

# CHAPTER V

## Comments and Coordination

The Missouri Department of Transportation proactively sought the involvement of the City of Columbia, Boone County, resource agencies, potentially affected interest groups and the general public in its study efforts prior to the release of the Draft EIS. Local interest in the effort was reflected in more than 170 stories that appeared in local newspapers. Thus roughly 23,500 weekday and 58,000 Sunday readers had the opportunity to learn about the study numerous times throughout the two-year study process.

This chapter summarizes the public involvement and agency coordination efforts and key messages conveyed by various stakeholders.

### A. Public Involvement

Gaining informed public input required an extensive outreach and involvement plan, which was developed in April 2002. The Public Involvement Consultant (PIC) coordinated corridor-wide activities and played an active role in the development and implementation of the SIU 4 Public Involvement Plan, which was coordinated by the Section Engineering Consultant (SEC).

The corridor-wide and SIU 4-specific public involvement activities included the following:

- A comprehensive Web site and e-mail address at [www.ImproveI70.org](http://www.ImproveI70.org),
- An Improve I-70 hot line at 1-800-590-0066 and a post office address for correspondence,
- One-on-one meetings with stakeholders at the project's kickoff,
- A community-based Improve I-70 Advisory Group that met 11 times,
- Eight public information meetings with an open house format,
- Presentations to community groups,
- A survey of business owners along the corridor, resulting in 1,582 interactions with area businesses,
- Outreach to the media through news releases and interviews,
- A project mailing list,
- Newsletter updates, postcard meeting notices and other mailings,
- Outreach to low-income, minority and Native American populations, and
- A public hearing to be conducted at the end of 2004.

The public involvement process proactively sought participation from all potentially affected stakeholders regardless of income, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability. As a result, several thousand contacts were made between the Greater Columbia public and the Improve I-70 Second Tier Study Team from May 2002 through Fall, 2004.

Details about these efforts are described below.

## 1. Project Web Site and E-Mail

The public was able to keep current on statewide and Columbia-specific project information and provide input 24 hours a day by logging on [www.ImproveI70.org](http://www.ImproveI70.org). The Local Focus area of the Web site listed Advisory Group and public meetings and posted meeting handouts and summaries, maps, exhibits and general updates throughout the course of the project. Users were able to use the Contact Us section of the Web site to sign up for the e-mail or mailing lists and to send questions and comments to the study team.

More than 50 Columbia-specific comments and questions were received through the Web site or by e-mail. Each person who sent an e-mail received an acknowledgement from the PIC, then a more detailed e-mail or telephone response from the SEC. Most e-mail correspondents expressed concerns about how the rebuilding and widening of I-70 might affect their property and when construction might begin. Early in the study, when the Far North and Near North Corridors were being considered in addition to rebuilding I-70, e-mail correspondents expressed opinions for and against the different corridor options. Others offered ideas on alignments and how the team might improve I-70. The following e-mail excerpt exemplifies the type of issue e-mail correspondents raised and the response they received from the study team.

***E-mail request:***

*We own (business name). We understand the I-70 widening and related improvements may affect (our business) which is in Section # 4. I need any type of plan, aerial photo or concept sketch which may depict the proposed improvements. Is there a schedule established?*

*E-mail request from a property owner, December 5, 2003*

***E-mail response:***

*Your property is quite close to existing I-70 and has a likelihood of being impacted by the proposed improvements to I-70. The full extent of the potential impacts won't be known until the project moves to the design phase which will not begin until our study is completed in late 2004. ... You should be able to download and print out the section of I-70 that is in the vicinity of your (business).*

*The timing of construction is completely dependent on funding. The design and construction for the I-70 improvements has not yet been funded. If the funding were in place, the earliest construction could begin would be approximately five years from now. I will send you an image of our very preliminary alternatives in that area via email. Please feel free to contact me should you have further questions.*

*Buddy Desai, CH2M HILL, Improve I-70 Columbia-Area Project Manager,  
December 5, 2003*

Personal interactions enabled the study team to understand in more detail how property owners might be affected by possible widening concepts and alignments. This later helped the team to develop I-70 widening alternatives that minimized impacts wherever possible.

## **2. Hot Line Calls and Correspondence**

The public could also reach the study team using the toll-free telephone hot line at 1-800-590-0066 or by mailing letters to Improve I-70, P.O. Box 410482, Kansas City, MO 64141. There were 78 calls and nine letters received during the course of gathering information and input for the Columbia section of the Draft EIS. As with the e-mails, concerns were expressed about which corridor would be selected, whether and when personal property might be affected and suggestions on how best to widen I-70.

## **3. One-on-One Stakeholder Meetings at Project Kickoff**

At the project's onset in May 2002, two independent facilitators conducted 30 interviews with potentially affected interests to explain the purpose of the Second Tier study and seek their input on issues, desired outcomes and interest in participating in an Advisory Group. These interviews were the first step in the process to generate public input about the I-70 improvement options in Columbia. The facilitators, under the direction of the PIC and working with MoDOT and the CATSO, identified an initial list of individuals associated with groups that had been active in the previous transportation planning efforts. They generated the names of additional groups and individuals during the interview process. Participants selected were those who represented various interests throughout the community. The community interviews set the stage for additional discussions to occur. Most of those interviewed were receptive to the idea of having a community input process that might aid in the MoDOT's decision-making process.

Towards the end of each interview, the interviewees were asked to look over a list of potentially important issues that deserved emphasis in making an alignment choice and to indicate their priority choices. Second, each individual was asked about the upside and downside of each of the alternatives. Third, they were asked about the criteria that should be used in evaluating the Near North, Far North and Existing I-70 Corridor options. And, fourth, there was ample opportunity for the interviewees to offer their opinions about a variety of issues and concerns they believed ought to be factored into the decision-making process.

Six priority issues emerged, being cited by 10 or more interviewees. In order, the most frequently cited important issues, stated as newspaper headlines, were the following:

- Recognition of future capacity needs in improvement plan (17 mentions),
- Growth/sprawl to the north (14 mentions),
- Local east-west traffic accommodated (14 mentions),
- Continuing growth in Columbia (12 mentions),
- Trucks diverted to bypass (11 mentions), and
- Displacement of residents (10 mentions).

The interview team offered the following observations based on what it heard during the interviews:

- There is a strong desire to make a decision about the highway alignment that meets long-term community needs.
- There is concern about the division of the community by the interstate, possible alternative I-70 corridors and the amount of growth that is expected to occur to the north.
- Some see growth to the north as something that should be anticipated. Others see growth as negative and something that should not be encouraged.
- While some believe growth has more negative than positive aspects, most interviewees felt that continued thoughtful growth in Columbia was a valuable characteristic for the community.
- The amount of truck traffic traveling through Columbia is viewed as a problem. This issue, along with the traffic and safety issues related to the intersection of U.S. 63 and I-70, were most often cited as significant negatives of the present corridor.
- Access is considered an issue that ties directly to the impact to the businesses located along the interstate. Some downplayed the issue of near-term access as something to be tolerated during construction as a necessary condition to solve a bigger problem. Some are concerned about access, as it might affect the downtown area over the long term.

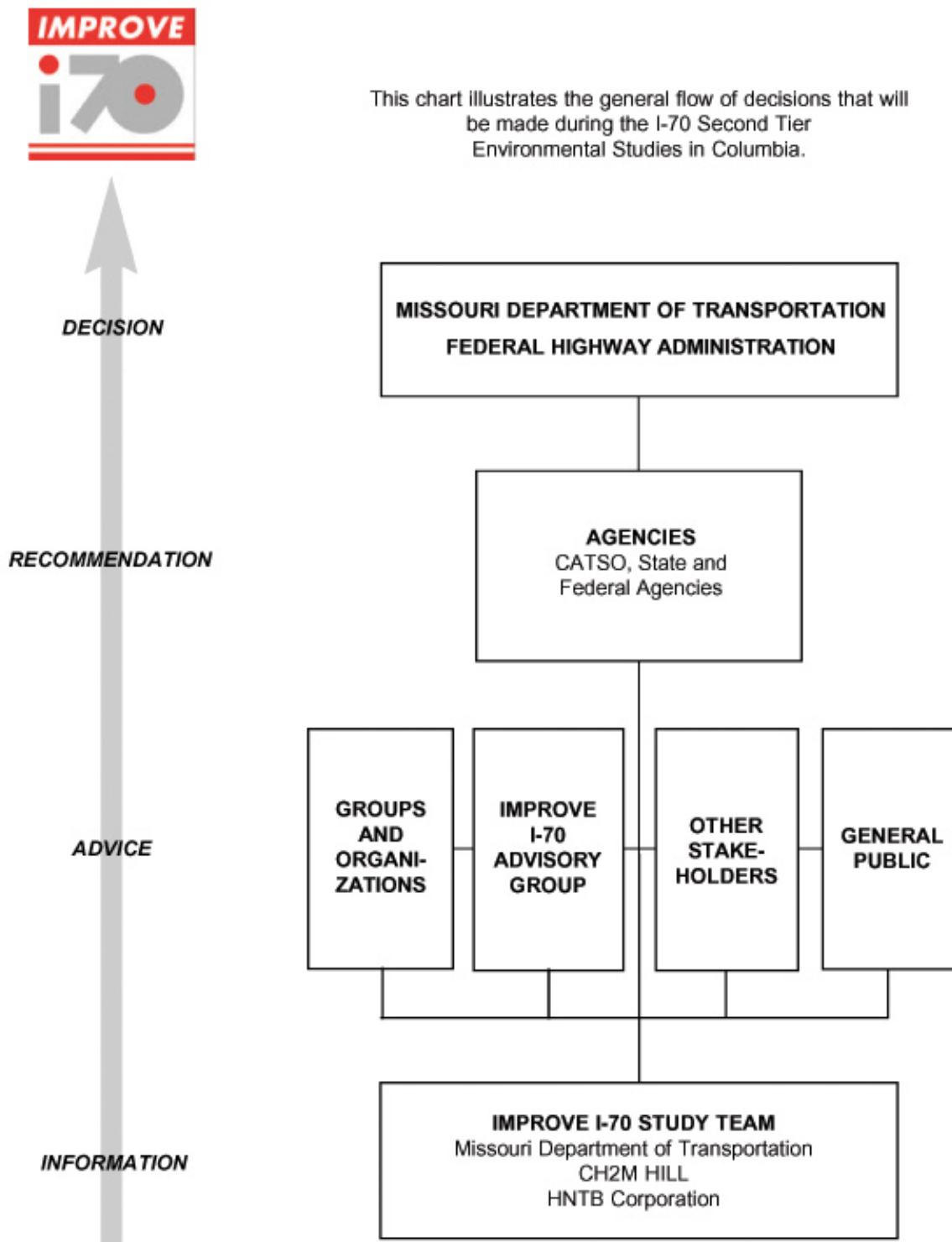
#### 4. Improve I-70 Advisory Group Meetings

Upon agreement that an Advisory Group would be an effective mechanism for receiving informed input from a wide range of interests in the I-70 corridor, the Improve I-70 Advisory Group was established in September 2002. It includes 22 representatives from local and county governments and their elected officials, area businesses, environmental groups and study area residents. Particular attention was given to including representation from a neighborhood along the corridor with low-income and minority populations. (See **Appendix V-A** for a complete list of Advisory Group members and the Advisory Group charter.)

The Advisory Group served in an advisory capacity to MoDOT and the SEC and provided input during data gathering, corridor selection, development and refinement of alternatives and impact analyses. As liaison between the project team and the larger community, the Advisory Group also informed others about the project and shared public input with the study team.

**Figure V-1** outlines the Advisory Group's role in relation to other project stakeholders and decisionmakers.

Figure V-1: Decisionmaking Flow Chart



### a. Advisory Group Pre-Meeting Publicity

All meetings of the Advisory Group were open to the public and publicized on the Improve I-70 Web site, in news releases to local media and by e-mail invitations to Advisory Group members and anyone who had attended a past meeting or asked to be on the e-mail distribution list. The list grew to include 91 names (22 Advisory Group members and 69 members of the public).

Each meeting prompted news coverage, usually in *The Missourian* and *The Columbia Daily Tribune* newspapers. Broadcast coverage included stories on stations KOMU 8 (NBC affiliate), KMIZ 17 TV (ABC affiliate), KRCG 13 (CBS affiliate), KQFX 11 (Fox affiliate), KSSZ 93.9 FM, KFRU 1400 AM and KBIA FM. Articles also appeared in the *Columbia Business Times*, a weekly business journal.

### b. Summary of Advisory Group Input During Three Study Phases

The Advisory Group met 11 times between September 2002 and March 2004. These and other public meetings were designed to gain input during three phases of the study: (1) corridor selection, during which the Advisory Group met six times, (2) preliminary and detailed widening concepts, the focus of three Advisory Group meetings and (3) development of reasonable alternatives, the focus of two Advisory Group meetings. At least two more Advisory Group meetings and a public hearing would be held after publication of the Draft EIS.

To reinforce that MoDOT and the SEC served as resources to the Advisory Group rather than as its driving force, all Advisory Group meetings were facilitated by the firm that conducted the one-on-one interviews at the onset of the project. Advisory Group members later said the use of out-of-state facilitators, who had no exposure to previous I-70 studies or Columbia, made the process more credible and objective.

Study team members presented information on various topics throughout the course of the project to gain feedback and identify community priorities. The Missouri Department of Transportation and CATSO officials clarified state and local issues and responded to specific questions raised by Advisory Group members. (CATSO initially had a staff representative on the Advisory Group, but when it was determined CATSO would have an ongoing technical role, the staff member joined the study team instead.) **Appendix V-B** contains meeting summaries that include meeting purpose, a list of attendees and an overview of handouts and exhibits.

**Table V-1** summarizes the meeting objectives and key themes from the Advisory Group's input during Phase 1 (September 2002 to May 2003). At each meeting, the Advisory Group asked clarifying questions as it learned more about problems on I-70 and how traffic was forecast to grow by 2030. The study team and resource agencies did their best to provide answers, either immediately that evening or at the following Advisory Group meeting. A frequently asked questions handout was developed and discussed at Advisory Group meetings, and it grew in length as the study progressed.

After Phase 1 (September 2002 to May 2003), when traffic and environmental analysis determined that the best course of action was to widen and rebuild I-70, the study team, with the Advisory Group's support, moved into Phase 2 (developing preliminary and detailed widening concepts). The purpose of this phase of study (June to November 2003) was to identify the widening options to be considered, to outline for the Advisory Group and public the advantages and disadvantages of each and to identify possible environmental impacts. After this was done, the study team would be able to combine the best attributes of the various concepts to draft

reasonable alternatives for the public to review and comment upon. **Table V-2** summarizes agenda items discussed at Advisory Group meetings held during this stage and key themes from their input.

By November 2003, reasonable alternatives were beginning to emerge. It was clear, for example, that stacking I-70 through Columbia's urban area would not be feasible because of impractical maintenance demands during periods of heavy snow and rain, limited local access, disruptive construction and high costs. A system of two-way or one-way frontage roads or a collector/distributor system running parallel to I-70 offered efficient methods for moving vehicles while maintaining local access. A basic widening option also was considered. Each widening concept had potential impacts on businesses, residents and the environment that concerned the Advisory Group. This prompted the study team to look for ways to reduce the area and property needed for the various widening options. The study team proceeded with its analysis of the most feasible widening concepts and began mixing and matching the best features of each, combining them into reasonable alternatives for review by the Advisory Group and the public. **Table V-3** summarizes agenda items and key Advisory Group input during this final phase (December 2003 through Spring 2004) prior to the publication of the draft EIS.

## 5. Public Information Meetings

After information was reviewed and discussed with the Advisory Group during each of the three study phases, findings and evolving concepts were presented at a series of eight events designed to gain informed input from the public at large. Although described variously as public meetings, a workshop, drop-in center and neighborhood meetings, each session was open and accessible to all members of the public, and information was presented in an open house format. A series of stations were placed throughout the room, providing members of the public the reasons why the study was being conducted, data and analysis from that phase of the study (e.g., traffic and environmental data during corridor selection, advantages and disadvantages during preliminary and detailed widening concept development and engineering maps, traffic data and environmental impacts analysis during the development of reasonable alternatives). Comment forms were provided at each meeting, and study team members were at each station to answer questions and listen to public feedback on the proposals.

### a. Pre-Meeting Publicity

Prior to the public meetings on April 23, August 21 and November 4, 2003, notices were printed in the Improve I-70 newsletter, which was mailed to 1,084 residents and businesses on the project mailing list.

Those and all other public meetings were announced on the Web site and in news releases sent to all local media, resulting in extensive media coverage. Postcard notices were mailed to all those on the mailing lists and e-mail notifications were sent to those on electronic distribution lists. Additionally, phone calls were made and faxes were sent to area churches and neighborhood leaders to ensure that low-income and minority residents knew about the meetings. Elected officials were invited by letter to attend a pre-briefing one hour before each meeting was opened to the general public. Prior to neighborhood meetings, Advisory Group members and neighborhood leaders distributed flyers to homes and businesses and forwarded e-mail notifications to area residents.

**Table V-1: Improve I-70 Advisory Group Meetings, September 2002–May 2003****Phase 1: Advisory Group Initiation and Corridor Selection**

Date	Agenda	Key Themes From Advisory Group Input
Meeting #1: 9/19/02 22 Advisory Group members Five members of media and public	Relationship between overall planning process and group's input. Key issues. Decision criteria and decisionmaking roles.	Add members to Advisory Group to fully represent experts and business stakeholders. Thoroughly evaluate economic, fiscal and traffic impacts and decision process of alternatives development for entire project period. Research whether similar transportation situations exist elsewhere and their outcomes.
Meeting #2: 11/7/02 21 Advisory Group members Three members of media and public	Decision criteria for corridor screening. Background information on each corridor option. Land use assumptions. Traffic modeling and scenarios. Responses to questions raised at first Advisory Group meeting.	Explore shifting traffic off I-70 to other roadway alternatives. Include aesthetic enhancements. Model a no-build option for I-70 widening. Minimize environmental and construction impacts.
Meeting #3: 12/12/02 18 Advisory Group members	Legal and policy guidance on truck diversions, speed limits, decommissioning interstate route and corridor enhancement alternatives. Preliminary guidance on corridor screening criteria. Results of initial traffic forecasts. Expectations about traffic modeling sensitivity analysis. Economic impacts of altered interstate routes in similarly sized communities.	Consider fiscal and environmental ramifications for all potential alternatives. Confirm modeling forecasts and traffic projections in the context of greater regional transportation needs. Enhance capacity of other transportation alternatives to better equalize local traffic flows.



**Table V-1: Improve I-70 Advisory Group Meetings, September 2002–May 2003**  
**Phase 1: Advisory Group Initiation and Corridor Selection**

Date	Agenda	Key Themes From Advisory Group Input
Meeting #4: 1/30/03 17 Advisory Group members Eight members of media and public	How I-70 problems are being addressed in a systematic and coordinated manner with local jurisdictions. Traffic forecasts: sensitivity analysis results and implications.	Consider viability and sequencing construction of chosen alternatives to provide alternate routing during construction. Confirm data and analysis before making final alternative selection decisions. Multiple jurisdictions should examine comprehensive traffic needs and future uses for near north alternative before eliminating it from consideration.
Meeting #5: 3/13/03 16 Advisory Group members Nine members of media and public	Response to issues raised at Meeting #4. Process for intermeeting communications. Assessments of near north and existing I-70 as corridor options and preliminary screening findings. Potential impacts along near north and existing I-70.	Positive deliberations have taken place through the Advisory Group process to date. General concerns raised over feasibility of near north alternative regarding traffic number forecasts. There is an existing and growing need to improve the I-70 corridor. Improvements to the I-70 corridor may increase traffic on other roadway alternatives designed to alleviate traffic on I-70.
Meeting #6: 5/29/03 14 Advisory Group members 30 members of media and public	Changes in the traffic modeling; revised forecasts. Preliminary information about environmental, socioeconomic and financial impacts of near north and expanded existing I-70 alternative. Feasibility of Near North Corridor as an option.	Debate occurred regarding traffic modeling, projections and environmental and socioeconomic costs between I-70 and the near north alternative. Eliminate the near north from consideration and proceed with existing alignment.

**Table V-2: Improve I-70 Advisory Group Meetings, June to November 2003**  
**Phase 2: Preliminary and Detailed Widening Concepts**

Date	Agenda	Key Themes From Advisory Group Input
<p>Meeting #7: 9/18/03</p> <p>13 Advisory Group members</p> <p>Six members of media and public</p>	<p>Project goals.</p> <p>How various alternatives would be developed and evaluated.</p> <p>Five widening concepts presented at the public meeting, with advantages and disadvantages.</p> <p>Emerging alternatives and example of how one performs in an initial screening.</p>	<p>Traffic operation issues represent the highest priority in the purpose and need for widening I-70.</p> <p>Requested clearer instructions on processes to provide better informed input to the Missouri Department of Transportation.</p> <p>The Missouri Department of Transportation Right of Way/property acquisition guidelines need further discussion and explanation.</p> <p>Alternative designs should account for bicycles and accompanying right of way.</p>
<p>Meeting #8: 10/23/03</p> <p>14 Advisory Group members</p> <p>Eight members of media and public</p>	<p>Status of study, including the business survey.</p> <p>Emerging improvement alternatives.</p> <p>Widening challenges, community values and tradeoffs.</p>	<p>Columbia concerned over fiscal impacts during I-70 construction. Investigating additional funding support.</p> <p>Discussed positive experience with Texas turnarounds in other states.</p> <p>Preferred alternative not determined at this point.</p>
<p>Meeting #9: 11/20/03</p> <p>15 Advisory Group members</p> <p>Nine members of media and public</p>	<p>Business survey results.</p> <p>The analytical refinements of the concepts and alignments under consideration.</p> <p>The process and timing to reach a preferred alternative.</p> <p>The Missouri Department of Transportation's property acquisition process.</p> <p>Desired role for the Advisory Group over the next several months.</p>	<p>Screening of concepts is key in moving toward the creation of a set of reasonable alternatives.</p> <p>Discussed Level of Service options and their benefits and costs.</p> <p>Comprehensive traffic modeling process further explained.</p>

<b>Table V-3: Improve I-70 Advisory Group Meetings, December 2003 Through Spring 2004 Phase 3: Development of Reasonable Alternatives</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Key Themes From Advisory Group Input</b>
Meeting #10 2/5/04  11 Advisory Group members  Nine members of media and public	Recent activities and updated material.  Methodology being employed to narrow the alternatives.  Preferred alternative for road and interchange configuration in the less populated areas.  Reasonable range of alternatives for the interstate, frontage roads and interchanges in the Columbia core area.  Next steps in the process and development of the Draft EIS.	Coordinate proposed plans with construction season sequencing to maximize efficiency and adequate funding.  Improve access to businesses, schools and residences in Fairview area.  Take a balanced approach to alternative analysis.  Mitigate I-70 as physical divider of Columbia.  Concerns about safety, right of way and relocation policies and timelines.
Meeting #11: 3/18/04  15 Advisory Group members  32 members of media and public*	Review feasible alternatives and summary of impacts.  Preview EIS topics and timing.  Identify and discuss topics of interest from the Advisory Group.  Identify next steps in the planning process.	Discussion of remaining alternatives' elements: lane widening and interchanges.  Need for sequencing construction to accommodate funding and long-range traffic numbers.  General discussion of EIS and Advisory Group process.  Need and desire for Advisory Group to stay involved in later study phases.
<i>* Neighborhood leaders, residents and pastors from low income, minority and other potentially-affected neighborhoods such as Park de Ville, Whitegate, Parkade, Rolling Hills, off-Broadway and Smithton Ridge were also invited to attend the March 18, 2004 Advisory Group meeting. Study team members stayed after the regularly scheduled Advisory Group meeting to answer their questions and listen to their feedback.</i>		

**b. Summary of Public Meetings and Input During the Three Study Phases**

The text below summarizes public input received during the three study phases. **Tables V-4 through V-6** summarize the meeting date, attendance, agenda and key themes emerging from the public input at each meeting. For a summary of meeting purpose, exhibits, handouts and comments from each meeting, see **Appendix V-C**.

At the first public meeting, held April 2003 during Phase 1 of the study (Corridor Selection), information was provided about the purpose of the study, current I-70 problems, traffic forecasts and a preliminary look at environmental impacts in the proposed corridors. Attendees were shown how traffic forecasts were the first tool for determining whether a transportation corridor met the purpose and need of the study. If an alternate highway corridor attracted enough traffic away from existing I-70 to relieve some of the interstate's traffic congestion, it was then screened for potential environmental impacts. Residents were invited to look at project maps that identified possible environmental impacts in all three corridors under consideration. Attendees were then encouraged to draw directly on the maps to indicate other potential environmental concerns or new residential developments currently under construction.

Attendees generally supported the recommendation to drop the Far North and Near North Corridors and to improve existing I-70. There was minimal support for the alternate corridors due to the relatively low amounts of traffic forecasted to use the facility in 2030, the environmental impacts and the cost. Some expressed a desire to build a roadway facility in the Near North Corridor to provide an additional transportation link in this fast-growing area of Columbia.

As a result of the input during this first phase of the public involvement, the study team looked at additional traffic forecasting scenarios and possible environmental impacts to ensure that the alternate corridors were considered thoroughly and given the best opportunity to draw traffic off existing I-70 in 2030. The study team also benefited from the public's identification of additional possible environmental issues. All information was shared with the Advisory Group in May 2003, when it was agreed that the alternative corridors did not draw enough traffic to justify the impacts. Thus widening and rebuilding I-70 was the most viable approach. **See Table V-4**.

Starting June 2003, the study team moved into Phase 2, Preliminary and Detailed Widening Concept Development—the phase of study to identify which widening options would be considered, outline for the Advisory Group and public the advantages and disadvantages of each, identify possible environmental impacts and combine the best attributes of the various concepts to draft preliminary alternatives for the public's review and comment. **See Table V-5**.

**Figure V-2: Study team member Jim Bednar outlines advantages and disadvantages of the widening concepts under consideration at the August 21, 2003 public workshop.**



A public workshop and drop-in center were held in August and November 2003, respectively, to illustrate to the public the various widening options and to identify the tradeoffs of each option: more local access would reduce the efficiency of traffic flow; more efficient traffic flow in some cases would affect more existing homes and businesses.

As the study team discussed these concepts with the public, team members gained a better understanding of the value the community placed on improving traffic flow while minimizing impacts to the properties located along I-70. Based on this input, the study team started to mix and match the best attributes of the different concepts to create hybrid alternatives.

The hybrid alternatives continued to evolve as the study team moved into Phase 3 (December 2003 through spring 2004) and were presented at a public meeting in December 2003. The study team continually tightened the proposed width, or footprint, of the I-70 alternatives to address concerns raised by stakeholders. Each alternative was analyzed for safety, operational feasibility, possible environmental impacts and cost. These alternatives and analysis of each were shared with the public at a series of neighborhood meetings held from March through June 2004. See **Table V-6**.

**Table V-4: Public Involvement Meetings, September 2002 to May 2003**  
**Phase 1: Corridor Selection**

Date	Agenda	Key Themes From Public Input
<b>Public Meeting at Columbia Activity and Recreation Center</b>		
Meeting #1: 4/23/03  55 Attendees	Share results from traffic forecasts.  Preliminary look at environmental impacts of the proposed corridors.  Identify other potential environmental issues in the proposed corridors.  Show approach for screening and eliminating corridor options.	Support for the recommendation to drop consideration of the Far North Corridor and to improve I-70.  Minimal support for Far North Bypass due to impacts, forecasts of low traffic use and cost.  Perceived need for near north bypass.  Desire to reduce access to I-70.  Desire to lower speed limit on I-70.  Concern about noise pollution associated with widening of I-70.  Identification of specific environmental issues located along the corridor.

**Table V-5: Public Involvement Meetings, June to November 2003  
Phase 2: Preliminary and Detailed Widening Concepts**

Date	Agenda	Key Themes From Public Input
<b>Public Workshop at Columbia Area Recreation Center</b>		
Meeting #2: 8/21/03  110 attendees	Summarize why Far North and Near North Corridors were removed from further study.  Introduce and seek input on widening concepts.  Seek input on possible environmental impacts.	The public indicated that its top three widening preferences were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-way frontage roads</li> <li>• Collector/distributor</li> <li>• Basic widening</li> </ul> Important characteristics to consider included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of existing roads as much as possible</li> <li>• Separating local trips from through trips</li> <li>• Maintaining existing access patterns to and from I-70 and local roads</li> </ul> Most important things to consider when choosing a widening concept included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being respectful of residential and business owners affected by the widening</li> <li>• Separating local from through traffic</li> <li>• Maintaining good access management practices</li> </ul>
<b>Drop-In Center at Days Inn</b>		
Meeting #3: 11/4/03  197 attendees	Share more detailed analysis of the preliminary widening concepts.  Illustrate possible environmental impacts.  Seek input on the business survey.	The I-70/Route 63 interchange needs immediate improvement.  Bike-pedestrian connections both along and across the I-70 corridor should be evaluated.  Environmental impact is a serious concern.  Consider alternative means of transportation.  Concern about noise pollution and whether a bypass is still needed.  Concern about impacts to area businesses.

**Table V-6: Public Involvement Meetings, December 2003 through Spring 2004  
Phase 3: Development of Reasonable Alternatives**

Date	Agenda	Key Themes From Public Input
<b>Public Meeting at Columbia Area Recreation Center</b>		
Meeting #4: 12/11/03 92 attendees	Impacts of proposed widening concepts. Emerging alternatives. Business survey results.	Various comments regarding impacts to specific properties that were shown on concept maps. Various comments regarding design in light of safety and good access management practices. Questions regarding when construction would start and finish and whether it would be soon enough to address traffic generated by increasing population. Agreement that I-70 traffic must be addressed. Concerns about lack of funds to widen and rebuild I-70.
<b>Neighborhood Meeting in Sunrise Estates at Prairie Grove Baptist Church</b>		
Meeting #5: 3/1/04 20 Attendees	Community impacts of alternatives. Traffic mitigation. Recommended preferred alternatives.	Noise concerns. Receptive to news that few Sunrise Estates properties would be affected directly.
<b>Neighborhood Meeting at Parkade Elementary</b>		
Meeting #6: 3/3/03 40 attendees	Community impacts of alternatives. Traffic mitigation. Recommended preferred alternatives.	Noise concerns. Receptive to news that few Parkade properties would be affected directly. Suggested further enhancements at Creasy Springs Road to connect with West Boulevard for better connectivity.
<b>Neighborhood Meeting for Whitegate at Oakland Junior High School<sup>1</sup></b>		
Meeting #7: 3/8/04 41 attendees	Community impacts of alternatives. Traffic mitigation. Recommended preferred alternatives.	Receptive to news that few properties in Whitegate would be affected directly. Noise concerns.



**Table V-6: Public Involvement Meetings, December 2003 through Spring 2004  
Phase 3: Development of Reasonable Alternatives**

Date	Agenda	Key Themes From Public Input
<b>Neighborhood Meeting for West Broadway and Park de Ville* at Activity and Recreation Center</b>		
Meeting #8: 6/30/04 100 attendees	Community impacts of alternatives. Traffic mitigation. Recommended preferred alternatives. Details on Fairview ramps at Stadium Boulevard interchange.	Concerns about additional traffic and increased development. Priority of Columbia improvements among others in I-70 corridor. Priority of I-70 improvements within Columbia. Order/timing of Stadium improvements (when would Fairview ramps be built).
<i>*Also invited Rolling Hills, Off-Broadway, Valley View and Park de Ville neighborhood leaders and their associations.</i>		

## 6. Presentations to Community Groups

In addition to the 19 Advisory Group and public meetings, study team members also met with community groups and affected property owners. Both the Web site and postcard notices encouraged citizens to call the Improve I-70 telephone hot line to request a presentation to their groups. Additional requests were taken by the Missouri Department of Transportation Central and District offices and also sought by CATSO's neighborhood liaison. Those presentations are summarized in **Table V-7**.

**Table V-7: Presentations to Community Groups**

Group or Individuals	Date	Input
Sierra Club, Ozark Chapter	July 2002	Identified environmental issues
Columbia City Council	July 2002	Clarification on study parameters and role of Advisory Group
Rolling Hills Neighborhood Association	September 2002	Concern about where bypass corridors would connect to I-70 Desire to address growing traffic on I-70
Smithton Ridge Neighborhood Meeting Organized and Hosted by Developer Scott Atkins	May 2003	Confusion about how the proposed Kroenke interchange was a proposal separate from the I-70 study
Columbia Rotary	October 2003	Concern about possible business impacts of preliminary widening concepts
Delegation from Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transportation and Advisory Group	January 2004	Lessons learned from Advisory Group public input process
Columbia Lodging Association	February 2004	Discussion on emerging recommended preferred alternative and minimized business impacts
Central Missouri Development Council	March 2004	Input on recommended preferred alternative
Columbia Chamber of Commerce	April 2004	Input on recommended preferred alternative
PedNet Coalition	May 2004	Preference for aggressive use of aesthetic enhancements to be considered during I-70 redesign
Columbia City Council	May 2004	Input on recommended preferred alternative
Columbia Convention and Visitors Bureau Master Plan Subcommittee	May 2004	Input on communication plans during construction
Columbia Chamber of Commerce Transportation/Infrastructure Committee	June 2004	I-70 corridor enhancement plan and opportunities for local participation

**Table V-7: Presentations to Community Groups**

Group or Individuals	Date	Input
Lois Walker, Manager, Terrace Retirement Apartments	September 2004	Concerned about finding a suitable new location and rebuilding the apartments should the project proceed.

## 7. Business Survey

Improvement of I-70 within its existing corridor would displace several commercial and industrial operations. A business survey was conducted to expand outreach efforts and to quantify the nature of I-70 widening impacts. The business survey also supported the project's environmental studies and screening of alternatives. **Appendix III-A** contains information on survey goals, methodology and results.

From a public involvement perspective, the business survey accomplished several goals. First, Advisory Group members' review of the survey instrument allowed the team to incorporate questions that would clarify Advisory Group issues of concern. Second, the 1,582 telephone contacts and numerous articles related to the business survey raised the awareness of the Improve I-70 effort and many opportunities for input. The survey questions illustrated the relevance of the project to local businesses and prompted many business owners to become active participants in the study effort, spurring their attendance at Advisory Group and public meetings and their calls to the hot line.

The input received during the survey process enabled the study team to better define local concerns. In short, survey respondents doing business along I-70 were concerned about impacts during construction, how soon they might be purchased if they are directly in the path of the widening and where they might relocate along I-70 if their property is indeed purchased. Advisory Group members expressed similar concerns.

The survey prompted the City of Columbia to do its own follow-up study to discern short- and long-term impacts to sales revenues and economic development. This, in turn, would help the City devise strategies for minimizing negative impacts and maximizing economic development opportunities. The study team coordinated with City officials and their research firm by providing I-70-related study data for additional economic impact analysis, reviewing the City's study recommendations to ensure they are considered in the Improve I-70 efforts as they proceed and incorporating recommendations as appropriate in the final EIS submitted to FHWA.

## 8. Media Coverage

The Missouri Department of Transportation distributed 17 Columbia-specific news releases through the course of the Improve I-70 study, resulting in at least 180 print stories and numerous stories on broadcast radio and television stations. There was newspaper and broadcast coverage prior to each Advisory Group and public meeting and coverage immediately following as well.

## 9. Mailing Lists

Those with properties in the I-70 corridor were included on the mailing list, as were all who requested being on the list after attending meetings, visiting the Web site or otherwise expressing interest in participating. Every person on the mailing list was sent the Improve I-70 newsletter and a postcard notice of upcoming public meetings. The mailing list grew to 1,084 names by fall 2004.

## 10. Newsletters and Other Mailings

Three Improve I-70 newsletters, called *Momentum*, were distributed during the course of the study. As noted, they were mailed to people living or working in the I-70 corridor and were also distributed at public meetings and posted on the Web site. Each newsletter included corridor-wide information as well as specific information on each aspect of the I-70 study.

The first issue, published in spring 2003, provided an overview of the Improve I-70 study, why I-70 was being studied, how each section would address environmental documentation, access management issues, a calendar of events and status updates for each section. A summary of the SIU 4 corridor screening process was provided, and readers were invited to attend the April 2003 public meeting.

The second issue (summer 2003) gave an overall study update, a calendar of events and discussed guard cable safety, funding and how traffic would be maintained during reconstruction. Section of Independent Utility 4 information included updates from the public meeting and announced the August public workshop. The local section summarized the corridor screening process and how the study effort would come to focus on rebuilding and widening I-70.

The third issue of *Momentum* was published (fall 2003) again provided a study update and calendar of events. It described how impacts would be quantified consistent with the requirements of NEPA. The section on SIU 4 summarized the preliminary widening concepts and provided meeting dates for the upcoming drop-in center and Advisory Group meetings.

An update letter was mailed in June 2004 to explain that study documentation was underway and that public hearings would be held in fall 2004.

## 11. Reaching Out to All Populations

### a. Low-Income and Minority Populations/Environmental Justice

The Improve I-70 team is committed to seeking input from all populations, regardless of race, income, age or disability. Early in the study, low-income and minority populations living along or near I-70 were identified, as were churches and neighborhood associations that served those areas, to determine whether there might be disproportionate impacts to those groups.

To ensure that all area residents were alerted to public meetings and had a convenient opportunity to attend, news releases were sent to all area media, postcards were mailed to property owners and residents, calls were made, faxes sent and e-mails distributed to area churches and neighborhood leaders in the corridor. Meetings were held at centrally located

venues like the Activities and Recreation Center, the Columbia Public Library, Midway Baptist Church, Prairie Grove Baptist Church, Parkade Elementary, Smithton Middle School and Days Inn. The CATSO's neighborhood liaison alerted neighborhood leaders throughout Columbia of opportunities to attend meetings or to host the study team.

As the preliminary widening concepts became more defined and reasonable alternatives emerged, the study team repeatedly sought input from the affected neighborhoods. After it was known that the Parkade, Sunrise, Park DeVille and Whitegate neighborhoods were going to be affected, for example, those neighborhood leaders were contacted and asked to assist the study team in arranging meetings and to notify area residents and businesses. The study team provided flyers, mailed news releases and sent e-mail notifications; the neighborhood leaders distributed the flyers to school children, through door-to-door visits and at grocery stores, and forwarded the e-mails to their own distribution lists. Leaders from other neighborhoods along I-70 were invited to attend the March 18, 2004, Advisory Group session to learn more and determine whether a meeting was needed in their neighborhood.

The study team also sought input from the Terrace Retirement Apartments and West Village Manor, which would need to re-locate should the Improve I-70 project be built. A meeting was held with Terrace Retirement Apartments management on September 10, 2004 to outline the plan, discuss impacts to residents and to identify issues of concern. While the Terrace representative was not immediately concerned, she noted that identifying a new site and relocating the residents would be a challenge. MoDOT agreed to assist with future communication to residents and explained its right of way procedures for compensating those who must move due to highway improvements. West Village Manor did not send a representative to this meeting.

## **B. Coordination with Agencies and Local Governments**

### **1. Notice of Intent**

The FHWA filed a Notice of Intent to prepare the Section Tier EIS affecting Boone County in Missouri. The notice (see **Appendix V-D**) was published in the *Federal Register* April 19, 2002 (Vol. 67, No. 76, p. 19469).

### **2. SIU 4 Management Team and CATSO Meetings**

The SIU 4 Study Team, which included representatives from the SEC, the General Engineering Consultant (GEC), CATSO, MoDOT Headquarters and District Five, met regularly with staff from the City of Columbia and Boone County to determine and study the alternatives developed for the Columbia area. The group met regularly to review land use and traffic data, widening concepts and emerging alternatives. This collaborative effort provided ongoing guidance and insight on issues such as land use forecasts, CATSO's Major Roadway Plan, floodplains, zoning and community outreach, among others.

The study team also made at least quarterly presentations to the CATSO board to update them on study progress and seek direction on Columbia-specific issues.

### 3. Study Management Group Meetings

Resource agency coordination was a priority throughout the Improve I-70 Second Tier study. The scoping process and agency involvement were discussed at the April 19, 2002, Study Management Group (SMG) meeting held at FHWA's Division Office. The SMG was convened to ensure proactive coordination was through regularly scheduled SMG meetings, phone calls, e-mails, correspondence and face-to-face meetings on SIU-specific issues.

Included in the SMG are representatives from the Missouri Department of Transportation headquarters and district offices, the GEC, FHWA, MDNR, MDC, USEPA, NRCS, United States Coast Guard (USCG), USACE and USFWS. See below for a summary of the SMG meetings. Six SMG meetings have been held to date.

The first SMG meeting was held April 19, 2002, at which the project status, scoping process, public involvement status and corridor-wide bicycle and pedestrian issues were discussed.

The second SMG meeting was held August 22, 2002. A summary of the Median Study, Public Involvement Plan, Rest Area Study, Corridor Enhancement Subcommittee meeting, study funding and schedule issues was presented. Section of Independent Utility 4 discussed Columbia-area project limits, study area features, purpose and need, environmental status, socioeconomic activities, traffic analysis, alternatives to be analyzed and a proposed revised project schedule.

The SMG reconvened on February 4, 2003, to discuss project status and the coordinated approach to the Improve I-70 effort, enhancements, corridor-wide decision-making criteria, traffic forecasting and results of the sensitivity analysis. Section of Independent Utility 4 summarized input from the first four Advisory Group meetings, corridor screening status and evaluation criteria and traffic studies.

The SMG met the fourth time on May 20, 2003, where they updated program status and schedule, cultural resources, interagency coordination, subcommittee activities (e.g., Mineola Hill, Overton Bottoms, Corridor Enhancement) and public involvement. Section of Independent Utility 4 presented purpose and need factors, the status of the traffic model and results of the traffic forecasts, corridor first- and second-level corridor screening, Advisory Group and public input, current activities and next steps.

The fifth SMG meeting was held September 11, 2003. The group discussed the overall status of the project and schedule. Section of Independent Utility 4 presented the results of the traffic analysis and corridor screening, widening concepts, Build Alternative alignments, evaluation criteria and draft evaluation matrix and input received from the Advisory Group and the from the August public workshop. Section of Independent Utility 4 also raised the Bristled Cyperus issue to ensure the SMG was aware of a possible threatened and endangered species along I-70 in the Columbia area.

The SMG met again on April 20, 2004 to discuss the overall status and schedule, as well as preliminary input from FHWA and resource agencies. Section of Independent Utility 4 presented the recommended preferred alternative, discussed impacts to the Bowling Napier Mansion and provided a recap of the meeting held with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on March 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss threatened and endangered species identified throughout the state. It was agreed that SIU 4 would make a technical presentation to FHWA on the Columbia-area proposal.

#### 4. Other Agency Coordination and Areas of Concern

This portion of the text is intended to consolidate the various agency coordination activities that have been discussed throughout this document. The large scope of the overall I-70 project (virtually the entire state) and the multiplicity of issues within SIU 4 made agency coordination essential. **Appendix V-E** contains copies of agency correspondence, organized by date. It is limited to written, final documents. Although extensive coordination was carried out by telephone, e-mail and in person, the final document produced by the agency is the one that best reflects the agency's interests. **Table V-8** addresses and summarizes the overall coordination and areas of concern that the individual agencies had with the SIU 4 project team.

##### a. NEPA/404 Merged Process

The FHWA, USACE and MoDOT executed an Interagency Partnering Agreement to facilitate processing the environmental documentation for the Improve I-70 project. See **Appendix V-E** for a copy of the Partnering Agreement. The agreement stipulates that SIU 4 is to be processed with an EIS and that a cooperative merged NEPA/404 process should be used. This merged process includes concurrence points in purpose and need, alternatives carried forward, joint NEPA/Section 404 public hearing, selected alternative, mitigation and ROD.

##### b. Environmental Study Methodology Agreement

The FHWA requested that the USEPA become a Cooperating Agency for the Improve I-70 project. See **Appendix V-E** for a copy of this agreement. The agreement outlines the responsibilities agreed to by USEPA and FHWA with respect to the preparation of environmental studies for this project.

##### c. Interagency Cooperative Agreement on Agricultural Lands

The FHWA, NRCS, FSA and MoDOT executed an Interagency Cooperative Agreement to facilitate the day-to-day working relationship and coordination as it relates to environmental resources. See **Appendix V-E** for a copy of this agreement. The agreement relates to WRP Lands, CRP Lands and Prime and Unique Farmlands.

##### d. Coordination Relative to Wetland Mitigation

A meeting was held on June 24, 2004 to discuss these potential sites and other mitigation options, and to gather feedback and comments regarding wetland mitigation preferences. The following agencies were represented: MDNR, MDC, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), USACE, FHWA, and MoDOT. A memo was handed out that discussed the following three mitigation options:

- On-Site Mitigation – Concentrated (occurring at one site) or dispersed (occurring at several sites)
- Off-Site Mitigation – Mitigation being handled through the use of a wetlands bank. This could be the use of an existing MoDOT wetlands mitigation bank or at a privately owned mitigation bank.
- Off-System Mitigation – MoDOT would fund the development of wetlands at a site or sites identified by another agency that have been designated as a very

high priority for acquisition and development as wetlands, or to develop wetlands on an agency owned site that is currently lacking funding.

MoDOT prefers to concentrate wetland mitigation in a large area. However, based on the discussion and preferences expressed by the resource agencies, it may be more realistic to utilize more than one site or option within the corridor. Although most of the agencies prefer on-site mitigation, or mitigation within the same watershed, they also realized that it may be more practical to develop a few larger, concentrated sites rather than several small dispersed sites for a long linear project such as this. There was also a consensus that the Loutre River valley was an excellent location for wetlands mitigation (see **Appendix V-E**).

#### e. Native American Coordination

The FHWA has contacted nine indigenous tribes that would have an interest in the I-70 corridor. To date, only the Sac and Fox Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Confederacy has responded, indicating that those tribes inhabited SIU 4 area extensively. The Confederacy asked to be notified immediately should any funerary objects or human remains be unearthed. **Appendix V-E** contains copies of the correspondence and responses.

#### f. Other Coordination/Issues of Concern

MoDOT took the lead on keeping the various public agencies involved in all aspects of Improve I-70. The study team participated in interactions with public agencies via meetings, telephone, e-mail and letters. Issues that were raised are identified in **Table V-8**, below.

**Table V-8: Summary of Agency Coordination**

Agency (Contacts)	Issues and Outcomes
Missouri Department of Conservation (Jeff Cockerham, Jim Loveless, Tim Smith)	General ecological coordination
US Fish and Wildlife Service (Paul Mckenzie)	Endangered species – Coordinated status of bristle cyperus relocation efforts and general endangered/threatened species issues
Columbia Parks Management Center (Steve Saitta)	Park and recreation area coordination and Section 6(f) funding – Data sharing, general coordination and outreach
Boone County Tax Assessors Office (David Sabbith)	Property values and impacts – Data sharing, general coordination and outreach
US Army Corps of Engineers (Kenny Pointer)	Draft Purpose and Need Statement – General agreement with draft (see <b>Appendix V-E</b> )
Missouri Department of Nature Resources (Jane Beetem)	Fisheries and water quality – Review of draft DEIS
Columbia Department of Planning	Land use, displacement impacts and local traffic - Data sharing, general coordination and outreach
State Historic Preservation Office	Cultural resource impacts – General coordination, field meetings, Section 106 reviews and I-70 MOU (see <b>Appendix V-E</b> )



**Table V-8: Summary of Agency Coordination**

<b>Agency (Contacts)</b>	<b>Issues and Outcomes</b>
Missouri Spatial Data Information Service	Input on available mapping data
Natural Resources Conservation Service (Bob Hagedorn)	Farmland coordination – Data on Conservation Reserve Program/Wetland Reserve Program sites, Farmland Conversion Impact Rating and general soils data (see <b>Appendix V-E</b> )
FEMA/SEMA (Mr. Glasscock)	General floodplain coordination and FEMA buyout data
USEPA (Joseph Cothorn)	Air quality – Review of draft DEIS
Boone County Missouri Cemetery Project	Input on local cemetery resources
Missouri Department of Nature Resources	Missouri State Operating Permit, Water Pollution Control Program (see <b>Appendix V-E</b> )
Columbia Department of Public Works	Zoning district mapping – Data sharing, general coordination and outreach
CATSO	Land use, displacement impacts and local traffic - Data sharing, general coordination and outreach