



**Potential I-55 Improvements
at Airport Road/Lockport Street and at IL 126/Essington Road**

Community Advisory Group Meeting #5

May 10, 2016

Summary

The fifth Community Advisory Group meeting for the potential I-55 improvements at Airport Road/Lockport Street and at IL 126/Essington Road was held on May 10, 2016 at the Romeoville Village Hall at 1050 W. Romeo Road in Romeoville, IL from 9:30 am to 11:30 am.

To announce the May 10th meeting, e-mails were sent to all CAG members. The CAG members who did not provide an e-mail address received phone calls alerting them of the meeting. The e-mail invitation was followed up with a mailing providing the meeting information.

The following CAG members attended:

1. Kim Allen – Romeoville Resident
2. Carlo Capalbo – Plainfield Park District
3. Jennifer Rooks-Lopez – Plainfield Park District
4. Nathan Darga – Planner, Village of Romeoville
5. Andi French – Plainfield Township Official
6. Ken Griffin – Romeoville Village Trustee
7. Jared Hamilton – Bolingbrook Resident
8. Dr. Bernice Holloway – Romeoville Village Clerk
9. Brad Johnstone – Plainfield Resident
10. Judy Johnstone – Plainfield Resident
11. Christina Kupkowski – Will County DOT
12. Bill Lamb – Lakelands Community, Plainfield Trustee
13. Laurie McPhillips – Lakelands Beach HOA
14. George M. Milton – Plainfield Resident
15. Tom Mooney – Plainfield Resident
16. Eric Olson – Romeoville Resident
17. Thomas Pawlowicz – Bolingbrook Assistant Village Engineer
18. Barb Poma – Plainfield Resident
19. Lucas Rickelman – Village of Bolingbrook
20. Jim Sanders – Plainfield Resident
21. Dave Sniegowski – Property owner at IL 126 & Essington



22. John Zabrocki – Romeoville Village Engineer
23. Tom Gename – Plainfield Resident (Alternate)

Also present at the meeting were eight members of the general public. Steve Schilke and Jennifer Kaluarachchige from Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) were present. Dave Heslinga, Peter Reinhofer, Elora Hsu and Heidi Voirol represented V3 Companies at the meeting. Mark Dwiggins from the Upchurch Group was another team member present.

Summary of Activities

The meeting began with a welcome and introductions of the CAG members, project team members and the public audience. Dave Heslinga from V3 then outlined the meeting agenda and discussed the Phase I Study Process. The presentation included a review of CAG #4 and a discussion of the schedule that was presented at that meeting.

Peter Reinhofer from V3 reviewed the progress since the last public meeting held in January 2012. The Purpose and Need received concurrence from NEPA in July 2013 and the project team was able to perform additional screening to evaluate the 13 alternatives remaining at that time. After the next round of screening, three alternatives remained for further evaluation. The project team was scheduled to meet with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS), US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and IDOT to perform the Environmental Field Review on October 1, 2013. This meeting was postponed until May 2014 due to the government shutdown. Based on the feedback from that field review, the original 27 alternatives were re-reviewed based upon a revised screening process.

The revised Round 1 Screening Process evaluated Environmental and/or Engineering obstacles. These obstacles included any potential impacts to the Lake Renwick East and Water Reserve Property (LWR). No paving, grading or altering natural water flow is allowed on LWR unless imperative and an unavoidable public necessity for public use. The original 27 alternatives were screened against this requirement. 14 alternatives and the no-build option remained after this screening.

Mr. Reinhofer also discussed the revised Round 2 screening process. Round 2 environmental screening required that the alternatives avoid bisecting wetland areas and minimize impacts to: wetlands, Waters of the US (Lily Cache Creek and Slough and former gravel pit ponds), Section 4(f) properties, residential properties and businesses. Three additional alternatives were developed as part of this process so 17 alternatives and the no-build alternative were evaluated against these environmental screening factors. Five alternatives remain after Round 2 screening.

There was an opportunity at this point in the presentation for CAG members to make comments. The following comments/questions were received:

- What traffic impacts will there be to the residential neighborhoods – *V3 responded that traffic analyses and evaluation will be part of the Round 3 screening process.*
- Will CMAP have 2050 numbers for this project – *CMAP will not have new projections until 2018.*



- Has CMAP evaluated the accuracy of their past predictions? – *The CMAP models are continuously updated and calibrated with new data including traffic counts and comprehensive plans.*
- Have you evaluated the impact of the Weber Road Improvements in relation to this project? – *The Weber Road interchange improvements are outside of the study limits. However, the 2040 traffic projections were developed by CMAP anticipating that the Weber Road Interchange and Weber Road improvements will be completed.*

There was a short break and then V3 presented the five remaining alternatives. 11x17 handouts of each alternative were included in the meeting information packet for the CAG members to review. There were also five exhibit boards showing each remaining alternative.

V3 then outlined the current Round 3 Screening Factors. The Evaluation factors included the Natural and Human Environments, Right of Way (ROW), Cost and Traffic Operations. The components of the Natural Environmental screening will evaluate impacts to water resources such as the Lily Cache Creek and Slough, wetlands, threatened and endangered species and 4(f) Parklands. Considerations for the Human Environment evaluation will include a review of impacts to any cultural resources, residences, businesses and recreational clubs. The screening process will also evaluate if ROW will be needed from existing properties and the overall cost. Lastly, the Traffic Operations evaluation will be performed.

The CAG members were then asked to answer the question: Any additional factors that should be considered? Each table conducted a discussion and presented their answers to the CAG group. The following comments were added to the list:

- Connectivity to interchanges – what about a 143rd bridge over I-55, Lockport Street Bypass or Budler Connection
- Traffic impacts to residential areas and traffic impacts to 135th Street and IL 126
- Increase in truck traffic
- Air/Noise impacts – natural quiet
- Lockport Bypass with Airport Road Interchanges
- Drainage
- Park Impacts
- Closure of the frontage roads
- Merits of a bypass
- Migratory bird impacts
- Property values
- Value of residences over parks
- Schools in the area and children walking to schools
- Conservation easements

Following the CAG discussion V3 outlined the next steps and tentative project schedule. The next step is to take the CAG feedback and complete the Round 3 screening. A public meeting is tentatively scheduled for late summer/early fall 2016. The project study group will then seek concurrence on a preferred alternative with the environmental resource agencies in a September 2016 NEPA/404 Merger meeting. A preferred alternative will be recommended and presented at the 6th CAG meeting in early



2017 and at a public hearing tentatively scheduled in the Summer 2017. The project study team will seek Design Approval in late fall/winter 2017.

The presentation was concluded and the floor was opened to CAG members for comments or questions. The following is a list of those questions/comments:

- What happened to the Kings Road option? - *This option was dismissed due to impacts to the Sears Distribution Center and the proximity to Weber/I-55 interchange*
- Can 135th/Essington traffic be funneled to Kings Road? – *This can be considered*
- Is some combination of the alternatives feasible? – *Yes, the preferred alternative could be one or two interchanges*
- Are the interchange locations weighted differently? - *All locations are considered equally and evaluated against the screening requirements.*
- Who will make the final decision on a preferred alternative? - *IDOT & FHWA*
- Can we do two ½ interchanges? One at each location? – *This option was considered but the frontage roads that would be needed to connect the two locations have impacts to the wetlands and the plant and wildlife habitat located south of the IL 126 interchange.*
- Is funding available for the next phases? - *There is additional funding needed for the remainder of Phase I and no funding has been identified for Phases II or III yet.*

Following the open discussion session for CAG members, the meeting was opened for comments from those that had been observing the CAG meeting. The following is a summary of those comments/questions.

- There are a lot of kids that walk along 135th and Essington Road and there are currently no trucks allowed on either of those streets. Will that change? Will there be a change to the speed limit? *Plainfield and Bolingbrook have jurisdiction for those roads and have the authority to provide truck restrictions. There will be other travel routes available for truck traffic desiring access to the IL 126 interchange using 135th Street east of Essington Road and the SW Frontage Road. As part of the Phase I process, an Intersection Design Study (IDS) will be prepared for the intersection of 135th Street and Essington Road. The IDS will show the layout of sidewalks and multi-use path improvements that will be included in the project for pedestrian and bicyclists.*
- Can two interchanges be part of the preferred alternative? - *Yes*
- Concerns expressed about the safety of children walking to schools
- Will the natural quiet be evaluated? - *Noise studies will be conducted to evaluate projected noise levels and the need for mitigation of noise impacts.*

V3 informed the CAG attendees that a summary of today's meeting will be available in a couple of weeks on the study website. If there are any additional comments following the meeting, comments can be submitted through the e-mail address on the website up to May 24, 2016. The meeting was then adjourned.