



Missouri Department
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600 NE Colbern Road
Lee's Summit, MO
64086

Future of I-70

PRESS RELEASE

Missouri Department of Transportation
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Lee's Summit, MO 64086

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 12, 2012

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Community Input is a MoDOT Priority on the study of Future I-70 in Kansas City

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) is beginning a Second Tier Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of I-70 in Kansas City, Missouri. The study area includes approximately seven miles of I-70 from The Paseo interchange on the west to the Blue Ridge Cutoff interchange on the east. The Second Tier EIS is the latest step in MoDOT's effort to plan for the future of I-70.

MoDOT is kicking off the public portion of the study by hosting an on-going town hall meeting at www.metroi70.com. The forum begins March 12, 2012 and runs through spring of 2014. The public can use the site to share their thoughts and views about the conditions and safety of the highway as well as the possible improvement alternatives that could address stated issues and concerns. Anyone with an interest in I-70 in Kansas City can lend his or her voice to the conversation. Register at www.metroi70.com.

Meanwhile, MoDOT will hold regular meetings with the study's Community Advisory Group (CAG). The CAG is charged with helping to share the progress of the study with the neighborhoods, businesses, and local communities that it represents while also communicating their concerns and perspectives to MoDOT. What's more, the public will be provided with access to MoDOT's Community Connections Team (CCT) of specialists who can meet with individuals one-on-one or in small groups to discuss the issues and concerns of their neighborhoods, businesses, community organizations, associations, and councils. Visit www.modot.org/kansascity/metroi70 to contact the CCT and host a presentation.

A public meeting will be held in April of 2012 to introduce the Second Tier EIS to the community and gather input from them about the study's draft Purpose and Need. MoDOT's Voice Van will be stationed at popular gathering spots along the corridor to hear the public's views on the study.

MoDOT is using the online town hall meeting at www.metroi70.com, CAG, CCT, Voice Van and a wide range of other media to connect with the I-70 community throughout the study process. The input that the public provides will be essential to the success of the project and will help MoDOT better understand the impact of potential improvement alternatives early in the process rather than later.



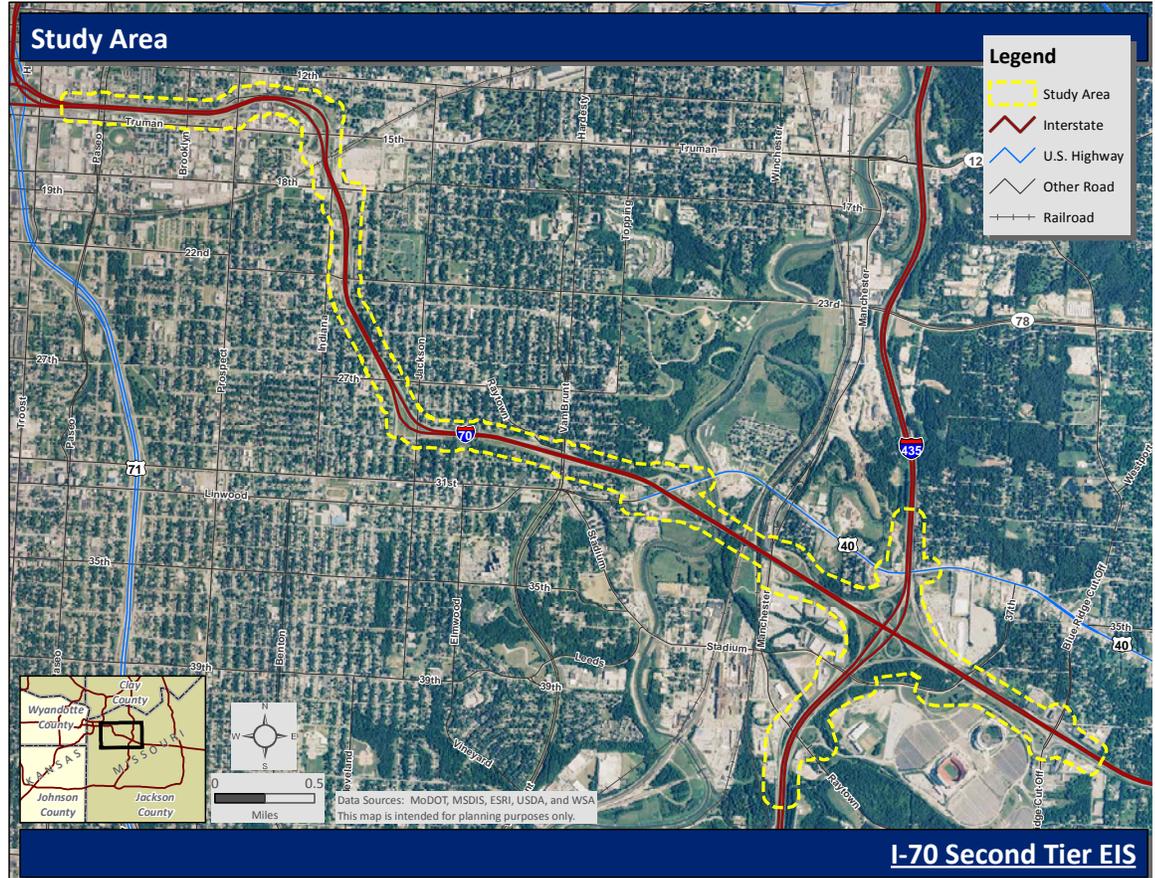
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Study Process and Schedule



The Second Tier EIS impacts approximately seven miles of I-70 in Kansas City, Missouri from The Paseo interchange to the Blue Ridge Cutoff interchange. It serves:

- Kansas City, Missouri
- Jackson County, Missouri
- Local and regional business and industry
- Interstate and international freight movements
- Neighborhoods
- Commuters
- Surrounding cities

MoDOT will coordinate with the community to develop the Second Tier EIS according to the following process and schedule:

Scoping (Winter 2011 – Spring 2012)

Involves working with key stakeholders, agencies, and the general public to identify a wide-range of issues, such as environmental, engineering, and traffic, that will be addressed in the EIS.

Purpose and Need (Spring 2012)

Identifies the problems that the study is intended to address and drives the development of a range of alternatives to respond to them.

Preliminary Alternatives and Alternatives Analysis (Spring 2012/Summer 2012)

Develops an initial range of alternatives that meets the Purpose and Need and evaluates the alternatives using established criteria.

Alternative Screening and Environmental Consequences

(Summer 2012 – Summer 2013)

Puts retained alternatives through a detailed evaluation of both beneficial and adverse social and environmental impacts.

Draft EIS (DEIS) (Summer/Fall 2013)

Identifies the preferred alternative for I-70 and is made available for public review and comment. The document is submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the lead federal agency for the EIS, for review and approval.

Final EIS (FEIS) (Winter 2013 – Spring 2014)

Addresses substantive public and agency comments on the DEIS that may lead to revisions to the preferred alternative. The FEIS is also submitted to FHWA for review and approval.

Record of Decision (Spring 2014)

Identifies the official decision on the alternative selected for implementation and marks the completion of the EIS process. FHWA issues the Record of Decision.

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Community Involvement

Community input is crucial to the development of the Second Tier EIS. Beyond newsletters and postcards, MoDOT will provide multiple mechanisms, such as the Community Advisory Group, Community Connections Team, mobile meetings, social media, and more for the public to access, get involved, and share their thoughts about the study.

Community Advisory Group

MoDOT is establishing a Community Advisory Group (CAG). The CAG is a voluntary group of individuals who represent civic and governmental organizations. CAG members will also serve as liaisons between their representative groups and MoDOT. The CAG is anticipated to meet approximately 12 times over the course of the study. Meeting summaries will be posted on the project website (www.modot.org/kansascity/metroi70).

Community Connections Team

MoDOT's Community Connections Team will provide one-on-one personal contact and small group conversations with community and neighborhood groups within the study area. Team members are specialists in customer relations, environmental analysis, and engineering. They plan to attend meetings with neighborhoods, businesses, community organizations, associations, and councils. Organizations may also request and schedule a Team presentation.

MoDOT Mobile Meetings

MoDOT will bring its Voice Van and project materials to key shopping destinations, community events, neighborhood libraries, and transit stops to gather input from neighborhoods and the traveling public about the study as it is developed.

Social Media and More

MoDOT will use social media tools, such as MindMixer, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and Flickr, to share information about project milestones and upcoming public involvement opportunities. On-line public meetings are planned to encourage the corridor's social networking community to express its ideas about the study. The on-line meetings will be paired with listening posts (public meetings) that will be held at community centers and schools to provide community members with an opportunity to speak in person with the study team while reviewing large scale exhibits of the study's recommendations.

Public Hearing

Once the Draft Second Tier EIS is completed, MoDOT will host a public hearing to help kick-off a 45-day review and comment period for the document. The Draft EIS identified the preferred alternative for I-70.

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Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of this study?

The Second Tier EIS will carry forward and refine the needs identified from the I-70 First Tier EIS and conduct an alternatives analysis based on the Improve Key Bottlenecks Strategy. Through the Second Tier EIS, more specific definitions of the improvements and their potential impacts will be developed for consideration by the general public and various resource agencies. Examples of such improvements include modifying access at interchanges, fixing existing pavement and bridges, improving interchange ramps, adding collector distributor roads, and providing for bus transit on shoulder.

What is the study area?

The study area includes all land within 200 feet of the I-70 First Tier EIS Selected Strategy (Improve Key Bottlenecks) defined footprint from west of The Paseo interchange to east of the Blue Ridge Cutoff interchange in Jackson County. The project length is approximately seven miles.

What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and why is it necessary?

An EIS examines and documents the environmental, social, and economic impacts of alternatives that have been proposed to address a specific need. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires an EIS for major actions that could significantly impact the natural and human environments. An EIS is also necessary if a project is to be considered eligible for federal funding.

How long will the Second Tier EIS take to complete?

An EIS typically takes three years to complete because the process involves compilation of large amounts of data, environmental field studies, coordination with federal/state agencies and the public and must follow a series of review and documentation steps. The Second Tier EIS was initiated in December 2011 and anticipate completion by spring of 2014. There are several key components of the EIS that must be followed, including the development and analysis of alternatives that address the study's Purpose and Need.

What is a tiered Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?

The I-70 Second Tier EIS is a result of a tiered environmental documentation process. Tiering refers to addressing overall transportation corridor strategies and issues in a first tier analysis, and analyzing more specific proposals and impacts in subsequent second tier studies. The tiered process enables decision-making that focuses on issues that are ripe for decision and reduces repetition in environmental documentation.

One way to imagine the tiered process is as an umbrella. In the I-70 First Tier EIS, the umbrella extends approximately 18 miles from the Missouri-Kansas state line to east of the I-470 interchange and includes the Kansas City, Missouri Downtown Central Business District Freeway Loop. An overall improvement strategy was approved for the corridor in April of 2011. The corridor umbrella covers and identifies future detailed second tier project level studies of shorter sections, which may take the form of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Environmental Assessment (EA), or Categorical Exclusions (CE). The Second Tier EIS will analyze I-70 in greater detail from west of the Paseo Boulevard interchange to east of the Blue Ridge Cutoff interchange

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How will the Second Tier EIS impact property owners?

The I-70 Second Tier EIS outlines an alternative for addressing issues and opportunities in the corridor. When the study is over, MoDOT will have a general understanding of which properties will be impacted. The exact amounts of right-of-way and the exact properties affected will not be known until the formal design phase of the project, which is not currently funded.

When will MoDOT start buying the property it needs?

When the design phase of the project is funded and finished, MoDOT will be able to identify the properties it needs to purchase. Funding has not been identified for the design phase or construction of any improvements that result from the I-70 Second Tier EIS. Only after construction is funded, will the timeframe for property acquisition be known.

What is the process for buying needed property?

MoDOT's *Pathways for Progress* brochure provides details about the property acquisition process. You can call MoDOT at 1-888-ASK-MODOT to receive a copy of the brochure in the mail.

Will construction begin soon?

There is currently no funding for design or construction, so a start date cannot be estimated. Only routine maintenance will occur in the foreseeable future.

The development of transportation improvements involves the following four phases – planning, environmental, design, and construction. The I-70 Second Tier EIS is in the environmental phase. The remaining phases are contingent upon available funding. Anywhere from a few to many years could be needed to complete the entire process.

How will MoDOT keep area property owners, businesses, and residents informed?

MoDOT will mail newsletters and postcards to stakeholders to communicate key milestones in the study. Similar information will be provided through social networking tools, during listening posts, mobile meetings, online meetings, and on the study website www.modot.org/kansascity/metroi70.

Are copies of the I-70 First Tier EIS available for review?

Yes, the I-70 First Tier EIS is available on the study website: www.modot.org/kansascity/metroi70.

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