

At its regular meeting on January 14, 2019, the Washington City Council approved two agreements with the Indiana Department of Transportation related to the future of Business 50 through the City. Under the terms agreed to, the City will assume ownership of the highway in return for a significant amount of money from INDOT. The agreement will allow the City to move forward on not only re-surfacing the road but improving it to modern standards and updating utilities under it.

Mayor Joe Wellman was happy with the Council's decision as he and members of the Council and the City's consultants have been earnestly negotiating with the State of Indiana for more than two years. Wellman explained, "The future of Business 50 has been a bone of contention with the State since the US 50 bypass was constructed in the early 90's. Like my three predecessors, my position has been that the City would not accept the road unless the State either re-built it or gave the City sufficient money to do so. That is what we have now accomplished."

Under the agreements, INDOT will provide the City with State and federal highway money totaling \$15.375 million dollars for re-construction and improvements. The projected cost to re-build the road's base, completely re-surface, and construct new curbs and sidewalks is \$16.9 million. This total includes new drainage structures and a potential multi-use path as requested by citizen focus groups. Included in the State's funding is \$800,000 for the City to use for operations and maintenance until the work is completed.

"Everywhere we look today," Wellman explained, "we are told how important good streets and related infrastructure such as sidewalks and paths are when people and businesses look at the quality of a community and how much a community cares about upkeep of their infrastructure. The current condition of the roadway has certainly been an eyesore for our community."

Nick Jahn, P.E., one the City's consultants on this project, said, "The fact that the State is willing to contribute almost 87% of the cost of re-building this road is impressive and almost unprecedented. At