

# EXPRESS ROUTE

## Greenwood seeks \$75M in stimulus funds to speed road plans, lure interchange

---

By Kathleen McLaughlin - [KmcLaughlin@ibj.ocm](mailto:KmcLaughlin@ibj.ocm)

---

Greenwood hopes an economic stimulus grant for transportation will hasten its plans to build an east-west thoroughfare and set the stage for a new Interstate 65 interchange.

The city is seeking \$75 million in federal funding, enough to build and widen 6-1/2 miles of suburban and rural roadway.

The improvements would start at State Road 135 on Stone Crossing Road and continue east on Worthsville road past I-65. The roadway from S.R. 135 to county Road 300 East would grow to four lanes, giving drivers a quick way to travel across the south side.

Greenwood also hopes Worthsville will feed a new interchange someday.

The city's application is among \$53 billion in requests that flooded the U.S. Department of Transportation before the September deadline to apply for \$1.8 billion in stimulus funds, said Dennis Faulkenberg, a local transportation-planning consultant whose clients include Hendricks County.

Greenwood's competitors include the state of Indiana itself, which filed eight applications worth more than \$400 million.

"There's never been a program like this," said Faulkenberg, president of

Indianapolis based Appian. "I don't know how they're going to judge these projects."

The stimulus program, dubbed TIGER for Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery, is in addition to the billions already funneled through states for various "shovel-ready" projects.

President Obama's administration seems to favor urban and mass-transit projects, Faulkenberg noted. At the same time, he said, the Transportation Department recently changed the TIGER guidelines, opening the program to applicants seeking less than \$20 million.

"That tells me they want to sprinkle it around," he said.

Though incredibly competitive, the stimulus program provides a one-time opportunity to bypass years of piecemeal road construction. Hendricks County, for example, is still trying to finish the Ronald Reagan Parkway to connect I-70 and I-65 in Boone County.

The first section of the parkway was built so long ago, 1996, that it's starting to crumble.

Greenwood's east-west route, like the Ronald Reagan, is supposed to move sub-urban traffic outside the I-465 loop.

The city also is looking to spur development, especially new industry east of I-65. The section targeted in the grant application is part of a grand plan to connect Morgan, Johnson and Shelby counties.

"Any of our growth will go east," Greenwood Director of Operations norm Gabehart said. "The road patterns to the east—we'll improve those."

Eventually, Johnson County would pick up the thread and extend Worthsville to Clark School Road, which runs east to Shelby County and I-74, Greenwood Engineer Mark Richards said.

In the meantime, widening Worthsville would help move traffic from US 31 to Sheek Road, which connects to Main Street near I-65. The traffic originates to the south, as residents of Whiteland and White River Township travel through Greenwood on their way to work.

The city already had identified \$18 million to complete the section of Worthsville from U.S. 31 to I-65. If Greenwood were to win the TIGER grant, Richards said, that local money would be available for building an interchange, which is estimated to cost \$30 million. (The source of the local funding is a tax-increment financing district that includes the Nestle water-bottling plant.)

# EXPRESS ROUTE

## Greenwood seeks \$75M in stimulus funds to speed road plans, lure interchange

---

By Kathleen McLaughlin - [Kmclaughlin@ibj.ocm](mailto:Kmclaughlin@ibj.ocm)

---

A new i-65 interchange has been on the drawing board in Johnson County several years, but earlier this year Greenwood hired the law firm Krieg DeVault to lobby for federal transportation funds.

Mayor Charles Henderson said in his February state-of-the-city address that he hoped to cut a ribbon on a new interchange at Worthsville and I-65 before the end of his fourth term in 2011.

In the late 1990s, Henderson presided over a ribbon-cutting on the I-65 interchange at County Line Road, which runs past Greenwood park mall. Gabehart said planners couldn't consider county Line as an effective east-west corridor because of congestion around the mall.

Indiana Department of Transportation engineers have said traffic volumes would justify an interchange at Worthsville, but it's not on a priority funding list.

Even if Greenwood wins the grant, Worthsville road would be widened only to dead-end at a county road amid farm fields.

Faulkenberg said such incomplete projects aren't roads to nowhere.

"To the folks who live out there, they do go somewhere. There are huge pockets of population and commerce out in the

suburban communities that have good connection to the center ... but you can't get from one to the other."