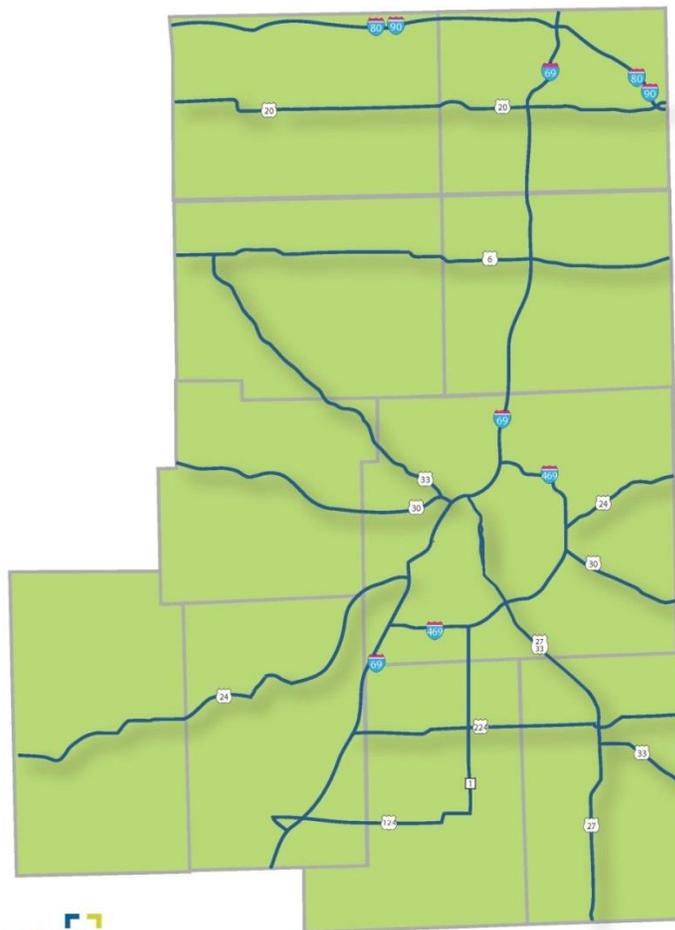


# NORTHEAST INDIANA

## REGIONAL INTERSTATE ACCESS ASSESSMENT

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NORTHEAST INDIANA REGIONAL SPINE



February 2015

# **NORTHEAST INDIANA**

## **REGIONAL INTERSTATE ACCESS ASSESSMENT**

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## Introduction

The Northeast Indiana Regional Interstate Assessment (2015) is the culmination of collaborative work conducted by the Northeast Indiana LEDO Council (LEDO Council) as supported by the Northeast Indiana Vision 2020 Infrastructure Task Force (Infrastructure Task Force) and administered by the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership (NEIRP). Sturtz Public Management Group was contracted with in the spring of 2014 to work with each of the Local Economic Development Organizations (LEDOs) that represent the ten counties throughout the Northeast Indiana region to identify a list of potential interstate projects and complete Economic Development Impact Profiles (EDIPs) for these projects. The Infrastructure Task Force developed and recommended to the LEDO Council qualification metrics by which to judge the economic impact that these proposed projects could have on the region. The LEDO Council then met to score the EDIPs using the qualification metrics which encompass both objective and subjective criteria. The results of this discussion thereby resulted in a tiering of projects that then could be used by the region to advocate for further study and funding.

## Historical Overview

The Regional Interstate Access Initiative originated in 2011 after an exchange trip for regional leaders to Denver planted a seed in the minds of participants that “Great cities have great transportation systems.” With this mantra to push progress, regional interstate accessibility came to the forefront of Vision 2020 priorities to be considered.

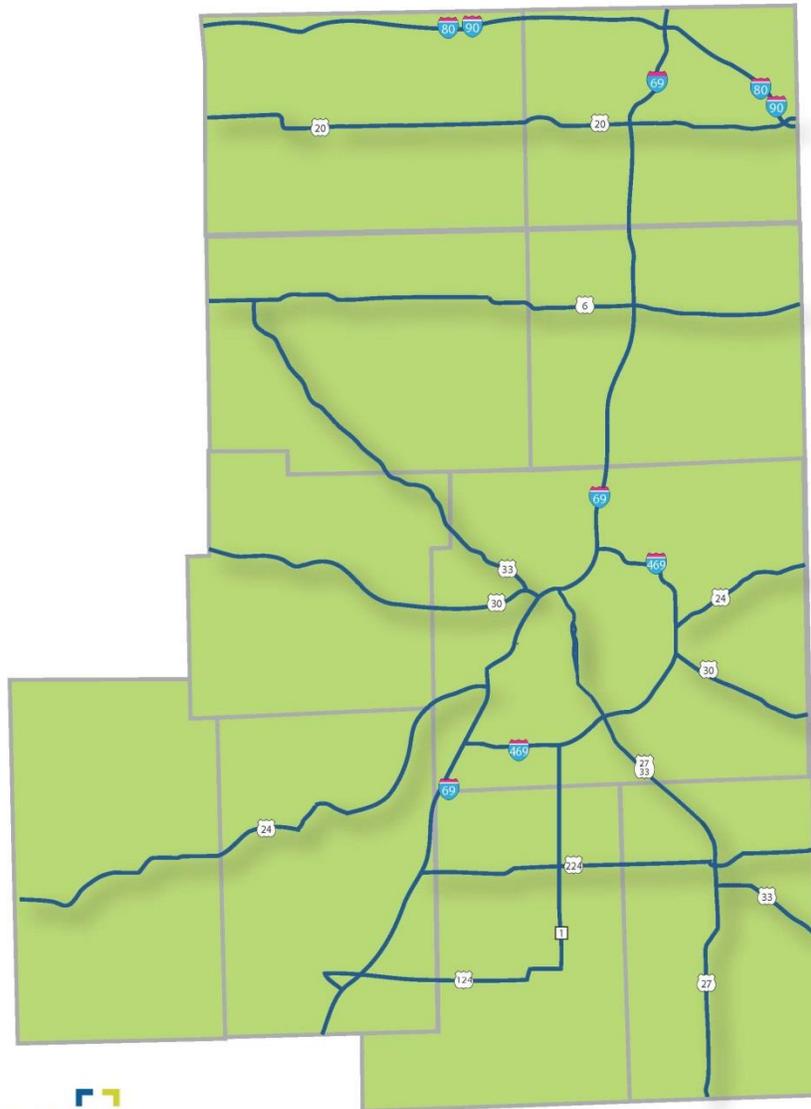
In 2012, the NEIRP worked with the Northeast Indiana Regional Chamber to build a list of pending projects at the local, regional and state level to establish a centralized list to lobby from. This list was generated in large part, from individual interviews with LEDOs conducted by the Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC) and Region IIIA as part of a previous Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) process.

In 2013, Vision 2020 convened an Infrastructure Taskforce around the Regional Interstate Access priority. Taskforce members came from many backgrounds, including LEDO representation, private business, local government, regional planning agencies and the Indiana Department of Transportation. The taskforce worked together to develop the Regional Spine Map, a specialized map that identifies the key transportation arteries both in and out of Northeast Indiana (see page ii). These roads, primarily interstate, were based on freight traffic volume. In addition, the taskforce created a tool to evaluate the economic development impact of potential transportation projects. This tool was established to measure the economic impact of infrastructure projects throughout Northeast Indiana.

In 2014, thirteen specific roadway transportation projects were selected to receive EDIPs (see page iii). This list includes projects that qualify for EDIP review based on ***required selection criteria that projects be connected to the Regional Spine for the purpose of movement of freight.*** Collectively, projects impact each county in the region and most impact more than one county. This list was developed from the previous NIRCC and Region IIIA LEDO interviews and was modified as desired by the LEDOs within

each county that the projects are located in. Throughout the summer and fall of 2014, EDIPs were developed for each of the projects in coordination with the LEDOs. Each of these completed EDIPs has been provided in this assessment. Please Note: This project list is not all inclusive. Additional EDIPs can be reviewed and added to the assessment as determined to be necessary.

## NORTHEAST INDIANA REGIONAL SPINE



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**Northeast Indiana Regional Interstate Access Project List**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Project Location (Northeast Indiana Counties)</b>	<b>Project Location (Counties Outside of Region)</b>	<b>Regional Spine Connectivity</b>
State Route 124	I-69 Interchange to State Route 116	Huntington, Wells	None	Yes
U.S. Highway 6	State Route 19 (Nappanee) to I-69	DeKalb, Noble	Elkhart	Yes
U.S. Highway 27	Monroe to I-70 (Richmond)	Adams	Jay, Randolph, Wayne	Yes
U.S. Highway 30	State Route 49/Illiana Highway (Chicago) to Indiana/Ohio line with a break through Ft. Wayne around 469	Allen, Whitley	Kosciusko, Marshall, Starke, LaPorte, Porter	Yes
U.S. Highway 33	Elkhart, IN to Indiana/Ohio line	Adams, Allen, Noble, Whitley	Elkhart	Yes
State Route 5	Interstate 80/90 to State Route 6	Lagrange, Noble	None	Yes
State Route 8	State Route 3 to DeKalb County Road 15	Noble, DeKalb	None	Yes
State Route 9/U.S. 20/State Route 3	Michigan line along State Route 9 to U.S. 20, along U.S. 20 to State Route 3, along State Route 3 to U.S. 6	Lagrange, Noble	None	Yes
State Route 9	U. S. 30 (Columbia City) to U.S. 24 (Huntington)	Huntington, Whitley	None	Yes
State Route 205, DeKalb County Road 56	State Route 9 to I-69	Whitley, Allen, Noble, DeKalb	None	Yes
U.S. Highway 224	I-69 to U.S. 27	Huntington, Wells, Adams	None	Yes
State Route 327	Interchange with Interstate 80/90 and along S.R. 327 from the Michigan line to State Road 120	Steuben	Branch	Yes
Wabash County Road 500 E.	Improvements from U.S. 24 to State Road 114	Wabash	None	Yes

## EDIP Methodology

Certain methods were established by Sturtz Public Management Group in consultation with LEDOs and the Infrastructure Task Force throughout the process of completing the EDIPs to help ensure the consistency and credibility of information collected. An explanation of information collection methods include:

1. Meetings were conducted with each LEDO to discuss projects in their counties and to request data elements.
2. Projects were classified as follows:
  - LOCAL: The project affects only one county in Northeast Indiana
  - REGIONAL: The project affects two or more counties in Northeast Indiana
  - STATE: The project encompasses counties both inside and outside of the Northeast Indiana Region
3. Traffic Counts along projects were obtained from the Northeastern Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC) and Region IIIA as collected by these agencies and/or the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)
4. Mapping, approximation of project length, and determination of the location of highways within the project study area was developed through the use of Google Earth software.
5. Project champions included holders of executive office for each local jurisdiction impacted by the project and the LEDOs in each county in which the project is located as well as others requested to be included.
6. Lead contacts are LEDOs that have shown the strongest interest in the project.
7. For projects that are part of larger corridor improvements outside of the region, the assessment focused on the Northeast Indiana portion of the project.
8. Project budgets were estimated as follows:
  - \$5 million per mile for 2 lane roadway construction improvements
  - \$10 million per mile for 4 lane roadway construction improvements
  - \$6 million per mile for 2 lane heavy highway roadway construction improvement
  - \$12 million per mile for 4 lane heavy highway roadway construction improvement
  - \$15 million per interstate interchange
  - \$20 million per toll road interchange

Because we do not know in detail the particular issues associated with any of these projects, costs were estimated based on recommendations from the Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council as an average for type of project and accounts for all aspects of project development, design, land acquisition and construction. It is expected that in addition to widening and shoulder improvements of existing roadways, that roads will need reconstructed, since they likely have not been constructed to carry large truck traffic originally. In addition, based on the age of the roadways, the right of way may have never actually been purchased and recorded, but rather is on an easement. This will require INDOT to procure what is perceived to be existing right of way in addition to any land needed for shoulders, turn lanes, utility relocations, etc.

9. The timeline was established through communication with LEDOs.
10. Regional spine impact, project approach, anecdotal evidence, potential negative results, and public input was developed through conversations with LEDOs, the Infrastructure Task Force and interviews with industries along the corridors and directed by LEDOs.
11. A 10 mile perimeter study area was established for each of the corridors to evaluation proximity to highways/interstates/existing companies and sites for future development.
12. The existing company data was developed by IPFW's Community Research Institute (CRI). Existing company data within the 10 mile perimeter study area was pulled from LexisNexis Academic and then was mapped using MapPoint 2013 to make sure that the companies fall within the ten mile boundary. If information for the companies that are being highlighted was not available, then Reference USA was used to fill in the gaps for those companies. The CRI database was also used to update any employment numbers for those highlighted companies if the information is available. Payroll for companies is not available from any of the databases whereas revenue is available. It should be noted that employment and revenue information was not available for every company.
13. Sites being marketed for future development were identified through research on each of the LEDO websites and through individual discussion with LEDOs.
14. A list of those that need to support the project was developed in consultation with LEDOs and through a consistent review of Business & Industry, Economic Development, Elected Officials, Government/Quasi-Government Agencies.
15. Next steps seemed to consistently include more detailed planning. Given that this is the first time the assessment was conducted, this may change over time.

**Qualification Metrics**

The qualification guidance details the assessment categories and criteria presented for proposed regional interstate access projects in Northeast Indiana. This was developed by the Regional Interstate Task Force for use by the LEDO Council as so desired to use as a tool when assessing projects.

The scoring criteria presented below are divided into four categories: Location (15 points), Economic Impact (20 points), Feasibility (10 points), and Other Considerations (20 points). The first three categories are developed to be scored based on objective measures. The fourth category (Other) is more subjective and depends more on intuitive judgment.

Categories	Criteria	5 Points	3 Points	1 Point
<b>Location (Up to 15 points)</b>	A	Project is located on the regional spine and includes improvements to more than one spine roadway/interchange (not including standard intersection improvements).	Project is located on the regional spine.	Project is not located on the regional spine.
	B	Project is connected to 5 or more spine corridors.	Project is connected to 2-4 spine corridors.	Project is connected to 0-1 spine corridors.
	C	Ten or more spine or non-spine state/US highways are located within a ten mile perimeter of the proposed project.	Between 5-9 spine or non-spine state/US highways are located within a ten mile perimeter of the proposed project.	Between 0-4 spine or non-spine state/US highways are located within a ten mile perimeter of the proposed project.
<b>Economic Impact (Up to 20 points, plus 1 point bonus for each shovel ready site in 10 mile perimeter)</b>	D	Total revenue of companies within a 10 mile perimeter of the project is over \$5 billion.	Total revenue of companies within a 10 mile perimeter of the project is between \$2 billion & \$5 billion.	Total revenue of companies within a 10 mile perimeter of the project is less than \$2 billion.
	E	Total amount of industrial park and industrial site land being actively marketed within a 10 mile perimeter of the project is over 1,000 acres. Add 1 pt. for each shovel ready site.	Total amount of industrial park and industrial site land being actively marketed within a 10 mile perimeter of the project is from 500 to 1,000 acres. Add 1 pt. for each shovel ready site.	Total amount of industrial park and industrial site land being actively marketed within a 10 mile perimeter of the project is less than 500 acres. Add 1 pt. for each shovel ready site.

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<b>Economic Impact (Continued)</b>	F	Total revenue of companies within a 10 mile perimeter divided by project cost is over 80.	Total revenue of companies within a 10 mile perimeter divided by project cost is from 40 to 80.	Total revenue of companies within a 10 mile perimeter divided by project cost is less than 40.
	G	Total average daily commercial truck traffic is over 1,000 along the project area.	Total average daily commercial truck traffic is from 500 to 1,000 along the project area.	Total average daily commercial truck traffic is less than 500 along the project area.
<b>Feasibility (Up to 10 points)</b>	H	Engineering feasibility study is complete, environmental issues and estimated costs identified.	Engineering feasibility study is underway. Environmental issues and estimated costs will be identified.	Engineering feasibility study has not been completed and is not underway.
	I	A formalized group comprised of public and private sector representation has been established to promote the project.	A group is under development comprised of private and/or public representation to promote the project.	No organization has occurred.

<b>Other Considerations (Up to 20 points)</b>	<b>Between 1 to 20 Points Based on Considerations Such as Those Listed Below:</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a big picture impact for the project?</li> <li>• Is there anecdotal evidence that the project will positively impact revenue, employment, space occupancy, or import/export traffic?</li> <li>• Will the project reduce congestion, eliminate an existing impediment, or complete a missing link to intermodal or other transportation?</li> <li>• Are there obstacles that will complicate the ability of the project to move forward?</li> <li>• Are there negative results to the project?</li> </ul>

**Project Tiering**

On December 17, 2014, LEDO representation from the 10 County Northeast Indiana Region held a Qualification Workshop to review the Economic Development Impact Profiles for each project. Presentations were given by each LEDO regarding the projects within their representative counties. At the conclusion of the workshop, each LEDO gave a subjective score based on “Other Considerations” as established in the qualification metrics. This score was added to the objective score established through the metrics to establish a qualified list of projects.

After the qualification workshop, projects were tiered based on scoring as follows:

Tier One	Tier Two	Tier Three
U.S. Highway 30	State Route 5	State Route 9 (Huntington/Whitley)
U.S. Highway 33	U.S. Highway 27	State Route 205
U.S. Highway 6	State Route 124 / Interstate 69 Interchange  State Route 8  State Route 327 / Interstate 80/90 Interchange  State Route 9 -U.S. Highway 20- State Route. 3 (LaGrange/Noble)	U.S. Highway 224  Wabash County Road 500 E.

Project tiering was development by Sturtz Public Management Group based on collective LEDO scoring conducted at the Qualification Workshop. The justification for scoring was analyzed and is summarized as follows:

*Tier One:*

Tier One projects were scored highest in regard to location and economic impact, but are recognizably larger projects that will take time to develop and implement. U.S. 30 and U.S. 33 are part of the National Highway System, which consists of roadways important to the nation's economy, defense, and mobility as determined by the Federal Highway Administration. U.S. 6 is also a Principle Arterial on the National Highway System which is defined as a highway which provides access between an arterial and a major port, airport, public transportation facility, or other intermodal transportation facility. Each of these projects has strong connectivity to the Northeast Indiana Regional Spine and non-spine highway corridors, has strong proximity to existing business & industry as well as sites planned for future development, and is highly used by commercial traffic. Specifics on each project that helped elevate them to Tier One status include:

**U.S. Highway 30:**

- › The improvement of this corridor to a full access controlled freeway was identified as a Tier 2 strategic priority by the State of Indiana Governor’s Blue Ribbon Panel Commission in 2014. This corridor is a connector between Fort Wayne, IN and Chicago, IL. The corridor also passes through the Orthopedic Industry concentration located in Warsaw, IN. It has been identified by the State for future study.
- › There is momentum between the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership and Orthoworx to increase awareness of the project.

**U.S. Highway 33:**

- › A need has been identified to improve a series of projects including: State Route 5, U.S. Highway 33, and U.S. Highway 27 to provide a collectively improved connection of corridors from the Michigan line in LaGrange, IN to Richmond, IN. Other U.S. highways in the Northeast Indiana region include: I-69 (which cuts from the northeast corner of the region to the southwest corner), and Interstate 80/90, U.S. 30, U.S. 6 and U.S. 24 (which cut east to west throughout the region). There is the need for a safe, improved route from the northwest corner of the region to the southeast. U.S. 33 would be the backbone of the Northwest – Southeast Corridor Connection improvements.
- › This corridor includes four of the ten counties in the Northeast Indiana region (Noble, Whitley, Allen, Adams).
- › This highway connects the South Bend metropolitan area to the Fort Wayne metropolitan area and is a connecting highway for the RV industry in LaGrange & Elkhart Counties south to Indianapolis, IN via Interstate 69 and Richmond, IN via U.S. 27.
- › The highway is perceived to be unsafe due to lack of shoulders as well as vertical and horizontal geometrics.

**U.S. Highway 6:**

- › This highway is one of a few highways in Indiana (all of which are in the northern part of the state) designated as a heavy highway. Across the U.S., the highway system standard is up to 80,000 lbs. U.S. Highway 6 in Northeast, IN can have up to 134,000 lbs. The highway is a key transport for steel between the Chicago Il. & Gary, IN area and Steel Dynamics in Butler, IN.

- › Proposed improvements would go beyond Northeast Indiana and would extend from Nappanee, IN in Elkhart County through the City of Ligonier, City of Kendallville, and the Town of Corunna to I-69 in DeKalb County. The western portion of the project area is perceived to be unsafe due the presence of both commercial truck traffic and Amish buggies where the highway is narrow and lacks adequate shoulders.

### *Tier Two*

Tier Two projects fall into one or more of three categories: 1) Part of the Northwest/Southeast Corridor Connection, 2) Projects that could be easily implemented and would have impact on significant/growing industry - “Low Hanging Fruit” and 3) Big Picture Projects. Specifics on Tier Two projects include:

#### **State Route 5:**

- › Improvements along State Route 5 would extend from the Michigan/Indiana State Line through Shipshewana to Ligonier, Indiana at the intersection with U.S. Highway 33. This highway is the northern leg of the Northwest/Southeast Corridor Connection.
- › State Road 5 would include new alignment or improved alignment along an existing county road to connect State Road 120 to Interstate 80/90 as well as an interchange at the 80/90 Toll Road. This would provide improved access for the RV Industry in Topeka and the tourism industry in Shipshewana.

#### **U.S. Highway 27:**

- › U.S. Highway 27 improvements would extend south from Monroe, IN to the southern Adams County line near Geneva, IN. This would also include the extension on to Richmond and would be the southern leg of the Northwest/Southeast Corridor Connection.
- › U.S. Highway 27 is part of the National Highway System. Roadway conditions are not up to National Highway System Standards. Amish buggies in Berne and Geneva have added to the deterioration of the roadway.
- › The project has already received some level of study from INDOT in 2006 and representatives from Adams, Jay, and Randolph Counties have discussed the project.

#### **State Route 124 - Interstate 69 Interchange:**

- › Significant truck traffic is being generated, and is continuing to grow at the Bluffton Industrial Park. These trucks mostly connect to Interstate 69. This project would provide direct access to the City of Bluffton and additional access for economic opportunities in Huntington County.

**State Route 8:**

- › The State Road 8 project is the smallest, least expensive project of those evaluated, yet has a strong proximity to existing businesses and highway connections.
- › Improvements have already been made from DeKalb County Road 15 near the Wal-Mart Distribution Center to Interstate 69 to the east. This project would involve picking up where improvements left off at DeKalb County Road 15 to State Road 3 to the west. The result would be an improved corridor from State Road 3 in Avilla, IN through Garrett, IN to I-69 in Auburn, IN.

**State Route 327- Interstate 80/90 Interchange:**

- › This project involves a new interchange along Interstate 80/90 at the intersection with State Route 327 in Orland. The longest stretch along the Indiana Toll Road without an interchange is 23 miles from State Route 9 north of the Town of LaGrange (Exit 121) to Fremont, Indiana (Exit 144). This interchange would approximately be located at mile 135.
- › While the project doesn't have strong proximity to existing business, the big picture opportunity exists for future site development along this significant transportation corridor.
- › Preliminary study has been completed by Trine Engineering students.

**State Route 9 -U.S. Highway 20- State Route 3:**

- › This route is currently designated to have a 90,000 lb. weight limit which is higher than the 80,000 lb. standard. The region should investigate the strategic opportunity of increasing the weight limit to 134,000 lbs. This would enable more freight from Michigan which allows up to 164,000 lbs. on 11 axles to connect to U.S. Highway 6 which allows for up to 134,000 lbs.

*Tier Three*

Tier Three projects are deemed to be important to the region, but need more development and/or support. These projects include the following:

**State Route 9 (Huntington / Whitley):**

- › This project would connect U.S. 24 improvements near Huntington to future U.S. 30 improvements near Columbia City. It would also connect Orthopedic related industry in Huntington, IN to Warsaw, IN. Overall project improvements are desired from Marion,

IN to the Indiana/Michigan state line and could even extend down to I-74 southeast of Indianapolis.

**State Route 205:**

› This project would make improvements within four counties (Whitley, Noble, Allen, and DeKalb). It serves as a connection between U.S. 30 in Columbia City and Interstate 69 near Auburn that avoids Fort Wayne traffic.

**U.S. Highway 224:**

› This project would improve the highway from Interstate 69 in Markle, IN and near Huntington, IN to U.S. 27 in Decatur, IN. Connectivity would be enhanced for trucks travelling from I-69 over to Ohio, thus avoiding Fort Wayne traffic.

**Wabash County Road 500 E.:**

› This project would improve a County Road in Wabash that connects to U.S. 24 and State Road 114. Midwest Poultry, a growing producer of eggs for Kroger is located along this corridor.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are being made to further the goal of enhancing interstate access within the Northeast Indiana Region. These recommendations can be used to advocate for the strategic investment of resources by leveraging the collaboration and information gained through the 2014 Northeast Indiana Regional Interstate Assessment process.

1. Continue to generate awareness and excitement toward the development of a full-access controlled freeway along U.S. 30.
  - Continue collaborative efforts with Orthoworx regarding awareness and education efforts evolving to increased advocacy and alignment of project champions.
  - Monitor and advocate for progress toward INDOT study of the corridor.
  - Advocate for an expanded look at including some level of improvement east of Fort Wayne to the Ohio line to ensure continuity to an improved corridor between the states.
  
2. Advocate for a study of Northwest – Southeast Corridor Connection projects comprised of State Route 5, U.S. Highway 33, and U.S. Highway 27.
  - Advocate for study to be completed by INDOT and/or private investment to better understand feasibility, cost, and phasing recommendations.
  - Convene project champions and private sector representatives to develop a formalized group to promote the collective projects.

3. Advocate for construction funding toward a project that can be readily developed that will also have a significant impact on business and industry in the region. State Road 8 would be a strong candidate for this as the general estimate of cost is \$32.5 Million for 6.5 miles of improvement. It also has the second highest return on investment of all the projects defined as total revenue of companies in a 10 mile perimeter divided by project cost. It would also complete a corridor that has been partially improved.
  
4. Encourage project champions in each county to continue to advance the understanding of each project through feasibility studies and the formation of collaborative groups that include public and private entities within representative counties. This can be further incentivized by offering matching funding for feasibility studies. The more information that is available, the increase likelihood that funding can be obtained.