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Agency Coordination and Public Involvement

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) provided regular opportunities for residents of the project area, local government officials, and state and federal agencies to become familiar with and participate in the IL 336 study through a structured coordination and communication program designed to encourage input. Participation was open to any interested persons. No one was excluded because of income, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or handicap. This section summarizes the agency coordination and public involvement activities that occurred during preparation of this document. Early coordination (scoping) was done as part of the Corridor Study (IDOT 2004) and is summarized in this section. The Corridor Study is available for viewing or downloading at IDOT's website.⁹⁵ The Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project appeared in the *Federal Register* on February 5, 2003 (included in Appendix D).

4.1 Interviews with Individuals and Organizations

This section summarizes the issues identified from the 30 interviews conducted early in the study process, with primary employers, planners, and economic development officials. Issues identified from the interviews are organized by county.

4.1.1 Peoria County Issues

- Connecting 336 close to the airport on 474 is very important.
- The airport is undergoing planning for the creation of a third runway. This runway would mirror the current NW- SE runway, slightly to the north and west.
- The airport is the shipping point for carriers such as FedEx for Central Illinois.
- Residential and commercial growth in Peoria County is occurring in the northwest section of Peoria City, near the eastern end of the study area.
- Primary transportation issues for the Peoria community include completing the ring around the City with the addition of another bridge and connecting Peoria to Chicago via Route 29.
- Developable land is more readily available along the northern alternatives in Peoria County.
- The southern route is of concern to many logistics operators who would rather see a direct connection into Interstate 474 than going through the congestion of Bartonville.

4.1.2 Fulton County Issues

- The Canton community is facing economic distress.
- Canton is a bedroom community for Peoria with an average commute time of 40 minutes.

⁹⁵ <http://www.dot.state.il.us/desenv/il336corridor/hp.html>.

- Growth is to the north of the community – both residential and commercial.
- Spoon River College – Many night programs would be more popular if students are able to make it from their jobs in Peoria to class by 6:00 p.m.

4.1.3 McDonough County Issues

- Western Illinois University suffers from the perceived inaccessibility by students, distributors, and conventioners. Though the student body has grown, the university feels that it can better serve the population of central and western Illinois through the completion of IL 336 to the east.
- Chicago area distributors are reluctant to service the Macomb market because of inaccessibility. Many goods and services are being purchased from Iowa companies.
- The manufacturers that are in the community are there because of historical reasons.
- 39% of the employment in the City of Bushnell is in the manufacturing sector, a higher ratio than the surrounding communities even though it is not located along a major roadway. Manufacturing employment is divided between food/feed processing and metal working. Bushnell is home to Vaughn and Bushnell, the largest hammer manufacturer in the United States.

4.2 State and Federal Agency Coordination

4.2.1 NEPA / 404 Process

The project was coordinated under the Statewide Implementation Agreement for Concurrent National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/404 Process⁹⁶, which was designed to involve key agencies early and to avoid possible oversights. The NEPA/404 process involved two formal concurrence points to date: purpose and need, and alternatives to be carried forward.⁹⁷ Appendix D contains documentation of activities related to the NEPA/404 process and meetings, including handouts, presentation materials, and meeting minutes (under State and Federal Agency Coordination: NEPA/404 Process).

Meetings were held with environmental agencies on April 25 and April 28, 2003 at the IDOT District 4 offices in Peoria. The April 25 meeting was held specifically for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who were unable to attend the April 28 meeting. The overall purpose of the meetings was to inform the agencies of the study and to obtain concurrence from the agencies on the Purpose and Need Statement, a draft of which had been forwarded to attendees for review

⁹⁶ 404 refers to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (discussed in Section 3.14).

⁹⁷ Concurrence means written determination that information is adequate to agree that the project can be advanced to the next stage of the project development; and agencies agree not to revisit the previous process steps unless conditions change.

prior to the meetings. The IDOT study team reviewed the Purpose and Need Statement, discussed exhibits, and responded to questions. In addition to IDOT and FHWA, agencies in attendance included the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), and the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA). The agencies present orally expressed their concurrence with the purpose and need for the project.

On September 9, 2005, IDOT held the first merged NEPA/Section 404 meeting following the completion of the corridor study, to discuss the project and to obtain concurrence for “purpose and need” and “alternatives to be carried forward.” Representatives were present from the same agencies as for the April 2003 meeting, except that the USFWS was not represented. Concurrence on the purpose and need was received; however, concurrence was not granted for the alternatives to be carried forward based on insufficient documentation of the alternatives proposed for elimination. Concurrence was later granted after requested documentation was provided to and reviewed by the environmental agencies.

A meeting with environmental resource agencies was held November 14, 2006 to present IDOT’s preliminary selected alternative and to solicit input. Agencies in attendance included IDOT, FHWA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), USACE, IDOA, and IDNR. There were no objections to the selected alternative as presented at the meeting from any of the agencies. Based on agreement between FHWA and IDOT, concurrence was not requested.

In preparation for a September 9, 2009 meeting with the environmental resource agencies, on August 5, 2009, FHWA distributed to the interagency group participants a Preferred Alternative Concurrence Package regarding the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The USACE, USEPA, USFWS, IDNR and IDOA gave concurrence with the Preferred Alternative at the meeting. Overall, the interagency group commented that the Preferred Alternative accomplished the project purpose and need with the least impact to environmental resources.

4.2.2 Other Agency Coordination

4.2.2.1 Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC)

Meetings were held with the INPC regarding alignments in the vicinity the Spoon River. On August 3, 2004, at a regularly scheduled meeting, the INPC granted preliminary approval for three tracts of land proposed as the Kedzior Woodlands Addition to the Harper-Rector Woods Nature Preserve (INPC 2004b).⁹⁸ The three separate tracts totaled 69.3 acres. Tract 1 (33.7 acres) was adjacent to the Harper-Rector Woods Nature Preserve. Tracts 2 (13.7 acres) and 3 (21.9 acres) were adjacent to IL 95: one on the north and one on the south. Dedication of all parts of these three proposed tracts as nature preserves will have effectively eliminated the use for the IL 336 project of the existing IL 95 alignment in the vicinity of the Spoon River. At the

⁹⁸ The proposal for dedication of the Kedzior Woodlands Addition is included in Appendix D under State and Federal Agency Coordination: Other Agency Coordination.

time of INPC's preliminary approval of the three tracts as nature preserves, IDOT had identified only a single alignment through the area around the Spoon River. Because of the environmentally sensitive nature of the area in the vicinity of the Spoon River and the river itself, IDOT has concluded that the least impacting alternative for a new highway through this part of the project corridor will be along the existing IL 95 alignment. Representatives from IDOT attended the August 3 INPC meeting to explain the impact on the IL 336 project of the dedication of all three tracts.

After a follow-up meeting with the INPC on August 27, 2004, the INPC deferred final approval of the land to a future meeting to provide time to gather information about the sites. IDOT then met with the INPC several times thereafter to discuss the proposed Kedzior Woodlands Addition and the IL 336 project. During that time, IDOT developed alternatives that will avoid the Kedzior Woodland Addition should it be approved. The three tracts were also assessed as part of the biological survey for the project (Feist and Trester 2005). The authors concluded that Tract 2, adjacent to IL 95, consisted of a highly degraded forest and an area dominated by non-native vegetation. Parts of Tract 3 were similar, but part included a Grade C mesic savanna.

The INPC did not act on the Kedzior Woodlands Addition proposal in its 184th meeting in October 2004 meeting (INPC 2004c), but deferred to a future meeting so that more information about the quality of the sites could be evaluated. In October 2005 at its 188th meeting, after a presentation by INPC staff, the INPC decided not to grant final approval for the Kedzior Woodland Addition to Harper-Rector Woods Nature Preserve (INPC 2005). The INPC's decision eliminated the need to consider alignments other than the alignment along IL 95. The alignment was adjusted to avoid impacting the higher quality tract on the south side of IL 95. A 10.2-acre portion of Tract 3 was added to the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory on July 12, 2005 as the "Seville Savanna" (INPC 2005).

INPC meeting minutes, IDOT meeting summaries, and IDOT project information packets are included in Appendix D under State and Federal Agency Coordination: Other Agency Coordination.

4.2.2.2 Illinois Department of Natural Resources

On September 12, 2006, the IDOT study team met with the IDNR to discuss the possibility of taking some right-of-way (ROW) from the Double T State Fish and Wildlife Conservation Area for the Build Alternative. The meeting was prompted by public comments questioning why IDOT planned to take more farm land from the public and relocate a farm residence when the state already owned the Double T area.

IDNR was not interested in allowing Double T land to be used for the project, and expressed concerns about the proximity of the alignment under consideration that was close to Double T. IDNR's concern was that the mowing and the type of vegetation that will be planted in the highway right-of-way could adversely impact the vegetation they will be trying to establish at the

conservation area. Meeting minutes and materials are included in Appendix D under State and Federal Agency Coordination: Other Agency Coordination.

4.2.2.3 Technical Reports

The following technical reports were prepared in conjunction with the study:

- The consultant team and IDOT coordinated with the IDOA and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for completion of the USDA/NRCS AD-1006 form.
- The Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) prepared assessments of wetland and biological resources in the study area (Feist and Trester 2005, Feist 2006, and Feist 2007).

4.3 Community Involvement

4.3.1 Advisory Council

An Advisory Council was formed early in the planning process with representatives of local communities and resource agencies to obtain their input regarding the 336 project. The members of the Advisory Council have multiple roles: they are to advise IDOT's study team on project issues as they are presented during Council meetings, communicate local concerns and values, act as a resource for community and agency information exchanges, serve as a local resource for the general public, and identify opportunities for local meetings. Understanding community concerns early in the planning process assists the study in planning a facility that is compatible with community goals and meets regional needs. It is the intent of the Advisory Council to maintain communication with the local communities throughout the duration of the project.

During the first meeting, held on April 10, the Advisory Council was presented with an overview of the study process, background information about the IL 336 project, and the corridors under study. Peoria County, McDonough County, Peoria County Farm Bureau, Fulton County Farm Bureau, McDonough County Farm Bureau, and 23 cities and villages in the project area were represented. The Council then broke into focus groups led by members of the IDOT study team. Some of the views expressed by Council members that they believed reflected the views of the people they represent are summarized below:

- Most of the people they represented would prefer Corridor A or B, partly because Corridor C is already congested on the eastern end. Corridor C, they felt, would be especially unpopular if it did not come close to Canton.
- Impacts to prime farmland would be very important; although, several agreed that hunting lands (strip mines and woodlands) are more valuable monetarily.
- Access to the Peoria would be very important.

- Commuters would prefer a freeway, and farmers would prefer an expressway.

During the July 7, 2003 meeting, the IDOT study team gave a progress update to the Advisory Council. The adjusted corridors were presented, and the Advisory Council members were invited to the public meeting. This was followed by informal discussions of the updated displays, which included the corridors on an aerial photo base with environmental and other information. The study team received input on suggested additions and changes to the displays.

Some of the views expressed by Council members that they believed reflected the views of the people they represent:

- Proximity of the roadway to communities would be very important. One member pointed out that 70 percent of the Fulton County population is in a narrow corridor from Lewiston to Canton to Farmington.
- Use of existing roadway right-of-way would be important.

The last Advisory Council meeting of 2003 was held on December 11, and included a presentation of the study results and IDOT's preferred corridor.

At the meeting held after identification of the project corridor, on June 30, 2004, the Advisory Council was presented with an overview of the preliminary alignments under study. Advisory Council members in attendance included representatives from Fulton and McDonough Counties, the Village of Bushnell and the City of Canton, and the Highway Department and Farm Bureau from Peoria County. The IDOT project team summarized the project status and provided handouts depicting the project corridor and the preliminary alignments. There were several comments about access and impacts to nearby communities and many comments about alignment preferences.

At the Advisory Council meeting on November 17, 2004, a project update was provided as were handouts depicting the preliminary alignments, a tabulation of alignment impacts, and a copy of the November 2004 project newsletter. In attendance were representatives from the highway departments from McDonough and Peoria counties, the Peoria County Farm Bureau, the Villages of Hanna City and Smithfield, and the Cities of Bushnell and Cuba. Most of the attendees were able to find at least one alternative alignment they considered acceptable.

An Advisory Council meeting was held on August 24, 2005 and was attended by representatives from numerous local municipalities including Bushnell, Canton, Farmington, Hanna City, Macomb, and Smithfield, the Peoria County Highway Department, the Farm Bureaus from both Fulton and Peoria Counties, and the Macomb Chamber. The IDOT project team updated Council members on the progress of the project since the beginning of the study including a discussion of the freeway limits, for which a handout was prepared depicting the freeway/expressway limits.

On February 10, 2006, IDOT sent a letter to Council members further updating them on the project's progress. The letter described alignments no longer under consideration since the last meeting, and presented several refined alignments.

An Advisory Council meeting on January 24, 2007 included a presentation of the preliminary proposed alignment. An overview of the project to date and a summary of rationale for elimination of alternatives were presented. The IDOT project team also discussed alignment/geometrics changes near Cuba.

An Advisory Council meeting on July 21, 2009 included a presentation of the Build Alternative, and changes since the previous meeting.

Presentation materials, handouts, sign-in sheets, correspondence, and meeting minutes/summaries for the Advisory Council meetings are included in Appendix D (see Community Involvement: Advisory Council).

4.3.2 Community Officials

While several local city and village officials attended the Advisory Council meetings, additional meetings were held with these representatives and with other local community and elected officials to obtain their input and develop an understanding of their issues and concerns. The meetings included representatives from Cuba, Canton, Farmington, Fulton, and Peoria. Table 4-1 summarizes the meetings. Copies of meeting minutes and materials are included in Appendix D under Community Involvement: Community Officials.

Table 4-1
Community Officials

Meeting Date	Community	Topics
June 12, 2003	Canton	A meeting was held with the Canton Community Committee to discuss their support of the alignments closest to the west side of Canton. Also discussed was a portion of the Double T land the Committee believes IDNR plans to lease as a means of income rather than use as a park or natural area.
July 28, 2004	Peoria County	A meeting was held with the Peoria County Highway Transportation Committee to brief the county on the status of the project and review some preliminary alignments. The county did not have any comments at that time.
August 4, 2004	Canton	The IDOT study team met with interested Canton area civic leaders and the Fulton County Engineer to discuss the preliminary alignments. Attendees were mostly interested in alignments around Canton with most of the support for alignments west of the Canton Airport.
February 8, 2005	Cuba	A meeting was held to discuss preferences for bypasses and interchanges, and the influence of the south bypass of Cuba that could be very restrictive and possibly separate schools from the community. Cuba city representatives stated their preference for the north bypass.

Table 4-1
Community Officials

Meeting Date	Community	Topics
August 19, 2005	Farmington	A meeting was held to discuss Farmington's plans for transportation improvements and how the IL 336 alignment works with their plans. The Farnsworth Group, a local engineering firm involved with Farmington's transportation plans, also attended the meeting and provided minutes in addition to those provided by IDOT.
November 11, 2005	Fulton County	A meeting was held with the Fulton County Farm Bureau regarding the status of the project to date.
February 22, 2007	Fulton County	A meeting was held with the Fulton County Highway Department to review the preliminary proposed alignment, impacts, and changes proposed to the local road system in Fulton County.
April 3, 2007	McDonough County	A meeting was held with the McDonough County Highway Department to review the preliminary preferred alignment, impacts, and changes proposed to the local road system in McDonough County.
June 28, 2007	Fulton County	A follow-up meeting to the February 22 meeting was held with Fulton County engineer to review the local road issues related to IL 336 through Fulton County.
December 6, 2007	Fulton County	The purpose of the meeting was to review local road issues related to IL 336 in Fulton County. This was a follow-up meeting to both the February 22 and June 28, 2007 meetings with the county engineer.

4.3.3 Other Coordination

Meetings were held with various local organizations/businesses to discuss how the proposed improvements may affect their operations, including local railroads and airports, and the Illinois River Correctional Center (Canton Prison). Appendix D contains minutes for these meetings under Community Involvement: Other Coordination.

4.3.3.1 Railroad Coordination

Throughout the project study, the IDOT study team coordinated with representatives of railroad companies potentially affected by the proposed improvements. Table 4-2 summarizes the coordination.

Table 4-2
Railroad Coordination

Meeting Date	Company	Topics
June 24, 2004	Union Pacific Railroad	A telephone conversation was held to discuss the status of the existing railroad line south of IL 116 between Peoria and Farmington.
August 4, 2004	TP&W Railway	A meeting was held to discuss the status of tracks from Peoria/Mapleton to LaHarpe.

Table 4-2
Railroad Coordination

Meeting Date	Company	Topics
May 26, 2006	Pioneer Railcorp	A meeting was held to discuss relocating about six miles of track and one mile of siding to accommodate the proposed alignment along County Highway 5. IDOT later provided Pioneer Railcorp with a list of current crossings and proposed crossings that will be required if the project were built.

4.3.3.2 Airport Coordination

Peoria Airport

The Peoria Airport authority's long-range master plans include extending an existing runway, and constructing an additional runway northeast of and parallel to the extended runway (Hanson 1999). Just under half the length of the proposed additional runway extends northwest into the project area toward the intersection of County Highway (CH) 24 and IL 116, and will require the closure and relocation of a portion of IL 116. A meeting with the Peoria Airport was held on June 18, 2004 to discuss the airport's expansion plans and the IL 336 alignments in development at that time. Eventually, alignments were developed north of IL 116 in order to avoid the potential future Peoria Airport expansion. The meeting minutes are included in Appendix D under Community Involvement: Other Coordination.

Canton Park District

On May 22, 2003, the IDOT project team met with the Canton Park District, owner of the Canton Airport, to provide an update on the status of the study and to gather data to better assess the impact of alignments on the airport. At that time, the Canton Park District was considering lengthening the runway to 5,000 feet (to the north). Park District representatives mentioned roadway systems in the area limit the possibilities for future commercial operations at the Canton Airport.

Local parks and trail and recreational use issues were also discussed. That discussion centered mostly on the locations, boundaries, and plans of existing area parks, and some rails-to-trails projects currently being considered. See Appendix D to review the minutes of this meeting under Community Involvement: Other Coordination.

4.3.3.3 Panhandle Eastern Pipelines

Study team members met with Panhandle Eastern Pipelines on June 6, 2003 to discuss the IL 336 project and the potential for Panhandle facilities (lines) in the project area. A Panhandle representative offered to send detailed maps showing the location of the lines in the area. It was determined that once an alignment is selected, Panhandle will be contacted to obtain detailed utility maps. Meeting minutes are included in Appendix D under Community Involvement: Other Coordination.

4.3.4 Interested Groups and Citizens

4.3.4.1 336 Coalition

Interest in the IL 336 project was revived with the formation of the 336 Coalition in 1998. The 336 Coalition's website describes the Coalition as "a group of concerned citizens, business people, and government officials focused on the construction of a four-lane highway running from Peoria to Macomb."

The IDOT study team met with the 336 Coalition Board on August 4, 2004. Most of the interest during the meeting was in the Canton area alignments with near unanimity in support of the alignment closest to the west side of Canton, which runs east of the Canton airport. In the Macomb area, it appeared the northern alignments were favored more than the southern alignments.

The meeting minutes are included in Appendix D under Community Involvement: Interested Groups and Citizens.

4.3.4.2 Citizens Against 336

Citizens Against 336 was formed in opposition to the IL 336 project. Included in Appendix D under Community Involvement: Interested Groups and Citizens is a summary paper prepared by Citizens Against 336 describing its opposition to the construction of IL 336, which focuses on questioning the need for a four-lane highway from Peoria to Macomb.

On March 3, 2005, the IDOT project team attended a meeting with the Citizens Against 336 group to obtain their input and develop an understanding of their concerns. Several hundred people attended the meeting including representatives for Congressman Ray Lahood, Senator George Shadid, and Representative Michael Smith. Most comments focused on concerns about loss of farmland, affects of the project on rural life, the sectioning and loss of family farms, and the belief that money would be better spent on education. There were also questions about the land acquisition process.

During the meeting, the group provided a package to attendees that included comment sheets to be used to provide written comments in opposition of the project to IDOT, and sample letters to politicians for citizens to use to state their concerns about the project. The package also included a list of arguments against the project.

On April 5, 2005, Citizens Against 336 sent IDOT 33 questions about the project, by electronic mail. On April 15, 2005, a meeting was held with the group during which IDOT provided written responses to all 33 questions. Correspondence, meeting materials and responses to questions is included in Appendix D under Community Involvement: Interested Groups and Citizens.

4.3.4.3 Citizens for a Responsible Alignment

In May 2006, IDOT received a letter from a member of Citizens for a Responsible Alignment, a group from the Bushnell area opposed to both the North and North-North alignments between Macomb and Marietta. The group was concerned about impacts of those alignments on farming operations. The letter included several questions composed by the group to which IDOT responded in writing. The IDOT project team then met with the Citizens for a Responsible Alignment on June 8, 2006. About 40 citizens attended the meeting including Illinois State Senator John Sullivan. The group wished to notify IDOT they were negatively affected by both these alignments, but were not in opposition to the project, and in fact, were in favor of the Middle alignment (discussed in Section 2). Applicable correspondence, IDOT's responses to the group's written questions, and minutes from the June 8, 2006 meeting are included in Appendix D under Community Involvement: Interested Groups and Citizens.

4.3.4.4 Changes Near Eden Road

Based on comments received at the public hearing, IDOT met twice with residents regarding potential alignment changes near Eden Road. In the Build Alternative as presented at the public hearings, the alignment was shifted to the north in this area to avoid three apparent residential relocations along Behrends Road. Shifting the alignment to the north, while avoiding the relocations, resulted in increased farm severances. After meeting with the affected residents and landowners, it was decided to move the alignment to the south along Behrends Road and avoid the farm severances. This increased the total residential relocations by three; however, none of the affected structures are occupied, and two are in disrepair and unfit for residential use. These changes are shown in Aerial Exhibit Sheets 32 and 33.

4.3.4.5 Changes and Coordination from Other Comments from the Public Hearing

A few other very minor adjustments to the Build Alternative were made based on comments from the public hearing and meetings with those concerned. A curve in a frontage road was eliminated (Aerial Exhibit Sheet 15) and access was modified at one location (Aerial Exhibit Sheet 16). The radius of a curve was decreased (i.e., the curve was made sharper, but still well within design standards), resulting in reduced severances, reduced wetland impacts, and an improved angle of intersection with CH 17 (Aerial Exhibit Sheet 24).

4.3.5 Public Meetings

Five sets of public information meetings were held during the study. Meetings were announced through advertisements in local area newspapers, press releases, and project newsletters. (See Compact Disk #1 in Appendix D.) Due to the size of the study area and the number of communities involved, each set of public meetings were held on three consecutive evenings in Peoria, Canton, and Macomb. The format for the meetings was open house with no formal

presentations. In each case, several large exhibits were placed throughout the meeting room for the public to view. For each set of meetings, the same materials were presented.

All meetings were publicized through six local newspapers: *Canton Daily Ledger*, *Elmwood Tri-County News*, *Fulton Democrat*, *Macomb Journal*, *McDonough Democrat-Spoon River Press*, and *Peoria Journal Star*. Project newsletters announcing the meetings were sent to local residents, local government units, review agencies, state and federal officials, and other interest groups.

Meeting materials, comments, and responses to comments for all five sets of public meetings are included on the compact disk in Appendix D.

4.3.5.1 Public Information Meetings – August 2003

Public meetings were held on three consecutive evenings, August 5, 6, and 7, 2003 at the following locations:

- Tuesday, August 5, 2003 – ITOO Society Hall in Peoria
- Wednesday, August 6, 2003 – Canton High School
- Thursday, August 7, 2003 – Macomb VFW Post 1921

Approximately 752 people total attended the August 5, 6, 7 public meetings. The purposes of the meetings were to present the corridors under study (A, B, and C) and to solicit public input. One large exhibit showed the entire study area on an aerial photo base map, with adjusted corridors shown, and with environmental and cultural features. Similar but more detailed exhibits of the Peoria, Canton, and Macomb areas were presented. A handout described the study process and included a comparison of the corridors.

Some 315 people provided comments on the project: 285 were in favor, 23 were opposed.

In general, opponents to the project expressed the belief that the project would not be an efficient use of public funds. Many of those who opposed also believed that the project would not bring economic benefit to the area. A few were opposed on environmental grounds. Many who were opposed still named a preferred corridor that was the least undesirable in their opinion. There does not seem to be any organized opposition to the project; those opposed were expressing their views as private citizens.

Of those expressing support for the project, most believe that the road would help the area economically. There is organized support for the project from the 336 Coalition, local government agencies, and others. The following summarizes the views of those who expressed a preference for particular corridor sections:

- East A

- In general, the people stating that business and economic interests were most important favored this route.
 - Some people that expressed an interest in protecting the natural environment preferred this route as least damaging.
 - Commenters opposed to loss of farmland found this route to be the least favorable.
- East B
 - The explanation for selecting this route was often an opposition to the amount of possible farmland impacts on East A.
- East C
 - Many people expressed an opinion against this corridor based on cost, lack of effectiveness in serving the area, and some environmental concerns.
 - Those favoring this corridor usually stated that it is partly constructed and therefore should be cheaper and faster to implement.
- West A
 - Many people stated that the west bypass of Canton had to be close to Canton, the airport, and the college. If it was constructed close, they supported it. If it was constructed 3 or more miles west of Canton, they did not support it.
 - Most of the comments on both West A and West B were based on whether or not the commenter had interests in the corridor. Those that had farms in one corridor preferred the other corridor. Bushnell interests preferred A because it benefits the industrial/commercial interests there.
- West B
 - As with west A, the opinions seemed largely dependent on whether the commenter had personal interests in this corridor.
- West C
 - There were few reasons given in support of this corridor.
 - Some people noted that this corridor was their least preferred because of costs, environmental reasons, and because it did not serve their traffic needs particularly well.

Following is the summary of those who expressed a corridor preference:

Corridor	West Sections	East Sections
A	93	111
B	108	74
A or B	29	30
C	13	28

As shown in the table, the greatest support is for the east section of A combined with the west section of B, or Corridor AB, the corridor recommended in this report and selected following the 1970s study.

4.3.5.2 Public Information Meetings – February 2004

On December 29, 2003, IDOT approved the draft corridor report with the recommended Corridor AB and made the report available to the public. Public meetings to receive input on IDOT's recommended corridor were held on three consecutive evenings, February 24, 25, and 26, 2004 at the following locations:

- Tuesday, February 24, 2004 – ITOO Society Hall in Peoria
- Wednesday, February 25, 2004 – Canton High School
- Thursday, February 26, 2004 – Macomb VFW Post 1921

The large exhibit with corridors was similar to the one used at the public meetings in August, but the recommended corridor was highlighted. Exhibits that illustrated the difference between an expressway and freeway, and exhibits that showed standard right-of-way requirements were also displayed. The draft corridor report was available for review. A handout summarized the results of a traffic study done in 2003, and it presented an updated comparison of alternatives, with the rationale for selection of the recommended alternative.

Over 700 people attended the public meetings and more than 250 provided comments. About 34 comments from the hearing plus a separate 600-signature petition stated a preference for a highway option closer to Bushnell—either Corridor A or a widening of the recommended corridor to bring it closer to Bushnell. These commenters and petitioners believe that Bushnell is a significant enough center of population and industry that better access for Bushnell should have been given more consideration in the study. A "Route 336 Position Paper" endorsed by the City of Bushnell and other Bushnell and Macomb area organizations presented the case for consideration of highway options closer to Bushnell.

Based on this public input, the recommended corridor was expanded in the vicinity of Bushnell, to provide alternatives that are closer to the city. This adjustment is shown in the May 2004 newsletter (Appendix D). The adjustment was also announced in the same newspapers that advertised the public meetings and hearings.

Other comments are summarized below.

Many people simply expressed their support for the project. About 27 people expressed concern about farmland impact. About 6 people expressed opposition to the project because they believe the fiscal situation in Illinois does not warrant constructing new highways. One commenter expressed a concern about taking habitat, wildlife areas, and timberland instead of farmland. About 17 people included an alignment suggestion in their comment. Several people suggested

using former mine haul roads. Several commenters indicated a preference for using existing highway and railroad rights-of-way for the new highway. A few people indicated opposition to the project or recommended corridor but did not indicate why.

4.3.5.3 Public Information Meetings – December 2004

Public information meetings to discuss the preliminary alternative highway alignments was held on three consecutive evenings in December 2004 at the following locations:

- Tuesday, December 7, 2004 – Canton High School
- Wednesday, December 8, 2004 – ITOO Society Hall in Peoria
- Thursday, December 9, 2004 – Macomb VFW Post 1921

Over 770 people attended these meetings: 280 in Canton, 151 in Peoria, and 345 in Macomb.

The purpose of these meetings was to review the preliminary alignments with the public and provide a basis for eliminating some while continuing the study, development, and refinement of others. Large-scale exhibits showed the entire study area on aerial photographic base maps, with preliminary alignments shown, and with environmental and cultural features. A handout was provided that described the study process and summarized the alignment progress and development. Information regarding project alignment impacts and a project schedule were also included as part of the handout; it also included a comment form.

Over two hundred comments were received during and after the public meetings. About 60 percent of commenters expressed support for the project, while about 10 percent were in opposition. The remaining 30 percent did not specifically express support or opposition to the project, but rather provided general comments.

Ninety-three comments regarding alignments between Macomb and Marietta were received; about 70 percent of the comments indicated a preference for a north alignment, a middle north alignment, or an alignment near Bushnell.

The public commenting on alignments between Marietta and Norris mostly supported a northeast or northwest alignment that would pass Cuba to the north, the Canton airport to the west, and then pass between Double T and the City of Canton, but closer to Double T. Some comments noted that avoiding the Double T property resulted in an alignment that impacted residences. Commenters believed the adverse impacts resulting from avoiding Double T were greater than if the alignment passed through a small part of Double T.

For the section between Norris and Peoria, commenters were mostly in favor of a north alignment (57 percent), while about 24 percent favored a south alignment (north or south of IL 116).

4.3.5.4 Public Information Meetings – March 2006

After the December 2004 meetings, preliminary alignments were reviewed and refined based on public comments and input, engineering factors, environmental impacts, socio-economic assessments, and other factors. The refined alternatives were presented in a set of identical public information meetings held on three consecutive evenings in March 2006 at the following locations:

- Tuesday, March 21, 2006 – ITOO Society Hall in Peoria
- Wednesday, March 22, 2006 – Macomb VFW Post 1921
- Thursday, March 23, 2006 – Canton High School

A total of 977 people attended these meetings: 157 in Peoria, 357 in Macomb, and 463 in Canton.

The purpose of these meetings was to focus on reviewing the remaining alignments as well as freeway/expressway locations and access issues. Public input from this meeting was to be used to help identify a proposed alignment. The refined alignments and environmental and cultural features were shown on large-scale aerial photographic base maps. A handout was provided describing the alignment progress since the December 2004 meetings, and included a map depicting freeway/expressway limits and a description of the reasons for choosing these limits and the differences between freeways and expressways. The handout also included a comment form.

Two hundred thirty-six comments were submitted during and following the public meetings. Twenty-six of those comments, all of which IDOT responded to, were received by electronic mail. Most comments indicated support for or against specific alternatives.

Before the March 2006 meetings, a group of stakeholders from the Bushnell area strongly supported alignments as close to Bushnell as possible. Following the March 2006 public meetings however, support for the north alignments began to change. Immediately following the meetings, IDOT received about 25 comments in support of the north alignments. Soon after, though, an organized effort against the north alignments developed, led by affected farmers who believed the impacts to their properties and their farm operations far outweighed the benefits of having the alignment slightly closer to Bushnell. Based on public input to IDOT, there appeared to be little to no continued support for the north alignments. IDOT received 48 comments either supporting the Middle alignment or opposing the north alignments in that area and a petition with 159 signatures opposing the north alignments. The Bushnell city council and Bushnell Economic Development Corporation, both of whom previously supported a north alignment, changed their position to support the Middle alignment.

Very few comments were submitted regarding the section between Marietta and just past Smithfield because only one alignment was shown.

In the section from just west of Cuba to south of Canton, commenters were split nearly evenly with 42 percent in support of the farthest north alignment around Cuba, while about 57 percent supported the alignment closest to Cuba.

Support for specific alignments around Canton were also split nearly evenly. About 53 percent of the comments supported the farthest west alignment close to Double T while 47 percent supported the alignment closest to Canton (on the west side).

From Norris to Peoria, 67 percent of commenters were in favor of the south alignment south of and parallel to IL 116. The north alignment, north of IL 116 and closer to Hanna City, was supported by about 34% of commenters.

4.3.5.5 Public Information Meetings – February 2007

The last set of public information meetings were held on three consecutive evenings in February 2007 to present a preliminary proposed Illinois Route 336 four-lane highway alignment for further study. The same materials were presented at all three meetings:

- Tuesday, February 20, 2007 – ITOO Society Hall in Peoria
- Wednesday, February 21, 2007 – Canton High School
- Thursday, February 22, 2007 – Macomb VFW Post 1921

About 1,087 people attended these meetings: 222 in Peoria, 532 in Canton, and 333 in Macomb.

The meetings focused on reviewing the preliminary proposed alignment. Large-scale exhibits showed the proposed alignment on aerial photographic base maps. A handout was provided describing the proposed alignment and included an impact description table, a summary of the alignment progress to date, the anticipated study schedule, public involvement process, and a comment form.

After the 2007 public meeting, and before publication of the Draft EIS, IDOT received approximately 250 comments, submitted either by mail, electronic mail, or via the project website to IDOT. Of those expressing support or opposition to the project, 126 expressed support and 55 expressed opposition. Those expressing support most commonly noted that they believed the project would be an economic benefit to the region. Some of the other issues that were noted in comments:

- Around 20 comments suggested modifications to the preliminary proposed alignment that would reduce impacts to the commenter's property. Some of these comments came from people expressing opposition to the project but still asking for consideration of a modification to the alignment or access changes.
- There were 18 comments regarding farmland loss.

- About 13 comments suggested highways like US 24, IL 116, and IL 9 should be improved before building IL 336. These comments were often paired with a statement in opposition to the project.
- Five comments suggested an interchange be built at IL 41 instead of an intersection.
- Two comments suggested IL 9 be improved to Bushnell instead of following IL 95 and 1400th Street. This is notable since in past meetings support for an alignment close to Bushnell had been significantly larger than was received following the February 2007 meetings.
- Three commenters expressed interest in preserving a prairie remnant along the Cuba to Canton Blacktop (CH 5).
- Eight comments suggested the need for wildlife crossings. They suggested the area near the Spoon River as a place for a wildlife crossing.
- Two comments suggested the alignment should go through the industrial park west of Canton.
- Ten commenters suggested that US 136 should be used instead of 1400th Street. This comment was made in one letter, but signed by 10 different people.

4.3.5.6 Public Hearings – August 2009

During the 60-day Draft EIS public comment period (which ended August 24), a public hearing was held on August 11, 2009 in Peoria, on August 12 in Canton and on August 13 in Macomb to present the Draft EIS to project-area residents and to offer a forum for people to ask questions and to provide comments. The hearings were publicized through advertisements in six local newspapers: *Canton Daily Ledger*, *Elmwood Tri-County News*, *Fulton Democrat*, *Macomb Journal*, *McDonough Democrat-Spoon River Press*, and *Peoria Journal Star*. Project newsletters announcing the meeting were sent to property owners, local units of government, utilities, state agencies, elected officials, and other interest groups. The same information was presented at all three meetings. Meeting exhibits included aerial photography of the project area depicting the project alternatives, typical sections and information on project impacts. Copies of the Draft EIS and design documents were available for review. A court reporter was present to record oral comments from attendees, a comment box was provided for those wishing to provide written statements, and a comment form with a self-addressed return mailing label was provided for those who wanted to mail their comments. Public comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period and IDOT responses are found on Compact Disk #2 in Appendix D. The meeting in Peoria was attended by 165 people, the meeting in Canton by 209 people, and the meeting in Macomb by 208 people.

4.3.6 Project Newsletters

In addition to the May 2004 newsletter describing the corridor adjustment (discussed in Section 4.3.5.2), newsletters were prepared and distributed just prior to each set of public information meetings. The newsletters were sent to project area residents, local government units, review agencies, state and federal officials, and other interested parties. Newsletters are included in Appendix D under Project Newsletters.

The November 2004 newsletter announced IDOT's approval of the IL 336 Corridor Study (IDOT 2004), which presented the project corridor. The newsletter also announced the dates and locations of the first set of public information meetings to discuss the progress and development of preliminary alignments within the project corridor. It also included the project web site address, the next steps for the project, and a project contact name and telephone number.

The February 2006 and February 2007 newsletters announced dates and locations for the last two sets of public information meetings. They also provided summaries of the study progress, as well as the project web site address, next steps for the project, and a project contact name and telephone number, as was done in the first newsletter. The 2006 newsletter included a brief summary of the basis for refining the preliminary alignments and also notified the public that some decisions had been made regarding which parts of the new facility would be freeway and which parts would be expressway. The 2007 newsletter informed the public that a proposed alignment would be reviewed during the February 2007 public information meetings.

The sixth newsletter (August 2009) informed recipients that the Draft EIS was signed and announced the dates and locations of the public hearings. It also provided an overview and map of the Build Alternative and outlined the next steps in the current preliminary phase. The newsletter included a contact name and telephone number.

4.3.7 Agencies, Organizations and Persons Who Received a Copy of the Draft EIS

4.3.7.1 Federal Agencies

- U.S. Department of Commerce – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Federal Railroad Administration
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District
- Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Peoria County SWCD
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Marshall-Putnam Counties SWCD
- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Environmental Health

- Natural Resources Management Team, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary
- U.S. Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. EPA Region 5, Environmental Planning and Evaluation Branch
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

4.3.7.2 State Agencies

- IDNR State Geological Survey
- Illinois State Library
- Division of Resource Review and Coordination, IDNR
- Illinois Department of Agriculture
- Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
- Illinois Department of Corrections
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
- Illinois Commerce Commission
- IDNR, Office of Water Resources
- Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
- IDOT, Division of Aeronautics
- Illinois Natural History Survey
- State Water Survey
- IDOT, Bureau of Design and Environment

4.3.7.3 State and Federal Legislators

- State Representative David R. Leitch
- State Representative Donald L. Moffitt
- State Representative Michael K. Smith
- State Representative Jehan Gordon
- State Representative Jil Tracey
- State Representative Richard P. Myers
- State Senator Dale Risinger
- State Senator David Koehler
- State Senator John M. Sullivan
- Congressman Phil Hare
- Congressman Aaron Schock
- U.S. Senator Roland Burris
- U.S. Senator Richard Durbin

4.3.7.4 Local Officials and Boards

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission
Mayor of Macomb
Village of Bushnell representative
President, Village of Hanna City
President, Village of Smithfield
City of Peoria Public Works Director
Village of Marietta representative
City of Macomb representative
Peoria County Highway Department
President, Village of Marietta
Mayor of Canton
Peoria County Highway Department
Village of Bardolph representative
City of Farmington representative

4.3.7.5 Agricultural Organizations

- Illinois Farm Bureau
- Peoria County Farm Bureau
- Fulton County Farm Bureau
- McDonough County Farm Bureau

4.3.7.6 Other Organizations and Persons

- Community and Environmental Defense Services

4.3.7.7 Libraries (Repositories)

- Peoria Public Library, Lincoln Branch
- Farmington Area Public Library
- Parlin-Ingersoll Public Library
- Spoon River Public Library District
- Macomb Public Library District

4.3.8 Draft EIS Comments

The Notice of Availability for the Draft EIS was published on June 26, 2009. The comment period for the Draft EIS extended from June 26 to August 24, 2009. Approximately 100 written and oral comments were submitted. Agency comments are located in Appendix D. Public comments and IDOT's responses are contained on Compact Disk #2 in Appendix D.

4.3.8.1 Agency Comments

Agency comments received during the study process and project public hearings were fully considered in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The following agencies provided written comments following the public hearings:

- Illinois Department of Agriculture
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources—Division of Ecosystems and Environment
- Illinois Department of Transportation – Division of Aeronautics
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Agencies either expressed satisfaction with the level of analysis given to the project's impact to area resources or requested further analysis or documentation. All agency comments have been responded to and can be found in Appendix D.

4.3.8.2 Public Comments

Comments were received from approximately 100 members of the public including project area residents, interest groups and local communities. Of those who responded, 19 percent expressed support for the project, 39 percent expressed opposition, and 42 percent had questions or suggestions. Of those opposed, the majority expressed concern about the project cost and justification; approximately 18 percent of those expressing opposition were concerned about farm impacts and other environmental impacts.