

CHAPTER 9: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVES

Involving the public early and often is critical to helping a community understand transportation and land use issues so it can, in turn, provide meaningful input to help shape solutions. As reflected throughout this report, from the *US 50 Gateway Study's* onset Dearborn County and OKI agreed that public involvement must be the cornerstone of this effort. To that end, the study team used a variety of techniques to seek input that would help:

- Identify and implement solutions to the chronic traffic congestion on US 50 on the roughly eighteen mile segment in Dearborn County between Stateline Road and State Rt. 62.
- Develop a plan for land use, access management and street layout that increases safety and the overall efficiency of the corridor.
- Coordinate transportation improvements proposed by INDOT's US 50 Environmental Assessment Study with a land use plan that maximizes the economic potential of the US 50 Corridor.

Input was sought from those who could be most affected by study area problems and potential solutions, including commuters, residents, property owners, businesses and the jurisdictions located along the US 50 corridor. The study team also reached out to churches, grocery stores and other locations frequented by low-income and minority populations. The section that follows summarizes the public involvement mechanisms used in this effort.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee met four times to provide input and direction. The committee included representatives from the cities of Aurora and Lawrenceburg; Dearborn County Planning Commission, Administration, Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Initiative; INDOT and OKI. See Appendix C-1: *Advisory Committee Meetings* for meeting summaries and materials.

Area Business Survey

There are 228 business parcels in the study corridor. To gain input from these business owners and managers, a survey was mailed to representatives from each parcel and made available online on OKI's Website. Sixty-six businesses returned the written survey and six others responded online (39% response). See Appendix C-2: *Area Business Survey* for the cover letter and survey sent to area businesses as well as a summary of the findings.

Three Public Meetings

Three public meetings were held during the study. The first meeting, held April 25, 2006, was hosted by INDOT. As a guest participant, the *US 50 Gateway Corridor Study* team presented a study overview and sought input on problems in the study corridor. The US 50 Gateway Study also had an information/discussion station in the open house portion of the meeting. INDOT and its consultants coordinated the promotion of this meeting.

The second public meeting, held July 26, 2006, was an interactive workshop designed to seek input on proposed land use concepts and 400 proposed access management strategies. This meeting was promoted through paid advertisements in the Dearborn County Register and the Journal-Press, news coverage in the Register and discussion on the Dearborn County Administrator's radio commentary. Additionally, 500 flyers were hand distributed to churches, grocery stores, social service agencies and businesses along the corridor to ensure that low income audiences were notified of the meeting.

The third public meeting was held November 2, 2006. Residents were invited to review how the proposed access management changes were adjusted based on public input and additional technical analysis, and to have another opportunity to comment. Draft "cut sheets" – aerial photos on which access management and land use proposals were superimposed – were posted at the open house and then made available for public review at the Dearborn County Plan Commission office and Lawrenceburg Library.

Like before, this meeting was promoted through paid advertisements in the Dearborn County Register and the Journal-Press, news coverage in the Register and

discussion on the Dearborn County Administrator's radio talk show. Additionally, 500 flyers were hand distributed to churches, grocery stores, social service agencies and businesses along the corridor to ensure that low income audiences were notified of the meeting.

Exhibit 9-1: November 2, 2006 Public Open House



See Appendix C-3: *Public Meetings* for summaries of each public meeting, handouts and presentations, comments received, news releases, other publicity materials and related news coverage.

Media Outreach and News Coverage

The local media were viewed as a partner in disseminating information about the study and public meetings. As noted above, the Dearborn County Register, Journal-Press and local radio stations were notified of each public meeting, and each provided news coverage as a result. The Dearborn County Register reaches approximately 8,500 readers and the Journal-Press reaches approximately 6,700 readers, so even if Dearborn County residents did not attend the public meetings, they had opportunity to learn about the study's progress and provide comments. See Appendix C-3: *Public Meetings* for news releases and sample news coverage for each public meeting.

Website

Dearborn County's Website, www.DearbornCounty.org, prominently featured the US Gateway Study in its planning department page. All study materials were posted there, as were public meeting notices. See Exhibit 9-1 for a sample screen from the Website.

Exhibit 9-2: Dearborn County Website

http://www.dearborncounty.org/planning/US_50Gateway.htm

DEARBORN COUNTY, INDIANA
Department of Planning & Zoning

Welcome
Welcome to the U.S. 50 Gateway portion of the Dearborn County Planning & Zoning website! To obtain information concerning advisory committee meetings or public workshops, or, to review materials that have been prepared in conjunction with this study thus far, please click on the links provided below...

The Southeastern Indiana Gateway: U.S. 50 Corridor Transportation and Land Use Plan will build upon and compliment the transportation findings and recommendations to be developed in the INDOT Study. This project will supplement the INDOT Study by looking at the land use opportunities in the corridor, by better defining access management, and by assisting a public discussion that will lead to an appropriate vision for the corridor. The plan will produce recommendations for long-range land use designations, zoning ordinance map and text modifications, and transportation/land use design guidelines for each jurisdiction to consider and adopt. Most important, the final plan will identify specific projects for jurisdictions along the corridor to implement.

U.S. 50 Gateway Study: July 2006
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[Existing Conditions: Access Management](#)
[Existing Conditions: Needs Statement](#)

Contact Information:
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Fax: 812-532-2029

Announcements
Events:
Plan Commission Meeting
Date:
August 28, 2006
Time:
7:00p.m.
Location:
The Commissioners Room in the Dearborn County Administration Building in Lawrenceburg

Recent news
To view and be a part of the Indiana Legislative Town Hall Meetings, please click here...

Website Information
If you have any questions or comments regarding this website, please click here...

http://www.dearborncounty.org/planning/US_50Gateway.htm (1 of 2) 8/12/2006 6:04:22 PM

Property and Business Owner Outreach

As noted above, business owners were surveyed by mail and property owners were notified about the public meetings by flyers, newspaper ads and media coverage. See Appendix C-2: *Area Business Survey* and Appendix C-3: *Public Meetings*. After the potential access management concepts were developed and shared with the public at the July 2006 workshop, the study team walked the corridor from end to end to

review how they would work in this real world application and to research in more detail the issues raised in public comments. As it did so, the study team spoke with several individual property owners to identify solutions that would either improve access or minimize potential adverse effects of changing access to the businesses. The recommendations resulting from this additional analysis and input from property owners were shared at the November 2, 2006 public meeting and discussed with public officials in each of the jurisdictions during meetings held in December, 2006. On January 9, 2007, the US 50 Study Team met with Greendale-area business owners to seek additional comments.

Additionally, the project manager responded to individual phone calls, e-mails and letters from property owners to answer questions and listen to their thoughts about how the proposed access management plan might affect their properties on US 50. See Appendix C-5: *Additional Comments*. A weblog commenting on many topics posted by several concerned citizens routinely announced, on their own initiative, upcoming public meetings for this study.

Presentations

The project manager and OKI presented the preliminary recommendations to zoning officials from throughout the corridor on October 18, 2006, and met with elected and public officials from each of the four affected communities (Aurora, Dillsboro, Greendale and Lawrenceburg) during December 2006. Presentations were also made to OKI's Intermodal Coordination Committee on September 12, 2006 and the OKI Executive Committee on September 14, 2006. Stakeholders included the Dearborn County Commissioners, See Appendix C-4: *Other Stakeholder Meetings*.

Coordination with INDOT

As outlined above, INDOT participated on the Advisory Committee, and the US 50 Gateway Study team participated in an INDOT public meeting in April, 2006. OKI and the project managers also met several times with INDOT and its consultants to share information and coordinate efforts.

CONCLUSION

The public played a key role throughout the *US 50 Gateway Study*, meeting the objectives initially set forth in the Public Involvement Plan to have an open and inclusive approach to seeking public input. The Advisory Committee, other elected and public officials, businesses and general public helped identify solutions to the chronic traffic congestion on US 50, and their input helped shape a plan for desirable land uses, access management and street layout that will increase safety and overall efficiency of the corridor. The study team also coordinated its study efforts with INDOT's.

Businesses participated in a survey mailed directly to their sites, and were contacted individually to determine how they would be affected by proposed access management strategies. Adjustments to the proposals were made based on their input where feasible.

The public participated in three public meetings held at the beginning, middle and end of the study. These meetings were promoted on the internet, in newspaper ads, news releases, media coverage and in flyers distributed to organizations and businesses located throughout the corridor. Presentations were also made to individuals, public officials in the four cities located along the corridor, Dearborn County and OKI. All of this input helped the study team understand community priorities and individual concerns. Adjustments were made where possible as a result.

As the recommendations move forward into future study and implementation phases, the viability and acceptance of each strategy will continue to rely on this commitment to an open and transparent public process.