

HIGHWAY 50 BYPASS SCOPING STUDY



SUSTAINING HOOSIER COMMUNITIES

2017-2018

A partnership between SPEA-L563:
The Planning Process & the
Bedford Planning Department





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Acknowledgements

This project was completed as a collaboration between the students SPEA-L563: The Planning Process & the Bedford Planning Department as part of the 2017-2018 Indiana University Sustaining Hoosier Communities (IUSHC) initiative. IUSHC is a program within the IU Center for Rural Engagement (CRE).

This report represents original student work and recommendations proposed by the students in SPEA-L563: The Planning Process for the Bedford Planning Department. The contents of this report represent the views of the students in SPEA-L563: The Planning Process and do not reflect those of IUSHC, CRE, Indiana University, or the City of Bedford.

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About Sustaining Hoosier Communities

Indiana University Sustaining Hoosier Communities is an initiative that partners with a local community within south central Indiana to explore, understand, and resolve challenges and projects identified by the community. Based on a tested model for university/community engagement that has been successfully implemented by over 25 universities and their community partners, Sustaining Hoosier Communities is a yearlong collaboration between Indiana University and a single community partner.

Indiana University's faculty who opt in to Sustaining Hoosier Communities match their courses to the projects based on their areas of research, expertise, and teaching. Each course uses a cross-disciplinary approach to explore and solve sustainability issues identified by the community partner through project-based research. Faculty and community stakeholders agree before classes begin on a scope of work and deliverables for each class, and project liaisons are identified by the community and the university to coordinate this unified effort.

Sustaining Hoosier Communities is just one example of many types of community engagement Indiana University plans to pursue as part of the Center for Rural Engagement. By harnessing the research, expertise, energy, and service of Indiana University's faculty, staff, and students, Indiana University and our local partners work collaboratively to improve the health, prosperity, and vitality of southcentral Indiana.

To learn more about IU Sustaining Hoosier Communities, visit www.shc.indiana.edu.

To learn more about the IU Center for Rural Engagement, visit www.rural.indiana.edu.

Sustaining Hoosier Communities Project Process





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About the Course

SPEA-L563: The Planning Process allows students to develop, design, and present a completed urban corridor or a neighborhood plan with accompanying analyses and recommendations to move the plan forward. Students in SPEA-L563: The Planning Process were paired with the Bedford Planning Department and were assigned to complete a scoping study for the City of Bedford on a possible Highway 50 Bypass around the north side of the community. A scoping study illustrates the impacts and challenges of the project to determine the overall feasibility of the project and should be completed as the first step of any major infrastructure project.

The City of Bedford was unable to fund a scoping study by hired professionals at the time so the students in this course completed the beginning of a scoping study over four weeks of the semester. In order to conduct this preliminary scoping study, students interpreted demographic information, created maps using this demographic data, analyzed development, corridor, and area plans, evaluated and wrote municipal codes, and wrote recommendations and “next steps” for the feasibility of a Highway 50 Bypass through Bedford. Students worked closely with Bedford’s Director of Planning and Zoning, Dan Kirk, to better understand the purpose of this new connection, environmental interactions, potential funding resources, and the possible effects of the project were it to move forward.



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About Bedford & the Highway 50 Bypass

The City of Bedford is considering the creation of a new route for traffic flowing east/west along US Highway 50. The goal of the US Highway 50 Bypass would be to divert traffic away from the town square and create an alternate path for regional traffic that passes through to a further destination. The four-lane highway that currently travels directly through downtown Bedford eventually splits between two one-way roads around the town square (16th Street going east and 15th Street going west). The current route forces regional traffic through the central business district, attracting potential customers to local business and moves traffic quickly and efficiently through Bedford. While the City acknowledges these benefits, the current path through downtown raises safety concerns for pedestrians and bikers and increases maintenance costs for streets as a result of heavy traffic traveling through the area. Students in SPEA-L563: The Planning Process worked with Bedford's Director of Planning & Zoning to initiate a scoping study that would propose a new route for US Highway 50.



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The Project: Connecting Course & Community

The City of Bedford has proposed a new bypass connection between Highway 50 and either John A Williams Boulevard or Highway 58 to provide an alternative route for thru-traffic around the Bedford downtown at an estimated cost of \$15 million. Students in SPEA-L563: The Planning Process worked with Dan Kirk, Bedford's Director of Planning & Zoning, to initiate a scoping study of both potential bypass routes. Although the current route allows regional traffic to flow through Bedford's central business district and attracts potential customers to local businesses, the City of Bedford has raised concerns about the safety of pedestrians and maintenance costs.

Students in SPEA-L563: The Planning Process conducted a scoping study to propose a new route for US 50 that includes the current John Williams Boulevard and a new road extending from Lincoln Avenue to the east that will meet up with the existing US 50 corridor, emphasizing that this plan will help clear downtown neighborhood of thru-traffic congestion as Bedford expands. With less traffic and competition for pedestrians and bicyclists, this potential route would provide a safer network for multi-modal transportation and help encourage residents to take advantage of Bedford's expanding downtown area. The Highway 50 Bypass would also allow Bedford to begin revitalization efforts of the historic courthouse square.

To support their proposal, students analyzed Bedford's demographic information, created graphical representations of this demographic data, and spoke with Bedford's Planning & Zoning officials to identify potential funding sources and provide recommendations for moving the Highway 50 Bypass forward.



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Student Outcomes

- Analyzed demographic data to create detailed maps of the proposed Highway 50 Bypass and illustrate the benefits and challenges of this corridor
- Created a scoping study for the City of Bedford of the feasibility of a Highway 50 Bypass
- Provided recommendations and “next steps” in moving the Highway 50 Bypass forward
- Gained project management and professional communication skills

Community Partner Outcomes

- Received detailed scoping study of the feasibility for the Highway 50 Bypass
- Identification of surrounding land parcels and owners of these parcels
- Description of environmental and public health concerns along the proposed Highway 50 corridor
- Detailed maps displaying where the roadway corridor would be located
- Greater awareness of the necessity of the Highway 50 Bypass



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