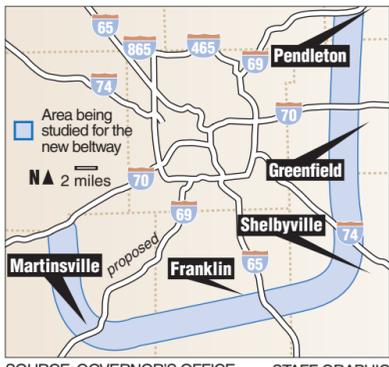


THE ROUTE

Gov. Mitch Daniels has proposed a tollway that would pass south of Franklin and be built somewhere in the area marked in blue below.



SOURCE: GOVERNOR'S OFFICE STAFF GRAPHIC

Public questions plan at Anderson session

The Associated Press

ANDERSON

Questions about the necessity of a proposed tollway around Indianapolis and how land would be acquired for its construction were among those raised by the public during a hearing on the project.

About 50 people attended the hearing Thursday night at Anderson University, the second in a series of meetings on the tollway proposed by Gov. Mitch Daniels.

While many of those who spoke were against the plan, Pendleton Town Council President Don Henderson said much misinformation was being spread.

"I happened to grow up when the interstate was being built, and people

said it would split farms, it would cause problems," Henderson said. "All that is true; there will be disruptions. But I would ask you how you would like it today if the interstate were done away with."

The proposed tollway would run from Interstate 69, near Pendleton about 20 miles northeast of Indianapolis, and head south and west for about 75 miles to link with Interstate 70 southwest of the city.

Daniels is seeking authority from the legislature to have a private company build and operate the central Indiana tollway and another in northwestern Indiana.

Joseph Gustin, the state highway department's deputy commissioner of public-private partnerships, said the availability of interstate highways was a

key to attracting development.

"The governor is committed to economic growth in Indiana," Gustin said. "And having viable transportation infrastructure is an important part of the plan."

Bill McAllister of Fishers said he believed the tollway made little sense for truckers and commuters and could hurt Indianapolis.

"I remember when Shadeland Avenue was a major connecting highway on the north side," McAllister said.

"Then 465 came in. Now Shadeland Avenue is a ghost highway. Why keep moving out and let the inner city die?"

Dick Donnelly, a former Anderson planning director, said he worried about the cost associated with the toll-

way project, including research and public meetings.

"I'm worried about the resources being spent right now," he said. "We're talking hundreds of thousands of dollars. It's about having alternatives for the future."

The meeting also drew a group of protesters who hung a banner with the slogan "Resist Roads/Build Community" and distributed literature about Hoosiers harmed by highway projects.

"We're trying to help some friends of ours near Bloomington to save their land," said Frank White, a 21-year-old student at Indiana University.

More highway department hearings on the tollway project are scheduled for Monday in Fishers and Fairland and Tuesday in Franklin and Martinsville.

• Daniels

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

company to build and maintain the toll road.

Changes could mean that legislators will spend more time debating and discussing the bill during this year's legislative session.

Daniels is confident the bill will be passed during the 2007 session and has no intentions of backing away from his proposal, said Betsy Burdick, the governor's deputy chief of staff. Burdick did not speak at the news conference.

He is not discouraged by initial responses during public meetings about a toll road through five central Indiana counties, she said.

Feedback gathered in those meetings will help lawmakers raise questions and make changes to the legislation to address people's concerns, she said.

Legislators who met with Daniels this week talked about some of those issues.

One example is the committee that reviews the beltway as the

IF YOU GO

A meeting is planned at Franklin College about the Indiana Commerce Connector:

When: 6 p.m. Tuesday

Where: Branigin Room, Napolitan Student Center

What: State officials will hear public comments and share information.

project progresses. The current legislation says the legislative budget committee will perform reviews. Lawmakers could change that to a different group or create a committee, Burdick said.

Local legislators listed ideas including ways to compensate landowners for their property and getting a specific and detailed route before allowing private companies to bid on the road.

The entire process to study, approve and build the beltway will not be completed during this legislative session, said Jane Jankowski, spokeswoman for the governor.

And the governor said this bill will be different from others.

Daniels compared the project to his Major Moves proposal last year, that when approved gave the state permission to lease the northern Indiana toll road to a private company.

In that case, the road was already built, and the state was ready to make a deal with a company, he said.

With the toll road and the Illiana Expressway in northwest Indiana, which are packaged together in the same bill, neither project is built and the state doesn't have an offer from a company wanting to operate the roads, he said.

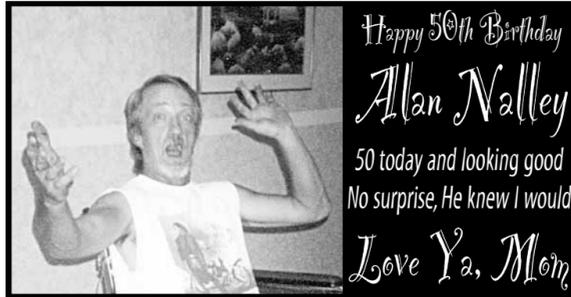
The difference means that legislators will spend time this session talking about the process of approving the beltway.

Daniels said he is set on his proposal for the Indiana Commerce Connector, among his other top ideas, and that he did not propose any with the notion they could fail.

"That's not the way I operate. I'm deadly serious about all these ideas," he said.

"I'm realistic enough to know that particularly if you try as many things as we tend to try that you won't bat 1,000, but that doesn't mean that we're not very sincere," Daniels said.

Franklin College reporter Drew Stegman contributed to this report.



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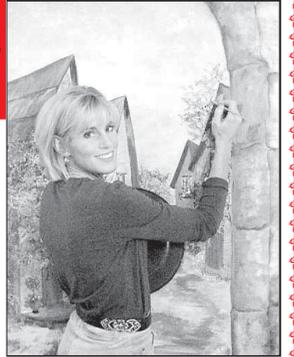
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• Beltway

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

Question: Alleviating truck traffic is a major concern for some. What if truckers indicated they would bypass that by getting off the toll road? How do you expect that to alleviate the truck traffic?

Daniels: First of all, and I don't want to be too harsh about this. Before anybody would build the road, they would study this very carefully.

The same predictions were made when tolls were raised after 20 years up north, and it didn't happen. Here's the reality: The trucking community tells me every 15 minutes of delay costs them as much as \$30.

So, a route that saves time, and that would be the test, is probably worth a big multiple of the toll you pay, \$5 or \$10 total.

Remember we are not talking about today. We're talking about this road at best being available in six, seven or 10 years, maybe the whole thing. So what a trucker thinks he sees today is completely different. It is getting worse every day. And it will be, and that's why I think you have to ask yourself that question. How will all this look for somebody trying to get to Fort Wayne to points south in the future?

There's already a lot of delay trying to wade through Fishers or the eastside of Indianapolis, and so it's an attempt to really get ahead of this problem a little bit. Remember, there are two sets of, I think, reasons to be interested in this idea. One is to protect against these problems and the other is to create new opportunities that are not there today for jobs and growth.

Question: The communities of Johnson and Bartholomew County have a pressing need for quality labor. How will the Commerce Connector alleviate that?

Daniels: Well, for one thing, it would make it possible for people to come to work in Johnson County from a little greater distance. If you could get on a free-flowing, limited-access road at, let's say, Anderson, and it's only about 30 miles or something on this route, be in Johnson County very quickly, it might widen the area in which good workers can live.

I believe the connector, certainly the economic development experts tell us, that the connector would create significant "hubs" at each intersection, or near each intersection, with all of these interstates and that could lead again to people locating near those places and having their choice of jobs anywhere around the route.

I guess I moved to say that I'm starting to run into this question in places.

There were some interesting stories written about Honda and Cummins and Jeffboat, and some of our successes in southeast Indiana last year.

I still got it over there on my desk from a business writer that says, "Factory managers and others are worrying about the demand for skilled labor and the upward pressure on wages." And I drew a great big circle and said, "That's the problem I've been waiting for!" "What a great problem, upward pressure on wages. So, you know, I don't want to be flippant about it, but we are trying to create so much activity and opportunity in this state that you do have to work to find workers for your plant."

Question: Why start the Commerce Connector bill on the Senate side?

Daniels: It can start on either side as far as I'm concerned. We got some enthusiastic supporters over (in the Senate), and they are rarin' to go. With all of our bills, really, have a number of people in the House who express interest or outright support.

But they do have to have the permission of their leadership before they can become an author of a bill that we are in support of, and I understand that.

So, it may be a little while, but there are definitely people on the Democratic side who are very supportive of our ideas like the higher education plan, the connector and so forth. But they need the blessing of their leadership. That's the way the system works.

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