

CHAPTER 8 – PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND AGENCY COORDINATION

The public and agency involvement program was designed to inform road users, the public, area residents and businesses, and public agencies about the NEPA process and to solicit their feedback. This input was evaluated by the I-69 Ohio River Crossing (ORX) project team and influenced decisions pertaining to the location, alignment, and conceptual design of the I-69 ORX DEIS alternatives.

8.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public involvement program consisted of advisory committees, public meetings, small group meetings, and other outreach and informational tools designed to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to participate in the development of the project. A copy of the Public Involvement Plan is provided in **Appendix C-1**. Comprehensive summaries of advisory committee meetings, public open houses, and other outreach are provided in **Appendix C-2**.

8.1.1 ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

Three public advisory committees, described below, met periodically with the project team and provided valuable knowledge, guidance, and feedback. The River Cities Advisory Committee (RCAC) focused on regional issues, the Environmental Justice (EJ) Subcommittee—a subset of the RCAC—focused on potential disproportionately high and adverse effects to low-income and minority populations, and the Section 106 consulting parties focused on cultural resources.

RIVER CITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The RCAC, consisting of 37 members from Henderson, Evansville, and surrounding counties, met five times to provide input and facilitate discussions regarding the project's development. Meetings focused on the following topics:

- Public scoping process (April 13, 2017)
- Results of the *Screening Report* (July 19, 2017)
- Short list of corridors, future of US 41 bridges, and tolling (September 19, 2017)
- Results of the *Screening Report Supplement* and review of preliminary alternatives (January 31, 2018)
- Updated alternatives and visualizations (June 26, 2018)

The RCAC is expected to reconvene around the publication date of this DEIS and as needed. Summaries of each meeting and a list of RCAC members are found in **Appendix C-5**.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SUBCOMMITTEE

The EJ Subcommittee, a subset of the RCAC, assisted the Project Team in identifying and addressing potential disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and/or low-income

populations and ensuring equitable distribution of the project's benefits and burdens. The 25-member subcommittee met five times and is expected to meet again when the DEIS is published. Meeting topics were:

- Introduction to EJ (June 13, 2017)
- Results of the *Screening Report* (July 19, 2017)
- Short list of corridors, future of US 41 bridges and tolling (September 19, 2017)
- Results of the *Screening Report Supplement* and review of the preliminary alternatives (January 31, 2018)
- Public survey, Community Conversations, tolling mitigation, and updated alternatives (June 18, 2018)

Summaries of each meeting and a list of EJ Subcommittee members are found in **Appendix C-6**.

SECTION 106 CONSULTING PARTIES

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), described in **Chapter 4**, includes a public involvement component, which provides the public with information about the project and its effects on historic properties, seeking public input, and establishing a consultation process. Accordingly, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) invited consulting parties to participate in the Section 106 process for the I-69 ORX project. The consulting parties included representatives of historical societies and local governments, landowners, and individuals with a demonstrated interest in the project, whether because they have a legal or economic relation to the project or affected properties, or an interest in the project's potential effects on historic properties. The consulting parties met three times and played a key role in the following:

- Identifying historic properties that may be affected (May 16, 2017)
- Providing input regarding the potential effects of the project on historic resources (December 12, 2017)
- Assisting in the development of appropriate mitigation measures to resolve adverse effects (July 24, 2018)

A fourth consulting parties meeting is anticipated following publication of the DEIS. Additional information about the consulting parties is available in **Sections 4.5.1. and 4.5.2.**

EVANSVILLE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

The Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization (EMPO) is responsible for coordinating regional planning in the Evansville-Henderson urbanized area, including Vanderburgh, Warrick, and Henderson counties and a small portion of eastern Posey County. It is also responsible for maintaining the region's travel demand model (TDM), demonstrating the region's conformity with National Ambient Air Quality Standards, and distributing federal funds to local public agencies.

The project team met regularly with the EMPO Director and Deputy Director, who also served on the project’s RCAC, EJ Subcommittee, and Interagency Advisory Committee (IAC), to keep them informed of the project’s progress and solicit input. The project team worked with EMPO to update the TDM, extending its forecast year from 2040 to 2045 and adding the ability of the model to consider project tolling scenarios. Project team members regularly attended EMPO’s Policy and Technical Committee meetings to provide updates and asked committee members to review the DEIS.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

To ensure that elected officials stayed informed and had the opportunity to ask questions about the project, the project team held elected officials meetings in Evansville and Henderson prior to public open houses and other project milestones. Elected officials include mayors, state legislators, members of Congress, and county and city council members. Other individuals were included at the request of the elected officials.

8.1.2 PUBLIC MEETINGS

The project team hosted several public meetings at project milestones to keep the public informed and gather feedback.

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

Open houses in Evansville and Henderson were promoted via legal notices in local newspapers, agency ListServes, social media, fliers, media releases, websites, and other outreach tools outlined in **Section 8.1.4**. Three rounds of public open houses were hosted prior to the publication of this DEIS. Each round consisted of two meetings, one in each state, for a total of six open houses. **Table 8.1-1** lists the public open houses hosted for the I-69 ORX project, including date held, location, and number of attendees.



Project team member discusses the preliminary alternatives at the July 2017 open houses.

Each meeting was held in a public space that was accessible for people with disabilities and provided free parking. Meetings consisted of at least one formal presentation, and an open house before and after the presentation to provide attendees the opportunity to view the displays and converse one-on-one with project team members. Meeting summaries which include a list of attendees, handouts, presentations, displays, and agendas, are included in **Appendix C-2**.

Table 8.1-1. Public Open Houses

MILESTONE	DATE	LOCATION	NO. OF ATTENDEES
Project purpose and need, preliminary corridors, and the NEPA process	April 18, 2017; April 20, 2017	Henderson Community College, Henderson, KY; Cedar Creek Elementary, Evansville, IN	207
Release of <i>Screening Report</i> and the short list of corridors	July 31, 2017; August 1, 2017	Crescent Room at Milestones, Evansville, IN; Henderson Community College, Henderson, KY	333
Publication of <i>Screening Report Supplement</i> , with additional details for the preliminary alternatives	February 6, 2018; February 7, 2018	Henderson Community College, Henderson, KY; Benjamin Bosse High School, Evansville, IN	273
Public hearing for the DEIS	To Be Determined	Evansville, IN; Henderson, KY	To Be Determined

The following sections provide additional information on the three rounds of open houses held for the project to date.

APRIL 2017 OPEN HOUSES – PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED, PRELIMINARY CORRIDORS, AND THE NEPA PROCESS

These two public open houses presented the preliminary corridors and provided attendees a chance to provide input and ask questions of the project team. Each meeting was held from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Central Time (CT), with a formal presentation at 5:30 p.m.

Public transportation to the Evansville open house was available via Metropolitan Evansville Transit System (METS) through regular route service. No public transportation service was available to the Henderson open house due to the operating hours of Henderson Area Rapid Transit (HART).

The goals of the meetings were to:

- Update the public on the history of the corridors
- Explain the NEPA process and solicit feedback on the I-69 ORX project’s goals and proposed Purpose and Need Statement
- Present the schedule for the DEIS development
- Present the five preliminary corridors that would be analyzed as part of the development of the *Screening Report* (**Appendix B-1**)

The meeting summary for the April 2017 open houses, which includes all public comments received between March and May 2017, is provided in **Appendix C-2**.

JULY/AUGUST 2017 OPEN HOUSES – RELEASE OF SCREENING REPORT AND SHORT LIST OF CORRIDORS

On July 31 and August 1, 2017, another round of public open houses presented the short list of corridors that would be carried forward into the DEIS for detailed study.

The meetings were held from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. CT, with the formal presentation scheduled at 6:00 p.m. at the suggestion of the EJ Subcommittee. Attendees were able to view displays and interact with project team members.

Public transportation to the Evansville open house was available via METS through regular route service. HART provided a special transit service for the open house, at no cost to passengers, from Third and Main Streets in downtown Henderson to Henderson Community College between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m.

The focus of these open houses was to:

- Summarize the results of the *Screening Report*
- Explain why the West Corridor 1, West Corridor 2, and Central Corridor 1 alternatives were advanced for further study in the DEIS
- Provide details on why East Corridor and Central Corridor 2 alternatives were dismissed from further consideration
- Show preliminary typical sections for each corridor



Open house attendees review the map of I-69 ORX's preliminary alternatives at a February 2018 open house.

The meeting summary for the July/August 2017 open houses is provided in **Appendix C-2**.

FEBRUARY 2018 OPEN HOUSES – RELEASE OF SCREENING REPORT SUPPLEMENT, AND ADDITIONAL DETAILS FOR THE PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES

In February 2018, two public open houses were held to present the *Screening Report Supplement* and additional details on the preliminary alternatives.

The meetings were held from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. CT, with formal presentations given at 5:00 and 6:30 p.m.

The project team shared information from the *Screening Report Supplement (Appendix B-2)*, including:

- Information about the bridge scenarios associated with each proposed corridor
- Number of lanes needed for cross-river traffic
- Potential property impacts
- Total project costs by year of expenditure
- Information on potential funding methods, including the proposed tolling of a new I-69 bridge

The meeting summary for the February 2018 open houses is provided in [Appendix C-2](#).

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

In April and May 2018, the project team hosted a series of “Community Conversations” to gather additional public feedback on the project. The goal of the Community Conversations was to provide a forum for public comment, address questions about the preliminary alternatives and tolling, and to solicit information for use in the identification of potentially disproportionately high adverse effects on EJ (low-income and minority) populations.

Six Community Conversations, three each in Evansville and Henderson counties ([Table 8.1-2](#)), were held. All used an open house format, with members of the public, including residents and business owners, able to drop in as available. To afford convenience to the largest number of attendees, the times and locations of these meetings varied.



Project team member addresses attendees at a Community Conversation in Henderson.

Community Conversations were promoted through 6,000 direct-mail postcards sent to residents within identified EJ U.S. Census Tract Block Groups (CTBGs); fliers, which were sent home with all students in Evansville and Henderson public schools and posted throughout both cities; news media; social media, the project website, and other digital communications; and notifications to advisory groups and local churches.

Table 8.1-2. Community Conversations

LOCATION	DATE	TIME (CT)	NO. OF ATTENDEES
C.K. Newsome Community Center, Evansville, IN	April 3, 2018	5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	14
Henderson Public Library, Henderson, KY	April 11, 2018	5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	60
Red Bank Library Branch, Evansville, IN	April 17, 2018	3:00 – 5:00 p.m.	29
The Gathering Place Senior Center, Henderson, KY	April 18, 2018	10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	57
McCullough Library Branch, Evansville, IN	April 30, 2018	5:30 – 7:30 p.m.	54
Housing Authority of Henderson	May 1, 2018	5:30 – 7:30 p.m.	41

8.1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE OUTREACH

The EJ Subcommittee guided outreach to low-income and minority stakeholders. They helped identify EJ organizations and individuals who represent EJ populations to assist with the

outreach efforts. They also provided recommendations for public involvement strategies and partners who could help engage EJ populations throughout the development of the DEIS.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OUTREACH

Efforts have been and will continue to be made to involve individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) in the development of the project. All public meeting notices offered, upon prior notice, to address any reasonable request for accommodation, including foreign language translation. An “I Read” card was available at the sign-in table at each public open house in case visitors needed to identify their primary language.

Key materials, including handouts and comment cards, were available in English and Spanish at the Fiesta Evansville and Community Conversations.

Contact information for requesting Spanish-language materials is available on the project website.

FALL 2017 OUTREACH

Throughout the project, the project team has sought opportunities to attend local meetings and events where project information could be shared with EJ communities. Many of the meetings and events were recommended by the EJ Subcommittee.

Twenty-one organizations were contacted in the Fall of 2017 and four allowed the project team to participate in one of their events (Table 8.1-3).

Table 8.1-3. Presentations or Events with EJ Partners

EVENT/MEETING HOST	CITY	DATE	# ATTENDEES
Fiesta Evansville	Evansville, IN	October 7, 2017	2,100
The Gathering Place Senior Center	Henderson, IN	October 13, 2017	40
Henderson NAACP	Henderson, IN	October 16, 2017	25
Evansville Promise Zone	Evansville, IN	October 18, 2017	15

In addition, the project team coordinated with multiple organizations for the posting of project information at their location. Fliers and project handouts for public review were placed at the Henderson County Public Library. Fliers with information on the project website and upcoming meetings were placed at or near the entrances of 12 other locations, including grocery stores, transit providers, retail outlets, and government offices.

SPRING 2018 OUTREACH

PUBLIC SURVEY

A public survey was prepared to collect input from residents regarding their use of the existing US 41 bridges and the potential impacts of the project, particularly the effects of various toll scenarios, on low-income and minority populations. In February 2018, surveys were mailed to 4,668 residences within the CTBGs in the project area that were identified as having environmental justice populations (Appendix C-2). The survey was also available online.

A total of 570 completed surveys were received—335 via mail and 235 online. There were 463 surveys from Kentucky, 101 from Indiana, and six from unspecified origins. Seventy-five respondents were identified as low-income based on their reported income and household size and the standards established by the US Department of Health and Human Services. Thirty-eight respondents were identified as minority based on the data provided.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Following the February 2018 open houses and public and business surveys, the project team collected additional public feedback about the preliminary alternatives and tolling scenarios, with an emphasis on reaching EJ populations. The project team hosted Community Conversations in the identified EJ block groups and promoted them extensively to encourage participation. Approximately 250 individuals attended these events.

The goal of the Community Conversations was to gather feedback and questions about the preliminary alternatives and tolling, with an emphasis on identifying potential disproportionately high adverse effects on low-income and minority individuals. More information about the Community Conversations is available in **Section 8.1.2**.

TRI-FEST

The I-69 ORX project team hosted a booth at Tri-Fest, an annual festival in downtown Henderson that draws more than 30,000 attendees, from April 20 to 22, 2018. The I-69 ORX booth displayed all materials available at the Community Conversations. Project-branded tote bags were given to approximately 460 visitors who stopped at the booth to learn more about the project. Fliers were distributed promoting the Community Conversations and encouraging people to submit comments about the preliminary DEIS alternatives, tolling, and other project concerns.

8.1.4 PUBLIC INFORMATION TOOLS AND TARGETED OUTREACH

PROJECT OFFICES

Local project offices opened in March 2017 and continue to serve as hubs for information and communication about the I-69 ORX project. The project offices allow members of the public and representatives from organizations to stop by the offices, view progress, ask questions, and share their input on the project.

The project information center is staffed by a full-time public information coordinator and other members of the project team. The office in Evansville is open Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday and the office in Henderson is open Wednesday and Friday; office hours



The two project information centers are located at 3120 Eagle Crest Drive in Evansville and 1970 Barrett Court in Henderson.

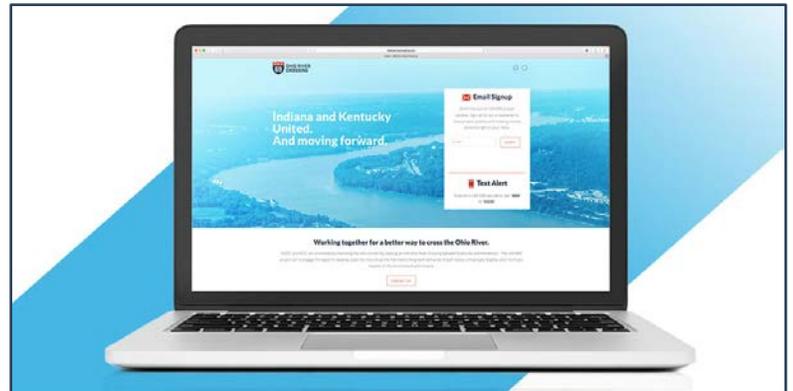
are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at each location. Appointments are also available outside normal business hours. Information about the project offices was provided in project outreach materials.

The project phone number, (888) 515-9756, rings to both office locations. The project e-mail, info@I69OhioRiverCrossing.com, is monitored throughout the work day.

The project offices also serve as meeting places for advisory committee meetings, media briefings, and meetings with other organizations. Outreach materials are available in both offices.

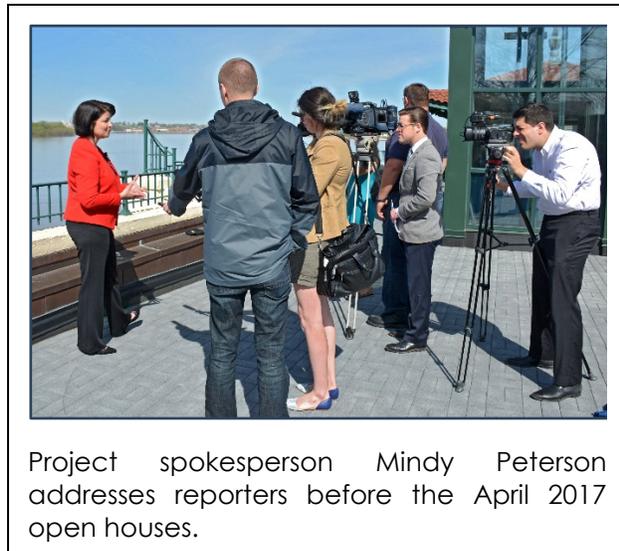
WEBSITE

The I-69 ORX website—www.I69OhioRiverCrossing.com—includes information about the project, maps, materials distributed at public open houses, contact information for the project team and options for submitting questions or comments.



Nearly 10,000 individuals have visited the project website, with most users located in Evansville and Indianapolis, IN, and Henderson, KY. Monthly digital outreach reports are available in **Appendix C-7**.

MEDIA RELATIONS



Project spokesperson Mindy Peterson addresses reporters before the April 2017 open houses.

The project team worked closely with reporters and media outlets in Southern Indiana and Western Kentucky to keep the public informed about the project development.

The project team issued news advisories and/or releases at eight project milestones. As a result of these efforts, information about the I-69 ORX project appeared nearly 400 times in newspapers, television reports, radio reports, and online stories.

In addition to stories that the project team proactively sent to the news media, approximately 20 other articles or stories were

produced on a variety of topics. Monthly media reports are available in **Appendix C-7**.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has allowed the project team to quickly provide project updates and converse with residents and business owners.

The I-69 ORX project social media handles are:

- Facebook – I-69 Ohio River Crossing
- Twitter – I69ORX
- YouTube – I-69 Ohio River Crossing

Nearly 600 people “liked” the I-69 ORX Facebook page and 260 follow the project on Twitter. A social media calendar was developed each month, and information on social media usage and engagement is included in the monthly Digital Outreach reports available in [Appendix C-7](#).

OTHER DIGITAL OUTREACH

Videos were an integral tool for engagement on social media and the project website. More than 20 videos that featured project team members, NEPA process, public meetings, and public involvement have been produced to date.

E-newsletters and SMS text messaging were coordinated with the social media and media outreach, ensuring messaging is consistent across all outreach materials. Both were used to promote public open houses and other meetings, and to share major announcements. More than 750 persons are subscribed to the project e-newsletter and almost 300 receive text messages.

PRINTED MATERIALS

Printed materials were used to inform residents about the project and notify them of upcoming meetings. Outreach materials included the project website address, social media handles, project office locations, the project e-mail address, and a toll-free phone number.

SMALL GROUP PRESENTATIONS

In addition to meetings with the advisory groups and the general public, the project team presented to small groups to help inform them and answer questions about the project. To date, presentations have been given to 15 organizations, including community service clubs, neighborhood associations, and business organizations.

The availability of speakers was publicized via the website, general media, social media, and e-newsletter. Pertinent questions and comments received at those presentations were added to the Public Inquiry Log, provided in [Appendix C-4](#). A list of small-group presentations is available in [Appendix C-8](#).

PROPERTY OWNER CONTACT

Prior to project field surveys, the team developed a property owner database, and “Notice of Survey” letters were mailed to all potentially affected property owners.

SURVEYS

At key stages of the NEPA process, the project team distributed surveys to provide feedback on specific topics:

- A survey was distributed at the April 2017 public open houses that sought feedback on the project's purpose and need and five preliminary corridors. A summary of the survey is included with the meeting summary in **Appendix C-2**.
- A survey was distributed at the February 2018 public open houses that sought feedback on the DEIS alternatives, project impacts, and the potential effects of tolling. A summary of this survey is included with the meeting summary in **Appendix C-2**.
- In February 2018, a public survey was mailed to more than 4,600 project area residences located within EJ CTBGs with a minority or low-income population 25 percent higher than the corresponding rate for the project area. This survey is described in greater detail in **Section 8.1.3**.
- Also in February 2018, postcards were sent to over 900 businesses within 1 mile of the DEIS Alternatives and downtown Henderson to provide directions on how to access the online survey. The online survey gathered information about each business (type of business, number of employees, etc.) and how each business may be affected by the DEIS alternatives. Details regarding this survey are provided in the *Socioeconomic Technical Report* (**Appendix E-1**).

Summaries of the results of each open house survey are included in the public meeting summaries (**Appendix C-2**). Reports for the public and business surveys are provided in **Appendix C-2 and E-1**.

STAKEHOLDER INQUIRIES

A record of stakeholder inquiries has been maintained throughout the NEPA process. Written inquiries (letters, comment forms, or e-mails), phone calls, and requests at meetings or the project offices were logged into the online inquiry database.

More than 650 entries have been filed in the Public Inquiry Log, provided in **Appendix C-3**. A Public Inquiry Report is prepared each month; copies are provided in **Appendix C-4**.

8.2 AGENCY COORDINATION

This section summarizes coordination with federal, tribal, and state permitting and resource agencies. Activities conducted specifically for Section 106 compliance, such as consulting party meetings, are described in **Section 4.5**.

8.2.1 NOTICE OF INTENT AND EARLY COORDINATION

A Notice of Intent (NOI) for the I-69 ORX EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on February 13, 2017. It revised the original NOI that was issued for the project on May 10, 2001. On March 7, 2017, a copy of the NOI was attached to invitation letters sent to identified agencies and tribes with jurisdiction over aspects of the proposed project or with a likely interest in the project (**Table 8.2-1**). These organizations were invited to become cooperating or participating agencies, attend Interagency Advisory Committee (IAC) meetings, and comment on the proposed project. Cooperating agencies include federal, state, and local agencies, other than the lead agencies, as well as Native American tribes, that have jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to

any potential environmental impact involved with the project. Participating agencies are those with an interest in the project. A copy of a sample invitation letter and the list of invitees are provided in **Appendix H-2**.

Table 8.2-1. Agencies and Tribes Invited to be Cooperating or Participating Agencies

AGENCY/TRIBE NAME	COOPERATING OR PARTICIPATING	ACCEPTED OR DECLINED
U.S. Coast Guard Eighth District	Cooperating	Accepted
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Indiana	Cooperating	Accepted
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Kentucky	Cooperating	Accepted
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Louisville District	Cooperating	Accepted
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 4	Participating	Accepted
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5	Participating	Accepted
National Park Service – Midwest	Participating	Accepted
National Park Service – Southeast	Participating	Declined
Natural Resources Conservation Service – Indiana	Participating	Accepted
Natural Resources Conservation Service – Kentucky	Participating	Accepted
Federal Aviation Administration – Great Lakes Region	Participating	Declined
Federal Aviation Administration – Southern Region	Participating	Accepted
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Region 4	Participating	Accepted
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Region 5	Participating	Declined
U.S. Forest Service – Hoosier National Forest	Participating	Declined
U.S. Department of Interior – Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance	Participating	Accepted
U.S. Department of Energy – Office of NEPA Policy and Compliance	Participating	Declined
Miami Tribe of Oklahoma	Participating	Accepted
Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma	Participating	Accepted
Delaware Nation of Oklahoma	Participating	Accepted
United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians	Participating	Accepted
Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma	Participating	Accepted
Eastern Band of Cherokee	Participating	Accepted
Cherokee Nation	Participating	Accepted
Shawnee Tribe	Participating	Accepted
Absentee Shawnee	Participating	Accepted
Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology (State Historic Preservation Officer)	Participating	Accepted
Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of Fish and Wildlife	Participating	Accepted
Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of Water	Participating	Accepted
Indiana Department of Environmental Management	Participating	Accepted
Indiana Geological and Water Survey	Participating	Accepted

AGENCY/TRIBE NAME	COOPERATING OR PARTICIPATING	ACCEPTED OR DECLINED
Indiana Department of Transportation – Office of Aviation	Participating	Declined
Indiana Department of Environmental Management – Office of Water Quality	Participating	Accepted
Indiana Department of Homeland Security	Participating	Accepted
Kentucky Department of Aviation	Participating	Declined
Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection	Participating	Accepted
Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection – Division of Water	Participating	Accepted
Kentucky Division of Forestry	Participating	Accepted
Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources	Participating	Accepted
Kentucky Office of Homeland Security	Participating	Accepted
Kentucky Department for Natural Resources	Participating	Accepted
Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission	Participating	Accepted
Kentucky Heritage Council (State Historic Preservation Officer)	Participating	Accepted
Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet	Participating	Accepted
Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization	Participating	Accepted

8.2.2 INTERAGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

INTERAGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 1

The IAC was formed to enable the project team to consult with multiple agencies, including the cooperating and participating agencies, develop consensus among a wide range of stakeholders, and resolve conflicts to produce positive and effective solutions. The first IAC meeting was held on April 12, 2017 in Evansville. Topics covered included project history, purpose and need, the range of corridors under consideration, the March 17, 2017 *Draft Environmental Methods Memorandum* (INDOT and KYTC 2017), and an overview of environmental issues. Copies of meeting minutes, presentations, and a memorandum dated June 6, 2017 that discusses the comments are provided in **Appendix H-3**. The following summarizes written responses to the materials distributed for the first IAC meeting. Feedback received was incorporated into the project analyses and is provided in **Appendix H-4**.

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) commented on March 6, 2017 that the project is within the range of the federally endangered Indiana bat, gray bat, sheepsnose mussel, and fat pocketbook mussel, as well as the federally threatened northern long-eared bat.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) commented on May 10, 2017 that a permit under Clean Water Act Sections 404 and 401 would be required for the project; that appropriate steps to avoid and minimize impacts to waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) must be documented; and that USACE may only permit the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (LEDPA). Additional discussion of permitting and mitigation occurred.

- Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology (DNR-DHPA) commented on May 10, 2017 that the proposed Section 106 process was sufficient; the purpose and need should consider local motorists unwilling or unable to drive at interstate speeds; the US 41 bridges are likely eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP); and East Corridor would have long-term, adverse impacts on Angel Mounds State Historic Site and should be avoided.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) commented on May 11, 2017 that they had no concerns with the project purpose and need; performance measures should be broadened to include options like bicycle and pedestrian use; and that the project's proposed range of alternatives appeared reasonable. USEPA also encouraged expanding the current hours of operation at the project offices.
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) commented on May 12 and 15, 2017 with information about existing wetland mitigation sites that should be avoided within the project area.

INTERAGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 2

A second IAC meeting was held on July 20, 2017 prior to the release of the draft *Screening Report* (**Appendix B-1**). The *Screening Report* was approved in August 2017. Attendees discussed stakeholder involvement, environmental and screening processes, and *Screening Report* results. Comments were incorporated into the project analyses and are summarized below. Copies of meeting minutes, presentations, and responses are provided in **Appendix H-3**.

- USEPA commented on August 24, 2017 that they recognize the project team's efforts to avoid resources such as wetland mitigation sites, Eagle Slough Natural Area, and NHRP-eligible properties. Because East Corridor had the least wetland and stream impacts, it had potential to be the LEDPA and therefore USEPA recommended retaining it for further study. USEPA also requested a rationale as to why East Corridor would either not meet the project purpose and need or have a fatal environmental flaw.
- IDNR-DHPA commented on September 26, 2017, clarifying their concerns regarding the removal of both US 41 bridges.
- USACE commented on September 6, 2017 that they can only permit the LEDPA, agricultural ditches may or may not be jurisdictional, costs should include estimates for mitigation, and steps must be shown to avoid and minimize impacts to WOTUS. There were additional comments regarding the delineation process.
- Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection, Division of Water commented on August 30, 2017 that a portion of the Ohio River is an Outstanding State Resource Water; the proposed crossings are within Source Water Protection Zone 1, the "critical zone" for Henderson Municipal Water and Sewer's surface water intake; West Alternatives 1 and 2 are within the Wellhead Protection Area of Ellis Park Race Course; and a Groundwater Protection Plan will be needed.

SCREENING REPORT SUPPLEMENT

On February 22, 2018, the *Screening Report Supplement* was submitted to IAC members for their review and comment (**Appendix B-2**). Written responses were documented in a memorandum dated April 2, 2018 (**Appendix H-4**) and are summarized below. These comments were incorporated into the project analyses.

- USACE commented on March 26, 2018 that they appreciate the revisions made to alignments to avoid resources, and visual impacts to NHRP-eligible properties should be considered.
- USEPA commented on March 26, 2018 that they recognize the efforts made to avoid resources and they reiterated comments made in their April 2, 2017 letter regarding East Corridor.
- USFWS commented on March 6, 2018 that they appreciate avoidance efforts and requested status of field work for mussel species.
- IDEM commented on February 23, 2018 that they were pleased with the avoidance of impacts to sensitive resources and requested continued avoidance and minimization measures.
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of Fish and Wildlife (IDNR-DFW) commented on March 26, 2018 that the project will require a Construction in a Floodway Permit, that Eagle Slough Natural Area should be avoided, and that bald cypress trees and a bald eagle nest are within 0.5 mile of the project area. However, due to distance (greater than 1,200 feet), they indicated that no impacts to the bald eagle nest are anticipated. IDNR-DFW recommended either West Alternative 1 or 2 to minimize impacts to wetlands and other habitat.
- IDNR-DHPA commented on March 20, 2018 that there are no aboveground resources in Indiana, but elimination of one or both of the US 41 bridges could have adverse socio-economic impacts on the viability of historic properties, such as historic districts within Evansville.

INTERAGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FIELD TOUR

A third IAC meeting, which included a field tour, occurred on May 24, 2018. The project team gave agency attendees a project update followed by a tour of the project area via minibus. A copy of the meeting summary is provided in **Appendix H-3**.

8.2.3 ADDITIONAL AGENCY COORDINATION

In addition to the IAC meetings and related submittals, the project team coordinated with agencies regarding specific issues. These activities are summarized below.

U.S. COAST GUARD

Coordination was conducted with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) regarding bridge span arrangements and navigational clearances across the Ohio River. In addition to the materials sent

to the IAC, a request for preliminary guidance was sent to USCG on March 2, 2017 (**Appendix H-5**). USCG responded on May 11, 2017 with initial comments regarding potential bridge and pier placements.

A *Navigation Clearance Study* and *Navigation Simulation Modeling Report* were submitted to USCG on October 9, 2017 (**Appendix P-1**). The *Modeling Report* detailed navigation modeling plan development and progress of the study during simulation modeling exercises, and summarized the results of each exercise. The *Clearance Study* detailed proposed horizontal and vertical clearance envelopes based on initial guidance from the USCG, the results of the navigation simulation modeling, and consideration of ongoing project development related to river crossing alternative locations analysis.

USCG responded on November 27, 2017 that the vertical and horizontal clearances presented for Western Alternatives 1 and 2 and Central Alternatives 1A and 1B (Preferred) would be acceptable for a USCG Bridge Permit and would meet reasonable needs of navigation (**Appendix H-5**). Final concurrence would occur following submittal of drawings and opportunities for public input.

IDEM – OFFICE OF LAND QUALITY, PERMITTING BRANCH, ENGINEERING SECTION

On January 26, 2018, coordination occurred with IDEM Office of Land Quality (OLQ) Engineering Section regarding existing landfills beneath I-69 (**Section 4.2.13**) (**Appendix H-6**). IDEM OLQ responded on March 9, 2018 that official permits from them would not be necessary; however, any work in regulated landfills would need written approval from IDEM (**Appendix H-6**). Specifically, any construction activity/post-closure use at landfill/open dump disposal sites would require their approval. Their response described the specific standards that would need to be implemented depending on the type of project impacts. Their response and Post-Closure Uses of Solid Waste Disposal Facilities guidance are included in **Appendix H-6**.

STATE AND TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICERS

Coordination with SHPOs (IDNR-DHPA and KHC) and the Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) listed in **Table 8.2-1** was conducted as part of the IAC and consulting parties meetings. See **Section 4.5.2** for a detailed summary of consulting parties coordination. The full record of consultation activities, list of consulting parties, and consulting party meeting summaries are contained in the Section 106 Documentation, **Appendix L**.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Coordination was conducted with USFWS regarding threatened and endangered species. A meeting was held on September 11, 2017 with the project team and USFWS to discuss the proposed approach to field surveys. The comments received were incorporated into the field studies discussed in **Section 4.4.6** and the technical reports in **Appendices K-1 and K-2**. A copy of the meeting summary is provided in **Appendix H-7**.

Additional coordination was conducted with USFWS regarding the proposed Green River National Wildlife Refuge. A meeting was held on August 7, 2018 to discuss the timeline for development of the refuge and ensure that each project appropriately accounted for the other in

its analysis. Additional information about the proposed refuge is provided in **Appendix N-2**. A copy of the meeting summary is provided in **Appendix H-7**.

EVANSVILLE-VANDERBURGH COUNTY AREA PLAN COMMISSION

The Evansville-Vanderburgh County Area Plan Commission provided written comments for the project on February 20, 2018 (**Appendix H-8**). Regarding land use, the Commission stated that the Future Land Use Map in the *Evansville-Vanderburgh County Comprehensive Plan 2035* recommends the future potential I-69 corridor alternatives for continued agricultural use, with the exception of commercial use at US 41 and Waterworks Road.

Regarding indirect impacts/growth potential, the Commission stated that West Alternatives 1 and 2 could present a redevelopment opportunity along South Kentucky Avenue, north of Veterans Memorial Parkway (**Appendix A-1, Sheet 2 and Appendix A-2, Sheet 2**). Central Alternatives 1A and 1B (Preferred) could improve growth potential along Green River Road north of existing I-69.

The Commission stated that it prefers an alternative that would keep one of the existing bridges open for local traffic, which they believe would provide better local access. They also stated that the need for cross-river redundancy in the event of emergencies.

The Plan Commission stated that there are no plans to extend public utilities south of the existing city limits. They also said that they have drainage concerns related to the Ohio River floodway/floodplain and the “Eagle Slough legal drain,” which is termed “Eagle Creek” throughout this report. They recommended coordination with the county surveyor.

Other items mentioned by the Commission pertained to the proposed Greenway Route (a.k.a. Pigeon Creek Greenway) and the existing Shared Used Agreement with INDOT for I-69 right-of-way. The Commission requested the project accommodate future construction of the trail. They also requested consideration of bicycle and pedestrian access in the new proposed bridge design.

Finally, the Commission requested that the project team coordinate with the Levee Authority Superintendent, local public safety officials, and Sycamore Land Trust (owner of Eagle Slough Natural Area).

EVANSVILLE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

On April 25, 2018, the director of the Evansville Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and the Evansville Fire Chief contacted the project team regarding emergency access issues (**Appendix H-8**). Currently, EMA’s access to the Ohio riverfront is limited, which at times causes response delays to spills, suicide attempts, and other emergencies that require river access. Therefore, they are requesting that the project install a boat dock on the north side of the river to facilitate emergency response access.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF VANDERBURGH

On April 17, 2018, the Vanderburgh County Board of Commissioners sent a letter to the project team stating the Board would like the refurbished or new bridge(s) to include a 10-foot-wide trail on both sides for pedestrian, bicycle, and non-vehicular use, and the trail should be non-tolled.

Additionally, they would like to be notified of any future access changes to Waterworks Road ([Appendix C-3](#)).

MAYOR OF HENDERSON

Mayor Austin of the City of Henderson contacted the project team on May 9, 2018 declining the City of Henderson's offer for adaptive re-use of the existing US 41 bridges due to a lack of connectivity ([Appendix H-8](#)). Additionally, the Mayor commented on the project's draft purpose and need, stating that all three build alternatives should include a minimum of eight lanes of cross-river traffic. Furthermore, the Major stated,

Kentucky and Indiana can and should maintain the existing bridges over the next 30 years through its road fund budgets. (Maintenance on those two bridges is currently in Kentucky's road plan.) Long term maintenance of existing infrastructure should not be piled on to the construction cost for new infrastructure in my opinion.