



**LOUISVILLE-SOUTHERN INDIANA
OHIO RIVER BRIDGES PROJECT**

PUBLIC COMMENTS REPORT

June 27, 2011 - July 15, 2011

Community Transportation Solutions, GEC

August 31, 2011

Executive Summary

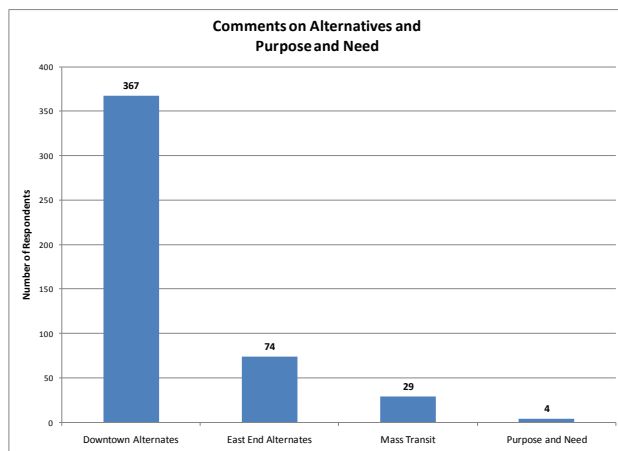
As part of the Public Involvement process in conjunction with development of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Louisville-Southern Indiana Ohio River Bridges Project, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) hosted two public meetings to explain the potential changes to the project's 2003 Record of Decision and to seek input on those changes and to the updated *Purpose and Need* document. The public meetings were held on June 27, 2011 at the Holiday Inn Lakeview in Clarksville, Indiana and on June 28, 2011 at the Holiday Inn Hurstbourne in Louisville, Kentucky.

There were a total of 1,231 comments received from the public in response to the Public Meetings. The comments represent 1,136 individuals or organizations (respondents). Some respondents submitted more than one comment. In that case, the respondent was entered in the database of comments once, but all comments, regardless of source, were considered and are reflected in this report.

There were 304 respondents, 26.8 percent of all respondents that stated support for the project. Twenty-five percent of those respondents commented they support the project with tolls; 10% support the project without tolls and 65% of the respondents did not mention tolls.

There were 468 respondents that provided a comment specific to the project alternates, including 29 who commented on mass transit, which is incorporated in the project alternates.

There were a total of 367 respondents who selected a downtown alternate (330 for No Action, six for the FEIS Selected Alternative and 30 for the Modified Selected Alternative). A total of 74 respondents selected an alternate for the East End Bridge (30 for the FEIS, 26 for the Modified and 18 for No Action).



Approximately 266 of the No Action Downtown respondents were part of a campaign where the same, or virtually the same comment was submitted on-line through the project website by different individuals who also stated the East End Bridge should be the priority. They represent nearly 23.5 percent of all respondents.

There were four (4) respondents that commented on the *Purpose and Need* Document, less than ½ of one percent of all respondents. The respondents represent National Trust for Historic Preservation, Hoosier Environmental Council, Sierra Club and River Fields. Their *Purpose and Need* document comments are summarized in this report, with excerpts, but are best understood from reading the original comment documents themselves.

Because the public comments were open response, a variety of topics other than the project alternates and *Purpose and Need* document were submitted. There were keywords that came up frequently. To capture the variety and combinations of keywords in the comments, each respondent's comment(s) was aligned with up to three keywords in the comments database. Some comments had more than three keywords so effort was made to ensure each and every comment was given full consideration and reflected in this report.

The most common keywords retrieved from the database produce the following themes:

1. East End Bridge Priority - 413 respondents (36%)
2. No Action Downtown - 330 respondents (29.0%)
3. Support for the Project - 304 respondents (26.8%)
4. No Tolls - 290 respondents (25.5%)
5. Build it now or ASAP - 163 respondents (14.3%)

This report breaks down the keywords into sub sections that explain in more detail the secondary or third level keywords associated with the alternatives, Purpose and Need and common themes.

Public Meetings

A Public Meeting Notice was advertised in the Courier-Journal and The News and Tribune on May 31, 2011 and again on June 20, 2011 inviting all citizens to comment on alternatives being studied as part of the ongoing SEIS. The meeting scheduled from 4 pm to 8 pm was an open house format with exhibits and project staff available to explain the project and alternatives being considered. From 6:30 pm - 8 pm was dedicated to a video presentation and an opportunity for public comments.

There were 292 members of the public that signed in at the Indiana Public Meeting and 304 that signed in at the Kentucky Public Meeting. The public was invited to attend either or both meetings, regardless of their state of residence.

Display boards were on exhibit for all six sections of the project to show the alternatives recommended for further analysis and project engineers / project representatives were available to answer questions. The *Purpose and Need* document was open for review and the public was encouraged to take the time to view the document. The three alternatives described include:

- No Action
- 2003 Selected Alternative with tolls
 - New Downtown I-65 bridge
 - New East End Bridge and I-265 linkage (6 lanes)
 - Rebuild Kennedy Interchange to the south
- 2011 Modified Alternative with tolls
 - New Downtown I-65 bridge (without bike/pedestrian lane)
 - New East End bridge and I-265 linkage (reduce to 4 lanes; expandable to 6 lanes)
 - Rebuild Kennedy Interchange in place

Comments on the alternatives and *Purpose and Need* document were solicited in a variety of forms. The public could: 1) provide their comments in writing; 2) sign up to speak at the public meeting; 3) have comments recorded by a court reporter at the public meeting; or, 4) enter their comment online on the projects website. The public was given a 15-day comment period following the second public meeting in which to submit their comments.

Public Comments

The Comment Forms available at the public meetings could be filled out and handed in at the public meeting, or taken home and mailed in to the project manager. Twenty-nine (29) were handed in at the Indiana public meeting and thirty-four (34) handed in at the Kentucky public meeting.

Those who signed up to speak at the public meeting had their comments transcribed by the court reporter. There were 28 individuals who addressed the audience at the Indiana Public Meeting and 47 individuals who addressed the audience at the Kentucky Public Meeting. The comments were entered in the database of public comments and are included in the analysis of this report. Some individuals attended both public meetings and addressed the audience both times. In this case, the individual

respondent was entered in the database once, but both public comments were entered in the comments field, given full consideration and are reflected in this report.

In addition to transcribing the comments of those who signed up to speak, the court reporters were also available to transcribe comments from those who wanted to have their comments recorded. There were a total from both public meetings of 112 transcribed comments from 98 individuals, including the comments transcribed from those who signed up to speak. The difference (14) accounts for those whose comments were transcribed more than once (i.e. those who spoke at both meetings).

Of the 1,231 comments received, 689 were submitted from the website, 391 were written on a Public Comment form, either handed in at the public meeting or mailed in after the meeting. There were 112 comments transcribed by the court reporters (including the comments of those who spoke at the public meeting). In addition, there were 39 comments submitted in a letter format or an e-mail.

Comment Sources	Quantity Received	Percent
Website comments	689	56.0%
Public Comment Forms	391	31.8%
Letters and e-mails	39	3.2%
Transcripts	<u>112</u>	<u>9.1%</u>
	1231	100.0%

The 1,231 comments were received from 1,136 individuals or organizations (respondents). Some respondents submitted more than one comment. In this situation, the respondent was entered in the database of comments once, but all comments were considered and are represented in this report.

Of the 1,136 respondents, 487 were from Indiana, 543 from Kentucky and 14 from other states. In addition, ninety two (92) comments were received with no indication of the state of residence.

State	Residents
Indiana	487
Kentucky	543
Unknown	92
Other	<u>14</u>
Total	1136

Comments on the Alternatives

The public was encouraged to comment on the three alternatives for the project: No Action, FEIS Selected Alternative and the Modified Selected Alternative. Although the alternatives as presented, were intended to be considered project wide, covering both the downtown bridge and the east end bridge, most comments about the alternatives mention either one or the other bridge. Few respondents (48 total) applied their alternate of choice project wide; the ones who did selected an alternate described below:

- The No Action Alternative for the project (including both bridges) was selected by thirteen (13) respondents. They do not support the project and do not want either bridge built.
- The FEIS Selected Alternative for the project (including both bridges) was selected by two (2) respondents. They wanted this alternative for both bridges.
- The Modified Selected Alternative for the project (including both bridges) was selected by thirty-three (33) respondents. They are in favor of the modified changes on both bridges.

Most respondents who made a selection on the alternatives chose the Modified Selected Alternative for one bridge and the FEIS Selected Alternative for the other; or chose No Action for downtown and another alternative for the east end. Therefore, this report will further break down the responses by the comments related to the Downtown Bridge and Approaches and the comments related to the East End Bridge and Approaches.

Project Alternates and Purpose and Need		
Comments	Respondents	Percent
Downtown Alternates	367	32.3%
East End Alternates	74	6.5%
Mass Transit	29	2.6%
Purpose and Need	4	0.4%

Downtown Bridge and Approaches

There were a total of 367 respondents who specified an alternate on the Downtown Bridge, representing 32.2% of all respondents. Of those, 330 respondents specifically stated they did not support the downtown bridge (or stated build the east end bridge only). They were particularly critical of the Kennedy Interchange. Eighty-three percent (83%) of these comments, (266), were generated by the campaign where the same, or virtually the same comment was submitted on-line from the website by different individuals who also favored building the East End Bridge. The campaign comment submitted states:

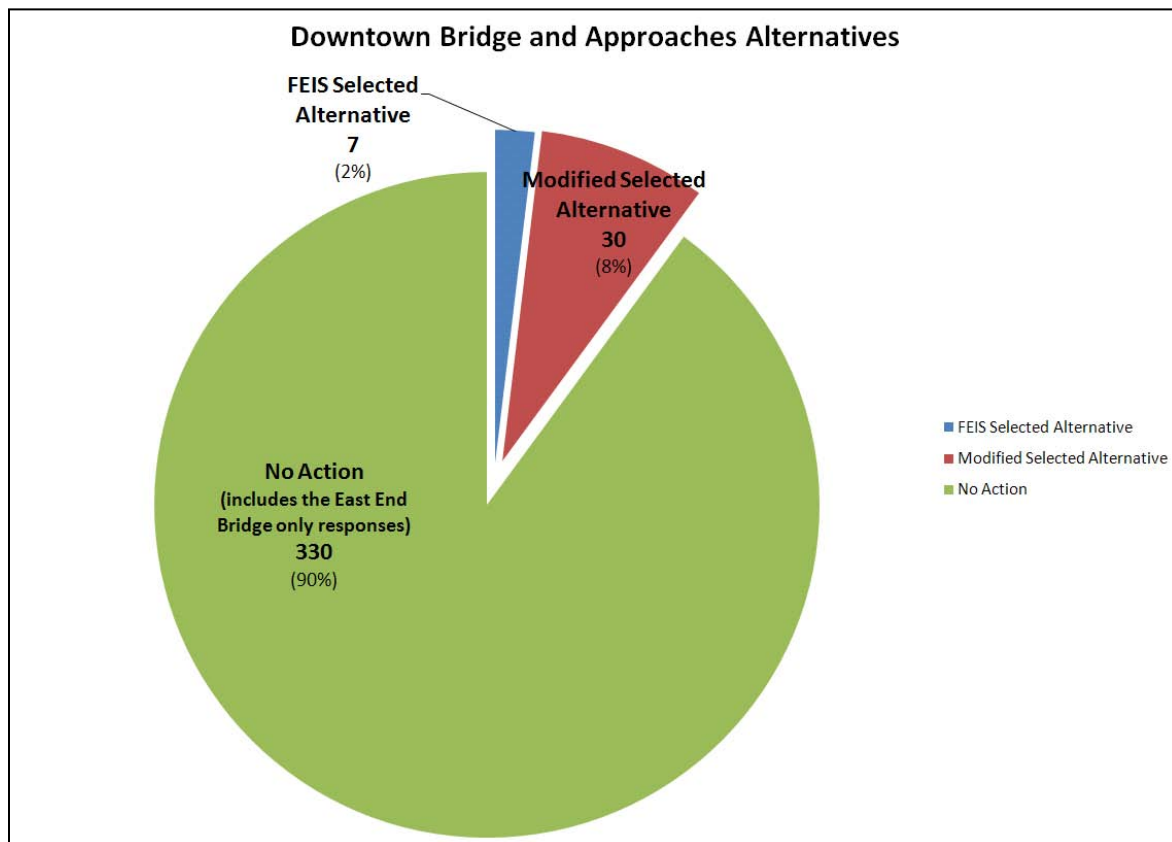
"I don't support any of the three current alternatives. I support dividing the project and building the East End Bridge first. It's long overdue and must be our greatest priority. I do not support a Downtown Bridge. Adding more spaghetti to the Kennedy Interchange will not improve traffic

congestion or safety, but will significantly detract from our downtown and waterfront. After the East End Bridge is complete, I think we should pursue the concept of removing or realigning interstates away from "spaghetti junction" to reduce its scale and improve the connection between our downtown and the Ohio River. Thank you"

Outside of the 266 respondents involved in the campaign, there were 64 respondents who chose No Action for the downtown bridge, including the 13 that selected the No Action Alternative project wide.

Downtown Bridge and Approaches		
Alternatives	Respondents	Percent
FEIS Selected Alternative	7	0.5%
Modified Selected Alternative	30	2.6%
No Action (includes EE only)	<u>330</u>	29.0%
	366	32.2%

Seven (7) respondents selected the FEIS Selected Alternative for the Downtown Bridge. And thirty (30) respondents selected the Modified Selected Alternative for the Downtown Bridge.

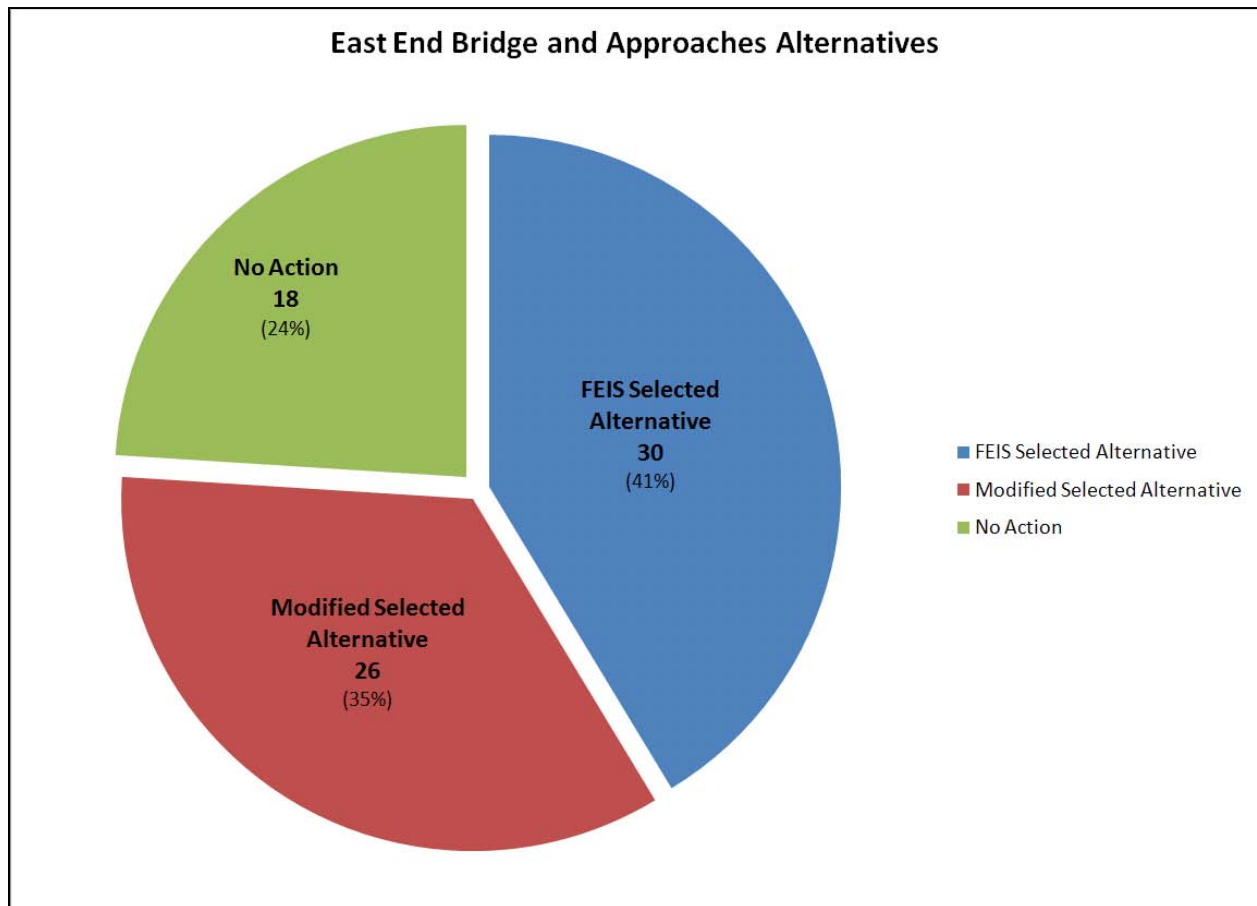


East End Bridge and Approaches

The most common comment received involved building the East End Bridge first (413 respondents); however, very few selected an alternate of choice. A total of 74 respondents, representing 6.5% of all respondents, selected an alternate for the East End Bridge.

East End Bridge and Approaches		
Alternatives	Respondents	Percent
FEIS Selected Alternative	30	2.6%
Modified Selected Alternative	26	2.3%
No Action	<u>18</u>	1.6%
	74	6.5%

The No Action Alternative for an East End Bridge was selected by eighteen (18) respondents, including the 13 that selected the No Action Alternative for the project, covering both bridges. The FEIS Selected Alternative for the East End Bridge was selected by thirty (30) respondents and twenty-six (26) respondents selected the Modified Selected Alternative.



No Tunnel

Among the comments about the East End Bridge, was frustration with the proposed tunnel. Twenty-six (26) respondents specifically commented the East End Bridge should be constructed with no tunnel. They doubt the historic need for the tunnel and think the cost is too high. Some excerpts from the comments include:

"Delete tunnel near historic property and save millions."

"This is very unfortunate and frustrating since the tunnel costs over \$260 million and the Drumanard estate is not that historic of a property."

"To spend \$250 million (1/4 of a billion) to preserve a house and put in a tunnel is absurd."

Mass Transit

There were twenty-nine (29) respondents that specifically mentioned being in favor of some form of improved mass transit (i.e. light rail, enhanced bus service, bike lanes, trains). Twelve of these respondents also selected the No Action Downtown Alternative, preferring nothing done downtown until improvements are made to mass transit. Some support the Big Four pedestrian bridge as part of the solution, while others don't believe it is an acceptable alternative to the pedestrian bridge designed with the FEIS Selected Alternative.

"...we're absolutely 100% supportive of the development of the Big Four pedestrian bridge, taking the funds from the Ohio bridge and -- and moving to that location."

"...the Indiana portion of the Big Four Bridge project is not fully funded and there is no indication when or if it will be. Additionally, the Big Four is far less convenient for pedestrian traffic than the Kennedy Bridge would be."

Others are concerned with TARC's reduced level of service and want more funds committed:

"Invest more, more, more on public and alternative mass transportation, including light-rail, passenger rail, and more for more efficient regular bus service in the Metropolitan area."

Seven selected the No Action East End Alternative along with improved mass transit. Only six (6) respondents selected No Action project wide and improved mass transit.

Other concerns raised by those who commented on mass transit, include air quality, reducing automobile dependency, decreasing economic resources, and environmental justice. They believe Louisville is behind the times in terms of mass transit, and they want to be heard on this topic.

Purpose and Need

There are four (4) respondents, less than ½ of one percent, who spoke on the Purpose and Need document, primarily from special interest groups who took considerable time and effort to study the alternatives and Purpose and Need document and reply in writing. The respondents and excerpts from their comments are below:

National Trust for Historic Preservation

The letter from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, submitted by Elizabeth S. Merritt, Deputy General Counsel, states they strongly support the modification to rebuild the Kennedy Interchange in place; but need more information regarding changes to the proposed tunnel under Drumanard

The National Trust strongly supports this modification to the proposed project, as it will reduce adverse effects on historic districts. The remaining modifications, by contrast, appear to present either minimal cost savings or potential exacerbation of adverse effects on historic properties. For example, more information is needed regarding changes to the proposed tunnel under Drumanard in order to evaluate what appears to present an increase in adverse effects.

They express their view that a reevaluation of the National Register under the Section 106 process is necessary and state the Nutall House (now owned by Casi) and the north field of the Belleview property must be reassessed for eligibility.

They also suggested additional alternatives need to be addressed within the scope of the SEIS, such as:

- **Transit** - *In the 21st century it is irresponsible to develop a transportation plan on this scale for an important and growing urban area without even considering the potential for transit to address a portion of the transportation needs. Transit must be an element added to the evaluation in the SEIS.*
- **Single-bridge alternatives, with tolls** - *In the original EIS, single bridge alternatives were evaluated for both the downtown bridge and the eastern bridge. In our view, it would be important and useful to include those single-bridge alternatives within the scope of the SEIS as well.*
- **Sequenced construction** - *Under the two-bridge scenarios, it is well-understood that the traffic volumes and toll revenue would be different for the two bridges. Therefore, the SEIS and the tolling studies should evaluate and disclose the impact on the costs of financing depending on which bridge is built first.*

See National Trust for Historic Preservation letter for their complete comments.

Hoosier Environmental Council

The Hoosier Environmental Council submitted a letter requesting the original scoping decision be revisited by reopening the EIS process from the beginning. The letter was submitted by Tim Maloney, Senior Policy Director and Steven Meyer, Land Use Policy Coordinator. They state:

"In light of the substantial modifications under consideration, together with the unusually long period of time that has elapsed since the 2003 decision and the funding uncertainty, the original scoping decision should be revisited by reopening the EIS process from the beginning."

Their concerns include a lack of cross-river transit, the removal of the bicycle lane on the Downtown Bridge and including the East End Bridge in the project.

- **Lack of Transit** - *"The Purpose and Need White Paper justifies the project need through reference to the projected growth in the number of daily river crossings (as a percent of bridge capacity). However, neither the 2003 Selected Alternative nor the 2011 Modified Alternative improves cross-river transit service as a method for controlling the rise in demand."*
- **Bicycle / Pedestrian Lane** - *The 2011 Modified Alternative does not include a dedicated bicycle/pedestrian lane on the Downtown Bridge. It also does not provide for North/South access (for any mode) on the East side of the Kennedy Interchange. These design features will create safety problems, impede mobility, and fail to provide adequate transportation system linkage..... The Big Four Bridge is not part of the Ohio River Bridges Project and should not be considered as an alternative to the bicycle/pedestrian access that would otherwise be offered via the Downtown Bridge.*
- **East End Bridge** - *"The Kentucky and Indiana Planning and Development Agency ("KIPDA") traffic projections do not justify the extraordinarily high financial cost for the East End Bridge. Over the next twenty years, the projected number of daily trips from Eastern Clark County to Eastern Jefferson/Oldham Counties is only 41,000 under the no-action alternative.¹ In the same period, the daily trips over the Kennedy and Clark Memorial Bridges will grow to 180,000.² In spite of the difference in demonstrable need, the East End Bridge accounts for nearly half of the total project cost (\$1.35 billion for the 2011 Modified Alternative)."*

They summarize by suggesting eliminating the East End Bridge from the project to allow for greater investment in a multi-modal facility downtown that serves all types of cross-river traffic. See Hoosier Environmental Council letter for their complete comments.

Sierra Club, Cumberland Chapter

The Sierra Club comment came in on a Comment Form handed in at the June 27, 2011 Public Meeting held in Clarksville, Indiana. Betty Bennett filled out the form and commented as follows:

"As we have stated in previous comments in earlier years, the purpose and need for this two-bridge project remains indefensible. The downtown bridge is truly needed and the fix for Spaghetti Junction is truly needed, but there is no need for an eastern bridge at this time. This is even more true today than it was a few years ago - in good economic times and lower gas prices.

The demographics of the community are changing, with more people moving into town and considerable disinvestment in the suburbs. Hopefully the SEIS will be studying these issues as well."

River Fields

The River Fields Board of Trustees President, Lee Cory, submitted comments via certified letter and electronic mail. The letter stated in reference to: *Comments on the Purpose and Need for of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement; Louisville-Southern Indiana Ohio River Bridges Project*. They provided their background on the project, how they would organize their response, which included *Comments on the Purpose and Need for the Project*; and incorporated their comments to the DEIS submitted on February 25, 2002, which was attached to the submittal.

River Fields original position on the purpose and need for the project are summarized as follows:

A. Defining Need: Two Separate Projects are Combined in this Study

The current purpose and need statement for this project states that its scope is about regional cross-

river mobility needs, current and future. The White Paper does not propose to change this statement. In reality, this Project has always been and continues to be two separate projects: (1) a downtown project to address current traffic safety and congestion-problems; and (2) an eastern project to satisfy economic development objectives for a portion of the region. In evaluating proposed traffic projects, traffic safety projects and economic development projects should not be placed on an equal footing and given equal priority. More importantly, a project that is solely for economic development purposes should not be characterized as a safety project in order to increase the project's priority status or to skew the cost/benefit analysis.

B. Analyzing Need

1. The only current traffic study-related need identified in the data supporting the ROD is rebuilding the Kennedy Interchange.

The computer freeway operations simulation model (CORSIM) used for the FEIS confirmed conclusions formed in previous studies that recognized that substandard design geometries (merges and weaves) result in both peak period congestion and safety problems within Spaghetti Junction.

The FEIS further claimed, however, that the Kennedy Bridge traffic demand resulted in the bridge being "over capacity," specifically, that it is currently at 106% of its design capacity Mr. John Sacksteder (DEIS, pg. 2-24). This conclusion was misleading because the definition of "capacity" in this context is incorrect and at odds with generally accepted traffic-flow conditions in similar urban areas.... In 2002, the Kennedy Bridge itself, however, was not currently a congestion problem except as it related to Spaghetti Junction.

2. There was no current traffic-related need for an eastern interstate bridge and highway.

"The FEIS stated that travelers currently incur "additional travel times and distance when traveling between the eastern portions of the metropolitan area" but presented no data on congested travel, travel time, and traveler delay for people or trucks with these origins and destinations." ... "The household travel survey showed that less than 5% of the trips made by the 5-county residents surveyed required a river crossing; when disaggregated into trips by state of residence, the survey showed that 2% of trips made by the Kentucky residents surveyed were cross-river trips and 15% of the trips made by the Indiana residents surveyed were cross-river trips."

"Representatives of the FHWA, KYTC, and INDOT heard repeatedly that an eastern interstate beltway is currently "needed" to route hazardous materials, particularly away from the 1-65 curve adjacent to the Louisville medical complex. The FEIS is silent on this point, from either a safety or productivity standpoint. This is undoubtedly because the volume of hazardous materials transported by trucks within the entire metropolitan area, much less those that could bypass and in this particular portion of a bypass, do not warrant a billion dollar expenditure on an eastern bridge for this sole purpose."

3. The FEIS's analysis of future need for an eastern bridge was based solely on a faulty socio-economic premise.

The underlying premise of the FEIS's future need analysis was a socioeconomic one: that the eastern bridge was needed to "accommodate" traffic associated with projected growth in eastern

Clark and Jefferson Counties. However, there were and are many flaws in and problems with this premise, such as

- *“The premise is inconsistent with the study consultant's own observations that the eastern bridge and interstate highway are needed to develop eastern Clark County, not to accommodate inevitable future growth”*
- *“The premise is inconsistent with the "no build" jobs forecast which show Clark County with a current and projected jobs deficit.”*
- *“Projected growth is predicated on socioeconomic forecasts that were aggressively inflated in expectation that the eastern bridge would be built. “*

“...the FEIS says that the socioeconomic projections developed by the study consultant for the year 2025 were based on locally adopted land use plans and transportation plans which assume two bridges will be built. The forecast updating for this Project was based on flawed methodology and unsupported and biased input. This is not just a process problem, since the forecast affects the projected traffic numbers and the socioeconomic impacts analysis.”

“There are several major problems with the FEIS's traffic projection methodology. First, a significant mathematical error was made in the computer modeling process: the total employment numbers that were input into the model are overstated by almost 20,000 jobs compared to the sum of retail and non-retail employment in the forecast tables and the computer model files themselves. Further, even with the inflated and unsupported socioeconomic projections and the math error, the traffic projections that are outputs of the computer model were not used by the study consultant. Rather, the consultant added "off model adjustments" to inflate future bridge crossings by 16%. Finally, the most significant traffic benefit shown in the entire Project—reduction in Vehicle Hours of Delay—from the eastern bridge was not a performance metric used by FHWA anymore because it is inaccurate. River Field analysis shows why it is inaccurate and misleading—future congestion improvements claimed in the FEIS from the eastern bridge result from the FEIS's arbitrary reallocation of projected jobs rather than remediation of traffic system inadequacies.”

The letter continues on page 11 to talk about the four factors associated with the purpose and need:

The "purpose and need" chapter states the general need as being increased cross-river mobility, but identifies four "need factors" against which the general need for cross-river mobility is to be measured. Two of those need factors relate to traffic safety and traffic congestion in the downtown Kennedy Bridge/Kennedy Interchange area. Those two factors are legitimately related to traffic conditions that should be considered in evaluating a highway project. Those two factors are also capable of being objectively evaluated using quantifiable data. The other two factors (accommodating growth and realizing land use plans calling for completion of the interstate loop), however, are not related to traffic problems and cannot be objectively evaluated using quantifiable data. The result is that the FEIS attempts to justify the eastern bridge on the grounds that it will help solve the current downtown traffic problems and that it will accommodate planned growth and improve accessibility in the east end. These justifications are totally without merit. In fact, all reliable data developed over the last 23 years indicate the opposite. First, there is no reliable data presented that demonstrates that the downtown problems would not be solved by a rebuild of the Kennedy Interchange and a new downtown bridge only. Second, the growth and accessibility assumptions underlying the purported need for an eastern bridge are based on forecasts and modeling that are so flawed and biased that they cannot be used to support the supposed need for an eastern bridge.

River Fields offers additional issues which they state need to be addressed in the SEIS. The issues are listed below along with portions of their comment.

1. The effect of tolling on traffic patterns

"Two different tolling studies conducted by the project have now shown that the public is sensitive to tolls and will adjust its traffic patterns to avoid them. The eastern bridge in particular would suffer enormous diversion of potential traffic if it is tolled."

2. Sequencing

"In its comments on the DEIS, River Fields urged that this important aspect of the project be the subject of study. This was not done, and neither the FEIS nor the ROD addressed this issue."

"The introduction of users fees or tolls, the fiscal impact of the Great Recession and the downturn both in the suburban housing boom and in miles travelled all point to the need to evaluate which project should be built first."

"River Fields' position is that this is essential to evaluate from a financial perspective, within the tolling study, in order to evaluate how much the public would be saving in the following areas:

-Savings on the cost of financing or borrowing money to build the project, as the income stream would be dramatically improved in the first years of the life of the Project -Savings of the cost of financing most importantly would reduce the cost of tolls as the price of tolls will be governed in large part by the price of financing. -Savings for citizens in the cost of gasoline, as the downtown project is the most direct and shortest trip for the majority of the population."

"It is River Fields' position that the SEIS should include an evaluation of and an explanation of the methodology in its process. This would require widening the scope of the currently proposed SEIS. The evaluation of sequencing is no especially urgent at this time due to the dramatically changed federal funding realities, potential inclusion of user fees (tolls) and the dramatic downturn in traffic, VMTs and VHTs in the region and throughout the country."

3. New listed or eligible national register properties must be considered

"In the eight years since the ROD was issued, enough time has passed that there are new properties which are eligible for National Register Listing which were previously ineligible. Among the obvious examples are the Nutall House and the north field on "Bellevue" farm. An analysis of the eligibility of, impacts on, and mitigation for any newly eligible properties should be part of the new section 106 study. Such evaluation should be thorough in both corridors with detailed study of all potentially eligible resources including but not limited to the surrounding neighborhoods of the National Register Districts of Butchertown, Phoenix Hill, West and East Main Street, The Country Estates of River Road and the eligible James Taylor subdivision and the Jacobs School eligible district. Again, the ambitious SEIS schedule must not abbreviate these evaluations."

4. Mass transit should be studied as an alternative

Mass transit was dismissed as a serious alternative for study early in the previous NEPA process. River Fields continues to believe that this was a mistake. Given the steep drop in traffic arising from escalating gasoline prices and the lingering recession—widely described as the worst since the Great Depression—the time to study mass transit as an alternative for the purpose and need has arrived.

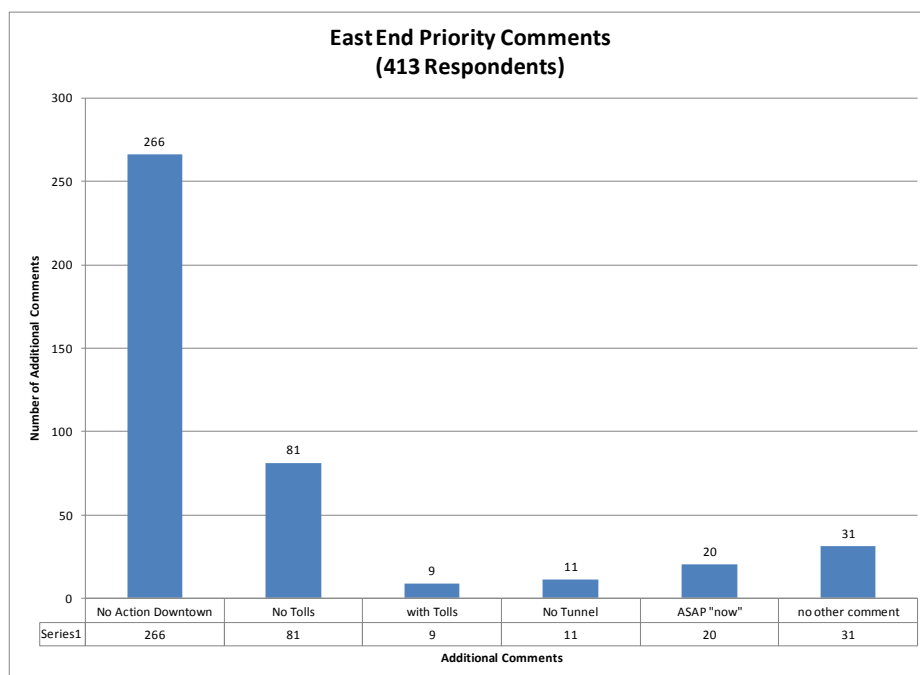
Other Comments from the Public

Although the public was encouraged to comment on the three alternatives and the *Purpose and Need* document, they took the opportunity to express other comments related to the project, such as tolling. There were also reoccurring comments like “*build it now*” and “*East End Bridge takes priority*”, among others. All comments were entered in the comment database and a summary of the most common comments and resulting themes are highlighted below.

East End Priority

The most common comment received involved building the East End Bridge first. There were 413 such comments, representing over 36 percent of all comments received. Approximately 65 percent of those comments were part of a campaign where the same, or virtually the same comment was submitted on-line from the website by different individuals who also favored No Action Downtown. They represent nearly 23.5 percent of all respondents.

Outside of the campaign, there were approximately another 150 comments expressing the need for the East End Bridge to be built first, or that it should be the priority. Thirty one had no other comment, that was their one and only comment. Whereas, several respondents had a variety of secondary comments related to the East End Bridge, such as no tolls, with tolls, no tunnel, and build it now (ASAP “now”).

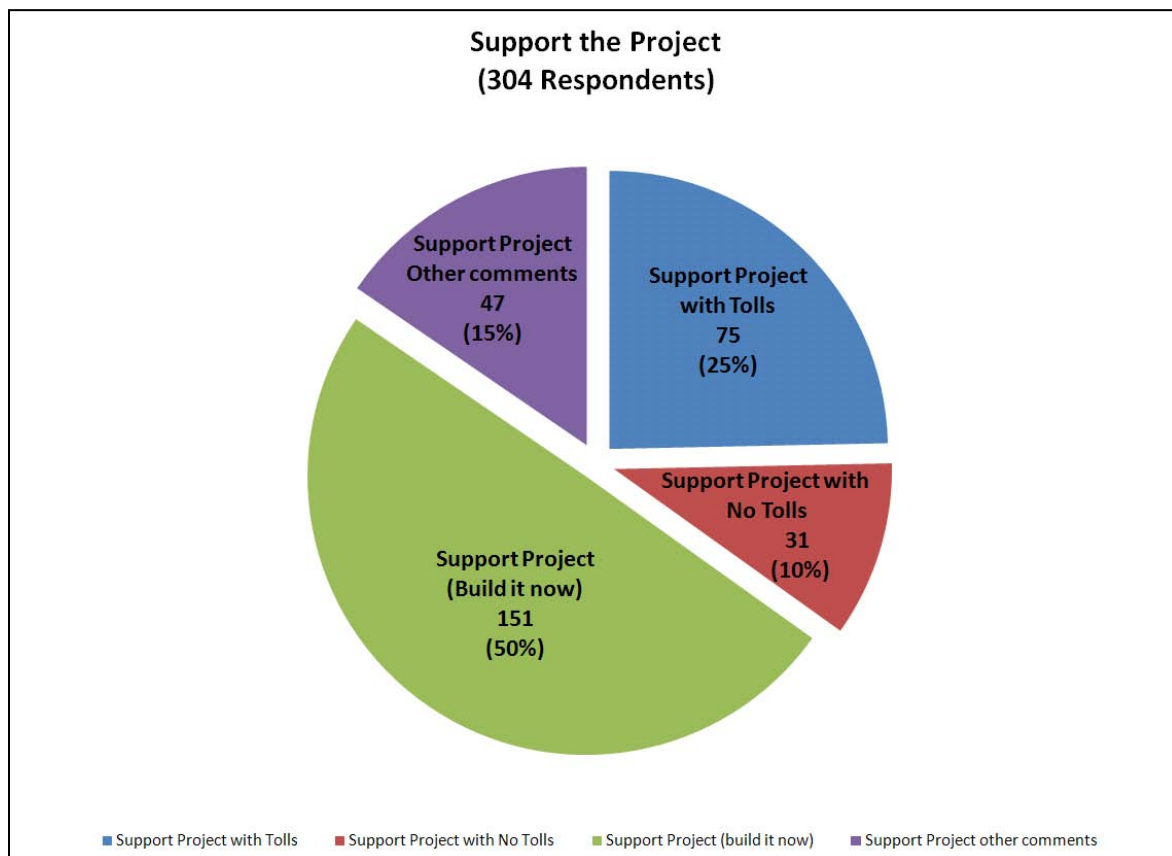


Another repeated statement from the East End Priority comments is the suggestion to wait and see how the downtown traffic is impacted before deciding to build the Downtown Bridge. Several are convinced trucks will go around to the east end and congestion downtown will be much relieved.

Support the Project

The next most popular comment received was in support of the project. There are 304 comments that specifically state they support the project, are in favor of two bridges or want to see the bridges built. There are one hundred and fifty one (151) of the 304 Support the Project comments that had no other comment other than “build it now” or “asap”.

Another seventy-five (75) individuals specifically stated they support the project with tolls. Whereas, thirty-one (31) stipulated their support with the additional comment of “no tolls”. And forty-seven (47) expressed support for the project along with another comment, such as traffic, the selection of an alternate or build the east end first.

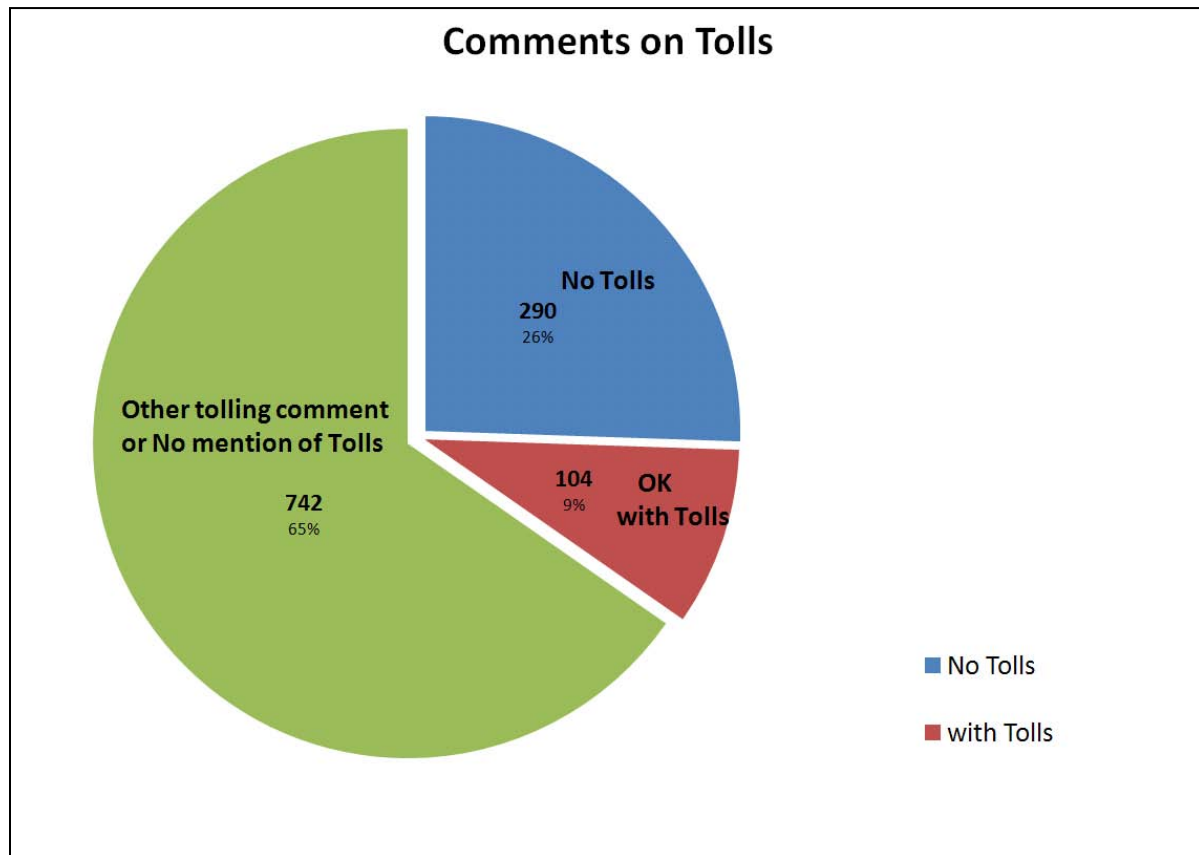


Tolls

There were 290 comments specific to “No Tolls”. A majority of them expressed comments about working in one state and living in another; or, were in the service industry and concerned with a loss of customers and therefore, income. Forty-three (43) individuals representing Buckhead’s Mountain Grill or Rocky’s Sub-Pub restaurants in Jeffersonville, Indiana submitted a “No Tolls” comment.

There were 104 comments that either supported the project with tolls or stated they were not opposed to tolling. Those individuals were more concerned with getting the project started as soon as possible.

The majority of the respondents, 742, did not have say yes or no about tolls, or did not mention tolling in their comment.



Build it Now / ASAP

Another reoccurring theme in the comments was frustration about how long the project has taken. Comments like *“hurry up”*, *“stop talking and start building”*, *“build the bridges now”* and *“we need the bridges asap”* were common. One hundred sixty three (163) respondents (almost 15% of all respondents) had an “ASAP” or “now” type comment.