

**Illinois NEPA/404 Merger Meeting
Day 1 – Downstate Projects
June 9, 2010**

**FHWA – Illinois Division Office
Training Room
3250 Executive Park Drive
Springfield, IL 62703**

9:00 am – 12 noon

- Eldamain Road (District 3, Kendall County)
 - Information – Alternatives to be Considered
- US 45 from Eldorado to IL 141 (District 9, Saline, Gallatin and White Counties)
 - Concurrence - Preferred Alternative
- US 51 – Pana to Centralia (District 7, Christian, Shelby, Fayette, Marion, Clinton, Jefferson and Washington Counties)
 - Concurrence – Alternatives to be Carried Forward
- Discuss status of NEPA-404 merger projects

**Illinois NEPA/404 Merger Meeting
Day 2 – Chicago Region Projects
June 11, 2010**

**IDOT – Region 1 Office
Training Room A – Basement Level
201 West Center Court
Schaumburg, Illinois 60196**

9:00 am – 12 noon

- US 45 from IL Rte 132 to IL Rte 173 (Lake County)
 - Project Status Update
- Pershing Road Realignment and Belvidere Street Bridge Extension in Waukegan (Lake County)
 - Concurrence - Purpose and Need
- IL Route 131, Russell Road to Sunset Avenue (Lake County)
 - Concurrence - Purpose and Need

12 noon – 1:30 pm (Lunch Break)

1:30 – 4:00 pm

- 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (CREATE Program, Cook County)
 - Project Introduction and Scoping
- IL 47 from Reed Road to US 14 (McHenry County)
 - Concurrence – Purpose and Need
 - Concurrence - Alternatives to be Carried Forward

NEPA/404 Merger Meeting
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NEPA/404 Merger Meeting Summary June 9, 2010

IDOT District 3, Kendall County Eldamain Road Environmental Assessment Information - Alternatives to be Considered

Topics Discussed: Alternatives Analysis and Proposed Methodology for Determining Indirect Impacts on Land Use

This was the third NEPA/404 presentation of this project. Concurrence on the Purpose and Need was received in May 2010. The purpose of the meeting was to present the alternatives analysis and the proposed methodology for determining indirect impacts on land use. The previous presentation was on February 10, 2010.

Alternatives Analysis Presentation

The project location and Purpose and Need were briefly reviewed. The purpose of the proposed action is to provide local system continuity, address local system deficiencies, improve local transportation and safety associated with the existing and future populations of Yorkville, Plano, and Kendall County, provide local access multi-modal transportation, and improve access for public facilities and emergency services. In addition, the projected population growth for the area and the CMAP facilities planning area (FPAs) map was presented. The FPAs guide where communities can extend sewer and offer centralized wastewater treatment. The project area is an area of planned growth.

A map of the environmental constraints in the project area was presented to show the presence of forest preserves, state parks, creeks and other sensitive areas.

Four alternatives (Alternative 1, 2, 3 and 4) including the No-Action Alternative were presented.

No-Action Alternative

The No-Action Alternative will not support the Purpose and Need because it will not provide local system continuity, will not address local system deficiencies, will not improve local transportation needs for Yorkville, Plano, and Kendall County populations, and will not improve access to public facilities and emergency services. The No-Action Alternative will not meet the Purpose and Need and assumes that other planned projects will be built. By 2030, increased congestion on IL 47 and Fox River Drive is anticipated. The cities of Yorkville and Plano expect between a 430% and 720% population growth between 2000 and 2030.

Alternative 1

Alternative 1 improves the existing alignment of Eldamain Road between US 34 and River Road and extends south from the existing Eldamain Road terminus at River Road to Pavillion Road at Fox Road. Pavillion Road extends from Fox Road, through a residential area, south to IL 71. It

then crosses IL 71 and follows Legion Road to East Highpoint Road, following East Highpoint Road to Lisbon Road. The alignment continues on Lisbon Road to Walker Road.

To provide system continuity, the existing roadway network including IL 71, Legion Road, East Highpoint Road, and Lisbon Road will need to be utilized to continue south. The circuitous nature of this route, which uses roadways through residential areas, does not result in the local system continuity needed to provide an effective local alternate to IL 47 and the associated reduction of congestion along the state route. For this reason, Alternative 1 will not improve access to public facilities and emergency services. Alternative 1 will not serve the existing and future growth planned for the area between Yorkville and Plano that is located to the west. Alternative 1 does not meet the project's Purpose and Need.

Alternative 2

Alternative 2 improves the existing alignment of Eldamain Road between US 34 and River Road and extends south from the existing Eldamain Road terminus at River Road to the top of the south riverbank, where the alignment curves to the southwest to align with Highpoint Road. The alignment generally continues along the existing Highpoint Road south to IL 71. Crossing IL 71, the alignment continues south and east on a new alignment to connect to Lisbon Road, continuing south ending the proposed improvement at Walker Road. Alternative 2 requires approximately 2.8 miles of new alignment and 3.7 miles of improvements to existing roadways. Alternatives 2a, 2b, and 2c are variations of Alternative 2 that refine the design in terms of minimizing environmental impacts and considering engineering design constraints.

This alignment is located between Yorkville and Plano and will serve the existing and future growth planned for the area as well as provide access to public facilities and emergency services.

Alternative 3

Alternative 3 includes improving the existing bridges across the Fox River and north-south roadways including Fox River Drive and IL 47. Currently, Fox River Drive is a two-lane roadway and bridge that crosses the Fox River south of Plano and IL 47 is a two-lane roadway with a bridge that crosses the Fox River in downtown Yorkville. Approximately five miles separates the existing bridges.

To facilitate movement of the projected 2030 traffic, IL 47 would need to be widened to a six-lane roadway between US 34 and IL 71. This would result in approximately 30 business and 25 residential relocations and would negatively affect the economic viability of the Yorkville downtown area.

To facilitate projected 2030 traffic, Fox River Drive and its bridge would need to be widened to a four-lane roadway. Widening Fox River Drive would result in residential and commercial displacements in the City of Plano, south of US 34. Fox River Drive currently has a winding alignment and is not a continuous north-south roadway between US 34 and Walker Road.

Furthermore, Fox River Drive is located on the far west side Kendall County and improving this existing roadway would not meet the Purpose and Need as it would not alleviate traffic congestion currently on IL 47 and would not accommodate the existing and planned growth that

will occur in the area between Plano and Yorkville. This alternative would not provide access to public facilities and emergency services or serve the existing and future growth planned for the Cities of Plano and Yorkville. Alternative 3 does not meet the project's Purpose and Need.

Alternative 4

Alternative 4 includes a new road between Eldamain Road and IL 47. Alternative 4 would begin at Beecher Road at US 34 and continue south crossing River Road, the Fox River, and Fox Road. The alignment would curve to the southwest to meet with Highpoint Road, where the alignment would then curve to the south to meet with Lisbon Road ending at Walker Road.

This alternative would serve as a bypass of IL 47 and would reduce existing and future traffic congestion on IL 47 through Yorkville. However, because it will be located in Yorkville one mile west of IL 47 and almost 4 miles east of the Fox River Drive bridge, it will operate as a municipal bridge, serving drivers in Yorkville. It will not serve the City of Plano. Its in-town location and the circuitous nature of its alignment between US 34 and Lisbon Road will not provide the cross-county system continuity in the Purpose and Need for the project. As this alignment is located within Yorkville, it will provide access to public facilities and emergency services within Yorkville but not the City of Plano. Alternative 4 does not meet the project's Purpose and Need.

Alternatives Meeting Purpose and Need

Alternative 2 meets the projects Purpose and Need and utilizes the existing right-of-way of Eldamain Road, Highpoint Road, and Lisbon Road. Alternative 2 and associated variations of Alternative 2 (including Alternative 2A, 2B, and 2C) were developed. Alternative 2a was developed to provide a more desirable 90 degree intersection with IL 71 to the east of the Highpoint Road intersection. Alternative 2b was developed to provide a 90 degree intersection with IL 71 to the west of the Highpoint Road intersection. Alternative 2c was a further refinement that reduced potential home displacements in a new subdivision south of IL 71. It also adjusted the alignment between Fox River and Fox Road to reduce impacts to a wooded ravine.

Each variation of Alternative 2 was evaluated for potential environmental impacts to socio-economics, agriculture, cultural, natural resources, water resources, wetlands, noise, special waste sites, and special lands. For analysis purposes a 150 feet right-of-way width was assumed. Alternative 2c had the least amount of environmental impacts.

Agency Questions and Answers on Alternative Analysis

After the discussion of alternatives FHWA (Fuller) asked if the number of alternatives is appropriate indicating that the range of alternatives was developed to try and achieve the Purpose and Need. USEPA replied that a sufficient number of alternatives had been included.

USEPA (Westlake) questioned the frequency of flooding at Fox River Drive and if improvements can be made to solve the problem and provide better access. Kendall County indicated that flooding doesn't occur at Fox River Drive bridge but does occur at the Big Rock Creek bridge. HLR (Lukas) explained that existing flooding issues may have independent utility and would be best considered as a separate project.

USEPA (West) asked if Alternative 4 (Beecher Road) is dropped due to not meeting the Purpose and Need due to continuity. HLR (Lukas) explained that Alternative 4 would not serve Plano and would only help Yorkville as a local crossing. USEPA (Westlake) asked if Yorkville plans to build this roadway. HLR (Lukas) stated that CMAP does not have it in their 2040 plan.

USEPA (Westlake) asked if any consideration was given to using Alternative 4 with a leg of Alternative 2 south of IL 71. USEPA (West) questioned whether serving Plano was in the Purpose and Need. HLR (Lukas) stated that the Purpose and Need includes: “improve local transportation and safety associated with the existing and future populations of Yorkville, Plano and southern Kendall County”.

Rock Island Corps (Betker) was in agreement with the alternatives presented as the Purpose and Need states serving continuity and agrees that the ones eliminated do not serve the Purpose and Need. USEPA (Westlake) brought up that last February the need for an Individual Permit was discussed. Rock Island Corps (Betker) stated that there is a new permit being developed to address impacts of bridges in rivers, but nothing has been released yet.

HLR (Lukas) stated that wetland impacts have been reviewed and there is a possibility of reducing the wetland impacts further. Rock Island Corps (Betker) stated impacted wetland acres are estimates and therefore the type of permit that would be required has not yet been determined.

FHWA (Fuller) stated that we will come back in September to get concurrence on alternatives to carry forward and the preferred alternative. The next item discussed was proposed methodology for determining indirect impacts on land use.

Propose Methodology for Determining Indirect Impacts on Land Use

The FHWA requested a methodology to be used to determine indirect impacts on land use. The potential for indirect impacts related to the proposed project are due to the proposed improvements in accessibility and mobility.

All comprehensive land use and transportation plans, including Kendall County Transportation Plan (2008), Kendall County Future Land Use and Transportation Plan (2005), Yorkville 2008 Comprehensive Plan, Plano Comprehensive Plan (2005), in the project area include an extension of Eldamain Road across the Fox River. There are other large-scaled planned projects including the Prairie Parkway and IL 47 add-lanes project that may contribute to induce land development in the study area.

Six different approaches were evaluated for forecasting indirect impacts on land use based on the NCHRP 25-25 “*Forecasting Indirect Lands Use Effects on Transportation Projects*”, December 2007, including:

- 1) Planning Judgment – analyzing land use impacts based on judgement of professional planners familiar with the area
- 2) Collaborative Judgment – includes the use of expert panels as suggested by the USEPA
- 3) Elasticities – evaluates how changes in highway capacity affect travel behavior and land use

- 4) Allocation Models – based on rules defined by planners and collaborative judgment to determine land use modeling
- 5) Four Step Models – CMAP model
- 6) Integrated Transportation Land Use Models - combination of CMAP modeling and land use modeling

This document provides guidance as to when and where to use these various approaches based on amount of land use change anticipated, context of the action, project complexity, and available resources. According to the document the approach that would be the best tool for the Eldamain Road Project would be Planning Judgment combined with CMAP modeling.

Key variables considered when using Planning Judgment include:

- Change in accessibility
- Change in property value
- Expected growth
- Relationship between land supply and demand
- Availability of other services
- Other market factors
- Public policy

The results of the CMAP models will be shared with the planners familiar with the area for their judgment on the effects of lands use in this area with and without the proposed Eldamain Road Extension.

Agency Questions and Answers on Methodology

USEPA (Westlake) stated that since CMAP modeling in 2040 does not include the Prairie Parkway, should we include it in this modeling? HLR (Lukas) stated that 2040 will be completed later this year and that CMAP considers the horizon for the Prairie Parkway to be beyond 2040. We will need to know if we should include the Prairie Parkway. USEPA (Westlake) enquired about the expense. HLR (Lukas) stated that there is little cost from CMAP but modeling land use would be costly for additional model runs. Working with only the comprehensive land use plans would be a minimal cost.

USEPA (West) asked about the Kendall County Land Use Plan. HLR (Lukas) stated that it did include the Prairie Parkway. USEPA (Westlake) asked what year this plan was. HLR (Lukas) was not sure as to the date of this plan. [*The plan is dated 2005*]. USEPA (West) asked if there was an interchange with the Prairie Parkway at IL 71 and HLR (Lukas) stated yes there is. USEPA (West) asked what the distance was between the Prairie Parkway crossing of the Fox River and the Eldamain Road bridge. HLR (Lukas) stated it is approximately one mile.

USEPA (West) asked if Kendall County has any agricultural protection. H&H (Huff) stated that they have a general statement to preserve agricultural lands but no programs like Kane County.

USEPA (Westlake) asked if the planning judgment includes talking with developers. HLR (Lukas) stated that it only includes talking with planning professionals.

FHWA (Allen) asked if everyone is in concurrence with the methodology. USEPA (Westlake) stated that they agree with the methodology. However, since we are not agreeing on alternatives, we will defer until the September meeting and asked if consideration would be given to any other projects that would alleviate local problems.

**IDOT District 9, Saline, Gallatin and White Counties
US 45 from Eldorado to Illinois 141
Environmental Assessment
Concurrence - Preferred Alternative**

This was the third NEPA/404 presentation of this project. The Purpose and Need (Concurrence Point 1) received concurrence from all agencies on July 20, 2009 and the Alternatives Carried Forward (Concurrence Point 2) received concurrence from all agencies on February 18, 2010. The purpose of this meeting was to present the Preferred Alternative (Concurrence Point 3). Meeting attendees had been provided a packet including a textual description of all alternatives being carried forward, a matrix comparing the impacts of all alternatives carried forward, typical sections of all alternatives carried forward, and detailed mapping of the three alternatives being carried forward for their review prior to the meeting.

Kevin Crider of Geotech Engineering, Inc. gave a PowerPoint presentation to the group. The presentation began with a review of information presented at the June 24, 2009 and February 18, 2010 meetings, including the project description, location and limits, and the purpose and need. The presentation also discussed the results of a meeting on April 26, 2010 that was held to discuss minimizing impacts to the copperbelly water snake, which is known to occur in the project area near the North Fork Saline River. Existing conditions were discussed and aerial photographs were shown to illustrate the project corridor. The presentation summarized the handout materials previously distributed and discussed design criteria, typical sections, alignments and specific features of the three alternatives carried forward, and the cost and impacts of each alternative.

Preferred Alternative

The presentation outlined the alternatives carried forward, including the No-Build and three potential Build Alternatives, all of which begin at the five-lane section in Eldorado and extend north to IL 141. Alternative 3 would have an open grass median and would use the existing two lanes to carry southbound traffic, with new lanes constructed east of the existing highway to carry northbound traffic. Alternative 5 would construct new lanes west of the existing highway to carry southbound traffic and would have an open grass median. Alternative 5A, the preferred alternative, primarily follows the alignment proposed for Alternative 5, but utilizes the Alternative 3 alignment through the copperbelly water snake habitat adjacent to the North Fork Saline River to minimize impacts to the species. Proposed copperbelly water snake and wetland mitigation measures were also discussed, including IDOT's desire to purchase adjacent land to the southwest of the North Fork Saline River Bridge as a mitigation site, as well as the forested land between the potential wetland mitigation site and the railroad trestle, which would ultimately provide a contiguous, protected block of copperbelly water snake habitat. Should the landowners be unwilling to sell, IDOT will attempt to acquire a site to the east of the existing roadway that shares hydrology for a wetland and copperbelly water snake mitigation site.

Alternative 5A is considered the Preferred Alternative because it is the least expensive, would convert less land to right-of-way, would require fewer residential displacements, and minimizes

impact to the copperbelly water snake.

Agency Questions and Comments

Representatives from the USEPA (Ken Westlake) and USFWS (Heidi Woeber) expressed concerns about the preferred mitigation site's landowners' willingness to sell, particularly if the land is economically valuable to the landowners (used for commercial uses, such as logging.) Julie Klamm of IDOT explained that, as the land is located in the floodplain of the North Fork Saline River, it is not being used for commercial use, and that as the value of the land is low due to the floodplain, the landowners are likely to sell. Kevin Crider of Geotech explained that only two property owners are believed to own the land that IDOT wishes to acquire for the mitigation site.

USFWS (Woeber) asked if an easement could be used to protect the site's ecological habitat if the landowners were unwilling to sell. IDOT explained that measures such as eminent domain and/or easements are not used to acquire/protect mitigation sites, and that other mitigation sites will be considered if landowners of the preferred site prove unwilling to sell. Julie Klamm stated that there is quite a bit of hydric soil in the area for potential mitigation. The mitigation sites under consideration are located in the same area and share the same hydrology as the land that will be acquired for roadway right-of-way. Julie Klamm also explained that right-of-way negotiations cannot begin until roadway design (Phase I) is complete, so it is unknown at this time whether or not the current landowners would be willing to sell.

USEPA (West) noted that the concrete barrier alternatives were not carried forward because they were more likely to trap migrating snakes, yet the preferred alternative still impacts the copperbelly water snake. Julie Klamm explained that all alternatives developed for the project would impact the snake, but the preferred alternative with widening to the east in the habitat area would minimize the impact. Kevin Crider used aerial mapping to illustrate and explain the difference between widening to the east and west and the impacts to copperbelly water snake habitat.

USEPA (West) expressed concern that snakes could be enticed to migrate to the mitigation site from the existing habitat on the west side of the existing roadway. Kevin Crider explained that the preferred mitigation site is located on the same side of the roadway (to the west) as the existing copperbelly snake habitat, therefore snakes would not be crossing the road when migrating between existing habitat and the mitigation site. As the new lanes will be constructed to the east, they will minimize impacts to the species.

USEPA (West) expressed concern the site being considered as a backup option for the wetland and copperbelly watersnake habitat is to the east of the existing habitat, and asked why no backup options were being considered to the northwest of the project. Kevin Crider explained that soils to the northwest are not hydric, and thus cannot be used for wetland and copperbelly water snake habitat. Julie Klamm also explained that the preferred mitigation site and the backup mitigation site will provide wetland hydrology and copperbelly water snake habitat. USEPA (Westlake) agreed that there is strong rationale for the preferred mitigation site on the west side of US 45 since it would protect existing habitat as well as restore more habitat.

Concurrence

Concurrence was received from all groups in attendance at the June 9, 2010 NEPA-404 Merger Meeting: US EPA, USFWS, and IDNR. The USACE Louisville District was not in attendance; therefore, FHWA (Fuller) will solicit their concurrence via email.

**IDOT District 7, Christian, Shelby, Fayette, Marion, Clinton, Jefferson and Washington Counties
US 51 from Pana to Centralia
Environmental Impact Statement
Concurrence – Alternatives to be Carried Forward**

The US 51 EIS project has previously been presented at the 2/07/08, 2/03/09, and 6/24/09 NEPA/404 Merger Meetings for project introduction, concurrence on Purpose and Need, and project update, respectively.

The purpose of the meeting was to seek concurrence on the Alternatives to be Carried Forward. The methodology used in the Macro Analysis Memo and Alignment Analysis Memo (submitted April 7, 2010) for corridor and alignment elimination was reviewed. In preparation for this meeting, on June 8th (the previous day) the project team conducted a field review of the project. The review was attended by various agencies.

A dual screen PowerPoint presentation was given by Jerry Payonk and Stacie Dovalovsky of Clark Dietz, Inc. The following summary points were made at the presentation:

- Through the Context Sensitive Solution (CSS) process, the project team has conducted over 70 meetings with the various Community Advisory Groups (CAG), Regional Advisory Group (RAG), and Project Study Group (PSG).
- The four step process used to define and analyze alternatives was summarized as follows:
 - 1) Develop Preliminary Corridors - the corridors were developed by the CAG, RAG, and PSG;
 - 2) Conduct Purpose & Need Screening and Corridor Consolidation - this step was presented at the 6/24/09 NEPA/404 Merger meeting;
 - 3) Perform Macro Analysis on Remaining Corridors; and,
 - 4) Develop and Analyze Preliminary Alignments within Remaining Corridors.

Steps 3 and 4 were outlined during the presentation.

- Thirty-one resource criteria (including environmental, community, cultural, and agricultural) were evaluated during the macro analysis of corridors. Engineering judgment and CAG input were also considered. The macro elimination process considered the range of impacts for each resource within the 500-foot width and assigned a threshold value for elimination based upon that range. The resource criteria that were used during the corridor elimination process varied by community as the resource impacts varied by community, making the process similar but unique for each geographical area. The resource impact evaluation considered the regulatory mandates and protection of resources. The macro analysis elimination process was illustrated graphically using Vernon Patoka as an example.

- During the macro analysis, 123 corridors were evaluated in Centralia-Sandoval, 24 corridors in Vernon-Patoka, 21 in Vandalia, and six in Ramsey. The number of corridors evaluated in each community varied based on factors such as community size and topographic features encountered. The Macro Analysis screening yielded three corridors in Centralia-Sandoval (Corridors D, DJ, and DL), two in Vernon-Patoka (Corridors J and Q), five in Vandalia (Corridors A, D, Q, S, and U), and two in Ramsey (Corridors A and C). These corridors demonstrated the fewest impacts to environmental resources and were carried forward into the alignment analysis for further evaluation.
- The first step of the alignment analysis was to develop a 200' wide preliminary roadway alignment measuring within the 500-foot roadway corridor originally studied. The preliminary roadway alignment was developed minimizing or avoiding resource impacts as much as possible. The alignment screening process evaluated the same 31 resource criteria used in the Macro Analysis. Engineering constraints and CAG input were also taken into consideration when evaluating the alignments. The alignments with the highest relative impacts and those that were not feasible from an engineering perspective were eliminated. The Alignment Analysis elimination process was illustrated graphically using Vandalia as an example.
- The Alignment Analysis screening yielded three alignments in Centralia-Sandoval (Alignment D, DJ, and DL), one in Vernon-Patoka (Alignment Q), two in Vandalia (Alignments S and U), and two in Ramsey (Alignments A and C). These alignments demonstrated the fewest impacts to environmental resources were selected to be carried forward for further evaluation into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).
- Centralia-Sandoval D (an eastern bypass that crosses over Raccoon Lake) was carried through the alignment analysis to provide balance by maintaining a bypass alignment for further evaluation around both sides of the Centralia area. The project team, however, believed there was compelling reasons for it to be eliminated. Centralia-Sandoval D exhibited the highest impacts to floodplains, wetlands, high quality wetlands, parklands, residential buildings, and commercial buildings compared to Alignments DJ and DL. An alignment that results in higher resource impacts relative to other viable alternatives would not be selected as a preferred alternative in the DEIS. After discussion with the agencies over the viability of Alignment D, they concurred that there are reasonable alternatives on the west side of Centralia that result in fewer resource impacts. The agencies agreed that Alignment D should be eliminated from further consideration.
- Each community was presented in aerial view with a graphic of all corridors originally considered, the corridors remaining after the screening process, the corridors remaining after the macro analysis, and finally, the corridors remaining after the alignment analysis.
- In general, existing US 51 will be widened to the east or west in the sections between communities to minimize impacts. In two cases along existing US 51 between communities, multiple alternatives were designed and carried forward to minimize impacts. The coincident areas with multiple alternatives are 1) Vandalia to Ramsey Link A (existing US 51 over Ramsey Creek) and Vandalia to Ramsey Link B (which utilizes disturbed area from a previous crossing over Ramsey Creek), and 2) Ramsey End Link A

(which utilizes existing US 51 over Opossum Creek) and Ramsey End Link B (an alternative west of existing US 51 over Opossum Creek to minimize impacts in an area of steep wooded topography).

- Six Public Information meetings (PIM) were held in the project area to present the alternatives to be carried forward. PIM#3 (three meetings at different locations within the project study area) was held in November 2009. Preliminary alternatives to be carried forward were presented at the meeting. Following this meeting in December 2009, additional high-quality wetland information was provided by the Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) which resulted in modifications to some of the alternatives presented to the public. The modified corridors were presented at PIM#4 in May, 2010. As a result of the high quality wetland information received, Vandalia Alignment U was developed, which traverses the southeast corner of the Vandalia Geologic Area Illinois Natural Area Inventory (INAI) site. The INAI site was originally avoided during the corridor development process. The project team met with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to discuss this site. The IDNR indicated that it is acceptable to traverse the INAI site as long as the integrity of the site is maintained. The portion of the INAI site traversed by Alignment U is likely a buffer to the actual Geological area specimen. The project team also met with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – St. Louis District to discuss high-quality wetland impacts.

- A summary of public comments received after PIM#3 and PIM#4 was presented. Subsequent to PIM#4, the project team received numerous comments from residents living in the north side neighborhoods of Vandalia near Thrill Hill Road. Vandalia Alignments S and U are within the vicinity of these neighborhoods, and result in 10 and 6 residential impacts, respectively. IDOT invited over 200 residents to a meeting held on June 3, 2010, to discuss the project development and residential impacts. Over 100 attendees came to the meeting. A general consensus among attendees was that Vandalia should be bypassed to the east. The project team discussed the constraints of an eastern bypass with attendees, which include extensive Kaskaskia River floodplain impacts. Although the project team had evaluated two eastern bypasses during the macro analysis, two additional eastern bypasses were developed subsequent to the meeting per the suggestions of the residents. It was determined that these corridors would be eliminated based upon incongruence with the project's Purpose & Need, and impacts to floodplain and Prime & Important farmland examined during macro analysis.

- Concurrence was granted for the following alignments to be carried forward into the DEIS:
 - Centralia End Link,
 - Centralia-Sandoval DJ,
 - Centralia Sandoval DL,
 - Sandoval to Patoka Link,
 - Vernon-Patoka Q,
 - Vernon to Vandalia Link,
 - Vandalia S,

- Vandalia U,
- Vandalia to Ramsey Link A,
- Vandalia to Ramsey Link B,
- Ramsey A,
- Ramsey C,
- Ramsey End Link A, and
- Ramsey End Link B.

Of note, Centralia-Sandoval D was not carried forward for further study.

After the presentation, the following questions were addressed:

Q: Where you surprised by the interest that the neighborhood residents on the north side of Vandalia showed?

A: The residential neighborhood on the north side of Vandalia is the densest residential area in the vicinity of the proposed alignments. The Vandalia CAG indicated that the residents in this area would not be pleased at the proposed alignments. However, the CAG and the project team believe that all options have been fully evaluated and that these are the best alternatives. The north side neighborhood group did not become involved with the project early on because they did not think an improved US 51 would be in proximity to their neighborhoods. IDOT has reached out to this group and invited them to attend the North Side neighborhoods meeting on June 3, 2010.

Q: What's happening with the proposed plans for I-70 access with respect to an interchange?

A: Due to the location of the existing I-70/US-40 interchange, an additional interchange cannot be constructed along I-70 where Vandalia Alignments S or U cross the interstate without compromising recommended interchange spacing distance of 3 miles. A preliminary study has been initiated and it is likely than a local road will be extended to provide access from the improved US 51 to the existing I-70 interchange. Additional studies will be performed to determine the exact type of facility that will be required. The proposed interchange areas have been submitted in an Addendum Environmental Survey Request (ESR) for field review.

Q: So there's no direct access proposed between US 51 and I-70?

A: Due to the location of the existing I-70 interchange, at this time an interchange with the improved US 51 and I-70 does not appear workable due to interchange spacing standards. US 51 users will have access to I-70 from a local roadway.

Q: Will you be doing more detailed wetland studies to identify more wetlands?

A: Yes, an Addendum ESR has been submitted for proposed interchange areas and areas where the alignments have shifted to avoid resources outside of the original survey limits.

Q: Engineering constraints including a forty foot cut and grade for trucks are a problem along the north side of Vandalia south of the lake; is the bluff/grade along the Kaskaskia River a problem on the south side of Vandalia?

A: No; there is adequate space along the south side of Vandalia to avoid steep grades.

Q: Have you drawn alignments to the east of Vandalia?

A: Two eastern alignments were evaluated during the macro analysis. These alignments were eliminated due to high floodplain impacts. During the Vandalia North Side Neighborhood meeting on June 3, 2010, the residents indicated that they would prefer an eastern bypass to avoid impacts to their neighborhood. Subsequent to the meeting, two additional preliminary eastern corridors were developed and analyzed using the macro analysis evaluation criteria. The alignments were developed to minimize impacts to the floodplain. Both alignments extend east of Bluff City in order to minimize impacts to the Kaskaskia River floodplain.

Q: How real are the alternatives to the east of Vandalia and should they be considered in this concurrence determination?

A: Using the macro analysis evaluation criteria, the eastern alignments would be eliminated due to floodplain impacts, residential impacts, and agricultural impacts. An eastern bypass that minimizes floodplain impacts extends east of Bluff City. A bypass this far east would not meet the project Purpose & Need because it fails to provide connectivity among communities, as Vandalia would not be connected by such a bypass. An eastern bypass precludes development due to the extensive floodplain, and is not compatible with Vandalia's existing land use plans. In addition, an eastern bypass would likely be constructed on fill or berms to avoid flooding, which would increase floodplain impacts.

Q: Wouldn't alignments to the east of Vandalia be expensive due to floodplains?

A: Cost has not been considered in the macro analysis or alignment analysis unless an element of an alternative being considered presented a unique cost concern of

extraordinary magnitude. However, it is likely that the cost of an eastern bypass could be high due to the requirement of constructing the roadway on fill.

Q: The new eastern alignments near Vandalia aren't going through all floodplain area, correct?

A: No, we have developed an eastern bypass that minimizes impact to the floodplain by veering off of existing US 51 north of Vandalia, extending east of Bluff City, and coming back to existing US 51 south of the floodplain. However, such a bypass does not meet the project's Purpose & Need, and results in high agricultural impacts. Such a bypass essentially connects Ramsey to Bluff City and on to Vernon. Vandalia would not be connected by such a bypass. Moving the bypass farther east to further minimize impacts to the floodplain would exacerbate the issue of connectivity to Vandalia.

Q: What about going west of Lake Vandalia?

A: By going west of Vandalia Lake, the impacts to neighborhoods on the north side of Vandalia would be minimized. However, agricultural impacts would be very high as this corridor south of Lake Vandalia would be traversing exclusively through farmland. A bypass that extends this far west would likely fail to meet the Purpose & Need of the project to provide regional connectivity

Q: What about going through Raccoon Lake in Centralia?

A: The project team has carried Alignment D, an eastern bypass of Centralia that crosses Raccoon Lake, through the alignment analysis. However, based on resource impacts, we believe that this bypass can be eliminated. Alignment D results in higher floodplain, wetland, high quality wetland, residential, and public facility impacts compared to the western alternatives (Alignments DJ and DL).

Q: Wouldn't it be appropriate to retain alignment D in Centralia that crosses Raccoon Lake if a new alignment is studied further that would cross Lake Vandalia?

A: Vandalia Lake is a major recreation destination for the region. An alignment that crosses Vandalia Lake would result in high agricultural impacts south of the lake, and would not completely eliminate residential impacts. It would avoid the north side neighborhoods near Thrill Hill Road in place of impacting other residences around the lake. In addition, parkland and densely wooded areas are adjacent to the north side of the lake. Crossing a lake would generally not be considered a preferred alternative if other alternatives with fewer resource impacts exist. Therefore, an alignment over Vandalia

Lake is not recommended, and the project team is comfortable eliminating Centralia-Sandoval D if the agencies concur.

Q: The City of Centralia has been discussing projects with the USACE around Raccoon Lake, correct?

A: There are plans to dredge Raccoon Lake. It is unknown if funding has been secured for this project to date.

Q: What strategy are you considering for addressing concerns and interest from the northern neighborhoods in Vandalia?

A: The project team intends to keep the lines of communication with the north side residents open. We plan on meeting with the group, or a smaller group of representatives, again to discuss the corridor development and elimination process in detail, and discuss the eastern corridors that have been developed and evaluated based on the comments received from the June meeting.

Q: Will you be studying new eastern alternatives at the macro level?

A:The preliminary eastern bypass corridors of Vandalia developed following the north side neighborhoods meeting have been evaluated using macro analysis criteria. An eastern bypass of Vandalia would be eliminated due to resource impacts, including floodplain, wetlands (this analysis is based on NWI wetlands as field data is not available), and agricultural. Additionally, an eastern bypass of Vandalia does not meet the project's Purpose & Need of connectivity of the region. Vandalia's 2009 zoning map identifies growth and development on the west side of the community. Vandalia is the second largest population and employment center within the 65-mile study area. A re-aligned US 51 to the east of the community would stifle growth and would not promote connectivity between communities.

Q: Is there any public support for the east side of Centralia?

A: We have received approximately eight public comments in favor of an eastern bypass. However, the City of Centralia and the majority of the CAG are not in support of an eastern bypass. They believe an eastern bypass would not allow for future development as the east side is already developed.

Q: Are there any strong reasons for keeping Alignment D in Centralia on the east side?

A: No, Alignment D results in the highest impacts to floodplains, wetlands, high quality wetlands, residences, and commercial facilities when compared to the western bypass alternative. The western bypass is a feasible alternative that would result in less resource impacts.

Q: Could alignment D in Centralia be eliminated due to wetlands, floodplains, and displacements?

A: Yes.

Q: How would an interchange at IL 161 affect the airport in Centralia?

A: The interchange with IL 161 near the airport east of Centralia near Alignment D has not been fully developed. However, it appears that due to the airport and adjacent commercial development, the interchange would be restricted to the north side of IL 161. It is possible that Alignment D may conflict with airport operations.

Q: Do the agencies concur with the request to move forward with detailed studies for the alignments discussed in the information package and also eliminate Alignment D in Centralia?

A: Yes, the agencies (USFWS, USACE, USEPA, IDNR) concur with all alignments to be carried forward and eliminate Alignment D in Centralia.

The goal for the next merger meeting presentation is to attain concurrence on the preferred alternative.

NEPA/404 Merger Meeting Summary

June 11, 2010

IDOT District 1, Lake County
US 45 from Illinois Route 132 to Illinois Route 173
Environmental Assessment
Information – Project Status Update

This was the 4th presentation of this project. The previous presentation was on February 18, 2010. The purpose of this presentation was to discuss the results of the bypass alternatives development and evaluation process and the associated stakeholder coordination that has occurred since the previous NEPA/404 Merger meeting. On this basis, the Project Team is recommending that six of the nine bypass alternatives be dismissed from further consideration, with the remaining three alternatives to be further developed and presented at a Public Meeting during the Summer 2010, along with the overall bypass alternatives development and evaluation process to date.

The following information was distributed to the NEPA/404 Merger meeting attendees via e-mail approximately two weeks in advance, with additional copies provided at the meeting to all meeting attendees.

- NEPA/404 Merger meeting Agenda
- The Project Status Summary white paper that was distributed to the Community Advisory Group (CAG) members in advance of the April 27, 2010 CAG meeting (this provides a synopsis of project development activities since Fall 2009, and it also provides a detailed explanation on the development of the nine bypass alternatives and the development and use of the Evaluation Matrix)
- Meeting minutes from the CAG meeting #3 on April 27, 2010
- Project Team recommendations for further screening of alternatives from nine to three
- Previous NEPA/404 Merger meeting minutes from February 18, 2010
- Exhibits showing the nine bypass alternatives developed for comparative analysis and for discussion with the CAG
- The Evaluation Matrix which summarizes the results of the comparative analysis of the bypass alternatives

The project consultant (Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd. – CBBEL) used a PowerPoint presentation to guide the overall project discussion. The project limits were re-stated. As mentioned at the previous NEPA/404 Merger meeting, an Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared for this project based on the likely future improvement needs along US Route 45 from IL Route 132 to IL Route 173. The intersections of US Route 45 at Grass Lake Road and Millburn Road lie within the Millburn Historic District, a National Register Historic Place. The location and proximity of these intersections and the narrow existing right-of-way precludes capacity improvements without impacts to the historic district and historic structures.

As discussed at the February 2010 NEPA/404 Merger meeting, eighteen initial potential bypass alternatives were identified based on NEPA requirements, project history, and stakeholder input from the initial Public Meeting, including north-south and east-west alternatives. Nine bypass

alternatives were dismissed due to unacceptable impacts and/or not meeting the project purpose and need. On this basis, the resource agencies in attendance concurred with the project moving forward with the reasonable range of nine bypass alternatives for development and evaluation, including Alternates A1, A2, A4, B1, B2, B4, C1, C2, and C4.

The “A” alternatives represent a US Route 45 west bypass, which uses the previously recorded IDOT alignment. The “B” alternatives represent an add lanes project on the existing US Route 45 alignment, and the “C” alternatives represent a US Route 45 east bypass. Each US Route 45 alignment is associated with 1 of 3 east-west improvement options. The “1” option maintains existing alignments of Grass Lake Road and Millburn Road. The “2” option realigns Grass Lake Road and Millburn Road to the north. The “4” option realigns Grass Lake Road to the south to meet Millburn Road. Building displacements that would result with the construction of each alternative are depicted on the conceptual drawings. All of the “B” alternatives result in the displacement of several historic structures.

CBBEL referred the meeting attendees to the Project Status Summary which provides a complete overview of the bypass alternatives development and evaluation process that has occurred for this project to date. The nine bypass alternatives were developed based on project design criteria assembled and reviewed by Lake County Division of Transportation (LCDOT) and IDOT to ensure each alternative is viable with respect to roadway design at this stage of development. As shown on the typical cross-sections distributed at the February 2010 NEPA/404 Merger meeting, a 130’ right-of-way (ROW) width is anticipated for the US Route 45 Bypass in the proposed condition, with an 80’ ROW width for Grass Lake Road and Millburn Road in the proposed condition. All nine bypass alternatives were developed with respect to proposed alignment and horizontal geometrics, and reviewed by LCDOT and IDOT for design acceptance and stakeholder coordination moving forward.

Next, discussion focused on the bypass alternatives evaluation and results. Matrix content, relative comparison of alternatives, and presentation were summarized. The matrix evaluation criteria are separated into four main categories: Transportation Performance, Environmental Resource Impacts, Socio-Economic Impacts, and Construction Cost. For the majority of the criteria, the results were quantity based, when direct measurable performance or impacts could be developed. For some of the criteria, the results were quality based, with the Project Team developing these results based on the best available information at this stage of overall project development. A color grading system was used to provide a visual representation as to which bypass alternatives perform relatively strong or relatively weak when compared to the other alternatives, within each criterion. Weighting of evaluation criteria was not used.

At this point in the evaluation process, the impact evaluation is based on the width of the ROW footprint per the typical cross-sections. Potential impacts are based on the best available information, including the results of field studies completed for this project (e.g., INHS field delineated wetlands) supplemented with available GIS information. Environmental surveys, such as cultural resources, are on-going and results will be evaluated as information becomes available.

A results summary for the four main evaluation criteria follows:

Transportation Performance: Based on Synchro/Simtraffic analysis of the core study area for each alternative and comparison of selected Measures of Effectiveness. Alternates A4 and B4 were strongest in comparison. Alternates B1 and C1 were weakest in comparison.

Environmental Resource Impacts: The B alternatives, as well as A2 and C2, were weakest in comparison predominantly due to historic district impacts, including historic buildings.

Socio-Economic Impacts: The B alternatives were clearly weakest in comparison, primarily due to resulting displacements.

Construction Cost: Alternates A2, B2, and C2 were weakest in comparison. Alternates A1, B1, B4, and C1 were strongest in comparison.

CBBEL provided a summary of the 3rd meeting of the project CAG on April 27, 2010. A PowerPoint presentation was used to update the CAG members on the project developments since the 2nd CAG meeting, which was also described in the Project Status Summary paper. A detailed explanation of how the nine bypass alternatives were developed and evaluated was given, as well as an explanation for the color coding system used with the evaluation matrix.

The CAG members were then placed in one of three breakout groups (Group 1, 2, or 3) to discuss the results of the bypass alternatives development and evaluation process, and to formulate their opinions on whether each alternative compares relatively strong or relatively weak to the other alternatives (and why), and whether the alternatives should be considered for more detailed development or dismissed (and why).

CBBEL referred the meeting attendees to the Alternatives Screening Recommendations paper that was distributed to meeting attendees and summarizes the results from the CAG meeting. Based on the CAG input received, there was general consensus that the “B” alternatives should not be considered any further due to the resulting displacements of historic structures within the Millburn Historic District. There was also general consensus for dropping the “2” options due to higher costs resulting from the greater length of roadway construction, as well as due to the property impacts/acquisition required within the Millburn Historic District boundaries both east and west of existing US Route 45. There appeared to be general consensus for four alternatives: A1, A4, C1, and C4. Group 1 supported A1, A2, C2, and C4. Group 2 supported A4 and C4. Group 3 supported Alt A1, A4, and C4.

Subsequent to the CAG #3 meeting, the Project Team (LCDOT, IDOT and the project consultants) met to discuss the overall bypass alternatives evaluation results and the recommendations moving forward. There was consensus within the Project Team that alternate C1 also be dismissed from further consideration based on the comparatively weak transportation performance. On this basis, LCDOT and IDOT/District One are recommending that alternatives A1, A4, and C4 be carried forward for further development and evaluation, and that the other six alternatives be dismissed from further consideration.

It was noted that the “A” alternatives cross through forest preserve property. The Consultant Team and LCDOT have met with the Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD) to discuss this project. Overall LCFPD does not object to the “A” alternatives. LCFPD does have a

concern with the fragmentation of a northeast portion of their property (at McDonald Woods) that would be isolated following construction of the “A” alternatives. Additional coordination with LCFPD would occur if an “A” alternative is selected as the proposed action.

Discussion of the Project Team’s recommendations occurred. Concurrence with this recommendation was not received from all of the resource agencies as discussed below under Agency Comments.

Discussion then segued to project updates and next steps, including the following:

Millburn Burial Site: Based on information received from the state, there is a burial site located adjacent to US Route 45 (east of the intersection with Independence Boulevard). Alternate C4 was revised to avoid the burial site. The revised alternate is Alternate C4.4, which replaces Alternate C4. An exhibit depicting Alternate C4.4 was distributed.

Millburn Congressional Church: Based on coordination with the CAG, the Project Team was informed that the property owned by the Millburn Congressional Church was larger than originally thought. The “4” options cut across the revised church property limits. The Project Team does not anticipate this to be a Section 4(f) issue. The Millburn Congressional Church is aware of the proposed project. The Project Team will arrange a meeting to discuss potential impacts with the Millburn Congressional Church.

Status of Cultural Resource Review: The Project Team is still waiting for Cultural Resources Review to be completed. It is anticipated that the review will be completed by Fall 2010.

Public Meeting: A Public Meeting has been tentatively scheduled for the end of July 2010. Concurrence was requested on the Project Team’s recommendation to dismiss six of the nine alternatives from further consideration, with the remaining three alternatives and overall project development results to be presented at the Public Meeting.

Concept Geometry Development: Concept geometry for the remaining portions of the EA project limits will be completed and submitted to LCDOT and IDOT for review.

September 2010/February 2011 NEPA/404 Merger meetings: Seek concurrence on Concurrence Point 2: Alternatives to be Carried Forward.

Agency Comments:

- 1) Could this meeting serve as Concurrence Point 2: Alternatives to be Carried Forward? (Westlake – USEPA)

Response: The Project Team would like to use the Public Meeting to gain wider public input on the alternatives before requesting concurrence on alternatives carried forward in the Environmental Assessment. Matt Fuller (FHWA) also stated that the informational packet for this meeting was not submitted early enough to allow the full 30-day review period (Note: The informational packet was submitted within an acceptable time [2-3 weeks] to allow review for a status update – as is acceptable).

- 2) Please elaborate why the “2” options should be dropped from further consideration. (West – USEPA)

Response: At the April 27, 2010 CAG meeting, there was general support for dropping the “2” options. This was primarily due to higher cost resulting from the greater length of roadway construction, as well as due to the property impacts/acquisition required within the Millburn Historic District boundaries both east and west of US Route 45.

- 3) USFWS did not recall receiving the informational packet. Therefore, the information was not previously reviewed. USFWS cannot provide comment at this time. USFWS will provide comment before the September NEPA/404 Merger meeting. (Cirton – USFWS)
- 4) What is the quality of the triangular-shaped wetland located west of US Route 45 and south of Independence Boulevard? (West – USEPA)

Response: Based on vegetative quality (INHS determined C-value and FQI), all potentially impacted wetlands are low to fair quality.

- 5) Where is the delineation of “waters of the U.S.” (waters)? Please provide additional information with respect to waters. For example, where are the proposed waters crossings and what is the acreage of waters impact. Please add acreage of potential waters impact to the evaluation matrix (potential wetland impacts are included). Have all wetland areas been identified? Please provide a copy of the delineation report to the USACE and USFWS. USACE cannot provide comment at this time without reviewing this information. (Chernich – USACE)

Response: INHS completed a wetland delineation report - it includes all identified wetland areas based on INHS field visit. The wetland delineation report will be forwarded to the USACE and USFWS. Based on GIS data, waters are identified on the Environmental Resources Inventory Map (which was available for review as a display board at the meeting). Potential waters impacts can be added to the evaluation matrix.

- 6) It was noted that the Cultural Resources Review is not yet complete. Has a “C” alternative that is located east of the Millburn Burial Site been considered? (West – USEPA)

Response: Alternate C.4.2 located east of the Millburn Burial Site was presented. This alternative was developed and considered by the Project Team, but discarded because of the higher cost (more pavement), additional property acquisition required to construct, and more intrusive on the adjacent Tempel Farms property, leaving larger divided portions of Tempel Farms property east and west of US Route 45, which is alleviated by alternate C.4.4. Alternatives C.4.2 and C.4.4 are similar with respect to transportation performance.

- 7) Stormwater management will need to be considered, including the implementation of water quality and quantity Best Management Practices (BMPs). It is anticipated that vegetated ditches will not be sufficient on their own. (West – USEPA)

Response: Noted. Water quality and quantity BMPs will be considered in preliminary design.

**IDOT District 1, Lake County
Pershing Road Realignment and Belvidere Street Bridge Extension in Waukegan
Environmental Assessment
Concurrence – Purpose and Need**

This was the first NEPA/404 meeting of this project. The purpose of this presentation was to discuss the history of the project area and to present the Purpose and Need for the project. The FHWA and Bureau of Local Road kick-off meeting was February 10, 2009. The logical termini of the project were determined to be South Avenue on the south side and Greenwood Avenue on the north side.

Mark Johnson of Ciorba Group gave a PowerPoint presentation. Handouts of the presentation were provided to the attendees.

The presentation focused on the projects Purpose and Need which are:

- Enhancing Economic Development
- Improving Access to the Lakefront
- Improving Roadway System Continuity
- Increasing Roadway Capacity
- Improving Roadway Safety

The improvements to Pershing Road, Belvidere Street Bridge and adjoining cross streets would serve as a backbone to improve access to the lakefront and by creating more open space enhance the development of mixed use residential/retail properties and recreational areas along the lakefront. The Waukegan lakefront has historically supported heavy industrial use. Consequently, with the decline in industrial activity, part of the lakefront has been abandoned. Several parcels are currently being remediated as they were heavily impacted by past industrial activities.

Both the Canadian National and Union Pacific Railroad have active tracks in the area. An active Metra commuter line uses the UP tracks for services between downtown Chicago and Kenosha. In addition, the Amstutz Expressway is west of the railroad tracks. The railroad and expressway corridor along with the significant change in elevation from the downtown Waukegan area to the lakefront hinder lakefront access and development options. A developer is currently in place to construct townhomes, condominiums, single family homes and retail development south of South Avenue. This is located south of the project study limits.

A Phase I Study is also being performed within the project area for a Lakefront Bikepath. This is a CMAQ project that will provide a bikepath connecting the Great Lakes METRA Station to the Waukegan Metra Station. The Belvidere Street Bridge that connects to a section of Pershing Road is in a deteriorated condition and qualifies for rehabilitation under the federally funded Highway Bridge Program (HBP).

In 2002 the City of Waukegan initiated a Master Plan to revitalize the downtown and lakefront. The plan, refined through a series of citywide town hall meetings, was completed in 2003 and incorporated in development guidelines in 2005.

The Master Plan has strong public support and includes lakefront improvements in line with the proposed Purpose and Need. The plan calls for pedestrian friendly sustainable development of the downtown, better access to the lakefront and to the Waukegan Harbor and includes the creation of an Intermodal Center. Key points of the plan are creation of new open land, residential and mixed-use development and the creation of a local road that will guarantee the needed system continuity in the East-West and North-South directions to connect all the key elements of the Master Plan.

An open discussion followed the presentation. The main points of the discussion are as follows:

- The US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) (Cirton) stated that there already seemed to be a significant amount of open space at the south end of the project near South Avenue. Ciorba stated that the land in the area just north South Avenue is bounded on the west by the Union Pacific (UP) Railroad. The Canadian National (CN) Railroad is located west of the Lake Michigan Shoreline and makes up the east boundary of the possible development area. Pershing Road is located midway between the two railroads which reduces the potential for development. The City of Waukegan stated that the CN Railroad currently owns the land between the lakefront and the CN Railroad at this location. Waukegan is negotiating with the CN Railroad to acquire this property and relocate the CN Railroad west to be adjacent to the UP Railroad tracks.
- The USFWS (Cirton) asked if there was any crash data to support the safety aspect of the P&N. Ciorba stated that there were some crashes where vehicles ran off the road at the Pershing Road “S” curve located at the intersection with Dahringer Road. There currently isn’t a significant amount of traffic on Pershing Road; however, the proposed increase in traffic volumes would increase the amount of crashes along Pershing Road, especially north of Grand Avenue where the ADT would increase from 550 vpd to 11,700 vpd based on the projected traffic volumes (see M-M Exhibit attached to these minutes).
- The USFWS (Cirton) requested backup data for the traffic projections along Pershing Road. Ciorba stated that the traffic volumes were obtained from a 2003 Transportation Technical Report developed in conjunction with the Waukegan Lakefront-Downtown Master Plan. Ciorba should submit a copy of the Technical Report (see M-M Exhibit attached to these minutes).
- The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) (Chernich) noted that Pershing Road provides access to the Waukegan Marina and access is currently confusing and difficult with the existing Pershing Road alignment. Ciorba agreed with the comment and stated that one of the goals in the Purpose and Need statement is to improve system continuity. The Pershing Road and Belvidere Street Bridge improvement project will provide an improved pedestrian and roadway connection to the Marina.
- The USEPA (West) stated that the project has merit, but the Purpose and Need should capture more of the positive aspects of what Waukegan is trying to accomplish with the

Master Plan. Ciorba agreed that the overall vision is captured more in the Master Plan than in the Pershing Road and Belvidere Street Bridge improvement project. The Master Plan includes several improvements for the lakefront area, including better access to the Metra station, bike path development, and open spaces. The project is by its nature an IDOT Local Roads project but constitutes a key component for the implementation of the City of Waukegan Master Plan. The Purpose and Need is limited to how the transportation aspects of the Pershing Road and Belvidere Street improvements can help attain the visions of the Waukegan Master Plan (see M-M Exhibit attached to these minutes).

- The USEPA (West) added that the Purpose and Need should focus more on the details of increased access between downtown Waukegan and the lakefront. Ciorba stated that details of potential solutions for improved access were not given as the presentation was limited to an introduction of the project and the discussion of the Purpose and Need of the improvement. Ciorba stated that the current conditions do not provide a direct, safe and pedestrian friendly access from downtown to the lakefront and do not provide enough continuity along the lakefront. As an example, the Belvidere Street bridge now connects with Pershing Road at an elevation of 25-30 feet above grade and far away from the lakefront. These already noticeable deficiencies will become more critical with the completion of the ongoing and future developments. Ciorba reiterated that, as stated in the Purpose and Need, this improvement will achieve better access to the lakefront, better roadway continuity, improved roadway safety and improved capacity within the limits of a local road.

Closing Statements

The USEPA (West) feels the elements are there for the Purpose and Need but feels it may need to reflect more accurately the overall goals for the area.

The USFWS (Cirton) requested supporting exhibits to evaluate the traffic projections more definitively. Concurrence on the P&N was not obtained.

**IDOT District 1, Lake County
II Route 131, Russell Road to Sunset Avenue
Environmental Assessment
Concurrence - Purpose and Need**

The purpose of the meeting, held at the IDOT District 1 office in Schaumburg, was to present IDOT/FHWA's Purpose and Need for the Illinois Route 131 Improvements from Russell Road to Sunset Avenue and to obtain concurrence from the agencies.

Purpose and Need

IL Rte. 131 within the project limits is designated as a Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA). The existing roadway section is generally rural, but the project area is developed with a mix of public lands and residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural uses. The IL Rte. 131 project has followed IDOT's Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process which involves stakeholder participation early and often in the development of a consensus solution. Stakeholders include representatives from the municipalities of Winthrop Harbor, Zion, Wadsworth, Beach Park, Waukegan, Gurnee, and Pleasant Prairie, WI. Other stakeholders include the Lake County Planning, Building and Development Department, Division of Transportation, and Forest Preserve District; Kenosha County; Waukegan Port District (Waukegan Regional Airport); Waukegan Park District; Wisconsin Department of Transportation; and local residents and concerned citizens. Ongoing stakeholder workshops and Public Meetings have been held to develop a problem statement based on project issues and concerns while striving to meet the following goals and objectives:

1. Improve mobility (capacity and efficiency);
2. Improve safety for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians;
3. Coordinate with planned land uses and area developments;
4. Facilitate economic growth along the route; and
5. Minimize impacts to the surrounding environment.

The problem statement served as a guide for development of the Purpose and Need as presented. A project overview and presentation of the Purpose and Need was made. A discussion of its contents followed the presentation.

Agency Questions and Comments

USEPA (West) requested clarification on the project termini and the existing lane configurations to the north and south of the IL Rte. 131 project limits. IDOT/HNTB explained that north of Russell Road in Wisconsin, the roadway is four through lanes (two lanes in each direction) separated by a depressed grass median. South of Sunset Avenue, the roadway was widened to four through lanes with a flush two-way-left-turn-lane median in 1991. IL Rte. 131 is a two-lane roadway within the project limits and stakeholders identified four through lanes and a grass median as project elements that satisfy the purpose and need.

Truck traffic was cited as one of the operational deficiencies. USEPA (West) requested clarification on existing truck usage and the classification of IL Rte. 131 as a truck route. IL Rte.

131 is a Class II truck route from Russell Road to IL Rte. 173. IDOT/HNTB explained that while IL Rte. 131 was not a marked detour, some vehicles may have diverted from the nearby Tri-State Tollway and U.S. Rte. 41 during recent construction activities. Stakeholders have also noted an increase in truck traffic on IL Rte. 131 after the Tollway increased tolls and that some trucks may be avoiding the scales on U.S. Rte. 41. Some truck traffic is attributed to the industrial and commercial operations located in the project study area. The Tollway has widened I-94 to four lanes in each direction to IL Rte 173, and Wisconsin is currently in the process of widening I-94 from the Wisconsin State line to the north ramps of the Russell Road interchange. IDOT is also studying the widening of I-94 from IL Rte 173 to Russell Road and has funding programmed for the eventual construction.

USEPA (West) inquired about the Waukegan Regional Airport Study and what coordination has occurred with the study team. IDOT/HNTB responded that the two preferred alternatives for runway expansion from the preliminary airport study have been included in the roadway alternatives and that airport officials are active stakeholders in the roadway study. The airport study is beginning a two-year master planning and environmental study for improvements at Waukegan Regional Airport and will invite IDOT/HNTB to an upcoming introductory Technical Advisory Group meeting.

USEPA (West) asked if ideas for limiting access were proposed, such as using frontage roads. With IL Rte. 131 being an SRA route, future access is more restricted. Some proposed developments have talked about consolidating their future access.

Alternatives for realignment of the intersection of Kenosha Road and IL Rte. 131 are included in the study. USEPA (West) inquired about the characteristics of the intersection, the land use in the area, and the justification for realignment. IDOT/HNTB explained that the two roadways intersect at a skewed angle and at the crest of a vertical curve, hindering sight distance for vehicles turning left from Kenosha Road onto southbound IL Rte. 131. Stakeholders have been asking that improvements be made to this intersection for many years. Two alternatives have been developed for intersection realignment. The first moves the intersection slightly north to a point 1,000 ft from the existing 29th Street intersection using currently vacant land. A traffic signal warrant analysis will be performed for both intersections. The second alternative shifts Kenosha Road farther north, approximately half way between 21st and 29th Streets, but crosses land the Beach Park School District plans to develop. Further evaluation of these Kenosha Road alternatives is anticipated.

Conclusion and Concurrence

The agencies in attendance (USEPA, USACE, USFWS, IDNR) issued concurrence on the Purpose and Need for the Illinois Route 131 Phase I Engineering and Environmental Study. The study team anticipates presenting the project alternatives for concurrence at the September, 2010 NEPA/404 Merger Meeting.

**IDOT District 1, Cook County
75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (CREATE Program)
Environmental Impact Statement
Information – Project Introduction and Scoping**

This was the first presentation of the CREATE 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project (CIP) to the NEPA/404 Merger Team. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project to the merger team and identify future merger team coordination.

Project Overview

FHWA (Fuller) opened the NEPA/404 Merger meeting for the 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project at 1:45 pm on Friday, June 11, 2010. FHWA does not anticipate the need for any individual US Army Corps of Engineers 404 permits for this project, and therefore, the 75th Street CIP EIS presentation to be provided today was for the agencies' information only.

FHWA and IDOT are serving as joint lead agencies for this project. Bernardo Bustamante, FHWA CREATE Program Manager, and Larry Wilson, IDOT CREATE Program Manager, made introductory remarks, stating that this is the first EIS NEPA action under the CREATE program. Larry Wilson stated that the program is unique in that it is a partnership of the Association of American Railroads (AAR), private railroad companies and city, state and federal agencies. This meeting served as the Agency Scoping Meeting for the NEPA EIS, and agencies were requested to provide any additional comments to the project team.

Doug Knuth, Project Manager for Jacobs, the project consultant, and Joe Leindecker, Jacobs Environmental Lead, presented an overview of the project and reviewed the project's possible involvement with the various resource agencies and environmental issues.

A printed presentation handout and other project information were distributed to those agencies participating in the meeting. All resource and regulatory agencies also received project information about 30 days in advance of this meeting.

Agency Questions

Following the presentation, questions were received from the agencies and discussed.

USEPA (Norm West) asked about possible increases in Amtrak traffic through the corridor with this project, or with possible future High Speed Rail alternatives. Doug Knuth responded that there was no increase in Amtrak traffic anticipated as a result of the 75th Street CIP project. He also noted that by improving the flow of trains through the 75th Street corridor, the project will be improving air quality and reducing noise impacts in the areas where trains are currently forced to idle and wait for Metra passenger trains and other train traffic within the project corridor.

FTA (Kimmelman) asked if any previous studies had been completed in the corridor. Doug Knuth noted that this study was originally an Environmental Assessment (EA) but had been elevated to an EIS with the addition of the proposed rail fly-overs. FTA asked about the Environmental Survey Request (ESR) form and Doug noted that the ESR limits had been expanded recently when the analysis changed to an EIS and the project limits expanded to

include areas potentially affected by train noise and air emissions.

USEPA (West) noted that the proposed project improvements have the potential to bring more trains into the LaSalle Street stations. He inquired as to a potential increased noise issue at this station and wanted to make sure the study accounted for this. Doug Knuth noted that the noise model is being updated with new information to account for this condition.

USEPA (West), asked whether a public meeting had been held with the community. He noted that with the minority and low income populations in the study area, USEPA would encourage a well-designed outreach to the local Environmental Justice communities. Doug Knuth pointed out that one facet of our public involvement program would be to utilize the DBE subconsultant Ralph G. Moore and Associates to help inform and to involve the community during the NEPA process and to prepare the local community for possible future employment opportunities to come from the project should the Proposed Action be approved.

FTA (Kimmelman) asked what concerns have been raised so far in our local meetings. The request for a new METRA station was mentioned as an issue that has been raised at previous meetings with stakeholders; also the grade separation at 71st Street was a local request from the community. The Alderman in that community has a goal to promote economic development along 79th Street.

USEPA (Westlake) asked for a clarification of the name and location of these proposed grade separations. Bill Thompson, AAR CREATE Program Manager, provided clarification using a map of the CREATE projects.

FHWA (Fuller) asked if there were any other questions or issues to be addressed in the meeting. Hearing no further issues, he adjourned the meeting.

**IDOT District 1, McHenry County
IL 47 from Reed Road to US 14
Environmental Assessment
Concurrence – Purpose and Need
Concurrence – Alternatives to be Carried Forward**

The purpose of the meeting, held at the IDOT District 1 Offices was to present IDOT/FHWA's revised Purpose and Need and the Alternatives to be carried forward for the IL 47 Road Improvements from Reed Road to US 14, and to obtain concurrence from the agencies.

Purpose and Need

The proposed revisions from the February 2010 Merger Meeting were discussed. Generally these consisted of including a discussion of thoughtful economic growth, revising the mobility and capacity sections, and to cite the projects that are both north and south of this as well as the Illinois Tomorrow Grant corridor study.

AGENCY QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

USEPA (West) requested clarification on the desire of stakeholder interest in environment and why a statement reflecting this sentiment was not included. In addition, parties have expressed concern to the agencies that environmental issues were not adequately being considered in the process, in particular the Kishwaukee River Watershed. Although environmental protection was a stakeholder concern it was not the primary one. There is a broad cross-section of Stakeholders and they include Crystal Lake, Huntley, Lake-in-the-Hills, Lakewood, Woodstock, McHenry County, developers, farmers and several environmental groups including the Kishwaukee River Ecosystem Partnership, Land Conservancy of McHenry County, Openlands, and others. Stakeholder workshops have been on-going and were used to development a problem statement that included the following themes:

1. Safety, as related to capacity, rear end collisions, and bicycle crossings;
2. Mobility, including the need for signal coordination;
3. Desire to protect the environment, including drainage and concerns related to the Kishwaukee River watershed; and
4. Facilitate thoughtful economic growth.

From this, the Purpose and Need was developed. FHWA and IDOT indicated there had been an environmental protection statement in a previous version. However, IDOT routinely and by policy and regulation, avoids and minimizes environmental impacts. Protection of the environment is not a need for the project, so the environmental statement was removed.

USEPA (West) indicated that given the resources along this route and the level of interest by the stakeholders and the agencies, that a statement indicating the project setting would be appropriate.

A separate environmental stakeholder meeting is being considered. However, the data is still being collected. Cultural resource and special waste clearances have been received for the project. The wetland delineations have been received but not the biological resource review from the IDNR/IDOT BDE. It was thought to be premature to meet when the IDNR data collection was incomplete. It was also noted that during the study process, environmental impacts are evaluated in a manner that could eliminate an alternative from further study. However, the existing IL 47 corridor and any proposed alternatives are all within the Kishwaukee River Watershed. Therefore, the watershed issue will not be a differentiator; all alternatives including the no-action fall within the watershed.

USACE (Chernich) asked if multi-modal uses would be considered. Bicycle/pedestrian accommodations are considered as part of the project, are illustrated on the exhibits and will be discussed during the alternatives portion of the presentation. All of the communities have expressed the desire to have bicycle/pedestrian accommodations.

Alternatives to be Carried Forward

Preliminary alternatives were presented. Based on the community and stakeholder meetings, the preferred alternative would generally be a four lane roadway with a landscaped median and bicycle/pedestrian accommodations. Based on this, two preliminary alternatives have been identified; the first would share the current centerline with the widening being of equal width to both sides; the second would shift the center line towards the east. Generally, the wetland

impacts are similar under both build scenarios. The eastern shift alignment avoids several homes however. The two build alternatives to the north end of the project have reduced right of way requirements. The narrower of the two would likely impact fewer ADID wetlands. Other details of the alignments were discussed; preliminary impacts were considered to be worst-case scenario; no minimization efforts have been investigated as we do not yet have concurrence.

AGENCY QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

USFWS (Cirton) recognized that numerous wetlands were adjacent to the existing roadway and asked if the project team had looked outside the corridor for a parallel route that may have fewer impacts. To the west there are large wetland complexes including an ADID site, and the Pleasant Valley Conservation Area, a McHenry County Conservation District Holding. To the east there are wetlands and housing developments. A new alternative in these areas would incur greater impacts and the existing alignment has already had some impact on the local resources.

USACE (Hall) asked about the median width and was it required to be 50'. It was explained that this width included two 6' shoulders and a 38' landscaped median. The median width is considered to be the minimum allowable for safety clearance and to provide turning lanes at crossroads.

USACE (Chernich) asked if the project could be elevated to an EIS. The project started as an ECAD, and was recently elevated to and EA due to the anticipated wetland impacts. Other impacts have not been identified or fully evaluated. As such, and due to the project being an existing as opposed to being on new alignment, it will continue to be pursued as an EA. If conditions change, the project could be elevated in the future.

Further Discussion and Conclusion

As a result of the meeting, the following action items were identified.

1. A sentence or two will be added to the Purpose and Need to indicate the study is within the environmentally sensitive Kishwaukee River Watershed. The Purpose and Need will then be re-circulated via email to the participants for concurrence. Concurrence can be provided via email prior to the next Merger Meeting.
2. Concurrence on the Alternatives could not be provided as this would circumvent the Purpose and Need Concurrence. This will be considered in the next Merger Meeting.