



On-Line Public Meeting Questions and Comments

DATE: September 22, 2008

SUBJECT: On-Line Public Meeting Questions

LOCATION: www.improvei70.org

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Comment or Question

This could have significant impacts on traffic in St. Louis. Why isn't MoDOT including the City of St. Louis in the study?

Rail down the median would be a better solution – cheaper, safer and better for the environment.

Response

Because of the complexity of moving additional traffic around or through St. Louis, a separate feasibility study is underway to examine alternatives in the St. Louis area. While coordinating closely with the Improve I-70 studies, any plans for major transportation improvements in St. Louis must be evaluated based on local needs, opportunities and coordinated with the region's overall transportation plan, including connections to I-70 in Illinois. Further, as part of the national Corridors of the Future program, Missouri will play a key role in national transportation planning for I-70 from Missouri's western border east to St. Louis, through Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. For more information on Corridors of the Future, go to www.corridors.dot.gov/

MoDOT supports investing in Missouri's rail systems, both for passenger and freight. However, even with improvements to the rail system, there will be a need for additional capacity on I-70.

To be effective, a new rail line in the I-70 corridor would need to connect to existing rail lines through farms, communities and cities, creating significant environmental and



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community impacts, and at a significant cost.

In terms of rail for both freight and passengers, MoDOT carefully monitors national transportation trends, including shifts in public policies, federal funding and the transportation plans of the nation as a whole. MoDOT is a partner in regional and national transportation planning programs, including the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative and the Corridors of the Future. The plans that come out of those programs will be factored into major investments in Missouri's transportation system.

Click on "Rail Service" in the bar to the left for more information.

Wouldn't there be more impacts to air and water?

The SEIS is in the process of comparing the existing recommendation to widen I-70 to six lanes with the construction of truck-only lanes. Evaluations, at this point in time, show that in the vast majority of the corridor – including sensitive areas like Mineola Hill and the Missouri river crossing at Rocheport – truck-only lanes can be accommodated within the planned right-of-way for six lanes. Median plantings could be planned to help sequester carbon and address run-off issues.

Is it safe to have the trucks merge with cars on the slip ramps?

The slip ramps would be designed to be long enough, and far enough from exits, to provide trucks room to merge safely with traffic. Those ramps and merge lanes would be longer than many current entrance/exit ramps on I-70 in Missouri.



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Couldn't trucks be encouraged to drive at night, when there's less traffic?

Truck operators typically schedule their work so that it maximizes their ability to meet the schedules of their customers and minimize costs and delays. Based on that knowledge, those truckers who can drive at night, when the highway is less congested, are likely doing so already.

Why don't we reduce speed limits for trucks to increase safety?

Many truck companies have already prohibited their trucks from going faster than 65 m.p.h. The larger issue for I-70 in Missouri is the number of vehicles on the highway that create congestion at virtually any speed.

How will we pay for improvements?

Funding decisions will need to be made by elected officials, and the citizens they represent.

Why not just improve rail? It's a better long-term solution.

Rail is an important part of the overall transportation system, but as a part of national and regional system, there is still a demand for additional capacity on I-70, and a need to improve safety. Click on "Rail Service" in the bar to the left for more information.

In larger cities would there be more than two auto lanes in each direction?

Yes, where needed based on the amount of traffic.

How will you deal with the Missouri River crossing just west of Columbia?

A new river crossing will be added to accommodate additional lanes when I-70 is rebuilt.



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Please consider making "truck-only" lanes available to cars during peak periods (holiday weekends, etc.) when the volume of cars plus RVs, campers, and moving vans might impede or overwhelm the proposed "general purpose" lanes as they do now.

Could there be a way for smaller forms of wildlife to pass under the highway where there are medians down the middle?

If you are going to build eight lanes, why not make them all general-purpose? That allows the most flexibility for everyone - trucks and cars.

Why do you have to have four truck lanes?
Why not two truck lanes?

In urban areas particularly, there could be some flexibility in lane configurations. Additionally, should truck-only lanes be implemented, "trucks" will be defined in detail. It is possible that some larger RVs and other vehicles could travel in the truck-only lanes.

An evaluation of impacts to the natural environment, including migration are part of the SEIS process. Accommodation, including ensuring sufficient space for wildlife at stream crossings will be considered in the SEIS and the design process.

MoDOT is currently comparing the impacts of six general purpose lanes versus separated truck lanes to see which strategy works best for I-70. Truck traffic on I-70 is growing at a faster rate than passenger vehicle traffic and is projected to more than double by 2030. Providing separate lanes for trucks can improve the safety and efficiency of the entire I-70 corridor by reducing truck-car conflicts and varying operating speeds.

It's possible that in some locations, particularly in cities, that there could only be one truck-only lane each direction. Across much of the state, though, there is enough long-haul truck traffic that two lanes each direction are necessary to safely and efficiently accommodate trucks. Two lanes each direction allows faster trucks to be able to pass slower trucks and allows for passing during a breakdown or incident in one of the lanes.