



CHAPTER V

Comments and Coordination

The Interstate 70 Improvement Study is an effort by the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) to determine how to improve the safety and efficiency of travel on 199 miles (320 kilometers) of I-70 between Kansas City and St. Louis, Missouri. The I-70 First Tier Study, launched in January 2000 and completed in December 2001, identified widening and reconstructing the existing I-70 as the preferred approach to improving the I-70 Corridor. The I-70 First Tier Study is available for review online at www.ImproveI70.org. A copy of the First Tier EIS Summary is included in Appendix A.

In December 2001, the I-70 First Tier Study findings were accepted by MoDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This formal acceptance, published in the form of a Record of Decision (ROD), explains the study's findings and any commitments that were made as a result of the study. The ROD is also available for review online at www.ImproveI70.org.

The Second Tier Studies, initiated in March 2002, further define the location and configuration of improvements to be made. This document is part of the Second Tier process. Future phases will focus on detailed design and construction.

The Missouri Department of Transportation has provided numerous specific and ongoing opportunities for public input during the I-70 Second Tier Study for Section of Independent Utility (SIU) 1. Through the study's public involvement program, interested agencies, local units of government and the general public have provided comments and input into the development and evaluation of I-70 alternatives. Specifically, the public involvement program was implemented to accomplish the following objectives:

- Inform the public about the proposed project, its objectives, purposes, alternatives, activities and importance to the area.
- Involve residents, interested groups, state and local government and relevant public agencies in the study process.
- Monitor and address the respective viewpoints of residents, interest groups and public entities.
- Educate interested community members regarding the Environmental Assessment (EA) process.
- Create a visual and written record of the study from initiation through completion.

Chapter V provides a summary of the agency coordination and public involvement that occurred through completion of this Draft EA. Copies of pertinent public correspondence have been included in Appendix H.

A. Public Involvement

The I-70 Second Tier Study for SIU 1 has employed a number of public involvement tools since the inception of the Study in March 2002. The public involvement program goal for the SIU 1 Second Tier Study is as follows:

Goal

To create informed consent for the reconstruction and widening of I-70 in SIU 1 through honest, simple and straightforward communications with potentially affected interests and the interested public.

Objective

The objective identified to meet the above goal for the I-70 SIU 1 Second Tier Study is:

- Support for reconstruction and widening of I-70 at the conclusion of the study measured through input received and media coverage.

Strategies

Strategies developed to guide the process in achieving the objective are:

- Explain the problem.
- Be first source of negative information.
- Maximize the use of existing organizations and communications channels, including mass media.
- Avoid confusion with I-70 Major Investment Study (MIS). (The I-70 MIS began evaluating methods of improving the safety and efficiency of travel on the Interstate through Jackson County prior to the start of this study. That work concluded in the fall of 2004).

The following tools have been employed to support public involvement in the I-70 Second Tier EA:

- Project Web site and e-mail;
- Public meetings;
- P.O. Box and hot line;
- Mailing lists;
- Media relations;
- Newsletters and updates; and
- Stakeholder coordination and briefings.

1. Internet – Project Web Site and E-Mail

A Web site and e-mail are perhaps the most convenient of all avenues for public involvement. Individuals with Internet access can visit the Web site at their convenience, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Web site for the Second Tier Studies, located at www.ImproveI70.org, went live in June 2002. The Web site has been maintained throughout the I-70 Second Tier Studies. The “Local Focus” area of the Web site listed public meetings, posted meeting handouts and summaries, maps, exhibits and general updates throughout the course of the project. Users have also been able to use the “Contact Us” section of the Web site to sign up for the e-mail or mailing lists, and to send questions and comments to the study team.

The Web site has been promoted through media relations and at public meetings. The Web site address has also been promoted through project team presentations and general correspondence.

Over 26 SIU 1-specific comments and questions were received through the Web site or by e-mail. Each inquirer received an acknowledgement from the Public Involvement Consultant, followed, when appropriate, by a more detailed e-mail or telephone response from the Section Engineering Consultant. Most inquiries expressed concern regarding (1) when construction might begin and (2) how would the proposed improvements impact their property.

2. Public Meetings

For purposes of this document, public meetings are defined as sessions open and accessible to all members of the public.

Public meetings provide qualitative rather than quantitative data. They draw on a self-selecting population and are not projectable to a larger audience. However, public meetings serve several important purposes:

- Public meetings offer citizens and organizations the opportunity to speak, one-on-one, with engineers, planners and other personnel conducting the study.
- Because public meetings generally attract a motivated audience with a unique and intense interest in the study’s subject, they provide the study with an opportunity to become acquainted with individuals and organizations most likely to continue their involvement throughout the process.
- Public meetings offer engineers and planners the opportunity to hear first-hand the concerns of those who might be affected by a project.
- Public meetings typically prompt media coverage, which is necessary for broad awareness of the project. The I-70 Second Tier EA benefited from coverage in both the print and electronic media.

Two public meetings were conducted: the first meeting was from 4 to 7 p.m. on November 18, 2003 at the Sermon Center in Independence, Missouri and the second meeting took place from 4 to 7 p.m. November 19, 2003 at the Oak Grove Civic Center in Oak Grove, Missouri. Public officials were given an opportunity to review the materials and ask questions from 2 to 3 p.m. each day, prior to the public being invited. A presentation was also made to the Mid-America Regional Council’s (MARC) Total Transportation Policy Committee (TTPC) on the morning of November 18, 2003 that included an overview of the study and invitation to the public meetings.

Conceptual aerial plan/profile sheets of the SIU 1 Project Area, including interchange alternatives, were set up for viewing. In addition, text and graphic exhibits, as well as videos which presented information about the overall project and specific aspects of the project, were also set up for viewing. Information regarding the I-70 MIS was also available to show the public the interrelationship between the two studies.

A series of stations were placed throughout the room, providing members of the public the reasons why the study was being conducted, data and analysis from that phase of the study and opportunities for written comments. Study team members were at each station to answer questions and listen to public feedback on the I-70 alternatives.

Both public meetings were well attended, with the Oak Grove meeting generating more participants than the Independence meeting. The public had the opportunity to ask questions on an informal basis and then offer written comments before they left the meeting. The study team received 42 comment forms as a result of the public meetings, a letter from the City of Blue Springs, and an e-mail from the City of Odessa.

The following table provides attendance figures and location details for each public meeting.

Table V-1: Attendance at I-70 Second Tier, SIU 1 EA Public Meetings

Location	Date	Attendance
Independence	11/18/2003	50
Oak Grove	11/19/2003	110

The ability to discuss, one-on-one, how the proposed improvements might impact stakeholders allowed the study team to understand in more detail the concerns of stakeholders. This information was invaluable in assisting the study team to develop I-70 widening alternatives that minimized impacts wherever possible.

a. Promotional Activities

Promotional activities for both of the Public Meetings were combined.

Mailings

Postcard notices were sent to approximately 2,500 homes on the SIU 1 mailing list to notify residents of the date, time and location of the public meetings. One hundred and six invitations were sent to public officials throughout the SIU 1 Project Area in Jackson and Lafayette Counties. Public officials included city council members, county commissioners, emergency services, fire department and law enforcement directors and public works officials. Newsletters were distributed throughout the SIU 1 Project Area.

Media Relations

Prior to the public meetings, a news release was sent by MoDOT to media outlets throughout the SIU 1 Project Area. Radio advertising was also placed on a variety of local stations to alert commuters of the meetings.

Web Site

From its February 28, 2000 inception to the Improve I-70 Web site, www.ImproveI70.org, included information about the date, times and location of the public meetings.

b. Questionnaires and Comments

Questionnaires were made available at public meetings and 42 questionnaires were completed for both public meetings. A summary of the comments received from participants at the public meetings can be found in Section B.1 of this chapter.

3. Post Office Box and Hot Line

The post office box and hot line have been promoted through media, on the Web site, in study publications and presentations.

There were 41 telephone calls and four letters received during the course of gathering information and input for the SIU 1 Draft EA. As with e-mails, concerns were expressed about how the proposed improvements might impact stakeholders' property and when the proposed improvements might occur.

4. Mailing Lists

Stakeholders with properties in the SIU 1 Project Area were included on the mailing list, as were all who requested being on the list after attending meetings, visiting the Web site, or otherwise expressing an interest in the project. Every person on the mailing list was sent postcard notices of upcoming public meetings and the Improve I-70 newsletter, *Momentum*, sent about every six months. The mailing list grew to 2,527 names by September 2004.

5. Media Relations

Media relations efforts on behalf of the I-70 Second Tier Draft EA have been conducted cooperatively between the study team and MoDOT. Media relations efforts have consisted of the following activities:

- Improve I-70 Media Manuals were distributed to media outlets throughout the corridor in December of 2002.
- A media release was distributed prior to the two public meetings for SIU 1 in November 2003. Generally, media releases were prepared by the public involvement team, reviewed by members of the study team and were distributed by MoDOT using the department's media list.
- Media packets were provided at public meetings. Packets included 8.5" x 11" reprints of exhibits as well as copies of media releases and fact sheets.

6. Newsletters and Updates

Three Improve I-70 newsletters, called *Momentum*, have been published and distributed to those on the project mailing list. They were mailed to potentially affected property owners along

the I-70 corridor and to persons in the project database. They were also distributed at public meetings and posted on the Web site. Each newsletter included corridor-wide information as well as specific information on different aspects of the I-70 Study.

7. Stakeholder Coordination and Briefings

Twelve special briefings have been conducted for 10 stakeholder groups to date. Table V-2 summarizes stakeholder briefings conducted to date. A summary of the comments received from participants at the Stakeholder Briefing meetings can be found in Section B.2 of this chapter. Additional briefings may take place between the publication of the Draft and Final EA.

Table V-2: Stakeholder Briefings Conducted

Stakeholder Group	Date of Briefing
City of Odessa, Missouri	6/19/2003
City of Grain Valley, Missouri	8/7/2003
City of Oak Grove, Missouri	8/7/2003
Odessa Focus Group	8/7/2003
City of Independence, Missouri	10/21/2003
City of Bates City, Missouri	10/21/2003
City of Oak Grove, Missouri	10/21/2003
Oak Grove Citizens Group	10/29/2003
City of Blue Springs, Missouri	11/5/2003
MARC Total Transportation Policy Committee	11/18/2003
City of Oak Grove, Missouri	5/5/2004
Oak Grove Chamber of Commerce	5/11/2004

A presentation was also made to the MARC TTPC on the morning of November 18, 2003 that included an overview of the study and invitation to the public meetings.

8. Future Public Involvement Activities

Upon completion of the Draft EA by MoDOT and other regulatory agencies, MoDOT intends to conduct a public hearing to discuss the Draft EA. Notification of the public hearing will be provided through mass media outlets, the Improve I-70 Web site, and specific mailings to all parties that have previously provided comments to MoDOT during the development of the Draft EA.

B. Summary of Scoping Comments/Public Input

1. Public Meeting Comments

Section of Independent Utility 1 is located in Jackson and Lafayette Counties which results in the SIU 1 Project Area being used for through traffic as well as significant commuter traffic during the morning and evening rush hours. Consequently the majority of the comments revolved around interchange concepts, their impacts on property, the ability to readily access and exit I-70 and the number and location of interchanges that could more readily facilitate

growth for communities east of Kansas City. A total of 42 comment forms were filled out and returned to the study team from the two public meetings.

a. Summary of Comments from the Blue Springs Public

Table V-3 summarizes the comments received from the Blue Springs public who attended the public meetings on either November 18, 2003 or November 19, 2003.

Table V-3: Summary of Comments from the Blue Springs Public

Dates	Agenda	Key Themes From Public Input
November 18, 2003 November 19, 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show and seek input on Woods Chapel Road interchange alternatives. • Show and seek input on Route 7 interchange alternatives. • Show and seek input on Adams Dairy Parkway interchange configuration. • Show and seek input on urban roadway for I-70. • Identify other potential issues in the proposed SIU 1 Project Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire to lessen impacts on adjacent businesses at Woods Chapel Road interchange. • Support for single point urban interchange (SPUI) at Woods Chapel Road. • Significant concern about noise pollution associated with widening I-70 and “jake brakes”. • Perceived need to minimize/eliminate medians on Highway 7.

b. Summary of Comments from the Grain Valley Public

Table V-4 summarizes the comments received from the Grain Valley public who attended the public meetings on either November 18, 2003 or November 19, 2003.

Table V-4: Summary of Comments from the Grain Valley Public

Dates	Agenda	Key Themes From Public Input
November 18, 2003 November 19, 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show and seek input on Highway AA/BB interchange alternatives. • Show and seek input on urban roadway for I-70. • Identify other potential issues in the proposed SIU 1 Project Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal support for SPUI with different signal configuration and folded diamond interchange. • Concern about proposed frontage roads around City park. • Perceived need to make I-70 a toll road with emphasis on commercial/truck traffic.

c. Summary of Comments from the Oak Grove Public

Table V-5 summarizes the comments received from the Oak Grove public who attended the public meetings on either November 18, 2003 or November 19, 2003.

Table V-5: Summary of Comments from the Oak Grove Public

Dates	Agenda	Key Themes From Public Input
November 18, 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show and seek input on Route H/F interchange alternatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More support for SPUI versus diamond interchange at Route H/F.
November 19, 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show and seek input on Fourth Street versus Fifth Street frontage road alternatives. Show and seek input on urban versus rural roadway for I-70. Identify other potential issues in the proposed SIU 1 Project Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for Fourth Street versus Fifth Street for frontage road. Support for urban roadway. Concern about noise pollution associated with widening I-70. Concern about frontage road configurations.

d. Summary of Comments from the Bates City Public

Table V-6 summarizes the comments received from the Bates City public who attended the public meetings on either November 18, 2003 or November 19, 2003.

Table V-6: Summary of Comments from the Bates City Public

Dates	Agenda	Key Themes From Public Input
November 18, 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show and seek input on Highway D/Z interchange alternatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for urban roadway extended to Oak Grove.
November 19, 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show and seek input on McDaniel Road interchange alternative. Identify other potential issues in the proposed SIU 1 Project Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern about stormwater runoff from widening of I-70. Support for widening I-70 to Odessa.

e. Summary of Comments from the Odessa Public

Table V-7 summarizes the comments received from the Odessa public who attended the public meetings on either November 18, 2003 or November 19, 2003.

Table V-7: Summary of Comments from the Odessa Public

Dates	Agenda	Key Themes From Public Input
November 18, 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show and seek input on interchange configurations and locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for County Road 96/Johnson Road interchange.
November 19, 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify other potential issues in the proposed SIU 1 Project Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for Route WW interchange. Support for Route 131 interchange. Slight support for widening I-70 to Odessa.

f. MoDOT Route F Public Meeting

The Missouri Department of Transportation District 4 hosted a public meeting for the Route F project in Oak Grove on October 26, 2004. Members of the Improve I-70 study team attended the public meeting to view the latest Route F developments and how these improvements might impact the I-70/Route F interchange alternatives being developed in the I-70 Draft EA.

g. Interstate 70 Second Tier, SIU 2 Public Meeting

A public meeting was held on December 2, 2004 to share alternatives being developed by the Improve I-70, SIU 2 study team, immediately east of the Improve I-70, SIU 1 study area. Improve I-70 alternatives at Odessa, located within the SIU 1 study area, were displayed at the SIU 2 public meeting.

h. General Comments from Public Meeting Participants

The SIU 1 study team received several comments related to the process used to share information and the manner in which it was shared. Comments received from public meeting participants were:

- “Thanks.”
- “I like what I have seen tonight at this meeting.”
- “Thanks for the update.”
- “I am impressed with the concepts that would improve flow.”
- “I am also happy with the constant information we continue to receive as the project moves forward.”
- “Very good layout and well presented.”
- “Really appreciate this meeting. The staff was very friendly and knowledgeable.”

Figure V-1: Photograph of Public Meeting



Team member Rick Ensz discusses Odessa interchange alternatives at the November 18, 2003 public meeting.

Figure V-2: Photograph of Public Meeting



Team member Mel Millenbruck discusses urban and rural section alternatives.

2. Stakeholder Briefing Comments

The SIU 1 team conducted twelve stakeholder meetings during the preparation of the Draft EA. The majority of those meetings were held with local city officials, both elected and professional staff. The balance of those meetings included briefings with key citizen groups and potentially affected interests.

a. Summary of Comments from the City of Odessa Briefing

Table V-8 summarizes the comments received from the City of Odessa.

Table V-8: Summary of Comments from the City of Odessa Briefing

Dates	Agenda	Key Themes From Stakeholder Input
June 19, 2003 Odessa Community Center Dyer Park 3 attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show and seek input on interchange alternatives. • Identify other potential issues in the proposed SIU 1 Project Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for interchange 1,000 feet east of County Road 96/Johnson Road. • Prefer interchange at Route WW. • Prefer interchanges east and west of Odessa and at Route 131. • Will support elimination of Route 131 interchange if two new interchanges are constructed.

b. Summary of Comments from the City of Grain Valley Briefing

Table V-9 summarizes the comments received from the City of Grain Valley briefing.

Table V-9: Summary of Comments from the City of Grain Valley Briefing

Date	Agenda	Key Themes From Stakeholder Input
August 7, 2003 Grain Valley City Hall 3 attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show and seek input on interchange alternatives. • Identify other potential issues in the proposed SIU 1 Project Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for closing south frontage road near current interchange. • Support all truck stop facilities on north side of I-70. • Support for SPUI. • Interest in potential interchange at I-70 and Pavillion Road. • Interest in closing Highway AA/BB interchange for new interchange further west of Highway AA/BB.

c. Summary of Comments from the City of Oak Grove Briefing

Table V-10 summarizes the comments received from the City of Oak Grove briefing.

Table V-10: Summary of Comments from the City of Oak Grove Briefing

Date	Agenda	Key Themes From Stakeholder Input
August 7, 2003 Oak Grove City Hall 2 attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show and seek input on interchange alternatives. • Identify other potential issues in the proposed SIU 1 Project Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support new interchange at I-70 and Stillhouse Road. • Concern about truck traffic. • Concern about frontage road concepts incorporating Fifth Street.

d. Summary of Comments from the Odessa Community Focus Group

Table V-11 summarizes the comments received from the Odessa Community Focus Group.

Table V-11: Summary of Comments from the Odessa Community Focus Group

Date	Agenda	Key Themes From Stakeholder Input
August 7, 2003 Odessa Community Center Dyer Park 8 attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show and seek input on interchange alternatives. • Identify other potential issues in the proposed SIU 1 Project Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed opinions regarding an interchange at Route WW. • Concern about school bus safety on frontage roads. • Concern about no interchange at Route 131. • Concern about eastern interchange concepts not connecting to any frontage roads.

e. Summary of Comments from the City of Independence Briefing

Table V-12 summarizes the comments received from the City of Independence briefing.

Table V-12: Summary of Comments from the City of Independence Briefing

Date	Agenda	Key Themes From Stakeholder Input
October 21, 2003 Independence City Hall 6 attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show and seek input on interchange alternatives. • Identify other potential issues in the proposed SIU 1 Project Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire no new frontage roads north of I-70 west towards Little Blue Parkway. • Support for roundabouts at Woods Chapel Road interchange. • Support for SPUI at Woods Chapel Road if frontage road were moved further north, north of current storage facility. • Concern about traffic congestion at I-70 and Little Blue Parkway interchange.

f. Summary of Comments from the City of Bates City Briefing

Table V-13 summarizes the comments received from the City of Bates City briefing.

Table V-13: Summary of Comments from the City of Bates City Briefing

Date	Agenda	Key Themes From Stakeholder Input
October 21, 2003 Bates City City Hall 1 attendee: Mayor Shawn Fox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show and seek input on interchange alternatives. • Identify other potential issues in the proposed SIU 1 Project Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Envisioned diamond interchange at McDaniel Road. • Desire for leaving slip ramp at existing interchange in place. • Support for diamond interchange 100 feet east of existing Route D/Z interchange.

g. Summary of Comments from the City of Oak Grove Briefing

Table V-14 summarizes the comments received from the City of Oak Grove briefing.

Table V-14: Summary of Comments from the City of Oak Grove Briefing

Date	Agenda	Key Themes From Stakeholder Input
October 21, 2003 Argus Consulting, Inc. Blue Springs 2 attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show and seek input on interchange alternatives. • Identify other potential issues in the proposed SIU 1 Project Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for diamond interchange at Route H/F using Fifth Street as frontage road. • Concern about truck traffic at interchange. • Concern about too many turning movements at truck stop in southwest quadrant. • Desire adding a right-in/right-out access for truck stop in southwest quadrant.

h. Summary of Comments from the Oak Grove Citizens Group Briefing

Table V-15 summarizes the comments received from the Oak Grove Citizens Group/5th Street Gang.

Table V-15: Summary of Comments from the Oak Grove Citizens Group Briefing

Date	Agenda	Key Themes From Stakeholder Input
October 29, 2003 Carol Taggert residence Oak Grove 4 attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show and seek input on interchange alternatives. • Identify other potential issues in the proposed SIU 1 Project Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned about frontage roads along I-70. • Opposed to Fifth Street being designated a frontage road. • Desire Fourth Street to be extended west to Robinson Street, then north to existing frontage road. • Concern about using frontage roads during emergencies would create internal (City) traffic problems. • Desire properties on both sides of Fifth Street be acquired if Fifth Street is chosen for frontage road.

i. Summary of Comments from the City of Blue Springs Briefing

Table V-16 summarizes the comments received from the City of Blue Springs briefing.

Table V-16: Summary of Comments from the City of Blue Springs Briefing

Date	Agenda	Key Themes From Stakeholder Input
November 5, 2003 Blue Springs City Hall 3 attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show and seek input on interchange alternatives. • Identify other potential issues in the proposed SIU 1 Project Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for SPUI at Wood Chapel Road. • Concern about distance of roundabout from I-70. • Concern about frontage roads near the country club.

j. Summary of Comments from the City of Oak Grove Briefing

Table V-17 summarizes the comments received from the City of Oak Grove briefing.

Table V-17: Summary of Comments from the City of Oak Grove Briefing

Date	Agenda	Key Themes From Stakeholder Input
May 5, 2004 Oak Grove City Hall 2 attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce new City Administrator to the Improve I-70 Project. • Brief new City Administrator on MoDOT District 4 Route F Study. 	

k. Summary of Comments from the Oak Grove Chamber of Commerce Briefing

Table V-18 summarizes the comments received from the Oak Grove Chamber of Commerce briefing.

Table V-18: Summary of Comments from the Oak Grove Chamber of Commerce Briefing

Date	Agenda	Key Themes From Stakeholder Input
May 11, 2004 United Methodist Church, Oak Grove 36 attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief on MoDOT District 4 Route F Study. • Brief on Improve I-70 Project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Questions were asked to get a better understanding of the two projects.

C. Agency Coordination

Resource agency coordination has been ongoing throughout this I-70 Second Tier Study.

1. Scoping and Agency Involvement Process

Resource agency coordination was a priority throughout the Improve I-70 Second Tier Study. The scoping process and agency involvement were discussed at the April 19, 2002 Study Management Group (SMG) meeting held at FHWA's District Office. The SMG was convened to ensure proactive coordination was through regularly scheduled SMG meetings, phone calls, e-mails, correspondence and face-to-face meetings on SIU-specific issues.

Included in the SMG are representatives from MoDOT headquarters and district offices, the General Engineering Consultant (GEC), FHWA, Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), United States Coast Guard (USCG), United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and United States Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS). The following sections summarize the SMG meetings and SIU 1 Management Team meetings.

a. Study Management Group Meetings

Two SMG meetings involving SIU 1 were held during the preparation of the Draft EA. Representatives from MoDOT Headquarters, FHWA, MDNR, MDC, EPA, NRCS, and USACE attended the meetings.

The SMG met on April 19, 2002, August 22, 2002 and February 4, 2003 to discuss the overall status of the project and schedule.

The SMG met on May 20, 2003 where they were updated on program status and schedule, cultural resources, interagency coordination and public involvement. SIU 1 presented the following:

- Overview of SIU 1
- Review of the I-70 First Tier EIS mainline findings
- Comparison of I-70 First Tier EIS versus I-70 Second Tier mainline findings
- Interstate 70 mainline findings
- Interchange alternative screening methodology

- Future steps and schedule
- Answered questions

The SMG met on September 11, 2003 where the group discussed the overall status of the project and schedule. SIU 1 presented the following:

- Overview of SIU 1
- Progress Report - Environmental
- Progress Report – Public Involvement
- Progress Report - Engineering
- Future steps and schedule
- Answered questions

The SMG also met on April 20, 2004 and October 26, 2004 to discuss the overall status of the project and schedule.

b. Section of Independent Utility 1 Management Team Meetings

The SIU 1 study team, which included representatives from the SEC, the GEC, MoDOT Headquarters and District 4, met regularly with staff from MARC and the cities of Blue Springs, Grain Valley, Oak Grove, Bates City and Odessa to determine and study the alternatives developed for eastern Jackson County and western Lafayette County. The group met periodically to review land use and traffic data, widening concepts and emerging alternatives. This collaborative effort provided guidance and insight throughout the process.

2. Cooperating Agency Process

The Federal Highway Administration, USACE, and MoDOT executed an Interagency Partnering Agreement to facilitate processing the environmental documentation for the Improve I-70 Program. A copy of the agreement is included in Appendix E. The agreement stipulates that SIU 1 is to be processed with an EA and that a cooperating agency process should be used. This process includes regular and continuous dialogue among the agencies.

3. Native American Coordination

The Federal Highway Administration has contacted nine indigenous tribes that would have an interest in the SIU 1 Project Area. The nine tribes included: Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa, Sac & Fox Nation of Oklahoma, Sac & Fox nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska, Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, Ote-Missouria tribe of Oklahoma, Osage nation of Oklahoma, Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, and Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma. To date, only the Sac and Fox NAGPRA Confederacy has responded, indicating that the tribe may have inhabited SIU 1 Project Area. The Confederacy asked to be notified immediately should any funerary objects or human remains be unearthed. Appendix E contains an example of the letters sent to the tribes and a copy of the response received.