

Meeting Summary

IMPROVE I-70 ADVISORY GROUP

10th Meeting

Columbia Activity and Recreation Center
1701 W. Ash Street
Columbia, Missouri

February 5, 2004

This is a summary of the key informational and action items from the tenth meeting of the Improve I-70 Advisory Group.

GENERAL

Members Present: Craig Adams, Jeff Barrow, Elaine Blodgett, Susan Clark, Dave Griggs, Chris Janku, David Mink, Larry Moore, Lowell Patterson, Pat Smith and Bob Walters.

Dennis Donald and John Huyler of The Osprey Group facilitated the meeting.

Materials Available at the Meeting

In addition to the agenda, materials, available for discussion at the meeting included:

- An updated Questions and Answers sheet
- A handout about the results of the Business Survey
- A handout on Level of Service (LOS)

Meeting Goals

The overall goal for the meeting was to review and reduce the number of reasonable alternatives under consideration. More specifically, goals included: 1) Hear about recent activities and updated material; 2) Understand the methodology being employed to narrow the alternatives; 3) Review the preferred alternative for road and interchange configuration in the less populated areas; 4) Review the reasonable alternatives for the interstate, frontage roads and interchanges in the Columbia core area; 5) Identify next steps in the planning process and development of the Draft EIS.

Preliminary Items

The meeting opened with an explanation about how the consulting team, with Advisory Group and public input, has been engaged in a process of narrowing from conceptual alternatives to options that work. The meeting used maps to focus on locations where the best option seems clear and others where various combinations have different strengths and weaknesses. Throughout the evening, the options were reviewed and reduced so that the

consulting team can focus its attention on the economic, environmental and social aspects of the most promising options in the near future.

Bob Brendel updated the Group on the December public meeting which was attended by about 100 people, the visit of a high-level delegation from Japan that met with Study Team members and several Advisory Group members, and the ongoing efforts to contact and meet with people from the neighborhoods likely to be impacted by the I-70 improvements under discussion.

In an email note to the Osprey Group, Tom Moran, who was unable to attend this evening's meeting, asked that Osprey tell the Group that he has questions and comments about the use of CATSO's background data as the foundation for some of the projections that are being used for traffic in this study. Tom feels that the information is biased, having a pro-development slant to it. Mr. Donald asked if anyone else wanted to comment on this topic and noted that Tom will likely be at the next meeting and can raise the issue again if he wants.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND ADVISORY GROUP INPUT

The Reasonable Alternatives: Methodology

Buddy Desai of CH2M Hill reviewed maps the Group had seen previously that contain green checks, red "x's" and level of service information for various intersections. He also recalled the Impact Summary Table for the various alternatives. Mr. Desai said that this table will be expanded based on the Group's input. All of the alternatives under consideration at this time were conceptualized to meet the traffic needs of the project. In order to narrow the alternatives under consideration a large group from the consulting team carefully considers each alternative with the information on the Impact Summary Table and the input provided by the Advisory Group and others from the public. By the March 18th Advisory Group meeting, Mr. Desai said that this review process will eliminate weaker alternatives and the preferred alternatives will remain.

Mr. Kevin Nichols of CH2M Hill then directed the Group's attention to three maps the Group had previously reviewed. These identified three conceptual options: the two-way frontage roads, the one-way frontage roads, and the collector-distributor system. The engineering team has worked to extract the best of each of these concepts to produce reasonable alternatives, that is, alternatives that all work from a traffic perspective.

After explaining that we would come back to the western and eastern portions of the Interstate later in the meeting, Mr. Nichols brought the Group's attention to the four major intersections/sections in the Urban Area. There were six alternatives illustrated with maps for Stadium, two for I-70 West, four in the "triplets" area and two at Highway 63.

Specific Areas

Stadium

Mr. Nichols began the detailed focus on the urban area with Stadium Boulevard which he described as a "stand-alone" location. In other words, "we can take an interchange

configuration there and change it and what happens at Midway or what happens at 70-West won't influence that particular configuration.” Mr. Nichols pointed out that the traffic analysis had found that the intersection of Bernadette and Stadium has the most impact on Stadium’s overall operation so there is a need to divert some of the traffic from Bernadette and Stadium. They considered five possible relief scenarios:

- a base case of doing improvements at Stadium and I-70 only
- an extension to Scott Boulevard that comes through this area and connects to an interchange, somewhere close along I-70
- the idea of putting a brand-new full interchange at Fairview.
- providing ramps only to and from the east, so that they are essentially part of the Stadium interchange itself
- a full Scott interchange, and then, in addition to the Stadium improvements, put ramps to and from the east.

After carefully considering these five possible scenarios to relieve traffic on Stadium the engineering team reached the following conclusions:

- A Scott interchange provides more relief to Broadway than Stadium improvements alone do. It also requires four lanes in each direction on Stadium from Broadway north to the interchange. The southern part of the area in town gets more benefit out of a Scott interchange.
- A Fairview interchange would require three lanes in each direction on Stadium and provide more relief to the Stadium area at the Bernadette intersection and at the ramp terminals of I-70.
- Ramps to and from Stadium take some of the traffic out of this interchange and divert it into Fairview (to and from the east). This provides similar traffic relief to the interchange area and to Bernadette as a full interchange would. It requires only three lanes north of Broadway. A Scott interchange does not provide any benefit to the problems at Stadium. Other alternatives provide better solutions to the operations problems there. Mr. Nichols added, however, that a Scott interchange might provide other benefits to the region of southwest Columbia.
- The Fairview interchange has several considerations. A full interchange at this location may tend to direct more traffic down Fairview which, currently, is a city collector. The City generally likes to have arterials, not collectors, connect to interchanges. Thus Fairview would possibly require a change from collector status to arterial status with the resulting impacts. Having a full interchange very close to Stadium could also be a problem for the FHWA which does not like interchanges that close. In summary, Mr. Nichols pointed out that there is no real traffic benefit to a full interchange at Fairview over the proposal involving ramps to and from the east.

Mr. Nichols concluded by saying that there is additional analysis to be done on the traffic volumes between Broadway and the Stadium connection with I-70, with particular attention to what the impacts are to Fairview.

Mr. Desai closed the discussion of Stadium by stating that as far as the I-70 Study Team is concerned, a Scott interchange is not required. He said that he expects CATSO and the City to continue to at least investigate whether a Scott interchange makes sense to them. He emphasized that the I-70 Study Team will develop a preferred alternative at Stadium with ramps to and from the east at Fairview. Then the Team will determine a line to the west where a new interchange could be built without operational and safety issues.

Mr. Nichols and Mr. Tim Page then focused the Group's attention on the various drawings of configurations for Stadium on the wall. They described the shortcomings of several which were eliminated from further consideration. Four remained. These will be examined in detail over the next several weeks with the goal of returning to the March meeting with one preferred alternative.

I-70 West (Business Loop)

Turning to I-70 West (the Business Loop), Mr. Nichols described the two drawings on the wall. One showed a two-point diamond; the other a three-point diamond. Mr. Nichols described several reasons why the Study Team had decided to eliminate the three-point diamond.

The Triplets (Providence/Range Line/Business Loop East)

Mr. Nichols began by saying that designing for this section the Project Team had done its best to try to reduce negative impacts by compressing the design as much as possible while maintaining operational efficiencies. He described the operations of three designs in some detail and answered questions from the Group about how vehicle movements in various directions could be made.

Route 63

Mr. Nichols described the intersection of Route 63 and I-70 as essentially a free-flowing intersection and that ramps are desirable only to and from the west, not to and from the east, for the interchange and Business 63 to operate properly. He reviewed several options and their respective strengths and weaknesses. At the end, one option was retained for further consideration.

After the preceding overview of the reasonable alternatives, the Advisory Group gathered around the maps for further discussion.

The Group started with questions about the 63 and I-70 interchange and the one option that remained. There was an initial question about access to 63 and whether the consulting team's analysis had been comparable to that conducted for the area around Stadium and Fairview. Mr. Nichols responded that the team had not analyzed the links north and south of the I-70 and 63 interchange to the extent they had reviewed the traffic in and around Stadium.

Mr. Nichols was asked about Federal Highway guidance for the distance between interchanges. He indicated that the general minimum is one mile and they would prefer two miles even in urban areas. It was noted by the Group that, while this might be the standard, it

seemed flexible since the guidance had not been applied in several areas along I-70 in Columbia. Ms. Harvey indicated that, even though there might be exceptions, the standard is more strictly enforced when it comes to construction along the interstate. Mr. Nichols noted that the Federal Highway Administration requires a report that documents impacts to the interstate system and that exceptions may be considered upon demonstration that the modifications will not degrade the system or introduce additional safety problems.

There was some discussion about access to local retailers in the vicinity of I-70 and 63. It was noted that “anything that we can do to keep local traffic off of Interstate 70 and that interchange should be a fairly high priority.” Mr. Nichols remarked that one of the advantages of the alternative under review involves access to the frontage road and the commercial areas without the need to get onto the interstate.

There was a question about how these plans mesh with the work planned for this construction season. Mr. Nichols said that in some cases there has been coordination, but in many ways the team has not progressed to that point yet. His bottom-line was that even with coordination some will “mesh real well; some of it will not mesh real well.” Ms. Harvey said that there are efforts to coordinate current construction and this planning with the hope of being able to use everything that is currently being constructed.

The Group then moved its attention west to what was termed the “triplets” and the two options (one a C-D system and the other relying on one-way frontage roads) that remained in this area.

There was an initial question about what appeared to be a new interchange. Mr. Desai clarified that this involved relocating the Business Loop East interchange, so there is not an additional interchange, but a moved interchange. By moving the interchange better access will be provided to the interstate to and from the west.

Mr. Desai described the differences or tradeoffs between the options. He said that the one-way frontage road provides better access (where allowed) to the abutting properties at slower speeds. The C-D system, on the other hand, provides more safety at higher speeds. The footprint required for either is projected to be about the same.

The Group moved back to some discussion about Fairview and Stadium. There was an initial question about whether local traffic could cross over I-70 at Fairview and avoid having to drive to Stadium. Mr. Nichols said that was not anticipated. He noted that an interchange at Fairview that would allow for this local access would be too close to Stadium. There was a good deal of discussion about the ramps at Fairview and desire for more convenient access to these shopping, school and residential areas without the need to travel to Stadium.

Mr. Dudark noted that some of the difficulties in asking Fairview to accommodate additional traffic are that it was not designed for these volumes. Mr. Desai also commented that the traffic moving from northbound Stadium to westbound I-70 is one of the least frequent movements of all. Another element of connectivity, as noted by Mr. Nichols, is the frontage road across Perche Creek; this is not as high speed as the freeway, but enhances access.

Mr. Desai also mentioned the potential impact on a Scott interchange. If ramps go further to the west from Stadium they could hinder the potential of a Scott interchange because of the location of the ramps and the desire to maintain minimal distances (at least a mile) between interchanges.

Identification of the Reasonable Alternatives for the Western and Eastern Areas

The Group reconvened to hear a presentation and discuss the rural portion of the study area. Mr. Nichols highlighted the recommendations and alternatives on the western and eastern portions of the study area, focusing on J and O, Midway, St. Charles, and Route Z. While there were some alternatives, these areas were generally portrayed as having much more straightforward options than their urban counterparts.

There was some final discussion and concern expressed about the I-70 and 63 interchange and the access to and from the north, south, east and west. It was characterized by one Advisory Group member as perhaps the “elephant in the room” that needs to be recognized. This person hopes that the team is not “ducking” a difficult issue. Another member of the Group echoed these comments saying that she was not sure the proposals were really solving the problems at I-70 and 63.

There was also comment about keeping some of the environmental and social impacts in perspective. A member of the Group indicated that he appreciated that the team was “bending over backwards” for the historical sites, the business and residential communities, and the environment, but suggested not placing such a premium on some of these impacts that we fail to come up with the best long-term solution.

Final Comments from Advisory Group Members

Before addressing expectations and next steps, Advisory Group members had the opportunity to provide closing observations. Highlights included:

- Concern that 63 – I-70 “still looks like a bowl of spaghetti. It looks very confusing.” But, beyond that, “I think we're getting there...”
- An Advisory Group member asked when more data would become available about the number of businesses and residences that might be impacted by the designs still under consideration, noting that, so far, traffic considerations seemed to have been most important. The response was that now is the time, when the options have been narrowed, that the selection of the preferred alternative involves careful consideration of all impacts. The decisions that are made will be explained in detail by referencing the Impact Summary Table at the March meeting. This table with additional categories for analysis will be sent to the Advisory Group prior to the next meeting (although it will not yet include the completed analysis).
- The interstate is basically a barrier that divides the city. What can be done to mitigate that barrier?
- Regarding Stadium, “I don't understand how we've solved that problem to the best that we might be able to... Unless the City, in the future, provides some kind of access out to the west there... Unless another overpass is put in, like a Scott Boulevard overpass... We've, in effect, continued to funnel all that traffic from the northwest and the southwest across I-

70 on that bridge. And that looks to me like a weak point in this design... Maybe it's been handled and I just can't see it... The rest of it looks pretty good to me.”

- After expressing “amazement” in the amount of progress that has been made, one Advisory Group member voiced the concerns many residents have about safety, the amount of their property that might be taken and if or when they should be thinking about moving.
- The progress here has been very good, particularly in the elimination process. The things that have been eliminated have been eliminated for good cause. “Quite frankly, though, I have to admit that I, at this point, have some very serious questions in my mind about the solutions proposed – all four proposed at Stadium.” This member added that the impact of the Stadium alternatives to the city-street system is critical to the City.
- “I think we're headed in the right direction.”

NEXT STEPS

The March 18th meeting was previewed. It was noted that the Group should expect to see the preferred alternative, with one map from east to west, and to hear detail on why it was selected. It was suggested that, given the comments above, considerable attention be given to Stadium and 63, and a description be provided to the Advisory Group about why the identified preferred alternative is best in meeting traffic objectives while minimizing impacts.

UPCOMING ADVISORY GROUP MEETING

Thursday, March 18th, 2004
4:00 – 6:30 pm

Columbia Activity and Recreation Center
1701 West Ash Street
Columbia, Missouri

Agenda

IMPROVE I-70 ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting 10
4:00-6:30 p.m.
February 5, 2004

Columbia Activity and Recreation Center
1701 W. Ash Street
Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Goals: 1) Hear about recent activities and updated material; 2) Understand the methodology being employed to narrow the alternatives; 3) Review the reasonable alternatives for the interstate, frontage roads and interchanges in the Columbia core area; 4) Review the reasonable alternatives for road and interchange configurations in the less populated areas; 5) Identify next steps in the planning process and development of the Draft EIS.

4:00 Convene Meeting
The Osprey Group

4:05 Updates
The Osprey Group

- Activities/events
- Updated or new materials

4:20 The Reasonable Alternatives: Methodology
Buddy Desai, CH2MHill

4:30 Identification of the Reasonable Alternatives for the Urban Area
Kevin Nichols and Buddy Desai, CH2MHill

5:50 Identification of the Reasonable Alternatives for the Western and Eastern Areas
Kevin Nichols and Buddy Desai, CH2MHill

6:20 Closing and Next Steps
The Osprey Group

- Advisory Group meeting – March
- Public hearing – expected timeframe (review the preferred alternative)
- Advisory Group meeting – expected timeframe (review comments/responses)

6:30 Adjourn



Frequently Asked Questions December 11, 2003

During the course of the Improve I-70 effort a number of questions have been asked -- and answered. Here is a summary of the most current issues.

1. Why is this study being conducted?

Interstate 70 was designed and built in the late 1950's and early 1960's. It is an outdated facility that no longer efficiently moves cars, trucks and people. To improve it, MoDOT must ensure that dollars spent on improvements today are not wasted tomorrow. The Improve I-70 studies will develop a comprehensive plan for how I-70 will look and operate in the future. The plan will allow MoDOT to make short-term improvements that advance I-70 toward its long-term vision. Additionally, completion of the studies is required by the federal government before design and construction can begin.

2. When can we expect construction to improve I-70 to begin and how long will construction take?

Currently no funding is available to completely design, re-build and widen I-70. However, MoDOT continues to spend what it can to maintain I-70's pavement and bridges, including investing \$87 million in the rural portions of I-70 in the past five years. At a minimum, in the coming years motorists will see continued resurfacing projects and installation of guard cable barriers in the median of rural areas to improve safety.

An interim project at the US 63/I-70 Interchange will begin in the next few months as part of this ongoing maintenance and safety improvement approach.

3. How will this project be funded?

Long-term improvements will require funding beyond MoDOT's current funding levels. A number of implementation plans are being developed based on a variety of funding scenarios. Ultimately, MoDOT will improve I-70 to the extent it can with the funds available. You are encouraged to voice your support for I-70 improvement to lawmakers who represent your area. MoDOT is keeping transportation policy makers informed on the needs of I-70 and encouraging local, state and federal officials to support special funding for I-70 improvements.

4. What are the estimated costs of the entire project?

Cost estimates for this 18-mile stretch of I-70 are being updated now that more detail is beginning to emerge, and will be available next month. More exact estimates will be developed as this study moves to its conclusion.

5. Could I-70 become a toll road to help address I-70 improvement needs sooner?

If tolls were implemented they could generate from 40 percent to 50 percent of the cost to widen I-70. But at the present time, MoDOT does not have the constitutional authority to operate toll roads. A constitutional amendment would have to be approved by the legislature and, ultimately, by the vote of the people. MoDOT's number one legislative priority is seeking tolling authority.

Current federal law does not allow the imposition of tolls on existing interstate highways. Reauthorization of the federal transportation bill, currently underway in Congress, is expected to address this issue, however, since reconstruction of the nation's interstate highway system is a looming issue for all state departments of transportation.

6. What is the priority of Columbia in the context of a statewide construction schedule? How are construction priorities going to be determined?

The statewide construction schedule hasn't been determined yet. Columbia's higher capacity needs, though, would likely make it high on the priority list. Construction priorities will ultimately be based on the needs in the corridor at the time the funding is received, how much the funding amounts to and the time frame surrounding the funding being received.

7. Two of the obvious weaknesses of I-70 currently are how it handles local traffic and interstate truck traffic. How are these problems being addressed in the study?

In the urban area of Columbia, the concepts under consideration include methods to separate local traffic from through traffic. These methods are associated with the type of frontage road system in place. Concepts for this include one-way and two-way frontage roads and a collector-distributor system that would enable local traffic to access local businesses without getting on and off I-70. Each concept has advantages and disadvantages, so engineers are looking at a combination of techniques that moves traffic smoothly with the least amount of impacts.

8. It seems like expanding I-70 in its current location fails to recognize the growth that is occurring north of Columbia. Wouldn't a more strategic, longer-range solution be to develop a bypass that accommodates future growth?

Two northern bypass options were considered and eliminated because they didn't remove enough traffic off of the existing I-70 to solve the capacity problem. The existing route would still have needed more lanes, and as long as improvements had to be made to the existing corridor, it made more sense to invest only in the existing interstate. Future growth north of I-70 may be more appropriately accommodated with an arterial loop such as is on the CATSO long range plan, or through some other local roadway system.

9. Given what would seem like a major disruption to businesses along the interstate with similarly large declines in tax revenue, why doesn't a separate bypass make more sense for this community?

Widening and rebuilding existing I-70 will be disruptive for a short amount of time, but the safety and traffic capacity improvements will be realized for decades. Many of the I-70-area businesses originally located here to attract and serve customers who use

this main thoroughfare, and most want to see it improved so it can bring even more people past their doors. Increased traffic can lead to increased business and tax revenues over the long-term.

10. Would the existing interstate need to be expanded if there is a separate bypass?

Yes. Traffic projections for 2030 indicate that there will still be increased demand for existing I-70 even if a new bypass is built, thus the need to build more highway lanes in the existing corridor.

11. Will the study determine the economic cost to the community during and after construction of lost business and business and residential relocations?

The Improve I-70 Study is determining the character of the business community and how each business might be impacted by I-70's widening. We are identifying who they are, what they do, why they are located along I-70, their number of employees, and whether they would consider re-locating if their business was in the path of the new alignment. The City of Columbia is commissioning an economic impact study to assess the overall economic impact to the community during and after the construction of I-70.

All of this information will be used in evaluating improvement alternatives and refining the preferred alternative to minimize impacts to the area's residences, businesses, and environmental concerns.

12. How have the City of Columbia, Boone County and other local governmental units been involved in this planning process? How will they be involved in the future?

Elected officials and technical experts from the City of Columbia, Boone County and many other organizations, as well as local citizens – those who know this area best -- have been involved in this effort. Traffic forecasts, for example, have used CATSO's traffic model and incorporate the city's and county's land use projections. All parties will continue to play an integral role in the planning process as it moves forward.

13. What opportunities are there for the community to be involved and provide input? And, does the community input matter?

Public input is critical to the success of this project. The public knows this corridor and issues better than anyone. The study team relies on public input to shape, refine and evaluate the alternatives that are being considered. People can get involved by giving us comments tonight, observing the next Advisory Group meeting on February 5th, or leaving comments on the Web site at www.ImproveI70.org. Or they can call our hotline at 1-800-590-0066.

14. What are the most significant environmental and social impacts associated with this improvement?

This effort evaluates impacts to both the human and natural environments. Human environment impacts include residential and business displacements and their economic impacts. Natural environmental impacts include acres of affected wetlands, floodplains, woodlands, parklands (Cosmo Park) and agricultural lands as well as impacts to historic properties and threatened and endangered species, like

the Bristled Cyperus. For more detail on these impacts, please see the Impact Summary Table in your handout packet and posted on the Web at www.ImproveI70.org.

All of this information will be used in evaluating the alternatives and refining the preferred alternative to minimize impacts to the area's residences, businesses, and environmental concerns.

15. What provisions are being made for pedestrian and bicycling access?

MoDOT will make provisions for bike, pedestrian and wheelchair access across I-70 wherever possible and reasonable, but most likely not at every crossing. For example, it's probably not reasonable to provide access on US63 over I-70 due to high traffic volumes and traffic mix.

This study will not determine a specific plan for pedestrian, bicycle and wheelchair access across I-70. However, improvement alternatives being considered will not preclude that access. A more specific access plan will be determined through a later design phase.

16. Are provisions being made to save room for eventual rail service along I-70 some day?

All Improve I-70 studies across the state are using criteria that would enable passenger (not freight) rail service along I-70 to be considered in the future, assuming that type of improvement is appropriate at the time. In the rural areas, the median will be extra wide and the horizontal and vertical alignments would work with passenger rail in the median. However, in urban areas like Columbia and other areas along existing I-70, placing any kind of rail service in the median would not be possible. Instead, rail service would likely leave the I-70 corridor in urban areas and be routed to a community train station that would be easily accessible by all residents. In the event passenger rail service is never the right solution, the wide median in the rural areas could accommodate some other type of transportation improvement as well.

17. What have you learned so far from the business survey and how will this information influence your planning?

Please see the Business Impact Survey Results in your handout packet, or posted at www.ImproveI70.org.

18. Where is information available on how people will be compensated if their property is needed for I-70 improvements? When will such an acquisition process begin?

Property acquisition will not begin until a design phase is complete (which can take several years) and construction funding is in place. At this time, no funding has been allocated for design or construction. Tonight's handout packet and the Improve I-70 website include MoDOT's "Pathways to Progress" brochure, which outlines MoDOT's right of way acquisition policies and procedures. You also may call 1-888-ASK-MODOT to speak to a right of way specialist about your concerns.

19. The decision to widen I-70 seems based on the assumption that long term traffic growth will continue. Does the study consider other scenarios such as

a long term reduction in traffic due to increased oil prices or new technological developments?

Traffic projections for I-70 in 2030 consider estimated population growth, land use changes, and continued demand for roads to get goods to the marketplace and people to jobs. It is also clear that the existing I-70 is already an outdated facility that has difficulty meeting even today's demands. While telecommuting and other technological advances may reduce some travel demand and make future travel more efficient, it is critical that efforts get underway to address existing and future mobility needs.

20. What will happen next in the study?

The Improve I-70 Study Team will evaluate the alternatives based on how well they solve the corridor's operational problems, then compute the impacts to the natural and human environments for those alternatives that solve the operational problems. A preferred alternative for improving I-70 through Columbia will be identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) when it is published next spring. This document is required by the Federal Highway Administration and the National Environmental Policy Act, and will be made available for public review before a formal public hearing expected in May. Public input received at the hearing will be used to develop a Final EIS next summer, which FHWA will review before issuing a "Record of Decision," hopefully about a year from now. This would be followed by the Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission's approval in late 2004 or early 2005. Should funding be available at that time, this project could move into the final design phase and eventually construction.

21. What is the "shelf life" of the EIS and the decision documents that go with it? How will the EIS be augmented or updated if funding is not available for several years?

After the Federal Highway Administration issues its "Record of Decision" the EIS has a three-year shelf-life if no project development activities (such as plan preparation, right of way acquisition or construction) occur immediately. If no project development occurs within that time but conditions in the I-70 corridor change and/or the project scope changes, before any activity can begin a re-evaluation is required. The Improve I-70 study effort, however, would not have to be completely re-done.

If you have questions or concerns about the study, contact the project office at 1-800-590-0066, or log on to www.ImproveI70.org.





COLUMBIA - AREA BUSINESS SURVEY February 5, 2004 Update

GOAL OF SURVEY

The improvement of Interstate 70 within its existing corridor will result in the displacement of a number of existing commercial and industrial operations. The business survey was conducted to quantify the nature of these impacts to support the on-going environmental studies and screening of alternatives.

The business survey had two goals:

1. To gather basic demographic information on the nature of the local businesses that may face displacement. This included data such as type/background, employment statistics, location and site selection issues, access needs, parking requirements, and other business-specific concerns.
2. To examine what the relocation strategies would be for individual business operations potentially facing displacement. These included: would the business reopen, where would the business relocate, what criteria would be used to select new sites? This information is assisting the study team assess impacts and helping the local planning and the economic development community understand the needs, requirements and preferences of local businesses so they can develop responsive strategies accordingly.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The business survey included both closed and open-ended questions. The pool of businesses selected to participate in the survey were those parcels that fell within a footprint that encompassed all the concepts under consideration. The questionnaire was field-tested by asking the project's Advisory Group to review and answer the survey first. All businesses were then telephoned to identify an appropriate recipient. Interviews were scheduled, if possible. If interviews were not possible, questionnaires were mailed or faxed to interested businesses. To provide the business community with as much information as possible, a "Drop-In" public information event was held where businesses could learn more about the project and talk to the project team directly. Follow-up contacts were made to maximize the response rate. The details of the implementation of the Business Survey are summarized below:

▪ Number of properties on initial business contact list	326
▪ Number of telephone contacts made	1,582
▪ Number of business owners agreeing to receive surveys	235
▪ Number of face to face contacts/visits	213
▪ Number of surveys completed through business owner interviews	79
▪ Total number of Business Surveys completed	123

KEY FINDINGS

- The business community is made up of a diverse mix of businesses. Nearly 60% are single location businesses (no other outlets). Most have fewer than 25 employees.
- Nearly half (49%) of the businesses are less than 10 years old.
- The principal site selection criteria for the existing business location is proximity to local residents and consumers. Three of the top five site selection responses relate to features of I-70 including proximity to I-70, visibility from I-70 and access to I-70.
- Approximately 12% of the responding businesses indicated they may not reopen if they are displaced by the I-70 project.
- Approximately 75% of respondents indicated that if they were required to relocate, they would have difficulty finding a suitable site for their business.
- Approximately 65% of businesses indicated that they would seek a site in the City of Columbia if MoDOT purchased their existing parcel.
- Concern was registered about the temporary business impacts from loss of access and traffic disruptions (i.e., restaurants) during construction.
- Partial property takes and construction-related disruptions could also force businesses to close, but that decision was site-specific and difficult to quantify.
- The hotel/motel, retail trade, automotive sales and rentals, and construction and maintenance sectors exhibited the highest percentage of concern about finding a suitable alternative site. Businesses in existence for more than 10 years exhibited more uncertainty about reopening in the face of displacement.

NEXT STEPS

- Key challenges will be to identify and convey suitable alternative locations for displaced businesses. Adequate timing will be needed to prepare businesses for displacement and relocation.
- The City of Columbia has commissioned a study to further quantify economic impacts during construction and long-term economic benefits.
- Based on survey feedback and other analysis, the Project Team has already reduced and adjusted the footprint of the alternatives to minimize impacts as much as possible.

Level of Service

Level of Service (LOS) is a measure of how effectively a highway can move the volume of traffic it carries. Ranging from LOS A (free-flow conditions) to LOS F (gridlock), the measure takes into account the driver's speed, freedom to maneuver and proximity to other vehicles. See photographs and descriptions to the right.

Of course a highway facility operates at different levels of service at different times of the day. Traffic operations during peak periods like morning and evening rush hour are much different than the middle of the night, for example.

As engineers plan for I-70 improvements, they must determine the number of lanes and basic design needed to reach a **minimum** level of service **during peak periods** in the future. This ensures that traffic operations will be acceptable during the busiest times, but also means traffic will not operate perfectly all the time.

Consider the design of a parking lot at a shopping mall. A properly designed lot would be very congested the morning after Thanksgiving, but traffic would move and spaces would be available – similar to LOS D. On average mornings, there would be very little traffic and spaces would be readily available – similar to LOS A. To design this parking lot for no congestion and ample parking spaces the day after Thanksgiving would not be a wise use of resources and would result in substantial impacts to the surrounding area.

The same concept can be applied in planning and designing roadways. Consistent with standards used throughout the country, the minimum LOS being used for I-70 through Columbia **during peak periods in the future** is C in the rural areas, and D in urban areas. That means during the busiest times, traffic will move well, and at other times it will operate better.

A



Free flow; low volumes and high speeds; most drivers can select their own speed

B



Stable flow; speeds somewhat restricted by traffic; standard LOS used for rural highway design throughout the U.S

C



Stable flow; speed controlled by traffic; standard LOS used for urban highway design throughout the U.S.

D



Approaching unstable flow; lower speeds

E



Unstable flow; low, varied speeds; volumes at or near capacity

F



Forced flow; low speeds to stoppages; volume exceeds capacity