are feasible steps towards that opportunity and imperative within the constraints of an interim project. The constraints require prioritization of efforts towards *Equitable Safety and Mobility* for local multimodal interfaces with the corridor, and reduction of impacts of an expanded mainline on adjacent populations. The recommendations support the Big Idea of *Interstate Corridors as the Constructed Terrain of Urban Connectivity and Quality of Life*.

The I-65 Safety & Efficiency Project (I-65 SAFE) is almost five miles long from the I-465 interchange to its terminus just north of Fletcher Avenue where it engages the I-65/70 North Split project's south terminus. Its purpose is to reduce congestion and improve safety and mobility as an Interim [near-term] rather than Major [long-term] project, as differentiated by expenditure thresholds.

It defines a major input to the Inner Loop at a critical stage in the overall system's long term reconstruction planning. That planning includes two concurrent and complementary initiatives: *Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program* (RCPP) planning grant for the Southeast leg of the Inner Loop; and *ProPEL Indy*, a multi-year study by INDOT to select a preferred alternative for the rebuilding of the 65/70 Inner Loop and its major spokes downstream of the I-465 belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Rethink Coalition agrees with many of the I-65 SAFE project objectives, but qualifies its support with the following recommendations:

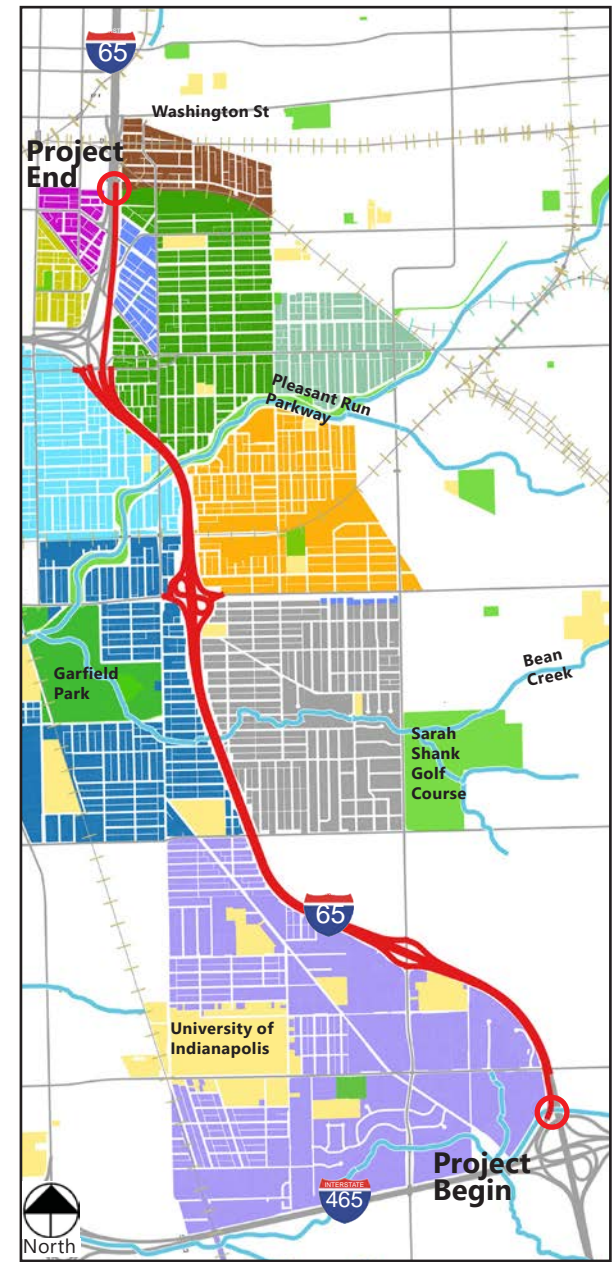
- Address environmental justice issues experienced by multiple affected neighborhoods that Rethink Coalition engaged in robust conversation. Their recommendations inform a balanced approach to interstate safety, congestion mitigation and neighborhood connectivity while maintaining the essential purpose and need of the I-65 SAFE project.
- Eliminate costly bridge widening and defer construction of an additional lane from the

Raymond Street interchange northward. Additional Washington Street exit capacity can be achieved as a near-term need north of the Morris/Prospect I-65 NB bridge.

- Limit bridge changes to rehabilitation and preservation, deferring major changes to completion of South Split planning studies which will better coincide with bridge useful life cycles. At that time utilize accelerated bridge replacement techniques to reduce reconstruction impacts on system traffic.
- Apply project savings realized by that scope reduction to address local multimodal connectivity ~~now conspicuously absent from the project~~ but crucial to repairing interstate barriers to neighborhood mobility as well as functionality of the transportation network.
- Implement recommended median and edge barrier improvements that mitigate wheel-pavement noise, eliminate the cost of problematic noise barrier walls and provide significant safety and life cycle cost benefit.

Rethink Coalition's recommendations align with current USDOT/FHWA policy for multimodal safety and mobility for all interfacing modes of travel. The recommendations also include several related *big ideas* that go well beyond project scope but that need to be adopted into long term plans (ProPEL Indy).

Rethink Coalition's collaboration with INDOT and the City is intended to keep the project on schedule and on budget while meeting project and community objectives consistent with a 21st century urban Interstate...a near term strategy for a more positive long-term outcome.



I-65 SAFE PROJECT INFLUENCE AREA

Executive Summary: Environmental Justice Recommendations

Study Area A

HANNA AVE BRIDGE

Stats: Ex. bridge length 225 feet | INDOT RW length 300 feet

- Widen an additional 12-feet +/-
- Provide 8' shared-use path both sides with continuous safety rail
- Provide safety fence both sides
- Extend shared-use path to RW extents for future city connection
- Provide "Lick Creek Greenway" name both sides

Study Area B

KEYSTONE AVENUE INTERCHANGE

Stats: INDOT RW length E 785 feet | INDOT RW length W 800 feet

- Improve signalization and crosswalk design within Interstate ROW

Study Area C

TROY AVENUE UNDERPASS

Stats: Influence zone N side 500 feet | Influence zone S side 585 feet

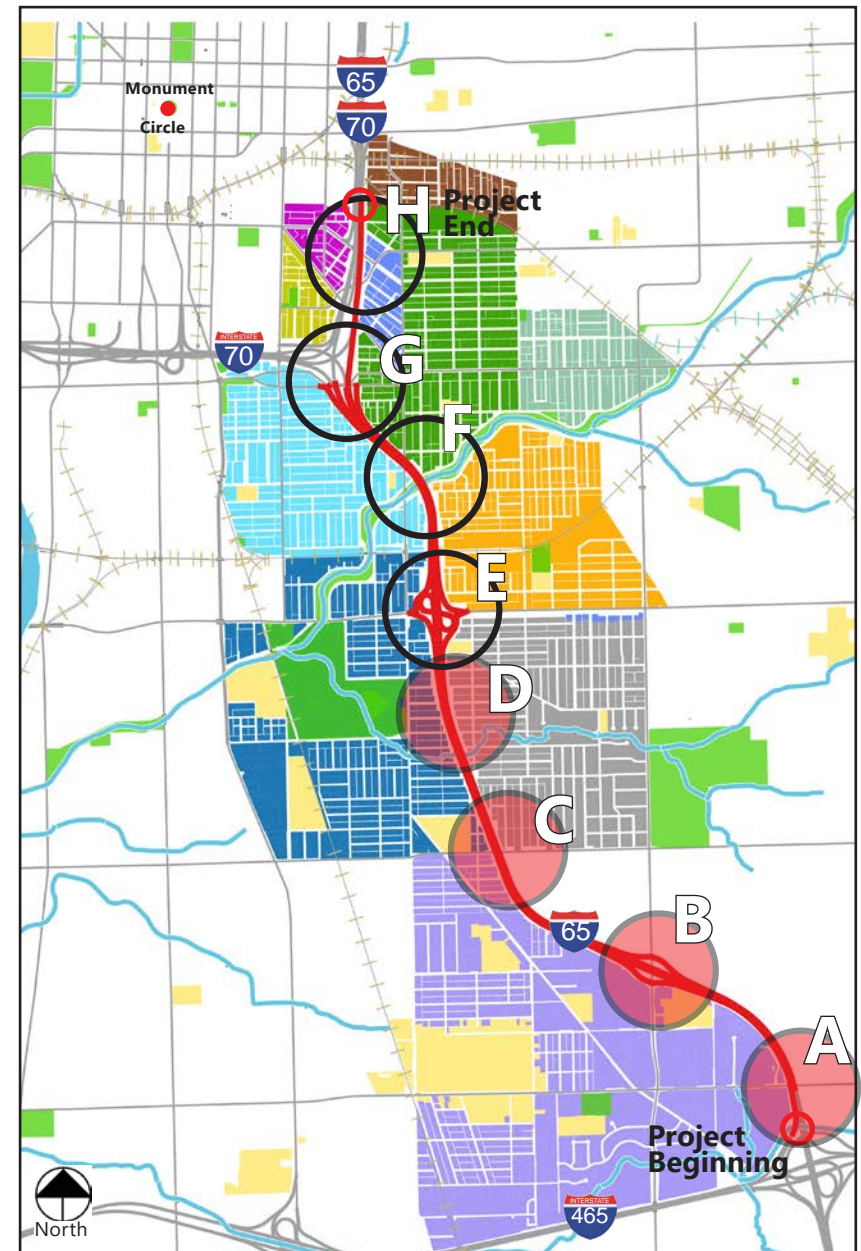
- Fix scupper drainage
- Pave bare dirt both sides
- Provide curb/barrier rail along N side
- Provide curb along existing sidewalk S side

Study Area D

NELSON AVE UNDERPASS

Stats: Underpass length 150 feet - two sides

- Fix scupper drainage
- Pave bare dirt both sides
- Improve lighting



STUDY AREAS

Executive Summary: Environmental Justice Recommendations

Study Area D

BEAN CREEK UNDERPASS

Stats: Underpass length 150 feet - two sides

- Fix scupper drainage
- Stabilize creek bed/bare dirt
- Improve lighting

Study Area D

SOUTHERN AVE UNDERPASS

Stats: Underpass length 140 feet - two sides

- Fix scupper drainage
- Stabilize creek bed/bare dirt
- Improve lighting

Study Area D

BRADBURY AVE UNDERPASS

Stats: Underpass length 170 feet - two sides

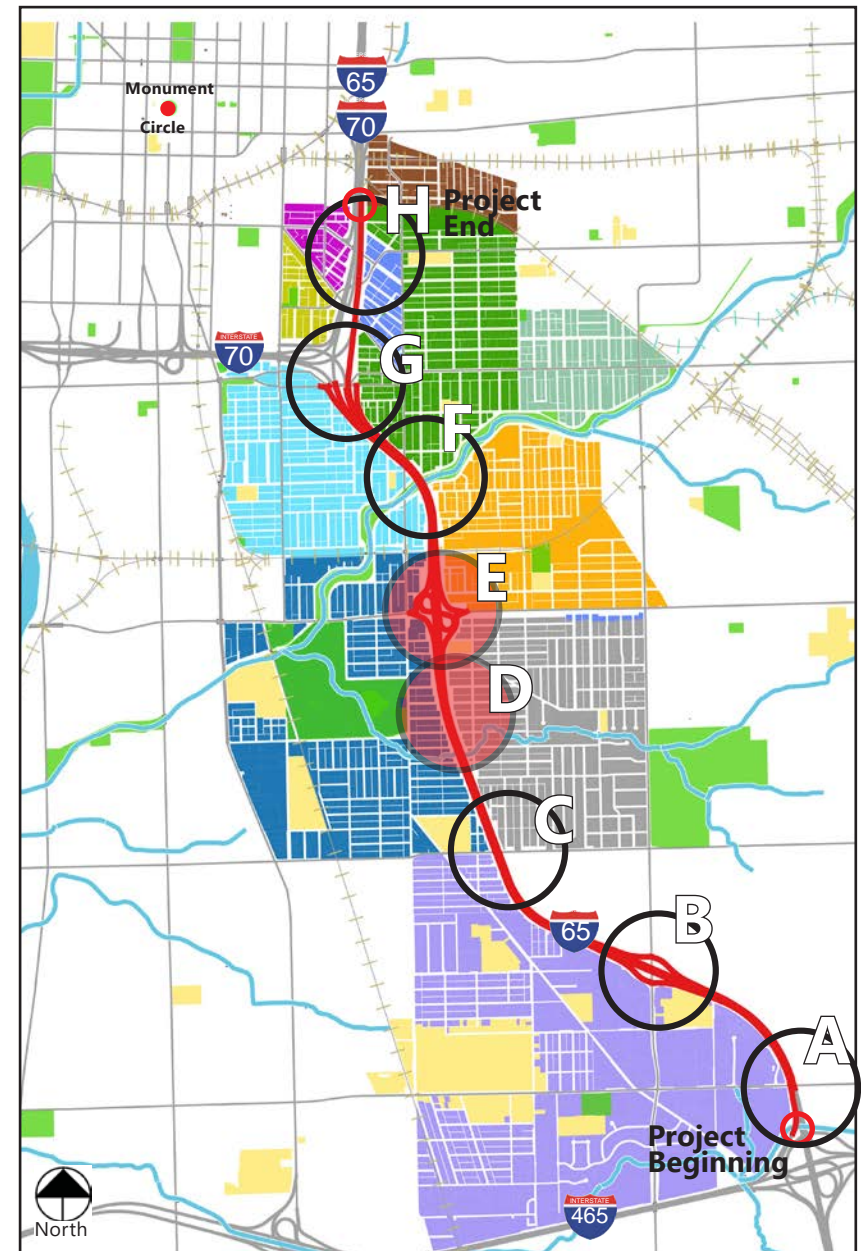
- Fix scupper drainage
- Pave bare dirt both sides
- Improve lighting

Study Area E

RAYMOND STREET INTERCHANGE

Stats: Underpass length 150 feet - two sides

- Convert the "rural" partial cloverleaf to a compact urban diamond interchange and lengthen the space between Shelby and I-65 ramp signals
- Create safe bike/ped passage under the bridge with kneewall widening of walk and low profile barriers at the curb line
- Free-flow shared use paths under ramps with no bike/ped vehicle conflicts and not crosswalks



STUDY AREAS

Executive Summary: Environmental Justice Recommendations

Study Area F

NAOMI STREET UNDERPASS

Stats: Underpass length 145 feet - two sides

- No bridge widening
- Fix scupper drainage
- Pave bare dirt both sides
- Kneewall widening of walk
- Improve lighting

Study Area F

PLEASANT RUN SOUTH PARKWAY UNDERPASS

Stats: Underpass length 140 feet - two sides

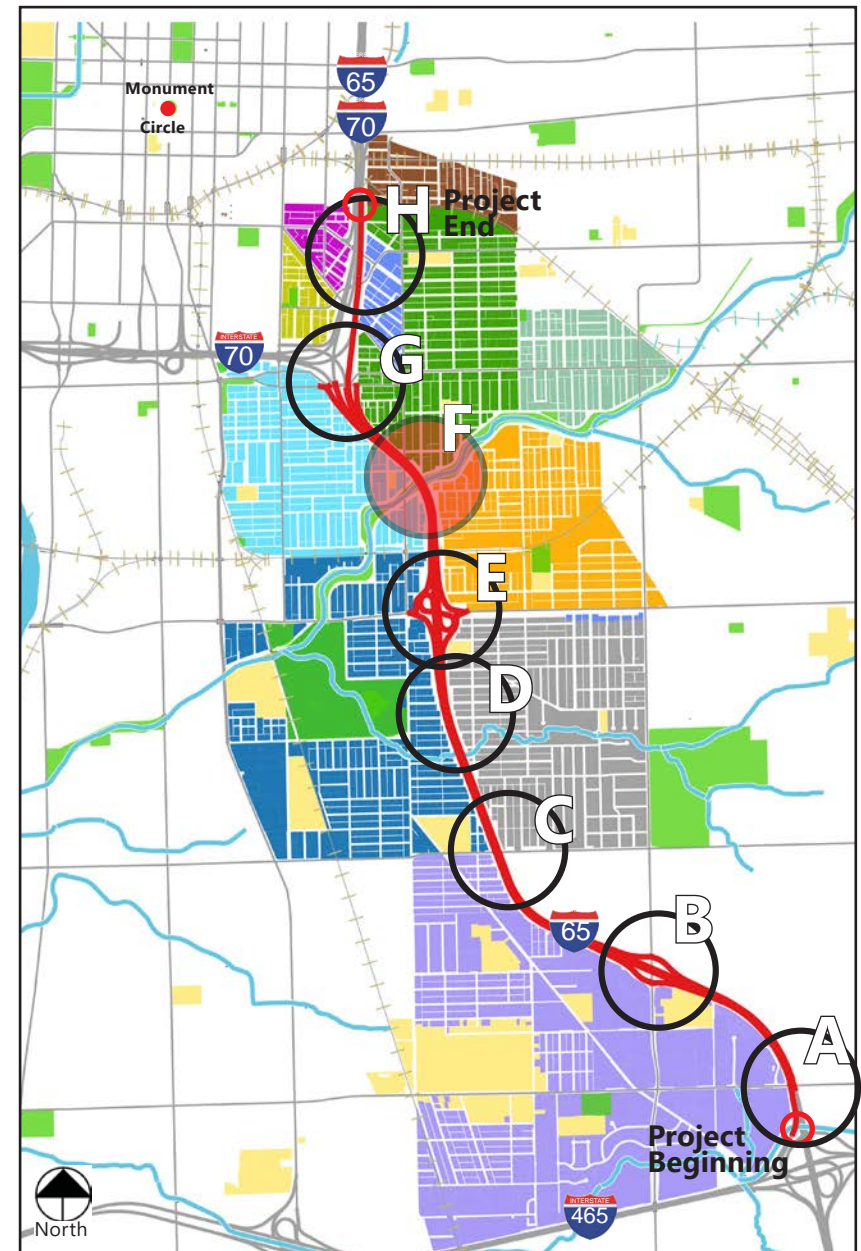
- No bridge widening
- Fix scupper drainage
- Pave bare dirt both sides
- Improve lighting
- Context sensitive design and 4f review (recognize national register listing)

Study Area F

PLEASANT RUN NORTH PARKWAY UNDERPASS

Stats: Underpass length 140 feet - two sides

- No bridge widening
- Fix scupper drainage
- Pave bare dirt both sides
- Improve lighting
- Context sensitive design and 4f review (recognize national register listing)



STUDY AREAS

Study Area F

SHELBY STREET UNDERPASS

Stats: Underpass length 205 feet - two sides

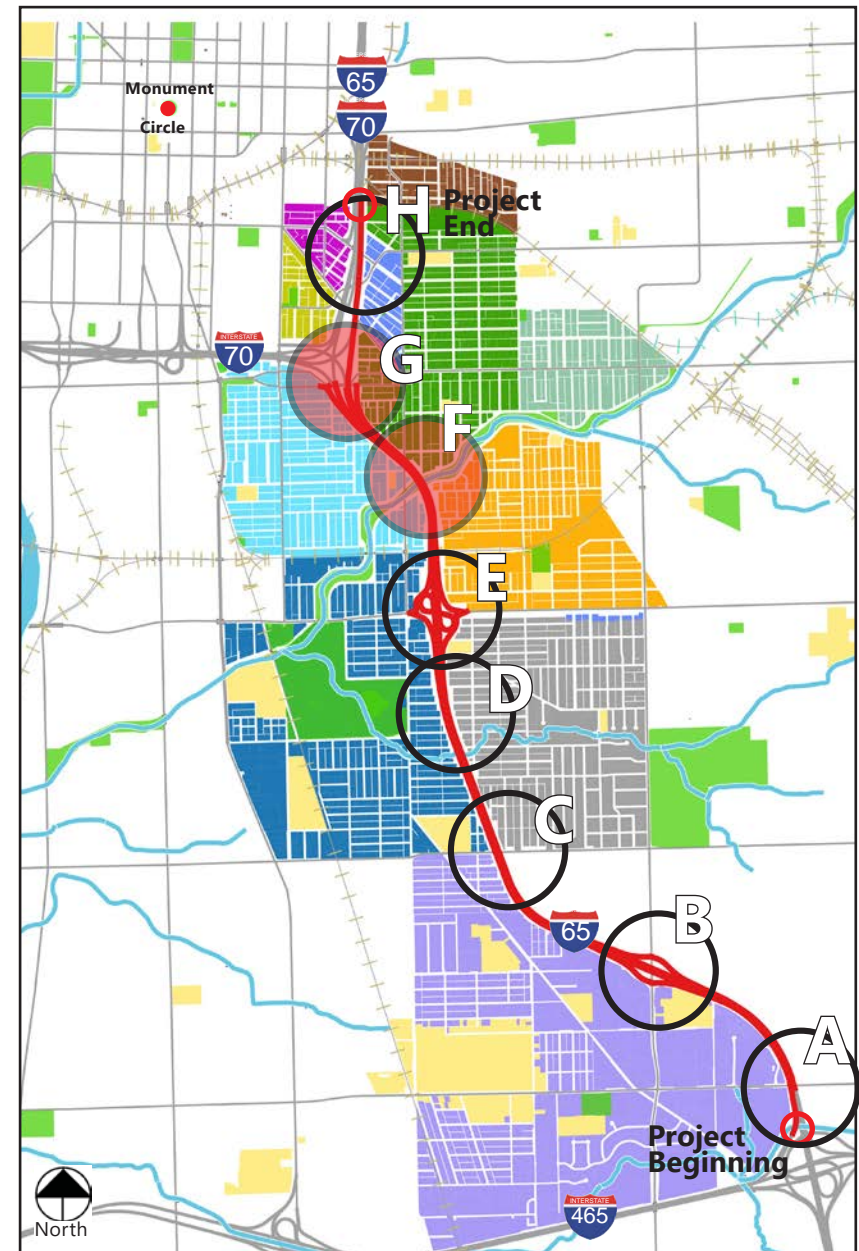
- Reconfigure all lanes to minimum standards.
- Reconfigure intersections at each end to reduce conflicts, and convert cycle-track to shared-use path.
- Protect bridge columns and bike/ped lanes & walks with low-profile median barriers.
- Design/install a balanced day/night lighting system.
- "Permit" a well-lit mural to Celebrate Shelby Street [Per the 10th St].
- Adjust Eskenazi Health parking lot movement and relocate police fence.
- Work with city to improve the transitions between cycle trak and shared-use-path north and south of the Shelby Street underpass which are now unsafe.

Study Area G

MORRIS/PROSPECT STREET INTERCHANGE AND BRIDGES

Stats: Underpass length 140 feet - two sides

- Reconfigure four travel and one turn lane to a lengthened turn lane and one travel lane in each direction. Create bike/ped shared use paths in place of existing narrow walks and outer travel lanes.
- Change ramp entrances from free-flow to all-way stop for bike/ped safety & metered gap flow to I-65, by utilizing single travel lanes on Morris/Prospect one way pair.
- Develop Leonard/Prospect Street all-way stops north of Morris.
- Eliminate parking restrictions for one travel lane on eastbound Morris from East Street with Street tree curb extensions.
- No overpass widening (ProPEL Indy and RCPP grant impact) and pushes columns too close to the signalized intersection of Leonard/NB ramp, making the transition from Prospect to the underpass difficult.
- No auxiliary lane creating a fifth lane into the Inner Loop which requires bridge widening.



STUDY AREAS

Executive Summary: Environmental Justice Recommendations

Study Area H

VIRGINIA/CALVARY/FLETCHER BRIDGES & ABANDONED RR BRIDGE

- Limit to work that does not impact recently received USDOT grant for Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program (RCPP). INDOT is a Rethink Coalition partner on the RCPP Planning project.
- Planning work to begin late 2023/early 2024 and complete in 12-15 months - concurrent with I-65 SAFE Project.

Overarching EJ Recommendation 1 THE I65 SAFE GREENWAY LOOP

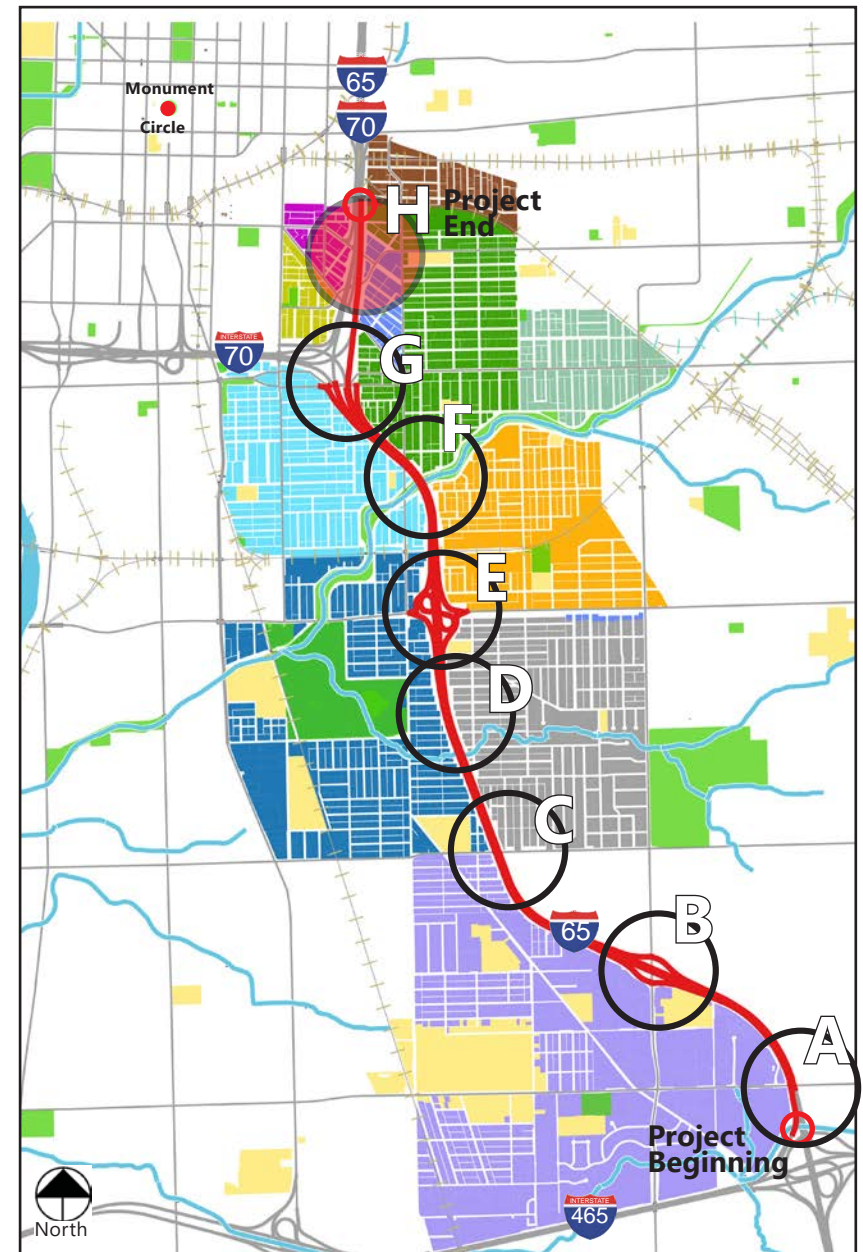
- Connect Lick Creek Greenway with Bates-Hendricks/Fountain Square.
- 8 miles (no acquisition/utilize INDOT RW)
- Rethink ask: permission for City to build (over time)

Overarching EJ Recommendation 2 NOISE MITIGATION COUNTERMEASURES

- Use continuous outer lane F-shape truck height concrete barriers and enhanced pavement in lieu of sound walls.

Overarching EJ Recommendation 3 ELIMINATE ADDED LANE AND BRIDGE WIDENING

- Eliminate fifth (auxiliary) lane from Raymond to Washington to reduce potential constraints on USDOT grant project awarded to Rethink Coalition.
- Eliminate all bridge widening from I-65 SAFE Project because of neighborhood impacts and high cost and the need to reallocate funding to underpass improvements.



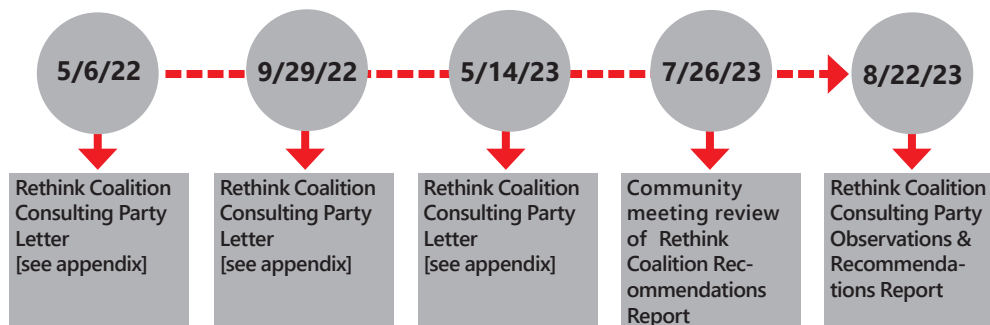
STUDY AREAS

Executive Summary: Environmental Justice Recommendations

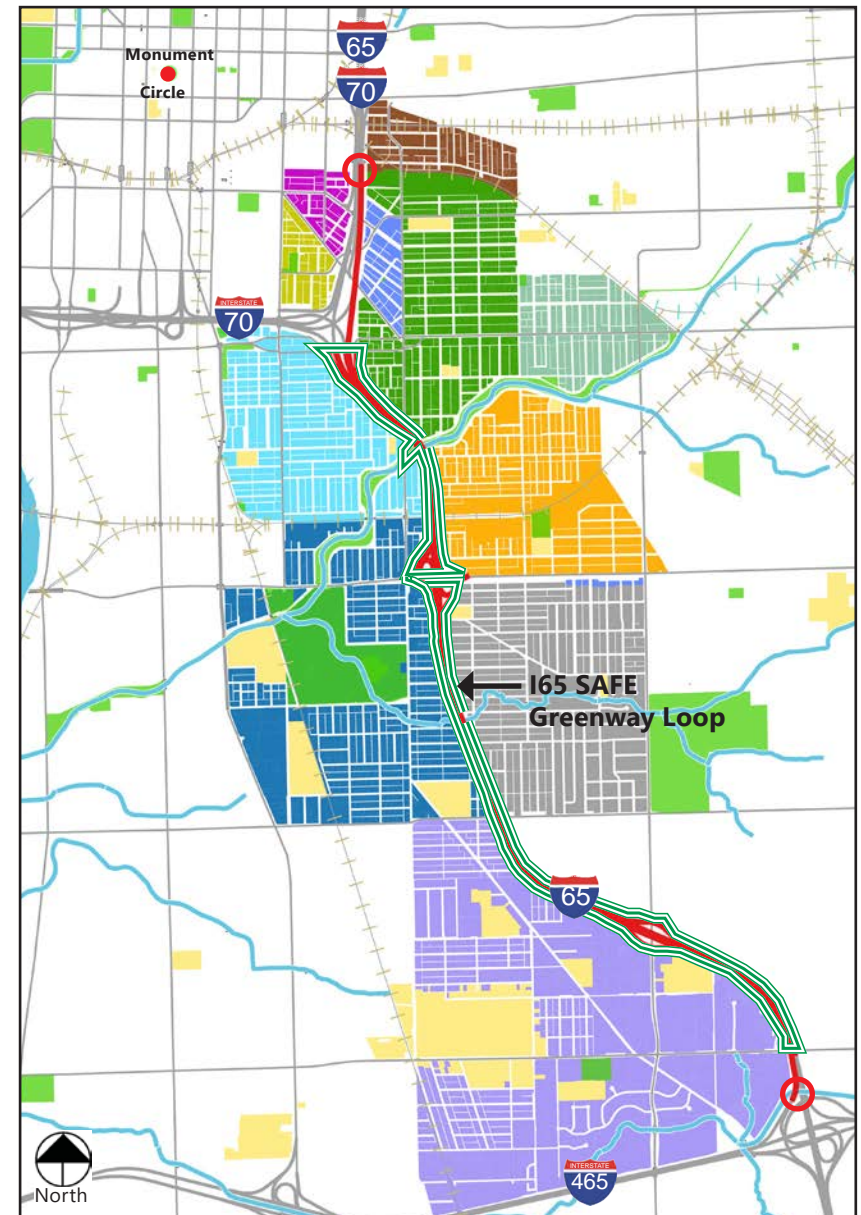
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE BUDGET SUMMARY TABLE

Area	Description	Est. Construction Cost
	INDOT PROJECT BUDGET	\$65,000,000
	RETHINK COALITION EJ RECOMMENDATIONS	
A	Hanna Ave Bridge	\$480,000-\$528,000
B	Keystone Ave Interchange	\$824,000-\$906,000
C	Troy Ave Underpass	\$282,100-\$310,310
D	Nelson Ave Underpass	\$72,800-\$80,080
E	Raymond Street Interchange	\$3,764,400-\$4,140,840
F	Naomi Underpass	\$75,400-\$82,940
F	PR South Underpass	\$72,800-\$80,080
F	PR North Underpass	\$72,800-\$80,080
F	Shelby Street Underpass	\$406,000-\$446,600
G	Morris/Prospect Bridge/Interchange	\$680,550-\$748,605
1	Overarching Recommendation: SAFE Greenway Loop	\$0 (permission to build in ROW)
2	Overarching Recommendation: Noise Mitigation Countermeasures	\$8,448,000-\$9,292,800
	SUBTOTAL EJ RECOMMENDATIONS	\$17,000,000
3	Overarching Recommendation: credit eliminate added (5th) lane from Raymond to Morris/Prospect and all bridge widening.	(\$19,850,000)
	BUDGET CHANGE	\$ 0 - (2,850,000)

Budget estimates based on sketch concepts to provide a rough order of magnitude for discussion.



RETHINK COALITION CONSULTING PARTY RESPONSES



RETHINK COALITION OVERARCHING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE RECOMMENDATIONS