



South Split – Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is INDOT doing at the South Split?

A: The project will increase vertical clearance below eight bridges at the I-65 and I-70 South Split in downtown Indianapolis to minimize the number of oversized vehicles striking the bridges, thereby improving safety and traffic flow. The project will involve:

- Closing I-65 and I-70 between the north and south splits for 59 days beginning September 3, 2013, to rebuild and lower pavement under seven bridges.
- Replacing part of the Virginia Avenue bridge with new steel beams to increase minimum clearance to 14 feet 9 inches. Virginia Avenue will remain open during this work.
- Replacing the eighth East Street Bridge structure over I-70 during 2014.

Q: Why are bridges in this area frequently struck?

A: All loads measuring 13 feet 6 inches or more must apply for an oversize load permit through the Indiana Department of Revenue (<http://www.in.gov/dor/4243.htm>), which designates an appropriate route for the vehicle to travel. The bridges near the South Split currently have clearances of 13 feet 11 inches or greater, which means the drivers striking the bridges do not properly secure their load, do not have the proper permit or have ventured off their permitted route. Drivers are responsible for their vehicles and loads, and any damage they may cause.

Q: Is it safe to cross the bridges being struck?

A: INDOT bridge inspectors are on call 24-7 and respond to reports of bridge strikes to inspect the damage and ensure motorist safety. Routine inspections are also performed on all public road bridges at least once every other year. INDOT and Purdue installed a camera to the southbound Virginia Avenue Bridge over I-65/I-70 to further monitor bridge strikes beyond those reported by law enforcement and the public.

Q: What entrance and exit ramps will be open and closed during construction?

A: OPEN RAMPS:

- I-65 southbound to I-70 eastbound
- I-65 northbound to I-70 westbound
- I-70 westbound to I-65 northbound
- I-70 eastbound to I-65 southbound
- I-65 southbound/I-70 eastbound exits to North Street, Michigan Street, Vermont Street, Ohio Street and Fletcher Avenue
- Pine Street ramps entering I-65 northbound and I-70 eastbound
- Morris Street ramp entering I-65 southbound
- I-65 northbound exit ramp to Morris Street

CLOSED RAMPS:

- I-65 southbound to I-70 westbound
- I-70 westbound to I-65 southbound
- I-65 northbound to I-70 eastbound
- I-70 eastbound to I-65 northbound
- I-65 northbound/I-70 eastbound exit ramp to Washington Street
- Washington Street ramp entering I-65 southbound/I-70 westbound
- Calvary Street, McCarty Street & Virginia Avenue ramp entering I-65 northbound/I-70 eastbound
- I-65 southbound/I-70 westbound exit ramp to East Street

To see a map, go to: http://www.in.gov/indot/files/GF_SouthSplit_MainlineRampClosures.pdf

Q: What can I do to prepare for the closure?

A: Motorists and businesses are encouraged to become more informed about the details of the closure and how it might affect them by visiting www.Southsplit.in.gov and signing up for email updates. Begin planning now. You may have to take a different route to work or inform employees about how they will be affected. Contact suppliers, delivery trucks, clients and customers to minimize any impacts to business. Plan to allow more travel time once construction begins, and be more courteous to fellow drivers.

Q: How are you working to inform the motoring public of the closure?

A: INDOT has been reaching out to community groups, residents and businesses in as many ways as possible. Broadcast media, social media and regular email updates are being used to keep the public informed every step of the way and throughout the project. A public open house was held in July to present project details, answer questions and address concerns.

Q: What is being done to keep traffic moving?

A: Advanced warning signs and message boards will notify through traffic to use I-465 around the south and west sides of Indianapolis. (http://www.in.gov/indot/files/South_Split_I-65-I-70_Detour_Map.pdf) The detour will add 2 to 3 miles to through interstate routes. During the past few years, INDOT has added dynamic message and travel time signs to Indianapolis interstates to provide enhanced traveler information. Traffic to and from downtown Indianapolis will be monitored, and signage will be adjusted to direct traffic to open ramps. Some signal timings and lane configurations in downtown Indianapolis are being temporarily modified to adjust for changes in traffic patterns and volumes. INDOT's Hoosier Helpers sponsored by State Farm will increase free interstate service patrols to improve incident response and minimize delay.

Q: Why not keep lanes open and rebuild the interstate in phases?

A: Traffic engineers performed a queuing analysis that predicted traffic would back up for miles in each direction, gridlocking I-65, I-70 and many of the roads that feed into them. Closing the interstate through the work zone will accelerate construction and expedite completion of the project while providing a safer environment for workers and motorists.

Q: What are the seven bridges under which the pavement is being lowered?

A: The seven bridges are:

1. Fletcher Avenue bridge over I-65/I-70

2. Calvary Street bridge over I-65/I-70 southbound
3. Calvary Street bridge over I-65/I-70 northbound
4. Virginia Avenue bridge over I-65/I-70 southbound
5. Virginia Avenue bridge over I-65/I-70 northbound
6. I-70 eastbound bridge over I-65 southbound
7. Morris Street bridge over I-65 southbound

Q: What is the required vertical clearance for bridges over the South Split?

A: The Federal Highway Administration's Application of Design Standards, Uniform Accessibility Standards, and Bridges Guidance says, "On Interstate sections in urban areas, the 4.9-meter (16-foot) clearance shall apply to a single routing. On other Interstate urban routes, the clear height of structures shall be not less than 4.3 meters (14 feet)." The west and south sides of I-465 that serve as the project detour form part of the "single routing" in the Indianapolis urban area for oversize loads on the interstate system.

Q: Why not raise the bridges rather than close the interstate?

A: There are a total of eight bridges at the South Split with clearances lower than 14 feet 9 inches. Raising them all would involve significant time, expense and impacts. Only one of the eight structures – East Street over I-70 – will be rebuilt in 2014 as part of this project because the pavement could not be lowered safely beneath the bridge.

Q: Why not lower the road elevation further for more bridge clearance?

A: To lower the road elevation any further below the seven project bridges would require a more significant project to relocate underground utility lines and reconstruct drainage features. It would also require long-term pumping of storm water to prevent the interstate from flooding, and backup systems to keep the pumps running when storms cut electric power.

Q: What is the estimated project cost?

A: Milestone Contractors' winning bid was \$12.4 million, 90 percent of which will be financed with federal highway funds. Contract incentives and liquidated damages of \$60,000 per day will encourage Milestone to meet or beat its closure estimate of 59 days. A separate contract will be bid to replace the East Street Bridge structure over I-70.

Q: Could this work be completed more quickly?

A: Four Indiana contractors competed over construction cost and closure days using an innovative INDOT bidding technique. Should contractors reopen I-65 and I-70 earlier than the 59 days in their bid, they will be eligible for incentives of \$60,000 per day. Should construction extend beyond the 59-day closure duration, contractors will be liable to pay damages of \$60,000 per day, barring abnormal weather conditions or other factors outside the contractors' control.

Q: Could this work have been completed before the school year on the Colts season began?

A: Development of the project began following the February 22 collision and repairs that closed I-65 northbound and I-70 eastbound at Virginia Avenue. Since then, design and the required regulatory clearances have occurred at an accelerated pace. A fall closure was the earliest and only timeframe in which work could have been completed this year.

Q: What is being done to control construction noise and dust impacts to adjacent neighborhoods?

A: INDOT is working to balance the interests of adjacent neighborhoods and the thousands of motorists that use I-65/I-70 each day. The initial phase of removing existing pavement and lowering the road bed is expected to generate the most noise and dust.

Q: Will there be any construction on alternate routes?

A: No lane closures are planned on the west or south legs of I-465 that will serve as I-65 and I-70 detours during construction. The west leg of I-465 between I-65 and I-70 was recently widened and rebuilt as part of the Accelerate 465 project.

Q: Why wasn't this work done during Hyperfix?

A: Hyperfix was a project designed to address pavement issues, not bridge clearances. The number of oversize vehicles striking overhead bridges has increased dramatically in the past few years. This was also seen at the 96th Street, Westfield Boulevard and Allisonville Road bridges over the I-465 north leg before the bridges were replaced.

Q: Will commuter bus service be offered as it was during Hyperfix?

A: Since the Hyperfix project was completed 10 years ago, the Central Indiana Regional Transit Authority (CIRTA) has launched regular Indy Express Bus service to Fishers and Carmel. More information is at: <http://www.cirta.us/pages/expressbus/>

Q: How will bicycle and pedestrian traffic be affected?

A: Some parking on New York Street will be restricted temporarily to accommodate additional vehicular traffic entering northbound I-65 and eastbound I-70 via Pine Street. During steel beam replacement on the Virginia Avenue bridge, Cultural Trail traffic will be detoured temporarily across the street.

Q: How will the project impact emergency response times?

A: INDOT is coordinating with public safety agencies to minimize impacts to emergency response times.

Q: Who may I contact with a question or concern?

A: Construction projects in Indianapolis are managed out of INDOT's district for East Central Indiana, which can be reached toll-free at 855-463-6848 or eastcentralin@indot.in.gov.

Revised Aug. 21