

Chapter 2—Public Involvement

The public involvement process for the K-68 Corridor Management Plan focused on achieving quality public participation that brought people together to resolve issues, established communication between different stakeholder groups, and found solutions to problems. Following is an overview of the goals and intent of the process, a description of the stakeholders involved, details about the feedback gathered along the way, tools that were used, and the overall schedule of activities.

GOALS AND INTENT

The public involvement process supported the idea that public involvement should be timely, useful, and used. In keeping with this idea, the goals for the K-68 Corridor Management Plan public involvement process included:

- Maximizing the effectiveness of communication between stakeholder groups
- Increasing responsiveness to stakeholder key issues and concerns
- Securing informed consent from stakeholders regarding the management plan and its outcomes

PROCESS

Public involvement activities complemented each of the study's five phases: data collection, analysis, improvement alternatives, preferred alternatives and selection criteria, and documentation. A summary of the phases and the type of input gathered during each is included below.

Phase 1 – Data Collection: As existing conditions data was gathered about the corridor, information was also collected from staff and local officials regarding community concerns. The first in a series of eight steering committee meetings was held during this phase to build a regional view of management plan goals and outcomes. The level of commitment anticipated from partnering organizations was also discussed. Similar information was discussed with city and county officials, as well as community leaders at the study's first of three public

officials' briefings. In addition, the first issue of the project's electronic newsletter was released.

Phase 2 – Analysis: Future land uses, a traffic demand model, and both short and long term transportation deficiencies were analyzed during this phase of the project. Public involvement began with stakeholders meetings coordinated to gather information from representatives of the five jurisdictions that make up the K-68 corridor, area school districts, economic development agencies, and utility providers. Stakeholder meetings included discussions about future land use assumptions and patterns, probable timing for future land and development, market trends, and infrastructure improvements. Separate steering committee meetings were coordinated to discuss land use, the traffic model, and deficiencies. Information collected during Phase 1 and later project phases was balanced with feedback gathered from stakeholders and the committee. A second newsletter summarized Phase 2 activities and the next steps in the process.

Phase 3 – Improvement Alternatives: A set of improvement alternatives was created for the corridor based on the information collected during Phases 1 and 2. The steering committee discussed the alternatives and criteria used to select the preferred alternatives. Additional regulations needed to support the preferred alternatives were also discussed. A second public officials' briefing was organized to inform officials and community leadership of anticipated future land uses and the potentially necessary transportation improvements as well as the short-term and long-term deficiencies associated with each.

The first of two rounds of public open houses were held during Phase 3 to allow the general public an opportunity to review and comment on the improvement alternatives for the corridor as a whole and their own communities, in particular. A third

newsletter was distributed to the K-68 community describing Phase 3 happenings and upcoming activities.

Phase 4 – Preferred Alternatives and Selection Criteria:

Preferred alternatives were developed based on the input gathered during the previous phase and were presented to the steering committee for further discussion of selection criteria, needed regulations, and future cost estimates. A fourth newsletter explained the results of this phase of the planning process.

Phase 5 – Documentation:

Initial and final drafts of the K-68 Corridor Management Plan were developed during the fifth and final phase of the planning process. The last public officials' briefing, the second and final round of public open houses, and steering committee meetings were held to discuss the final corridor management plan document. Public involvement activities were concluded with the deployment of one last newsletter.

Though there were a variety of meetings included in the public involvement process, each began with an orientation as to where the particular meeting fell in the scope of the planning process, what the role of the participants was, and what decisions could and could not be made. Information about project goals, participants, and the overall planning process was also provided along with a brief presentation using boards and/or other handouts as necessary.



PUBLIC OUTREACH

Steering committee meetings, public officials' briefings, stakeholder meetings, public meetings, internet, and the media were used to share information about and gather feedback for the corridor management planning process. See table 2.A for a detailed list of meeting dates, locations, and topics. The public outreach effort was coordinated to:

- Inform the community about the project, its timeframe, challenges, decisions to be made, and its potential impact to property owners
- Gain community understanding, support, and advocacy for implementation
- Solicit community input on general design details, access management, utilities, acquisition, construction easements, driveway relocations, and more
- Help develop a relationship for implementation.



Brief descriptions of the vision and purpose of each public outreach technique are included below:

Steering Committee Meetings: The committee consisted of representatives from the five jurisdictions that make up the K-68 corridor. Steering committee members attended a kick-off and eight other meetings. Meeting locations were rotated among the cities and held at city and county facilities. The meetings were working sessions geared for the development of a regional view toward the future development of the K-68 corridor. The Committee provided input and guidance regarding projected population and market growth, land use, traffic alternatives and corridor vision.

Table 2.A: Detailed Schedule of Meetings

Meeting	Date	Location	Topic
Kick Off	March 4, 2008	Paola	Project Purpose and Goals, Project Expectations, Market Growth Methodology, Public Involvement Plan
Steering Committee #1	May 5, 2008	Ottawa	Project Purpose and Goals, Project Expectations, Market Growth Methodology, Public Involvement Plan, Existing Data Collection
Public Officials Briefing #1	May 22, 2008	Ottawa	Goals and Outcomes of Corridor Plan
Stakeholders	June 6, 2008 June 23, 2008 August 4, 2008	Paola Conference Call	Corridor Vision, Land Use and Economic Development, Growth Constraints
Steering Committee #2	October 9, 2008	Louisburg	Market Demand for 2010, 2020, 2030
Steering Committee #3	February 12, 2009	Ottawa	Future Land Use, Projected 2030 Traffic Volumes, Existing and Future Deficiencies
Steering Committee #4	April 2, 2009	Paola	Revised Future Land Use, Future VISUM Traffic Model, Revised Projected 2030 Traffic Volumes, Future Levels of Service with No Improvements, Improvement Alternatives
Public Officials Briefing #2	April 30, 2009	Paola	Review Improvement Alternatives
Open House #1	May 5, 2009 May 7, 2009 May 14, 2009	Louisburg Paola Ottawa	Review Improvement Alternatives
Steering Committee #5	May 21, 2009	Louisburg	Preferred Improvement Alternatives and Corridor Plan Plates, Improvement Priorities, Gap Analysis and Corridor Regulations
Steering Committee #6	June 11, 2009	Louisburg	Revised Corridor Plan Plates, Revised Corridor Regulations, Draft Plan Outline, Review Plan Acknowledgements
Steering Committee #7	July 9, 2009	Paola	Review Draft Plan
Public Officials Briefing #3	August 27, 2009	Ottawa	Review Draft Plan
Open House #2	September 3, 2009 September 10, 2009 September 15, 2009	Paola Ottawa Louisburg	Review Draft Plan

Public Officials Briefings: The briefings were informative meetings with local officials and community leaders from the corridor scheduled at three key phases in the planning process: Data Collection, Improvement Alternatives, and Documentation. One briefing was held in each of the corridor's three cities – Ottawa, Paola, and Louisburg. Media releases advertised each.

Stakeholder Meetings: A series of stakeholder meetings, with individuals and groups who are affected by or have an interest in a particular project or action, were coordinated over a period of two days in small groups meetings, one-on-one meetings, and telephone conferences. A wide variety of stakeholders make up the K-68 corridor, which spans two counties and three cities in Kansas, and impacts Cass County and Harrisonville, Missouri.

Specific corridor stakeholders generally include property owners and residents, business groups, developers, utility companies, school districts, rural residents, umbrella organizations, selected and appointed officials at the state, county, and local levels, and the project's steering committee. Below is the list of stakeholders along the K-68 corridor:

- Franklin County
- Miami County
- City of Ottawa
- City of Paola
- City of Louisburg
- Ottawa USD 290
- Paola USD 368
- Louisburg USD 416
- Wellsville USD 289
- Development and Real Estate Community
- Franklin County Rural Water District No. 6
- Miami County Economic Development
- Miami County Rural Water District No. 2

Common Themes: Below is a list of common themes that were identified during the stakeholder outreach meetings:

- Future increase in traffic volumes
- Development expanding outward from metro area
- Sight Distance - vertical and horizontal
- K-68 intersections at K-33, Old KC Road, US-169, US-69, I-35, Metcalf, and Hillsdale Lake
- Future development near Hillsdale Lake
- Widening K-68 from I-35 to Louisburg
- Wider shoulders
- K-68 as major east-west corridor
- K-68 as bypass for Kansas City, the first east-west outer loop located south of I-435 and between I-35 and US-71
- Proximity to the Gardner intermodal facility and the associated impact to future development and traffic
- Quality of life – K-68 corridor has best of both worlds (suburban/rural)
- Infrastructure – water, sewer, roads
- Schools
- Better access for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Economic development
- Increase in the number of local jobs
- Balance of commercial and industrial
- More housing – lower density, affordable
- Traffic from the Wal-Mart Distribution Center
- School bus traffic
- Farm traffic
- Truck traffic
- Development in cities – intervening corridor agricultural use
- Traffic controls
- Turning lanes
- Identification signage
- Limited access

Public Meetings: Open house public meetings were coordinated in two rounds for each of the three cities that make up the corridor. Media releases provided notice of each round of meetings along with KDOT's placement of message boards at key locations in Ottawa, Paola, and Louisburg.

Internet: Electronic newsletters were paired with the project portal available on www.ksdot.org for the purpose of providing the general public with access to K-68 Corridor Management Plan project design and meeting materials. The newsletter was also used to build the project stakeholder list, evaluate the public involvement process, and gather community comments.

Media: Press releases were distributed in advance of each meeting.

