

# Morgan County SR 37/144 Corridor Study Steering Committee Meeting Notes

**Date / Time:** Wednesday, September 3, 2008 @ 6:30 PM

**Location:** Morgan County Administration Building

**Attendees:** John Chappelow, Eleza Durnal, Melanie DePoy, Kenny Hale, Ross Holloway, Paul Prather, Bob O'Neal, Bill Rumbaugh and John Taylor  
EGT: Cory Whitesell, Jim Rice and Scott Burgins.

Whitesell began the meeting at 6:35 p.m. and committee members introduced themselves. Cory then gave an overview of the corridor study planning process.

A member asked if there is money to follow up on whatever decisions the group makes. Rice said that in any project involving such high-price items as infrastructure, dreams and desires will have to be kept in line with resources. However, the group will talk about funding methods.

Rice explained that the timeline and funding are uncertain for construction of I-69 through Morgan County. Rice said every decision the group makes should be a good decision whether or not I-69 is ever built in the county. The plan should also focus on what the community can do to protect key areas for development in the next 10 years or so until the interstate gets here, while at the same time building resources to undertake infrastructure work, which might include TIFs.

Holloway predicts I-69 won't get to Morgan County in the lifespan of this study, but that traffic will continue to build along SR 37, so it important to plan. Speculators could move in and start buying land, he said. We need to protect land on both sides of SR 37, so developers know how local officials want the land to be developed.

Cory presented maps with the three alternatives for I-69 through Morgan County. A possible fourth alternative would narrow the right of way and possibly reduce the amount of state-funded frontage roads.

Rice asked what issues a corridor plan should address. What does the group see happening over the next 10 years in key parcels along the route?

O'Neal said he wants overlay zoning to guide development along SR 144 and 37. He does not want another Wal-Mart type construction, which appears to be the cheapest design that the chain offers.

The communities should agree on a set of guidelines along the routes to steer design, setbacks, etc. These regulations should be in place for when an owner wants to sell off parcels to gas stations or other uses that might not be in the best interest of the community.

Ross said the group should be proactive and advocate for the community's preferred selection for interchanges. Construction is far enough away that it's still feasible to change minds, he said. Some officials have already come up with a preferred version based on the existing alternatives. Ross will distribute a copy of their preferred choice.

"The luxury of time" allows us to plan for better uses and keep things from getting worse. It might also be possible to get higher uses out of already developed property when it transitions to new uses, group members said.

A lot of work is needed because there is no sewer or water plants south of town. Taylor said it is tough in Martinsville to find available property with water and sewer that someone is willing to sell. "We have nothing to show."

Every comprehensive plan since 1967 has suggested that Martinsville set aside land for economic development, but it hasn't been done. Instead, it goes for houses, schools, etc.

Martinsville is exploring creating a redevelopment commission. Rice suggested not using EDIT accounts like cash accounts. Instead use a portion of the money to pay for part of a bond to get a bigger investment. One member warned that Morgan County could get squeezed between Bloomington and Indianapolis, so the group needs to work with them and make sure the plans don't interfere. Burgins noted that EGT is working on the I-69 for Monroe County.

Taylor said we should be planning this even if there was no I-69 project. The community needs to protect property, steer growth and extend infrastructure.

Rice said soil conditions, economic opportunities and local preferences usually have little impact on what road routes engineers pick. Instead, it's simple geography. Rice said he has brought a group of 40 people to INDOT to successfully lobby for changes to a highway plan.

Holloway said that although communities are against an Area Plan, they share common goals. Rice said we can use this document to bring communities together by looking at key points one at a time.

Ross said he would like to see ordinances for each community mirror each other, as they do for storm water. Cory then led the group in an examination of maps showing the possible I-69 routes.