

I-70 PEL Key Influencer Online Survey Summary

July 2018



Overview

As the I-70 Planning and Environmental Linkages Study neared completion, the project team reached out to an additional 41 key influencers, whose names had been provided by members of the Senior Advisory Group or MoDOT staff. They were asked to provide input on their experiences with, and desires for, the I-70 corridor. This document summarizes the responses of those who opted to complete the online survey.

Approach

A fifteen-question online survey was developed based on questions used in the earlier round of key influencer interviews. Along with a link to the survey, a letter of introduction was sent to all names on the expanded key influencer list, which was authored by Wesley Stephen.

Respondents

- Ben Abbott, General Manager – Permian Plastics, LLC
- Al Beltranea, General Manager – St. Charles Convention Center
- Mark Rhoades, VP of Operations TVS Supply Chain Solutions – St. Peters, MO
- Susan Sams, Business Communications/Owner – Sams Carpet Cleaning & Repairs, Sams Properties, Inc.
- Keith Schneider, Senior Director – Cushman & Wakefield
- Wesley Stephen, District Planning Manager – MoDOT St. Louis
- Scott Tate, President and CEO – Greater St. Charles County Chamber of Commerce

Questions and Summary of Responses

1. *This Planning and Environmental Linkages study, or PEL, is a high-level study seeking to inform the overall vision, goals, and strategies for a 40-mile corridor of Interstate 70. The western end of our study area is the 64/70 interchange in St. Charles County; the eastern boundary is the end of the reversible lanes in St. Louis City. Given the above, please share your ideas about what is working well on I-70 today?*

Several respondents agreed that, generally, traffic moves well through the corridor. Influencers noted that this was due to little or no construction along the corridor; good maintenance of existing infrastructure; existing one-way outer roads, roundabouts, and DDI interchanges; having enough lanes; long on/off ramps; and diverging diamond interchanges (i.e. at 5th Street, First Capitol, Mid Rivers, and TR Hughes).

However, a few respondents noted some issues, including that, aside from the areas of I-270 through MO 94 and MO 370 though MO 79, I-70 is “tight and congested.” Also, the area east of I-170 sees slowdowns due to hills and curves. Another requested that one-way outer roads, slip ramps, and Texas U-Turns be implemented along the entire corridor, and others wanted more ramps for exiting and entering the highway, and to have improved safety along the corridor.

2. *What do you think are the greatest challenges facing the corridor today?*

The respondents identified several broad challenges for the corridor, including the volume of traffic causing congestion and collisions, insufficient space for widening/adding lanes, and that the corridor “looks tired.” More specifically, influencers pointed out issues with the I-64 interchange, the short on/off ramps to I-64, the railroad bridge west of MO Z, and having too few lanes from I-64 to Warrenton.

3. *What key challenges do you believe the corridor will face in the next 10 to 20 years?*

Most respondents believe the main challenge for the corridor will be keeping up with the continued growth and development that occurs along it, as major commercial and residential development will lead to increased traffic flow. They also noted that it will be important to consider adding extra lanes to accommodate that growth, as well as any increased freight movement. Another influencer also mentioned the importance of getting businesses to “buy into” the one-way service roads.

4. *The PEL will look at ways to improve safety, convenience, access, and aesthetics along and across this 40-mile section of I-70. What improvements do you believe are needed to enhance connections along the corridor? Connections may be defined as creating access to job markets, future development areas, surrounding neighborhoods? Think about walking, biking, transit, as well as driving. Also, consider the varying abilities of people of all ages.*

Respondents primarily focused on the importance of providing better and safer access for non-motorized users of the corridor (i.e. making infrastructure bike/pedestrian friendly, continuing trail development, extending the MetroLink, etc.); beautification/landscaping; and creating one-way outer roads, especially from St. Charles to Wentzville.

5. *Where on this corridor are safety improvements most critical?*

Respondents broadly highlighted the need for longer on/off ramps and more lanes throughout the corridor, as well as examining both the use of roundabouts at exits and the interchanges between outer roads and ramp terminals for bike/pedestrian traffic. More specifically, influencers pointed out safety concerns about the I-70/I-64/MO Z interchange, the Mid Rivers Mall area (Zumbehl and Cave Springs), the bottleneck at Highway Z, the hill under the TR Hughes overpass, the winding S curve in Wentzville, and the hill between Bryan Rd. and Lake St. Louis.

6. *What factors do you think contribute to a business' success if it is located adjacent to I-70? Think about things like the type of business, access, size, signage, and other factors.*

Nearly every respondent discussed access from the interstate as being crucial for a business' success, and one further noted the benefits of having continuous outer roads to help with accessibility to businesses for both customers and freight. A few also touched on visibility from the interstate, and modernized and aesthetically-pleasing interchanges as being helpful for businesses along the corridor.

7. *In your experience, does this corridor currently support and integrate existing development opportunities?*

The general consensus of the key influencers was that the corridor's support and integration of existing development opportunities is currently limited, due to obsolete interchanges, a lack of outer roads in St.

Louis City/County, outdated infrastructure, the failure to plan ahead for development, and a lack of visual appeal.

8. *During the next five to ten years, what should MoDOT's highest transportation priorities be for this 40-mile segment of I-70?*

Nearly every respondent highlighted the need for additional lanes throughout the corridor, specifically from MO K to Wentzville Parkway, and through Warrenton. Additionally, influencers noted that upgrading infrastructure, improving access to the St. Louis Lambert International Airport and other areas prime for redevelopment, removing bottlenecks, reworking the I-70/I-64/MO Z interchange, adding one-way outer roads, and moving "passing through" freight traffic off of the corridor would also be worthy priorities for MoDOT.

9. *What is your ideal vision for the I-70 corridor for 2030 and beyond?*

Many respondents reiterated their previously stated desires for the corridor (continuous outer roads, increased lanes, and beautification), but a few had more descriptive visions that included the utilization of smart technology to improve safety, traffic flow, and maintenance, and the ability to serve all users (motorized or not) efficiently.

10. *What should MoDOT and the regional partners have as their highest priorities to make your vision come to life?*

Beyond the desired improvements previously mentioned (adding lanes, fixing the I-70/I-64 interchange, rebuilding the railroad bridge west of MO Z, adding one-way outer roads, etc.), influencers suggested staying ahead of the shifts in population migration, modernizing the infrastructure to ensure safety and reliability, and increasing funding as the highest priorities.

11. *Have you heard of any specific groups or needs around access to the I-70 transportation system?*

One respondent named the Lincoln Port Authority as a specific group needing access, and another brought up the implementation of toll roads to support funding as a need for the corridor.

12. *Is the current function of the corridor compatible to your/your community's needs? What about the needs of others? (i.e. through travelers, commuters, trucking community)*

All but one of the five respondents to this question said that the corridor's current function is compatible to their needs, although they noted that improved access and safety, additional lanes, and continuous outer roads would be beneficial to everyone. One key influencer denied that the corridor was compatible to their needs because, "safe access has been, and remains, a long-standing concern".

13. *How frequently do you use any portion of this 40-mile section of I-70, from the 64/70 interchange at the western edge to the reversible lanes in downtown St. Louis City at the eastern edge?*

Five respondents reported that they use the corridor 6+ times a week, and the other two use it 2-5 times a week.

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