



ILLINOIS ROUTE 159

Issue 3 - Fall 2006

NEWSLETTER



COMMUNITY HELPS SHAPE ILLINOIS ROUTE 159 IMPROVEMENTS

*Public and Project Team Members Work
Together on Project*

Illinois Route 159 is a major north-south thoroughfare running through the City of Collinsville, Illinois. Collinsville is a main street community rich in history and tradition with close proximity to the amenities of the metropolitan St. Louis area. Illinois Route 159 is a critical thoroughfare in the community and any potential growth of the City is dependent on safe smooth traffic operations. Studies show traffic will reach gridlock without necessary improvements.

Any potential improvement to Illinois Route 159 must reflect full and complete consideration to all the factors involved. To accomplish this, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is using an approach for involving the community in the project studies. This summer a Community Advisory Group (CAG) was formed to help shape project decisions.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

In the coming weeks, residents and business owners in Collinsville may see IDOT's survey consultant performing field work to identify the underground location of various utilities. The consultant utilizes special equipment to locate underground water, sewer, telephone and other utilities so this information can be used during plan development. For more information, please visit the project website at

www.dot.il.gov/ilroute159.

IN THIS ISSUE

This newsletter provides an update on the Community Advisory Group's activities, project engineering and environmental studies, as well as information on how you can get involved in the project.

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The CAG is comprised of members of the Collinsville community as well as users of the roadway and serves as a conduit of information to and from various stakeholders, organizations, and members of the community. The City of Collinsville recognizes the need for improvements and has joined the CAG in the planning process. The Project Team that is responsible for the decisions and development of the overall study uses the input and feedback of the CAG, in addition to the engineering and environmental studies, as it develops the project design

The CAG has had three meetings including their first gathering in July. The following articles are a brief summary of the significant accomplishments of the previous CAG meetings.



Illinois Department of Transportation
www.dot.il.gov/ilroute159

A MESSAGE FROM IDOT:

In July of 2005, the Project Team started working on the Illinois Route 159 project. Over the past 12-15 months, IDOT's staff and consultants have had the opportunity to meet with and work with members of the Collinsville community on the transportation issues relating to Illinois Route 159. I would like to thank the members of the community who have volunteered their time and talent by participating in the public involvement meetings; your efforts will help make this project beneficial for the City of Collinsville and the users of this highway. I would also like to encourage continued involvement by the community as we work together toward the project alternatives.

Sincerely,
Mary C. Lamie, PE
Deputy Director of Highways
Region Five Engineer

CAG DEFINES PROBLEM STATEMENT

One of the CAG's first tasks was to develop a problem statement. A problem statement is a concise narrative, prepared at the start of a project to define the problem to be solved.

To help shape the CAG's discussions, the project team shared several recurring comments received from the community through previous outreach efforts such as the stakeholder meetings and public involvement meeting. Some examples include the community's interest in preserving the character and aesthetics of downtown Collinsville, improving safety and congestion, and maintaining access to businesses and residences during construction. The CAG was asked to keep these comments in mind as they developed the problem statement.

As a result of this exercise, the CAG reached consensus on the following problem statement, which will serve as the primary focus for future meetings:

"The transportation problem in the City of Collinsville along Illinois Route 159 is the flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic and safety within a highly urbanized and historically significant section of the community that promotes and sustains economic development and redevelopment of the Central Business District."

This statement will be used in the development of the Project's Purpose and Need Statement.



CAG Works on Roadway Alternatives

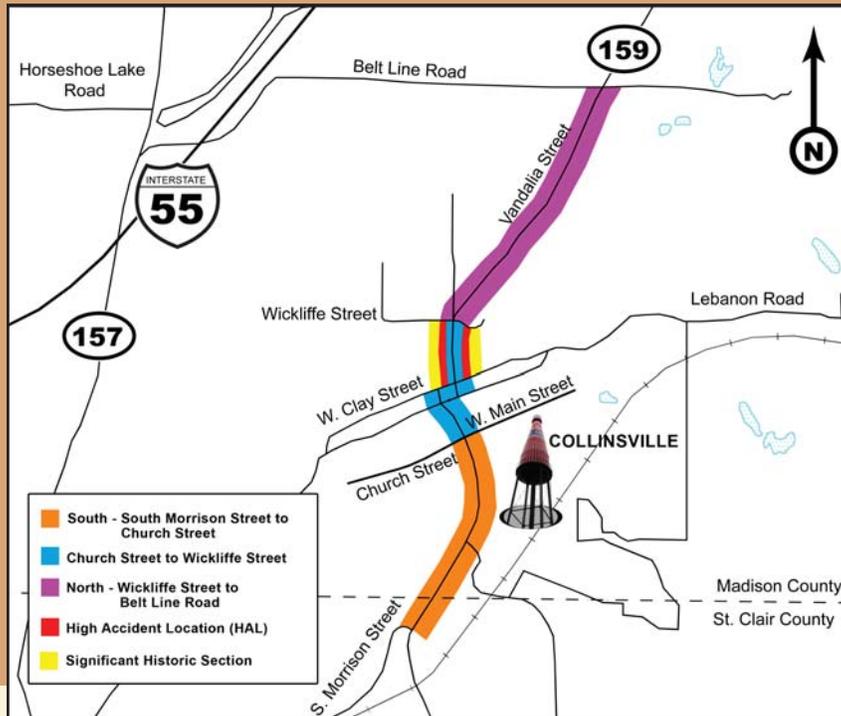


CAG ASSISTS PROJECT TEAM WITH ALTERNATIVES

The CAG has completed two meetings focused on helping the project study team determine what type of roadway alternatives should be studied. Because the area surrounding the project varies from residential to commercial to a central business district, the CAG first divided the project into the following three segments:

- **South – South Morrison Street to Church Street**
- **North – Wickliffe Street to Belt Line Road**
- **Church Street to Wickliffe Street, which has both a residential section and commercial section**

The CAG looked at various potential roadway features to be included in the separate segments. The group discussed possible number of lanes, lane widths, medians, bicycle accommodations, sidewalks, and aesthetic features within each segment. The CAG then recommended roadway features for each segment to be studied as alternatives for the roadway improvement.



THE ONGOING STUDY

For over a year the project team has studied the transportation problem on Illinois Route 159. The initial ground surveys were performed and completed in March 2006. Additionally, data collection activities have been ongoing with the collection of traffic data and accident history along the route. This data now reflects and identifies specific areas of concern and confirms that Illinois Route 159 has existing and future traffic volumes exceeding acceptable levels for the safe and efficient flow of traffic throughout the project limits.

Environmental experts are studying the impacts that the potential roadway improvement may have on the environment. Noise and air quality studies are currently underway. IDOT is also coordinating with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and Collinsville's Historic Preservation Commission to identify historic properties along the route. The project team has also performed an inventory of parks and recreational areas along the route for consideration during the development of alternatives.

IDOT plans, designs, and constructs projects in three phases. This project is currently in the first phase, the preliminary design and environmental study. This portion of the project is anticipated to be complete by the end of summer 2008 and will result in a decision on the roadway improvements that will meet transportation and community needs. This recommendation will then be carried forward into final design and construction.





WHAT'S NEXT?

Project Team Coordination

The Project Team, which includes the Illinois Department of Transportation, Volkert & Associates, Inc., and Bernardin Lochmueller & Associates, Inc., will take input from the CAG on the roadway segments and begin developing preliminary plans for the roadway alternatives. These alternatives will be shared with the CAG to gain additional input and feedback. After viable alternatives have been developed in coordination with the CAG; the Project Team will coordinate a public involvement meeting so the general public can review and provide input on the alternatives. It is anticipated that the next public involvement meeting will be held in Summer of 2007.



CONTACT INFORMATION

You may submit questions or comments on this project by writing us at:

***IL Route 159 Project Team
c/o Volkert and Associates, Inc.
#2 Eastport Plaza Drive, Suite 220
Collinsville, IL 62234***

Or you may submit questions or comments on the project website at:
www.dot.il.gov/ilroute159



Illinois Department of Transportation