Appendix G

FHWA Questionnaire

Federal Highway Administration
Planning and Environmental Linkages Questionnaire

This questionnaire is intended to act as a summary of the planning process and ease the transition from planning to a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis. Often, there is no overlap in personnel between the planning and NEPA phases of a project, so consequently much (or all) of the history of decisions made in the planning phase is lost. Different planning processes take projects through analysis at different levels of detail. Without knowing how far, or in how much detail a planning study provided, NEPA project teams are not aware of and may often re-do work that has already been done. This questionnaire is consistent with the 23 CFR 450 (Planning regulations) and other FHWA policy on Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) process.

The Planning and Environmental Linkages Study (PEL Study) is used in this questionnaire as a generic term to mean any type of planning study conducted at the corridor or subarea level which is more focused than studies at the regional or system planning levels. Many states may use other terminology to define studies of this type and are considered to have the same meaning as a PEL study.

At the inception of the PEL Study, the study team must decide how the work will later be incorporated into subsequent NEPA efforts. A key consideration is whether the PEL Study will meet standards established by NEPA regulations and guidance. One example is the use of terminology consistent with NEPA vocabulary (e.g., purpose and need, alternatives, affected environment, environmental consequences).

> *Instructions: These questions should be used as a guide throughout the planning process, not just answered near completion of the process. When a PEL Study is started, this questionnaire will be given to the project team. Some of the basic questions to consider are: "What did you do?", "What didn't you do?", and "Why?". When the team submits a PEL Study to FHWA for review, the completed questionnaire will be included with the submittal. FHWA will use this questionnaire to assist in determining if an effective PEL process has been applied before NEPA processes are authorized to begin. The questionnaire should be included in the planning document as an executive summary, chapter, or appendix.*

1. Background

a. Who is the sponsor of the PEL Study? (state DOT, local agency, other)

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) is the sponsor of the Interstate 70 (I-70) PEL Study (PEL Study).

b. What is the name of the PEL Study document and other identifying project information (e.g., sub-account or STIP numbers, long-range plan or transportation improvement program years)?

This PEL Study is entitled *Envision I-70: I-70 Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study, Wentzville to City of St. Louis*. STIP number J6I3038; Illustrative Tier I Corridor, *Connected 2045, Long-Range Transportation Plan for the St. Louis Region, and Citizen's Guide to Missouri's Transportation Future; Long Range Transportation Plan*.

c. Who was included on the study team (Name and title of agency representatives, consultant, etc.)?

The PEL Study team included the following individuals:

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Missouri Division:
  - Raegan Ball, Program Development Team Leader
- Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT):
  - Wesley Stephen, District Planning Manager
  - Shaun Tooley, Transportation Planning Specialist
  - Andy Tuerck, St. Charles County Area Engineer
  - Betherny Williams, St. Louis County Area Engineer
  - Michelle Forneris, St. Louis City Area Engineer
  - Richard Moore, Environmental and Historic Preservation Manager
  - Laura Ellen, Project Manager (2016-2018)
- East-West Gateway Council of Governments (EWG):
  - Marcie Meystrik, Corridor Planning Coordinator
  - Paul Hubbman, Senior Manager of Corridor & Long-Range Planning
- Bi-State Development Agency (Metro):
  - Jessica Mefford-Miller, Interim Executive Director of Metro Transit/Assistant Executive Director of Transportation Planning & System Development
  - Lance Peterson, Director of Service Planning
- Jacobs Engineering Group Inc.:
  - Tracey Lober, Project Manager
  - Laura Meyer, Senior Environmental Planner
  - Jim Clarke, Senior Environmental Planner
- AECOM (Conditions Assessment Report):
  - JC Murray, Transportation Department Manager
- StratCommRx (Public Outreach):
  - Kelly Ferrara, President

- Development Strategies (Economic Development):
  - Robert Lewis, Principal
  - Andy Pfister, Associate/Senior Strategist
- Alta Planning and Design (Active Transportation):
  - Paul Wojciechowski, Principal
- Archaeological Research Center of St. Louis (Cultural Resources):
  - Joe Harl, Vice President

d. Provide a description of the existing transportation facility within the corridor, including project limits, modes, functional classification, number of lanes, shoulder width, access control, and type of surrounding environment (urban vs. rural, residential vs. commercial, etc.)

I-70 is one of the primary east-west routes across the Unites States (U.S.). The limits of the Study (Study Corridor) include an approximately 40-mile segment of I-70 from Wentzville (Route Z) to the end of the express lanes near North Broadway in the City of St. Louis, Missouri. The particular area under study (Study Area) includes a 0.25-mile buffer on each side of the Study Corridor and extends up to one mile north and south of I-70 along major connecting routes. Within the PEL Study Area, I-70 traverses a number of political and municipal jurisdictions, including St. Charles County, St. Louis County, the City of St. Louis, and numerous other municipalities. This diverse corridor links employment centers such as downtown St. Louis, residential communities (urban, suburban, and rural), St. Louis Lambert International Airport, and several other regional destinations. The corridor plays a key role in the economic health of the region.

Because of the length of the I-70 Study Corridor, and to more finely define problems and needs, the Study Corridor was divided into five segments, which are listed below:

- Segment 1: Wentzville (Route Z) to Route K (8.3 miles)
- Segment 2: Route K to Highway 94 (10.5 miles)
- Segment 3: Highway 94 to I-270 (4.4 miles)
- Segment 4: I-270 to Florissant Road (7.7 miles)
- Segment 5: Florissant Road to North Broadway (the end of the express lanes) (9.3 miles)

Within the PEL Study Corridor, I-70 varies from two to five lanes in each direction, and has two express lanes in the City of St. Louis. The eastbound and westbound directions are barrier-separated for the entire length of the PEL Study Corridor. Shoulder widths west of the Missouri River are generally 10 feet on the outside and 4 feet on the inside. East of the Missouri River, shoulder widths vary from 2 to 8 feet on the outside and 0 to 8 feet on the inside.

I-70 is a controlled-access interstate facility with no traffic signals, intersections, or property access. There are no at-grade crossings with other roadways, railways, or bicycle/pedestrian paths. Entrances and exits to the Interstate (I-70) are provided at interchanges via ramps.

Bridges: Of the 46 bridges over I-70 in the Study Corridor, 31 bridge structures have a vertical clearance of less than 16 feet 6 inches, which is the current standard for minimum clearance. While all bridges over the interstate have at least 14 feet-8 inches of clearance, which will accommodate a standard trailer height (13 feet, 6 inches), this height is insufficient for the largest legal truck height permitted to use the corridor (15 feet). Bridge condition in the Study Corridor is less of an issue. However, 17 bridges over I-70 are at or approaching their 50-year design life, and while the condition of most bridges is rated Very Good or Good, 19 are rated Fair and two are rated Poor.

Modes*:* I-70 currently serves passenger vehicles, freight, and bus service. Metro Transit–St. Louis (Metro) operates numerous MetroBus routes in the PEL Study Area, including several that use I-70 for a portion of the route. The MetroLink light rail corridor crosses I-70 near the St. Louis Lambert International Airport, but does not use the I-70 right-of-way. The St. Charles Area Transit (SCAT) provides bus service within the City of St. Charles and limited commuter service into St. Louis County. The commuter bus routes use I-70 to connect to the Metro system at the North Hanley Station.

While bicycle and pedestrian use is not prohibited on the interstate shoulders in Missouri, formal bicycle and pedestrian facilities along the I-70 right-of-way do not currently exist. The existing network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities on local, county, and state routes in the PEL Study Area varies from suburban patterns with low connectivity, to denser urban patterns with higher connectivity. Bicycle and Pedestrian Levels of Service (BLOS, PLOS) measurements indicate that I-70 is a major impediment to north-south bicycle and pedestrian movement outside of the City of St. Louis.

For a more detailed description of the existing transportation facility and surrounding land use, please refer to Section 1.2 of the PEL Study.

e. Provide a brief chronology of the planning activities (PEL Study) including the year(s) the studies were completed.

Scoping was conducted in spring and summer of 2017, including meetings with the public, the Senior Advisory Group (SAG), and the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to present the purpose of the Study and discuss transportation needs and opportunities along the I-70 corridor. Scoping also included a MetroQuest Survey, documented in the MetroQuest Survey Report (Summer 2017), and an intensive data collection effort for existing conditions in the corridor, documented in the *I-70 PEL Study Conditions*

Assessment Report (May 2017). This process is documented in Chapter 3.0 of the PEL Study.

The corridor vision and Purpose and Need were developed during the fall and winter of 2017 based on the collective input and information collected during scoping. These statements, which were provided to the FHWA, SAG, TAG, and posted to the Study website, are documented in Chapter 1.0 of the PEL Study, and served to guide development of transportation strategies in the PEL Study Corridor.

Through a series of workshops with the Transportation Corridor Improvement Group (TCIG), which is comprised of MoDOT, EWG, and Metro, the vision and Purpose and Need guided development and prioritization of transportation strategies during the spring and summer of 2018. The strategies and evaluation process were presented to the public in July 2018 and the TAG and SAG in August 2018. The strategies, evaluation process, and final recommendations are presented in Chapters 4.0 and 5.0 of the PEL Study. Environmental considerations for the high-priority strategies are discussed in Chapter 6.0 of the PEL Study.

f. Are there recent, current, or near future planning studies or projects in the vicinity? What is the relationship of this project to those studies/projects?

Numerous transportation-related studies in and near the Study Area have been completed recently, and several are ongoing that are relevant to this PEL Study. These include studies on interchange improvements, congestion reduction and traffic flow, land use plans, freight movement, transit, and bicycle/pedestrian plans. Please refer to Section 1.3 of this PEL Study for details.

2. Methodology Used

a. Did you use NEPA-like language? Why or why not?

NEPA-like language was used in this PEL Study in most cases to help streamline the environmental process under future NEPA studies. Only in one instance was NEPA-like language not used, as described in the last bullet in the response to question 2.b.

b. What were the actual terms used and how did you define them? (Provide examples or list)

- A Purpose and Need Statement was prepared for this PEL Study that included identifying the PEL Study purpose, needs, and goals. The PEL Study defines the Purpose and Need Statement as follows: A Purpose and Need statement is used in Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) studies to articulate, and focus on, the specific problems to be addressed. The Purpose and Need is used to develop and evaluate alternatives, but is not mode

specific or biased toward a particular solution. The Purpose and Need for this PEL Study is provided in Chapter 2.0.

- A No-Action Alternative was identified and defined as follows: The No-Action Alternative consists of transportation infrastructure projects in the Study Corridor that are reasonably foreseeable or in progress. Reasonably foreseeable projects include those with identified or committed funding that would be constructed whether or not any improvements/recommendations cited in this PEL Study are implemented, and those outside the purpose and need for this Study. The No-Action Alternative serves as a baseline comparison for operational, safety, benefit-to-cost, and environmental analysis purposes. Projects included in the No-Action Alternative are listed in Chapter 4.0 of this PEL Study.

- Potential mitigation strategies for potential impacts associated with implementation of high-priority strategies were identified and defined as follows: Mitigation is a mechanism to use to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate the adverse environmental impacts associated with federally-funded actions. Refer to Chapter 6.0 of this PEL Study for details.

- The PEL Study did not identify "Action Alternatives" or a "Preferred Alternative." The PEL Study is not intended to identify specific solutions, but rather to establish a vision for the corridor, goals for each segment, and conceptual strategies to achieve the vision, the Purpose and Need, and the goals. The conceptual strategies are defined as follows: These strategies represent a broad range of potential solutions identified through the public and stakeholder outreach program described in Chapter 3.0 and a technical assessment of the transportation needs in the corridor. The conceptual strategies are identified in Chapter 4.0 of this PEL Study.

c. How do you see these terms being used in NEPA documents?

The terms used in this PEL Study, such as Purpose and Need, No-Action Alternative, and others listed above, are terms that are used in NEPA documents. For example, future NEPA studies will describe the Purpose and Need of the project; establish a No-Action Alternative to serve as a baseline for analysis; evaluate the No-Action Alternative and build alternatives based on their ability to meet the purpose and need and their environmental impacts; identify measures to mitigate impacts; and identify a Preferred Alternative that meets the purpose and need while minimizing impacts.

d. What were the key steps and coordination points in the PEL decision-making process? Who were the decision-makers and who else participated in those key steps? For example, for the corridor vision, the decision was made by state DOT and the local agency, with buy-in from FHWA, the USACE, and USFWS, and other resource/regulatory agencies.

Key steps and coordination points include:

- Development and refinement of vision and Purpose and Need statements were based on the collective input during the scoping process (summarized above in response to question 1.e and described in detail in Chapter 3.0 of the PEL Study). The final statements were approved by the TCIG with input from the FHWA, SAG, and TAG.

- The PEL Study Team developed transportation strategies and the evaluation process, which was refined by the TCIG and finalized based on comments from the SAG and TAG.

- Recommendations regarding the prioritization of transportation strategies were based on the results of the evaluation process. These recommendations were finalized by the TCIG based on comments from the SAG and TAG.

Key participants in this PEL Study process, as noted above, included:

- The PEL Study Team, which is listed under 1.c.

- The TCIG, which is made up of the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), East-West Gateway Council of Governments (EWG) and Metro. Refer to 4.a. for details.

- Agencies invited to participate in scoping are listed under 3.a

- A Senior Advisory Group (SAG) was formed to provide input about the overall needs of the PEL Study Corridor. The SAG met three times during the PEL Study and included representatives from the following municipalities, local agencies, and businesses in the PEL Study Area:
  - East-West Gateway Council of Governments
  - Economic Development Center (EDC) Business & Community Partners
  - City of St. Louis
  - Great Rivers Greenway
  - Greater St. Charles Chamber
  - Greater St. Charles Convention and Visitors Bureau
  - Lindenwood University
  - Metro Transit
  - Missouri Department of Transportation
  - Municipal League of Metro St. Louis
  - St. Charles County
  - St. Charles Economic Development Corporation
  - St. Louis Convention and Visitors Center
  - St. Louis County
  - St. Louis Development Corporation

- St. Louis Economic Development Partnership
- St. Louis Lambert International Airport
- St, Louis Port Association
- St. Louis Regional Chamber
- St. Louis Regional Freightway
- University of Missouri–St. Louis.

- Three Technical Advisory Groups (TAG) were established for this PEL Study, organized by the City of St. Louis, St. Charles County, and St. Louis County within the PEL Study Area. Each TAG consisted of representatives from the city and respective counties and municipalities and stakeholders located therein (see table below). TAG members provided technical knowledge and insights into practical solutions for their portion of the PEL Study Area, such as land uses and development conditions, socioeconomic conditions, freight issues, multi-modal transportation needs, and access and operations issues. Twelve TAG meetings occurred during this PEL Study.

Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs)

St. Charles County TAG Members	St. Louis County TAG Members	City of St. Louis TAG Members
• City of Lake St. Louis • City of O'Fallon • City of O'Fallon Economic Development • City of St. Charles • City of St. Peters • City of Wentzville • St. Charles Area Transit • St. Charles County • St. Charles County Dept. of Transportation • St. Charles County Highways Dept. • St. Charles Dept. of Engineering	• City of Berkeley • City of Bridgeton • City of Cool Valley • City of Edmundson • City of Ferguson • City of Jennings • City of Maryland Heights • City of Normandy • City of Northwoods • City of Pasadena Hills • City of Pine Lawn • City of Woodson Terrace • Great Rivers Greenway • St. Louis County • St. Louis County Dept. of Highways, Traffic, and Public Works • St. Louis County Dept. of Planning • University of Missouri–St. Louis • St. Louis Lambert International Airport	• City of St. Louis • City of St. Louis Traffic Division • Great Rivers Greenway • Project Connect • RideFinders • City of St. Louis Board of Public Service • St. Louis Development Corporation • St. Louis Planning and Urban Design

e. How should the PEL information be presented in NEPA?

This PEL Study and supporting technical studies were prepared consistent with NEPA. When projects are advanced to the NEPA planning phase, the information in this PEL Study can be referenced and used as a foundation and guide for determining the NEPA class of action for the project, developing the project's purpose and need, identifying key

issues and concerns, developing the approach for agency and public outreach, developing a No-Action Alternative and build alternatives, and identifying potential impacts and mitigation measures.

3. Agency Coordination

a. Provide a synopsis of coordination with federal, tribal, state and local environmental, regulatory, and resource agencies. Describe their level of participation and how you coordinated with them.

Agency coordination was conducted for this PEL Study. An agency scoping meeting was held early in the Study (June 2017) with local, state, and federal resource agencies to obtain their input on the scope of issues to be addressed and the Study's Purpose and Need. A second meeting was later held (July 2018) with these agencies to review the range of alternatives and conceptual strategy evaluation and obtain their feedback. Table 1 lists resource agencies invited to participate in these meetings, and indicates meeting participants. Additional agencies played a more integral role in the PEL Study, as described in the response to question 4.a. Also refer to Chapter 3.0 of the PEL Study for more details.

Table 1: Resource Agency Coordination

	Meetings	
Resource Agencies Invited to Participate	**Attended June 28, 2017 Scoping Meeting**	**Attended July 26, 2018 Meeting**
Environmental Protection Agency		X
Federal Aviation Administration	X	
Federal Emergency Management Agency		
Federal Highway Administration	X	X
Federal Transit Administration – Region 7	X	
Illinois Department of Transportation		
Missouri Department of Conservation		
Missouri Department of Natural Resources	X	
Missouri Department of Public Safety		
Missouri State Historic Preservation Office		
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers		
U.S. Department of Agriculture	X	
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development		
U.S. Department of the Interior – Natural Resource Conservation		
U.S. Department of the Interior – National Park Service		
U.S. Department of the Interior – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	X	

Resource agency questions and concerns received were considered during the development, screening, and ranking of conceptual strategies.

MoDOT will provide a copy of this PEL Study to Native American Tribes. MoDOT will consult with tribes under Section 106 consultation that will be conducted for individual projects when they advance to the NEPA stage.

b. What transportation agencies (e.g. for adjacent jurisdictions) did you coordinate with or were involved during the PEL Study?

MoDOT, EWG, and Metro comprise the TCIG, which participated in stakeholder outreach, developed the I-70 Corridor Vision Statement, and evaluated and prioritized conceptual strategies. Coordination with the TAG, which includes representatives from the transportation agencies from adjacent jurisdictions, occurred throughout the PEL Study. Coordination also occurred with the Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Transit Administration.

c. What steps will need to be taken with each agency during NEPA scoping?

Because this Study was not intended to yield specific project recommendations, but rather conceptual strategies and goals, future scoping requirements are not known. The steps necessary to scope future projects in the Study Corridor will depend on the location of the project, potentially affected resources, and the level of NEPA documentation required.

4. Public Coordination

a. Provide a synopsis of your coordination efforts with the public and stakeholders.

Public coordination conducted for this PEL Study is summarized below. For details, please refer to Chapter 3.0 and Appendix C of this PEL Study. Appendix C also provides a complete list of the stakeholders discussed below.

- **TCIG (**Transportation Corridor Improvement Group): Nearly 20 years ago, a group of local agencies formed the TCIG with the purpose of sharing information needed for major transportation studies and assisting in managing large-scale corridor studies. Representatives from MoDOT, Metro, and EWG comprise the core of the TCIG. The local agencies had vital information required for this PEL Study, including existing and future land uses and transportation-related data. Their involvement supported the overall PEL Study and decision making process, which will effectively transition into future NEPA studies.

- **SAG** (Senior Advisory Group): The SAG consisted of elected officials or senior-level staff appointed by the respective local officials from the involved jurisdictions, and oversight agencies located throughout the corridor. Many of the organizations represented on the SAG will be instrumental in carrying forward strategies resulting from this PEL Study. Therefore, obtaining informed consent with this group was key. The SAG partnered with the Study team to help establish the direction for this PEL

Study, ensure that all relevant options were being explored, and provide suggestions for public engagement techniques and corridor improvement strategies.

- **TAG** (Technical Advisory Group): Three TAGs were formed for this PEL Study, broken out by the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County, and St. Charles County. TAG members included technical staff from the involved jurisdictions, support agency staff, and regional partners who could offer technical insights into the PEL Study. The value of the TAG stemmed from their focused discussions on individual nuances and needs along key segments of the PEL Study Corridor.

- **Key Influencers**: This PEL Study presented its own set of challenges, which included a 40-mile long PEL Study Corridor crossing numerous jurisdictional boundaries. In addition to serving as a major roadway for daily rush hour commuters, I-70 is also a major thoroughfare in the U.S. interstate system, with a number of key industries and employment centers located along the corridor. Improvements identified in this PEL Study could serve as an important economic development tool in the future that will be key to the St. Louis region's growth. The PEL Study team wanted to provide a way for key stakeholders to offer their unique views about the vision for the corridor. Key influencers included economic generators, community organizations, key agencies, and major employers, such as the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) and Lindenwood University. To make sure that this PEL Study incorporated a clear understanding of the viewpoints of minority and economically disadvantaged sectors, the PEL Study team also invited civic organizations and key institutions such as the Hispanic Chamber, Beyond Housing, and the International Institute to participate in the process. The Study team reached out to approximately 50 key influencers and conducted interviews with 16 individuals. An additional 41 key influencers were identified as the Study progressed, and were invited to complete an online Survey Monkey questionnaire about the Study; nine key influencers completed the questionnaire.

- **Public Officials**: The St. Louis region is complex, in part because of the number of government entities located within its boundaries. In fact, 38 of them are located in or within one mile of the PEL Study Corridor. Elected officials, city administrators/managers, and local public works staff had yet another point of view about the corridor, particularly relevant if their municipal boundaries fell within portions of the corridor. It was important that these public officials understood the purpose of the PEL Study and were provided avenues to share information relative to the PEL Study. These officials were briefed and engaged prior to public meetings, during the Purpose and Need development phase, and again when final conceptual strategies were identified and presented.

  The municipalities within one mile of the PEL Study Area that have a vested interest in this PEL Study are listed below:

- City of Bellerive
- City of Bel-Nor*
- City of Bel-Ridge
- City of Berkeley
- City of Beverly Hills
- City of Breckendridge Hills
- City of Bridgeton*
- City of Champ
- City of Cool Valley*
- City of Country Club Hills
- City of Edmundson*
- City of Ferguson*
- City of Glen Echo Park
- City of Flordell Hills
- City of Hillsdale
- City of Jennings
- City of Josephville
- City of Kinloch*
- City of Lake Saint Louis
- City of Maryland Heights
- City of Normandy*
- City of Norwood Court
- City of Northwoods*
- City of O'Fallon*
- City of Pasadena Hills
- City of Pasadena Park
- City of Pinelawn
- City of St. Ann
- City of St. Charles*
- City of St. John*
- City of St. Paul
- City of St. Louis
- City of St. Peters
- City of Velda City
- City of Velda Village Hills*
- City of Wentzville*
- City of Woodson Terrace
- City of Uplands Park

*Signed in at public officials briefing meetings.

- **General Public/ Stakeholders**: The intent of this PEL Study was to gather input for development of higher-level conceptual strategies at the corridor-wide and segment levels. As such, gaining public input around a specific intersection, for example, was not the intent. Rather, the goal was to create opportunities for the public to help the PEL Study team form an overall vision for the PEL Study Corridor. Innovative methods to involve minority and economically disadvantaged sectors of the community as well as the general public were used. One approach was to distribute information through members of the various community groups that the team identified to gain input from a broad representation of the region (e.g., SAG, TAG, public officials, and key influencers). Each organization was asked to provide information about the PEL Study to their respective members or constituents, including access to the project website. Representatives of these institutions, along with other regional partners, were asked to participate in an interview to help the PEL Study team gain unique insight about the future transportation needs of the St. Louis region.

- **Public Involvement:** Four public officials' briefings and three public meetings were held during this PEL Study to present information about the PEL Study, gather input on corridor issues and concerns to be considered in formulating the Purpose and Need for the Study, and to present the conceptual strategies and obtain feedback. Also, a 90-day on-line survey was conducted in early 2017 to obtain input on Study topics such as congestion, safety, bicyclist and pedestrian facilities, and transit. PEL Study information

as well as public meeting and survey announcements were distributed via newsletters, fliers, press releases, social media, project website, and through TAG and SAG members. Refer to Chapter 3.0 of this PEL Study for more details.

5. Corridor Vision/Purpose and Need

a. What was the scope of the PEL Study and the reason for doing it?

Several individual transportation projects were being studied and planned in the I-70 corridor in the Study Area. It became evident that a corridor-wide vision was needed to help guide and prioritize those and future projects so that together they could effectively address transportation issues on I-70 in a cohesive way. This PEL Study was initiated to set a vision and a strategic plan for the future of the I-70 corridor in the St. Louis Region, from Wentzville (Route Z) to North Broadway in the City of St. Louis where the interstate's express lanes end. The purpose of this PEL Study was to establish a long-term vision for the corridor and identify conceptual strategies to achieve that vision that can be refined and evaluated under specific projects when they are advanced to the NEPA planning phase.

b. Provide the corridor vision, objectives, or purpose and need statement.

The vision for the I-70 corridor in the PEL Study Area is to provide a safe, well-maintained, interstate facility offering reliable mobility for all users into the distant future. The purpose of this PEL Study was to investigate and identify the transportation problems in the I-70 corridor and to recommend transportation improvements, solutions, and strategies that would:

- increase safety on the corridor for all users;
- manage existing and future traffic congestion;
- improve efficiency and reliability of freight movement;
- address substandard bridges, and identified deficiencies in other physical assets; and
- improve multi-modal connections within and between communities and employment centers located on either side of the interstate.

Please refer to Chapter 2.0 of this report for more detail about the corridor vision, needs, goals, and Purpose and Need.

c. What steps will need to be taken during the NEPA process to make this a project-level purpose and need statement?

The Purpose and Need developed under this PEL Study was developed to address transportation needs identified and to achieve the overall vision for I-70 in the PEL Study

Corridor. Under future NEPA studies for specific projects, a more specific Purpose and Need statement will need to be developed to address the specific needs of the project, while remaining generally consistent with this Study's Purpose and Need in order for individual projects to collectively achieve the overall vision established for the PEL Study Corridor. Chapter 5.0 of the PEL includes evaluation criteria for use on future projects in determining how well they align with the vision for the Study Corridor.

6. Range of Alternatives Considered, Screening Criteria, and Screening Process

a. What types of alternatives were looked at? (Provide a one or two sentence summary and reference document.)

The goal of this PEL Study was to set a vision and strategic plan for the future of the I-70 corridor in the Study Area. As such, specific project alternatives were not identified. Rather, a higher-level approach was taken to identify conceptual strategies from which future projects can be developed and alternatives evaluated to collectively achieve the vision set for the Study Corridor. This PEL Study evaluated a broad range of conceptual strategies at the segment and corridor level. These strategies included Corridor Management/Technology Concept, System Optimization Concept, Mainline Capacity Concept, Freight Concept, Transit Concept, Alternate/Parallel Route Concept, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Concept. Refer to Chapter 4.0 and Appendix D of this PEL Study for more information.

b. How did you select the screening criteria and screening process?

The criteria and process were determined through a collaborative series of workshops with the TCIG. The TCIG selected a linear process in which goals were developed to address each identified transportation need and conceptual strategies were developed to address each transportation goal. The transportation goals were supplemented with impact minimization goals so the advantages and disadvantages of each conceptual strategy could be evaluated. The goals functioned as the screening criteria. The intent was to prioritize strategies based on how well they addressed the collective goals of each segment. Refer to Chapter 4.0 of the PEL Study for details.

c. For alternative(s) that were screened out, briefly summarize the reasons for eliminating the alternative(s). (During the initial screenings, this generally will focus on fatal flaws.)

Only strategies that met the Purpose and Need at a basic level were considered in this PEL Study. Therefore, no strategies were screened out. All strategies were considered potentially feasible solutions, and were prioritized into three categories: High Priority Strategies, Other Recommended Strategies, and Long-Term Strategies for Future Consideration. Both corridor-wide and segment-specific strategies were considered. Refer to Chapter 4.0 of the PEL Study for details.

d. Which alternatives should be brought forward into NEPA and why?

As noted above, all strategies developed under this PEL Study were considered potentially feasible, and none were eliminated. All strategies were prioritized according to three categories – High Priority Strategies, Other Recommended Strategies, and Long-Term Strategies for Future Consideration. All strategies can be used as a foundation for the development, screening, and evaluation of alternatives for specific projects under future NEPA studies. For future projects with a purpose and need derived from this PEL Study, the process and documentation in the Study allows alternatives that must be analyzed in the NEPA process to be narrowed.

e. Did the public, stakeholders, and agencies have an opportunity to comment during this process?

Agencies and stakeholders had the opportunity to provide comments during the PEL Study process regarding the approach to the PEL Study, establishing a vision for the PEL Study Corridor, and developing and screening strategies. The public had the opportunity to participate in the process through public meetings and other outreach activities, as described in Chapter 3.0 of this PEL Study.

f. Were there unresolved issues with the public, stakeholders, and/or agencies?

- Some stakeholders voiced the desire for more specific alternatives to come out of this PEL Study instead of the conceptual strategies that were developed.

- During the July 2018 elected officials briefing, St. Charles County voiced their opinion that adding mainline capacity should be a high-priority strategy in I-70 through St. Charles County. The results of the prioritization process classify adding mainline capacity as a Long-Term Strategy for Future Consideration.

7. Planning Assumptions and Analytical Methods

a. What is the forecast year used in the PEL Study?

The forecast year used in this PEL Study was 2045.

b. What method was used for forecasting traffic volumes?

EWG's regional travel demand model (including the 2045 land use forecasts) was used for population and traffic projections.

c. Are the planning assumptions and the corridor vision/purpose and need statement consistent with the long-range transportation plan?

Yes. The I-70 corridor vision statement and the Purpose and Need were developed based on stakeholder and public input, and goals from local, regional, and statewide plans

including the long-range transportation plan. Refer to Chapter 2.0 of this PEL Study for details.

d. What were the future year policy and/or data assumptions used in the transportation planning process related to land use, economic development, transportation costs, and network expansion?

This PEL Study assessed assumptions made under the No-Action Alternative, current local and regional studies, and the EWG fiscally constrained travel demand model. The No-Action Alternative included transportation infrastructure projects in the PEL Study Corridor that are reasonably foreseeable or in progress. Current local regional studies were evaluated to make sure that conceptual strategies developed under this PEL Study were consistent with those plans. The EWG travel demand model, which is based on the latest planning assumptions, was used for population and traffic projections to help assess future traffic volumes, population increases, and development trends.

8. Resources (wetlands, cultural, etc.) Reviewed. For each resource or group of resources reviewed, provide the following:

a. In the PEL Study, at what level of detail was the resource reviewed and what was the method of review?

As noted in the *I-70 PEL Study Conditions Assessment Report,* resources considered in this PEL Study were selected based on PEL Study Area characteristics (described in Section 6.1 of this PEL Study) and regulatory requirements that are generally consistent with NEPA, its implementing regulations, and FHWA and MoDOT guidelines. The selected resources were analyzed to consider avoidance or minimization measures in the conceptual strategy development process and to assess the importance of each resource to the PEL Study Area, which could affect decision making. Resources evaluated were those that were considered as potential "red flags" with separate regulatory drivers, such as the Endangered Species Act or Clean Water Act; or resources considered to be typically of concern to the general public. Resources evaluated in this PEL Study are listed below:

- Air quality
- Sensitive noise receptors
- Cultural resources
- Parks, wildlife refuges, and recreation facilities
- Public and large commercial facilities
- Sites with hazardous substances
- Wetlands and other waters of the U.S.

- Water resources
- Other biological resources
- Land cover and land use
- Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice

The environmental resource information presented in this PEL Study is similar to, but less detailed than, the information typically presented in NEPA documents. A PEL Study typically occurs before detailed information about a project and impacts from that project are available. A desktop analysis was completed for each resource listed above, using readily available data from MoDOT, EWG, the Missouri Resource Assessment Partnership (MoRAP) (which provided fine resolution land cover data), and other agencies and stakeholders. For more information about the level of detail and review methodology used for this PEL Study, please refer to Chapter 3.0 of the *I-70 PEL Study Conditions Assessment Report*, and Chapter 6.0 of this PEL Study.

b. Is this resource present in the area and what is the existing environmental condition for this resource?

All the resources listed previously are present in the PEL Study Area. Please refer to Chapter 3.0 of the *I-70 PEL Study Conditions Assessment Report*, and Chapter 6.0 of this PEL Study for details about the existing conditions for these resources.

c. What are the issues that need to be considered during NEPA, including potential resource impacts and potential mitigation requirements (if known)?

For issues that need to be considered during the NEPA process, please see Chapter 6.0 of this report. The following key resources have been identified: Environmental Justice, floodplains/floodways, traffic noise, air quality, wetlands, water quality, sinkholes, historic resources, park and recreation resources, Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) resources, hazardous materials, and cemeteries.

d. How will the data provided need to be supplemented during NEPA?

The environmental data collected and evaluated in this PEL Study was obtained through a desktop survey using available agency and GIS data; no field surveys were conducted. Under future NEPA studies, updated data will need to be collected for these resources, as well as other resources not evaluated under this PEL Study (such as visual conditions, farmlands, and energy), and field surveys will need to be conducted to confirm existing conditions within the PEL Study Area, including Section 106 surveys, etc. In addition, any new regulations or changes in federally-listed threatened/endangered species, etc. that have occurred at the time future NEPA studies are initiated will require additional assessment. Chapter 6.0 of this PEL Study outlines next steps recommended during future NEPA studies.

9. List resources that were not reviewed in the PEL Study and why? Indicate whether or not they will need to be reviewed in NEPA and explain why.

As noted above, resources evaluated in this PEL Study were those considered as potential "red flags," such as the Endangered Species Act or Clean Water Act; or resources considered typically of concern to the general public, and are listed previously. Other resources not evaluated, such as visual conditions, farmlands, and energy, as well as cumulative impacts, will need to be evaluated in future NEPA studies. In addition, consultation with resource agencies (e.g., State Historic Preservation Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) will need to be performed under future NEPA studies.

10. Were cumulative impacts considered in the PEL Study? If yes, provide the information or reference where it can be found.

Because of the high level of conceptual strategies developed under this PEL Study, cumulative impacts were not considered.

11. Describe any mitigation strategies discussed at the planning level that should be analyzed during NEPA.

Potential mitigation measures discussed in the PEL Study that should be analyzed during NEPA include:

- During NEPA and final design, seek to avoid and minimize impacts to existing development, historic resources, floodplains, wetlands/waters, caves and sinkholes, and Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) properties.
- Work with local planners to incorporate proposed improvements into future land use plans.
- Provide opportunity for participation and input from Environmental Justice (EJ) populations in the project development process. Work to avoid and minimize effects to EJ populations.
- Comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act).
- Coordinate with the appropriate environmental resource agencies.
- For effects to identified hazardous waste sites, evaluate dust suppression, pump and treatment of ground water, or soil remediation.
- If projects result in noise impacts, implement noise abatement measures if found reasonable and feasible.

12. What needs to be done during NEPA to make information from the PEL Study available to the agencies and the public? Are there PEL study products which can be used or provided to agencies or the public during the NEPA scoping process?

All documentation prepared under this PEL Study will be maintained by MoDOT via their website and made available to stakeholders and the public for future NEPA studies.

13. Are there any other issues a future project team should be aware of?

a. Examples: Utility problems, access or ROW issues, encroachments into ROW, problematic land owners and/or groups, contact information for stakeholders, special or unique resources in the area, etc.

It is recommended that future project teams be aware of the following items:

- Environmental Justice (EJ) communities are located adjacent to the I-70 corridor throughout most of the PEL Study Area.
- Several sinkholes and cave resources are located in the central portion of Segment 2. The surface above and near caves should be managed with those resources in mind because the two are interconnected. Project designs would need to be modified as warranted to mitigate adverse impacts to cave resources. Sinkhole and cave locations will need to be considered as required for placement of support structures and drainage features.
- Common concerns voiced by the public and agencies included safety (lane widths, lengths of on- and off-ramps, lighting, wayfinding, and pedestrian access), and usage and access (especially the use of one-way outer roads in the St. Charles County portion of the PEL Study Area, and the best use of the express lanes in the City of St. Louis).
- Freight access and movement was consistently identified as a priority and needs to be considered by future project teams.
- Active stakeholder engagement was key to the PEL Study process, and participation by the numerous municipalities and agencies within the PEL Study Area remained high overall throughout the process. As such, it is recommended that future project teams continue a high level of engagement with those entities in future NEPA studies, as well as major employers and nonprofits such as Great Rivers Greenway. Further, stakeholder participation varied along the Study Corridor. For example, participation in the online survey was higher in the western end of the Study Corridor than the eastern end, where attending regularly scheduled aldermanic meetings proved more effective. Therefore, it is also recommended that future project teams develop an outreach program that employs a variety of methods,

including attendance at aldermanic meetings in the City of St. Louis and council meetings in St. Louis and St. Charles counties, depending on the project location.

- No groups voiced strong support or opposition to the PEL Study.
- The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) facility located west of the PEL Study Area near the eastern terminus of Segment 5 will likely be open for business during future studies, adding an additional major employer near the PEL Study Corridor.
- Growth in the St. Charles area should be considered, including an ongoing study at Route N and anticipated growth from projects along that corridor.
- The cumulative impacts from other upcoming projects in the Wentzville area should be considered.
- A new interchange on I-70 will be constructed at David Hoekel Parkway in Wentzville. Construction is expected to begin in late 2019.