

## LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

### Proposed Improvement Multi-Use Trail in Town of Lowell, Lake County

**The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) will host a public hearing on Tuesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, from 6 pm to 8 pm with a formal presentation at 6:30 pm, at the Lowell Town Hall located at 501 E Main St. Lowell, IN 46356. If you prefer to participate in the hearing virtually, contact Ben Harvey, Stantec by Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, to register or refer to instructions at the bottom of this notice.** The purpose of the public hearing is to offer all interested persons an opportunity to comment on current preliminary design plans to provide a walking/bike path between Nassau Park (formerly called Liberty Park) and Freedom Park in Lowell in Lake County.

The purpose of the project is to provide a direct, non-motorized link for pedestrians and bicycles between Nassau Park and Freedom Park. The need for the project is due to the lack of a direct, non-motorized, vehicle separated connection between Freedom Park and Nassau Park. Freedom Park is in the northwest corner of Lowell's town limits and Nassau Park is located downtown. Freedom Park has little connectivity except by vehicle.

As proposed, the project will construct an Americans with Disability Act (ADA)-compliant, multi-use trail connecting Nassau Park to Freedom Park. This trail will be comprised of both off-road and on-road segments. Through subdivisions, the trail will be concrete to match existing sidewalks and, in some areas, may replace the existing sidewalk, in off-road areas, the trail will be asphalt. The entire trail will be 10-ft to 12-ft wide with 2-ft shoulders except where it is determined to use the existing sidewalks without further improvements. Two boardwalk sections will be constructed to minimize impacts to Wetland 03, the large wetland in the center of the project. One section of boardwalk will be 100-ft long and the other section will be 450-ft long. The topography in the project area requires retaining walls in one location to limit the construction footprint to avoid impacts to environmental resources. The approximate length of the proposed project will be 1.2 miles.

The proposed trail alignment will cross two wetlands and avoid an open water wetland and one stream. One wetland is located immediately south of Freedom Park and will be filled by construction of the trail. The second wetland that will be impacted is a large wetland located in the center of the project area. Two additional trail alignments that follow the higher ground to the west were considered to cross this wetland at its narrowest point; however, the steep topography would not allow for ADA-compliance. The placement of the trail in steeper terrain would require significant use of retaining walls as well as increase the risk of erosion. The project will clear approximately 0.64 acres of trees to construct the trail. Tree clearing will be restricted to the minimum needed to construct the trail and impacts will be mitigated as directed by U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM).

The Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) plan for the project involves the closure of the sidewalks along the southside of Timber Lake Drive and on the east side of Redbud Lane to convert them to the multi-use trail. The project will also require the closure of the existing sidewalk in the southeast corner of the intersection of West Main Street and North Liberty Street. The Town will utilize signage to direct pedestrians to the opposite side of the roadway. Work within roadways is not anticipated and disruption of traffic is not anticipated.

MOT details will be presented during the public hearing. Access to all properties will be maintained during construction. INDOT will coordinate with emergency services, local school corporation officials and project stakeholders to ensure potential disruptions and impacts are minimized as much as possible. The project will require approximately 1.0 acre of permanent new right-of-way, in addition to approximately 0.5 acre of temporary right-of-way needed during construction. No displacements of properties or relocations are to occur.

Federal and local funds are proposed to be used for construction of this project. INDOT and the Federal Highway Administration have agreed that this project poses minimal impact to then natural environment. A Categorical Exclusion (CE) environmental document has been prepared for the project. The environmental documentation and preliminary design information is available to view prior at the following locations:

1. Town of Lowell Website
2. Town of Lowell – Town Hall
3. INDOT District Office (315 Boyd Blvd, La Porte, IN 46350; and INDOT4U Toll Free Telephone Number – 1-855-463-6848)

Public statements for the record will be taken as part of the public hearing procedure. All verbal statements recorded during the public hearing and all written comments submitted prior to, during and for a period of two (2) weeks following the hearing date, will be evaluated, considered and addressed in subsequent environmental documentation. Written comments may be submitted prior to the public hearing and within the comment period to Ben Harvey, Stantec, 3901 Industrial Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46254. E-Mail:

Benjamin.Harvey@stantec.com. **INDOT respectfully requests comments be submitted by September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

Virtual participation in the public hearing will be made available via a zoom meeting here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5335310327?pwd=b3ZnQnV3UGtvOTltQkpKRURNQWVrQT09; Meeting ID: 533 531 0327; Passcode: 000000>. With advance notice, INDOT will provide accommodations for persons with disabilities with regards to participation and access to project information as part of the hearings process including arranging auxiliary aids, interpretation services for the hearing impaired, services for the sight impaired and other services as needed. In addition, INDOT will provide accommodations for persons of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requiring auxiliary aids including language interpretation services and document conversion. Should accommodation be required please contact Ben Harvey, Stantec at 317-599-4390 or Benjamin.Harvey@stantec.com.

**In the event of inclement weather resulting in hazardous driving conditions, please call the Benjamin Harvey, Stantec at 317-599-4390 to learn of any postponement of the public hearing. If the public hearing is postponed due to inclement weather, it will be rescheduled for a later date and time and the public comment period will be extended.**

This notice is published in compliance with Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Section 771 (CFR 771.111(h)(1) states: “Each State must have procedures approved by the FHWA to carry out a public involvement/public hearing program.” 23 CFR 450.212(a)(7) states: “Public involvement procedures shall provide for periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all and revision of the process as necessary.” approved by the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation on July 7, 2021.