



## **Chapter 4 - Agency and Public Involvement**

### **What is in Chapter 4?**

Chapter 4 explains how the study team worked with the community and key stakeholders to solicit their opinions and advice concerning various community interests and concerns, as well as discussing the various pros and cons of the improvement alternatives developed.

It also has information on how the team worked with local, state and federal government agencies that have an interest in the project – agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the MDNR and SHPO.

### **What were the public involvement and agency processes?**

The agency and public involvement processes were created to make sure that the community and the agencies that serve that community have input into the ideas, evaluations and recommendations that come out of the environmental decision-making process. The public involvement and agency coordination process utilized several different tools to involve as many people as possible in the process and to ensure that the community knew about and understood the project.

Agencies were involved through both in-person meetings and written correspondence with the study team. The study team met with all interested local, state and federal agencies three times during the study. The public was involved through the community advisory group, two public meetings, an on-line survey, web-based information, articles and information in the local paper and radio. The study team also made presentations to local elected officials, business associations and community groups.

### **What were the goals of the Public Involvement Plan?**

The study team wrote a Public Involvement Plan to guide how technical experts like engineers and transportation planners would get and use information from the public. The Public Involvement Plan also outlines how information will be shared with the public.

The ultimate goal of the public involvement process was to get the community's help in developing a recommendation that meets their specific needs, desires and concerns. It means

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#### **Public Involvement Goal**

The study team's goal was to get the community's help in developing a recommendation that meets their specific needs, desires and concerns and to develop a coordination plan with the local, state and federal governmental agencies.

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that the final recommendation must include working out difficult trade-offs, and needs to be a recommendation that the community at-large understands and can support.

Goals of the Public Involvement Plan included:

- Help the public understand the environmental decision-making process and goals, including the NEPA planning process that is a requirement for transportation projects that receive federal funding;
- Gather meaningful public input into (1) the development of the formal purpose and need and (2) identification of the reasonable alternatives; and,
- Create sustainable support for the recommendations and findings in the Final EIS.

Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) requires that the lead agencies establish a plan for coordinating public and agency participation and comment during the environmental review process. In conjunction with the Public Involvement Plan, the study team established a special plan for coordinating with resource agencies. The Coordination Plan (included in Appendix I) identified how the study team would solicit and consider input from agencies and the public.

The study team structured the Coordination Plan to accomplish the following:

- Identify early coordination efforts;
- Identify resource agencies that would want to cooperate or participate during development of the EIS; and
- Establish the timing and form for agency involvement.

### **How did the team meet public involvement goals?**

The Public Involvement Plan called for talking with property owners in the study area, key stakeholders, community organizations, elected officials and members of the public interested in the study. Table 4-1 provides a summary of the tools the study used to implement the public involvement and agency coordination plans.

### **Who did the study team work with?**

The community at large played an important role in the development of the study, its recommendations, and outcomes. The study team identified several groups and organizations as key stakeholders due to their proximity, their role in the community or their history, including:

- Central Bank
- Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Business Association
- East End Neighborhood and Development Association

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#### **SAFETEA-LU**

The Federal transportation bill that was passed in 2005 provided additional requirements for streamlining the environmental decision-making process, including a formalized coordination plan with the local, state and federal governmental agencies.

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- Jefferson City Housing Authority
- Jefferson City School District
- Lincoln University
- Munichberg Neighborhood
- Quinn Chapel AME

**Table 4-1: Public Involvement and Agency Coordination Tools**

Public Involvement Goal	Public Involvement Tools
Help the public understand the EIS process and goals, including the NEPA planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media Relations – Media relations efforts included sending press releases about the project, public meetings, advisory group meetings and other activities to newspapers, TV and radio stations. The local media coverage included TV, newspaper and radio stories on the project and its progress.</li> <li>• Web Site – The study team made a variety of study and process materials available on MoDOT’s web site, including electronic versions of printed materials, meeting exhibits, presentations, notes, project maps, frequently asked questions and event announcements. (<a href="http://www.modot.org/central/major_projects/cole.htm">http://www.modot.org/central/major_projects/cole.htm</a>)</li> <li>• Newspaper Inserts – Two weeks prior to each of the public meetings, the communications team placed a full-page, color advertisement in the Jefferson City Tribune. Additional copies were printed as hand-outs for public meetings and other community discussions and presentations.</li> <li>• Letters and Postcards – Used to notify the public of the public meeting related to the project alternatives.</li> <li>• Meetings – Information about the environmental decision-making process was presented as part of public meetings, advisory group meetings as well as at presentations about the project throughout Jefferson City and Cole County.</li> </ul>
Gather meaningful public input into the (1) development of the formal purpose and need and (2) reasonable alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the above, plus:</li> <li>• Advisory Committee – The study team formed a community advisory group that met three times during the study development. Their input helped direct the project Purpose and Need and preliminary and reasonable alternatives. They will meet again in the fall to discuss the draft recommended alternative.</li> <li>• Public Meetings – The team hosted two open-house style public meetings in order for the public to learn about the process and its decisions. The first meeting focused on the Purpose and Need and provided information on the environmental decision-making process, NEPA, existing conditions, historic properties, cultural resources and preliminary alternatives. The second meeting recapped information from the first meeting and focused on getting feedback on the reasonable alternatives. More than 150 people attended the public meetings.</li> <li>• On-Line Survey – During the development of the Purpose and Need, an on-line survey was posted to MoDOT’s web site requesting public input. More than 60 surveys were completed.</li> </ul>
Create sustainable support for the recommendations and findings in the Final EIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the above, plus:</li> <li>• Public Hearing – As is appropriate and required in the environmental process, a public hearing on the Draft EIS document will be held in the Winter of 2009.</li> </ul>
Agency Coordination Goal	Agency Coordination Tools
Identify early coordination efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scoping meeting – The team hosted an initial scoping meeting to identify areas of mutual interest.</li> </ul>
Identify resource agencies that would want to cooperate or participate in agency coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letters of interest – Letters were sent to a range of agencies and organizations to invite their participation in the environmental process. Responses were tracked and those interested were included in ongoing agency communication.</li> </ul>
Establish the timing and form for agency involvement in defining purpose and need, range of alternatives and methodologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study team agreed to collaborate with agencies following the purpose and need and upon completing a preliminary draft document.</li> <li>• The study team drafted a methodologies memo that identified the methods used in conducting the environmental analysis.</li> <li>• Scoping meetings – The team hosted three scoping meetings with agencies to discuss the project, concerns and opportunities.</li> <li>• Letters – Several agencies sent letters to the study team outlining support, questions or concerns.</li> </ul>

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### Who participated in the Community Advisory Group?

The following persons contributed their valuable time to offer advice and counsel to the study team:

Cathy Bordner  
 Jim Crabtree  
 Stan Fast  
 Dr. Bert Kimble  
 Dr. Carolyn Mahoney  
 Mark Mehmert  
 Rev. Margaret Redmond  
 Allen Pollock  
 Charlie Brzuchalski  
 John Pelzer  
 Dave Trizner  
 Randy Allen

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- Southside Business Association
- Immaculate Conception Church

### Community Advisory Group

The study team met with the Community Advisory Group on four separate occasions during the course of the study. A synopsis of each meeting follows below, with complete meeting notes available in **Appendix H**.

- July 31, 2007 at MoDOT District 5 – At the first meeting, the study team provided an introduction to the study process and the role of the Advisory Group. The main focus of the meeting was to discuss the purpose and need, identify issues important to Advisory Group members and discuss possible constraints and impediments to making improvements on Whitton Expressway.
- October 16, 2007 at Lincoln University – The focus of the meeting was to develop consensus on the key screening criteria and to discuss initial concepts. An updated Purpose and Need was provided to the Advisory Group that included a discussion of key screening criteria that would be used to evaluate the various alternative improvements. The Advisory Group began asking questions about roadway widths and impacts to homes, yards, sidewalks and on-street parking, a particular concern for Quinn Chapel, who has no off-street parking. As the conversation continued, the study team suggested that the group look at maps and discuss potential alternatives and solutions.
- January 22, 2008 at Page Library, Lincoln University – The team provided an overview of the project progress so far, noting that since the last meeting, the study team had developed a range of initial concepts and conducted a preliminary screening of the concepts. The screening was based on each concept's ability to meet the project's formal Purpose and Need and the key screening criteria identified at the previous Advisory Group meeting. As part of the discussion, the study team provided the Advisory Group with the reasonable alternatives that the team would develop in further detail. The group expressed concern about the effect some concepts had on Quinn Chapel, several neighborhoods, and the local street system.

### Resource Agency Group

The study team met with representatives from local, state and federal resource agencies on two occasions. Participating agencies included the USACE, MDNR, SHPO, and the Capitol Area MPO. At each meeting the study team presented information and findings to date and discussed issues with agency representatives.

- August 12, 2007 at the Immaculate Conception School – The first agency group meeting served as the project's formal Scoping meeting. The study team provided an overview of the anticipated study process as well as issues identified in the preceding

Problem Definition Study. Agency representatives shared their issues and concerns regarding potential alternatives. Many of their concerns focused on impacts to historic sites and districts, community resources such as Central Dairy and the Performing Arts Center, and natural resources such as Wears Creek.

- January 22, 2008 at Lincoln University – The study team led a discussion of the initial improvement concepts and the screening process utilized to select reasonable alternatives. The Madison Overpass and Clark Realignment concepts generated the most discussion by the group. The group discussed potential impacts associated with retaining walls needed for the Madison Overpass. The concern with the Clark Realignment focused on some homes in the anticipated corridor. A representative from the City of Jefferson noted that the Central East Side Neighborhood Plan identified many of these properties for redevelopment.

## What opportunities for public input were provided?

### Public Open House Meetings

Two rounds of public meetings were held during the study process.

The first public meeting took place on August 14, 2007. The meeting was held at Kertz Hall at Immaculate Conception Church from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. A total of 56 persons and several members of the local media attended. The study team hosted an open house public meeting and on-line survey to collect public input on the draft Purpose and Need. Participants were asked to provide information on locations of concern and interest in terms of impacts and possible improvements, as well as cultural resources within the project area. To facilitate that discussion, the open house included informational exhibits, stations with maps for hands-on activities and a comment station. The team collected both verbal and written comments for consideration in the screening process. A total of 41 comments (31 from the web-based survey) were received. Additionally, team members documented verbal comments made during the open house; all comments received are included in this summary.

There was significant participation in the public meeting by members of Quinn Chapel AME. As a group, they expressed concerns over the project's affect to their church. Several congregation members shared their experiences with the initial construction of Whitton Expressway, which had a negative impact to the African-American community in Jefferson City, and in particular, impacts to what was formerly known as the "Foot" neighborhood adjacent to Lincoln University. Several meeting participants expressed concerns over the prior treatment of that largely minority neighborhood and the need to preserve as much of what remained as possible.

The other predominant theme heard in the public meeting was related to preservation of the neighborhoods between Whitton Expressway and the prison redevelopment site, especially

related to historic homes in the area. Neighborhood representatives also expressed concerns about increased traffic on residential streets.

The second meeting occurred on January 29, 2008 from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m., at the Immaculate Conception Church's Kertz Hall. A total of 96 persons attended the meeting. Meeting participants were greeted, asked to sign in and invited to view the boards and ask questions of any member of the team. Additionally, each participant was given a packet of information, including copies of the proposed reasonable alternatives, the full-page advertisement, comment form, and study team contact information. The study team received 22 comments from the public. Study team members documented verbal comments made during the open house and any written comments received. Participants were asked to comment on the recommended set of reasonable alternatives, to identify any other alternatives that should be considered, and to comment on the proposed evaluation criteria.

### **On-Line Survey**

Concurrent with the first public meeting, the study team conducted an online survey. The survey's questions mirrored the questions from the first public meeting's comment form. A total of 31 comments from the web-based survey were received. Meeting and on-line survey participants were asked to rank the draft project goals as Very Important, Important or Not Important. Following is a breakdown of feedback regarding the draft project goals:

- Provide roadway capacity and improve traffic operations;  
Very important – 29 / Important – 8 / Not important – 4
- Improve traffic safety;  
Very important – 29 / Important – 10 / Not important – 0
- Address road and bridge needs;  
Very important – 25 / Important – 13 / Not important – 1
- Improve access to major activity centers and encourage development;  
Very important – 18 / Important – 18 / Not important – 4

Survey participants were also asked to indicate what they would change or add to the Purpose and Need, as well as the project's goals and objectives. The third question asked participants to identify any cultural resources they were concerned that the project might affect.

### **What other meetings were held?**

The study team met with a number of individuals and organizations during the course of the study. At the meetings the study team generally discussed a broad range of issues, but in some cases the meetings were focused on a specific issue. The study team met with the following organizations:

- December 4, 2007 – Quinn Chapel AME
- February 7, 2008 – Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Committee;

- February 20, 2008 – Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Board of Directors;
- February 27, 2008 – Missouri State Penitentiary Redevelopment Commission;
- March 6, 2008 – Eastside Neighborhood Development Association;
- April 4, 2008 – Eastside Business Association;
- April 24, 2008 – City of Jefferson City Council

### **What were public and agency questions and concerns?**

Understandably, many comments and concerns related to the effect transportation improvements would have on neighborhoods, specific homes, and other properties. Public comments often questioned how the project would affect Jefferson City neighborhoods, institutions, and infrastructure.

Questions and concerns generally fell into the following categories:

- Historic properties – How the project would affect Jefferson City’s historic districts, sites and landmarks;
- Neighborhood Cohesion – Wanted to avoid creating additional barriers between neighborhoods – especially in Old Munichberg, the Southside and the Central East Side neighborhoods;
- Pedestrian access – Improving pedestrian access across the Whitton Expressway;
- Economic access – Maintain accessibility to businesses on the south side of Whitton Expressway and improve accessibility to the prison redevelopment site, Lincoln University and Jefferson City High School; and
- Social – Minimize impacts to historic sites relating to the African-American community near Lincoln University, including Quinn Chapel;