

I-57/64 & IL 15 - MT. VERNON INTERCHANGE

Jefferson County

Stakeholder Involvement Plan

For Public and Agency Involvement

ROUTE: I-57
SECTION: VARIOUS
COUNTY: Jefferson
JOB NO: P-99-007-20/D-99-043-15

DATE: February 2021
VERSION II

PREPARED FOR:
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DISTRICT NINE, BUREAU OF PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
2801 W MURPHYSBORO ROAD
CARBONDALE, ILLINOIS 62901



PREPARED BY:
CRAWFORD, MURPHY & TILLY, INC.
2750 WEST WASHINGTON STREET
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62702



Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction 3

 1.1 Project Background and History.....3

 1.2 Stakeholder Involvement Plan Goals and Objectives.....4

 1.3 Legal Requirements.....5

2.0 Agency Coordination..... 6

 2.1 Agency Coordination.....6

 2.2 Agency Issue Identification and Resolution7

3.0 Stakeholder Group Organization 7

 3.1 Stakeholder Identification Procedures.....8

 3.2 Project Study Group (PSG)8

 3.3 Community Advisory Group (CAG).....8

 3.4 Implementation9

 3.5 Stakeholder Involvement9

 3.6 Stakeholder Consensus9

4.0 Tentative Schedule of Project Development Activities 10

 4.1 Step One: Stakeholder Identification, Development of the SIP, & Project Scoping.....10

 4.2 Step Two: Project Purpose and Need Development.....10

 4.3 Step Three: Alternative Development.....10

 4.4 Step Four: Preferred Alternative.....11

5.0 Public Involvement Activities 11

 5.1 Stakeholder Activities.....11

6.0 Key Project Development Activities/CSS Process Steps 12

 6.1 Data Collection13

 6.2 Develop Purpose and Need of Project13

 6.3 Develop and Evaluate Alternatives13

 6.4 Determine Preferred Alternative14

7.0 Communication Tools 14

 7.1 Project Identify.....14

 7.2 Newsletters14

 7.3 Project Website.....14

 7.4 Notifications and Advertising.....15

 7.5 Media Briefings15

 7.6 Stakeholder Mailing List.....15

 7.7 Public Comments15

8.0 Stakeholder Involvement Plan Availability and Monitoring/Updates 15

 8.1 Availability of the Stakeholder Involvement Plan15

 8.2 Modifications of the Stakeholder Involvement Plan.....15

9.0 APPENDICES 17

 Appendix A Agencies and Advisory Groups.....17

| | | |
|------------|---|----|
| Appendix B | Schedule of Stakeholder Activities..... | 20 |
| Appendix C | Glossary..... | 22 |
| Appendix D | Dispute Resolution Flowchart..... | 24 |
| Appendix E | Acronyms | 25 |

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background and History

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is performing a Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Study to study alternatives for improvements to the Interstate 57/64 at IL Route 15 Interchange in Mt. Vernon, Illinois. The project study area is as follows: I-57/64 split (approximately 0.8 miles north of IL Route 15) to north of Veteran's Memorial Drive and on IL Route 15 from Davidson Avenue to 42nd Street. See study area outlined in red in Figure 1 below.

The proposed project will involve a detailed study of transportation issues within the project area, while integrating community concerns through an open and comprehensive planning process. Mount Vernon is at the crossroads of two major interstates as well as a major arterial route. The north-south I-57 connects Chicago and Memphis (via I-55 in Missouri), the east-west I-64 connects St. Louis and Louisville, and IL Route 15 is an east-west Illinois State highway. Previous engineering studies completed for the I-57/64 and IL 15 Interchange have shown the need for improved access to and from I-57/64 and IL Route 15 by increasing capacity and reducing accidents.

Although the planning process for this project will begin with a clean slate, stakeholder issues and objectives identified through earlier planning efforts and engineering studies will need to be acknowledged and appropriately considered as part of the current project effort.

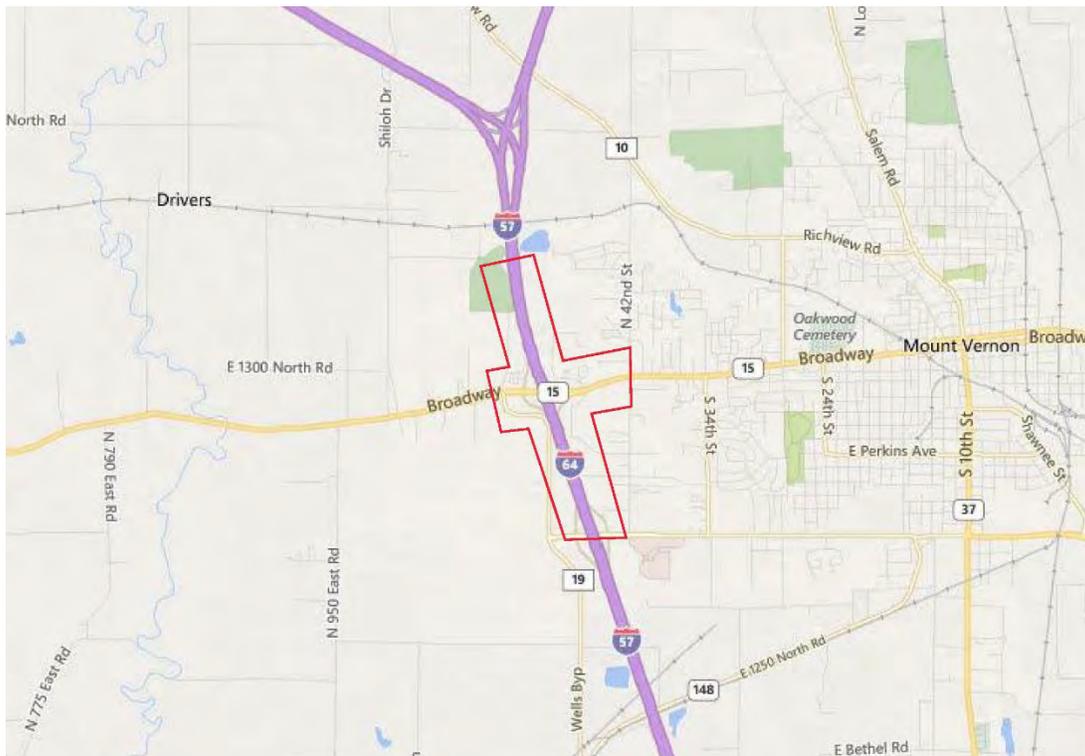


FIGURE 1

I -57/64 & IL 15 INTERCHANGE STUDY AREA MAP

1.2 Stakeholder Involvement Plan Goals and Objectives

The Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP) serves as a guide for implementing stakeholder involvement activities during the I-57/64 and IL 15 Interchange study. Stakeholders include local, regional, state, and federal agency representatives; elected officials; business leaders; property owners; key community leaders; civic/community groups; environmental preservation and interest groups; media outlets; and any other stakeholders as directed by IDOT. The SIP is a framework plan for the execution of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) that is both comprehensive and flexible based on project needs. Therefore, the SIP is subject to revision anytime as events warrant.

The goal of the SIP is to outline a program of activities to actively engage stakeholders throughout the planning process. The objectives of the SIP are to:

- Identify stakeholders
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of the lead agency
- Establish the timing and type of outreach activities with all stakeholders
- Establish stakeholder requirements for providing timely input to the project development process
- Provide an approach for evaluating the effectiveness of the public-participation program and refine, as appropriate, to respond to public needs and concerns

Context Sensitive Solutions

The I-57/64 and IL 15 Interchange study is being developed using the principles of the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process as outlined in Chapter 19 of the Illinois Bureau of Design and Environment Manual. CSS is an interdisciplinary approach that seeks effective, multimodal transportation solutions by working with stakeholders to develop, build and maintain cost-effective transportation facilities which fit into and reflect the project's surroundings (its "context"). Through early, frequent, and meaningful communication with stakeholders and a flexible, creative approach to design, the resulting project will improve safety and mobility for the traveling public.

The CSS approach will provide stakeholders with the tools and information required to effectively participate in the study process. Stakeholders are given an understanding of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, transportation planning guidelines, design guidelines, and the relationship between transportation issues (needs) and project alternatives. In other words, using the CSS process should provide all project stakeholders a mechanism to share comments or concerns about transportation objectives and project alternatives, as well as improve the ability of the project team to understand and address the stakeholders concerns. This integrated approach to problem solving and decision-making will help build community consensus and promote involvement through the study process.

As identified in IDOT's CSS policies, stakeholder involvement is critical to project success. The CSS process strives to achieve the following:

- Understand stakeholder's key issues and concerns
- Involve stakeholders in the decision-making process early and often
- Establish an understanding of the stakeholder's role in the project
- Identify transportation problems which can and should be addressed by the study with stakeholder involvement and concurrence.

- Identify reasonable solutions to address identified transportation problems for the project with stakeholder involvement and general concurrence.
- Consider all modes of transportation
- Set a project schedule
- Apply flexibility in design to address stakeholder's concerns whenever possible

The CSS process will address various potential effects to study area resources including:

- Local businesses and industries
- Schools and educational facilities
- Historic properties
- Cemeteries
- Residential areas (relocation/right of way encroachment)
- Agricultural land
- Green space (preservation/protection interests)
- Traffic and congestion
- Water resources, including lakes, rivers, and wetlands
- Natural resources, including threatened and endangered species

For more information on the project development and CSS process steps, refer to Section 4.0.

1.3 Legal Requirements

The process for this study will meet state and federal requirements meant to integrate environmental values and public interaction into transportation improvements. The requirements include the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 23 USC 139 – Efficient Environmental Reviews for Project Decision-making, and the Illinois Public Act 93-0545 (605 ILCS 5/4-219) - Context Sensitivity.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and IDOT, acting as joint lead agencies on the I-57/64 and IL 15 Interchange study, developed this SIP to meet the requirements of CSS and to address the Coordination Plan requirements of 23 USC 139(g) within the context of the NEPA process.

As part of NEPA, the FHWA and IDOT will complete environmental resource studies for the I-57/64 and IL 15 Interchange study. Due to the limited environmental impacts and right of way acquisition anticipated, this project will likely be process as a Federal Approved Categorical Exclusion (CE). A CE is defined as a category of actions which do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and for which, neither an Environmental Assessment nor an Environmental Impact Statement is required.

The SIP will be updated accordingly as the project progresses.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NEPA is a federal law that requires the consideration of environmental issues during the planning of projects that are federally funded or permitted. The I-57/64 and IL 15 Interchange study will receive federal funds and permits and is therefore subject to NEPA. The NEPA process requires federal agencies to integrate

environmental values into their decision-making process by considering the environmental impacts of their proposed actions and reasonable alternatives for these actions. Under NEPA, the term “environment” refers not only to the natural environment (e.g., air, water, ecology, and geology), but also to the human environment (e.g., social, cultural, and economic issues).

IDOT will assess the natural, built, and human environment to determine the extent of impacts that may arise from constructing and operating a project. Environmental factors such as air quality, noise, wildlife, vegetation, water quality, wetlands, geology, neighborhoods, park/recreation areas, utilities, visual quality, and cultural resources will be assessed.

One of the basic principles of NEPA is to provide better decision-making by including the input of those who may be affected by a project. NEPA encourages early and frequent coordination with the public and resource agencies throughout the project development process. Affected populations include the public and various project stakeholders.

Project stakeholders are asked to provide input and to comment on project-specific information provided throughout the NEPA process. The information includes potential actions and possible impacts of taking any given course of action.

National Historic Preservation Act

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings.

This project is considered a federal undertaking by FHWA. See Section 2.0 of this document for further information on the project agency coordination to satisfy the Section 106 requirements.

2.0 AGENCY COORDINATION

2.1 Agency Coordination

Completion of the I-57/64 and IL 15 Interchange study will require the involvement of federal, state, and local agencies. The goal of agency outreach and involvement is to ensure early and ongoing coordination with affected agencies regarding study issues, as well as to achieve agency support for how CSS and the public process will play a role in project development and decision-making. Coordination with these agencies throughout the project development process ensures all laws and regulations are met, while streamlining project decision-making. The roles of cooperating agencies are described in this section, as well as the agency dispute resolution process.

Joint Lead Agencies

FHWA and IDOT will act as joint lead agencies for preparing the environmental document. As such, FHWA and IDOT (Secretary of Transportation), as listed in **Table A.1** in **Appendix A** are the ultimate decision-makers for this project.

Cooperating Agencies

A cooperating agency is any agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposed project. Cooperating agencies are permitted, by request of the lead agency, to assume responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses for topics about which they have special expertise.

Agencies invited to serve as cooperating agencies are shown in **Table A.2** in **Appendix A**. The list of cooperating agencies will be updated, pending responses to invitation, and incorporated into the SIP.

2.2 Agency Issue Identification and Resolution

For minor disagreements, the lead agencies may, after due consideration of the concerns of the participating agencies, decide to proceed without any dispute resolution process. When there is disagreement on important issues of concern, the lead agencies may decide that the most effective approach would be to work out the disagreement in some formal or informal way.

23 U.S.C. 139 describes a formal process for resolving issues that may delay the project or result in a denial of a required approval for the project, which is illustrated in the flow chart shown in **Appendix D**. The project sponsor or the Governor of the State in which the project is located may invoke the process for issue resolution at any time. While this process is one tool available to States and project sponsors for resolving issues of concern, there are other options that are available to lead and participating agencies that should be explored before invoking the formal issue resolution process.

In order to help assure an effective process, each party invited to a meeting convened under the dispute resolution provision should be represented by a person of sufficient rank and authority to make binding commitments on behalf of that party. Accordingly, the organizational level of the persons invited to such meetings by the Federal lead agency may vary depending upon the issues in dispute.

Resolution of the issue of concern means that the agencies involved agree on how to proceed so that they are able to reach decisions on matters within their authority. For example, the resolution may be an agreed upon framework or process for proceeding with the issuance of the permit or other approval needed for a project. This agreement should be in the form of a signed document.

3.0 STAKEHOLDER GROUP ORGANIZATION

The project development and CSS process outlined in in this SIP will be implemented using a variety of stakeholder coordination and outreach mechanisms and techniques as described in this section. The project team will identify and coordinate with agencies, technical professionals, community leaders and other stakeholders. Outreach activities will include a project website, small group meetings, public meetings, newsletters, media outreach and other tools.

Multiple stakeholder meetings will be conducted throughout the development of the project to develop a problem statement, during alternatives development, and during the evaluation process as a means to obtain stakeholder input regarding various project issues and potential solutions. These meetings will provide an opportunity to facilitate initial public input on the alternatives that should be considered, focus more closely on alternatives development with a small group of interested parties, and will help create a shared vision for the project.

3.1 Stakeholder Identification Procedures

Per IDOT CSS procedures, a stakeholder is anyone who could be affected by the project and has a stake in its outcome. This includes the public, property owners, business owners, state and local officials, federal and state resource & regulatory agencies, special interest groups, and motorists who utilize the facility.

The identification of stakeholders will be done through a combination of research and input from local community leaders. It is anticipated that new stakeholders will be added to the initial stakeholder list throughout the project. All stakeholders expressing interest in the project will be added to the project mailing list and will be able to participate in the process through various public outreach opportunities. These opportunities include, but are not limited to, the project website, project study groups, public meetings, public hearings, newsletters, and press releases. The project mailing list will be updated and maintained throughout the duration of the project.

3.2 Project Study Group (PSG)

The Project Study Group (PSG) consists of a multidisciplinary team of representatives from IDOT, FHWA and the project consultant team. The PSG will make the ultimate project recommendations and decisions on this project. Per IDOT's CSS procedures, IDOT has formed the initial interdisciplinary PSG. However, to maintain an optimal multi-disciplinary team, this membership may change as the study progresses and the understanding of the project's context is clarified.

The PSG has primary responsibility for the project development process. The group will meet throughout the study process to provide technical oversight and expertise in key areas including study process, agency procedures and standards, and technical approaches. The PSG also has primary responsibility for ensuring compliance with the SIP as well as IDOT and FHWA requirements.

Other responsibilities of the PSG include the following:

- Expedite the project development process
- Identify and resolving project development issues
- Promoting partnership with stakeholders to address identified project needs
- Working to develop consensus among stakeholders
- Acquire clearances and approval of resource agencies

The individuals listed in **Table A.3** in **Appendix A** will form the PSG for the I-57/64 and IL 15 Interchange project.

3.3 Community Advisory Group (CAG)

The Community Advisory Group (CAG) will consist of a representative cross-section of all stakeholders. The CAG serves as a liaison to members of the public and the organizations they represent. The CAG's responsibility is to share their local knowledge and assist in identification and understanding of the concerns and values, or context of the communities and stakeholders. The CAG members are initially identified through the stakeholder interviews and recommendations from the PSG. It is important that the CAG be representative of the varied interests that exist within the project study area while being small enough to allow the detailed level of discussion and activities needed to accommodate meaningful interaction. To keep the CAG at a maintainable number of participants the maximum number of CAG members will be 30 people.

Additional interests may be represented as the study progresses. The CAG's primary responsibility is to provide input to the PSG. The CAG will meet throughout the study process.

Other responsibilities of the CAG include the following:

- Provide input into the problem statement and purpose and need
- Provide input on the alternatives to be studied further
- Provide input on the preferred alternative

Community Advisory Group Ground Rules

The following ground rules will be used during the I-57/64 and IL 15 Interchange study to form the basis for respectful interaction between all parties involved in the stakeholder process. The ground rules will be established initially in the SIP but agreed on by CAG members. PSG/CAG members will have the opportunity to discuss the rules at their first meeting and to modify the ground rules. The rules include:

- Input on the project from all stakeholders is duly considered in order to yield the best solutions to problems identified by the process.
- Input from all participants in the process is valued and considered.
- All participants must keep an open mind and participate openly, honestly, and respectfully.
- All participants should work collaboratively and cooperatively to seek a general understanding of agreements and solutions.
- A general understanding of agreement or consensus is "when a majority of the stakeholders agrees on a particular issue, while the remainder of stakeholders agrees its input has been heard and duly considered and that the process as a whole was fair".
- All participants in the process must treat each other with respect and dignity.
- The project must progress at a reasonable pace, based on the project schedule.
- IDOT and FHWA will serve as the lead agencies and make final project decisions.

3.4 Implementation

Public involvement in the planning process begins at the start of the project and continues throughout the entire project. The SIP serves as a guide for public involvement in this study but includes strategies that can be used throughout all phases, including construction. Implementation of this plan requires the commitment and efforts of all involved parties along with the expected actions, responsibilities, and timing. The PSG will be responsible for the overall development, implementation, and coordination of the SIP.

3.5 Stakeholder Involvement

Any stakeholder that shows interest in the project will be added to the stakeholder list, ensuring they will receive newsletters, meeting invitations, and project updates. In addition, stakeholders will be informed about the project website where they can access information and submit comments.

3.6 Stakeholder Consensus

IDOT is committed to working with stakeholders during the study process to identify issues early and seek consensus on all issues. IDOT is also committed to building stakeholder consensus for their decisions.

However, if a consensus cannot be reached after making good faith efforts to address unresolved concerns, IDOT may proceed to the next step of project development without achieving consensus.

4.0 TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF PROJECT DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

This section describes the general project development process, project activities, and associated stakeholder involvement activities. A comprehensive schedule of anticipated outreach activities and corresponding milestones is shown in Appendix B.

4.1 Step One: Stakeholder Identification, Development of the SIP, & Project Scoping

This step of the project development process begins the CSS process with various agency notifications, project organizational activities, and environmental study scoping activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Develop the SIP and make the plan available for review
- Assemble and organize the PSG and CAG
- Identify project cooperating and participating agencies
- Hold formal scoping meeting with FHWA and resource agencies
- Organize and hold stakeholder meetings

4.2 Step Two: Project Purpose and Need Development

The objective of this step is to identify the transportation issues in the study area and develop the project's purpose, goals, and objectives. CAG members will be provided information such as existing and projected traffic volumes, number of crashes, operational problems, and environmental constraints in order to develop a clear statement of transportation problems to be solved. This information will be used for the development of the project's Purpose and Need statement. This statement provides context and criteria for the development and screening of alternatives to the proposed action. The purpose and need statement is reflective of transportation needs, environmental values, and community values. The purpose and need statement influences the rest of the project development process, including the range of alternatives studied and, ultimately, the preferred alternative. Activities in this step include the following:

- Educate the CAG on its role in the process, the ground rules for participation, and the expectations for involvement in the group
- Gather input from the CAG to identify the transportation concerns to be solved by the project and develop a Problem Statement
- Issue project website updates, newsletters, and other project materials, as necessary
- PSG develops project Purpose and Need and receives input from the CAG

4.3 Step Three: Alternative Development

A range of project alternatives will be considered that address the project's Purpose and Need. The alternative development process will be iterative in nature, providing progressively greater detail. Stakeholders will be provided opportunities to provide input. This milestone of the project consists of screening the list of suggested alternatives to identify a reasonable range of alternatives that adequately

satisfy the project Purpose and Need. This milestone is intended to conclude with alternatives to be carried forward. Steps in the alternatives development process include the following:

- Identification of alternative development procedures, planning and design guidelines, and alternative evaluation procedures. This information will serve as the general guidance for the alternatives development and evaluation process
- PSG evaluates preliminary alternatives and conducts CAG meetings to discuss and identify preliminary alternatives that meet Purpose and Need
- CAG provides input to the PSG for their identification of alternatives to be carried forward
- PSG evaluates study alternatives to be carried forward
- Issue project webpage updates and other project materials, as necessary

4.4 Step Four: Preferred Alternative

In this Step, the project team will present the preferred alternative and finalize environmental impacts. The objective of this step is to achieve consensus on the preferred alternative.

- PSG performs detailed evaluation of the alternatives carried forward
- PSG conducts multiple CAG meetings to present the detailed evaluation and findings to receive stakeholder feedback
- PSG achieves stakeholder consensus on a preferred alternative
- A public involvement activity is conducted to obtain public comment on the preferred alternative and potential environmental impacts
- Update the project website and other project materials as necessary
- Prepare Combined Design Report and process the design approval

5.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

The following public involvement activities in this section are proposed for the I-57/64 and IL 15 Interchange study. Unless otherwise noted, the PSG is the responsible party for activities and coordination, and all activities will be approved by IDOT before proceeding. The PSG designated point of approval is the IDOT Program Development Engineer, Carrie Nelsen, or her designee with IDOT District 9. They will manage integral IDOT reviews and approvals, consolidate review comments, and coordinate the resolution of conflicting study issues.

5.1 Stakeholder Activities

Stakeholder involvement for the I-57/64 and IL 15 Interchange study will be an ongoing process from project initiation through the duration of the study. Various meetings will be held throughout the project development process to provide outreach opportunities to all stakeholders. Meeting opportunities are listed below.

Agency Coordination

The goal of agency outreach and involvement is to ensure early and ongoing coordination with affected agencies regarding study issues, as well as to achieve agency support for how CSS and the public process

will play a role in project development and decision-making. To ensure compliance, coordination with resource agencies will occur periodically through the study process.

CAG Meetings

Multiple CAG meetings will be held throughout the project development process to obtain stakeholder input regarding various project issues and potential solutions. These meetings will provide an opportunity to facilitate initial public input on the alternatives that should be considered, focus more closely on alternatives development with a small group of interested parties, and will help create a shared vision for the project. Renderings and visualizations may be developed to illustrate concepts and issues that have been raised, developed, and evaluated. The renderings and visualizations will depend on the topics of discussion and format of the particular meeting in which it is presented. The first CAG meeting's anticipated outcome will be the development of a problem statement, draft purpose and need, and discussion of project specifics and alternatives development process.

PSG Meetings

The PSG has primary responsibility for the project development process. Multiple PSG meetings will be held throughout the project for the development of the purpose and need statement, alternatives development, and alternative evaluation process. PSG meetings will be conducted after CAG meetings as a means to discuss stakeholder input on project issues. These meetings will provide an opportunity to address project issues, concerns, and determine direction to keep project moving forward. The first PSG meeting's anticipated outcome will be finalizing the problem statement, purpose and need, and impacts to alternatives.

Public Meetings

Public involvement for this project also will include opportunities for broader public meetings in the form of public information meetings. These large-scale meetings will be held to coincide with major project milestones, raising awareness of the project development process. These meetings also will provide a forum for general public input, including concerns and comments regarding the study.

The public meeting will utilize a range of presentation methods and techniques including project boards, handouts, and PowerPoint or multimedia presentations. The meeting will be advertised by a newsletter/invitation, public notices placed in area newspapers, and on the project website. Opportunities for the public to provide written comments (comment forms) will be available at the meetings as well as on the project website. Translation services will be provided when requested in advance. The meeting will be held within the study area at a location that is convenient to the community and stakeholders.

6.0 KEY PROJECT DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES/CSS PROCESS STEPS

Outreach activities have been coordinated to support NEPA milestones, incorporate the CSS process, and gather input at key decision points. This section describes the general project development process, project activities, and associated stakeholder involvement activities. A comprehensive schedule of anticipated outreach activities and corresponding milestones is shown in Appendix B.

6.1 Data Collection

This stage of the project development process includes identifying stakeholders, notifying agencies of the project, establishing the PSG and CAG, project organizational activities, scoping activities, collecting information about the study area, and identifying existing transportation needs. These activities include, but are not limited to:

- Assemble and organize the PSG and CAG
- Develop and circulate the SIP
- Conduct stakeholder meetings
- Launch the project website

6.2 Develop Purpose and Need of Project

The project team will work with stakeholders to identify transportation and infrastructure problems in the study area and develop the project's purpose, goals, and objectives. Stakeholders will be asked to discuss transportation problems they perceive to be within the study area. This information will be used as guidance during the development of the project Purpose and Need statement. This statement provides context and criteria for the development and screening of alternatives to the proposed action. The purpose and need statement is reflective of transportation needs, environmental values, and community values. The purpose and need statement influence the rest of the project development process, including the range of alternatives studied and, ultimately, the preferred alternative. Activities in this stage include:

- Educate the CAG on the ground rules, its role in the process and expectations for the group.
- Gather input from the CAG to identify the transportation problems to be solved by the project and develop a Problem Statement
- Conduct stakeholder meetings, as necessary
- Issue project website updates, newsletters and other project materials, as necessary
- Development of Purpose & Need Statement – The PSG will identify the needs of the project and draw from the concepts presented in the Problem Statement

6.3 Develop and Evaluate Alternatives

A range of project alternatives will be considered to address the project's Purpose and Need, including a no-build alternative. Screening and evaluation criteria will be developed to evaluate these alternatives and select which will be studied in detail. Steps in the alternatives development process include:

- Identify alternative development procedures, planning and design guidelines, and evaluation and screening criteria. This information will serve as the general guidance for the alternatives development and evaluation process
- Screen preliminary alternatives, including a no-build alternative, and determine the alternatives to be carried forward for detailed study based on alternative screening criteria
- Evaluate detailed study alternatives
- Hold CAG Meetings to discuss the study alternatives, screening and evaluation process, and impacts
- Conduct small group meetings, as necessary.
- Issue project website updates, newsletters and other project materials, as necessary.

6.4 Determine Preferred Alternative

The project team will present to stakeholders the preferred alternative and finalize the environmental studies. Activities in this stage of the project development process include:

- Identify a recommended Preferred Alternative
- Refine the recommended alternative to address stakeholder comments
- Hold a CAG meeting to discuss the preferred alternative and environmental impacts
- Hold a public meeting to obtain public comment on the preferred alternative
- Update the project website and distribute newsletters and other project materials as necessary.
- Refine the engineering and environmental impacts
- Process the design approval

7.0 COMMUNICATION TOOLS

In addition to meeting opportunities, several communication tools will be used throughout the study to engage project stakeholders and support public involvement and CSS efforts. These tools are designed to reach local stakeholders, as well as those with regional interest in the project. Communication tools will include a project website, newsletters, media outreach, and other tools.

7.1 Project Identity

A project identity (logo, graphics) will be developed to provide a consistent and recognizable image for the project. The project identity will be used in all stakeholder involvement materials.

7.2 Newsletters

Newsletters will be distributed to provide project information and solicit input. The newsletters will contain project and public meeting information. Hardcopy newsletters will be sent to stakeholders that only have physical addresses listed in the mailing list. An e-newsletter will be distributed to those who provide an email address. The newsletters will also be posted on the project website.

The Schedule of Stakeholder Activities in **Appendix B** includes the timing and objectives for newsletters.

7.3 Project Website

A project website will be maintained throughout the study at <http://idot.illinois.gov/transportation-system/transportation-management/featured-projects/index>. The website will support broader outreach and provide access to project information to accommodate regional and national interest in the project.

The website will serve as a comprehensive information resource for the project. Project and meeting materials will be available on the website, including newsletters, public meeting announcements, public comment summaries, documents, frequently asked questions, CAG meeting materials and other information. The project web pages will be included on IDOT's website. Updates will be made as the study progresses at key project milestones.

7.4 Notifications and Advertising

Newspaper advertisements will provide descriptions of the public workshops and hearings (purpose, date, location, and format) to local newspapers. The newspaper advertisements are intended to reach a larger audience and inform individuals that are not on the project's mailing list of the upcoming public participation opportunity. The project team will develop newspaper notices following IDOT media guidelines. Announcements will also be placed on the project web page. In addition, news releases will be developed in coordination with IDOT to send to media affiliates including print, radio, and television stations.

7.5 Media Briefings

A proactive approach to media coordination will be used to ensure that media has current, relevant, and accurate information to share with the public. This approach includes participation by the IDOT spokesperson or the consultant in media briefings, preparation of media kits, preparation of press releases, and availability of project staff to support the spokesperson in ongoing coordination with members of the media.

7.6 Stakeholder Mailing List

A project mailing list consisting of project stakeholder contact information will be maintained throughout the project. The mailing list will be used to distribute notifications about upcoming public participation opportunities and provide project updates. Newsletters, postcards, or email notifications will be distributed to the mailing list to provide project information and announce upcoming public meetings.

7.7 Public Comments

The project team will document stakeholder comments and responses throughout the study. Comments will come in the form of e-mail, standard mail, phone calls and comment forms from meetings and briefings. The Project Mailing List will continue to be updated for individuals who request to be added to the distribution list.

8.0 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN AVAILABILITY AND MONITORING/UPDATES

The SIP is a dynamic document that will be available to the public and updated as appropriate through the duration of the project. This section describes SIP stakeholder review opportunities and plan update procedures

8.1 Availability of the Stakeholder Involvement Plan

The PSG will make the SIP available to the cooperating and participating agencies for review and comment. The comment period for the SIP will be 30 days from date of release. As the project proceeds, the PSG will update the SIP as needed to reflect appropriate changes or additions. The PSG will advise stakeholders of future SIP updates and post the updates on the project website.

8.2 Modifications of the Stakeholder Involvement Plan

The SIP will be reviewed on a regular basis for effectiveness and will be updated as appropriate. Updates to the SIP include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Maintaining a current list of CAG members
- Maintaining a current list of agency partners
- Maintaining a detailed list of all public outreach methods used during the CSS process

9.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A Agencies and Advisory Groups

| Table A.1: Lead Agencies | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| LEAD AGENCIES | | |
| AGENCY NAME | ROLE | OTHER ROLES |
| Federal Highway Administration | Federal Lead Agency | PSG |
| Illinois Department of Transportation | State Lead Agency | PSG |

| Table A.2: Cooperating & Participating Agencies | | |
|--|--------------------|-----------------|
| COOPERATING AGENCIES | | |
| AGENCY NAME | ROLE | RESPONSE |
| U.S. Army Corps of Engineer, St. Louis District | Cooperating Agency | Pending |
| U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5 | Cooperating Agency | Pending |
| U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 3 | Cooperating Agency | Pending |
| USDA, Forest Service, Region 9 | Cooperating Agency | Pending |
| Illinois Department of Natural Resources | Cooperating Agency | Pending |
| Illinois Department of Agriculture | Cooperating Agency | Pending |
| Illinois Environmental Protection Agency | Cooperating Agency | Pending |
| Illinois Historic Preservation Agency | Cooperating Agency | Pending |

| Table A.3: Project Study Group | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|--|
| NAME | REPRESENTING | ROLE | PHONE | EMAIL |
| IDOT, District Nine, PO Box 100, Carbondale, IL 62903-0100 | | | | |
| Carrie Nelsen, PE | IDOT District 9 | Program Development Engineer | (618) 351-5280 | Carrie.Nelsen@Illinois.gov |
| Susan Poe, PE | IDOT District 9 | Geometrics Engineer | (618) 351-5213 | Susan.Poe@Illinois.gov |
| Charles Stein, PE | IDOT District 9 | Studies & Plans Engineer | (618) 351-5286 | Charles.Stein@Illinois.gov |
| Nancy Heil, PE | IDOT District 9 | Land Acquisition | (618) 351-5412 | Nancy.Heil@Illinois.gov |
| IDOT, Bureau of Design and Environment, 2300 S. Dirksen Pkwy., Springfield, IL 62764 | | | | |
| Paul Niedernhofer, PE | IDOT Central Office | Project Development | (217) 524-1651 | Paul.Niedernhofer@Illinois.gov |
| Felecia Hurley | IDOT Central Office | Environmental Studies | (217) 785-2130 | Felecia.hurley@Illinois.gov |
| FHWA – IL Division, 3250 Executive Park Drive, Springfield, IL 62703 | | | | |
| Chris Fraley, PE | Federal Highway Administration | FHWA Oversight | (217) 492-4619 | Chris.Fraley@dot.gov |
| Matt Fuller | Federal Highway Administration | FHWA Oversight | (217) 492-4625 | Matt.Fuller@dot.gov |
| Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Inc., 2750 West Washington Street, Springfield, IL 62702 EFK Moen, LLC., 13523 Barrett Parkway Drive, Suite 250, Saint Louis, IL 63021 | | | | |
| Stan Hansen, PE, PLS | CMT, Inc. | Project Manager | (217) 787-8050 | shansen@cmtengr.com |
| Emily Munday, PE | CMT, Inc. | Project Engineer | (309) 680-1306 | emunday@cmtengr.com |
| Kristin Timmons, PE | CMT, Inc. | Public Involvement | (217) 572-1099 | ktimmons@cmtengr.com |
| Matt Overbey, PE, PLS | CMT, Inc. | Geometrics Engineer | (217) 572-1139 | Moverbey@cmtengr.com |
| Heather Lacey | CMT, Inc. | Environmental Studies Lead | (937) 701-6578 | hlacey@cmtengr.com |
| Brian Eads, PE | CMT, Inc. | Traffic Lead | (314) 571-9065 | beads@cmtengr.com |
| Allen Smith, PE, SE | CMT, Inc. | Structures Lead | (314) 345-5989 | asmith@cmtengr.com |

Table A.4: Community Advisory Group (Includes the PSG in Table A.3)

This table lists the CAG members identified to date. This list will be updated as additional members are added.

| REPRESENTING | NAME |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Environment | |
| Pending – as needed | |
| Economic Development | |
| Jefferson County Economic Development Corporation | Tony Iriti, Executive Director |
| Greater Egypt Regional Planning and Development Commission | Cary Minnis, Executive Director |
| Southern IL Metropolitan Planning Organization | Joe Zdankiewicz |
| Quality of Life | |
| SSM Health Good Samaritan Hospital | Jeremy Bradford |
| Crossroads Community Hospital | Amanda Basso |
| Calvary United Pentecostal Church | Pastor Steve Edwards |
| Agriculture | |
| Farm Credit Illinois | Mark Kabat, Regional Manager |
| | |
| Industry | |
| Illinois Trucking Association | Matthew Hart, Executive Director |
| Truck Center, Inc. | Julie Klebba, General Manager |
| Walgreens Distribution Center | Brian Prost, General Manager |
| DoubleTree by Hilton & Holiday Inn Express | Mike Carbonaro, General Manager |
| Rend Lake College MarketPlace | Cory Phillips, Director |
| Villages/Cities/Towns/Counties | |
| City of Mt Vernon | Mary Ellen Bechtel, City Manager |
| City of Mt Vernon | Matt Fauss, Public Works Director |
| City of Mt Vernon | Brad Ruble, City Engineer |
| Jefferson County Highway Department | Brandon Simmons, County Engineer |
| Small Business | |
| Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce | Mike Beard, Executive Director |
| Jung Trucking/Warehouse | Ryan Pratt, Warehouse Manager |
| Cracker Barrel/McDonalds/Agave Mexican | Chris Prichard, General Manager |
| Roadhouse Harley Davidson | Rodney Cabaness |
| Agave Mexican | Amada Minquiz, Manager |
| Monken Toyota | Wes Monken |
| McDonald's | Jim Ward, Director of Operations |
| Tourism | |
| Mt. Vernon Convention & Visitors Bureau | Angela Schrum |
| Commuters | |
| South Central Transit | Randy Barrow |
| | |

Appendix B Schedule of Stakeholder Activities

| ACTIVITY | DATE | DESCRIPTION |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| Development of Draft Stakeholder Involvement Plan | October - December 2020 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP) to document outreach goals, objectives, stakeholders, tools, and participation opportunities |
| Draft Stakeholder Plan | October 2020 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send to IDOT for review and comment The SIP will be updated at milestone points throughout the project |
| Initial Stakeholder Conversations | December 2020 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss project study area and affected communities Discuss community values, interests, and concerns Identify potential stakeholders and advisory group members |
| Formation of Community Advisory Group (CAG) | November-December 2020 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and notify preliminary CAG members |
| CAG Meeting #1 | February 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce the project Provide project history Explain project development process (Phase I, II, & III) Explain what environmental topics are studied, in general Define CSS, Stakeholder, and CAG Provide CAG Ground rules Discuss project specifics (existing roadway system, environmental resources, community characteristics) Group exercise – Consensus on Problem Statement |
| Project Study Group (PSG) Meeting #1 | February 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce the project and the planning process Identify preliminary project needs and issues Review and obtain input on identified stakeholders Review results of CAG Meeting #1, and any small group meetings Develop Purpose & Need Statement from CAG Meeting Discuss range of preliminary alternatives and impacts |
| Newsletter #1 | March 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In lieu of a public meeting, release a newsletter explaining the beginning of this Study. Introduce the project, planning process, schedule, goals, and public participation opportunities (i.e. how to apply to be on CAG) Introduce project website |
| Stakeholder Meetings #1 | March 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As requested, and/or as necessary. |
| PSG Meeting #2 | April 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss any stakeholder input from meetings Review preliminary alternatives Plan for CAG Meeting #2 |
| CAG Meeting #2 | May 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present approved Purpose & Need Present and discuss potential alternatives to be carried forward Discuss how potential alternatives carried forward fulfill the P&N Discuss preliminary environmental and socioeconomic impacts Discuss screening and evaluation process followed to get to alternatives carried forward |

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN

| ACTIVITY | DATE | DESCRIPTION |
|----------------------------|----------------|--|
| PSG Meeting #3 | May 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review results of CAG Meeting #2 ▪ Finalize alternatives to be carried forward and refinements of preliminary alternatives based on comments from CAG ▪ Review preliminary impacts |
| PSG Meeting #4 | July 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss recommended preferred alternative ▪ Discuss impacts of recommended preferred alternative ▪ Plan for CAG Meeting #3 |
| CAG #3 | August 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss evaluation of Alternatives In-Depth ▪ Present recommended preferred alternative ▪ Discuss preliminary environmental and socioeconomic impacts ▪ Draft Combined Design Report will be available |
| Stakeholder Meetings #2 | September 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As requested, and/or as necessary |
| PSG Meeting #5 | September 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss CAG Meeting #3 ▪ Discuss Public Meeting |
| Newsletter #2 | September 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present Final Purpose & Need Statement • Explain Alternative Development Process ▪ Discuss Preliminary Alternatives evaluation & environmental impacts ▪ Bring public up to date on CAG meetings and small group meetings ▪ Discuss upcoming Public Meeting |
| Public Information Meeting | October 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide summary of studies completed to date ▪ Present alternatives carried forward and how those alternatives fulfill the purpose and need goals. ▪ Discuss environmental and socioeconomic impacts and screening and evaluation process ▪ Present recommended preferred alternative ▪ Obtain comments on recommended preferred alternative |
| PSG Meeting #6 | November 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review results of the Public Meeting. ▪ Discuss enhancement and mitigation opportunities ▪ Discuss revisions to Combined Design Report |
| Design Approval | December 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Final approval for next phase |

Appendix C Glossary

Alternative

One of a number of specific transportation improvement proposals, alignments, options, and design choices in a study. Following detailed analysis, one improvement alternative is chosen for implementation.

Categorical Exclusion (CE)

Defined as a category of actions which do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and for which, neither an Environmental Assessment nor an Environmental Impact Statement is required.

Community Advisory Group (CAG)

The CAG includes community leaders, including elected officials, representatives from local municipalities, and local resource agencies. This group ensures that identified solutions balance community, technical and long-range planning needs. It also assists in keeping the project on the right track with respect to implementation. The CAG will provide input at key project milestones throughout Phase I of the planning process.

Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)

Balance between mobility, community needs and the environment while developing transportation projects. This is achieved through involving stakeholders early and continuously, addressing all modes of transportation, applying flexibility in the design, and incorporating aesthetics to the overall project.

Multi-Modal Transportation

Includes all modes of transportation for a complete transportation system. Examples: cars, trucks, bicycles, pedestrians, high occupancy vehicles, mass transit, rail.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The federal law that requires the preparation of an environmental document to analyze the impacts of projects using federal funds. Documents may include an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Environmental Assessment (EA), or Categorical Exclusion (CE) depending on the type of project and anticipated level of impacts. To comply with NEPA, a process has been developed by IDOT to address all potential environmental, social, cultural, and economic impacts of a proposed highway project before decisions are reached on design. Public involvement is an integral component of the NEPA process.

Open House

An informal Public Meeting during which display boards are used to convey important project information. IDOT and consultant personnel are available to answer the public's questions.

Problem Statement

A concise narrative, prepared as part of a project needs study, defining the fundamental situation or circumstance to be solved. A problem statement will generally describe a particular situation in which an expected level of performance is not being achieved and will list one or more important factors which cause or contribute to the unacceptable performance.

Project Study Group

The Project Study Group (PSG) is a multi-disciplinary team that ensures all federal, state, and local requirements are met as well as full implementation of the CSS process including the SIP. The includes appropriate District, FHWA, Planning and Programming, Bureau of Design and Environment (BDE), Metropolitan Planning Organization, consulting staff, and other representatives as appropriate to the project. The PSG is involved in stakeholder identification and other outreach activities.

Public Hearing

The official method for gathering public comments on project impacts and technical studies. The format of the Hearing may be formal or informal and the purpose is to afford the public an opportunity to provide comments on the proposed project in an open forum. A verbatim record of the proceedings is kept.

Public Involvement

Coordination events and informational materials geared at encouraging the public to participate in the project development process. A successful Stakeholder Involvement Plan facilitates the exchange of information among project sponsors and stakeholders, providing opportunities for input and participation throughout the planning process.

Stakeholder

An individual or group with an interest or investment in a way an issue is resolved. This includes local, regional, state and federal agency representatives; local, regional, state and federal officials; business leaders; property owners; key community leaders; civic/community groups; environmental preservation and interest groups; media outlets; and any other targeted stakeholders as directed by IDOT.

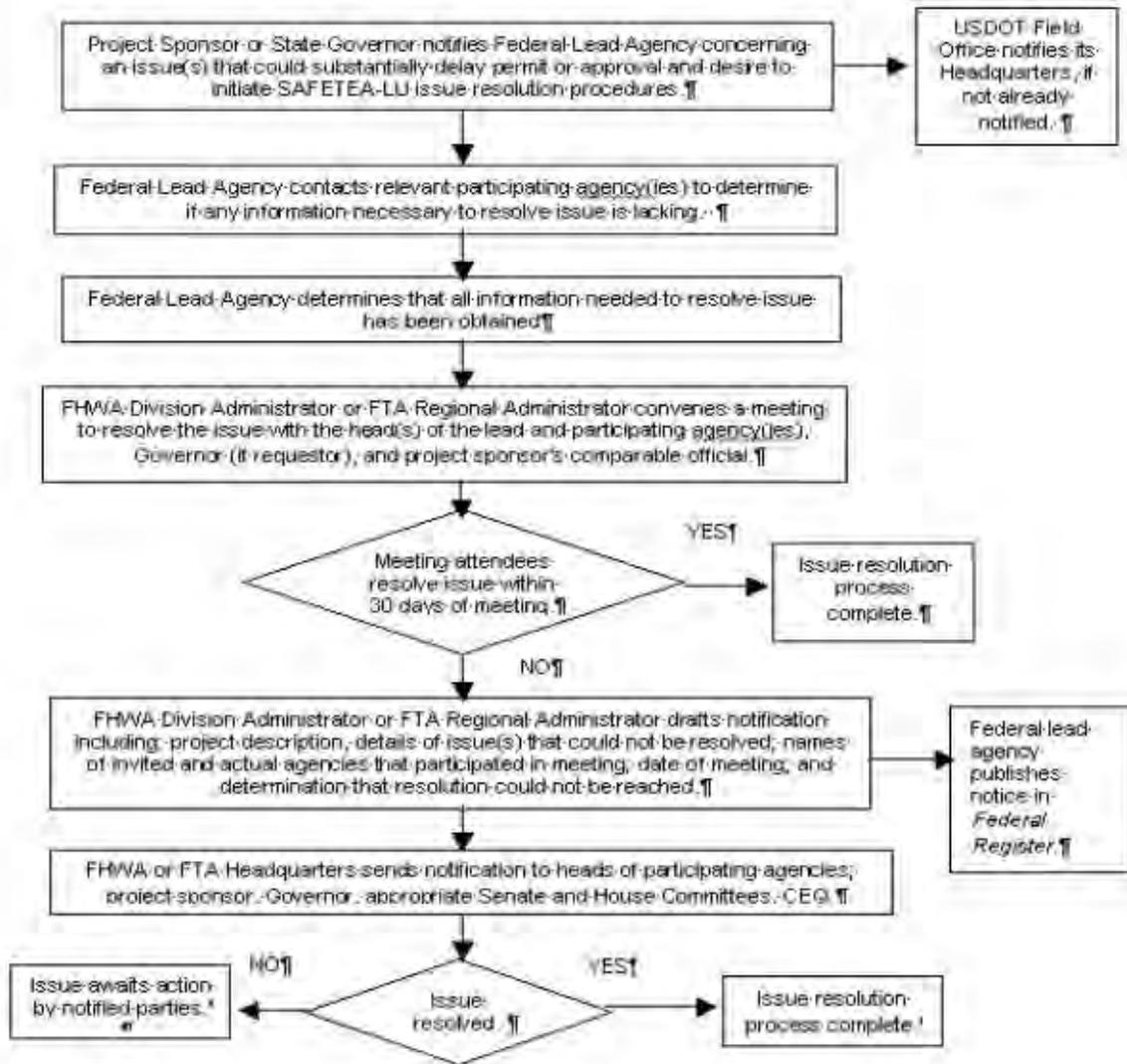
Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP)

A formal written plan explaining how stakeholder input and participation will be facilitated throughout the planning process. The SIP outlines tools and techniques for engaging stakeholders throughout the planning process. The SIP has been designed to ensure that stakeholders are provided a number of opportunities to be informed and engaged as the project progresses. The goal of the SIP is to outline a program of activities to actively seek the participation of stakeholders. The SIP provides the framework for achieving consensus and communicating the decision-making process between stakeholders to identify transportation solutions for the project.

Study Area

The geographic area within which pertinent project matters are contained. Originally defined at the outset of engineering and environmental evaluation, although it may be revised during development of the studies and the environmental document.

Appendix D Dispute Resolution Flowchart



Appendix E Acronyms

| | |
|------|---|
| BDE | Bureau of Design and Environment |
| CAG | Community Advisory Group |
| CCA | Community Context Audit |
| CSS | Context Sensitive Solutions |
| EIS | Environmental Impact Statement |
| FEIS | Final Environmental Impact Statement |
| FHWA | Federal Highway Administration |
| IDOT | Illinois Department of Transportation |
| NEPA | National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 |
| NHPA | National Historic Preservation Act |
| NRHP | National Register of Historic Places |
| PSG | Project Study Group |
| ROD | Record of Decision |
| SIP | Stakeholder Involvement Plan |
| SOL | Statute of Limitations |