

## APPENDIX K: RESOURCE AGENCY, STAKEHOLDER & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY #3

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US 31 South

## Resource Agency, Stakeholder & Public Involvement Summary #3

February 26, 2025



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# 1. STUDY OVERVIEW

ProPEL is an Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) initiative for transportation planning that uses collaborative Planning and Environment Linkage (PEL) studies to consider environmental, community, and economic goals early in the planning process. Through the PEL studies, INDOT aspires to create smarter transportation systems that build stronger communities.

The ProPEL US 30 and 31 studies span 180 miles across 12 counties. The ProPEL US 31 South study area extends from 276th Street in Hamilton County to just south of the Eel River in Miami County. It includes Miami, Howard, Tipton, and Hamilton counties. The US 31 Kokomo bypass is excluded from the ProPEL US 31 South study.

This report provides a summary of the public outreach conducted from August 1, 2023, through December 13, 2024, which includes the Universe of Alternatives (Level 1), Level 2, and Level 3 alternatives analysis screening steps, as well as the overall feedback that was collected from the public during that time frame. A detailed summary of the outreach activities completed during this period, including stakeholder and public information meetings, is contained in **Section 3**. In addition, the study team held community office hours each month.

# 2. PURPOSE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Feedback from residents, motorists, businesses and others is vital to the success of the studies. Along with the other study areas, the ProPEL US 31 South study team is gathering public feedback throughout the planning process. The third round of public engagement began in August 2023 as part of the alternatives analysis phase of the ProPEL study.

The alternatives analysis phase included three distinct alternatives development and screening steps: Universe of Alternatives (Level 1), Level 2, and Level 3. The purpose of the engagement during these tasks was to:

- Identify the improvement concepts that met the purpose of and need for potential improvements in the study area and were considered practical in the Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) screening.
- Identify and qualitatively evaluate location-specific improvements for reasonability and potential impacts at the 18 primary intersections in the study area during the Level 2 screening.
- Identify and evaluate improvement packages for multiple sections, or planning segments, within the study area during the Level 3 screening. Improvement packages included improvements at the primary intersections, the secondary intersections, and the roadway sections between them.
- Solicit input from the public and other study stakeholders at each of the three alternatives screening steps.



Figure 1: ProPEL US 31 Study Schedule

### 3. OUTREACH AND ADVERTISEMENT

The US 31 South study team conducted outreach at each of the three alternatives development and screening steps to solicit public feedback. Outreach efforts included community office hours, public information meetings, community outreach events, resource agency coordination, and targeted stakeholder meetings.

The ProPEL US 31 South study team advertised the community office hours and community outreach events through the study website, social media channels, and eblasts to registered study stakeholders. In addition, public information meetings were held after the release of the Draft Level 3 Screening Report. These meetings were promoted through two public notices, a press release, a media advisory, and an email to study email subscribers.

**Tables 1, 2, and 3** contain a summary of the outreach efforts at each screening step.

*Table 1: ProPEL US 31 South Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) Screening Outreach Efforts*

Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) Outreach Efforts		Date(s)
Media Alert	ProPEL US 31 South media outlets	11/9/2023
Website Information	ProPELUS31.com	11/13/2023
Indiana Legislators Briefing	Virtual meeting	11/13/2023
Media Briefing	Virtual meeting	11/13/2023
Press Release	ProPEL US 31 South media outlets	11/13/2023
US 30 & 31 Coalitions	Virtual meeting	11/13/2023; 11/16/2023
Resource Agency Coordination	Email	11/20/23
Tribal Nations Coordination	Email	12/8/2023
Direct Mail	UofA postcard to residents, businesses; Approx. 18,000 postcards mailed	11/15/2023
Hard Copy of Reports, Comment Forms	Tipton County Public Library	11/14/2023 – 12/22/2023
	Peru Public Library	11/14/2023 – 12/22/2023
	Kokomo Howard County Public Library, Main Branch	11/14/2023 – 12/22/2023
	Kokomo Howard County Public Library, South Branch	11/14/2023 – 12/22/2023
	Sharpsville Town Hall	11/14/2023 – 12/22/2023
Stakeholder Email Blasts	66% open rate and 480 recipients	11/14/2023
	61% open rate and 482 recipients	12/5/2023
	65% open rate and 481 recipients	12/21/2023
Public Notices	Tipton County Tribune	11/15/2023; 11/29/2023
	Peru Tribune	11/15/2023; 11/29/2023
	Kokomo Tribune	11/15/2023; 11/29/2023
	Hamilton County Reporter	11/15/2023; 11/29/2023

<b>Stakeholder Advisory Committees</b>	Virtual meetings	11/17/2023
<b>JJ's Travel Plaza + adjacent businesses</b>	Virtual meeting	11/21/2023
<b>Social media Posts</b>	Universe of Alternatives milestone/study schedule	11/13/2023
	What is Universe of Alternatives	11/14/2023
	Introducing Alternatives A to Z	11/16/2023
	Universe of Alternatives: Access Management	11/17/2023
	Universe of Alternatives: Added Travel Lanes	11/18/2023
	Universe of Alternatives: Auxiliary Lanes	11/20/2023
	Universe of Alternatives comment period	11/21/2023
	Universe of Alternatives: Bypass	11/21/2023
	Universe of Alternatives: Median U-Turn	11/22/2023
	Happy Thanksgiving	11/23/2023
	Universe of Alternatives: Collector-Distributor System	11/23/2023
	Universe of Alternatives: Overpass/Underpass	11/24/2023
	Community Office Hours event promotion	11/24/2023
	Universe of Alternatives: Free-Flow	11/25/2023
	Universe of Alternatives: Green T Intersection	11/27/2023
	Universe of Alternatives: Interchange	11/28/2023
	Universe of Alternatives: RCI	11/29/2023
	Universe of Alternatives: RIRO	11/30/2023
	Community Office Hours event promotion	12/1/2023
	Universe of Alternatives: Roundabout	12/1/2023
	Universe of Alternatives comment reminder	12/6/2023
	Happy Hanukkah	12/7/2023
	Community Office Hours event promotion	12/7/2023
	Universe of Alternatives screening levels	12/8/2023
	Universe of Alternatives comment period	12/9/2023
	Community office hours event promotion	12/10/2023
	Holiday Campaign: Annmarie's Boutique	12/13/2023
	Universe of Alternatives: RCI video #throwbackthursday	12/14/2023
	#feedbackfriday Universe of Alternatives comment reminder	12/15/2023
	Holiday Campaign: Tinkerhouse Trading Company	12/17/2023
	Universe of Alternatives comment reminder	12/19/2023
	Holiday Campaign: Rockin' Js Boutique	12/19/2023
	Holiday Campaign: Pipe Creek Mercantile	12/21/2023
<b>Grissom Air Reserve Base</b>	Virtual meeting	11/29/2023
<b>Community Office Hours</b>	Pipe Creek Mercantile	12/6/2023
	Kokomo-Howard County Public Library	12/6/2023

	Tipton County Historical Society	12/12/2023
<b>Local Elected Officials</b>	Hamilton County Council	11/1/2023
	Tipton Mayor Kegan Schmicker + Commissioner Nancy Cline	1/29/2024
	Peru City Council	2/5/2024

Table 2: ProPEL US 31 South Level 2 Screening Outreach Efforts

Level 2 Screening Outreach Efforts		Date(s)
<b>Indiana Legislators Briefing</b>	Virtual meeting	3/18/2024
<b>Media Alert</b>	ProPEL US 31 South media outlets	3/26/2024
<b>Website Information</b>	ProPELUS31.com	3/27/2024
<b>Media Briefing</b>	Virtual meeting	3/27/2024
<b>US 30 &amp; 31 Coalitions</b>	Virtual meetings	4/9/2024; 4/10/2024
<b>Stakeholder Advisory Committees</b>	Virtual meetings	4/9/2024; 4/11/2024
<b>Farm Bureau</b>	Virtual meeting	4/9/2024
<b>Resource Agency Coordination</b>	Email	3/27/2024
<b>Tribal Nations Coordination</b>	Email	4/2/2024
<b>Direct Mail</b>	Level 2 postcards mailed to residents and businesses; Approx. 18,000 postcards mailed	4/1/2024
<b>Hard Copy of Reports, Comment Forms</b>	Tipton County Public Library	3/27/2024 – 4/30/2024
	Peru Public Library	3/27/2024 – 4/30/2024
	Kokomo Howard County Public Library, Main Branch	3/27/2024 – 4/30/2024
	Kokomo Howard County Public Library, South Branch	3/27/2024 – 4/30/2024
	Sharpsville Town Hall	3/27/2024 – 4/30/2024
<b>Stakeholder Email Blasts</b>	65% open rate and 469 recipients	3/27/2024
	57% open rate and 459 recipients	4/26/2024
<b>Public Notices</b>	Tipton County Tribune	3/27/2024; 4/18/2024
	Peru Tribune	3/27/2024; 4/18/2024
	Kokomo Tribune	3/27/2024; 4/18/2024
<b>JJ's Travel Plaza + adjacent businesses</b>	In-person meeting	4/23/2024
<b>Grissom Air Reserve Base</b>	In-person meeting	5/7/2024
<b>Best Western/Knights Inn</b>	In-person meeting	6/20/2024
<b>Local Elected Officials</b>	Miami County Commissioners	4/15/2024
	Howard County Commissioners	4/15/2024
	Miami County Council	4/16/2024

	Tipton County Commissioners	4/22/2024
	Hamilton County Commissioners	4/22/2024
	Tipton City Council	4/29/2024
	Howard County Council	4/30/2024
	Hamilton County Council	5/1/2024
	Peru City Council	5/6/2024
<b>Social Media Posts</b>	Public comment period open	3/27/2024
	Level 2 Explainer Video	3/29/2024
	Happy Easter	3/31/2024
	US 31 & CR 200 N alternatives video	4/2/2024
	Distracted Driving Awareness Month promotion	4/2/2024
	US 31 & Airport Road alternatives video	4/4/2024
	US 31 & Business 31 alternatives video	4/4/2024
	US 31 & CR 100 N alternatives video	4/5/2024
	Community Office Hours promotion	4/5/2024
	US 31 & CR 400 S alternatives video	4/6/2024
	US 31 & Division Road alternatives video	4/7/2024
	Solar Eclipse promotion	4/8/2024
	US 31 & SR 18 alternatives video	4/9/2024
	US 31 & SR 218 North alternatives video	4/10/2024
	Community Office Hours promotion	4/12/2024
	US 31 & SR 218 North alternatives video	4/12/2024
	US 31 & 296th Street alternatives video	4/13/2024
	Interactive map promotion	4/17/2024
	US 31 & Blair Pike Road alternatives video	4/18/2024
	US 31 & CR 500 S alternatives video	4/19/2024
	Feedback/public comment period reminder	4/20/2023
	Happy Earth Day	4/22/2024
	Interactive map promotion	4/23/2024
	US 31 & 550 N alternatives video	4/25/2024
	US 31 & Logansport Road alternatives video	4/26/2024
<b>Community Office Hours</b>	Tipton County Fairgrounds	3/27/2024
	JJ's Travel Plaza	3/27/2024
	Peru Public Library	4/15/2024
	Tipton County Public Library	4/15/2024
	Dutch Café	4/17/2024
	Kokomo-Howard County Public Library	4/17/2024
	Maple Lawn Village Mobile Home Community*	5/11/2024
	Woodland Hills Mobile Home Community*	5/11/2024

	Cedar Creek Mobile Home Community*	6/12/2024
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\* Sensitive community outreach

Table 3: ProPEL US 31 South Level 3 Screening Outreach Efforts

Level 3 Screening Outreach Efforts		Date(s)
Direct Mail	Level 3 postcards mailed to residents and businesses; Approx. 18,000 postcards mailed	10/31/2024
Indiana Legislators Briefing	Virtual meeting	11/8/2024
Media Alert	ProPEL US 31 South media outlets	11/8/2024
Website Information	ProPELUS31.com	11/12/2024
Media Briefing	Virtual meeting	11/12/2024
Press Release	ProPEL US 31 South media outlets	11/12/2024
US 30 & 31 Coalitions	Virtual meetings	11/12/2024
Stakeholder Advisory Committees	Virtual meetings	11/13/2024
Hard Copy of Reports, Comment Forms	Tipton County Public Library	11/12/2024 – 12/13/2024
	Peru Public Library	11/12/2024 – 12/13/2024
	Kokomo Howard County Public Library, Main Branch	11/12/2024 – 12/13/2024
	Kokomo Howard County Public Library, South Branch	11/12/2024 – 12/13/2024
	Sharpsville Town Hall	11/12/2024 – 12/13/2024
Stakeholder Email Blasts	60% open rate and 447 recipients	11/12/2024
	64% open rate and 512 recipients	11/20/2024
Public Notices	Tipton County Tribune	10/31/2024; 11/7/2024
	Peru Tribune	10/31/2024; 11/7/2024
	Kokomo Tribune	10/31/2024; 11/7/2024
Public Information Meetings	Tipton County Fairgrounds	11/14/2024
	Virtual	11/15/2024 through 12/13/2024
	Peru Jr./Sr. High School	11/19/2024
Virtual Public Information Meeting	ProPELUS31.com	11/15/2024
Local Economic Development Organizations	Virtual meeting	11/22/2024
JJ's Travel Plaza + adjacent businesses	Virtual meeting	11/27/2024
Farm Bureau	In-person meeting	12/2/2024
Miami Correctional Facility	Virtual meeting	12/3/2024
Best Western/Knights Inn	Virtual meeting	12/3/2024
Grissom Air Reserve Base	Virtual meeting	12/5/2024
Local Elected Officials	Hamilton County Commissioners	11/25/2024

	Tipton City Council	11/25/2024
	Howard County Council	11/26/2024
	Peru City Council	12/2/2024
	Tipton County Commissioners	12/2/2024
	Miami County Commissioners	12/2/2024
	Howard County Commissioners	12/2/2024
	Miami County Council (virtual)	12/4/2024
<b>Resource Agency Coordination</b>	Email	11/13/2024
	Virtual meeting	12/5/2024
<b>Tribal Nations Coordination</b>	Email	12/5/2024
<b>Social Media Posts</b>	Next milestone: Level 3	11/6/2024
	PIMs promotion	11/7/2024
	Draft Level 3 Screening Report released	11/12/2024
	Tipton PIM promotion	11/13/2024
	Peru PIM promotion	11/16/2024
	Virtual PIM available	11/16/2024
	Community Office Hours promotion	11/19/2024
	Level 3 comment period reminder	11/22/2024
	Community Office Hours promotion	11/25/2024
	Happy Thanksgiving	11/28/2024
	PIM recap video	12/3/2024
	Community Office Hours promotion	12/4/2024
	Community Office Hours promotion	12/8/2024
	Level 3 comment reminder	12/12/2024
<b>Community Office Hours</b>	Dutch Cafe	11/26/2024
	Kokomo-Howard County Public Library	11/26/2024
	Pipe Creek Mercantile	12/10/2024
	Tipton County Public Library	12/10/2024
	Indiana University Kokomo*	3/20/2025

\* Sensitive community outreach

## 4. TARGETED COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The US 31 South study team conducted a corridor analysis to identify potentially sensitive communities, including communities with relatively higher concentrations of low-income, minority, or limited English proficiency (LEP) populations. The full analysis is included in the ProPEL US 31 South Environmental Constraints Report (<https://propelus31.com/31doclibrary/>). The study team also used the outreach activities detailed in **Section 3**, including the Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings, to identify or confirm other sensitive communities within the study area.

Due to the presence of sensitive communities in the study area, additional targeted outreach occurred, including:

- Holding community office hours at the three mobile home parks that have direct access to US 31. These mobile home parks are:
  - Maple Lawn Village (October 7, 2023; May 11, 2024)
  - Woodland Hills (October 7, 2023; May 11, 2024)
  - Cedar Creek (June 12, 2024)
- Coordination targeting minority and LEP populations identified within the study area, including:
  - Translation services, including translating the direct mail postcard and other study information to Spanish.
  - Hosting Community Office Hours at Indiana University Kokomo

## 5. STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The study team established two Stakeholder Advisory Committees, which include representatives from local agencies, residents, community organizations, churches, social service providers, emergency service providers, businesses, and business organizations. One Stakeholder Advisory Committee includes individuals from the northern portion of the study area (from the northern US 31/Kokomo Bypass intersection to just south of the Eel River in Miami County). The second includes representatives from the southern portion of the study area (from 276<sup>th</sup> Street in Hamilton County to the southern US 31/Kokomo Bypass intersection). Virtual meetings with each occurred on November 17, 2023 (Level 1); April 9 and 11, 2024 (Level 2); and November 13, 2024 (Level 3).

The purpose of these meetings was to introduce the Draft Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 Screening Reports and familiarize attendees with the resources available to learn more. The study team also encouraged the committee members to ask questions and share information out to colleagues and/or constituents. Meeting materials and summaries are included in **Appendix G**.

## 6. US 31 COALITION PRESENTATION

The ProPEL US30/US 31 Advisor team and members of the US 31 South and US 31 North study teams met virtually with members of the US 31 Coalition on the following dates to discuss the alternatives development and screening process:

- Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) Screening: November 16, 2023
- Level 2 Screening: April 10, 2024
- Level 3 Screening: November 12, 2024

The ProPEL US 31 South meeting materials and summaries are included in **Appendix H**.

## 7. ADDITIONAL STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

In addition to Stakeholder Advisory Committee and US 31 Coalition outreach, members of the US 31 South study team coordinated and/or conducted outreach to the following stakeholder groups:

- Indiana state legislators (coordinated with ProPEL US 30/US 31 Advisor team)
- Local media representatives (coordinated with ProPEL US 30/US 31 Advisor team)
- US 31 South Local Economic Development Organizations (LEDOs)
- Farm Bureau members from Howard, Tipton and Miami counties (coordinated with US 31 North study team)
- Miami County Economic Development Authority (coordinated with US 31 North study team)
- Local elected officials
- Local (non-resource) agencies

- Grissom Air Reserve Base
- Miami County Correctional Facility
- Adjacent businesses (JJ's Travel Plaza, Best Western, Knights Inn, etc.)

See **Tables 1, 2, and 3** for dates of these outreach efforts.

Materials related to each of these outreach activities are included in **Appendix I**.

## 8. OFFICE HOURS AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

The US 31 South study team is in the corridor regularly to build awareness around the study, provide an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to engage with the study team, and receive public comments related to the study and study milestones. The study team coordinated and staffed 37 Community Office Hours events at a variety of times and locations across the corridor during the period from August 1, 2023, through December 13, 2024. In addition, the US 31 South study team coordinated participation at 12 community events in various counties within the study area.

See **Tables 1, 2, and 3** for dates of these outreach efforts.

## 9. AGENCY COORDINATION

During the alternatives analysis phase of the study, coordination with resource agencies and cultural resources stakeholders was completed via email, as well as a virtual coordination meeting held on December 5, 2024. The following summarizes these coordination efforts:

- Draft Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) Screening Report
  - Federal/State/Local Resource Agencies: Transmitted for review and comment via email on November 20, 2023. A hard copy was also mailed to the Indiana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).
  - Tribal Nations: Transmitted for review and comment via email on November 20, 2023.
- Draft Level 2 Screening Report:
  - Federal/State/Local Resource Agencies: Transmitted for review and comment via email on March 27, 2024. A hard copy was also mailed to the Indiana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).
  - Tribal Nations: Transmitted for review and comment via email on April 2, 2024.
- Draft Level 3 Screening Report:
  - Federal/State/Local Resource Agencies & Cultural Resources Stakeholders: Transmitted for review and comment via email on November 13, 2024; Virtual coordination meeting held on December 5, 2024.
  - Tribal Nations: Transmitted for review and comment via email on December 5, 2024

In general, the purpose of the virtual coordination meeting was to summarize the Level 1 and Level 2 screening steps, to introduce the Draft Level 3 Screening Reports, and to familiarize attendees with content and resources available to learn more. Email correspondence, meeting materials, and meeting summary are included in **Appendix K**.

## 10. PUBLIC MEETING FORMAT

The study team held two in-person meetings when the Draft Level 3 Screening Report was released for public review and comment:

- November 14, 2024, at the Tipton County Fairgrounds
- November 19, 2024, at Peru Jr./Sr. High School

A virtual, on-demand meeting was also available beginning November 15, 2024. Public comments on the Draft Level 3 Screening Report were accepted from November 12, 2024, to December 13, 2024.

The format of the in-person meetings was an open house with a presentation (**Appendix K**) from study team members. The open house was held from 5 to 7 p.m. with a presentation scheduled at 5:30 p.m. During the presentation, the study team reported the results of the Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 alternatives analysis and screening steps.

At the in-person meetings, the informational boards, digital displays, and feedback opportunities (**Appendix L** and **Appendix M**) were situated throughout the venue in a way that would lead participants through the meeting information in a clear and meaningful way. A separate area was designated for a formal presentation by the study team. The information presented at the meeting was organized into the following stations:

- Station 1: Welcome/Sign-In
- Station 2: Study Overview
- Station 3: East Union Planning Segment
- Station 4: Tipton Planning Segment
- Station 5: Sharpsville Planning Segment
- Station 6: Miami South Planning Segment
- Station 7: Grissom Planning Segment
- Station 8: Peru Planning Segment
- Station 9: Miami Central Planning Segment
- Station 10: Public Comments

Informational boards included an overview of the PEL study process, a summary of the alternatives screening process, the study schedule, a recap of the issues (need) and desired outcomes (purpose), study goals, and a study corridor map illustrating the seven planning segments in the US 31 South study area. Additionally, seven television monitors were used to show the fly-through videos that were created for the Improvement Packages in each of the planning segments to demonstrate what alternatives could look like in the future.

Feedback exercises also were integrated into the public information meeting. At each planning segment station, customized comment cards were used that allowed attendees to provide specific input on the Improvement Packages considered in the Draft Level 3 Screening Report. This approach gave participants the opportunity to think about one planning segment at a time in order to offer focused and thoughtful feedback. It also allowed for attendees to chat with study team members prior to commenting, and it helped to prevent a line forming at the general comments table. More than 65 comments were collected using the customized comment cards.

To further provide the public with the opportunity to give feedback and ask questions, a virtual meeting experience was designed to closely mimic the in-person meeting, and attendees navigated through the informational displays in the same way. The virtual experience also allowed participants to interact with the feedback exercises in the same way.

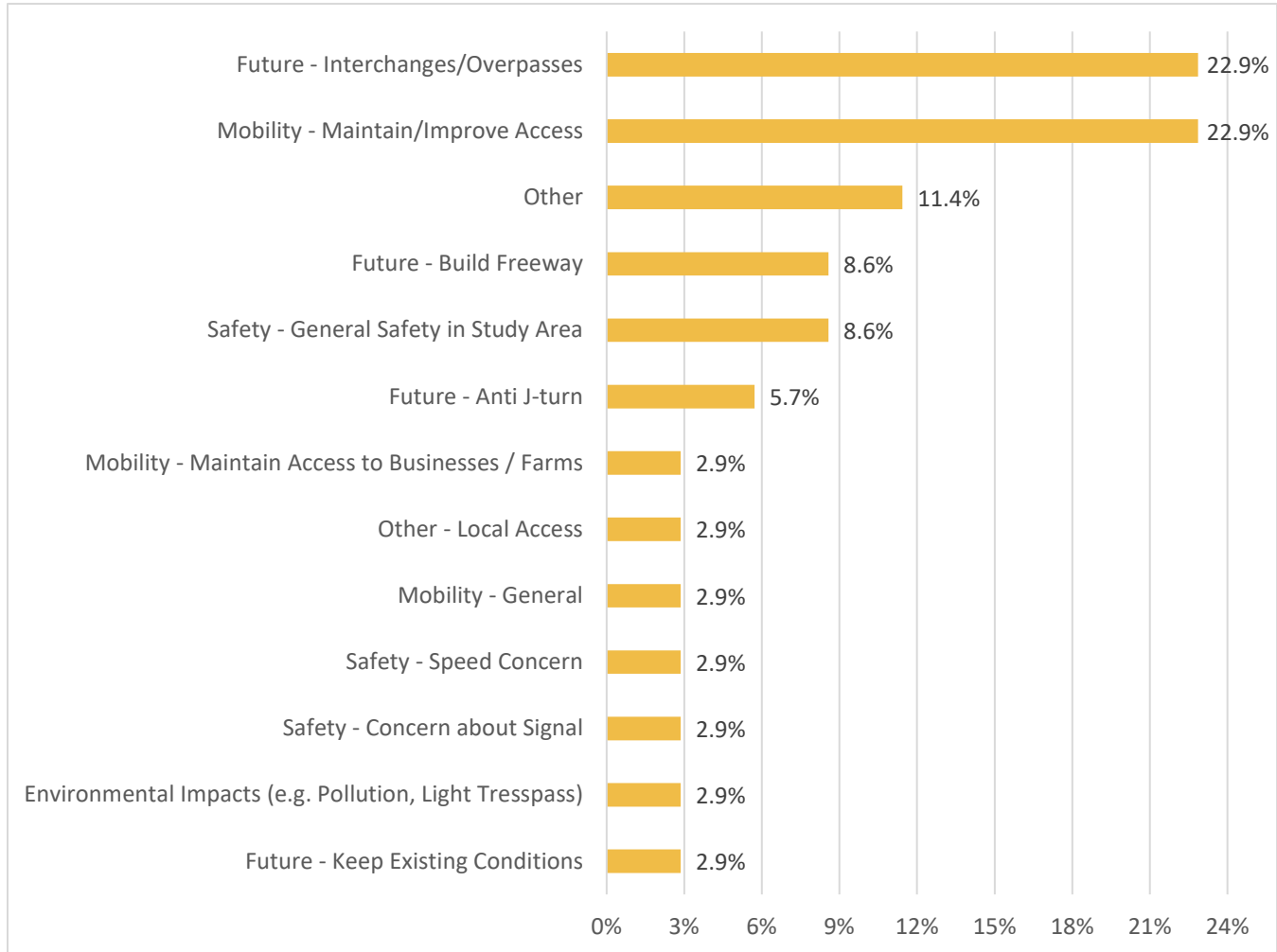
## 11. PUBLIC MEETING ATTENDANCE

Participants represented a wide range of interests and included residents, business owners, elected officials, school systems, emergency services, members of the agricultural community, community organizations, members of the US 31 Coalition, and media.

Meeting Information	Total Attendees
November 14, 2024 (Tipton County Fairgrounds)	119
November 19, 2024 (Peru Jr./Sr. High School)	74
Virtual Meeting	75
<b>TOTAL ATTENDEES</b>	<b>268</b>

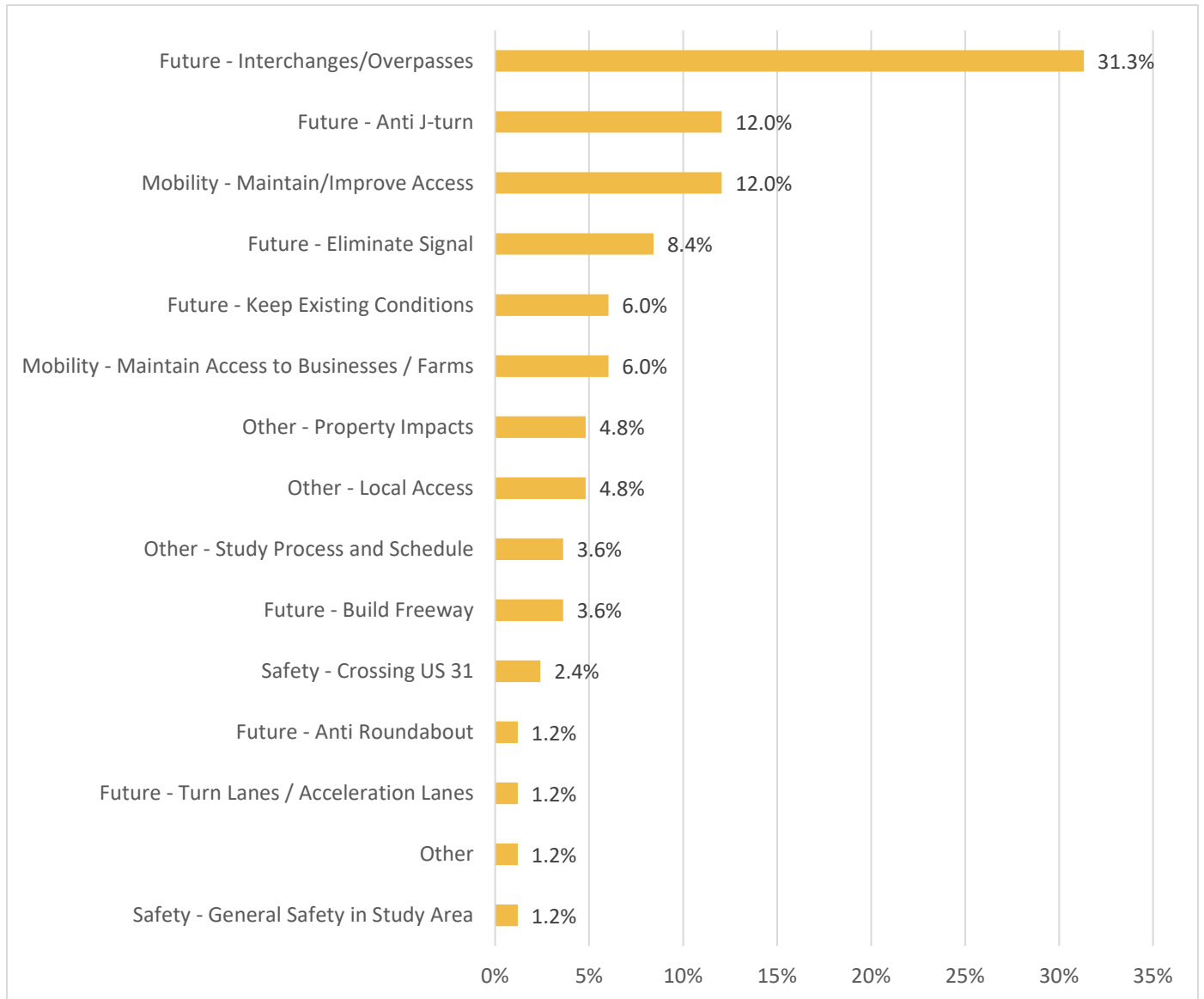
## 12. COMMENT SUMMARY

During the Draft Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) Report comment period, the US 31 South study team received 37 public comments. **Chart 1** below provides a summary of those comments.



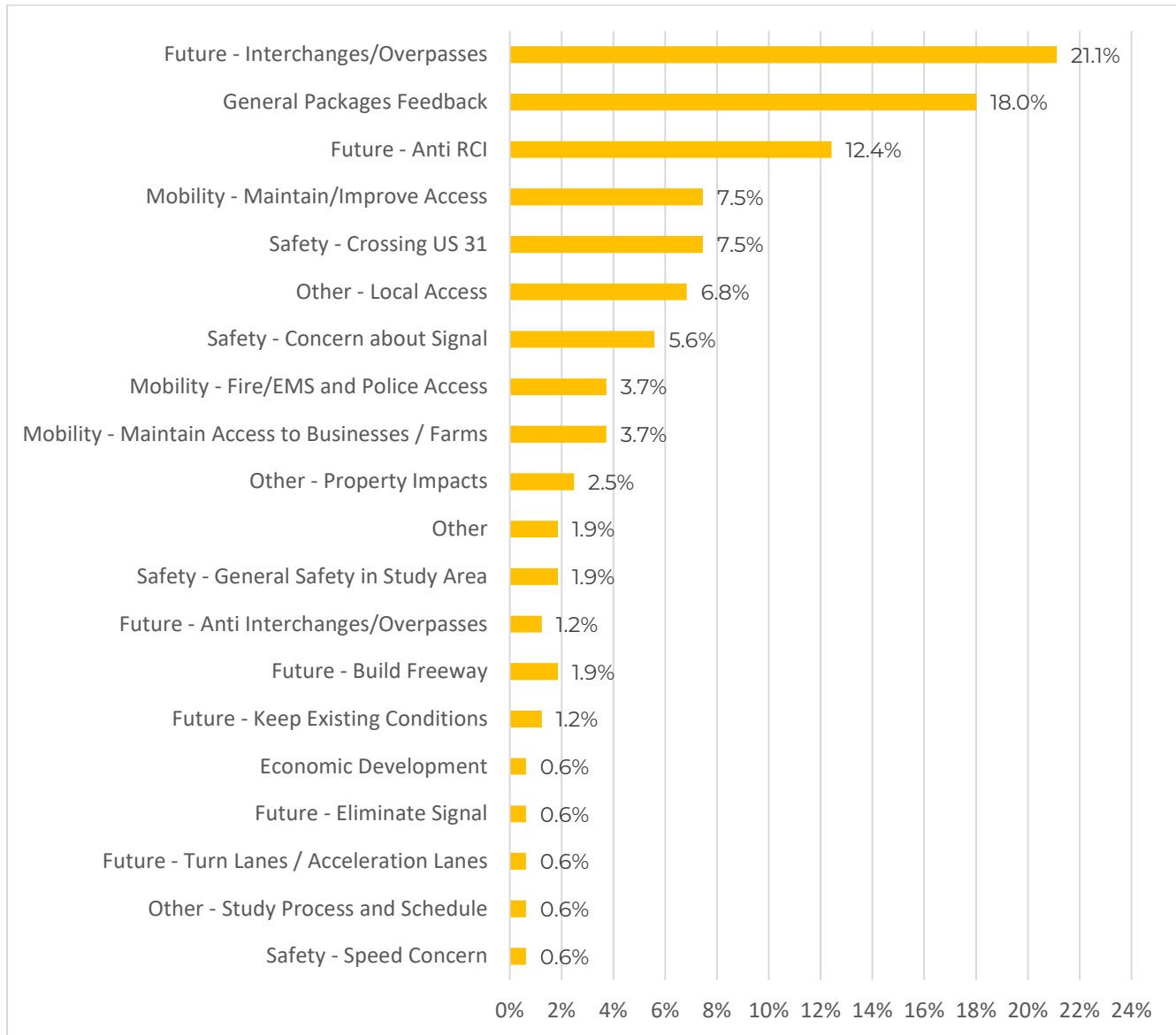
*Chart 1: Universe of Alternatives (Level 1) Screening Summary of Public Comment Types*

During the Draft Level 2 Screening Report comment period, the US 31 South study team received 83 public comments. **Chart 2** below provides a summary of those comments.

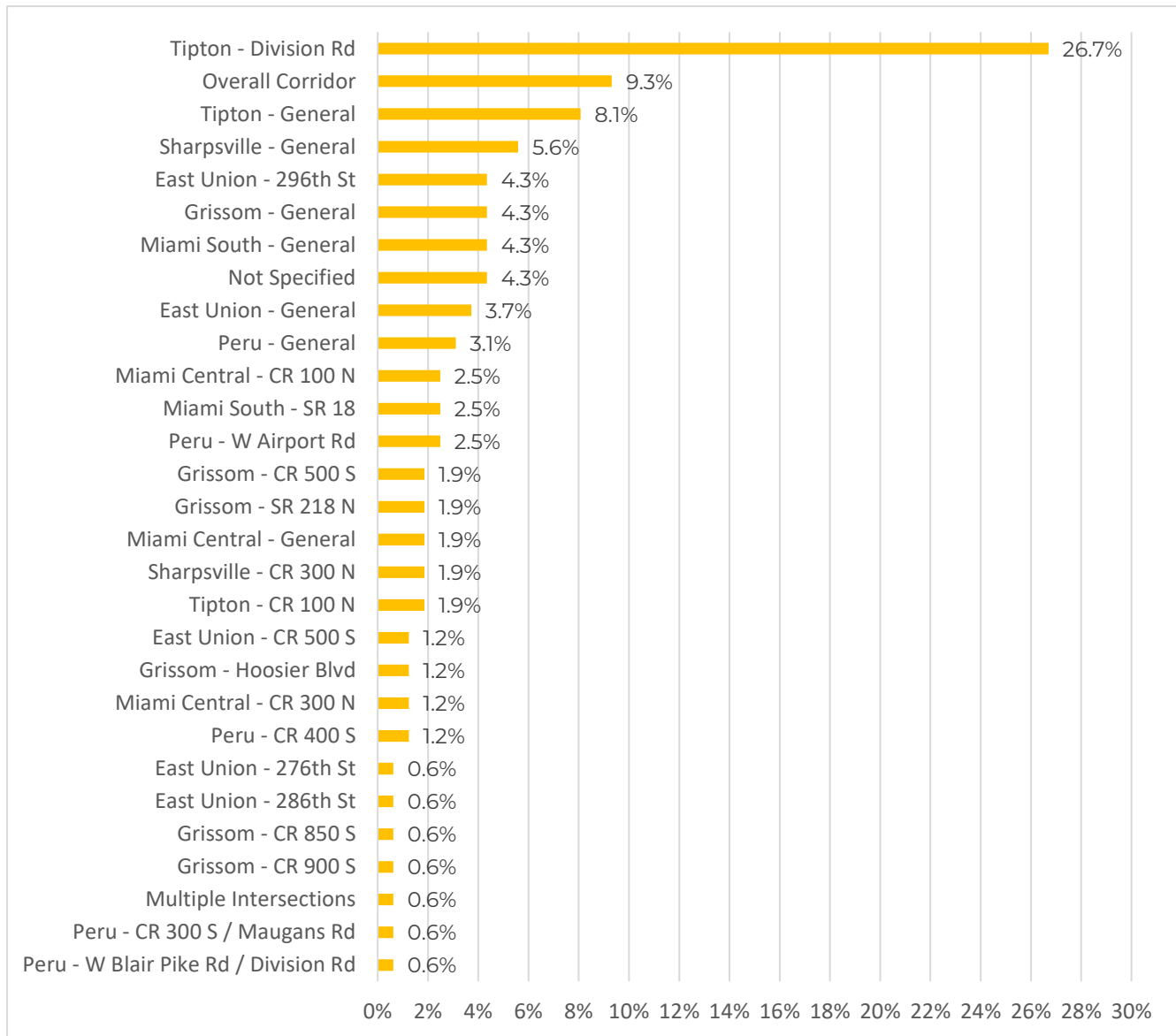


*Chart 2: Level 2 Screening Summary of Public Comment Types*

During the Draft Level 3 Screening Report comment period, the US 31 South study team received 162 public comments. **Chart 3** and **Chart 4** below provide a summary of those comments.



*Chart 3: Level 3 Screening Summary of Public Comments by Category*



*Chart 3: Level 3 Screening Summary of Public Comments by Location*

A complete listing of the public comments received from August 1, 2023, through December 13, 2024, can be found in **Appendix N**.