

# Chapter 5: Comments & Coordination/Public Involvement

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## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Coordination with appropriate local, state, and federal agencies, in conjunction with the public involvement processes, assisted in the identification of pertinent issues and information regarding this project. This level of coordination and public involvement will continue throughout the US 231 Relocation Study Environmental Document process. Comments regarding this study are addressed within this chapter, and included in Appendix A of this Environmental Document.

## 5.2 AGENCY COORDINATION

### 5.2.1 *General Project Coordination*

Informal agency coordination (local, state, and federal) was initiated to obtain information, confirm project assumptions, and to open a general dialogue for project discussions. The following agencies have been contacted during the study:

#### Local agencies:

- City of West Lafayette
- Tippecanoe County
- Area Plan Commission of Tippecanoe County (TCAPC) (also a member of the Project Team)
- Purdue University

#### State agencies:

- Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM)
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology (DHPA), State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)
- Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), Crawfordsville District

#### Federal agencies:

- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
- United States Coast Guard (USCG)
- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE), Louisville District

Table 5-1 provides details on official correspondence from agencies regarding the project. Agency correspondence letters are provided in Appendix A.

**Table 5-1  
Official Correspondence from Agencies**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>From Whom</b>
IDNR	July 31, 2001	Ronald P. Hellmich
USFWS	September 25, 2001	Scott Pruitt
NRCS	November 30, 2001	Jane E. Hardisty
USCG	December 4, 2001	Roger K. Wiebusch
USCG	December 6, 2001	John Konik
Purdue University	January 25, 2002	Wayne Kjonaas
IDNR DHPA	January 10, 2002	Larry D. Macklin
IDEM	January 25, 2002	Bruno Pigott
IDNR DHPA	May 1, 2002	John R. Goss
Purdue University	June 4, 2002	Wayne Kjonaas
USFWS	July 19, 2002	Scott E. Pruitt
IDNR DHPA	August 8, 2002	John R. Goss
FHWA	August 20, 2002	Shelby M. Fuller
USFWS	September 10, 2002	Scott E. Pruitt

### ***5.2.2 Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act***

INDOT, in conjunction with FHWA, initiated the Section 106 review and consultation process for the proposed project in accordance with National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA); Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's (ACHP's) current regulations of 36 CFR Part 800; National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act; the American Indians Religious Freedom Act; the Archaeological Resources Protection Act; and State of Indiana regulations. FHWA serves as the lead agency for all Section 106 activities.

In March 2002, a Section 106 Review and Coordination letter inviting consulting parties to participate in the US 231 Relocation Study was prepared and sent to parties identified in the Section 106 Mailing List for the project. Six affirmative responses were received. Consulting Parties for this project include:

- Angela Bowen, Wabash Valley Trust for Historic Preservation (WVTHP)
- Mark Dollase, Historic Landmarks Foundation (HLF)
- James Howell, Shelby Township Historical Association
- David M. Schotes, Delaware Nation
- Julie Olds, Miami Tribe of Oklahoma
- John P. Froman, Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma

Consulting Parties were provided copies (CD and hardcopy) of the draft Section 106: Phase I Survey Report (Phase I Report) for review and comment.

In May 2002 comments on the draft Phase I Report were received from DHPA. A Consulting Parties meeting was arranged to discuss the project, DHPA findings, and the draft Phase I Report. Invitation letters were sent to the Consulting Parties as well as the DHPA (State Historic Preservation Officer [SHPO]). The meeting was held June 5, 2002 in West Lafayette, Indiana. Members of the Project Team, including FHWA and TCAPC, attended the meeting. Two Consulting Parties attended: Angela Bowen of WVTHP and Mark Dollase of HLF. Representatives from DHPA were in attendance.

In July 2002, based upon comments from DHPA and the results of the Consulting Parties process to date, the Phase I Report has been finalized for review and comment. A preliminary No Historic Properties Affected finding by FHWA was included with the report. In accordance with Indiana Division of FHWA Section 106 Consultation Procedures, the final Phase I Report was open to review and comment for 30 days. The report comments have been reviewed and FHWA has issued the official findings for this portion of the Section 106 process.

A FHWA determination of No Historic Properties Affected is appropriate for the architectural resources within the DOE Survey Area. In accordance with 36 CFR §800.4(d)(1), no further coordination is required and the FHWA's responsibilities under Section 106 for architectural resources within the US 231 Relocation Study are fulfilled.

The Section 106 review and coordination process has been discussed at public information meetings and Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings. Copies of Section 106 documents are located in the project repository (TCAPC offices) and on the project website [www.relocate231.com](http://www.relocate231.com).

Section 106 comment and coordination letters are provided in Appendix A.

### **5.3 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

A Public Involvement Plan (PIP) (included in Appendix A) was initiated at the start of the US 231 Relocation Study. The purpose of the plan was to encourage and facilitate public participation in the project in order to aid the process of selecting the best alternative to meet the surrounding community's needs. Specific objectives included:

- Providing timely information to the public about the study process and project alternatives;

- Soliciting input from citizens on the resources of concern, impacts of alternatives, and preferences in regard to alternatives;
- Involving environmental justice communities in the transportation decision-making process; and
- Developing an understanding of local issues that will enable the environmental document to best provide the information needed for decision-making while also fulfilling NEPA requirements.

To meet the objectives of the PIP, several information gathering and dissemination approaches were utilized, including the:

- Creation of a comprehensive project website [www.relocate231.com](http://www.relocate231.com);
- Formation of a Community Advisory Committee (CAC);
- Organization and maintenance of a project repository site (located at TCAPC offices);
- Development and distribution of a project newsletter;
- Encouragement of open dialogue with members of the community; and,
- Scheduling of public information meetings throughout the study.

These efforts are described in greater detail later in this chapter, Appendix A, and Appendix B (Community Impact Assessment [CIA] Report).

Although comment periods (deadlines) have been requested at specific intervals, the comment process has been open and continuous throughout the study. Comments are accepted via mail, email, fax, and via the project website.

### ***5.3.1 Public Meetings***

Two public information meetings were held and one public hearing will be held during the US 231 Relocation Study.

#### **January 17, 2002 Public Information Kickoff Meeting**

A public information kickoff meeting was conducted January 17, 2002 at Purdue University's Stewart Center (Room 206) from 5:00-8:00 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the public with information regarding the project's history, the eight preliminary alternatives under consideration, and to solicit public comment regarding the project. Information packets (including maps and graphics) were prepared and distributed at the meeting. Information was also presented on large graphic information boards at the meeting. The packets were also posted to the project website and made available in the project repository (located at TCAPC offices) for viewing by those unable to attend. Members of the project team were available for public questions/comments before and after the meeting.

Approximately 275 people attended and viewed graphic information boards, which included the study area with proposed alignments and baseline environmental constraints. A large number of those in attendance were Purdue students and/or professors. Three Purdue University classes (engineering and landscape design) required students to attend the meeting.

All public comments in conjunction with this meeting were requested by February 8, 2002 (although comments continued to be collected after the requested date). A total of 111 comments were received from the public as a result of the first public information meeting. These included: written comments received at the meeting (19), via mail (11), e-mail (6), fax (2), and on the project website (90).

Top concerns of commentors included impacts to neighborhoods, limited access, impacts to farmlands, noise, proximity to schools, impacts to natural resources, increased traffic, lowering of property values, safety threats to pedestrians/bicyclists, and urban sprawl.

#### **June 6, 2002 Public Information Meeting**

A second public information meeting was conducted on June 6, 2002 in the cafeteria at Klondike Middle School from 5:30-8:30 p.m. The purpose of this meeting was to present the status of the project, the results of preliminary alternative analysis, and analysis of historic architectural resources (Section 106) within the study area. Also discussed was the role and activities of the CAC, a group of citizens and representatives of several local community and neighborhood groups established by INDOT to act as an informational liaison between the community and transportation officials. During the second half of this public information meeting, residents were able to present their comments regarding the project via signing up to be a speaker.

Information packets (including maps and graphics) were prepared and distributed at the meeting. Information was also presented on large information boards at the meeting. This information also was made available on the project website and in the project repository. Members of the project team, as well as a representative from the Corradino Group (the firm conducting the US 231 Environmental Assessment from I-70 to I-65) were available for public questions and comments before and after the meeting.

Approximately 170 people were in attendance to collect information and voice their comments regarding the project.

All comments were requested by June 21, 2002. Comments were received at the public meeting (41), via mail (five), fax (one) and the project website (19). A total of 66 comments were received from the public as a result of the second public meeting.

Top concerns of commentors included impacts to neighborhoods, limited access, long-term planning, cost, the other US 231 study (I-65 to I-70) and how it will link to this study, impacts to farmlands, noise, proximity to schools, impacts to natural resources, increased traffic, lowering of property values, safety threats to pedestrians/bicyclists, pollution, and urban sprawl.

### **Public Hearing**

On October 3, 2002, a public hearing will be held to present the US 231 Relocation Study Draft Environmental Document and to obtain agency and public feedback.

### ***5.3.2 Other Activities***

#### **Website**

Nearly all information regarding the US 231 Relocation Study (from SR 26 to US 52) can be found at the project's official website ([www.relocate231.com](http://www.relocate231.com)). The site provides background information, press releases, information regarding public meetings (both before and after meetings), public comments, answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs), project documents, project mapping, etc. The website to date has had approximately 4,873 hits.

#### **Newsletter**

A project newsletter was developed and mailed directly to those requesting to be on the project mailing list (approximately 420 individuals). A project e-mail list was developed for those citizens requesting e-mail notifications regarding the project's progress and substantial events related directly to the project. Approximately 180 individuals received e-mail notifications throughout the life of the project. Newsletters were also provided to CAC members to local distribution and dropped off at various locations within the project study area. The newsletter is also available on the project website.

#### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

Public comments were solicited through the project website ([www.relocate231.com](http://www.relocate231.com)) and at each public information meeting. Each comment was entered into the project's comment database. Comments were then classified into general themes (e.g., concerns about impacts to neighborhoods, increased noise and traffic, etc.)

and responses were developed. Those general comment themes and responses are posted on the project website and also represented in Table 5-2 below.

**Table 5-2  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

1.	<p><b>Q:</b> What is the purpose and need for this leg of US 231?</p> <p><b>A:</b> The Purpose &amp; Need for the entire relocation of US 231 from south of CR 500S to US 52 was established in the 1987 DEIS and 1992 FEIS and corresponding ROD (the full text of these documents is available on the website and in the project repository). The purpose and need for the entire relocation was designed to ease traffic congestion and accidents in the area of the current US 231 (notably Northwestern Avenue, State Street, etc.); to conform to existing state and local transportation plans; and to meet the needs of future land use planning. The northern portion of the route between SR 26 and US 52 is necessary to complete the previously approved plans for the relocation of US 231.</p>
2.	<p><b>Q:</b> Why were certain western alignments developed by Baker subsequently recommended for elimination from detailed study?</p> <p><b>A:</b> Some western alignments do not meet the purpose and need for the proposed action because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They lack conformity with existing plans (TCAPC, Purdue) that call for connections with extensions of Cherry Lane and Cumberland Avenue.</li> <li>• According to current and future traffic models, they will not generate enough volume to lessen present (and future predicted) traffic congestion and accidents on roads and intersections near the Purdue University campus (i.e. Northwestern Avenue, McCormick Road, State Street, etc.). This is because traffic destined for the north side of West Lafayette is not likely to go very far west only to return eastward.</li> <li>• They are inconsistent with the intent of local land use plans (TCAPC, Wabash Township), which call for maintaining the rural character of the area.</li> </ul>
3.	<p><b>Q:</b> Why isn't the No-Build Alternative being given greater consideration, since it remains "on the table?"</p> <p><b>A:</b> The No-Build Alternative is carried forward as required by FHWA regulations, and is used as a base line for traffic, accident, and planning comparisons between the Build Alternative alignments. The No-Build Alternative remains "on the table", even though, as applied to the northern portion, it does not meet the purpose and need for the proposed action.</p>
4.	<p><b>Q:</b> Is US 231 a "bypass," and if so, why don't you take it all the way to Montmorenci and connect it with US 231 out there?</p> <p><b>A:</b> Relocated US 231 is not proposed as a "bypass" in the same sense as I-465 in Indianapolis (for example). It is not intended to reroute through traffic beyond the greater Lafayette/West Lafayette area. Rather, it is intended for use by local traffic and, as such, would not attract acceptable volumes if routed toward Montmorenci.</p>

5.	<p><b>Q:</b> Will Relocated US 231 result in commercial businesses being developed along the route, as happened with US 52 and SR 26 south?</p> <p><b>A:</b> US 231 will be a limited access highway with no curb cuts and intersections only with certain roads such as Cherry Lane (extended), SR 26 West, and Cumberland Avenue (extension).</p>
6.	<p><b>Q:</b> What are the access and intersection considerations for Cherry Lane, SR 26, Lindberg Road, Cumberland Avenue, Klondike Road (if a western alignment is chosen) and US 52?</p> <p><b>A:</b> In general, while various potential access points and intersections are being considered for alignments carried forward for more detailed study, these scenarios will not be expressly examined or determined until a preferred alternative is selected.</p>
7.	<p><b>Q:</b> How will the northern terminus of US 231 at US 52 tie into the larger study of a future route to I-65?</p> <p><b>A:</b> The study referred to is intended to examine a variety of possible routes for US 231 from I-70 to I-65. However, the US 231 Relocation Study (SR 26 to US 52), including a recommended terminus at US 52, is likely to be completed before US 231 from I-70 to I-65, in which case this study will incorporate that detail. Lastly, the US 231 Relocation Study (SR 26 to US 52) is a programmed, approved project with a ROD issued in 1992. Additional information about the US 231 from I-70 to I-65 study is available at <a href="http://www.corradino.com/us231">www.corradino.com/us231</a>.</p>
8.	<p><b>Q:</b> We have heard that the cost to build the road is not a concern for elimination of alignments. Can you clarify this?</p> <p><b>A:</b> Ultimately, cost is a factor in evaluating the final selection of a preferred alternative. For example, if two alternatives rate similarly in all other factors, then cost would be considered. However, cost is not considered a major factor in early evaluation and elimination of alignments, which is based mainly conformity to purpose and need and other fatal flaws (such as impacts to certain public parks, historic properties, etc.).</p>
9.	<p><b>Q:</b> Can the project maps show more detail as to where current roads are?</p> <p><b>A:</b> Project maps have been updated to show more detailed information, including neighborhoods, secondary roads, easier identification of each alignment, etc.</p>
10.	<p><b>Q:</b> Can you please put more information (primarily the information given at the public meeting) up on the website?</p> <p><b>A:</b> All public meeting information, CAC meeting materials, prior documents on the study, maps, etc. have been posted to this website. E-mail update subscribers receive notification when new information has been added to the site.</p>
11.	<p><b>Q:</b> Is Baker (INDOT's consultant for the US 231 Relocation Study between SR 26 and US 52) communicating with the Corradino Group (INDOT's consultant for the US 231 from I-70 to I-65 Environmental Assessment) to ensure coordination between the two studies?</p> <p><b>A:</b> Yes, both firms are in collaboration with each other.</p>

12.	<p><b>Q:</b> How can I find out about meetings?</p> <p><b>A:</b> INDOT sends press releases concerning upcoming meetings to local media before meetings. Also, as soon as meeting dates and locations are set, they are advertised on the homepage of this website. Project update e-mails are also sent to the public informing them of upcoming events. You can sign up to be added to the project e-mail and mailing lists at public meetings, via the website feedback page (<a href="http://www.relocate231.com/feedback.asp">www.relocate231.com/feedback.asp</a>), via mail (Wendy Vachet, Project Manager, Michael Baker Jr., Inc., 701 E 83<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Merrillville, IN 46410), or via fax (Wendy Vachet - 219-755-0233). Comments may also be submitted by any of the preceding methods.</p>
13.	<p><b>Q:</b> Where will impacts to wetlands, floodplains, air quality, and noise levels be addressed?</p> <p><b>A:</b> The impact on natural, human, and cultural environments will be investigated for alignments carried forward for detailed analysis and will be addressed in the DRAFT Environmental Document.</p>

### **Community Advisory Committee (CAC)**

The CAC created for this project consisted of 23 members representing various groups and organizations found in the study area. The CAC members served as liaisons between the project team and the organizations they represented, as well as the larger community.

The CAC received more intense education and involvement in the project development process than the public at large. The CAC provided ideas and information that was directly used in the development of the environmental document (specifically the Community Impact Assessment Report [CIA Report], Appendix B). The CAC also provided feedback on certain aspects of project development. They were given presentations by the project team and provided their reactions to that information before it was presented to the general public. The exercises were intended to help the CAC members develop a deeper understanding and empathy for the project development process, which they took back to their respective organizations and communities. The CAC did not have a decision-making role in the project, and this was made clear to its members from the outset.

The CAC has met three times and is scheduled for two more meetings throughout the life of the project:

- April 11, 2002 – Morton Community Center, Room 106 from 6-8pm, West Lafayette, Indiana.
- May 16, 2002 – Klondike Middle School, Media Center (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor) from 6-8:30pm, West Lafayette, Indiana.
- July 25, 2002 – Klondike Middle School, Art Room from 6-8:30pm, West Lafayette, Indiana.

- September 23, 2002 – Klondike Elementary School, 5:30-8:30pm, West Lafayette, Indiana.
- October, 2002 - TBD

**5.4 SUMMARY**

Public involvement will continue throughout the US 231 Relocation Study Environmental Document process.

A PIP was initiated at the start of the US 231 Relocation Study. The purpose of the PIP was to encourage and facilitate public participation in the project in order to aid the process of selecting the best alternative to meet the surrounding community's needs. Below is a synopsis of all comments received regarding this study.

**5.4.1 Total Number of Comments**

Comments received at Public Meetings:

Jan 17, 2002 Public Meeting .....	2
Speakers at Meeting.....	17
June 6, 2002 Public Meeting .....	22
Speakers at Meeting.....	29

Comments received by Mail:

Regarding Jan 17, 2002 Public Meeting.....	11
Regarding June 6, 2002 Public Meeting.....	5

Comments received by Fax:

Regarding Jan 17, 2002 Public Meeting.....	2
Regarding June 6, 2002 Public Meeting.....	1

Comments received by E-mail:

Regarding Jan 17, 2002 Public Meeting.....	6
Regarding June 6, 2002 Public Meeting.....	0

Comments received by Website:

Start of Project – June 5, 2002.....	90
June 6, 2002 – present (through comment #112).....	19

**Total Comments Received .....187**

**5.4.2 Top Concerns of Commentors**

Alternative analysis reasoning (why were alternatives eliminated?) .....	12
Community facilities impacts.....	3
Costs .....	17
Emergency services access .....	8
Farmlands .....	16

Flooding ..... 7  
Is this relocation necessary? ..... 7  
Limited access .....19  
Long-term planning.....12  
Mitigation efforts (aesthetics, noise barriers, etc.)..... 4  
Natural resources (streams, trees, wetlands, wildlife, etc.) .....22  
Neighborhood impacts.....72  
Noise .....39  
"Other US 231 Study" (how it will link with this route?) ..... 9  
Pedestrians/bicyclists .....14  
Pollution.....12  
Property values.....14  
Safety .....15  
Schools (proximity to) ..... 7  
Traffic.....59  
Urban sprawl .....12