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7 COMMENTS, AGENCY COORDINATION, & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

7.1 Introduction

The following substantive changes have been made to this section since the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was published:

- During the Screening of Alternatives, preliminary Alternative R was evaluated before being removed from further consideration. Alternative R consists of upgrading US 231 from I-64 to I-69. Many comments on the DEIS requested further consideration of an upgrade of US 231 in addition to the five alternatives presented in the DEIS. In response to these comments, this FEIS further evaluates the costs, impacts and benefits of Alternative R. See **Section 2.5.1** for details about Alternative R.
- Multiple comments were received from local officials in Loogootee and Martin County about the alignment of Alternative P in Martin County, in particular in the vicinity of Loogootee. The DEIS showed Alternative P with an alignment west of Loogootee. Portions of this alignment are in Daviess County. These comments requested modifications to Alternative P to bring it through or to the east of Loogootee.

In response to these comments, three additional variations of Alternative P were added in Martin County. All variations of Alternative P are within Section of Independent Utility (SIU) 4. See **Section 2.7** for a discussion of Tier 2 sections for all alternatives. Alternative P with these variations has been designated as Refined Preferred Alternative P (RPA P). It is evaluated separately from any alternative considered in the DEIS. A single variation of RPA P will be selected in Tier 2 studies for SIU 4. See **Section 2.5.2** for details about the variations of RPA P near Loogootee.

- Summary of Public Hearings and Major DEIS Comment Themes
- Post DEIS Consultation with Martin County
- Mid-States Corridor Regional Development Authority added to Participating Agencies
- Additional Agency Coordination

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) have incorporated methods for conducting agency coordination and public involvement in the development of this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires agencies and the public be afforded early and continuing opportunities to be involved in the identification of environmental and related social and economic impacts. Coordination follows the FHWA-Indiana Division Streamlined Environmental Impact Statement Procedures, September 2007. A formal Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was prepared at the initiation of this project and has been updated as necessary (see **Appendix BB**).

This chapter presents the process used, identifies the engagement activities and summarizes the information presented and gathered related to agency coordination and public involvement.



7.2 Summary of Major Themes

Section 7.3 and **Section 7.4** provide detailed summaries of agency and public engagement. These activities have identified recurring issues and concerns. The following subsections describe these major themes and are separated into those received prior to the identification of Preferred Alternative P (**Section 7.2.1**) and those received after the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (**Section 7.2.2**).

7.2.1 Summary of Major Pre-DEIS Themes

7.2.1.1 Wildlife and Natural Areas

The Study Area is largely rural and contains a substantial portion of the Hoosier National Forest. Tourism in the region accounts for a significant economic impact. Protecting the quality of the environment and the integrity of the natural areas was mentioned in most meetings. The rural nature of this region was viewed as part of the identity of many of the communities regardless of any economic value obtained through tourism. Stakeholders, the broader public and agencies each requested existing roadways be used to the extent practical to limit habitat fragmentation and other impacts. Winding and narrow road networks in the region were regularly cited as limiting both commercial and tourism growth, but protecting natural areas remained a high priority. Alternatives M and O both cross the acquisition boundary of the Hoosier National Forest. These routes were frequently cited as having the potential to impact wildlife and natural areas.

7.2.1.2 Access

Each alternative would modify the existing highway network. Residential and business owners throughout the Study Area are concerned that a new alignment and/or facility type would result in loss of access to either their properties or local roads they use regularly. The agricultural community is concerned that movement of farm equipment could be restricted on new roadways. The public and stakeholders throughout the Study Area requested a high level of engagement going forward regarding access restrictions.

7.2.1.3 Relocations

Residents across the Study Area are concerned about potential residential, commercial and industrial relocations. Also, the region has a high number of small family burial plots making potential relocation of cemeteries a significant issue. Residents in several communities identified limited housing stock as a significant issue. Many noted builders are interested in higher end developments which do not address the need for middle- and lower-income housing. Taking of smaller/older housing stock could create issues with the availability of comparable housing. Amish residents would face additional hurdles in finding replacement housing given the need for homesteads and proximity to maintain community cohesion.

7.2.1.4 Agricultural

Maintaining access to agricultural properties is a major concern. Related concerns include impacts to farming operations by separation of farming infrastructure from agricultural fields and loss of multi-generational land. Alternatives with new alignment may split farms, produce uneconomical remnants and/or create adverse operational travel, which can be acutely impactful to Amish farmsteads. Impacts to farmland and farming operations were expressed as a high level of concern at each point of public engagement.

7.2.1.5 Economic Effects

Workforce shortage was one of the most common themes throughout the meetings with stakeholders, businesses and community leaders. Residents and businesspeople in Huntington, Jasper, French Lick, Paoli, Loogootee and Bedford all identified a consistent trend of migration out of the area and issues attracting young families into the area. Numerous factors cause this phenomenon. Residents recognize any build alternative would not address this



issue on its own. However, modest reductions in travel time and an improved facility were perceived as attracting forces for residents and businesses. See **Appendix CC – Purpose and Need, Sections 4.2.2.4 and 4.2.2.5** for details of this input. Many stakeholders view improved north-south linkage as important to enhance the local and regional economy and to attract additional workforce. This linkage would provide more efficient commercial travel, as well as easier commuter access.

7.2.1.6 Consideration of No-Build

NEPA requires a No-Build alternative be included at all stages of the study. The costs, impacts and benefits of all alternatives are measured against the No-Build alternative. Many public comments opposed the project and preferred the No-Build. The reasons offered for selecting the No-Build are summarized as:

- A build alternative would be an inappropriate use of tax funds.
- Impacts to the environment are not warranted by the proposed improvements.
- The public would receive a higher benefit through regular maintenance of the existing roads.
- A build alternative would change the rural nature of the region.

7.2.2 Summary of Major DEIS Comment Themes

7.2.2.1 Loogootee Impacts

Public officials and other stakeholders in Martin County submitted many comments about Alternative P's western path around Loogootee. Most public officials in Loogootee and Martin County submitted comments opposing the selection of Alternative P's western variation around Loogootee. Martin County stakeholders met with project staff during the comment period to discuss their concerns. Those meetings and the key input derived from them are detailed below in **Section 7.3.4**.

7.2.2.2 Alternatives O and M

During the screening of alternatives, agency input suggested Alternatives O and M were not preferred due to the environmental impacts they would create. In their DEIS comments, agencies reiterated their stance on Alternative O and M and agreed with the conclusion that Alternative P was the preferred alternative of those that adequately satisfied purpose and need. In its comment letter on the DEIS, U.S. Department of the Interior (USDOI), commenting on behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), stated the agency "agrees with the DEIS's conclusion that the preferred alternative, Alternative P, including a western bypass of the City of Loogootee, has fewer overall impacts to federal trust resources when compared to the alternatives that sufficiently met the purpose and need for the Project (M and O)." This letter provided this comment under the header, "Support of the Preferred Alternative."

7.2.2.3 Relocations

Several DEIS comments centered on concern over the number of relocations that Alternative P would create. Some were concerned about their ability to find comparable replacement properties. This included statements that lower priced home inventory was lacking, which might force people to relocate to other communities. In some instances, concern was expressed over being able to duplicate the unique qualities of a property like a rural lifestyle, wooded lots, ponds and pastures.

7.2.2.4 Agriculture

A common theme among DEIS comments demonstrated concern for impacts to farmland and the area's agribusiness. Respondents raised concerns that multi-generational farms could be lost or divided such that they no longer would be economically viable. A common sentiment was a lack of attention to the negative impacts the project could have on an industry important to the area.



7.2.2.5 US 231 Improvements

Another common theme focused on planned improvements to US 231. In June of 2021, Governor Holcomb announced plans to invest in improvements to US 231. The changes would include added travel lanes and intersection improvements. Comments stated that the planned changes would adequately improve the function of the highway. Related comments suggested it was wasteful to create a new facility while improving a parallel highway.

7.2.2.6 Bypassed Cities

Concern for a new facility that bypasses cities was a common theme. Comments stated that bypassing towns would negatively impact businesses that rely on traffic through the community. Some commentors felt there was a lack of involvement in making the decision to bypass the towns. Some commented that other road projects had not led to economic growth for surrounding communities and any benefits would not be worth the negative impact to local economies. Some comments acknowledged the need for a new terrain road in Dubois County. However, they felt there was no need for the rest of the project.

7.2.2.7 Role of the RDA

Participation of a Regional Development Authority in the project brought comments and questions about the nature of the RDA's role. Concerns about how and why the RDA funds the project were shared. Other comments suggested an explanation of the role of the RDA should have been included in the Environmental Impact Statement. There were questions about the RDA's ability to direct or influence the study.

7.2.2.8 Impacts to Daviess and Martin County Amish Communities

Several comments focused on concern for the unique needs of the area's Amish communities. The comments brought up concerns that a large facility would create challenges for horse-drawn vehicles. Comments also suggested that Amish community members might have a harder time replacing property in proximity to other Amish families and at potentially higher prices than other area properties.

7.2.2.9 Reconsideration of Alternative R

Several comments asked for further consideration of Alternative R. Alternative R would upgrade US 231 from I-64 to I-69. It was eliminated from consideration during the Screening of Alternatives. In response to comments on the DEIS, further evaluation of the costs, impacts and benefits of Alternative R were included in the FEIS.

7.3 Public and Community Outreach

7.3.1 In-Person Outreach

Public engagement can take many forms. Providing in-person meetings where the public can speak directly with project representatives is a pillar of the NEPA process. Due to the scale of this project with a 12-county Study Area, in-person opportunities were provided over a wide geographic area. These were needed to provide adequate opportunities for the public to learn about and comment on the project. There was additional flexibility to meet with groups at their request. Announcements were provided prior to all meetings through newspapers, television news stations, email notifications, text alerts, social media and the project website.

7.3.1.1 Stakeholder Outreach/Economic Development Interviews

Outreach to local businesses and communities began immediately following the initiation of the project. Meetings were held with 18 stakeholders throughout the Study Area. These allowed the project team to gather input on a broad range of issues and concerns from these stakeholders during project scoping. The detailed meeting summaries and correspondence may be found in **Appendix AA - Stakeholder Meetings and Correspondence**.



- **June 11, 2019: Dubois County Airport Authority (Huntingburg).** Airport Manager Travis McQueen identified the facility as publicly owned. It predominantly services commercial operations in the region. The airport provides an estimated regional economic impact of over \$500 million annually. Mr. McQueen has heard from airport users that they desire improved roadway connectivity to the north for shipping products.
- **June 11, 2019: Dubois Strong (Jasper).** President Ed Cole identified that about a third of the Dubois County workforce is in the manufacturing sector. Roadway connectivity is a significant issue both for employee commutes and materials logistics. US 231 north of Jasper is a logistical bottleneck.
- **June 12, 2019: Southern Indiana Development Corporation (SIDC) (Loogootee).** Executive Director Greg Jones and Program Specialist Rhonda Rumble stated that SIDC serves Daviess, Greene, Lawrence, Martin and Knox counties. It promotes regional quality of life, building regional collaboration and building regional assets. They noted that the construction of I-69 has resulted in some export of labor to Bloomington. They would like to see any alternative encourage growth within the counties and limit inter-regional competition for economic initiatives.
- **June 13, 2019: Mulzer Crushed Stone (Tell City).** President Ken Mulzer Jr. identified that most of his shipping is via barge rather than truck. While improved highway linkage would not necessarily impact his own business operations, he felt that existing roads limit economic growth in the region. There are transportation bottlenecks on US 231, especially near Jasper.
- **June 13, 2019: OFS Brands (Huntingburg).** President Hank Menke has actively supported transportation improvements in the region. He stated that the region lacks a good north-south connection with I-69.
- **June 13, 2019: Perry County Port Authority (Tell City).** Chief Executive Alvin Evans stated that the Port Authority serves Ohio River barge transportation. He did not believe highway linkage improvements would significantly impact the Port's operations. He noted that there is a substantial workforce issue, with more available jobs than workers. Workforce shortages are limiting capital investments and encouraging automation which may increase residential outmigration. Improved linkage to locations such as Bloomington may encourage families to live and work in the region but travel for 'city life' entertainment.
- **June 18, 2019: Boyd Grain Trucking (Washington).** President Tom Boyd and Farm Manager Trent Boyd stated they operate a fleet of 100 tractor trailers. They primarily ship grain but do haul other products. Grain predominantly ships to the south and southeast. They did not think the project would significantly affect their operations.
- **June 18, 2019: Westgate Technology Park (Odon).** Purdue Foundry Director Jason Salstrom stated that his organization was founded to catalyze and support the Westgate Technology Park. It is located in Odon to take advantage of the Crane military facility and proximity to Bloomington. A goal is to draw young families to the area workforce. The proximity to Bloomington has been both positive and negative. He believes the region needs improved local services for families to 'work and play' locally and they should not need to travel elsewhere for entertainment.¹ Improved highway connections are needed to Jasper.
- **June 19, 2019: Glenmore Distillery (Owensboro).** Distribution Center Manager Jonathan Guillen and his assistant Amanda Clary stated their distillery ships to all 50 states and internationally. They had no specific opinions regarding the project. They noted more generally that shipping costs are reduced any time there are improved linkages.
- **June 19, 2019: Lincolnland Economic Development Corporation (Rockport).** Executive Director Tom Utter and his assistant Valerie Schmidt would support any build alternative. They see the need for an improved north-south linkage from Rockport. Ultimately, they would like to see that linkage extend north to West Lafayette.

¹ See **Appendix CC – Purpose and Need** for details of interview statements.



- **June 25, 2019: Cook Group (French Lick).** Chairman Steve Ferguson and Vice-President Chuck Franz support the project due to the relative inaccessibility of the French Lick resort area. The Orange County population is projected to decline up to ten percent over the next 30 years. This is despite strong employment opportunities at area resorts. Visitors to the area describe the roadways as dangerous. Flooding events routinely sever access on SR 56, US 50, US 150 and many county roads.
- **June 25, 2019: Elliot Stone (Bedford).** Treasurer Ralph Morgan stated that USDOT-required electronic logs for freight shipments have caused significant changes in logistics patterns. It has caused increased shipping costs to and from areas with poor access. Electronic logs have restricted truck travel. There are heavy fines to drivers for violations. Areas directly south or southeast of Bedford is one such shipping ‘dead zone.’ This limits some economic activity in the area.
- **June 25, 2019: Radius (Bedford).** President Jeff Quyle and Director of Crane Community Support Matt Craig stated that Radius was created by state legislation to support the region’s economy. They serve Crawford, Washington, Orange, Lawrence, Martin, Greene, Dubois and Daviess counties. They are very interested in promoting improved transportation facilities. Currently, lack of adequate transportation limits economic growth and stability.
- **June 26, 2019: Farbest Foods, Wabash Valley Produce (Jasper).** Multiple executives and managers provided input. These included Ted Seger, Phil Seger and Ryan Downes from Farbest Foods, and Brad Schnarr and Andy Seger from Wabash Valley Produce. They stated that the effects on their businesses could be positive or negative. This depends on which route is chosen. They intentionally locate their facilities in remote areas. They view as undesirable any alignment proximate to their operations, especially one that limits access to county roads. However, improvements not immediately proximate to their facilities could be beneficial.
- **June 26, 2019: Jasper Engines (Jasper).** President Doug Bawel stated that the transportation improvement which would have the biggest positive impact to their operations would be improvements to SR 37 between SR 62 and I-64. He understands this is beyond the scope of the Mid-States project. He has suggested an alignment west of Jasper connecting to I-69 near Petersburg. He also stated that his shipments avoid US 231 north of Jasper to Crane because of poor road conditions. This road is a bottleneck for the region.
- **June 26, 2019: Masterbrand Cabinets (Jasper).** Vice-President of Materials Todd Whalen and Vice-President of Logistics Matt Agler stated they use very little multimodal shipping. Nearly all shipping is via truck. They did not identify any specific transportation issues. Their biggest issue is workforce availability. Much of their workforce and the workforce of their shippers are over 55. They have difficulty retaining younger workers.
- **June 26, 2019: Meyer Distributing (Jasper).** CEO Jeff Braun and Vice-President of Strategic Initiatives and Logistics Matthew Schaick stated as an auto parts distributor, Meyer uses motor freight exclusively with a hub and spoke logistics model. Their major linkage issue is access via US 231 to both the north and south. These movements take more time than they should. The conceptual alternatives going north or east of Jasper could benefit their company. Workforce availability was one of their primary concerns. The bulk of their workforce is geographically south of Jasper. They commented that even a ten-minute improvement of time on a better facility could be an incentive to attract workers.
- **June 27, 2019: Daviess County Economic Development Corporation (Washington).** Executive Director Bryant Niehoff stated that US 231 provides challenges to businesses on the eastern side of Dubois County. SR 257 connects Pike and Dubois counties. It is difficult for trucks to travel and has flooding issues. Lack of an adequate labor force was one of the region’s largest problems. There is a surplus of available jobs. This is partly due to the lack of lower-end single family homes. Low profit margins for constructing such facilities discourage builders (See **Appendix CC – Purpose and Need Appendix, Section 4.2.2.5**).



- **March 17, 2020: Indiana Landmarks (letter).** Community Specialist Joshua Biggs commented on the screening report with concern that the action has the potential to have adverse effects to historic resources.
- **March 20, 2020: Indiana Landmarks (letter).** Director of the Southern Regional Office Gregory Sekula commented on the screening report and that the agency would not be able to offer a ranking of preference based on the scale and lack of detail of the project at this time.
- **June 6, 2022: Dubois County Airport Authority (letter).** James Hunsicker, President of the Dubois County Airport Authority offered comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and shared information on future plans for the facility and a desire to continue coordination throughout the study.
- **June 14, 2022: Collective of Legislative and Executive Governing Bodies of Martin County (letter).** Joe Lannan with Ready Martin County and the appointed representative of the Collective of Legislative and Executive Governing Bodies of Martin County provided its comments on the DEIS on behalf of the group. Among other points, the letter asked that the group be granted participating agency status, inclusion in the Section 106 coordination process and removal of the Alternative P western variation in Loogootee from consideration based on concerns of economic impact and interference with Amish travel.

7.3.1.2 Stakeholder Meetings/Regional Issues Involvement Teams

With project limits extending from US 231/SR 66 near Rockport to I-69 with multiple alternatives, the typical approach of a single Community Advisory Committee to engage key stakeholders was not practical. Four Regional Issues Involvement Teams (RIITs) were formed within the project study area. These teams represented general regions of the project study area. The geographic regions were defined as southcentral (SC), northeast (NE), northcentral (NC) and northwest (NW). The project management team invited elected officials to participate, as well as representatives of area planning, economic development, and tourism industries. School districts and various first responders were invited to participate. During stakeholder identification, several businesses and employers were identified and invited to participate. Local groups representing environmental interests and other interested individuals were also invited. For a list of invited members, see **Appendix AA**.

Two rounds of RIIT meetings were held. The first round focused on introducing the project and the purpose and need. The second round focused on the alternative screening process. The detailed meeting summaries and presentation materials may be found in **Appendix AA – Stakeholder Meetings and Correspondence**.

- **July 9, 2019: Northeast RIIT Round One (Paoli).** This meeting was held at INDOT’s sub-District office in Paoli. Eight area stakeholders and five representatives from the project team attended. Primary considerations for conceptual alternatives include preserving the rural nature of the region, providing safe and convenient access to and from the facility, maintaining or increasing tourism in the area, avoiding impacts to the Hoosier National Forest, maintaining compatibility with Crane’s security needs and maintaining compatibility with the needs of the Amish communities. Considerations for Amish communities include accommodating horse-drawn vehicles and preserving the continuity of farmsteads. Primary purpose and need concerns included economic development, safety and congestion.
- **July 9, 2019: South Central RIIT Round One (Huntingburg).** This meeting was held at the Huntingburg Event Center. Twenty-five area stakeholders and five representatives from the project team attended. Primary considerations for conceptual alternatives included ensuring access points, consideration of US 50 as an eastern alternative, considering access points to Huntingburg other than SR 64 and eastern alternatives would interest only Perry County. Also, alternatives should minimize the use of eminent domain, impacts to natural resources, businesses and agribusiness. Primary issues associated with the Purpose and Need included economic development, linkage improvements, safety and congestion.



- **July 10, 2019: North Central RIIT Round One (Loogootee).** This meeting was held at the Redemption Christian Church. Fifteen area stakeholders and five representatives from the project team attended. Primary considerations for conceptual alternatives included using existing US 231 to the extent practical, improving regional connectivity without drawing traffic from I-69 and maintaining alignments close to communities to provide access. Also, a western route would provide the least benefit to the area and limit impacts to areas deemed serene. Primary issues associated with the Purpose and Need included economic development, linkage improvements (including utilities), safety and congestion. It was noted that some in the community remain resentful of the right-of-way takes associated with the I-69 project.
- **July 10, 2019: Northwest RIIT Round One (Washington).** This meeting was held at the Antioch Christian Church. Attendance included 11 area stakeholders and four representatives from the project team. Primary considerations for conceptual alternatives included considering use of US 50 along with SR 60, developing routes for French Lick and West Baden, upgrading SR 56 from French Lick to Haysville, upgrading SR 37 if eastern variation is selected and use of SR 56 and SR 356. Primary issues associated with the Purpose and Need included economic development, linkage improvements to major markets south such as Nashville, safety and congestion.
- **February 11, 2020: Northeast RIIT Round Two (Paoli).** This meeting was held at the Paoli Community Center. Eighteen area stakeholders and six representatives from the project team attended. The screening process was presented. The Northeast RIIT was most interested in Alternatives M and O. Detailed discussions focused on these alternatives. The discussion focused on local resources and issues within these alternatives.
- **February 11, 2020: South Central RIIT Round Two (Huntingburg).** This meeting was held at the Huntingburg Event Center. Twenty-five area stakeholders and six representatives from the project team attended. The screening process was presented. The South Central RIIT was most interested in Alternatives B, C, M and O. The discussion focused on local resources and issues within these alternatives.
- **February 12, 2020: North Central RIIT Round Two (Loogootee).** This meeting was held at the Redemption Christian Church. Eleven area stakeholders and seven representatives from the project team attended. The North Central RIIT was most interested in Alternatives P and M. The discussion focused on local resources and issues within these alternatives.
- **February 12, 2020: Northwest RIIT Round Two (Washington).** This meeting was held at the Washington Community Center. Fourteen area stakeholders and five representatives from the project team attended. The Northwest RIIT was most interested in Alternatives P, B and C. The discussion focused on local resources and issues within these alternatives.

7.3.1.3 Public Informational Meetings

Two rounds of public meetings were held. The first round introduced the project and its Purpose and Need. The second round presented the alternative screening process. Both sets were held in three geographically dispersed locations. Presentation materials and comment forms are in **Appendix BB – Public Meetings and Correspondence**.

- **August 5, 2019: Round One (Washington).** A public meeting was held at Washington High School. Eighty-three members of the public and 13 project representatives attended. Thirty comment forms were collected. The formal presentation was supplemented by map displays staffed with project representatives who could answer questions. The meeting introduced the public to the project, the draft Purpose and Need, and conceptual alternatives. Key issues raised at this location included promoting economic development, impacts to the Hoosier National Forest and improving travel safety.



- **August 6, 2019: Round One (French Lick).** A public meeting was held at the Springs Valley High School. One hundred and twelve members of the public and 15 project representatives attended. Fifty-five comment forms were collected. The formal presentation was supplemented by map displays staffed with project representatives who could answer questions. The meeting introduced the public to the project, the draft Purpose and Need and conceptual alternatives. Key issues raised at this location included improving access for tourism, impacts to the Hoosier National Forest, maintaining access to local roads and impacts to private property.
- **August 8, 2019: Round One (Jasper).** A public meeting was held at Jasper High School. Two hundred thirty-six members of the public and 19 project representatives attended. One hundred eleven comment forms were collected. The formal presentation was supplemented by map displays staffed with project representatives who could answer questions. The meeting introduced the public to the project, the draft Purpose and Need and conceptual alternatives. Key issues raised at this location included congestion relief, safety improvements around Jasper and Huntingburg, impacts to farms and residential properties, economic development and forest impacts.
- **February 18, 2020: Round Two (Loogootee).** A public meeting was held at Loogootee High School. Approximately 500 members of the public and 20 project representatives attended. Twelve comment forms were collected. The formal presentation was supplemented by map displays staffed with project representatives who could answer questions. The meeting provided the project status and presented the Screening of Alternatives. Key issues raised at this location included improving connectivity to Loogootee/Martin County for promoting economic development, impacts to the Hoosier National Forest, impacts to private property and impacts to the Orange County Amish community.
- **February 19, 2020: Round Two (Bedford).** A public meeting was held at Bedford Middle School. One hundred and fifty members of the public and 15 project representatives attended. Thirty-one comment forms were collected. The formal presentation was supplemented by map displays staffed with project representatives who could answer questions. The meeting provided the project status and presented the Screening of Alternatives. Key issues raised at this location included impacts to karst topography and the Hoosier National Forest, properties losing access, potential flooding and private property takes.
- **February 20, 2020: Round Two (Jasper).** A public meeting was held at Jasper Middle School. Approximately 600 members of the public and 20 project representatives attended. One hundred twelve comment forms were collected. The formal presentation was supplemented by map displays staffed with project representatives who could answer questions. The meeting provided the project status and presented the Screening of Alternatives. Key issues raised at this location included concerns that a new facility will trigger need for additional improvements to the local road network, impacts to businesses in Jasper and Huntingburg if traffic is diverted around the communities and impacts to private and commercial properties.
- **Meetings in a Box/Post Meeting Comment Forms Received.** In addition to accepting comment forms during each public meeting, members of the public could return comment forms electronically or through traditional mail to provide input. For those who could not attend the public meetings, 17 libraries hosted “Meetings in Box.” These included presentation packets and comment forms. The list of libraries and the information packets may be found in **Appendix BB – Public Meetings and Correspondence**. Eighty-two comments were received. Approximately an additional 2,600 electronic comment forms were received. During the first round of meetings the comment forms were not made available online and only a limited number of comments were received. During the second round the public was encouraged to comment online. This significantly increased responses. The comments generally were consistent with the issues expressed in-person at the meetings. These are summarized in **Section 7.2**.



7.3.1.4 Public Hearings

Public hearings on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) were held on April 26, 2022, at WestGate Academy in Odon, IN and on April 28, 2022, at the Jasper Arts Center in Jasper, IN. Presentation materials and comment forms are in **Appendix BB – Public Meetings and Correspondence**.

- **April 26, 2022: Hearing (Odon, IN).** The public hearing was held at Westgate Academy with 374 people from the public signing in and 15 representatives of the project team attending. It occurred between 5:30 and 7:30 pm. Information was available in an open house format. Informational stations were available for people to learn about the project, including a station for signing up to speak at the hearing or writing a formal comment. Maps of the preferred alternative were available for viewing and project representatives were available for questions. A short informational video about the DEIS was also available for review. A formal presentation was given before opening the formal comment session. After the formal comment session, stations reopened, and team members were available to take questions.
- **April 28, 2022: Hearing (Jasper, IN).** The public hearing was held at the Jasper Arts Center on the campus of Vincennes University Jasper with 329 people from the public signing in and 15 representatives of the project team attending. It occurred between 5:30 and 7:30 pm. Information was available in an open house format. Informational stations were available for people to learn about the project, including a station for signing up to speak at the hearing or writing a formal comment. Maps of the preferred alternative were available for viewing and project representatives were available for questions. A short informational video about the DEIS was also available for review. A formal presentation was given before opening the formal comment session. After the formal comment session, stations reopened, and team members were available to take questions.

7.3.1.5 Ad Hoc Meetings

Additional meetings were held with targeted stakeholders due to information gathered or meetings requested by groups within the Study Area. The project team sought to accommodate these requests and provide expanded opportunities for the public and stakeholders to provide comments. Meeting summaries may be found in **Appendix AA – Stakeholder Meetings and Correspondence**. Below is a list of the additional meetings.

- November 1, 2019, February 7, 2020: Mid-States Regional Development Authority (Jasper)
- December 18, 2019: Washington Rotary Club (Washington)
- March 12, 2020: Orange and Lawrence counties Amish communities (Orange County)
- March 12, 2020: Mid-States Next Level Coalition (Huntingburg)
- March 17, 2020: Dubois County Airport Manager (Huntingburg)
- March 18, 2020: Daviess and Martin counties Amish communities (Daviess County)
- March 19, 2020: Farbest Foods & Wabash Valley Produce (Jasper)
- June 30 & September 17, 2020: Davies Driven (Virtual)
- July 29 & August 13, 2020: Huntingburg Solar (Virtual)
- August 31, 2020: French Lick Parkway Coalition (Virtual)
- November 10, 2020: Jasper Multi-Modal Transportation Plan (Virtual)
- January 21, 2022: Lehigh Cement (Mitchell)
- May 11, 2022: Martin County/Loogootee (VUJC)
- June 28, 2022: Martin County/Loogootee (Loogootee)



- September 22, 2022: Martin County/RDA (GAB Loogootee)
- December 22, 2022: Martin County/Loogootee (VUJC)

Given the unique nature of Amish communities, special effort was made to accommodate their needs and remove barriers to project input. Early project efforts focused on forming relationships within the community and identifying best practices for providing project information and gathering feedback. During these meetings, community members were able to provide the project team with critical information about how their work, family and worship needs influence their travel. There were three other coordination meetings conducted with members of Amish communities after the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. More information on those meetings can be found in **Appendix OO – Amish Outreach**.

7.3.2 Virtual Outreach

Public engagement was not limited to in-person meetings with fixed locations and dates. The project has a robust online presence to provide multiple platforms continuously available throughout the project. These provide information and allow comments to be submitted. These include a project website and social media channels. Also, traditional media outlets were monitored for project news to gather perspectives being shared among the public.

7.3.2.1 Project Website

The project website, <https://midstatescorridor.com/>, launched July 2019 and is updated with project information and announcements at appropriate intervals. The website added on-site Spanish translations to visitors in spring 2021. ‘Digital dashboards’ are generated each month to provide the project team with a consistent summary of website activity and social media engagement. These dashboards summarize information such as the number of page visits in that month, average time users spent on the site and type of device used to access. The inset is a snapshot of one part of the dashboard. Copies of the digital dashboards are included in the project record.

Key Website Pages:

- **Project Overview.** Information includes a project summary, key points about the Mid-States Corridor and answers to frequently asked questions.
- **Public Meetings and Outreach.** Pages include a summary of public outreach efforts over the course of the project, public information meeting materials, information about the Regional Issues Involvement Teams (RIITs) and summaries for all meetings.
- **Project Documents.** Downloadable project documents in PDF format include the Screening of Alternatives report, Public Involvement Plan, Coordination Plan (**see Appendix BB**), Purpose and Need Statement, Environmental Justice Outreach Plan (**see Appendix W**) and background documents and maps.
- **Project Maps.** High-resolution project maps are available for download. These include the alternatives carried forward in the Screening of Alternatives.
- **News & Events.** News releases, including public meeting information and project updates, are posted.
- **Photos & Videos.** A playlist containing a variety of informational project videos and photo albums with images from public meetings is included.

Website User Summary



Device Summary



Figure 7-1: Sample of Digital Dashboard



- **Contact Us.** Information includes pages dedicated to comments and questions, details about the project office and contact information for the project team.

7.3.2.2 Social Media

A Facebook and Twitter account were created for the Mid-States Corridor project and are updated with the project information. Posts focus on project information, ways to follow progress, contact channels and next steps. More than 274 comments were received through the Facebook account; all comments received through these formats are logged for the project record. Comments with specific questions such as inquiries into the number or dates of future meetings were responded to. The project accounts are:

- Facebook.com/MidStatesCorridor
- Twitter.com/MidStatesStudy



Figure 7-2: Image of Twitter Handle



Figure 7-3: Image of Facebook Page

7.3.2.3 Traditional Media

Traditional media such as newspapers and local television news were monitored for articles, stories, opinion pieces and letters to the editor which referenced the Mid-States Corridor Project. These articles were collected for the project record. Approximately 452 media mentions were captured between July 2019 and March 2023, **Appendix II – Media Outreach** lists sources and publication dates. Notices for activities such as public informational meetings and notice of availability of project materials at area libraries were provided in local newspapers.

Although mentioned in a broader context for the state of Indiana’s commitment to infrastructure projects, on June 11, 2021, Governor Eric J. Holcomb, at a chamber event in Southwest Indiana, announced support for three transportation projects. One of the three projects included a statement for the investment of \$75 million for design and construction of added travel lanes, passing lanes and intersection improvements at strategic locations on US 231. These were identified as focusing on improvements to reduce congestion in the Jasper and Huntingburg areas and improve safety and mobility along the entirety of US 231 between I-64 to I-69. This announcement was made independent of the formal public outreach specific to the Mid-States Corridor project. However, this action generated additional interest in the project as part of the highlight for anticipated activities.



7.3.3 Project Office

A dedicated project office was established to offer the public additional opportunities to provide input. The office was opened Monday July 15, 2019, in Room 216 of the Administration Building at the Jasper Campus of Vincennes University. General office hours were 8:00am to 5:00pm Eastern Time on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Meetings could be scheduled at other times by appointment. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the office was temporarily closed on March 23, 2020. On February 1, 2021, the office was reopened, but visits were by appointment only. On June 14, 2021, the project office reopened on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and by appointment in a new location in room 202 in the Center for Technology Innovation and Manufacturing. As visitors to the project office decreased following the end of the DEIS comment period, in August of 2022, the project office reduced hours to Wednesdays and by appointment.

7.3.3.1 Visits

The project office has had 119 visitors between July 15, 2019, and April 1, 2023. Three surges of visitors coincided with the two rounds of public informational meetings and the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Visitors typically were interested in looking more closely at maps and asking questions about potential impacts to properties or businesses. Concerns over impacts to farming operations were a primary topic.

7.3.3.2 Contacts

Phone inquiries, emails and letters were directed to the project office. Between July 15, 2019, and April 1, 2023, there were 219 phone inquiries, 549 emails and 328 letters/returned comment forms received at the project office.

7.3.4 Post DEIS Consultation with Martin County

In response to DEIS comments that expressed strong concern for the selection of the western variation of Alternative P at Loogootee, outreach efforts were made by the Project Team to collect additional information. Martin County stakeholders met with project staff during the DEIS comment period to discuss their concerns. Additional meetings with local public officials and stakeholders were held after the close of the DEIS comment period (see **Appendix NN** for additional documentation). Key input from these meetings identified several causes for their concern. Local elected officials felt Alternative P's western variation would hinder further economic development in Loogootee and Martin County. They felt the area's economic development is already constrained by the amount of government owned land in the area. There was also concern that a western variation would create transportation issues for the area's Amish community. The group felt either an upgrade of US 231 through Loogootee or a variation to the east of Loogootee was preferable to the western variation at Loogootee. These conversations also led to additional outreach with the Amish community. Meetings were held with Daviess and Martin County Amish community members to discuss the selection of Alternative P and receive their input. During the meetings Amish residents described their most frequently used roads and travel paths. They expressed a preference for underpasses for their movement as opposed to steep overpasses or at-grade crossings. They also had questions about access and the project timeline (see **Appendix OO - Amish Outreach** for additional documentation). The feedback from local public officials and stakeholders and resulting outreach led to the decision to carry forward multiple variations in the Loogootee area for further analysis in the Tier 2 studies known as Refined Preferred Alternative P (RPA P). These variations are in Section of Independent Utility (SIU) 4. Selection of a single variation at Loogootee requires detailed, localized economic studies, traffic studies and public outreach surveys in Loogootee and Martin County. These activities are appropriate for conducting during Tier 2 studies in SIU 4.

7.3.4.1 Refined Preferred Alternative P Outreach

Outreach to inform the public of the additional variations included the development of a video that explained the process of adding the variations. The video explained that the added variations would increase flexibility as the decision on an alignment is determined in the Tier 2 studies. The video was paired with a press release, updated



maps and a flyer that included a QR code to direct people to the materials on the project website. All these items were made available at local libraries along the RPA P variation to provide easy access to the materials. A comment period was provided extending from March 1, 2023 to March 31, 2023. Comment forms and comment boxes were also available at the local libraries. In addition to these efforts, a meeting was held on March 22, 2023, with members of the Martin County Amish community. The meeting was held to inform the attendees of the new variations in the Loogootee area, answer their questions and receive their feedback. The meeting was hosted by a local Amish family at a centrally located Amish school to provide easy and familiar access to participants.

7.3.4.1.1 Summary of Major Themes of Refined Preferred Alternative P Comments

Many of the comments received stated that a new facility is not needed in the Loogootee/Martin County area. Commenters felt the benefit of a new facility would not outweigh the impacts it could bring. There were concerns that a new facility would create impacts to farmland, natural areas and the county tax base.

Several comments suggested the commitment of \$75 million in local improvements to US 231 by Governor Holcomb would adequately address any needed improvements in the Loogootee/Martin County area.

Of the comments that designated a preferred variation, the majority identified P2, a variation generally following existing US 231 through Loogootee, as the preferred option. Some comments suggested that keeping traffic near businesses was a goal that could be met by P2. Other commenters preferred P2 because it would not disturb farms, natural areas and pose fewer problems for Amish travel, whereas P1, P3, and P4 are more likely to impact farms, natural areas, and Amish travel.

7.4 Agency Review and Coordination

The Notice of Intent (NOI) for the project was published in the Federal Register on July 5, 2019. This initiated the Mid-States Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in compliance with Title 23 USC Section 139. Participating agencies were identified following the NOI. A participating agency includes any tribal, local, state or federal agencies that may have an interest in the project. Formal invitations were provided to the agencies. All federal agencies invited are designated as participating agencies unless that agency declines. To decline, they must state they have no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project, they have no expertise or information relevant to the project and do not intend to submit comments on the project.

A participating agency may also be designated as a cooperating agency. A cooperating agency has a higher degree of authority, responsibility and involvement in the environmental review process. Participating agencies designated as cooperating agencies are typically other federal agencies that have specialized expertise and/or may have other involvement such as permitting or authorization authority. They can be state, local, or tribal agencies. **Table 7-1** Identifies the Mid-States EIS participating and cooperative agencies.

Participating agencies formally identify issues of concern in the EIS scoping process. They provide input on the Purpose and Need, the range of alternatives, the screening of alternatives and adequacy of the analysis. These agency meetings and correspondence occurred during the development of this Tier 1 DEIS.

7.4.1 Agency Coordination Meetings

- **July 3, 2019: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.** A meeting was held at the USFWS Bloomington Field Office. Several representatives from INDOT and USFWS attended. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project to the USFWS, seek early scoping issues related to threatened and endangered species and develop general consultation expectations for the tiered approach of the study. A full meeting summary may be found in **Appendix Z – Agency Meetings and Correspondence.**



Invited Agency	Participating	Cooperating
Federal Agencies		
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	X	X
U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service	X	
U.S. Forest Service - Hoosier National Forest	X	
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	X	
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers [Louisville District]	X	
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [Region 5]	X	
U.S. Coast Guard [Eighth District]	X	
U.S. Department of the Interior - Office of Environmental Policy	X	
Federal Aviation Administration [Great Lakes Region]	X	
National Park Service [Midwest]	X	
State Agencies		
Indiana Department of Natural Resources	X	
Indiana Department of Environmental Management	X	
Indiana Geologic Survey	X	
Local Agencies		
Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization	X	
Bloomington/Monroe County Metropolitan Planning Organization	X	
Tribal Entities		
Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma	X	
Miami Tribe of Oklahoma	X	
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians	X	
Forest County Potawatomi Community	X	
Delaware Nation of Oklahoma	X	
Shawnee Tribe	X	
Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin	X	

Table 7-1: Mid-States Participating and Cooperating Agencies

- **August 5, 2019: Early Coordination Letter.** A formal Early Coordination Letter was sent to the following entities. The letter may be found in **Appendix Z – Agency Meetings and Correspondence**:
 - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
 - U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - U.S. Forest Service - Hoosier National Forest
 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
 - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers [Louisville District]
 - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [Region 5]
 - U.S. Coast Guard [Eighth District]
 - U.S. Department of the Interior - Office of Environmental Policy
 - National Park Service [Midwest]



- Federal Aviation Administration [Great Lakes Region]
- Federal Highway Administration
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources [Director]
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of Fish & Wildlife
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of Water
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of Oil & Gas
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management [Director]
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management – Office of Water Quality, Surface Water
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management – Office of Water Quality, Drinking Water
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management – Office of Air Quality
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management – Office of Land Quality
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management – Groundwater Section
- Indiana Geologic & Water Survey
- Indiana Department of Transportation – Environmental Services Division
- Indiana Department of Transportation – Multimodal Planning and Programs Division
- Indiana Department of Transportation – Cultural Resources Office
- Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Bloomington/Monroe County Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Mid-States Corridor Regional Development Authority
- Miami Tribe of Oklahoma
- **August 20, 2019: Agency Scoping Meeting.** An agency scoping meeting was held on the Jasper Campus of Vincennes University. Representatives from FHWA, INDOT, USFWS, USEPA, USFS (Hoosier National Forest), USACE, IDEM, IGWS, IDNR, FAA, Huntingburg Airport, Delaware Nation, Mid-States Regional Development Authority (RDA) and Evansville MPO attended. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the project milestones, Purpose and Need, potential preliminary alternatives, preliminary alternative screening, preliminary input from recent stakeholder and public meetings and invitations to be participating and cooperating agencies. A full meeting summary may be found in **Appendix Z – Agency Meetings and Correspondence**.
- **December 12, 2019: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.** A meeting was held at the USFWS Bloomington Field Office. Representatives from FHWA, INDOT and USFWS attended. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss appropriate levels of Section 7 coordination and consultation at the Tier 1 and Tier 2 levels of the project. The agencies agreed to engage in formal consultation in Tier 1 which will require a Biological Assessment (BA) and Biological Opinion (BO) included in the FEIS. A full meeting summary may be found in **Appendix Z – Agency Meetings and Correspondence**.



- **March 3, 2020: Screening of Alternatives.** A meeting was held on the Jasper Campus of Vincennes University. Representatives from FHWA, INDOT, USFWS, USEPA, USFS (Hoosier National Forest), USACE, IDEM, IGS, IDNR, FAA, RDA, Pokagon Tribal HPO and Miami Tribe attended. The purpose of the meeting was to present the alternatives screening process and the alternatives recommended to be carried forward for further study. A full meeting summary may be found in **Appendix Z – Agency Meetings and Correspondence**.
- **March 4, 2020: Agency Bus Tour.** A bus tour was held the day following the screening of alternatives meeting for participants in the previous day’s meeting. The tour left from Vincennes University to observe areas associated with Section 2 and Alternatives C, M and O in Section 3. Key stops included Huntingburg Lake, East Fork of the White River, Glendale Fish and Wildlife Area, Orangeville Rise and Buffalo Flats. The tour pamphlet may be found in **Appendix Z – Agency Meetings and Correspondence**.
- **May 5, 2022:** A meeting was held on the campus of Vincennes University Jasper Campus to share findings of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the selection of Alternative P (later modified to become Alternative RPA P). A presentation was shared with participants and time for questions and discussion was provided. The meeting invitation, meeting summary, presentation, and a memo on the preferred alternative may be found in **Appendix Z – Agency Meetings and Correspondence**.

7.4.2 Agency Correspondence

- **July 29, 2019: U.S. Department of Interior, USFWS (email).** Robin McWilliams acknowledged receipt of the notice of intent and USFWS intent to begin coordination with INDOT.
- **August 6, 2019: INDOT, Office of Aviation (email).** Chief Airport Inspector Julian Courtade from INDOT’s Office of Aviation provided guidance on construction of structures near airport facilities. Two recommendations were provided: obstructions within a 5 nm radius of a public use airport must not exceed a 100:1 slope to the nearest point of the runway; and it is recommended to contact the airport owner of any private air facilities to notify them of any nearby obstructions. A permit would only be required from his office for public-use airports.
- **August 22, 2019: Indiana Geological & Water Survey (email).** Todd Thompson from IGWS responded to accept IGWS’s being a participating agency on the project.
- **August 23, 2019: Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Oil & Gas (email).** Orphan Well Manager Brian Royer from IDNR’s Division of Oil & Gas notified the study team there are numerous old oil and gas wells located in the Huntingburg and Jasper area. The largest concentrations are southwest of Huntingburg. He provided additional information on well density. He stated that as more detailed information became available regarding alternatives, more specific information could be provided.
- **September 3, 2019: Miami Tribe of Oklahoma (letter).** Tribal Historic Preservation Office Diane Hunter stated the tribe will act as a participating agency and held no objection to the project at this time.
- **September 9, 2019: Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Office of Land Quality (email).** Lynette Schrowe acknowledged the department has no additional comments and requested the agency be included as a participating agency.
- **September 10, 2019: Indiana Department of Natural Resources (letter).** Beth McCord, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer in IDNR’s Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology stated her agency will provide multiple points of contact due to the scale of the project. The agency had no specific comments to the Purpose and Need, preliminary alternatives, or summary of the August agency meeting.



- **September 10, 2019: U.S. Department of Interior, Fish & Wildlife Service (letter).** Scott Pruitt from USFWS accepted a role as a cooperating agency. Additional comments regarding the Purpose and Need were included. It was noted an EIS of a previous similar project was withdrawn due to a reevaluation of traffic data. The agency requested further clarification in the purpose and need as to how current data supports the need. The agency specified it does not support any alternative east of existing US 231 due to concerns regarding karst areas, water quality, protected species/habitat and public lands.
- **September 11, 2019: Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Office of Water Quality (letter).** Alisha Turnbow from the Groundwater Section stated that the project area is not located in a wellhead protection area but is within four source water assessment areas for public water supply systems.
- **September 12, 2019: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (letter).** District Ranger Michelle Paduani accepted the invitation for the Hoosier National Forest to act as a participating agency. It was also noted that any alternative within the National Forest System (NFS) would need to be reviewed by the agency for consistency with its Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). Any alternative which requires right-of-way from the NFS will require INDOT to request a Federal Land Transfer through FHWA.
- **September 12, 2019: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (letter).** Deputy Multi-Media Office Director Kenneth Westlake provided comments on the Purpose and Need and potential preliminary alternatives. The agency provided three recommendations on the Purpose and Need. These include: clarify terminology used in reference to the Study Area; clarify why Goal 3 – Reduction in localized congestion within Dubois County is not a core goal, and; further evaluation of how the completed I-69 project will affect the Purpose and Need goals related to accessibility, travel time and safety. He recommended presenting an alternative or combination of alternatives which improve the existing roadway network. He also recommended eliminating alternatives which do not substantially follow existing roadways.
- **September 12, 2019: Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Office of Water Quality (letter).** Surface Water, Operations and Enforcement Branch Chief Brian Wolff provided four comments, these include: (1) the agency was unclear as to the purpose of the project; (2) Section 1 has several compensatory mitigation sites adjacent to US 231; (3) the agency prefers alternatives using existing roadways and (4) the agency prefers alternatives which remain on or to the west of US 231 due to environmentally sensitive karst areas to the east.
- **September 12, 2019: Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife (letter).** Environmental Supervisor Matthew Buffington provided an assessment of regulatory requirements if the project progresses forward, a list of managed lands and species the department expects would be avoided or impacts minimized, and comments related to the agencies position on the proposed alternative alignments.
- **September 13, 2019: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (letter).** Kenneth Westlake accepted participating agency status for USEPA. He also asked that any information regarding meetings or conference calls be received at least two weeks in advance.
- **February 24, 2020: INDOT, Multimodal Planning and Programs (email).** INDOT Chief Airport Engineer Michael Buening wrote that the Huntingburg Airport is extending its runway to the east approximately 500 feet. This also will extend the runway protection zone. A map of the extension project was provided for use to avoid potential conflicts with any proposed alternatives.
- **February 26, 2020: Indiana Department of Natural Resources (letter).** Beth McCord, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer in IDNR's Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology, identified their staff would attend the March 3, 2020, agency partnering meeting remotely and requested hard copies of materials be sent to the agency.



- **March 11, 2020: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (email).** Michelle Paduani provided information related to the agency's management areas.
- **March 18, 2020: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (letter).** Deputy Director Kenneth Westlake provided recommendations to the alternatives in the screening report. These included carrying forward western and eastern routes around Jasper/Huntingburg and to not carry forward the Northeast Family of alternatives.
- **March 23, 2020: U.S. Department of Interior, Fish & Wildlife Service (letter).** Scott Pruitt provided recommendations from review of the screening report. These included Alternatives M and O be removed from consideration and to carry forward a western and eastern option for the Jasper/Huntingburg area. An additional list of species that may be listed within the next five years was also provided.
- **March 27, 2020: Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife (letter).** Environmental Supervisor Matthew Buffington provided an additional list of species and an assessment of the alternatives proposed. The letter requested to remove from consideration Alternatives M and O.
- **April 3, 2020: Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Office of Water Quality (email).** Samuel Blazey, Section Chief of the Groundwater Section, responded that the agency has no additional comments from their September 9, 2019, letter.
- **April 15, 2020: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (email).** USACE Project Manager Deborah Snyder commented that the Northeast family of alternatives would not be acceptable as the least environmentally damaging practical alternative as required by Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act.
- **April 15, 2020: City of Bloomington Planning and Transportation Department (email).** Senior Transportation Planner Patrick Martin responded to the screening report meeting summary with concurrence of Deborah Snyder's comments expressed at the meeting.
- **April 17, 2020: Federal Aviation Administration (email).** Bobb Beauchamp identified the FAA's concerns are limited to the area adjacent to the Huntingburg Airport.
- **October 28, 2020: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (email).** USACE Project Manager Deborah Snyder accepted participating agency status for her agency.
- **February 8, 2021: Indiana Department of Transportation (email).** Jason DuPont, on behalf of INDOT and the project team, sent a project update to participating agencies regarding necessary project adjustments in response to restarting work after it was paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **March 21, 2022: Indiana Department of Transportation (email).** Jason DuPont, on behalf of INDOT and the project team, invited participating agencies to a meeting on the campus of Vincennes University Jasper Campus to be held on May 5, 2022, to discuss the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the preferred alternative.
- **June 13, 2022: Indiana Department of Natural Resources (email).** J. Matthew Buffington, Environmental Supervisor for the IDNR Division of Fish and Wildlife provided comments on various potential impacts of the preferred alternative identified in the DEIS. The 14-page document gave opinions on the preferred alternative and recommendations on managing impacts.
- **June 14, 2022: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (email):** Deborah Duda Snyder, Project Manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, provided comments on the DEIS and suggested continued coordination.
- **June 14, 2022: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (email):** Kenneth Westlake, Department Director of the Office of Multimedia Programs of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency provided its comments on the DEIS. Comments focused on environmental impact on water resources, mitigation and environmental justice.



- **June 14, 2022: U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (email):** John Nelson, Regional Environmental Officer for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within the U.S. Department of the Interior, provided comments on the DEIS. This included support of the preferred alternative, information on endangered species and general and specific recommendations.
- **February 27, 2023: Indiana Department of Transportation (email).** Jason DuPont, on behalf of INDOT and the project team, sent an email to participating agencies announcing that changes had been made to Alternative P in the Loogootee area. The email shared that, in response to feedback following the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Refined Alternative P (RPA P) would be the FEIS Preferred Alternative. It would have four variations in the Loogootee area. Maps of the changes were provided, as well as a link to a video on the project website that described the changes.
- **February 27, 2023: Indiana Department of Environmental Management (email).** James Turner with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) Office of Water Quality responded to the RPA P email to state that Jason Randolph will manage permitting for this project. The email asked that he be added to the project's distribution list.
- **March 7, 2023: Indiana Department of Transportation Office of Aviation (email).** Tyler Lewandowski, Project Manager for INDOT Office of Aviation stated that, after review, no tall structure permit is required for the project if all construction equipment is under 200 feet in height.
- **March 16, 2023: United States Department of Agriculture (email).** John Allen, State Soil Scientist for the United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service, asked to be notified when a single alternative and permanent ROW are determined so an environmental review can be completed.
- **March 17, 2023: Indiana Department of Natural Resources (email).** Beth McCord, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), stated they will report on significance of, and impacts on specific properties once the assessment on potential impacts to archaeological and above-ground properties occurs in the Tier 2 studies.
- **March 27, 2023: Indiana Department of Natural Resources (email).** Matt Buffington, Environmental Unit Supervisor for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of Fish and Wildlife, commented that the alternatives appear to have varied impacts to natural resources, with impacts increasing from west to east. He shared that the western variation appears to have the lowest likely impacts. His comment addressed how western variations would have fewer impacts to West Boggs Creek (and Lake) and the eastern alternatives appear to create more significant forest impacts.

