Pre Tier 1 History

• Purpose of Nationwide I-69 Corridor

To improve international and interstate trade in accordance with national and state goals; to facilitate economic development in accordance with state, regional and local policies and plans; to improve surface transportation consistent with national, state, regional and local needs and with the Congressional designation of the corridor.

Pre Tier 1 History

• Congressional Designation of I-69 Corridor
Pre Tier 1 History

- Nationwide I-69 Corridor Sections of Independent Utility

Pre Tier 1 History

- Southwest Indiana Highway Project
  - Consolidated into one project in 1992
  - One EIS for entire corridor
  - DEIS published in 1996
Pre Tier 1 History

• Southwest Indiana Highway Project DEIS (1996)
  – Significant interest from several groups
  – Two aspects of study received special attention in comments
    • Scoping (Is this truly an Evansville-to-Bloomington project?)
    • Purpose-and-Need

Purpose and Need

• Purpose and Need Background – Pre Tier 1
  – Major object of USEPA comments
    • Stress on economic development suggest non-highway alternatives
    • Suggested specific strategies
      – Rural enterprise zones
      – Tax abatements
      – Freight rail improvements
      – Job training
      – Industrial development funding
      – High technology parks
Tiered EIS

• Decided to prepare new study
  – Need to consider entire Evansville-to-Indianapolis connection
  – Need to give closer attention to Purpose and Need
  – To address concerns expressed by USEPA
  – Determined in 1999 to prepare as tiered study
    • Issued Notice of Intent in January 2000
    • Decision to be made on a corridor
    • Level of environmental analysis determined in consultation with agencies

Tiered EIS

• Noteworthy features of Tier 1 study
  – To focus on a corridor
  – Great attention to Purpose and Need
  – Coordination with resource agencies
  – High level of public involvement
  – Detailed attention to formal comments
  – High level of scrutiny to environmental documents
Tiered EIS

• Significant Issues and Major Stakeholders
• Section 106 issues
  – Amish area of Daviess County
  – Maryland Ridge
  – Patoka River bottoms
  – General approach to Section 106 in Tier 1
    • Defer eligibility determination to Tier 2
    • Defer boundary determinations to Tier 2

I-69 Tier 1 – Record Of Decision

• Approved March 24, 2004
• Established Purpose & Need for I-69
• Decision made on a Corridor
  – Exact alignment to be determined in Tier 2
  – Corridor is generally 2,000 feet in width
    • Wider or narrower in some places
  – Exact alignment of highway will require approximately 240 – 470 feet
Selected Corridor – Performance on Project Goals

• Performed high on all three core goals & highest of all alternatives on three economic development goals
• In SW Indiana, increases personal income by $173 million annually; adds 4,600 permanent jobs to economy
• Results in 40,000 fewer auto-related injuries over 20 years
• Reduces travel time between Indianapolis & Evansville by 27 minutes, saving $1.1 billion in driver time & vehicle operating costs over 20 year period
• Provides additional 37,000 Hoosiers 30-minute access to major urban areas

Tiered EIS

• How Decide on 3C?
  – Selection of single preferred alternative
    • 3C selected for reasons of benefits and impacts
      – Performs higher on all three core goals
      – Performs highest of all three economic development goals
      – Lowest wetlands impacts of DEIS preferred alternatives
      – Lowest farmland impacts of DEIS preferred alternatives
      – Second lowest floodplain acres of DEIS preferred alternatives
Tiered EIS

• How decide on 3C?
  – Selection of single preferred alternative
  • Highlights of 3C benefits
    – 27 minute Evansville-Indianapolis travel time savings
    – 4,500 truck hours saved daily
    – Added $173 million in annual personal income, SW Indiana
    – Added 4,600 permanent jobs in SW Indiana
    – Reduces serious crashes by 1,500 annually
    – Offers net economic benefits to all regions of SW Indiana
    – More than one-third is upgrade of existing 4-lane highway
    – Avoids many sensitive natural areas
    – Passes through Patoka NWR in reserved corridor

Purpose and Need

• Tier 2 Purpose and Need Indicators
  – Not redo Purpose and Need Analysis
    • Project goals and performance measures remain from Tier 1
  – Only some performance measures will be reported in Tier 2
    • Some will not influence alignment decision in corridor
e.g., region-wide employment
  – Some measures more relevant in some sections
    • e.g., congestion relief
Tier 2 Studies
6 Sections

142-mile Evansville to Indianapolis project is divided into six sections

Each section is being studied independently
Tier 2 Studies

Tasks completed or nearly completed include . . .

• Opened Project Office within each section
• Identified property owners within / adjacent to the project corridor
• Conducted initial public outreach – office open houses, community advisory committees, etc.
• Surveyed the area for endangered Indiana bats
• Identified the locations, sizes, and types of wetlands
• Identified historic cultural resources
• Developing preliminary alternative alignment concepts within the project corridor

Tier 2 Studies

Tasks ahead include . . .

• Additional environmental research and analysis, including noise, air quality, ecological, archaeological, & HAZMAT studies
• Refine alternative alignments based on results of environmental analyses, engineering feasibility, and input from regulatory agencies and the public
• Draft Environmental Impact Statement
• Public Hearing
• Engineer’s Report
• Final Environmental Impact Statement
• Record of Decision (ROD) from FHWA
Public involvement activities include:

• Project offices in all 6 sections, open during business hours, to provide current information and receive input
• Open Houses introducing office and personnel to public (late June 2004)
• Community Advisory Committees (most formed & 1st meeting held)
• Project Web Site
• Newsletters and Information Brochures
• Community & government official small group meetings
• Public info meetings at key stages in the study process
• Public hearing when Draft EIS is issued

Tier 2 Studies

Preliminary design and environmental studies will culminate in FHWA’s issuance of a “Record of Decision” (ROD), which identifies the Interstate alternative selected within each section.