Illinois Department of Transportation

30 COMMUNITY CONNECTION

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT and PHASE I DESIGN REPORT

WINTER 2009 NEWSLETTER

A Message From IDOT:

Although some time has passed since I addressed you regarding the US 30 Project, the Project Team has been working diligently to keep the project moving forward. Several major milestones have been met during this time. These milestones were accomplished through a coordinated effort with the Community Advisory Group (CAG) and the Project Study Group (PSG). They first identified problems within the project study area that should be considered. After gaining consensus from the CAG Problem Statement, the PSG was positioned to move forward with drafting the Purpose and Need Statement. The Purpose and Need Statement is a federally required document that drives the Environmental Impact Statement. It essentially provides the basis for evaluating alternatives and ultimately selection of the preferred alternative. The Purpose and Need Statement has recently been approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) with concurrence received from State and Federal regulatory and resource agencies. Last but not least, the CAG and PSG have worked to identify and evaluate potential corridors that will be studied further using environmental and engineering criteria.

A lot has been accomplished, and it would not have been possible without the valuable input from the CAG and from you, the community. We have made major strides, but there is still work to do. As you read through this newsletter, you will be informed of the project's next steps and how the community can stay involved. I encourage the community to contact the project hotline at 1-866-Route30 (1-866-768-8330) or visit the project website at www.dot.il.gov/us30/index1.html to provide the Project Team with your comments and/or questions. Together our efforts will result in transportation improvements in which we can all take pride.

Sincerely,
George F. Ryan, P.E.
Deputy Director of Highways,
Region 2 Engineer

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS
Public Informational Open House
Thursday, January 29, 2009
1:00pm - 7:00pm
United Methodist Church
200 Lincolnway
Morrison, IL 61270

The US 30 Project has a Logo!

The Community Advisory Group (CAG) has selected a logo that conceptualizes regional collaboration, historical identity, infrastructure improvements, and state support.

IDOT challenged the CAG to develop a US 30 project logo that the community could readily associate with the project. The committee was asked to think long term when considering branding concepts because the selected logo could potentially be used from the current EIS phase through construction.

After the CAG identified characteristics that were important to include in the logo, the Project Team and several members of the CAG provided sketches that were consolidated into the project logo shown here.

CAG AND PSG WORK TOGETHER ON STUDY

In October 2007 the US 30 Community Advisory Group (CAG) was asked to assist the Project Study Group (PSG) by identifying corridors using their community knowledge and unique interests. In what has become typical fashion for this group, the CAG rolled up their sleeves and were ready to work hard in this effort.

To prepare the CAG for this task, the Project Team explained various factors the members must consider in defining a route. These factors included several engineering and environmental concerns such as the horizontal and vertical alignments, the cost of bridges, presence of wetlands, impacts on nature preserves, and several other important issues. The Problem Statement identified by the CAG is also something that was to be kept in mind.

After listening to the instructions of the team and taking time for questions, CAG members split into smaller groups and began discussing ideas and sketching potential corridors on maps for the PSG to consider. When all pencils were down, each small group presented their ideas to the entire CAG. Of course there were similarities amongst the ideas presented, but there were also several unique thoughts brought to the table. After consolidating similar ideas, 16 different corridors were recommended to the PSG for further study. Upon considering the ideas of the CAG, the PSG agreed the CAG had done a fine job and added only one corridor of its own. The resulting corridors can be seen at the Public Informational Open House.

Following the October 2007 CAG meeting and subsequent PSG meeting, the team began studying the corridors. In order to get the most out of each of the corridors being considered, the team first broke the study area into sections. This allowed for the best parts of the corridors to be joined rather than throwing out an otherwise good corridor because of a fatal flaw in one small part of it. Second, in keeping with the established screening process, the team based each evaluation on the Purpose and Need Statement. The result of this step was a recommendation to the PSG that certain section corridors be eliminated from further consideration because of failure to meet the Purpose and Need. The PSG accepted the recommendation.

The team then went to work identifying potential impacts from each of the section corridors. This was an extensive effort that was eventually summarized in an evaluation matrix. Using that information, the team compared the corridors and ranked them according to various criteria identified as important considerations in the study. The team again presented its findings to the PSG and recommended corridors for further study. The PSG agreed with the recommended corridors and retained one additional corridor around the north side of Morrison to ensure that a full spectrum of alternatives is studied in-depth.

At this point in the process it was time for the CAG to reassemble and consider the direction recommended by the PSG. Once again the CAG was in full force to get the job done. First the Project Team presented the methods used and findings of the analyses. The CAG then broke into groups to review and comment on the merits of these corridors. After lengthy discussions, the entire CAG regrouped and presented their thoughts. While there was not total agreement, the overall thoughts of the CAG were relatively clear. They agreed with certain corridors recommended by the PSG but suggested future study efforts provide a narrower focus.

The CAG suggestions were then taken to the PSG. The PSG felt it important to continue to evaluate a northern route around Morrison since the northern environmental data collection has not been completed. They also stressed that further evaluation of the corridors should be done within a broader buffer area to allow for greater flexibility in analyses. With this in mind, the PSG decided the results of the process should be shared at a Public Informational Open House in January 2009. They directed that the recommendations of the PSG as well as the suggestions of the CAG be presented to the public and input solicited. The PSG will then consider the public's comments from stakeholder meetings and the public open house as a part of further evaluations and decisions.

CAG member Russ Holesinger reviewing US 30 corridors map.

CAG members Kay Shelton and Alderman Barb Bees sharing their comments on the US 30 corridors.

Consultant Gil Janes listens as CAG members discuss the US 30 corridors.

Consultant Mike Walton discussing corridors with CAG member.

CAG members providing input to Project Team about the US 30 corridors.

Next Steps

A number of important steps are planned for the next few months including:

STEP 6: Provide for continued input from the CAG, stakeholder groups, and public through the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process.

STEP 5: Present progress updates on the US 30 project to various federal, state, and local agencies.

STEP 4: Moving forward with in-depth environmental and engineering studies within the proposed corridors to determine reasonable alignments that best meet the project's Purpose and Need while avoiding or minimizing adverse impacts to sensitive environmental resources.

STEP 3: Share responses from the Public Informational Open House and other sources with the PSG

STEP 2: Present the proposed corridors at a Public Informational Open House.

STEP 1: Meet with various stakeholder groups to update them on the status of the project as it relates to their individual interests and concerns.

US 30 Environmental Impact
Statement and Phase I Design Report
US 30 Joint Venture Team
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103 Lanter Court
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Illinois Department of Transportation

Project Team

Federal Highway Administration
(FHWA)
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Consultant Team
Volkert & Associates, Inc.
Project Management Consultant
(Joint Venture)

Howard R. Green Company
Project Management Consultant
(Joint Venture)

Hudson and Associates, LLC
Context Sensitive Solutions/
Public Involvement Consultant

Kaskaskia Engineering Group
GIS/Mapping Consultant
Environmental Consultant

Frequently Asked Questions:

The Project Study Group Responds To Your Questions

1. *What is the importance of the Purpose and Need Statement?*

The Purpose and Need Statement is federally required and is the basis for evaluating alternatives and environmental impacts in the EIS. It establishes why a project should take place and explains to the public and decision-makers that the expenditure of funds is necessary and worthwhile. In addition, although significant environmental impacts are expected to result from the project, the Purpose and Need section should justify why impacts are acceptable based on the project's importance.
As importantly, the project Purpose and Need drives the process for alternatives consideration, in-depth analyses, and ultimate selection. Without a well-defined, well-established, and well-justified Purpose and Need, it will be difficult to determine which alternatives are reasonable, prudent, and practical.
It also may be impossible to dismiss the no-action alternative.

2. *What are the engineering and environmenta l concerns that may affect the evaluation of corridors?*

*Traffic Operations/Congestion Relief
*Potential for Crash Reduction
*Agricultural Land Severance
*Centennial Farms Impacts
*Special Waste
*Natural Areas
*Air Quality
*Wetlands
*Threatened & Endangered Species
*Prairies
*Operational & Maintenance Costs
*Corridor Utilization
*Property Impacts
*Displacements
*Economic Sustainability
*4f/6f Properties
*Nature Preserves
*Water Resources
*Land Acquisition Cost
*Forest Areas
*Wildlife Habitat
*Construction Cost
*Floodplains

3. *How can the public get involved during this phase of the project?*

IDOT has outlined a very open and engaging community involvement plan through its Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process. The plan creates a forum for the public to be educated, informed and involved throughout the entire EIS/Design Report. Such opportunities include participating in public meetings; visiting the project website (www.dot.il.gov/us30/index1.html);
calling the project hot line at 1-866-ROUTE30 (1-866-768-8330);
requesting the Project Team to speak to your group; and attending the CAG meetings. IDOT encourages you to Get Involved...Stay Involved!

4. *When is the next Public Information Meeting?*

The next public information meeting is scheduled for January 29, 2009. The purpose of the meeting will be to garner input from the public on the proposed corridors recommended by the Project Study Group (PSG) and Community Advisory Group (CAG).

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