

Federal Highway Administration

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

For

Illinois Route 47 (FAP Route 326)

**Approximately 1,650 feet South of Granville Road to Caton Farm Road
Grundy and Kendall Counties, Illinois**

Section (109,110)R, R-1, 110BR & BR-1

July 17, 2012

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is proposing to reconstruct and widen Illinois Route 47 (FAP Route 326) from approximately 1,650 feet South of Granville Road to Caton Farm Road, Grundy and Kendall Counties, Illinois. The purpose of the proposed action is to address the existing and future transportation needs along Illinois Route 47, from south of Granville Road to Caton Farm Road, a distance of approximately 11.5 miles. The specific needs of the project include improving safety for all users, improving capacity and mobility, and improving the facility condition.

This transportation project is included in the FY 2010-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) endorsed by CMAP. The conformity analysis performed by CMAP was found to meet the applicable criteria of 40 CFR 51 and 93 and conform to the State Implementation Plan.

The proposed action includes reconstructing and widening Illinois Route 47 from 2 lanes to 4 lanes. The existing Illinois Route 47 two-lane pavement will be completely reconstructed with two 12-foot lanes in each direction along with a 32-foot wide raised median and 12-foot outside shoulders. Southern portions of the reconstructed pavement will have curb and gutter with storm sewer along the outside of 12-foot wide paved shoulders. Northern portions of the project will have 12-foot wide shoulders (eight-foot paved and four-foot earth) and an open ditch.

All intersections will be reconstructed to revise approach grades and corner radii to design requirements. Left turn lanes will be constructed on all side road and Illinois Route 47 approaches. The Prologis Parkway intersection will continue to be signalized. There are three proposed traffic signal installations at the intersections with Granville Road, U.S. Route 52 and Plattville Road. The traffic signals will be installed when the warrants are met. It is anticipated that the warrants will be met at these three intersections in 2020. At the Granville Road intersection, the west leg is the entrance to Saratoga School where cross walks will be provided across all four legs and a sidewalk will be provided adjacent to the school to the south project limits. All other side roads will continue to be stop controlled.

There are two bridges and 6 culverts being improved along Illinois Route 47 to accommodate the roadway widening improvements. The bridge crossings are over Valley Run Creek and Saratoga Creek.

The proposed project will involve 68 parcels of land from which right-of-way will be acquired. A total of 164.7 acres of land will be acquired, plus 1.9 acres of permanent easements, and 3.2 acres of temporary easements. The total acreage sum of land acquisitions (proposed right-of-way, permanent and temporary easements) is 169.8 acres. Construction of the transportation project will necessitate the acquisition of full parcels of property and the relocations

of 9 residential properties, 7 other buildings (i.e. sheds and/or garages), and one vacant commercial building. All relocations and property acquisition will be conducted under the provisions of the *Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition*, as amended, and the *IDOT Land Acquisition Procedures Manual*.

The project will affect a total of 165.6 acres of agricultural soils and 49 farms. These effects include five farm residence displacements and the loss of crop land. There will be no severances, landlocked parcels, or uneconomic remnants. The agricultural land loss represents 0.04 percent of the total land in farms for the two counties. Farms will continue to operate; however, these impacts will reduce total revenue to existing operations. The reduction in farm revenue may temporarily reduce the total counties' revenues; however, additional development in the area will offset the losses in county revenues.

There were six cultural resources that warranted National Register consideration. These structures will be avoided by the proposed improvement. The State Historic Preservation Officer provided concurrence on May 10, 2012 that the six architectural resources will be avoided by the project and a finding of "No Historic Properties Affected" was made.

The air quality analysis indicated the carbon monoxide (CO) concentrations are below the 8-hour National Ambient Air Quality Standard. No portion of this project is within a designated nonattainment or maintenance area for any of the air pollutants for which the USEPA has established standards. Accordingly, a conformity determination under 40 CFR Part 93 ("Determining Conformity of Federal Actions of Federal Actions to State or federal Implementation Plans") was not required.

Traffic noise abatement was analyzed at 26 receptors adjacent to the project. Fifteen noise walls were evaluated for the impacted receptors. Twelve were found feasible to construct and provided at least a 5 dBA traffic noise reduction. Ten were considered acoustically reasonable, as they achieved the IDOT noise reduction design goal of at least an 8 dBA traffic noise reduction. The ten noise walls that met the feasibility criterion and the noise reduction design goal criterion were evaluated for cost-effectiveness. Only one receptor site, the Saratoga School (CNE R47-3), was found to be economically reasonable and feasible for noise abatement measures. Predicted noise levels for the receptor would approach or exceed FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria of 67 dBA for schools. Providing a 14-foot high, approximately 369 feet long barrier in front of the school, adjacent to the existing right-of-way, provided at least a 5 dBA traffic noise reduction and achieved the IDOT noise reduction design goal of at least an 8 dBA. However, the School Board decided against constructing a noise wall in front of the school and therefore it is not proposed for this project.

The proposed improvement is expected to require the removal of approximately 663 trees of six inches or greater in size. Most are adjacent to or within proposed right-of way purchases along Illinois Route 47 and its side streets.

Tree replacement is based on the IDOT D&E – 18 policy, which recommends the replacement of isolated trees or small groups of trees within the project ROW to the extent practical. If bare root or balled and burlapped trees are used for replacement plantings, a minimum ratio of 1:1 is recommended for the number of trees planted to the number of trees intended to be established. If seedlings are used, a minimum ratio of 3:1 is recommended for the number of trees planted to the number of trees intended to be established. Replacement trees should be planted in suitable locations as close as practical to the removal site. Protection and care of existing trees and shrubs which remain within the project limits will be provided in accordance with Section 201 of the IDOT *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, which will be included in the construction contract documents.

The project was coordinated with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The following federally listed species are noted as occurring in Grundy and Kendall Counties (March 2012). The eastern prairie-fringed orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*) occurs within mesic to wet prairies and the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) occurs within caves and mines (winter habitat) and along small stream corridors with

well developed riparian woods (summer habitat). There is no suitable habitat for either of these species in the project area and therefore, the project will have no effect on these two species.

Suitable habitat for state threatened and endangered species is present for one listed species, the slippershell mussel (*Alasmidonta viridis*), within the project corridor. Five live specimens of the slippershell were collected during the 2007 survey at the Illinois Route 47 crossing of Valley Run. The widening of Illinois Route 47 at this location will impact the mussel. A commitment has been made to submit an Incidental Take Permit to IDNR and to resurvey the area before construction. In addition to the survey at Valley Run Creek, mussel surveys will be conducted at Saratoga Creek, Lisbon Creek, and West Aux Sable Creek. If the slippershell is present the mussels will be relocated to a site unaffected by the project.

Nine jurisdictional wetlands were identified within the project corridor. The total area of jurisdictional wetlands within the project corridor is approximately 1.96 acres. The wetlands range from 0.01 acres to 1.21 acres in size. Of the nine delineated wetlands within the project corridor, five would be directly affected. These wetland sites occur adjacent to the highway and will be filled for roadways and grading for drainage and storm water conveyance and storage. Wetland impacts related to roadway construction will include vegetation removal, placement of clean fill, and changes to the wetland. The proposed improvements would impact 0.21 acres of wetland.

Mitigation for wetland impacts will follow the IDOT's *Wetland Action Plan*, as approved by the IDNR. State mitigation ratios are determined by the size of the impact (over or under 0.5 acres) and the location of the mitigation site (on-site, off-site, out-of-basin). The project corridor is being processed as a Programmatic Action and requires a wetland compensation plan and coordination with the IDNR. The compensation plan for this proposed project will be to purchase or utilize credits from wetland banks. Wetland impacts resulting from the project will be mitigated at the IDOT Morris Wetland Bank or other local wetland banks dependent upon the availability of wetland mitigation credits. The impacted wetlands are within the Illinois River Basin in the Rock Island District. Off-site mitigation ratios (1.5:1) are required. A total of 0.21 acres will be affected, requiring 0.32 acres of mitigation.

A Preliminary Environmental Site Assessment (PESA) was completed for the proposed improvements on March 30, 2012 by the Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS). The PESA evaluated 72 sites for the potential presence of special waste. Each of these 72 sites would be impacted with the construction of the proposed improvements. The majority of these sites were agricultural. Thirty-six of the 72 sites had identified Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) that may be indicative of releases or potential releases of hazardous substances on, at, in, or to the proposed project. Twenty-four of the remaining sites were associated with de minimis conditions, and 12 sites did not contain RECs or de minimis conditions. The PESA also indicated that no sites in the project area are currently listed in the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Information System (CERCLIS). One site, a vacant lot on the east side of Illinois Route 47 between Airport Road and Nelson Road (Site 2561-59) is an Archived CERCLIS site; the site once contained anhydrous ammonia above-ground storage tanks (ASTs) that have since been removed. A CERCLA site investigation found that soil impacts are not probable at this site.

Further environmental studies, specifically, a Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI), will be conducted if the proposed improvements require excavation adjacent to a property identified with a REC or requires excavation, including subsurface utility relocation, on a property with an easement. Special waste issues that may arise in the construction phase will be managed in accordance with the "IDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction and Supplemental Specifications and Recurring Special Provisions." Once the nature and extent of involvements are known and the areas of contamination are determined, those soils found to be contaminated will be managed and disposed of in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations and in a manner that will protect human health and the environment. The quantities to be disposed of are not expected to have a substantial effect on landfill capacity.

The PESA also indicated that many buildings in the project area may contain asbestos-containing material (ACM); if building modification or demolition will occur due to the project, ACM testing should be performed.

The project does not involve any lands using Land Water Conservation (LAWCON) Section 6(f) funds, any Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Act lands, or any publically owned, publically used parks, recreation areas or wildlife/waterfowl refuges (Section 4(f)). However, there is one Illinois Natural Area (INAI) Site. Valley Run is a part of the Aux Sable Creek INAI site in Grundy and Kendall Counties which includes the main stem of Aux Sable Creek. The project corridor crosses Valley Run south of Minooka Road. The designated area consists of approximately 32 miles of stream. Its natural area status is based on the presence of the slippershell mussel and the greater redhorse (state listed species) and 17 native species of mussels and 48 species of fish (high quality stream). Valley Run is rated under the Biological Stream Rating System as a B stream for both diversity and integrity.

The proposed improvements will convert a small portion of the natural area (stream and adjacent riparian corridor) to highway uses. In addition to the expansion and the replacement of the current Illinois Route 47 bridge at Valley Run there is proposed ditch realignment and grading along both sides of Minooka Road. The existing ditches currently discharge into Valley Run Creek (INAI site) and will continue to do so after this improvement is constructed. There will be in stream work along the east side of Valley Run Creek for this ditch work. The existing bridge at Minooka Road over Valley Run will remain and there will be no in stream work at the bridge.

It is anticipated that this project will result in the disturbance of one or more acres of total land area. Accordingly, it is subject to the requirement for a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for stormwater discharges from the construction site. Permit coverage for the project will be obtained either under the IEPA General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Site Activities (NPDES Permit No. 1LR10) or under an individual NPDES permit. Requirements applicable to such a permit will be followed, including the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. Such a plan shall identify potential sources of pollution which may reasonably be expected to affect the quality of stormwater discharges from the construction site. It shall also describe and ensure the implementation of practices that will be used to reduce the pollutants in discharges associated with construction site activity and to assure compliance with the terms of the permit.

An indirect and cumulative impact analysis indicated changes to adjacent land or land use as a result of the proposed project may occur. With regard to the proposed improvements, areas of farmland would be expected to change to industrial or commercial / retail land use, depending on local zoning laws, development trends in the Grundy County and Kendall County area and the national economy. The Illinois Route 47 construction is expected to provide improved access to the area, potentially enhancing the likelihood of development in the area already planned for development. The proposed action would cause only minor impacts to air quality, natural resources and water quality. The indirect impacts hinge on construction of the proposed project and the associated developments which would not occur without the proposed improvement. The cumulative effects of actions taken will primarily be those associated with new development which will occur based on improved access of undeveloped properties in the vicinity of the proposed project. Where impacts to environmental resources cannot be avoided, the actions will follow the applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations.

The project was presented to the public for comment at a public hearing on June 26, 2012 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the Saratoga Elementary School located at 4040 N. Division Street (Illinois Route 47), Morris, Illinois. There were 64 people in attendance. There were no substantial comments generated at the meeting. The comment period ended July 6, 2012. Forty-nine comment sheets, letters, emails, and meeting minutes were documented. The top five comment topics included Saratoga School access items, statements of support for the project, median openings/access, and side road improvements. The issues and comments raised were addressed in a letter response to their comment, and in the errata to the Environmental Assessment.

The FHWA has determined that this project will not have any significant impact on the human environment. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is based on the attached Environmental Assessment (EA) and errata which have been independently evaluated by the FHWA and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the need, environmental issues, and impacts of the proposed project and appropriate mitigation measures. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required. The FHWA takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the attached EA and supporting documents.

7/19/12

Date of Approval

Jon Paul Kohler

For FHWA