



US 30 East

Resource Agency, Stakeholder & Public Involvement Summary #1

April 28, 2023

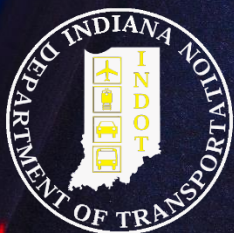


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1. STUDY OVERVIEW

ProPEL is an INDOT initiative for transportation planning that uses collaborative PEL studies to consider environmental, community and economic goals early in the planning process. Through the PEL studies, INDOT aspires to create smarter transportation systems that build stronger communities.

The ProPEL US 30 and 31 studies span 180 miles across 12 counties. The ProPEL US 30 East study area extends from Beech Road in Marshall County to the Indiana/Ohio state line in Allen County. It includes Marshall, Whitley, Kosciusko, and Allen counties.

This report provides a summary of the information provided at two (2) Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings, two (2) in-person public meetings, and one (1) virtual meeting, as well as the feedback that was collected from the public through December 31, 2022. It also includes the information presented and feedback received from three resource agency coordination meetings held in early 2023. Public feedback will continue throughout the remaining phases: Purpose and Need, Alternatives Analysis, and the completion of the PEL Study.

2. PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Feedback from residents, motorists, businesses and others is vital to the success of the studies. Along with the other study areas, the ProPEL US 30 East study team is gathering public feedback throughout the planning process. The initial round of public engagement occurred in December 2022 as part of the Vision and Scoping phase of the ProPEL study. The purpose of these meetings was to:

- Introduce the concept of a Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) study
- Define the ProPEL US 30 East study process
- Identify the specific goals of the ProPEL US 30 East study
- Help people understand how to participate in the ProPEL US 30 East study
- Solicit input on the fit and function of the study corridor (e.g., future corridor vision, specific transportation concerns, environmental resources of concern, as well as community goals).

Figure 1: ProPEL US 30 Study Schedule



3. OUTREACH AND ADVERTISEMENT

The study team conducted stakeholder and public outreach to raise awareness of the ProPEL US 30 Vision and Scoping portion of the study, encourage participation and solicit feedback during the public comment period. Table 2 contains a summary of these efforts.

Figure 2: ProPEL US 30 East Outreach Efforts

	Outreach Efforts	Date(s)
Stakeholder Advisory Committees	Virtual meetings	11/14/2022; 11/15/2022
Public Information Meetings	In-person – Fort Wayne and Warsaw; virtual via propelUS30.com	12/5/2022; 12/6/2022; 12/7/2022 (virtual)
Website information	ProPELUS30.com	11/22/2022
Press release (Appendix A)	INDOT media list	11/22/2022
Media alert (Appendix B)	INDOT media list	12/5/2022
Social media posts (Appendix C)	Twitter, Facebook & Instagram posts with in-person meeting information	11/22/2022; 12/4/2022; 12/5/2022; 12/6/2022
	Twitter, Facebook & Instagram with virtual meeting information	12/7/2022
	Twitter, Facebook & Instagram with PIM recap	12/22/2022
Stakeholder email blasts (Appendix D)	67% open rate and 476 recipients	12/2/2022
	60% open rate and 701 recipients	12/7/2022
Public notices (Appendix E)	The Post and Mail	11/26/2022, 12/3/2022
	Journal-Gazette	11/25/2022, 12/2/2022
	Times-Union	11/26/2022, 11/30/2022
Community Office Hours	Warsaw	10/25/2022
	Monroeville	10/26/2022
	Warsaw and Columbia City	11/18/2022
	Columbia City	11/18/2022
	New Haven	12/15/2022
	Columbia City	12/16/2022

4. STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The study team established two Stakeholder Advisory Committees, which included representatives from local agencies, residents, community organizations, churches, social service providers, emergency service providers, businesses and business

organizations. One Stakeholder Advisory Committee included individuals from the eastern-most study area – from Fort Wayne to the Ohio state line. The second included representatives from the western study area, Warsaw to Fort Wayne, which connects to the US 30 West study area. Virtual meetings with each occurred November 14 and 15. The purpose of these meetings were to introduce the committee to the study, discuss expected roles, and facilitate feedback from the community stakeholders. The study team also encouraged the committee members to assist in raising community awareness about the study and its feedback opportunities. Meeting materials and summaries are included in **Appendix F**.

5. US 30 & 31 COALITIONS PRESENTATIONS

The ProPEL Advisor team met virtually with members of the US 30 and US 31 Coalitions to provide an update on the studies, discuss community and stakeholder engagement activities, provide information on next steps, and answer any questions from attendees. Meeting materials and summaries are included in **Appendix G**.

6. AGENCY COORDINATION

As part of the Vision/Scoping phase of the study, coordination meetings were held with resource agencies, cultural resource stakeholders and federally recognized Tribes. These meetings included:

- November 30, 2022: Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology Coordination Meeting (Virtual)
- January 27, 2023: Resource Agency Meeting & Cultural Resource Stakeholder Meeting (Virtual)
- February 23, 2023: Tribal Partner Coordination Meeting (Virtual)

In general, the purpose of these meetings was to introduce the PEL study process, kick-off the ProPEL and US 30 studies (all four corridor studies), discuss proposed analysis methodologies and to communicate specific next steps for the studies. Meeting materials and summaries are included in **Appendix H**.

7. PUBLIC MEETING FORMAT

The study team held two in-person meetings:

- Monday, December 5, 2022, at Sweetwater Sound in Fort Wayne, 5-7 p.m. EST
- Tuesday, December 6, 2022, at Lincoln Elementary School in Warsaw, 5-7 p.m. EST

A virtual, on-demand meeting was also available beginning Wednesday, December 7, 2022. The virtual presentation was made available online at propelUS30.com.

The format of the meetings was an open house with a presentation (**Appendix I**) from study team members. The open house was held from 5 – 7 p.m. EST with a presentation scheduled for 6 p.m. During the presentation, the study team shared an overview of the study purpose, process, how public feedback will be gathered and considered and the importance of public feedback in the study process. The study team highlighted the need for public input on how the US 30 corridor fits and functions within the community.

At the in-person meetings, two sets of the informational boards and feedback opportunities (**Appendix J** and **Appendix K**) were situated across the room from each other. A separate area was designated for a formal presentation by the study team. The information presented at the meeting was organized into the following stations:

- Station 1: Welcome/Sign-In
- Station 2: What is PEL? / ProPEL US 30 East Study Details
- Station 3: Exercise: Corridor Vision

- Station 4: Exercise: Location-Specific Input
- Station 5: PEL Study Areas/ProPEL US 30 East Study
- Station 6: Comment Station

Informational boards included an introduction into the Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) study process, a map of the overall study area, a roadmap of the study purpose, an outline of the study schedule and maps of the US 30 East study area.

The open house exercises were organized in two categories: 1) location-specific feedback and 2) corridor vision. The purpose of these exercises was to gather input on the corridor fit and function. For fit, the study team wanted to understand how participants would like to see any improvements reflect the character of the area and provide opportunities for community gateways. For function, the study team sought to understand how the corridor could support safety, traffic flow, connections, access, biking, walking and recreation.

The location-specific boards included maps of the various sections within the study area. Participants were asked to place color-coded dots on the map to denote any traffic concerns, safety concerns, bike and pedestrian connections, local connections, sensitive resources and redevelopment potential. Other location-specific boards asked prompting questions with a designated area for participants to write answers on sticky notes. The prompting questions included:

- What are your biggest safety concerns along the corridor?
- Where are your biggest traffic concerns along the corridor?
- What other concerns do you have along the corridor?
- What local connections are needed along the corridor?
- Are there sensitive environmental resources along the corridor?

The corridor vision boards sought to understand the communities' vision for desired improvements to reflect the character of the area and serve as community gateways. The boards included prompting questions and a designated area for participants to write answers on sticky notes. The prompting questions included:

- What do you like most about the corridor?
- What is the most important thing the study should consider or do as part of the PEL process?

To further provide meeting participants the opportunity to give feedback and ask questions, a map of the other corridors was available as well as a representative from the adjacent US 30 East study area.

The virtual meeting experience was designed to closely mimic the location-specific and visionary feedback gathering. Virtual attendees navigated through the following experiences at each station:

- Welcome/Sign In
- Opening window: A recorded presentation from the in-person public meeting
- Station 1: Provide location-specific information by dropping a pin on a map and identifying current opportunities and issues along the corridor
- Station 2: Answer corridor vision questions about how they would like to view the corridor in 10 to 15 years, including what they like most about the corridor and what the most important thing INDOT should consider as part of the study process.
- Station 3: Provide other comments regarding the study via the electronic form
- Station 4: Visit the website for the other study areas on ProPELUS30.com and ProPELUS30.com.

8. PUBLIC MEETING ATTENDANCE

Participants represented a wide range of interests and included residents, business owners, three elected officials, three government officials, school systems, emergency services, community organizations, members of the US 30 Coalitions and one media outlet.

Meeting Information	Total Attendees
December 5, 2022 (Fort Wayne)	109
December 6, 2022 (Warsaw)	158
Virtual Meeting	78
TOTAL ATTENDEES	345

9. COMMENT SUMMARY

The study team received approximately 862 stakeholders and 610 comments from the in-person and virtual public information meetings, Community Office Hours, and entered into PIMA via social media or website access. The study team grouped the comments by general type of concern into one of the following categories. However, many of the comments pertain to one or more of the categories:

- Local Mobility (29.8%) – Local mobility comments were primarily related to maintaining access to the homes, businesses, farmland, and towns along, and adjacent to, the US 30 East study corridor by maintaining or improving access to, from, or across US 30.
- Regional Mobility (53.2%) – Regional mobility comments typically related to increasing the ability of traffic, especially semi-trucks, to access and travel along US 30 with minimal delay and optimal safety. Comments included requests for additional interchanges, overpasses, and/or the conversion of US 30 to a freeway.
- Safety (41.1%) – Safety comments related to user safety throughout the study area, with the most frequent concerns indicating high travel speeds on US 30, difficulty accessing or crossing US 30, and vehicles, especially semi-trucks, running red light.
- Redevelopment (16%) – Information provided about existing or future redevelopment needs, or concerns.
- Environmental (13.6%) – Comments related to historic properties along the corridor, increased vehicle emissions, and traffic noise of high-speed vehicles.
- Bike and Pedestrian (12.6%) – Bicycle and pedestrian comments related to the additional of non-motorist facilities on, or adjacent to, US 30, such as sidewalks, trails, transitways, or other multimodal accommodations.
- Economic Development (17%) – Comments related to economic development focused on the effect US 30 can have on development throughout the corridor.
- Other (6.3%) – Comments that don't readily fall into any of the above categories.