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GATEWAY PROJECT

Panel seeks funds for bridges

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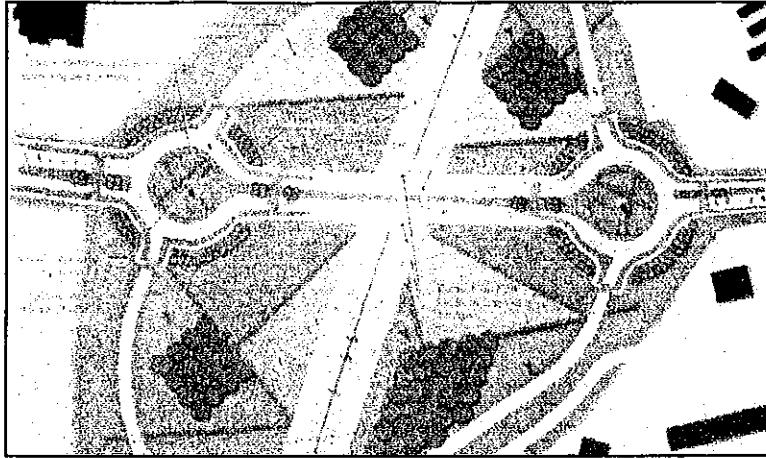
LEBANON — Lebanon faces a mid-February deadline if it wants to participate in designing two new bridges over Interstate 65, consultants said Monday.

But part of that pressure includes deciding how much — if anything — to spend on putting Lebanon's brand on new bridges at Indiana 39 and the CSX Railroad over the interstate.

The state will widen I-65 from four lanes to six between I-865 and U.S. 52, beginning in early 2011. Existing overpasses will have to be rebuilt to accommodate the extra lanes.

Potential designs for the bridges were shown to the city council Monday by Alan L. Hamersley, of the engineering company Butler Fairman & Seufert; Carl Kincaid, an architect with Rundell Ernstberger Associates; and Jim Lewis, representing the Greater Lebanon Vitalization Committee.

The concept drawings are part of the Lebanon Gateway & Corridor Master Plan, which will be formally presented to the council on Jan. 11. "Gateways" are highway entrances to the city; "corridors" are streets leading to the downtown



REPORTER PHOTO

This and other architect's renderings of a possible design for the Indiana 39 and Interstate 65 interchange were shown to the Lebanon City Council Monday.

square. In December 2008 the city council approved spending up to \$196,000 for the study.

The gateway committee chose "Heritage of the Heartland" for the bridge design theme, Kincaid said.

Hamersley said it would cost up to \$73 million for the two bridges, if all design options are included; that includes \$831,600 for a decorative screen on the CSX bridge.

Lebanon's 2010 budget is about \$73 million.

One design calls for a pylon-and-guy-wire bridge at Ind. 39. The pylon would be reflective of grain elevators, Kincaid said. That would cost about \$1.351 million. A plan for two roundabouts, including an access road to Cox Avenue south of the interstate, would be \$2.787 million. A third option, adding land-

scaping, a roundabout "gateway structure" and a wind spire, would add \$2.37 million.

An estimated 60,000 to 100,000 vehicles use I-65 per day, Lewis said in urging the council to consider funding the projects. "This is a great chance to market our town," Lewis said.

Contracts for the Ind. 39 bridge could be advertised in late summer,

Hamersley said; contracts for the railroad bridge are expected to be advertised in May.

Design of the bridges will be locked in well before then, however.

Lebanon has to "make a fairly quick decision" if it wants input into the bridge design, Lewis said.

Mayor Huck Lewis named council members Mike Kincaid, Jeremy Lamar and Brent Wheat to a committee that will review the proposal.

Several meetings were held to find out what the public thinks of suggested improvements. Those meetings built upon a spring 2007 analysis of Lebanon's entrances by Ball State University professor David Schoen and his urban planning program students.

The mayor said he and John Brand of BF&S have been negotiating with the state highway department over enhancements to the new Ind. 39 overpass.

"We're at a position where we're trying to figure out if we can do this," he said.

The original gateway plan included Lafayette Avenue. That has been eliminated, Hamersley said, because the state will eliminate the U.S. 52/Lafayette Avenue interchange when it widens I-65.