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# Position Statement

HUNI seeks joint Policy Direction that advances vibrancy and quality of life to guide Interstate investment through downtown Indianapolis

**Indianapolis, Indiana January 25, 2018** The Historic Urban Neighborhoods of Indianapolis (HUNI) urges the City of Indianapolis, State of Indiana, and Metropolitan Planning Organization to work together on a policy directive to shape future investments in the interstate system through downtown. HUNI is attending the INDOT Consulting Party meeting on Friday, January 26 at 9 AM at the Benjamin Harrison Presidential Site to make this request and ask that it be included in the report of this meeting. HUNI urges INDOT to leverage its funds with other creative funding tools to achieve positive change that advances downtown vibrancy and its quality of life. Our intention is not to be an adversary to the existing process, but rather to facilitate a creative solution that meets INDOT's objectives, accelerates a bold vision for a world-class City, and maintains Indianapolis as the primary economic generator for the State of Indiana.

HUNI is seeking support for development of technically and economically feasible alternatives to the INDOT plan that more holistically address community development and quality of life opportunities. Those include economic development, environmental and social justice considerations, in addition to traffic management (in conjunction with mass transit, bike trails, etc.) But, rather than simply oppose this project, we view this as an opportunity to reshape downtown Indianapolis for the next half-century. Our vision reimagines the spatial and functional relationships of downtown Indianapolis to the region and the state as a whole. INDOT is on a fast track towards seeking design-build proposals for the first phase of the overall project, the north split of I-65/I-70, in late 2018/early 2019, per recently revealed documents.

The current plan is an archaic, 1960s-era model of transportation planning. The impact on Downtown caused by the project's widened bridges, added lanes and tall retaining walls will be devastating. The project will even further separate Downtown from its adjoining districts and historic neighborhoods that had been so impacted by the original interstate configuration fifty years ago. Some of those neighborhoods have only recently recovered due to the heroic efforts of countless committed stakeholders, though they are still impacted by proximity to the raised interstate facility. Other neighborhoods have never fully recovered. The expanded facility will exacerbate those environmental impacts on air quality and noise by closer proximity, increased traffic volumes and the proposed removal of existing landscaped berms along some sections.

This very large investment to repair outdated infrastructure is intended to enhance mobility and safety, which are admirable objectives. Yet even INDOT's report, based on questionable traffic projections, projects traffic demand will exceed capacity in 20 years. It will have a long-term adverse impact to the form and function of the city, its residents, and its businesses for the next 50 years (its projected life-span).

HUNI's broad goal is to leverage this very large federal and state investment into a new paradigm for transportation infrastructure within a vibrant community and region. The scale of this investment has a potential impact equal to or greater than the city-defining Indianapolis Park and Boulevard system of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. We view this as an opportunity to establish a new grass-roots driven policy partnership with the City, the Regional Planning Agency and the State.