

CHAPTER I

Purpose and Need

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) propose improving a portion of the I-70 corridor between just west of Route 19 (milepost 174) and Lake St. Louis Boulevard (milepost 214) to meet the current and future needs of this extremely important transportation facility. To facilitate this action, MoDOT has completed a First Tier EIS and initiated this Second Tier EIS to fulfill this goal. This chapter of the Second Tier EIS provides an overview and description of the study corridor within SIU 7, and identifies serious transportation problems within that section of the I-70 corridor that would be addressed by the proposed project.

The Department of the Army Corps of Engineers has indicated that it is in general agreement with this Purpose and Need. A copy of this letter can be found in Appendix H of the Draft EIS.

A. Summary of First Tier EIS Project Purpose & Need

The goal of I-70 improvements between Kansas City and St. Louis is to provide a safe, efficient, environmentally sound and cost-effective transportation facility that responds to the needs of the study corridor and to the expectations of drivers traveling on a nationally important interstate. The need for the project is based on transportation deficiencies identified in the First Tier EIS. These are summarized as follows:

Roadway Capacity – Increase roadway system capacity in accordance with projected travel demands to improve the general operating conditions on I-70.

Traffic Safety – Reduce the number and severity of traffic-related crashes occurring along I-70 between Kansas City and St. Louis.

Roadway Design Features – Upgrade current roadway design features along I-70, including interchanges, roadway alignment and roadway cross-sections.

System Preservation – Preserve the existing I-70 facility through ongoing rehabilitation and maintenance activities.

Goods Movement – Improve the efficiency of freight movement using I-70.

National Defense/Homeland Security – Adding additional capacity along the I-70 corridor would increase the ability of the corridor to handle diversion from other highway links should a disaster occur.

Each of these specific needs is discussed in Chapter I of the Draft EIS. The ordering of these specific needs is not intended to imply any relative prioritization or order of importance. Furthermore, the numbering of the individual needs within SIU 7 is not intended to replace the findings of the Missouri Long-Range Transportation Direction regarding the prioritization of MoDOT's statewide needs.

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