



IDENTIFY ALIGNMENT CONSTRAINTS

The study team is preparing to move from evaluating the wide corridors to developing and evaluating narrower, specific location alternatives for I-70 improvements.

At this station, please help us identify specific existing constraints within the corridors so the study team can be as informed as possible when developing possible I-70 alignment locations.



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WHAT'S NEXT

After this meeting, the Section 4 Team will review the public comments collected before making a final decision on which corridor(s) will move forward for alignment development.

The team will then begin developing a wide range of possible alignment locations. Interchange improvements along these alternatives will incorporate MoDOT's current access management guidelines (see video). Those alternatives will be shared with you early next year.





What's Next

Now that the corridor screening is almost complete, the study team will begin concentrating efforts on developing alternative alignments within the reasonable corridor(s).

In the coming months the team will:

- Develop a wide range of alternatives that will satisfy the purpose and need of this study, which is to improve the efficiency, safety and capacity of I-70.
- Begin gathering socioeconomic information along the reasonable corridor(s) to ensure that proposed alignments don't have disproportionate impacts on low-income and/or minority populations
- Conduct visual cultural resources investigations along the reasonable corridor(s) to ensure that proposed alignments avoid impacts on significant historic sites.
- Perform traffic analysis to determine the number of lanes required and to ensure that the proposed alternatives will keep traffic moving on I-70
- Determine the environmental impacts that result from alternatives that are developed.

This analysis will determine whether any alternatives have "fatal flaws". After the analysis is completed next winter, a second public information will be held to present the range of alternatives developed, their impacts, and to seek your input on which of the most viable alternatives should be carried forward for more detailed investigation.



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ACCESS MANAGEMENT

The Improve I-70 studies will consider how to improve traffic flow and overall safety by applying access management measures at all interchanges.

Access management is a careful planning process that looks at;

- the design and location of interchanges,
- the location of nearby frontage roads, cross-streets and driveways, and
- the potential for traffic conflicts – places where vehicles may cross paths.

Many measures can be taken to apply access management at interchanges. Deciding what measures to use is a process that involves you.

Improve I-70 team members are in the beginning stages of determining how to improve interchanges while applying MoDOT's access management guidelines. Your experiences with traffic in the area are important and could be informative to study team members.

Please view the video located here to learn more about access management. Then share your thoughts and opinions with a member of the Improve I-70 team.





PROJECT FUNDING

The total cost for I-70 widening and reconstruction between Kansas City and St. Louis is estimated to be \$3 billion in today's dollars. Currently no funding is allocated for the design and construction of I-70 improvements.

So what happens next? Why conduct studies if there's no money to build the improvements? And how will MoDOT get the \$3 billion dollars needed?

Why Conduct The Studies?

I-70 has immediate needs that must be met. In meeting those needs, MoDOT must ensure that dollars spent on improvements today are not wasted tomorrow. The Improve I-70 studies will develop a comprehensive plan for how I-70 will look and operate in the future. The plan will allow MoDOT to make short-term improvements that advance I-70 toward its long-term vision. Additionally, completion of the studies is required by the federal government before design and construction can begin.

Your Support Is Important

You are encouraged to voice your support for I-70 improvements with lawmakers who represent your area. Your support is particularly important as Congress debates the next federal transportation bill in the coming months. MoDOT is keeping transportation policy makers informed of the needs on I-70 and encouraging local, state and federal officials to support special funding for I-70 improvements.

How Will MoDOT Get The Money?

The question is not so much how to find three billion dollars, but rather, how best to fund the improvements over time with the money available.

MoDOT has spent \$87 million on the rural portions of I-70 in the past five years, and will continue to spend what it can to maintain I-70's pavement and bridges. At a minimum, in the coming years motorists will see continued resurfacing projects and installation of guard cable barriers in the median to improve safety.

But long-term improvements will require funding beyond MoDOT's current funding levels. A number of implementation plans are being developed based on a variety of funding scenarios. Ultimately, MoDOT will improve I-70 to the extent it can with the funds available.



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COMMENT AREA

The comments you have verbally provided to members of the Improve I-70 team are important. Please take a moment, however, to record your thoughts on the comment forms. This will help provide a thorough record of your opinions. You may leave your comments with us now, or send them by mail no later than next

Friday, May 2.





**Improve I-70 -- Columbia
Frequently Asked Questions
Public Information Meeting
April 23, 2003**

1) What's happened since the last I-70 study?

The first task of this study has been to evaluate the three corridors developed during the last study using local information. The Tier 1 Study, for example, applied a broad, statewide formula to determine traffic projections for each corridor in the Columbia area. The Tier 2 Study has incorporated into its corridor analysis more specific information related to the Columbia area. The team has worked closely with county and city agencies to gather this local information, such as the current, long-range plans for the city and county, as well as local traffic patterns and other information.

2) What's next?

The next step for the study team will be to formally recommend which corridor(s) is carried forward for developing a wide range of alignment alternatives, to occur in the next several months. Alignment alternatives will show where improvements might be located and how they could impact people and the environment.

3) Can we speed up the process?

Additional funding can help speed study processes, to a limited extent. However, environmental studies are highly regulated and involve pre-determined timeframes for review by numerous federal and state agencies and by the public. This helps ensure alternatives are thoroughly reviewed and all impacts are considered before design and construction begin.

4) When will construction begin?

At this point, no funds have been allocated to construct improvements being considered in the Tier 2 Study. Completion of the Tier 2 Study will allow MoDOT and the communities along the corridor to have a comprehensive plan for how the interstate will look and operate in the future. It will also enable MoDOT to implement short-term improvements that advance I-70 toward its long-term vision and ensure that, should funding become available, MoDOT will have the federally required documentation to proceed. Construction funding is likely to come incrementally, and the 2nd Tier Studies will develop improvement strategies that fit a wide range of funding scenarios.

5) What will ongoing development in the corridors do to estimates/impacts?

Development in any of the corridors will affect our estimates. We do the best we can to anticipate development and include it as part of our evaluation. Once the final environmental document – the product of this study -- is approved, MoDOT will work with the appropriate agencies, the City of Columbia and Boone County, to do everything possible to preserve the corridor from development. In the end, if the local entity does not preserve the corridor, development will continue and the right-of-way cost for any of the options will be higher than our current estimate. How much higher will largely depend on when funding becomes available to move forward with design, right of way acquisition and construction. If construction funding were imminent, some right-of-way acquisition could begin shortly after the environmental document is completed.

Environmental documents have a limited shelf life. If funding does not come in the near future, the document would be subject to re-evaluation to determine if its assumptions and conclusions are still valid. In a worst-case scenario, development in the selected corridor might require initiation of another study.

6) To what extent might local planning and zoning regulations be used to guide future development?

Typically a city uses planning and zoning regulations to guide development according to that city's master plan. The Improve I-70 Second Tier Study is being conducted in coordination with Columbia's current Comprehensive Plan. The city could, if needed, adjust its comprehensive plan to complement the recommendations of the Second Tier Study.

7) What are the current and projected levels of service on I-70 through Columbia?

Currently, I-70 through Columbia operates at level of service (LOS) D, which is defined as approaching unstable flow with travel speeds considerably affected by changes in operating conditions. If no action is taken to improve I-70, the additional traffic projected by 2030 will make operating levels decline significantly, to level of service F. This would mean commuters would experience traffic delays on an ongoing basis.

8) How much of the traffic on existing I-70 through Columbia is local?

Our current analysis indicates that 65-75 percent of the traffic along existing I-70 through Columbia is local traffic.

9) How much of the traffic on I-70 through Columbia is truck traffic?

Year 2000 figures indicate that trucks comprise about 20 percent of the traffic on I-70 through Columbia. This figure is projected to increase to 23 percent by 2030.

10) Is there any reasonable possibility that the future of existing I-70 could be explored with just four lanes?

No. Four lanes on existing I-70 (two lanes in each direction) will not be able to efficiently handle the projected traffic that will use the corridor in the future. To minimize the impacts of

widening I-70 to up to three to four lanes in each direction, the study team will propose design features such as frontage roads and more efficient interchange configurations.

11) How do we measure the viability of the northern corridors?

The first step is to determine whether an additional corridor would relieve traffic congestion on existing I-70.

There are three questions we must ask: 1) Does building an alternate four-lane corridor relieve traffic on existing I-70? If yes, 2) Does the alternate corridor remove enough vehicles from existing I-70 to reduce the amount of widening required on existing I-70? If yes, 3) Will the impacts of building an corridor be less disruptive than adding more lanes to existing I-70. If the answer to any of these questions is "no", the corridor will not be considered viable and will not move forward for further study.

12) Can we remove all access to I-70 within Columbia except for U.S. 63 and Stadium along with improvements to parallel routes, like express lanes to Business Loop 70?

While it is not practical to remove all access points from existing I-70 other than at U.S. 63 and Stadium, the study team will investigate opportunities to combine or possibly remove some access points to improve operations along the existing route. As the study progresses, improvements to parallel routes, such as Business Loop 70, will be investigated to further determine their impact on the operation of I-70.

13) Will alternatives be considered that can address the local east-west traffic demand?

Our current traffic analysis indicates that the Far North corridor does not divert enough traffic from existing I-70 to significantly relieve congestion on I-70, which is the primary purpose of this effort. In this study, we cannot consider alternatives that only address local east-west traffic demand and do not address the needs of existing I-70. The Near North corridor, and to a lesser extent the Far North corridor, clearly attracts local trips traveling within Columbia. We will provide CATSO with all of the information gathered to date so it can consider how to prioritize this corridor in Columbia's long-range transportation plan.

14) If the existing route is widened, how would traffic be affected during construction, and what could be done to mitigate impacts to traffic?

MoDOT's goal is to keep four lanes open during construction, but there will be impacts to traffic during improvements to the existing route, including delays and diversions. Specific impacts are not yet known but will be identified in the course of this study. A preliminary plan for traffic control will be developed during this study and will be considered during the process of evaluating improvement alternatives. A more detailed traffic control plan will be determined when the project moves into the design phase.

15) What is the lowest allowable speed limit for an interstate facility?

There is only a maximum allowable speed limit, mandated by state law, which in Missouri is 70 miles per hour. Beyond that, the responsibility for setting a speed limit is MoDOT's. The speed limit must be appropriate for the type of facility and the type of usage and cannot be set artificially low. FHWA requires that the speed limit on an interstate highway be safe, reasonable and serve the traffic using it. When MoDOT sets speed limits, it looks at how the existing traffic is using the roadway and how it is being driven.

16) What is latent demand and induced traffic, and are we able to account for it in this study?

The theory of latent demand, or induced traffic, has been discussed in the transportation planning industry for many years. The theory states that as congestion increases within a transportation system, motorists who would normally make certain trips in uncongested conditions choose not to make those trips in congested conditions. Motorists will choose to make those trips again, however, once there is an improvement to the system that reduces congestion.

The issue of latent demand is less of a concern in communities the size of Columbia. While I-70 in Columbia does have periods of congestion, especially during the morning and evening rush hours, the level of congestion is not considered to be a likely deterrent to making a trip. Instead of canceling certain trips altogether, Columbia motorists will shift the times at which they will make their trips, or choose different routes. The study team believes that assumptions built into the current model allow for enough residual capacity to account for any additional induced trips generated by the proposed improvements.