

CHAPTER V

Comments and Coordination

Throughout the development of the Route 65 project, the Missouri Department of Transportation proactively sought the involvement of the Cities of Lincoln and Warsaw, Benton County, resource agencies, the Benton County Corporation and the general public. This chapter summarizes the public involvement and agency coordination efforts and the key messages conveyed by various stakeholders.

A. Public Involvement Plan

The public involvement process described throughout this section was inclusive of all residents in the study area and did not exclude anyone because of income, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability.

Gaining informed public input was accomplished by following the details outlined in the Route 65 public involvement plan. The plan documents the approach and philosophy of MoDOT and the consultant study team for identifying and engaging the communities, officials, local citizens and other potentially affected interests in the Route 65 corridor. The public involvement plan was designed to provide a clear description of how the study team will solicit input, develop two-way communication with the public and document public opinions regarding the transportation planning process.

Details about the public involvement efforts are described below. A copy of the public involvement plan is available from MoDOT Central District upon request.

1. Newsletters

Project newsletters were sent to local units of government, project-area residents, project-area businesses, review agencies and others on the mailing list before each public information meeting (PIM, see **Chapter V.A.5**). The newsletter mailing list was initially composed of names and addresses taken from Benton County tax rolls as well as local and state officials. Subsequently, the names of people who expressed an interest in the study by attending public meetings or by calling the project team were added to the mailing list. The purpose of the newsletters was to keep the public updated on the study's progress, summarize project issues and concerns, announce upcoming meetings and encourage continued public input. Copies of the project newsletters are contained as **Appendix V-A**.



In February 2007, a Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) was circulated. The DEA presented a preferred alternative. This configuration was the result of extensive public input and agency coordination.

The circulation of the DEA was followed by a Public Hearing. Based on written and verbal public input, agency coordination and internal analysis, the preferred alternative was refined and the selected alternative was identified.

The selected alternative is shown in **Exhibits II-3A–J**.

A discussion of the Public Hearing and responses to the issues raised by the circulation of the DEA and during the Public Hearing are presented in **Chapter V.C**.

The first newsletter, mailed in January 2006, introduced the project and the study team. It described why the study was being conducted, presented the study schedule, described the project boundaries, defined the criteria that would identify and evaluate project alternatives and announced the time and location for the first PIM. Contact information for both the MoDOT project manager and the consultant project manager also appeared in the first newsletter.

The second newsletter, mailed in May 2006, described the study progress since the first PIM and discussed the individual elements that comprise the DEA. Similar to the first newsletter, it contained contact information for the MoDOT project manager and the consultant project manager, a project schedule and the date and location for the second PIM.

The third newsletter, in the form of a letter from the project manager, was sent to coincide with the project's public hearing. This newsletter announced the date, time and location for the public hearing along with information relating to what would be displayed at the hearing. The newsletter also listed locations within the project corridor where the DEA was available for review. Contact information for both the MoDOT project manager and the consultant project manager was also included.

2. News Releases and Advertisements

News releases announcing the date and locations of the PIMs were distributed to the following project-area media:

- Newspapers *Sedalia Democrat*, the *Sedalia News Journal*, the *Benton County Enterprise*, the *Lincoln New Era* and the *Cole Camp Courier*
- Radio stations KDRO, KSIS and KAYQ

Display advertisements announcing the date and locations of the PIMs were also placed in the *Benton County Enterprise*. Meeting announcements were placed about two weeks before the PIMs. In addition, several articles on the project appeared in a few of the newspapers listed above. Copies of the news releases and the newspaper advertisements are attached as **Appendix V-B**.

3. Telephone and Mail Contacts

Project contact information was provided to the public before the first PIM so interested persons could call the study team to discuss ideas and concerns and to provide land use and other information to be used in developing and refining alternatives. All calls were logged and summarized. When appropriate, meetings were held with individual property owners to discuss specific issues or written responses, and information was provided upon request. This project contact information included phone, email and mailing address for MoDOT's project manager (phone and mailing address only) and the consultant project manager.

As of March 1, 2007, there were approximately 25 contacts from the public (not including comment forms related to the PIMs or public hearing) during the course of gathering information and input for the project. The chief concerns were whether the City of Lincoln would be bypassed, whether and when personal property might be affected, what type of field work the study team might be performing, and how existing driveways and access patterns would be handled.

4. Civic Organization Meetings

An important element of the public involvement process included close involvement with the Benton County Corporation, formerly known as the Benton County Coalition. The Benton County Corporation is comprised of business owners and important political figures interested in the transportation issues affecting Benton County. The Benton County Corporation provided input to the study team during data gathering, development and refinement of alternatives and impact analyses. As liaison between the project team and the larger community, the Corporation members were asked to inform others in their community about the project and share public input with the project team. Given the breadth of the Benton County Corporation, it has proved to be the ideal mechanism to get project information out to the public. The Corporation was also an excellent mechanism to receive project-related input. The involvement of the Corporation has proved vital to the high level of involvement that the study team received from the public.

The study team met with the Corporation four times. A summary of the key topics discussed and messages received at each meeting with the Corporation is listed below.

The first meeting with the Benton County Corporation occurred on June 21, 2005. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce project staff to the Corporation members, gather information on specific issues affecting the Route 65 corridor and explain how the Corporation could work best with the study team. Corporation members expressed general concerns about the following issues affecting Route 65:

- Safety,
- Access and mobility,
- Impacts to residences and businesses and
- Timing of the proposed improvements.

The second meeting with the Corporation was held on October 25, 2005. The purpose of the meeting was to review the purpose and intent of National Environmental Policy Act, discuss the project schedule and review the work efforts the team would be performing. General comments by Corporation members included the following:

- A bypass of Lincoln would severely impact the town,
- Questions about the role cost plays in selecting a preferred alternative and
- Questions about whether the study team would be available to meet with civic groups.

The third meeting with the Corporation was held on February 17, 2006. The purpose of this meeting was to preview the materials that would be presented at the first PIM on February 22, 2006. The study team displayed the initial range of alternatives under consideration. The Corporation reiterated their strong preference that the roadway remain through Lincoln and that any bypass of the city would effectively “kill” it from an economic standpoint.

The fourth meeting with the Corporation occurred on May 9, 2006. The purpose of this meeting was to review the details of the first PIM, display the reasonable range of alternatives and provide a preview the second PIM. In general, the Corporation members expressed their satisfaction with the alternatives, the screening of the alternatives and the results of the alternatives screening.

In addition to the four meetings with the Benton County Corporation, the study team made itself available to meet with a range of possible interest groups including property owners, environmental groups and agricultural interests to provide additional feedback to the study team about local opinions and questions. To date, none of these groups have contacted the study team to request a meeting.

5. Public Information Meetings

Two PIMs were held to assist the study team in data gathering, developing and refining alternatives. The meetings were announced through advertisements in area newspapers and project newsletters. The sessions were held in an open house format from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

The first PIM was held on February 22, 2006, in Lincoln, Missouri, at the Lincoln School. About 216 people attended the meeting. Representatives from MoDOT and CH2M HILL, MoDOT's consultant, were present to convey a variety of information and answer questions from those in attendance. An open-house format was used for the meeting. No formal presentations were delivered.

A variety of media outlets were used to announce the meeting and encourage project stakeholders to attend the PIM. Local radio and local newspapers were utilized to run advertisements and stories about the study and public meeting. The Benton County Corporation provided a tremendous amount of local support and "word of mouth" advertising. A project newsletter announcing the meeting was sent to property owners, local units of government, utilities, state agencies, elected officials and other interest groups. Meeting exhibits included aerial photos of the project area and the initial range of alternatives, information on traffic volumes, a project schedule, information on cultural resource issues and a public involvement display explaining how to stay involved in the study. The purpose of the meeting was to gather information on the study area and obtain input on the initial range of alternatives.

A handout included information on the purpose and scope of the project, the study process, the project area, the project schedule, upcoming activities and public involvement opportunities, frequently asked questions and a comment sheet. Attendees were encouraged to comment on the project either verbally to a project team member, verbally on a tape recorder or through written comments.

Verbal comments provided at the PIM, in addition to written comments provided at the meeting and by mail, consistently expressed these opinions regarding the project:

- Support to improve the highway; nearly all comments referenced safety concerns;
- Widespread support for keeping Route 65 through Lincoln, and opposition to any alternative that bypasses Lincoln;
- Support for the utilization of enclosed drainage within Lincoln, to limit impacts and
- Support for a two-way, left-turn lane, as opposed to a raised median, within Lincoln.

The second PIM was held on May 24, 2006, in Lincoln, Missouri, at the Lincoln School. About 200 people attended the meeting. Representatives from MoDOT and CH2M HILL, MoDOT's consultant, were present to convey a variety of information and answer questions from those in attendance. An open-house format was used for the meeting. No formal presentations were delivered.

A media release was issued before the meeting. Exhibits at the meeting included maps showing the initial range of alternatives, maps showing the reasonable range of alternatives, maps showing the preferred alternative, the project schedule, cultural resources information and details on the makeup of the DEA. A meeting handout was provided which included information on the status of the study and alternatives under consideration.

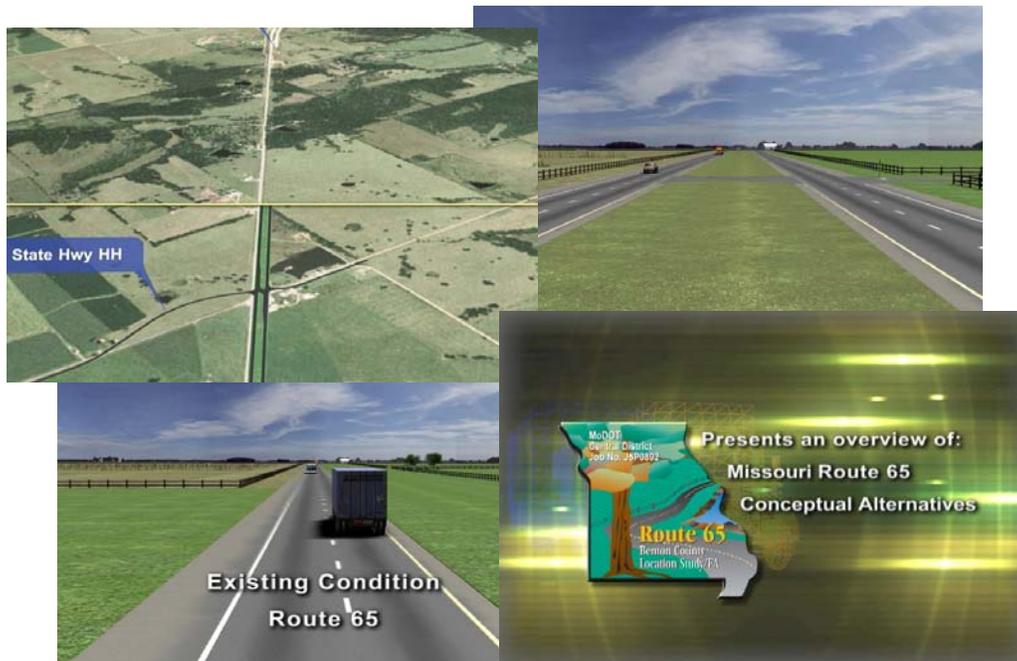
Attendees were encouraged to comment on the project either verbally to a project team member, verbally on a tape recorder or through written comments. Those attending the meeting overwhelmingly supported the preferred alternative as presented by the study team. Comments provided by the public at the second meeting included the following:

- Widespread support for keeping Route 65 through Lincoln;
- Support for a four-lane divided highway outside of Lincoln in order to improve safety;
- A desire for a median opening at the Warsaw Airport to support proposed growth;
- Appreciation of the three-dimensional (3-D) video as a useful visualization tool and
- Strong opposition to consideration of a 2 plus 1 roadway configuration.

The PIM handouts are attached as **Appendix V-C**, and the PIM summaries are attached as **Appendix V-D**.

6. Three-Dimensional Video

In order to help the public better “visualize” the alternatives, a 3-D animated video of the preferred alternative was displayed at the second PIM. The study team developed this video by using a combination of horizontal and vertical geometry from computer-aided drafting (CAD) drawing files, sketches and high-resolution photos. Textures of existing buildings in Lincoln were photographed and applied to the buildings in the video to give the roadway a “real-life” look and to help orient the viewer. The creation of this 3-D video was very well-received by the public with most attendees noting that it provided a very clear image of what the new roadway would look like.



Typical scenes from Route 65 visualization

For the public hearing, an updated 3-D animated video was developed. The updated version was largely the same as the initial version. The one new feature that was added depicted a 3-dimensional drive-through of the section north of Lincoln. This section will require the new northbound profile to be independent of the existing southbound profile (higher or lower in certain locations). This difference in elevation would also require a wider median at certain locations. These unique features of the north section were portrayed in the updated video for the public hearing.

B. Coordination with Agencies and Local Governments

1. Notice of Intent

On April 20, 1994, a Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register regarding the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for the improvement of the Benton County portion of Route 65. On February 27, 2006, a notice was published in the Federal Register to rescind this NOI. The current scope of the Route 65 improvement project was reduced from the earlier project. Using practical design principles, the current project sought to utilize the existing roadway to the extent possible. Not only would this minimize costs, but it would also minimize impacts. Because of this scope reduction, the NOI was rescinded.

2. Coordination with Local/Regional Officials

As mentioned previously, an important element of the public involvement process included close involvement with the Benton County Corporation. The Corporation's membership includes the area's important political figures. The study team met with the Corporation four times leading to the DEA. **Chapter V.A.4** summarizes this coordination.

3. State and Federal Agency Scoping Meeting

In order to involve applicable regulatory agencies, an agency scoping meeting was organized. The meeting was held on February 6, 2006, at MoDOT's District 5 office in Jefferson City, Missouri. The meeting was held to discuss the purpose and scope of the study, present the study schedule and activities, review the project corridor and obtain comments on the range of environmental issues that should be considered when developing the reasonable range of alternatives in the DEA.

Representatives from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MoDOT, Federal Highway Administration, State Emergency Management Agency, Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency were invited to the meeting. Several MoDOT and FHWA representatives were also in attendance. This meeting was intended to bring together the agency decision-makers into a single room.

Study members presented details related to the project corridor to assist agency representatives in understanding project-area transportation issues. An information packet was provided at the meeting. The meeting itself was organized around the project scope, alternatives, the study process, project purpose and need, project schedule, public involvement plan, known environmental constraints and project contact information.

The meeting was very successful in providing the agencies with the project-related data they needed to understand the project. It also established the framework for the project's overall agency coordination process. A detailed summary of the agency scoping meeting is contained in **Appendix V-E**.

4. Summary of Areas of Concern

This portion of the text is intended to consolidate the various coordination activities that have been discussed throughout this document. **Appendix V-F** contains copies of important agency or resource correspondence. The Missouri Department of Transportation will continue its agency coordination activities, as appropriate, throughout the balance of the project.

a. Section 4(f) Applicability

The Truman Reservoir and the Lost Valley Fish Hatchery lie immediately adjacent to Route 65. Both are publicly owned, multi-purpose facilities with recreational components. Coordination with each administrative agency was needed to determine whether Section 4(f) of the

U.S. Department of Transportation Act applied¹. Through extensive coordination, it was determined that Section 4(f) was not applicable to the areas of these properties adjacent to Route 65 (see **Chapters III.C.15 and IV.B.16**).

b. General Coordination for Important Recreational Facilities

While Section 4(f) is not applicable, the Truman Reservoir and the Lost Valley Fish Hatchery are important facilities to the people of Missouri. The project team coordinated the development and evaluation of the project alternatives with each administrative agency to develop a project that best serves the needs of these important resources.

The administrators of the Truman Reservoir (ACOE) were particularly concerned with:

- **The Configuration of the Sterett Creek Marina Road Intersection:** This intersection is used by boaters to access the Sterett Creek Marina and other areas associated with the Truman Reservoir. The ACOE was concerned with ensuring that it was configured to operate properly/safely. They were also concerned with maintenance of traffic during construction.
- **Potential Impacts to the Sterett Creek Embankment:** Lying adjacent to Route 65, the embankment is a vital flood-control structure. The project team is coordinating with the ACOE to ensure that the selected alternative does not inadvertently affect the integrity of the embankment.
- **Drainage Pattern Alterations:** Roadway improvements can affect drainage patterns. Maintaining proper drainage is also important to the integrity of the embankment.

The administrators of the Lost Valley Fish Hatchery (MDC) are particularly concerned about possible displacements to existing wells/well houses. Adjacent to Route 65 are several wells that supply water to the hatchery. Disruption of these resources would impact the hatchery. The project team also coordinated the maintenance of the Old Route 65 access road to the hatchery and the avoidance of the site under consideration for a new forestry building. Coordination materials and meeting summaries are contained in **Appendix V-F**.

c. Interagency Coordination on Agricultural Land Agreements

Several types of agricultural lands are recognized and protected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Coordination under the Farmland Policy Protection Act, the Wetland Reserve Program and the Conservation Reserve Programs was conducted. The selected alternative will not result in significant impacts to these resources.

d. Cultural Resource Coordination

Pursuant to the investigation of whether important cultural resources were present within the project area, coordination with the State Historical Preservation Office was conducted. This included field surveys and other interaction. It was through this coordination that methodologies

¹ Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966 limits FHWA participation in projects that adversely impact publicly owned park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges and historic sites. The Secretary of Transportation may only approve projects requiring the use of these lands if there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use and the project includes all planning to minimize harm.

were established. Investigations and assessments found that no National Register of Historic Places-eligible resources that would be affected by the selected alternative. On October 3, 2006, SHPO concurred with MoDOT that no NRHP-eligible resources (architectural or archaeological) are present within the footprint of the selected alternative or situated in its immediate vicinity.

e. Endangered Species

The potential presence of the Mead's milkweed was a concern throughout the project. Coordination between MoDOT and the USFWS resulted in a species-specific study in summer 2005. The project team also coordinated extensively with The Nature Conservancy. This private organization preserves important habitat, such as the Rock Hill Prairie². The selected alternative is not expected to affect the Mead's milkweed. No right-of-way acquisition is expected from the Rock Hill Prairie. Among the project-related concerns expressed by The Nature Conservancy were direct impacts to their property, temporary construction encroachments and drainage/stormwater alterations.

f. General Conservation

In addition to coordination with the Lost Valley Fish Hatchery, the project team conducted general coordination with the MDC. Among the issues discussed were a variety of prairie-related issues, from the Prairie Chicken Restoration Management Program to the remnant tallgrass prairie sites located throughout Benton County. Improvement of Route 65 within the existing corridor is not expected to impact these resources.

C. Circulation of DEA and Public Hearing

In February 2007, the Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) for the Route 65 improvement project was circulated. The DEA presented the details of the project development process up to the point where the selection of a preferred alternative was made. This allowed for a more focused presentation of impacts and the opportunity for a more productive stakeholder involvement process. **Appendix V-G** contains copies of the DEA distribution letters.

The circulation of the DEA was followed by a Public Hearing. The Public Hearing was conducted to provide a formal venue for the public to view the DEA and to review the latest exhibits. The hearing was announced through legal advertisements in local newspapers, informal display advertisements in local newspapers, letters and postcards to the project mailing list and radio announcements.



Station 2:

Location of Public Review Copies of the Draft EA

Benton County Court House
316 Van Buren Street, Warsaw

City of Warsaw
181 West Harrison Street, Warsaw

City of Lincoln
122 East Main Street, Lincoln

Lincoln School
101 West Lamine Street, Lincoln

Benton Co. Soil & Water Conservation District
535 North Highway 65, Lincoln

Boonslick Regional Library
102 East Jackson Street, Warsaw

² This facility is a 68-acre tract located in the southeastern quadrant of the Route 65/Route BB intersection. This facility is owned by a private organization, The Nature Conservancy. Among the goals of this facility is the preservation of important habitat for the Mead's milkweed.

The hearing was held on Wednesday, March 14, 2007. The Public Hearing was conducted in an open house format from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. About 150 people attended the hearing. Representatives from MoDOT were present to discuss the project and to answer questions from those in attendance. No formal presentations were delivered.

A variety of media outlets were used to announce the hearing and encourage project stakeholders to attend. Local radio and local newspapers were utilized to run advertisements and stories about the study and public hearing. A letter announcing the meeting was sent to property owners, local units of government, utilities, state agencies, elected officials and other interest groups.

Meeting exhibits included project overviews, project schedules and recaps of the previous public involvement meetings. The basic elements of the DEA were discussed. Copies of the DEA were made available for review. The primary exhibits focused on the preferred alternative. A detailed depiction of the preferred alternative was provided (the Public Hearing materials were similar to **Exhibit II-3** in this document). The access management plan for Lincoln's driveway closures, relocations and turning restrictions was also presented (the Public Hearing materials were similar to **Exhibit II-4** in this document). The various impacts of the preferred alternative were summarized.



Preferred Alternative And Drainage Within Lincoln

- The Preferred Alternative uses an enclosed drainage concept through Lincoln. Engineering studies conducted at this stage of the project indicate that such a drainage system can work. Due to the very flat terrain in Lincoln and lack of design level mapping, these studies are not 100% conclusive. The team will be able to confirm that the proposed system can work during the next phase of the project when more detailed data will be gathered and analyzed.
- In the unlikely event that the proposed drainage system is not feasible, **one of the other two reasonable alternatives (LT-E or LT-W) will be designed and constructed instead.** Both of these alternatives would use an open drainage system, and consequently would have wider footprints. Ultimately, this would result in more impacts to the properties along Route 65 in Lincoln.
- Please see the exhibit to the right for a depiction of LT-E and LT-W and their respective impacts.
- MoDOT feels it is likely that enclosed drainage will be feasible. However, considering alternate scenarios at this time will minimize delays should enclosed drainage become infeasible.

SUMMARY FOR THE REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES THROUGH LINCOLN THAT UTILIZE OPEN DRAINAGE (LT-W AND LT-E)		
ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS/IMPACTS	LT-W - Western Widening with Open Drainage	LT-E - Eastern Widening with Open Drainage
Route 65	Achieved	Achieved
Design Goals	Achieved	Achieved
Design Objectives	Minimally Achieved	Minimally Achieved
Right-of-Way	6.1 Acres	6.2 Acres
Assessment Involvement	One Expected	Two Expected
Linear Footprint	910 Linear Feet	1,160 Linear Feet
Acres (Existing Use)	59 Acres	68 Acres
Drainage	Yes - Tributary to Cole Camp Creek and Duran Creek	Yes - Tributary to Cole Camp Creek and Duran Creek
Encroachment on Rock Hill Prairie	None Expected	None Expected
USDA Office	None Expected	None Expected
Other	None Expected	None Expected
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS		
Impacts (Route 65 to Carport Barn Road)	18	15
Land Displacements	11	12
Setbacks	3	1
Permits	4	2
Acquisition	118 Acres	118 Acres
Properties within Lincoln (roughly between 68th and 78th)	1) Papa John's Restaurant 2) Bob's Market 3) Memorial Lincoln Ambulance Station 4) Pitman Patch Antiques 5) Pandora's Ball & Tackle 6) Sharon Johnson Accounting Tax Service	1) MoDOT Maintenance Salt Barn 2) Casey's General Store 3) Ballerup 4) Shelter Insurance 5) Bristol Manor Residential Care Facility 6) Nick's Upholstery Auto & Boat
URBAN IMPACTS		
Access	Minimal	Minimal
Driveway	None	None
Access Points	Revision of Driveway Access Points	Revision of Driveway Access Points
Cost	\$16,300,000	\$15,200,000
Construction	No Technical Challenges Construction to be Done Adjacent to Live Traffic; Temporary Access Impacts to Adjoining Properties	No Technical Challenges Construction to be Done Adjacent to Live Traffic; Temporary Access Impacts to Adjoining Properties



Route 65 Alternatives
City of Lincoln - Two-Way Left-Turn Lane Alternatives (Open Drainage Concept)



Public Hearing exhibits dealing with the drainage issues within Lincoln

Additionally, a series of exhibits focused on the issue of drainage in Lincoln. The preferred alternative consists of an enclosed drainage system with symmetrical widening through Lincoln. While planning level analysis by study engineers indicated that an enclosed drainage section is feasible, there is some uncertainty about whether such a system would be feasible due to the

flatness of the terrain in Lincoln. The exhibits presented at the public hearing emphasized that this was an unlikely scenario, but that it was important to disclose it and to gauge public sentiment, in the event that it became necessary. Two of the reasonable alternatives (LT-E and LT-W) utilized an open drainage system with widening to the east or west, respectively, of the existing roadway; these were presented as exhibits, along with impact tables and general description text boards. Because of the complexity of requesting input on design elements that are unlikely to be necessary, a team member was stationed at these exhibits throughout the Public Hearing. All visitors who reviewed the drainage exhibits were engaged to ensure that they understood the intent of these exhibits and that input was being requested as to which open drainage alternative they preferred if the enclosed drainage alternative was not feasible. Verbal comments received relayed that support for enclosed drainage was high. Few visitors expressed a preference relative to surface drainage options. However, the relatively large proportion of written comments that dealt with drainage in Lincoln indicates that the attendees understood the issue.

Appendix V-G contains important Public Hearing materials such as the meeting handouts. A complete transcript of the Public Hearing was prepared for the project's technical file.

Attendees were encouraged to provide comments on the project either on the available tape recorder or through written comments. However, the bulk of the hearing's interaction occurred verbally. The project team actively sought to engage the attendees, both to answer questions and to explain the project. Those attending the hearing generally supported the preferred alternative, as presented. Based on a debriefing of the project team members present at the Public Hearing, the following common themes emerged:

- Widespread support for keeping Route 65 through Lincoln with curbs and gutters;
- Support for a four-lane divided highway outside of Lincoln in order to improve safety;
- Numerous inquiries about access to and from personal property in the project area³;
- Appreciation of the three-dimensional (3-D) video as a useful visualization tool and
- No strong preference between the open drainage options within Lincoln.

At all of the public involvement venues, the local community was very attentive and supportive. The project team sought, throughout the public involvement process, to encourage input. Public input was an important component in the decision-making process. Because of the specificity of the configuration shown at the Public Hearing, very detailed discussions could be held. This allowed for many of the uncertainties associated with the project to be resolved. After their individual concerns were addressed, the preferred alternative was generally embraced. Nevertheless, the attendees were encouraged to provide formal comments and suggestions.

³ Because the preferred alternative presented at the Public Hearing was very detailed, it allowed for stakeholders to envision clearly how the improved Route 65 would operate. Not surprisingly, the access management plan was of interest to most attendees. As a result of the Public Hearing, the entire access management plan was reexamined. Some elements were revised; the revisions are identified on **Exhibits II-3A–J** and discussed in **Chapter II.D.4**. The format of **Exhibit II-4** was also revised, based on the Public Hearing.

The circulation of the DEA and the Public Hearing generated a limited number of written comments. The limited number of written comments is interpreted by the project team as support for the preferred alternative and an indication that stakeholders clearly understood the project and that their concerns were adequately addressed. Except for a letter from the City of Lincoln, all written comments were received on Public Hearing comment sheets. The City's letter was a query about which section in the DEA contained depictions of the access management plan. In reply, MoDOT directed them to **Exhibit II-4** and summarized the project's intention to provide access to all existing parcels in Lincoln (the reply letter is contained at the end of **Appendix V-G**). The substantive comments (written or otherwise) received during the Public Hearing or during the DEA comment period are discussed below.

Outside of Lincoln, the selected alternative will reconfigure Route 65 into a divided highway. Crossovers will be provided at each existing intersection. Comments included inquiries about specific additional crossovers. In each of these instances, the project team acknowledges the difficulties that some land owners will experience as a result of the transition of Route 65 into a divided highway. However, it has been determined that the development of additional, single-use crossovers will degrade the operation, as well as the safety, of the new facility.

Within Lincoln, the selected alternative will configure Route 65 into a five-lane urban cross-section. While curbs and gutters were overwhelmingly supported, there were comments about the process that resulted in the proposed central turn lane. During the project, two median treatments were considered - a continuous, two-way, left-turn lane and a raised median. The two-way, left-turn lane configuration maximizes access to and from the properties along Route 65. A raised median would concentrate access across Route 65 to a limited number of median openings. Both configurations were considered appropriate to manage traffic safely. Throughout the public involvement process, the raised median configuration was overwhelmingly rejected by the public.

Environmental concerns included questions about traffic noise and the visual impacts of existing roadside signs. During this project, existing noise conditions were determined, future noise levels were predicted and the feasibility of noise barriers was evaluated. Ultimately, no barrier was found to be both effective and feasible. Relative to the removal of existing roadside signs, it is expected that the design process is unlikely to result in alterations to these signs, unless they are found to be out of compliance with MoDOT standards.

The selected alternative will require the acquisition of private property. Comments sought information about the prices paid to landowners. The Missouri Department of Transportation's right-of-way acquisition and relocation program is carried out in compliance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act). The Uniform Act, as well as Missouri law, requires that just compensation be paid to the owners of private property taken for public use. This program is discussed in greater detail in **Chapter IV.C.1**.

As expected, the majority of substantive comments focused on individual property impacts. Each of these issues was investigated individually. Consequently, the circulation of the DEA and the Public Hearing facilitated a process where the preferred alternative was modified in minor, but important ways. These modifications resulted in the identification of the selected alternative described in this FEA. The selected alternative is shown in **Exhibits II-3A-J**. A detailed description of how the selected alternative described in this document differs from the preferred alternative presented in the DEA is presented in **Chapter II.D.4**.