

Stakeholder Meeting Summary

Thursday, October 18, 2007
Whiteside County Natural Area Guardians (NAG)
Odell Community Center
Morrison,, Illinois

Project: FAP 309 (US 30)
Section (20-1, 17R, 16, 15, 110) PE 1
Whiteside County
Job No. P-92-107-07

Attendees:

Fred Turk
Carolyn Keller
Tim Keller
Robert Stone
Robert Nowak
Shirley Nowak
Charlene J. Knudten
Dan Eads
Davis Anvrin
Jim Davis
Sarah Bull
Linda Boardsen
Dale Belt
Elisa Rideout
Dave Harrison

Project Study Group:

Becky Marruffo (IDOT)
Dr. Cassandra Rodgers (IDOT)
Jon Estrem (HR Green)
Bridgett Jacquot (Volkert & Associates, LLC)
Mary Lou Goodpaster (Goodpaster-Jamison, Inc.)
Shelia A. Hudson (Hudson and Associates, LLC)

Handouts (see attachment):

Power Point- US 30 Environmental Impact Statement and
Phase I Design Report

Meeting Purpose

Members of the US 30 Project study team met with Whiteside County Natural Area Guardians (NAG) representatives to present an overall project update. The presentation included results from the feasibility study, highlights of the next steps (Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) study and Design Report); an overview of the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) policy and process; the status of the Community Advisory Group (CAG), Project Study Group (PSG), and Stakeholder meetings; as well as other public outreach activities.

Listed below is an outline of the PowerPoint presentation:

- Results from the Corridor Feasibility Study
- Federal Requirements for Next Phase (NEPA, EIS and CSS Policies)
- Environmental Criteria
- Project Timeline
- Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)– PSG Role and CAG Role
- CAG & PSG Meetings
- Stakeholder Briefing Highlights
- Key Issues from Meetings
- Other Public Outreach Activities

A map which highlighted some of the environmental issues already identified within the project study area was also presented.

Study Team Presentation

Becky Marruffo opened the meeting by introducing the US 30 study team, and expressing IDOT's appreciation to the organization for agreeing to meet with the study team regarding the project. She went on to briefly explain IDOT's new approach called Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) which engages stakeholders in the entire design process.

Jon Estrem and Bridgett Jacquot presented a US 30 PowerPoint presentation. During the presentation they explained FHWA and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements and process. Jon gave a detailed description of CSS and explained how the process will be implemented into the EIS/Design study. In addition, PSG and CAG roles were highlighted. Bridgett and Mary Lou noted potential environmental issues based on federal criteria, and explained that the study team will assess these issues in-depth as a part of the study. They both expressed the study team's desire to work closely with the Whiteside County Natural Area Guardians to develop a comprehensive document.

Bridgett highlighted the most recent exercises and activities the CAG has participated in to assist the PSG with developing a Problem Statement, defining the Purpose and Need, and developing corridor alternatives. She went on to discuss key issues raised from the first round of stakeholder meetings and other public outreach activities.

Becky thanked the organization for their time and encouraged them to stay involved with the project.

Comments/ Issues/ Questions

Comments:

Several members of the NAG expressed concerns about the process and what was truly driving the project. It was their understanding that developers and individuals representing economic development agencies were truly driving the effort.

Dr. Rodgers explained that federal guidelines prohibit the department from allowing economic development to be the only factor for proposing a new roadway system. There are other factors and criteria that must be reviewed and analyzed as part of the report before the FHWA will approve a proposed improvement.

Bridgett acknowledged the concerns about the process and went on to explain that both the Federal Highway Administration and the Department of Transportation will monitor our process to make sure it is objective and defensible. She reiterated the purpose of the Feasibility Study, and how the study positioned the project for this phase. Bridgett also explained the importance of gathering more in-depth traffic data, historical data, comprehensive land use and development plans, design and engineering plans, as well as environmental information to draft an Environmental Impact Statement that leads to a Record of Decision (ROD) during this phase.

Becky elaborated on the CAG process, expectations, and roles. She explained that members of the CAG will be involved throughout the entire process – that includes through construction and maintenance. Shelia Hudson concurred with Becky's comments about the CAG process. She went on to share with the group the make-up of CAG interest groups who serve as representatives, such as farmers, homeowners, historical groups, bicyclist, educators, civic groups as well as a representative from the NAG just to name a few.

Elisa Rideout (NAG/ CAG representative), stated she was not sure that the group supports a 4-lane highway or agrees that the project is truly needed. She went on to say that she thinks the project is more politically motivated than anything. However, since the project is moving forward she would hope that the project need assessment is based on defensible traffic data, and not qualitative judgements by project proponents. In addition, she requested that the team be sensitive to areas they can protect.

Mary Lou Goodpaster assured members that the Project Study Group (PSG) will adhere to all federal and state requirements. In addition, the CSS process will provide venues and forums for the public to be heard and/or voice their opinions as the project progress.

Questions:

Q: NAG - Does the study team have a comprehensive development plan for the area?

A: Team Response - Jon responded no; however, the purpose of the study team meeting with various county and city representatives, developers, and other interest groups is to hopefully learn more about their short and long term development plans for the area. The information gathered will be shared with the CAG, PSG, and TAG (if needed) and will be incorporated, as necessary, into the environmental impact statement. He went on to express the importance of CSS and that nothing can be done without considering the community's context as part of the CSS process.

Q: NAG – The Feasibility Study pushed for a four lane highway, will the study team consider that to be the end result?

A: Team Response – Becky concurred the previous study did propose a possible four lane highway and potential alignments were identified. However, she went on to explain that the study was a preliminary study scoped to determine a need (if any) and examine preliminary data. This phase will take us through detailed analyses to identify alignment location, number of lanes, and environmental impacts. The project team also stressed that the No Action Alternative will be carried throughout this process, and that it is possible to have a Record of Decision that identifies a new alignment through some areas, while leaving the current highway in others.

Q: NAG - How can the public learn more about the process? Who will make the final decision?

A: Team Response – Becky responded, the public can always go to the web site (at the time the site was being revised) to learn more about the project. She also stated that the PSG will make recommendations to the Department for final approval.

Q: NAG - How will the study team decide on consensus?

A: Team Response – It’s a nebulous process that requires a lot of monitoring, reviewing, documenting and auditing to check ourselves. This is one of the important elements of CSS.

Q: NAG – Will the Lyndon Prairie Nature Preserve be safe?

A: Team Response – Bridgett responded that the study team considers any alignment that impacts the Lyndon Prairie Nature Preserve to be fatally flawed. The study team will not recommend any alternative that impacts the nature preserve.

Q: NAG – Will global warming have its own category in the environmental impact statement?

A: Team Response – Bridgett stated Energy is the area where global warming will be considered within the Environmental Impact Statement.

Q: NAG – How long is this process?

A: Team Response- Bridgett stated as late as 2010 for the completion of Phase I.

Q: NAG – What are the qualifications of the persons conducting the inventories of natural resources? Are biologists a part of the process?

A: Team Response - The natural resource field investigations are conducted by scientists from the Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS). These scientists include specialists in ornithology, ichthyology and aquatic studies, botany, wetlands, and other areas. Their investigations will be summarized in the environmental impact statement and referenced. The qualifications of each of the contributing scientists are provided on the INHS website.

Q: NAG – Has the study team contacted landowners/ property owners to inform them that their property may be impacted?

A: Team Response – Jon responded yes and no. The project has not reached the point where property impacts have been identified. Once potential alignments have been identified property owners will be contacted. However, during the Feasibility Study and during our first public information meeting the public was informed about the study area boundaries. He also mentioned that teams of archaeologists and biologists completed the environmental inventories for the entire study area this summer, and that property owners were notified of these surveys.

Q: NAG – How is the study team assessing traffic data or determining traffic patterns?

A: Team Response – Jon responded most of the data will come from the Department’s Division of Traffic Safety.

Q: NAG – Will the study team consider local fender-bender and commuter accidents in the crash analysis for this project?

A: Team Response – Accident data for the entire study area have been provided by IDOT. The study team will analyze all of these data as part of the project crash analysis.



Howard R. Green Company

AGENDA
October 18, 2007
Whiteside County Natural Area Guardians



- 1. Welcome & Introductions**
- 2. US 30 Project**
- 3. US 30 Corridor Feasibility Study**
- 4. Environmental Impact Statement & Phase I Design Report**
- 5. Project Timeline**
- 6. Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)**
- 7. Stakeholder Briefings**
- 8. Other Public Outreach Activities**



Illinois Department of Transportation

US 30 PRESENTATION

Whiteside County

Natural Area Guardians

Odell Community Center

Morrison, IL

Thursday, October 18th, 2007

VOLKERT
& ASSOCIATES, INC.



Howard R. Green Company

US 30 Project

This project proposes 4 lane improvements to US 30 in Whiteside County Illinois, from the junction of IL 136 near Fulton to the junction of IL 40 in Rock Falls.



Illinois Department of Transportation

The US 30 Corridor Feasibility Study determined there was a need to:

- *Improve Regional Mobility*
- *Accommodate Land Use Planning Goals*
- *Address Local System Deficiencies and Safety*



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NEXT STEP

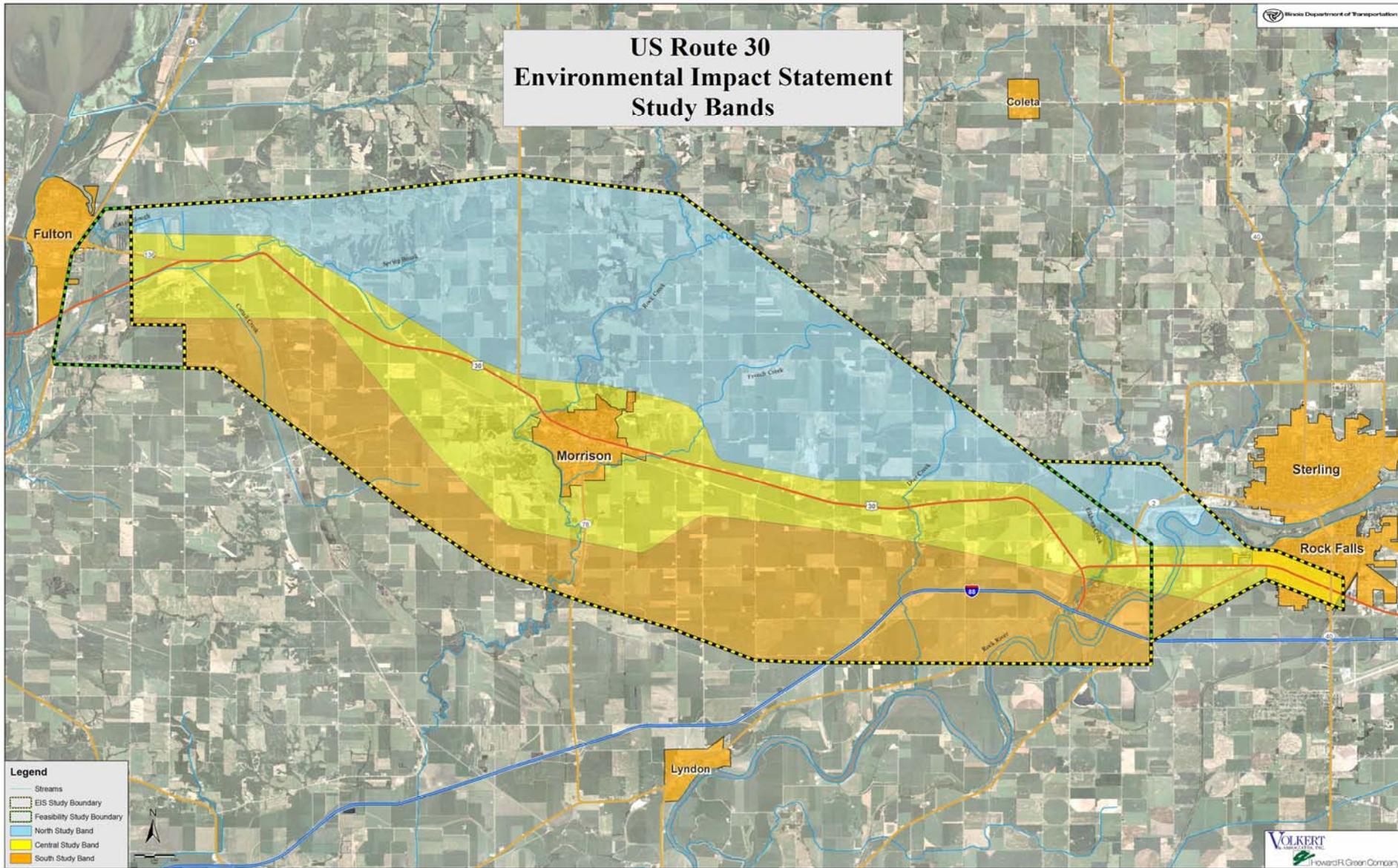
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND PHASE I DESIGN REPORT

Using Context Sensitive Solutions Process



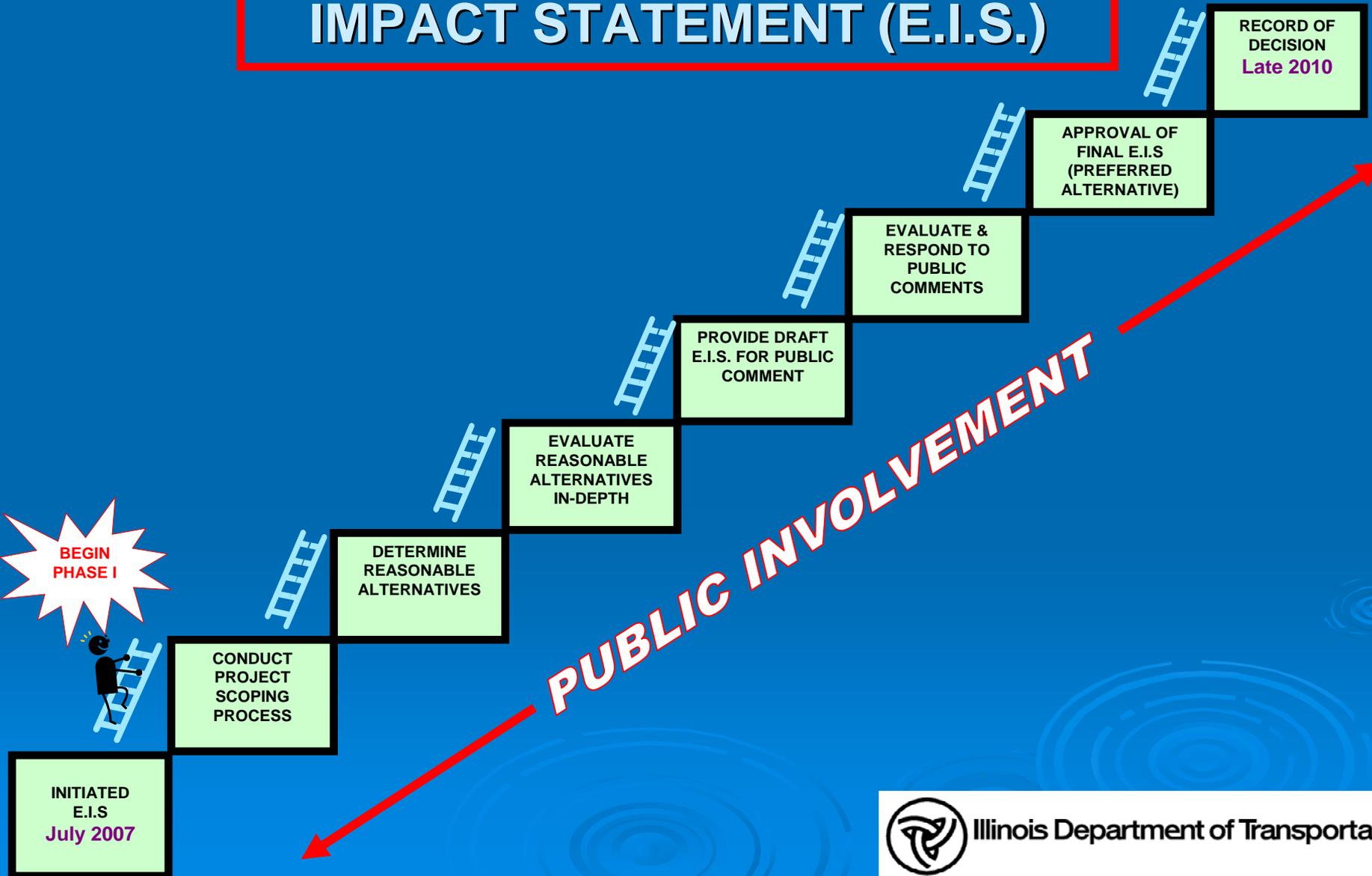
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US 30 Study Bands



PHASE I ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (E.I.S.)

**COMPLETE
DESIGN
REPORT**



ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA

Social/Economic

Historical/Archaeological

Noise

Natural Resources

Water Quality/Resources

Flood Plains

Nature Preserves

Endangered & Threatened Species

Mitigation Measures

Construction Impacts

Secondary & Cumulative Impacts

Agricultural

Air Quality

Energy

Special Waste

Parks

Natural Areas

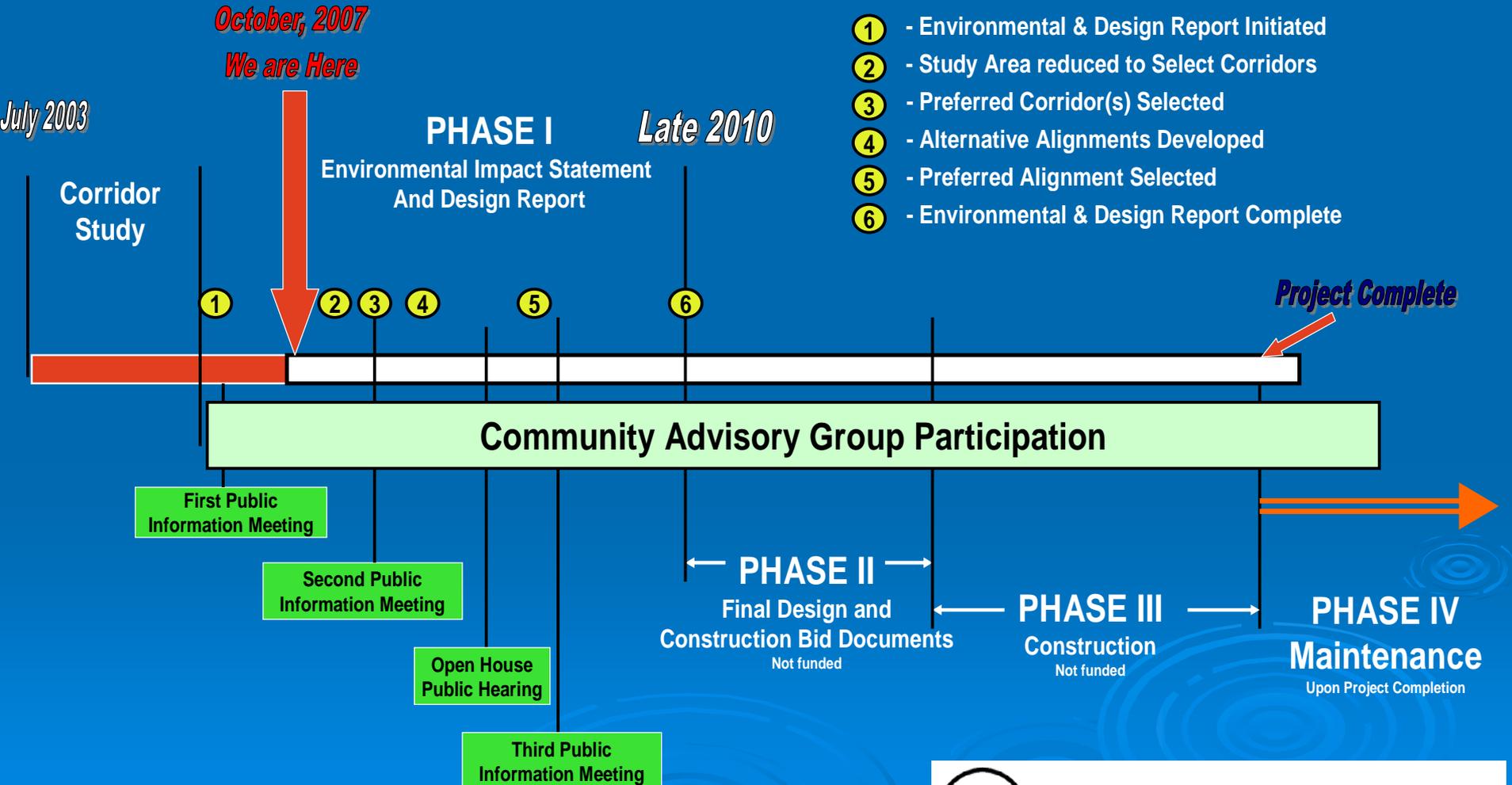
Special Lands

Wetlands

Permits

Visual Quality

Project Timeline



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

CONTEXT SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS

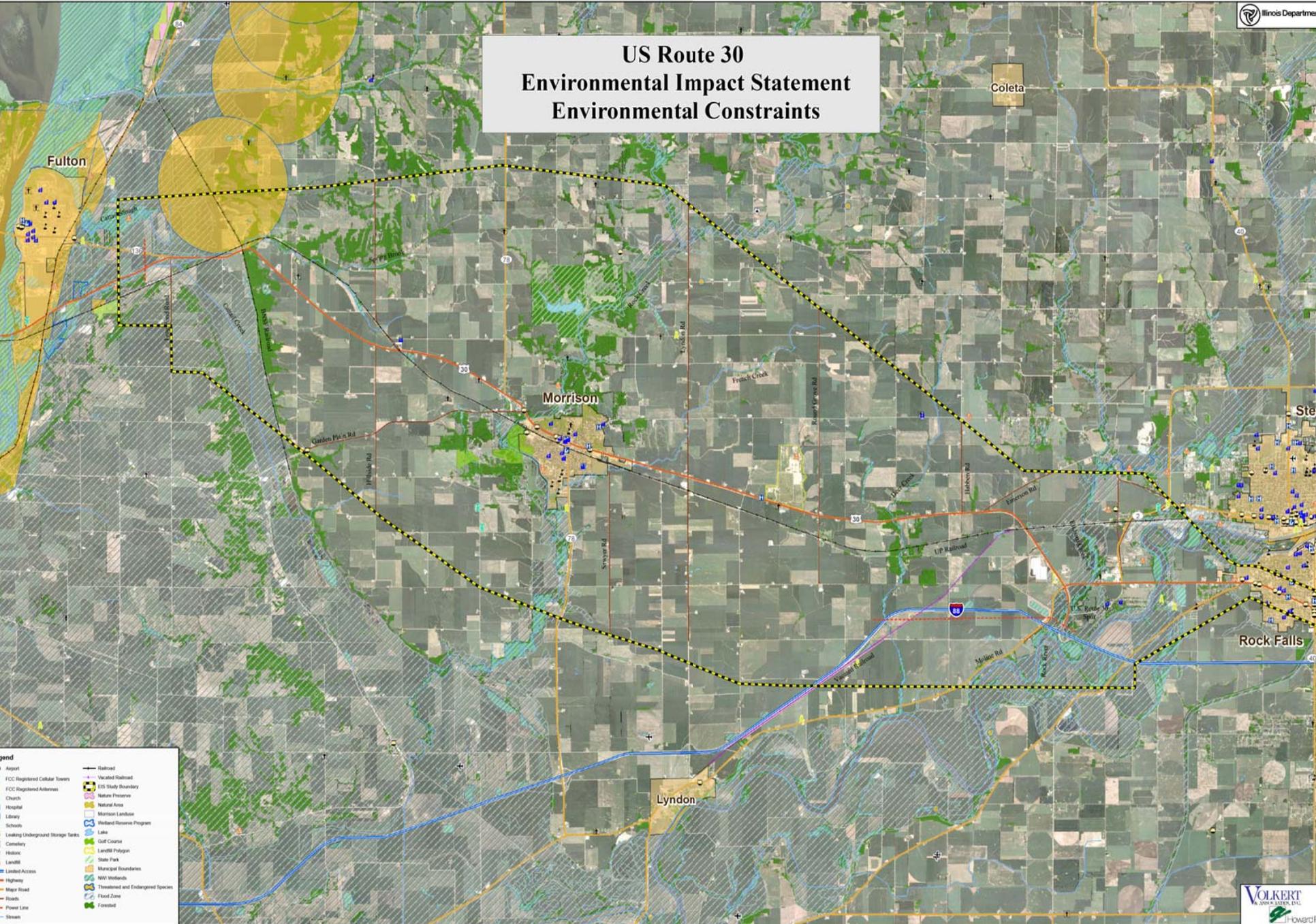
PROJECT STUDY GROUP'S ROLE

- Identify Stakeholders and assure representation of all entities in the Public Involvement process.
- Utilize the problem statement developed by the Community Advisory Group to develop the Project Purpose and Need Statement.
- Utilize the information gained by the Community Advisory Group along with Environmental and Engineering Data to guide the project decisions.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP'S ROLE

- Identify criteria that reflect the ideas and interests of the community (e.g. safety, agriculture).
- Develop a problem statement.
- Participate in exercises to visualize and suggest engineering and aesthetic concepts for enhancing the project.
- Provide ideas and information to be directly used in the development of project documents, the study bands, corridors and alignments of potential improvement.

US Route 30 Environmental Impact Statement Environmental Constraints



- Legend**
- Airport
 - FCC Registered Cellular Towers
 - FCC Registered Antennas
 - Church
 - Hospital
 - Laneway
 - Schools
 - Leaking Underground Storage Tanks
 - Cemetery
 - Historic
 - Landfill
 - Limited Access
 - Highway
 - Major Road
 - Roads
 - Power Line
 - Stream
 - Railroad
 - Vacated Railroad
 - EIS Study Boundary
 - National Preserve
 - National Zone
 - Morrison Landbase
 - Wildland Stewards Program
 - Lake
 - Golf Course
 - Landfill Program
 - State Park
 - Municipal Boundaries
 - WVI Wetlands
 - Threatened and Endangered Species
 - Flood Zone
 - Forested

CAG & PSG MEETINGS

DEVELOPMENT OF CORRIDORS

- Provided CAG with engineering & environmental criteria in order to develop corridor alternatives
- CAG developed corridor alternatives on blank maps
- PSG will take these corridors and refine based on a Corridor Alternatives Screening Analysis, which includes Critical Flaw Screen & Environmental & Engineering Criteria Screen

STAKEHOLDER BRIEFINGS

- We have met with several groups thus far including US 30 Coalition, Several Legislators, County and Township Personnel, Business Owners, the State Park and City Councils.
- Input Important to Identify Community Concerns
- We will continue to update stakeholders throughout the length of the project



Key Issues from Meetings

- Land Acquisition
- Bypass or No Bypass in Morrison
- Project Funding
- Did this backtrack?
- Effects on Businesses

Other Public Outreach Activities:

- *Public Information Meetings*
- *New Project Web Site*
- *New Project Hotline 1-866-ROUTE30*
- *Project Newsletters and Fact Sheets*



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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ONGOING SUPPORT !**

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