

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Engagement Process

The process involved a set of strategically designed activities engaging stakeholders and informing the public through interactive meetings, newsletters, and a web site. The project team and partners developed the goals of the public engagement process at a Community Outreach Goals Workshop in September 2006. The goals were defined as:

- Obtain public input that is timely and useful
- Secure public trust that the information received is complete, timely and honest
- Encourage public advocacy:
 - For design concept solution
 - For funding
- Develop a public that is knowledgeable/well-educated about the project, including:
 - Understanding of implementation possibilities and schedule so as to help manage expectations
 - Able to distinguish this project from other projects in the area
 - Understanding that the project is not about east/west roadways
 - Understanding the interrelationships among this and other projects
 - Understanding of large developments happening in/near the area
- Promote recognition that this project is a real partnership among the Cities of Kansas City and Lee's Summit, Jackson County, the Mid-America Regional Council, and the Missouri Department of Transportation

Stakeholder Meetings

The project team held a series of three stakeholder meetings during the data collection stage of the project and a series of three more stakeholder meetings during the corridor concept development and evaluation phase. The stakeholder groups, which focused on Quality of Life, Planning and Development, and Transportation, included representatives of neighborhoods, businesses, property owners, institutions, planners, developers, public safety officials, bicycle, pedestrian and transit interests, and others. There were about 40 representatives of organizations and interests that attended each stakeholder meeting series.

Exhibit 46 – Photographs from the Stakeholder Meetings



The purpose of the first series of stakeholder meetings was to get the perspectives of the representatives on issues, accommodations, special needs of user groups, future development, character and priorities for Lee's Summit Road between US-40 Highway and I-470. The participants were asked a series of questions designed to get their perspectives in ways that could help direct the design process. Stakeholder concerns at the meetings are listed below.

- The biggest issue is safety - for drivers, residents, emergency services, transit users, pedestrians and bicyclists.
 - Intersections are of particular interest.
 - The perceived high percentage of truck traffic is a concern.
- Other issues are the environment (including noise), access (where, how much, and for emergency services), traffic capacity as the area develops, integrity/aesthetics of area, and potential impacts to property owners.
- Roadway character is important to stakeholders. A strong feeling is that the improved roadway should still have a country feel; many want trees, natural cliffs, and natural landscaping. Some like berms or landscaped medians but think it is important to balance landscaping and potential property impacts.
- Although stakeholders generally support accommodating bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit riders as part of roadway improvements, concerns varied:
 - A major need for transit service under existing conditions is either a wider driving lane or bus pull-offs at major bus stops and pedestrian connections.
 - For recreational bicyclists and walkers, a connection to the Little Blue Trace Park and any proposed trails in Lee's Summit and Independence is important.
 - For serious "commuter" bicyclists, either a bike lane or a wide shared curb lane would be important.
 - Potential pedestrian needs are between neighborhoods, to and from bus stops, recreational destinations and/or community services.
- Discussions on where development might happen highlighted some of the development constraints on the Kansas City side including steep topography, a large area within the flood plain and high water table.
 - Some development is proposed in the vicinity of Woods Chapel Road and in other locations to the north between Noland Road and Lee's Summit Road.
 - Strother Road improvements and its interchange with I-470 will likely spur development in the southern portion of the study area.
- Opinions were mixed as to whether proposed east/west roadways were likely or even needed in the future.
 - Emergency service representatives strongly voiced a need for at least one good east/west connection between Noland Road and Lee's Summit Road.
 - Some neighborhood, property and church representatives feel better east-west connections would be valuable.
 - Some stakeholders think the cost would be prohibitive, the terrain difficult and the effects of more traffic on existing residents would be undesirable.
- Safety improvements top the list of what stakeholders think is most important to fix. Suggestions included adding shoulders, lighting, turn lanes at intersections, and some improvements to the alignment for better visibility.

The purpose of the second series of stakeholder meetings was to get the perspectives of the representatives on the preliminary concepts to help refine the concepts. Participants heard a presentation on roadway concepts and were asked questions about them. Stakeholders were in basic agreement with roadway concepts, though some were concerned with the safety in varying the number of lanes in different locations and questioned whether widening the roadway would encourage speeding. They thought the concepts basically support development but were concerned that some development could negatively impact neighborhoods.

Stakeholders agreed the concepts addressed access for all types of users (vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian) though some desired an off-street trail the full length of the roadway. Participants thought that character could be addressed

by enhancing the provided green space. Stakeholders did not voice a strong preference on priority locations for beginning construction of the roadway project but generally thought the priorities should respond to traffic demand needs and to safety needs.

Public Meetings

There were two public meetings during the process, both held at the Oakwood Baptist Church near the middle of the Lee's Summit Road corridor. Between 35 and 40 people attended each meeting where they could review exhibits about the project and talk to the project team.

Exhibit 47 – Photographs from the Public Meetings



At the January 18, 2007 public open house, participants filled out comment cards answering three questions in reference to the importance of east-west connections and the value of safety improvements as they may relate to potential impacts. In their responses they strongly supported safety improvements. Specific concerns were with traffic volumes, speeds, no good location to stop in an emergency, dangerous curves, and the need for a safe place to ride bikes. Although over two-thirds of the respondents supported east/west connections by ranking them as "very important" or "important", almost one-third thought they were "not very important".

Other comments related to bicycle/pedestrian issues (adding shoulders, trail connections and on-road facilities, and sidewalks or paths on both sides), potential property impacts, roadway maintenance (snow/ice removal, trimming vegetation), roadway improvement items (intersections, lighting, curves), and phasing starting from the Truman Medical Center hospital south to I-470.

At the June 7, 2007 public open house, participants viewed exhibits on how the roadway improvement concepts had been developed along the corridor, the preliminary concept design and potential implementation stages. They talked to City and consultant staff regarding their particular interests and concerns. Participants filled out comment cards with the primary question, "Are you in general agreement with the roadway concept proposed at this meeting?" Out of 18 total responses to that question, 15 (83%) said "Yes." Two respondents said "Not Sure" accompanied by questions as to whether their house would be taken by the project and which of the alignment options would be more expensive. One respondent said "No" with the request to avoid installing off-road bicycle/pedestrian facilities that immediately parallel the roadway. Other comments related to:

- Requests to speed up the project
- Concerns about traffic volume increases and congestion
- Requests to be kept informed of progress
- Differing opinions on bicycle facilities, both on-road and off-road facilities
- Suggestion that the costs of improvements be shared equally among the project partners (cities, county, the Missouri Dept. of Transportation, etc.)
- Suggestion to rename the entire road "Lee's Summit Road" to eliminate the confusion of differing names over the length
- Thoughts about maintaining the "character" of the current road

Contact List

The contact list for mailing newsletters and reaching stakeholders grew to over 500 names. The list includes a broad range of people who might have an interest in the roadway including:

- Property owners who abut the roadway right-of-way
- Neighborhood and homeowners associations within Kansas City and Lee's Summit
- Businesses, business organizations, institutions and associations that serve the study area
- State, federal, county and city elected and appointed officials
- Public safety and school representatives
- Planners and engineers who work in the area
- Representatives of bicycle, pedestrian, and environmental interests
- Utility representatives
- Persons who attended a public meeting or asked to be included on the list

Newsletters and Website

The newsletters and project website were designed to keep all interested citizens up to date on the project as it progressed. The project website is on the City of Kansas City's Public Works web site at <http://www.kcmo.org/pubworks.nsf/web/LSRstudy?opendocument> and contains a project description, project area map, all newsletters and open house materials.

With the completion of project there are four newsletters. All newsletters are included in the Appendix. People on the contact list received Issue No. 1 in late October 2006. Its purpose was to introduce and describe the project and schedule, to review the history of planning for Lee's Summit Road over the last 15 years, and to describe the partnership that is managing the project. Issue No. 2 reached participants in early January 2007. It served as an invitation to the first public open house, reviewed the input from the first series of stakeholder meetings, how the mailing list of was compiled, and introduced the concepts of "Immediate," "Interim," and "Ultimate" roadway improvements. Issue No. 3 mailed in April 2007, included an invitation to the second public open house, explored what should be considered in creating a roadway concept, and summarized public input from stakeholders and persons filling out comment cards at the January Public Open House. Issue No. 4 mailed in August 2007, announced the availability of the Corridor Concept Report, presented the list of potential improvements and summarized public input from the June public meeting.