

Memo



To: Plainfield Plan Commission
From: Scott Singleton, Director of Transportation
cc: Tim Belcher, Executive Director of Development Services
Andrew Klinger, Town Manager
Date: August 30, 2024
Re: RZ 24-052
Supplemental Transportation Comments on South of I-70 Development

Transportation planning discussions for areas south of I-70 go back to at least 2006. The Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) completed the **‘Plainfield Subarea Transportation Plan’** as somewhat of a follow-up to the Town’s 2004 Comprehensive Plan. While the overall plan extends fully south to the County Line and west out to CR 525 E, the plan offers a ‘Recommended Roadway Plan’ identified as Figure 4.1. This plan is included with this memo for the Commission’s information as Exhibit A, as I wish to highlight 4 specific improvements in the general area south of I-70 between Quaker Boulevard and Ameriplex Parkway:

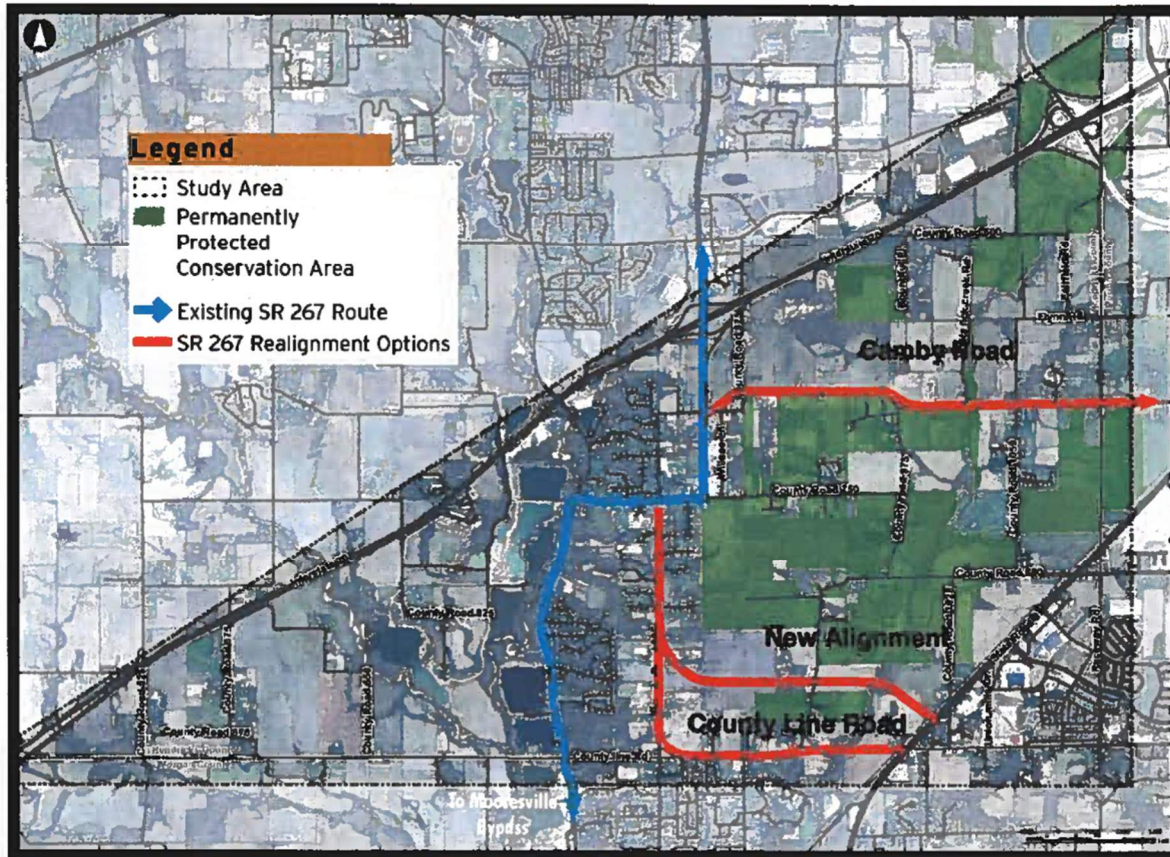
- Camby is identified to eliminate the existing sharp turns
- Orly Road is illustrated to extend westward as a frontage road along I-70 before turning and connecting to Camby Road
- Stansted is proposed to extend out of Marion County to tie-in to Camby at CR 1050 E
- A new N/S connecting road is recommended between Orly Road and Camby Road.

Below is a zoomed-in exhibit with some additional labeling to help illustrate these recommendations:



Perhaps of less concern for the immediate zoning case, but still worth mentioning, is the plan's acknowledgement of the value a new connecting road from then SR 267 (now Quaker Boulevard) would offer. The below Figure 3.1 from the MPO's plan highlights a pair of options that would attempt to connect from CR 825 E to SR 67. This solution was clearly developed to avoid impacting the 'Permanently Protected Conservation Area' that was the result of the Indianapolis Airport Authority's (IAA) coordination with U.S. Fish & Wildlife (USFW) when mitigating impacts for the new Indianapolis terminal and runway improvements back in the early 2000's.

Figure 3.1: SR 267 Realignment Options

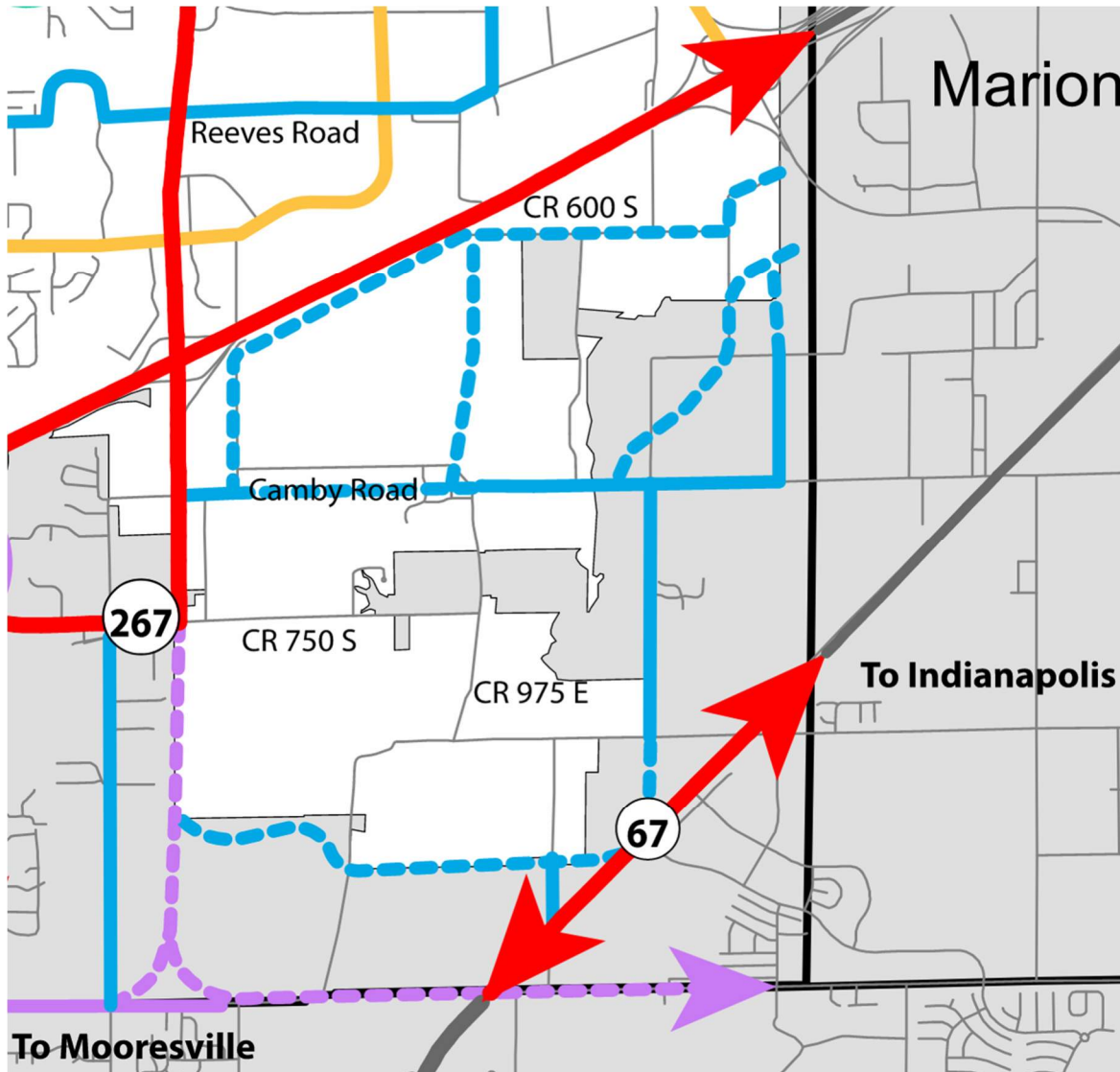


This planning effort sat idle for several years until sometime around 2016/2017 when the Indianapolis Airport Authority announced plans to divest of significant amounts of its real estate holdings, including the protected areas that would remain so as part of the Habitat Conservation Plan. By 2018, the Town reached an agreement with IAA wherein approximately 1,800 acres of property were purchased by the Town under the vision of expanding the precedent of then Sodalis Nature Park (now Echo Hollow Nature Park) to a significantly broader scope.

These developments have critically influenced the Town's transportation planning by moving much of the area infrastructure under the Town's jurisdiction. They've also opened discussions with USFW about the value consolidating protected areas, including along the riparian corridor of the East Fork of

White Lick Creek, could have for the Indiana Bat and how public infrastructure improvements designed to navigate around the protected areas would benefit the conservation area.

One result of all of these developments was an update to the Town of Plainfield's **Thoroughfare Plan** in 2019 that lays out a network nearly identical to the 2006 MPO study but pulls the discussion of a future Quaker Boulevard extension away from CR 825 E in favor of a new alignment that would impact land that was protected by the USFW restrictions. And while this change creates an expectation for significant environmental mitigation, it is generally viewed as a critical need for servicing the increasing and expected increase of vehicles that utilize the Quaker/I-70 interchange area to travel south to Mooresville and Camby.



Snipped from Exhibit Z: Future Thoroughfare Plan Map

Understanding this level of planning for future traffic is key when considering land use development near I-70 and future volumes of traffic that Camby Road is expected to support. However, I also want to bring attention to two related coordination efforts with other municipal agencies that are influencing decision-making in this area.

Jumping back to around 2006/2007, with the **new I-70 interchange at Ronald Reagan Parkway and Ameriplex Parkway** in place, the City of Indianapolis **approved construction of a large PepsiCo distribution facility**. This facility was approved with certain conditions to extend Stansted Road and Orly Road, while also creating future right-of-way for a future extension of Stansted Road. The below comparison of GIS displays helps to illustrate the expectation for future routing of traffic in this south of 70 area to these locations, consistent with other planning documents referenced above.



Hendricks County Beacon GIS



City of Indianapolis MapIndy GIS

Recently, the Town Council approved a public infrastructure improvement project to reconstruct Orly Road for nearly 4,000 feet, extending the improved roadway section that was constructed as part of the PepsiCo development. These improvements are expected to support future development occurring near I-70, but also serve as what is a two-directional effort to create the necessary infrastructure that allows future development options to use both I-70 interchanges. This project is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2025.



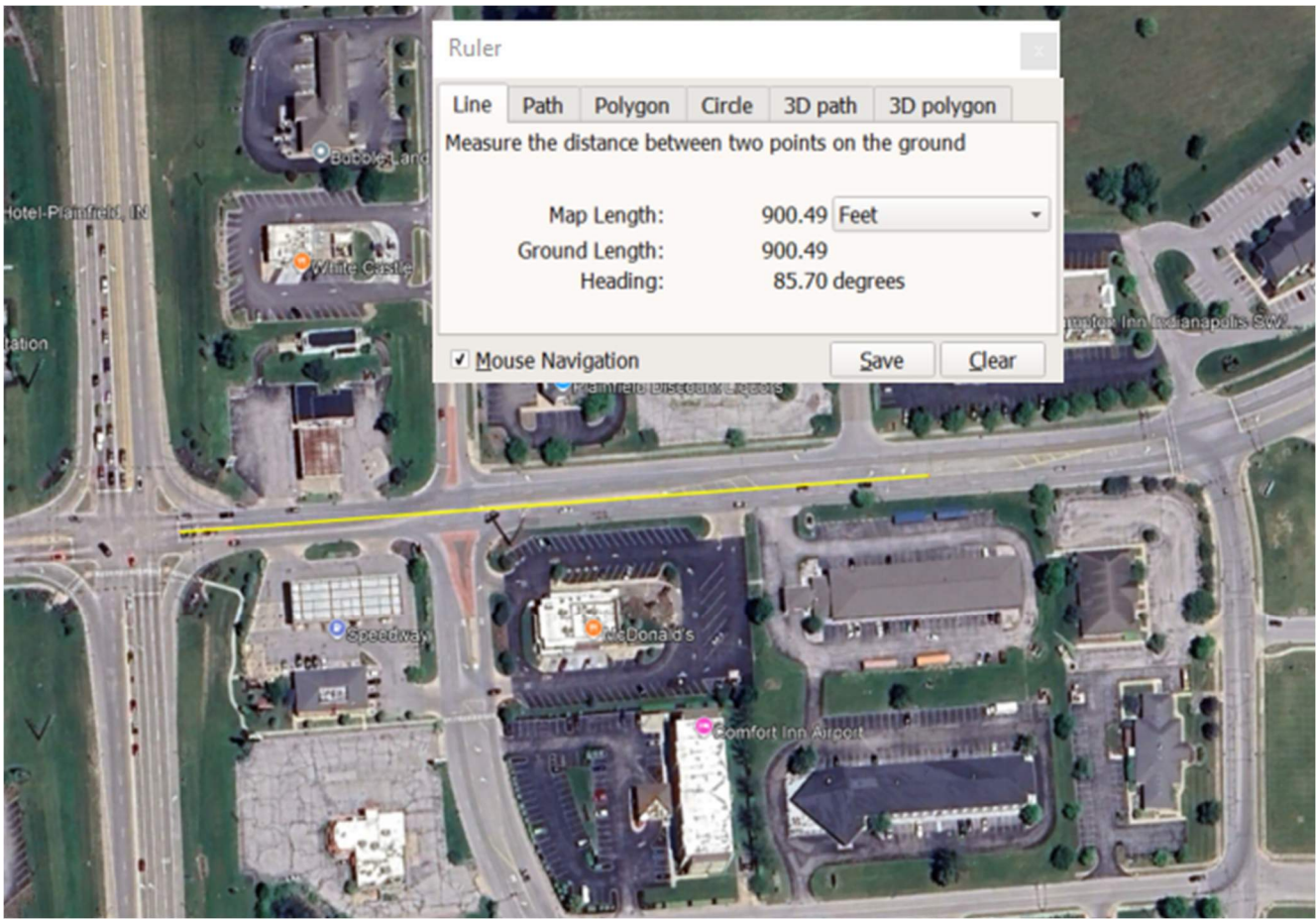
The planned connection of Orly Road to Camby Road, coupled with the beginning of construction to improve Camby Road east of Quaker Boulevard is intended to phase future development, and the accompanying costs to build infrastructure. As traffic volumes increase, infrastructure improvements will meet at a reasonably appropriate time where new connectivity provides an alternative for traffic routing. The timing of development and future improvements will take multiple projects across years, if not decades, to complete. These steps are being taken now in anticipation of development interest in this area as most areas north of I-70 have fully developed. So while a planned future connection of Stansted and Camby is anticipated, interim developments will rely on a phased effort to connect Orly Road along I-70 and down to Camby Road.

The other coordination effort that has impacted planning in this area has been working with **the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)** to accept its **relinquishment of SR 267 to local jurisdiction**. This of course is why we now refer to that roadway as Quaker Boulevard, with that relinquishment agreement having been executed back in 2020.

The relinquishment of portions of old SR 267 was initially made to the County back in 2016. The portions within the Town boundaries in 2020 were handled separately because they play a more crucial role in providing connectivity to I-70 and US 40. Still, for the particulars of this area, the Town's interest remains in developing an extension of Quaker Boulevard to the south around the Echo Hollow Nature Park as described above. Additional planning details of that extension as well as ongoing coordination with INDOT concerning its plans to replace the I-70 interchange in the coming years, are more thoroughly accounted for in the **Scoping and Alignment Study** that is published on the Town's webpage.

But as we begin to narrow this broader discussion to the current re-zoning case, INDOT's relinquishment is most apt for this discussion because as the discussion/negotiations played out between the State and the Town, the Town completed its own Traffic Impact Study in 2019 that forecasted future traffic volumes into the intersection of Quaker Boulevard and Camby Road, based upon land use assumptions from the Town's Comprehensive Plan. That study was used to design and layout improvements that were completed by the Town in 2020 to upgrade that intersection to a traffic signal with capacity to expand as area traffic increases.

Historically, if you look to the north of I-70, local street access near Quaker Boulevard was approved too close to the corridor. In part, this was the result of the natural lot depth that highway commercial business uses required for their development. But as volumes increase, these distances pose queuing concerns which translate into safety concerns. To address this concern on Camby Road, and in particular on the east side of the road that will see much larger volumes of traffic than the west, the Petitioner has proposed to construct the first public street intersection approximately 900' away from Quaker Boulevard, providing over 400' of queuing space for each intersection as traffic volumes grow. To put this in relation to the development north of I-70, you can see from the below image this would allow for approximately 2 – 2 ½ size of similar lots to develop in the proposed Highway Business zoning request.



Additionally, the Petitioner is proposing to introduce a sweeping curve along Camby Road in this area. The roadway curvature is purposefully introduced for multiple reasons but in large part is required as a means to minimize any conflict with lands further east that are protected by the USFW conservation easements. However, the curve is being considered as a means to interrupt sight distance and act as traffic calming as the Town seeks to ensure the area develops in a way that properly accommodates pedestrian infrastructure and use.

Lastly, given the nature of the limits of this rezone request and the practical limits for constructing the necessary infrastructure, the Petitioner has proposed a temporary tie-in detail that will effectively recreate the existing sharp turn in Camby Road, albeit with a slightly increased turn radius. Staff identifies this as a practical limitation for incremental development but it will need to be sufficiently designed and signed to clearly warn drivers of what will remain an undesirable roadway design.

My intent in providing this rather extensive account of the history of transportation planning in this area is to illustrate to the Commission, as well as any interested parties from the public, that there has been extensive consideration put into this area. While the current rezone represents a relatively minor development compared to the high-level planning discussed in this memo, it may very well be the first domino to act as a catalyst for the years of planning to get accelerated into implementation. And while Staff recognizes there will likely remain many unanswered questions, I am hopeful this account provides confidence to the Commission that any decision it is prepared to offer can be made with all of these past efforts in mind.

Figure 4.1: Recommended Roadway Plan

