



ILLINOIS I-270

Preliminary Engineering Study



Illinois I-270 Preliminary Engineering Study

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN

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APPENDIX A: Communications Protocol Template

ACRONYMS

BDE	Bureau of Design and Environment
CE	Categorical Exclusion
CSS	Context Sensitive Solutions
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
IDOT	Illinois Department of Transportation
MoDOT	Missouri Department of Transportation
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
SIP	Stakeholder Involvement Plan

Introduction

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is conducting a study of I-270 from the Riverview Drive interchange in St. Louis, Missouri to Illinois Route 157 in Madison County, Illinois. The Illinois I-270 Preliminary Engineering Study will investigate how to address traffic growth, decreasing congestion and improving safety along the route. With there being no known environmental issues and very minimal right-of-way to be acquired, this study is anticipated to be processed as a Federally Approved Categorical Exclusion (formally referred to as a Categorical Exclusion II or CE II).

Project Background

The most northern connection between St. Louis, Missouri and Madison County, Illinois is I-270. This portion of the interstate, from IL 157 to the Missouri state line, is largely a four-lane highway which travels over several railroads and is adjacent to a few residential subdivisions.

As a direct route to and from St. Louis County into Illinois, I-270 is a common corridor for many motorists who work, live, and/or go to school on opposite sides of the Mississippi River. With population density increasing in St. Louis County and nationwide freight movement expansion through the area, the four-lane highway has seen significant increases in traffic volume and the number of crashes. IDOT will evaluate these issues and other concerns identified during the Illinois I-270 Preliminary Engineering Study. The following plan outlines the stakeholder involvement plan for the I-270 Preliminary Engineering Study.

I-270 Study Area



Purpose of Stakeholder Involvement Plan

Recognizing the value that stakeholders bring to the transportation planning process, the project study group will employ several tools to ensure a variety of opportunities for them and the general public to be involved throughout the study. A stakeholder is any person or organization who is interested in or directly affected by the project. Their involvement is critical and helps build awareness and understanding. Ultimately, public involvement should lead to a

final outcome that reflects an interdisciplinary collaborative process and includes input from anyone with a stake in the project as well as the general public.

A stakeholder involvement plan (SIP) calls for early and continuous involvement by key stakeholders and the public so that the study team can meet the following objectives:

- Understand key issues, concerns, opportunities, and challenges of the study area;
- Establish a process that allows all stakeholder types to obtain information and provide input;
- Build trust with key stakeholders; and
- Use stakeholder input to inform the decision-making process and final recommendation.

The purpose of this plan is to provide guidelines for public participation throughout the I-270 Preliminary Engineering Study. The rest of this plan outlines various techniques and tools to ensure there are meaningful exchanges of information and ideas. It will remain flexible throughout the study process and will be amended as necessary to achieve the overall study goal.

Stakeholder Identification

One of the first steps of any public involvement program is to identify the stakeholders. This can include residents or property owners adjacent to the study area, neighborhood or subdivision groups, business leaders, elected/community officials, state and federal governmental resource agencies, interest groups, religious, social, and educational institutions, motorists who travel the corridor and any additional stakeholders as identified by IDOT. Stakeholders for the Illinois I-270 Preliminary Engineering Study have been identified using background information from previous relevant studies, existing databases and Internet searches.

Project Study Group

The Illinois I-270 Preliminary Engineering Study is sponsored by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). IDOT has hired a consultant team led by Crawford, Murphy & Tilly to assist in evaluating the issues within the parameters of the study.

The Project Study Group (PSG) includes:

- Jeff Keirn, IDOT District 8, Regional Engineer
- Kirk Brown, IDOT District 8, Program Development Engineer
- Tiffany Brase, IDOT District 8, Studies and Plans Engineer
- Jennifer Hunt, IDOT District 8, Project Environmental Studies Manager
- Rich Barbee, IDOT District 8, Geometric Engineer
- Chris Fraley, FHWA, FHWA Oversight
- Jack Elston, IDOT Bureau of Design and Environment, Bureau Chief

Phase I Engineering Services I-270 from Riverview Dr. in MO to IL 157 in IL

- Scott Stitt, IDOT Bureau of Design and Environment, Location and Environment Section Chief
- Paul Loete, IDOT, Director, Office of Highways Project Implementation
- Roger Driskell, Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Project Manager
- Jim Michael, Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Project Engineer
- Stan Hansen, Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Principle-In-Charge
- Laura Sakach, Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Environmental Studies Lead
- Heather Lacey, Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Environmental Studies
- Laurna Godwin, Vector Communications, President
- Darby Latham, Vector Communications, Associate Consultant

Public Engagement Tools/Techniques



Stakeholder Meetings

Early coordination with stakeholders will be accomplished through stakeholder meetings. The Project Study Group will conduct meetings with stakeholders such as elected officials, community leaders, and special interest group leaders as necessary. The meetings provide a means for introducing the study and obtaining information about the study area's current conditions, possible constraints and potential opportunities. The meetings will also inform the study team of the best methods for public outreach and engagement. Notes will be taken at each meeting and become part of the public involvement documentation. Project handouts and/or other appropriate materials will be prepared for distribution at such meetings or presentations.

Community Meetings

The study team will meet before and after the public meeting, as necessary, with stakeholder groups and organizations in order to share project information, foster discussion, and generally aid in public understanding of the study's purpose, need, and process. An advantage of community presentations is that the study will gain exposure to a broader audience of constituents outside of those who would normally self-select to attend public meetings. Project handouts and/or other appropriate meeting materials will be prepared for distribution at such meetings or presentations.

Mailing List

A mailing list will be developed at the start of the I-270 Preliminary Engineering Study and will expand and gain new contacts as study participants are added via the study's web site, email communications, public meeting attendance records, and other vehicles. The stakeholder mailing/email list will be updated and maintained throughout the project. The list will be used to communicate project information, updates, and public involvement opportunities to stakeholders.

Public Meetings

Public meetings represent an important opportunity for direct engagement with the larger, general public. At these meetings, study team members staff display boards and are available to discuss, explain, and help participants understand the information presented.



The study team will hold an initial public informational meeting to review the range of issues to be addressed by the study and to identify significant issues and a potential alternative. A public meeting can be the general public's first introduction to the study and thus a key point of contact for the study team. A critical function of the public meeting is to educate and inform the public about the study and obtain input.

The study team will organize and facilitate two public meetings:

- A meeting to present the study's purpose and need; and a
- Final public meeting to present the study's draft preferred alternative and receive public comment.

The public meetings will be held at facilities within the study area using an open house format. While formal presentations are not a planned component of the meetings, they could be utilized, if determined necessary for enhanced understanding of information.

Comment forms will be available at both public meetings and on the webpage, to gather written feedback from attendees.

A meeting report will be prepared following each public meeting summarizing participants' comments. These summaries will be made public via the study's website.

The project team will announce meeting information to appropriate audiences via emails and mailings, flyers/posters, press advisories, and/or other materials. When necessary, the consultant will coordinate the distribution of materials to residences in unincorporated areas.

Informational Sheet

A one-page informational handout will be produced to distribute at stakeholder meetings and public meetings. It will describe the study's purpose and need, the public engagement process, and include a timeline. It will also highlight the study area and provide contact information. The informational handout will help ensure the correct study information is being communicated to the public. The informational sheet will also be uploaded to the study's website on IDOT's website.

Website

A study micro website will be established and housed on IDOT's website as a tool for both public outreach and engagement. The study website will include general study information, contact information, and technical documents. The site will be a centralized information source for learning about the project, getting updates, and downloading public meeting displays and other project materials. Visitors will also be able to submit comments and sign-up to be on the mailing list.

Media

An effective method of informing the general public is through the news media. The primary media strategy will be to produce and distribute press advisories and releases to announce key events, such as the public meetings.

The study team will pitch to all local media organizations. Press releases will provide descriptions of the public meetings (purpose, date, location and format) to local newspapers. The press releases are intended to reach a larger audience and inform individuals that are not on the study's mailing list of the upcoming public participation opportunity. The study team will develop newspaper notices following IDOT media guidelines. Announcements will also be placed on the study web page. News releases will be developed in coordination with IDOT to send to media affiliates including print, radio, and television stations. Legal notices will be posted when required by policy. Advertisements in local media may be used as well if outreach needs to be expanded.

Newsletters/Mailings

Newsletters will be produced and distributed to those included on the mailing and email lists. The initial newsletter will introduce the study to area constituents following the first public meeting. Subsequent newsletters will be mailed or emailed in advance of the public meeting.

Communications Protocol

Stakeholder comments and questions will come in the form of emails, website comment forms, standard mail, phone calls and public meeting comment forms. Feedback obtained during stakeholder and community and public meetings will be recorded in the form of meeting notes; Comment forms from all public meetings, will be summarized in comment reports; and a special communications document will be used for study team members to complete when responding to public input and inquiries outside of the scheduled briefings and meetings. *Appendix A has a copy of the communications template.*

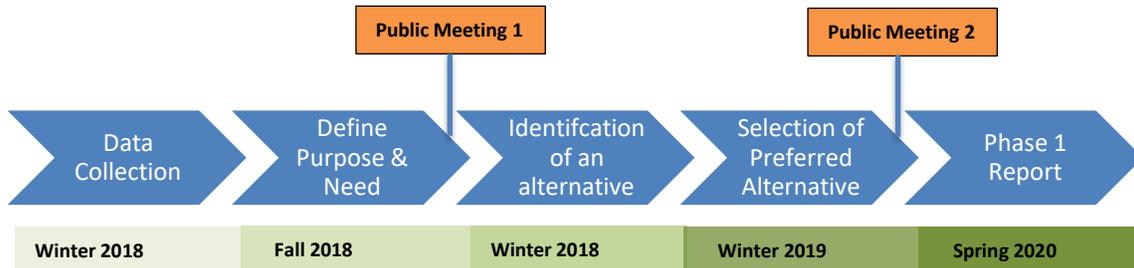
Plan Monitoring/Updates

This stakeholder involvement plan will be regularly reviewed for effectiveness and will be updated/amended as appropriate. Plan administration includes, but is not limited to:

- Maintaining a current database of study participants, along with area residents and business owners;
- Maintaining a detailed public involvement record (log) that includes stakeholder contacts, meetings, and comments; and
- Ensuring two-way communications and timely responses to stakeholders through formal and informal channels.

Public involvement activities will be reviewed with the study team on a regular basis. Direct feedback will be solicited from the public during meetings (comment forms) to determine their effectiveness.

Project Timeline



Conclusion

Through both public involvement and outreach, the overall goal of this phase of the study is to investigate how to address traffic growth while decreasing congestion and improving safety concerns along the route. This public engagement plan details the tools and techniques the study team will employ to offer stakeholders and the general public the opportunity to learn about and provide feedback on the Illinois I-270 Preliminary Engineering Study.

