



# MID-STATES CORRIDOR

**Date of Meeting:** August 5, 2019      **Re:** Mid-States Corridor Public Meeting Kick-off -- Washington, IN

**Location:** Washington High School – Washington, IN      **Issue Date:** August 21, 2019

**Submitted By:** Lochmueller Group

**In Attendance:** There were 83 attendees from the public in attendance. Additionally, 13 representatives from the project team were in attendance.

**Key Themes of public input—these themes represent reoccurring sentiments from conversations with the project team and comment forms received at Washington, IN.**

1. Improving regional connectivity to promote economic development in the Western portions of the study area is a significant need.
2. Environmental impacts, particularly to the Hoosier National Forest, are a significant issue.
3. Project cost also is an important decision factor.
4. The project should use existing infrastructure where possible, and minimize new terrain construction.
5. Improved travel safety is important to this region.

A full meeting agenda and summary for all three public kick-off meetings can be found on the subsequent pages, following the location specific information.



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August 26, 2019

Page 2

**Date of Meeting:** August 6, 2019      **Re:** Mid-States Corridor Public Meeting Kick-off – French Lick, IN

**Location:** Springs Valley High School – French Lick, IN      **Issue Date:** August 21, 2019

**Submitted By:** Lochmueller Group

**In Attendance:** There were 112 attendees from the public in attendance. Additionally, 15 representatives from the project team were in attendance.

**Key Themes of public input—these themes represent reoccurring sentiments from conversations with the project team and comment forms received at French Lick, IN.**

1. Improving access for tourism and business is important for economic development in this region.
2. Environmental impacts, particularly those which affect the region’s rural landscape and Hoosier National Forest should be minimized or avoided.
3. The project should use existing infrastructure where possible, and minimize new terrain construction.
4. Potential impacts to private property (including homes, farms, and other businesses) are important.
5. Maintaining existing county roads access is important.

A full meeting agenda and summary for all three public kick-off meetings can be found on the subsequent pages, following the location specific information.

August 26, 2019

Page 3

**Date of Meeting:** August 8, 2019      **Re:** Mid-States Corridor Public Meeting Kick-off – Jasper, IN

**Location:** Jasper High School – Jasper, IN      **Issue Date:** August 21, 2019

**Submitted By:** Lochmueller Group

**In Attendance:** There were 236 attendees from the public in attendance. Additionally, 19 representatives from the project team were in attendance.

**Key Themes of public input—these themes represent reoccurring sentiments from conversations with the project team and comment forms received at Jasper, IN.**

1. Impacts to private property, particularly farms and residential areas, are important.
2. This project has the potential to significantly impact traffic flows around Jasper and Huntingburg. Congestion relief and safety improvements are needed. Impacts to small businesses due to traffic flow changes should be minimized.
3. Forest and air quality impacts should be minimized or avoided.
4. Improving regional connectivity is vital for continued economic development and improved quality of life.
5. Project cost also is an important decision factor.

A full meeting agenda and summary for all three public kick-off meetings can be found on the following pages.

## **Public Meeting Agenda**

### ITEMS DISCUSSED:

The meetings were an open house format lasting from 5:30 – 7:00 pm Eastern Time. A brief project presentation was given at 6:00 pm. Before and after the presentation, the project team was available for questions at informational stations.

#### Project Stations

After attendees signed in at a welcome table and provided contact information for future outreach, they were encouraged to visit the stations to learn more about the project.

#### **Public Involvement Station**

At the public involvement station, attendees were given an informational handout with project details, a timeline, and a map of preliminary alternatives. The handout also included contact information to encourage attendees to follow the project progress through the website or social media outlets. In addition to a take-home handout, the attendees were given a comment form, which included a preliminary alternatives map on which they could draw or write suggestions. The attendees were asked to fill out the comment/map sheets and deposit them in a comment box before they left.

#### **Project Overview/Study Area Station**

The project overview/study area station included posters with the 12-county study area map and a brief explanation of the Mid-States Corridor. Jeff Whitaker (Lochmueller) and Clint Scherzer (INDOT) from the project team answered questions relating to the study area, as well as general project questions.

#### **Environmental Process/Tiered Study Approach Station**

The Environmental Process/Tiered Study Approach station included graphics to help explain the environmental process and the timeline for a tiered study. Rusty Yeager (Lochmueller) and Matt Riehle (Lochmueller) from the project team answered questions relating to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and questions relating to the Tiered approach and how that governs the project timeline.

August 26, 2019

Page 5

### **Purpose and Need Station**

The Purpose and Need station included a poster with a brief description outlining what the Purpose and Need section of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) entails. Michael Grovak (Lochmueller) from the project team explained the significance of Purpose and Need, as well as general questions relating to the overall project process.

### **Potential Preliminary Alternatives Station**

The potential preliminary alternatives station included two large maps of the potential preliminary alternatives. On various nights, this station was staffed by different members of the project team, including Jason DuPont (Lochmueller Group), Josh Eisenhauer (VS Engineering) and Nick Jahn (VS Engineering). They explained the process of narrowing down preliminary alternatives and how each are evaluated. As part of a tiered study, the Tier 1 study will determine a 2,000-foot-wide preferred corridor in its official "Record of Decision". This corridor will then advance to subsequent Tier 2 studies, where specific alignments will be determined.

### **Timeline and Project Team**

The timeline and project team station included graphics explaining 'next steps' and the unique partnership of the project team. Mark Schroeder (RDA), Kyanna Moon (INDOT), and David Goffinet (Lochmueller) from the project team answered questions regarding public involvement and agency representation, as well as general project questions.

### Presentation

Project Manager, Jason DuPont (Lochmueller Group), began the presentation with introductions of the project team, including Kyanna Moon (INDOT), Michelle Allen (Federal Highway), Mark Schroeder (Regional Development Authority), and David Goffinet (Lochmueller, Public Involvement). The presentation included:

- Project Overview – The EIS process, the evaluation of multiple facility types and multiple corridors in a 12-county study area
- The NEPA Process – The NEPA process requires federally-funded projects to conduct an environmental study which evaluates the cost, benefits, and impacts of the proposed project. The process requires extensive public and agency coordination.
- The Tiered Approach – A tiered approach is being used due to the size and complexity of this project. Tier 1 is a "big picture" evaluation which will identify a corridor/facility type which then advances to Tier 2 studies for several Sections of Independent Utility (SIUs). Tier 2 studies identify specific alignments and right-of-way requirements for each SIU.

- A project timeline and important milestones –
  - Milestone 1: Preliminary Alternatives, Purpose and Need—Fall 2019
  - Milestone 2: Screening of Alternatives—Early 2020
  - Milestone 3: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – Fall 2020
  - Milestone 4: Final EIS & Record of Decision (ROD) – Summer 2021
- Purpose & Need – The specific regional **needs** this project aims to address. Including:
  - Improved regional connectivity for businesses in Dubois County and southern Indiana;
  - Improved regional traffic safety in Southern Indiana; and
  - Supporting economic development in southern Indiana; and
  - Improved connections to major multi-modal locations from southern Indiana
- Potential Preliminary Alternatives – The explanation of options from I-64 through Jasper and either directly North on existing 231, or East or West to connect to I-69 or SR 37. The alternatives generally follow existing highway facilities w/ some new terrain options.
- The process aims to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential social, economic, and environmental impacts
- Environmental Considerations – The process looks at both human and environmental considerations
- The next steps for public and agency involvement, including future public meeting dates
  - Agency Coordination meeting: August 20<sup>th</sup>
  - The second round of Public Information Meetings: Early 2020

David Goffinet, Public Involvement Manager (Lochmueller Group), explained the importance of public involvement in this process, including:

- The variety of groups involved, including: Regional Issues Involvement Teams, *Ad Hoc* stakeholder meetings, working alignment meetings, and the broader public.
- Outreach Tools – The various ways the public can provide feedback, comments, or questions, including: the project website, the local project office on Vincennes University Jasper Campus Administration Building, the comment sheets provided, and various project social media outlets.

The project team remained at the venue after the presentation to answer questions.