

# Tipton Co rejects US 31, Division Rd interchange plan

Officials: Short term gains not worth long term cost of Indiana 213 upkeep

- [Tyler Juranovich Kokomo Tribune](#)

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TIPTON – The Tipton County Commissioners rejected a proposal from the Indiana Department of Transportation that would have given the county the full interchange at U.S. and Division Road it wants in exchange for a previously planned overpass and taking ownership of Indiana 213.

The commissioners unanimously rejected the proposal at their regular meeting Monday, citing that while the deal was a good one in the short term, officials didn't see it as such in the long term.

According to Phil Beer, county engineer, the upkeep of the 14-mile road would cost the county an estimated \$4.5 million in the first 10-15 years, and by year 20 the cost would be more than \$6 million, the amount the county needs to find to construct an interchange at the intersection instead of the currently proposed overpass.

“It would probably be cheaper for us to try and come up with funding for an interchange,” Commissioner Dennis Henderson said, adding that public opposition to the proposal also played a part in the board's decision.

The commissioners first made public INDOT's proposal in early January and sought the public's opinion.

Officials from the Town of Windfall came out against the proposal because of doubts the town and county would be able to afford to maintain Indiana 213. A small stretch of the state highway runs through Windfall, and the town of 700 would've been responsible for upkeep of that section had the proposal been accepted.

The commissioners aren't giving up on finding a way to build an interchange at U.S. 31 and Division Road, though by what means the county intends to make that happen is unclear at this point.

Henderson said the county will continue to lobby state elected officials to fund the interchange, as well as looking at options where the county could fund the construction itself.

"It's still our goal to try and get it done," Henderson said, adding that the interchange remains the commissioners top priority. "I think it's important not to just forget and let time go by. We need to keep pursuing because we know if we don't, things don't just happen."

County elected and business officials see a full interchange at the intersection as very important to the growth of business along U.S. 31 and the city's business park, and in keeping truck traffic off of city roads.

Without an interchange at Division Road, the county's only access to U.S. 31 would be at Indiana 28.

INDOT's current proposal for limiting access on U.S. 31 in the county is building overpasses at 600 South, 500 South, 300 North and 450 North. All other county roads would be turned into cul-de-sacs where they meet the highway.

Originally, an interchange at U.S. 31 and Division Road was planned as part of INDOT's major project to turn U.S. 31 into a free-flow highway with no stoplights by 2025, but it was scrapped after the interchange was not funded by the General Assembly.

Since early 2020, the county has made it a priority to push for the interchange.