

I-55 AT IL 59 ACCESS PROJECT - COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP
SUMMARY OF MEETING AND WORKSHOP FINDINGS
MEETING NO. 4 – JULY 16, 2018 (1:00PM – 3:00PM)

This was the fourth Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting. The last CAG meeting was held on March 15, 2018. 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 items within the study area. The meeting consisted of a PowerPoint presentation followed by a group exercise/workshop. The presentation portion of the meeting included a summary recap of the third CAG meeting which discussed travel demand modeling results, alternative analysis evaluation process, and potential environmental impacts. The presentation also recapped the third meeting's workshops that were held to review alternatives for the interchange, east-west connector routes, and capacity improvement alternatives. There was also a recap of the second public meeting held on April 11, 2018 which discussed alternatives to be carried forward and the alternatives that have been eliminated from further study.

The presentation presented the recommended preferred alternatives selected for US 52, the I-55 and IL 59 interchange, an east-west connector route, and Seil Road. Following the presentation, members met in four groups for the workshop portion of the meeting. Each group participated in two workshops. The first workshop discussed bicycle and pedestrian facilities for the preferred alternative for each alternative analysis category. The second workshop discussed environmental impacts for the preferred alternatives throughout the entire project study area. Comments and concerns from each group were documented. After the workshop discussions were completed, the comments and discussion topics from each group were presented to the entire community advisory group.

PowerPoint Presentation

- A summary of the 6.5 square mile project study area was given at the beginning of the presentation. The project schedule for the Phase I study was also summarized, a fifth CAG meeting will be held if necessary. The comments received from today's CAG meeting will help to determine if a third public meeting will be needed. If a third public meeting is not necessary then the study will move directly to a public hearing.
- A recap of the elements presented at CAG #3 included: a review of the CAG #2 presentation and workshop, other studies and projects in the area, review of the purpose and need statement, travel demand modeling results, the alternatives analysis evaluation process and potential environmental impacts. The workshop at the previous CAG divided the participants into three groups to discuss the different alternatives and how the evaluation criteria applied to each.
- A recap of the public meeting held on April 11th was provided. Over 140 members of the public, elected and municipal officials and stakeholders attended the public meeting. The purpose of the public meeting was to present the Project Study Team recommendation of alternatives to be carried forward and those recommended to be dismissed from further study, with opportunity for the public to offer input.
- The alternatives that were carried forward were presented for each of the three distinct categories:
 1. Interchange alternatives: Three of the six interchange types were carried forward at I-55 and IL 59. (I-1, I-2 and I-6)
 2. East-West connector alternatives: Two of the nine east-west connector alternatives were carried forward (EW-1/1A/1B and EW-6).
 3. Route Capacity Improvements: All of Seil Road and US 52 alternatives were carried forward.
- Formal Concurrence was received on June 21, 2018 from the Federal Resource Agencies, providing acceptance for moving forward toward development of a Preferred Alternative. The next step was explained in the study process to identify and develop the Preferred Alternative.
- Based on stakeholder meetings, community input and the evaluation criteria, the Project Study Team has developed an overall recommended preferred alternative which incorporates the following category alternatives:
 - I-6 (IL 59 at I-55 Diverging Diamond Interchange)
 - EW-6 (Olympic Boulevard Extension)
 - S-1 (Seil Road Mini-roundabouts at States Lane and Raven Road)
 - US 52 Capacity Improvements (River Road to Houbolt Road)

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- The I-55 / IL 59 interchange alternative I-6 (Extension of IL 59 into a Diverging Diamond Interchange) is being recommended for the preferred alternative for the following reasons:
 - Accommodates projected traffic demand and provides acceptable traffic operations for all movements.
 - The interchange alternative was most supported at the CAG & Public Meeting.
 - Accommodates east-west connectivity over I-55.
 - Utilizes the existing bridge constructed in 2008-2009.
 - Avoids impacts to existing operations and expansion plans of major gas pipeline facilities, a key advantage over I-1 and I-2 alternatives.
 - Moderate comparative construction cost to other alternatives. I-1 is considerably more costly while I-2 was slightly less costly.

- The East-West connector route alternative EW-6 (Olympic Boulevard Extension westward towards I-55) is being recommended for the preferred alternative for the following reasons:
 - Passes through an existing Forest Preserve District of Will County and City of Joliet Conservation Easement for transportation purposes.
 - Does not encroach on other Forest Preserve or the Joliet Junior College Natural Areas.
 - Utilizes existing infrastructure - an already wide, industrial street with low average daily traffic.
 - The EW alternative south of Joliet Junior College with the least comparative wetland impacts.
 - Alternative received positive feedback both in the CAG & Public Meeting.
 - Provides for adequate distance from the planned I-80 / Houbolt Road diverging diamond interchange.
 - Accommodates projected traffic demand and provides acceptable traffic operations for all movements.

- The Seil Road route capacity improvement alternative S-1 (mini roundabouts at Seil Road / States Lane and Seil Road / Raven Road) are being recommended for the preferred alternative for the following reasons:
 - Provides acceptable traffic operations for the 2040 no-build (20,000 ADT) and build (23,000 ADT) projected traffic on Seil Rd.
 - Received substantial stakeholder support over S-2 (traffic signals) and S-3 (add-lane) alternatives at both CAG and Public Meeting.
 - Mini-roundabouts better discourages illegal truck traffic.
 - Minimizes impacts to Seil Road Park.
 - Lowest comparable costs when compared with the other alternatives.
 - Prevents induced travel demand; alternative S-3 (add-lane) attracts up to +14,000 ADT over the no-build condition.

- The US 52 route capacity improvement alternative between River Road and Houbolt Road is being recommended for the preferred alternative for the following reasons:
 - Addresses existing and anticipated capacity deficiencies along US 52.
 - Add-lane west of IL 59 keeps average daily traffic volumes on Seil Road and Mound Road manageable as development west continues.
 - Introduces a raised median and access control to provide additional mobility and improve safety; a third through lane is not possible due to limited right-of-way.
 - Adds a westbound auxiliary lane between IL 59 and the I-55 southbound exit ramp to keep queues manageable and prevent blockage of the I-55 interchange.
 - Provides additional storage capacity and turn lanes that improve operations and control queues at the I-55/ US 52 interchange while minimizing impacts to adjacent properties with limited right-of-way.

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- Following the workshop, the independent utility / logical termini was explained. The project is likely to be divided into four separate projects due to jurisdiction. The four projects are likely to include the I-55/IL 59 interchange (I-6), Olympic Boulevard Extension (EW-6), Seil Road (S-1) and US 52 (Jefferson Street). The next steps include refining the preferred alternative, develop independent termini for the alternatives and complete the environmental reports. At this time the schedule for a potential public meeting and public hearing is undetermined as IDOT is coordinating with the Federal Highway Administration. The project study team will be reaching out to local agencies and stakeholder groups regarding the preferred alternative.

Breakout Session Workshop

Following the PowerPoint presentation, a breakout session was held to discuss two topics—bicycle and pedestrian accommodations and environmental issues. Attendees were randomly broken into four small groups (green, red, blue and silver) to discuss each topic. Comments on each topic from each group are summarized below:

- **Group #1 (Green Star Group)**

Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations: Concern was expressed about connecting from Nicor to Seil Road due to the steep drop and how to safely design this trail. The Village of Channahon has extensive bike trails on River Road and a connection to the I&M Trails. Olympic Boulevard could provide connectivity to the existing trails starting at IL 59. The multi-use path on the south side of IL 59/US 52 would provide pedestrian/bicycle access where there is none currently. The group felt that if it was built it would be used as there are safety issues there now. There was a desire to address connection issues between this project and Route 6/Frontage Road/Camelot. If there is not a roadway change there may be a bicycle/pedestrian solution. There was also a request to consider a multi-use path that would provide access to the Joliet Park District on US 52. The Rock Run Trail west will add access and safety where there is currently none. The proposed trail on the north side was a logical connection.

Environment and Other Concerns: Noise abatement is needed along Seil Road west of I-55 at the roundabouts. In regards to Seil Road, there were concerns expressed about water detention between the West Frontage Road and the IL 59 interchange and drainage issues off the Frontage Road. There was a desire to minimize the impacts to the humane society property and maintain the access for the facility. The group was happy that IDOT took the environmental concerns of the community to heart and did a good job of addressing those concerns. The group also asked that decorative treatments be considered for the bridge.

- **Group #2 (Red Star Group)**

Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations: The group stated that there is no current bicycle or pedestrian accommodations on the Seil Road Bridge. The existing striped (very narrow) shoulder may be present but is not a safe condition for pedestrian or bike crossings. The improvements suggested will be a good addition to the bicycle path being built by the Forest Preserve on Black Road as well as provide a good connection to the I&M Trail. Crossing US 52 at the East Frontage Road will be safer with the addition of crosswalk and pushbutton signal crossing installation at the traffic signal. The group felt that a logical connection would be at IL 59 to a possible trail along the DuPage River. The recommendations for US 52 bicycle and pedestrian accommodations looked good to the group. There was concern expressed regarding whether people would use the trail due to the high traffic volume, but ultimately people felt that if it was not built now the trail never would be due to the high cost of adding it after this project was built.

Environment and Other Concerns: There was concern and discussion about the roundabout size and if trucks would get stuck. It was explained that the roundabouts would have a paved island in the center to prevent this from happening. The group preferred the roundabouts to traffic lights at this location. There was concern also expressed about traffic backing up between the roundabouts without the addition of travel lanes on the bridge and the need for land acquisition.

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- **Group #3 (Blue Star Group)**

Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations: The group stated that there would be less conflict points with the additional of the proposed bicycle/pedestrian accommodations. The group requested that these accommodations to be close to residential areas. At US 52 there was concern about the ability for these users to cross over the roadway. Pace transit users are stranded on the shoulder when they exit the bus. The group supported connecting to existing paths on Olympic Boulevard and on US 52. The group also expressed a desire for accommodations on the Seil Road Bridge for residents, students, etc.

Environment and Other Concerns: The group expressed support for the alternatives since a bridge (and not a roadway filled in) was proposed to minimize impact to wetlands on Olympic Boulevard and no impacts to the Fen. The weaving between I-80 and US 52 will provide more space for cars to merge and will improve safety. Regarding the roundabouts the group was happy that there was minimal impacts to the park and that this feature would deter trucks from the area. The group expressed a desire to address traffic for future developments.

- **Group #4 (Silver Star Group)**

Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations: The group expressed a desire to extend the paths to Houbolt Road and to other trails in the area as there is a general lack of connections currently between trails. There was a recommendation to have the path extend down US 52 on the east side of I-55 as it might improve safety. There was also a suggestion to have a bridge crossing I-55 just north of the diverging diamond to provide a connection to Joliet Junior College. Currently, residents cannot access trails from their homes, they have to drive to them. A suggestion was made to consider pedestrian tunnels under I-55 and IL 59 to allow bicyclists and pedestrians to avoid busy intersections. Another desired connection was to the Forest Preserves under Seil Road. Additionally, it was suggested to add sidewalks along IL 59 at US 52 as there are many people who walk along the roads currently.

Environment and Other Concerns: There was concern expressed about noise due to the Frontage Road realignment moving closer to the homes. Wildlife is present near Olympic Boulevard and Rock Run that could cause possible accidents. There was also concern about light pollution due to the new interchange. There was also discussion about drainage and flooding by McDonough Street and along the DuPage River and if a new interchange would cause additional flooding problems.

The group reconvened after the workshops were complete and a summary of each group discussion was shared.