



TOWN OF ARGOS

201 WEST WALNUT STREET

ARGOS, INDIANA 46501

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June 28, 2017

INDOT LaPorte District Office
Attention: Customer Service Center
315 E. Boyd Blvd.
LaPorte, IN 46350

RE: Public Comments Period, US Hwy 31/SR 10 Improvement

On behalf of the Town of Argos, I'm writing a response to the public comment period for the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) J-Turn plan at the intersection of US HWY 31 and SR 10. Let me begin by commending INDOT on conducting a public hearing. As evidenced by the large turnout by area residents and other officials, transportation flow at that location is of great interest.

The Argos Town Council is not in favor of the J-Turn plan presented by INDOT as a long term plan. While issues of mobility and safety were noted as key factors to the presented plan, factors of economic development were surprisingly absent. Let me shed light on what the Town has done lately to attract industry with the intent of urging INDOT officials to factor this into a long term transportation plan.

The Town has an economic development plan that centers around developing an industrial park with rail served and non-rail served property. To this end, the Town of Argos purchased about 80 acres and, with the help of Indiana Municipal Power Agency (IMPA), received Shovel Ready Certification through the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) in 2015.

Through yet another partnership, the Town and Marshall County EDC (MCEDC) will begin construction of a shell building this summer after much planning and organizing stakeholder meetings. MCEDC has secured a conventional loan for the \$2.10 MM project and will be the developer of the building. So as you can now understand there are some real financial implications that will be influenced by ease of travel from US Hwy 31 to the industrial park. Other partners that have a financial stake in the success of this economic venture include Norfolk Southern, NIPSCO, IMPA, and the local lender. Each has made a contribution or have agreed to make a contribution in the future.

The Town of Argos can support a short term plan of J-Turns provided that it includes the **long term solution of an interchange**. We suggest that this alternative be studied then engineered with a final step of construction through an investment by the State of Indiana.

In closing, the Town of Argos will transform itself into a viable economic engine through the execution of its current economic development plan and through its willingness to invest in this plan. INDOT can have a positive influence on the success of this venture and help the State share in the economic benefits resulting from the build-out of our industrial park without sacrificing safety and mobility. We look forward to a favorable response to these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dustin Johnson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dustin Johnson, President
Argos Town Council

CC: Commissioner Kevin Overmyer
Senator Randy Head
Representative Jack Jordon