

**I-55 AT IL 59 ACCESS PROJECT
COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP
SUMMARY OF MEETING AND WORKSHOP FINDINGS
MEETING NO. 1 – OCTOBER 10, 2017 (1:00PM-3:00PM)**

This was the first meeting held in a series of six Community Advisory Group (CAG) meetings scheduled to take place through 2019. Local residents and representatives of various local agencies were in attendance to share concerns and identify problems with regard to current transportation, environmental, and community related issues. The meeting consisted of introductions of each member, a power point presentation, followed by a group exercise/workshop where members met in six smaller groups. Each group developed a list of concerns and presented those concerns to the entire CAG.

Power Point Presentation

- The power point presentation was given by Knight E/A. The presentation consisted of an overview of the study area which included routes under IDOT jurisdiction as well as local roads under the jurisdiction of the City of Joliet, the Village of Shorewood, and Troy Township. The presentation also included a summary of the findings from the first public meeting held on September 14, 2017.
- The focus of the study and the study process was presented.
- The role and goals of the CAG was presented.
- The Community Advisory Group is one tool of the Public Outreach process for stakeholder involvement and Context Sensitive Solutions. Other tools for stakeholder involvement include public meetings and hearing, a project website, and project surveys. A project specific Stakeholder Involvement Plan was described and noted as available for viewing on the project website. In addition, the public can obtain updates on the progress of the project study via the project website.
- The project study schedule was presented, with emphasis on each of the three major study phases requiring federal NEPA 404 concurrence, and the timing of each of the public outreach efforts relative to development of each stage. The I-55 at IL 59 Access Project is currently in its beginning stage. Five additional CAG meetings are anticipated during the project study through 2019.
- The public meeting held on September 14, 2017, was recapped and public meeting comments were summarized. The most frequently recurring comments received at the meeting with regard to transportation and environmental issues were presented during the power point presentation, prior to the workshop breakout session.

CAG Problem Statement Workshop

- CAG attendees were assigned and split into six groups and developed a list of concerns with a theme to summarize those concerns. Each group presented their concern to the entire group for discussion. The presentations given by groups one through six are summarized below.
- Group #1 – Safety: This group highlighted safety as the main subject of their workshop discussion and presentation. The project study area has significant congestion which is the cause of accidents. Intersections of concern were identified which include US 52/ IL 59, US 52 / I-55 interchange, and I-80 / I-55 interchange. The cloverleaf interchange at I-80 and I-55 may have inadequate geometry which needs to be investigated; trucks do not have enough distance to merge onto I-80 from I-55. The group shared that adding additional lanes may help prevent weaving of vehicles which is a safety concern. There are inadequate accommodations for turning movements at some intersections. There is a lack of pedestrian accommodations especially on the west side of the project. Pedestrians need access to get over I-55.

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- **Group #2 – Freight:** This group identified freight and truck traffic as a cause of accidents and congestion on US 6, US 52, I-80, I-55, IL 53, Houbolt Road, Larkin Avenue, Seil Road, and Mound Road. Freight traffic diverts to local roadways and causes congestion. This group shared a concern that future developments will draw more truck traffic. A suggestion was made for a dedicated truck route.
- **Group #3 – Congestion and Traffic:** This group identified congestion, traffic patterns, and daily commutes as a concern. The geometry at I-55 and I-80 should be studied to accommodate safer weaving of ramp traffic at the interchange. Improvements to the US 52 bridge over I-55 are suggested to accommodate pedestrians. Improvements to local roads are important to handle a potential I-55 and IL 59 interchange upgrade for additional movements. The group stated that there are a lot of other studies that have been done on local roads, and that construction and coordination between those studies are important with this project.
- **Group #4 – Pedestrian and Bicycle:** This group identified pedestrian and bicycle facilities as a concern. They stated that it is important to provide pedestrian access across interstates, to provide pedestrian and bicycle connections to Rock Run and other parks in the area, and to provide crosswalks and pedestrian crossing signals at intersections to provide safer conditions for crossing. A separated recreation/pedestrian path was suggested, as opposed to a widened shoulder on-street. The high crash history, especially along US 52 is an example of the need for separated paths; introducing pedestrian and bikes to the roadway use would increase the crash potential. The group noted a concern for the lack of sidewalks on bus routes, in particular where school children are standing and waiting to be picked up in the morning before school. Public perception within the group is that the existing trails in the area are used primarily for recreational use rather than for commuting.
- **Group #5 – Quality of Life:** This group identified preservation of quality of life as a priority for this project. This group considers their towns to be more rural with the presence of park and river oriented locations. A focus should be placed on relieving congestion, consider the addition of more lanes along major routes. Truck traffic is a concern and is overall part of the inherent problem of congestion that is prevalent. This group identified the need for additional interchange access at Seil Road. More pedestrian and bicycle facilities are needed. The DuPage River is an asset to the community and the natural character of the entire river should be preserved throughout the project. The project should strive to save as much green space as possible. Noise is a concern and an effort should be made to reduce it.
- **Group #6 – Community Character:** This group identified the community character of the area within the project as a priority to be considered throughout the project study. The character of the community was described as “feels like the country but has suburban access.” The positive features of the area are the access to nature, biking, canoeing, the DuPage River, forest preserves, and access to local main street type shopping that is not “big box” retail, and that access to big box type retail stores are readily accessible via the interstate system. The parks and open space are the reason many people choose to live in this area. Transportation should be a big asset but is currently a big problem and detracts from the enjoyment of the area.
- The CAG members then participated in an issues ranking exercise. The issues identified above will be considered and will become a part of the overall problem statement that will be developed and presented at the next CAG meeting in November.