

**Illinois NEPA/404 Merger Meeting  
September 8, 2010**

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

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**2:00 pm -4:30 pm**

- IL 104 – Bridge over the Illinois River in Meredosia (District 6, Morgan and Pike Counties)
  - Concurrence - Preferred Alternative
  
- Eldamain Road (District 3, Kendall County)
  - Concurrence – Revised Purpose and Need
  - Concurrence - Range of Alternatives and Preferred Alternative
  
- Eastside Highway, Bloomington (District 5, McClean County)
  - Project Introduction

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September 9, 2010**

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**8:00 am – 10:00 am**

- I-55 at Lorenzo Road (District 1, Will County)
  - Concurrence - Alternatives to be Carried Forward
  
- IL 47 from US 14 to Charles Road (District 1, McHenry County)
  - Project Introduction

**10:00 am – 10:15 am (Break)**

**10:15 am – 12:00 noon**

- US 45 Millburn Bypass (District 1, Lake County)
  - Information – Public Meeting Results on Alternatives
  
- US 12 Richmond Bypass (District 1, McHenry County)
  - Concurrence – Purpose and Need

**12:00 noon – 1:00 pm (Lunch Break)**

**1:00 pm – 3:00 pm**

- Elgin O’Hare-West Bypass Tier 2 (District 1, Cook and DuPage Counties)
  - Scoping Meeting
  
- IL Route 131, Russell Road to Sunset Avenue (Lake County)
  - Concurrence – Alternatives to be Carried Forward

**3:00 – 3:15 pm (Break)**

**3:15 pm – 4:30 pm**

- IL 47 from Reed Road to US 14 (McHenry County)
  - Concurrence - Alternatives to be Carried Forward
  
- Discuss status of NEPA-404 merger projects

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**IDOT District 1, Lake County  
IL Route 131 from Russell Road to Sunset Avenue  
Environmental Assessment  
Concurrence – Alternatives to be Carried Forward**

This was the second NEPA/404 presentation of this project. The Purpose and Need (Concurrence Point 1) received concurrence from the attending agencies on June 11, 2010. The purpose of this meeting was to present the Alternatives to be Carried Forward for the Illinois Route 131 Improvements from Russell Road to Sunset Avenue and to obtain concurrence from the participating agencies.

**Project Review**

The project location and Purpose and Need were reviewed. 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 seven municipalities in the project area, the Lake County Division of Transportation (LCDOT), the Lake County Forest Preserve District, the Waukegan Port District (Waukegan Regional Airport), the Waukegan Park District, and local residents and concerned citizens. Ongoing stakeholder workshops and Public Meetings have been held to develop a problem statement based on stakeholder-identified project issues, concerns, goals and objectives.

The purpose of the Illinois Route 131 engineering study is to improve safety and functionality along Illinois Route 131 from Russell Road to Sunset Avenue. Improvements to this route are necessary to address issues of roadway and intersection capacity and efficiency; enhance vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle accommodation and safety; and bring the roadway into compliance with current IDOT standards. The needs of the project are to improve safety, improve capacity, and improve operations and mobility. The stakeholders also rated the design elements of number of lanes, median treatment, edge treatment, and pedestrian / bicycle accommodations by how well they meet the project needs for roadway users. The elements that received the highest overall rating were four lanes divided, wide grass median, paved shoulder with curb and gutter, and shared-use path, respectively.

**Alternatives Presentation**

Four build alternatives that address the Purpose and Need and incorporate the identified project elements were presented. All four alternatives propose increasing capacity of the roadway by adding a through lane in each direction to create a four-lane highway. The median treatment, edge treatment, and bicycle/pedestrian accommodations differ amongst the four alternatives. The alternatives also all propose alignment shifts at the forest preserves, park districts, golf courses, and cemetery along the route to avoid impacts to these sensitive resources.

Alternative A1 proposes a 13' flush median and 10' outside shoulders. This median allows the highest level of access to adjacent properties and the shoulder provides space to accommodate stranded motorists, emergency vehicles, and potentially bicyclists. Alternative A2 proposes the same flush median but reduces the required right-of-way by replacing the shoulder with curb and gutter. Alternative B1 proposes a 22' barrier median and 10' outside shoulders. This median increases safety by providing a barrier between opposing directions of traffic and better manages access to minor streets and driveways. Median openings are proposed at one-quarter mile intervals to allow U-turns for passenger cars. Alternative B2 proposes the same barrier median but replaces the shoulders with curb and gutter to reduce the right-of-way requirement.

Four formal alternatives for realigning the skewed intersection of Kenosha Road and IL Rte. 131 were also analyzed. One alternative realigns Kenosha Road with 28<sup>th</sup> Street as proposed by LCDOT. Another alternative relocates Kenosha Road due south to create an intersection with 29<sup>th</sup> Street east of IL Rte. 131. Both of these have been dropped from consideration because of the proximity of the new intersection to the existing 29<sup>th</sup> Street intersection. A third alternative realigns Kenosha Road at the approximate mid-point between 21<sup>st</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Street, the two major adjacent intersections. This alternative requires acquisition of property currently owned by the Beach Park School District and they have plans to build a new facility on Kenosha Road. The final alternative creates a new intersection 1,000' north of 29<sup>th</sup> Street. This alternative is the only feasible alternate that remains.

The study has also analyzed several roadway alternatives near the Waukegan Regional Airport. The Waukegan Port Authority is performing a study to provide improved and efficient aviation facilities. The preliminary study looked at 18 different alternatives for runway extension/relocation and the impact to the roadway and the two preferred alternatives involve grade separation where the extended runway will cross IL Rte. 131. The airport has been acquiring property on both sides of the highway in anticipation of this expansion. The Project Study Team from the IL Rte. 131 Phase I Study is participating in stakeholder meetings for the airport Environmental Assessment and representatives from the airport study have attended and participated in the roadway stakeholder meetings and workshops. The two studies have been actively coordinating with one another.

#### Agency Questions and Comments

During and after the presentation, the following questions and comments were addressed:

Q: How were the element categories rated? (USEPA – Westlake)

At the second Corridor Planning and Technical Advisory Group meeting, the stakeholders were presented with four elements in each of the four design element categories and asked to rate how each one meets the project purpose and need. The ratings were compiled and consensus was reached on the elements that received the highest overall aggregate rating.

Q: Were alternatives shown for the entire length or were different alternatives shown in different areas along the road? (USEPA – West)

The same layout was shown along the entire route for median and edge treatments along with bicycle or shared use paths. As the alternatives are refined, they will be using various components from the four alternatives shown.

Q: Where are the break points for the barrier median? (USEPA – Westlake)

Break points are proposed at approximately one-quarter mile intervals between the signalized intersections. In most cases, this interval aligned with a side street. Median breaks are not proposed exclusively for driveways.

Q: Is the bike path proposed along the entire route? (USEPA – West)

No, the bike path is only proposed as a connection to a future Lake County Forest Preserve trail between Yorkhouse Road and the ComEd right-of-way to the south.

Comment (IDOT District One – Baczek): To adhere to the new complete streets legislation, bike paths and/or sidewalks should be proposed along the entire corridor on both sides of the roadway unless the local agencies cannot fund their portion.

Q: Should the on-road bicycle use be shown as a shared-use lane? At only 2-ft, it cannot be called a bike lane and should not be marked or labeled as such. (IDOT BDE – Zyznieuski)

To be marked on the pavement, the lane would need to be 5-ft wide. At 2-ft, it can only be called a shared-use lane. The study will make the necessary changes to exhibits and bicycle accommodation proposals moving forward with the alternatives evaluation and refinement.

Q: Has the airport looked at extending the runway to the northeast? (USEPA – Westlake)

Yes. The airport looked at 18 different alternatives for runway extension and relocation to achieve the FAA standard runway length and safety zones beyond the ends of the runway. The two alternatives with the fewest relocations and least impact to the environment both involve grade separation.

Q: Did the study look at moving the roadway west around the end of the proposed runway? (USEPA – Westlake)

Several of the airport alternatives involved a roadway bypass of the expanded airport property due to the extended runway. The reasonable bypass alignments created by the roadway study team significantly impact forest preserve property and displace several residences.

Q: Why were two alignments for the runway shown on the handout prior to the meeting? (USEPA – West)

Roadway project stakeholders are very aware of the Port District's plans to expand the airport and that extension/relocation of the runway will impact IL Rte. 131 and the two studies will have to work together towards a mutually agreeable solution. The two preferred alternatives are included in the roadway EA to show the potential impact of the runway expansion and to show the coordination between the two project teams.

Q: What other options were pursued for the Kenosha Road realignment? Can the option near the Beach Park Middle School remain for further evaluation? (USEPA – West)

The study analyzed the four alternatives shown as exhibits in the Environmental Assessment Alternatives Chapter 3. Other alternatives impacted wetlands, impacted a cell phone tower near the existing intersection, displaced residential property, or introduced sub-standard intersection spacing. The study team will work with the Beach Park Middle School staff to analyze their facility expansion plans and determine if other options existing for Kenosha Road realignment near the school.

Q: Why aren't agricultural land impacts listed in the evaluation criteria? (IDOA – Savko)

Agriculture should have been included in the evaluation criteria and will be added. The study team will review the land uses in the project area to determine if any agricultural land exists in the project area and if it will be impacted.

Q: Could you look at the capacity analysis of moving Kenosha Road traffic to 21<sup>st</sup> Street? (USEPA – West)

The consultant will review the traffic data and patterns and run capacity analyses of eliminating the Kenosha Road intersection with IL Rte. 131 and running all traffic through the 21<sup>st</sup> Street intersection to the north.

### **Conclusion and Concurrence**

The consultant will send capacity analyses for the Kenosha Road intersection alternatives and information on any agricultural impacts to Matt Fuller for distribution.

The USEPA (West), IDOA (Savko), USFWS (Cirton), and IDNR (Hamer) issued concurrence on the Alternatives to be Carried Forward for the Illinois Route 131 Phase I Engineering and Environmental Study. The study team anticipates presenting the preferred alternative for concurrence at the second NEPA/404 Merger Meeting in 2011.