

Alton-Godfrey

TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Illinois Department of Transportation

Newsletter #2

Fall, 2014

Study Update

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is pleased to bring you this update of the Alton-Godfrey Transportation Study to help you stay informed on the study's progress.

Why is this study being conducted?

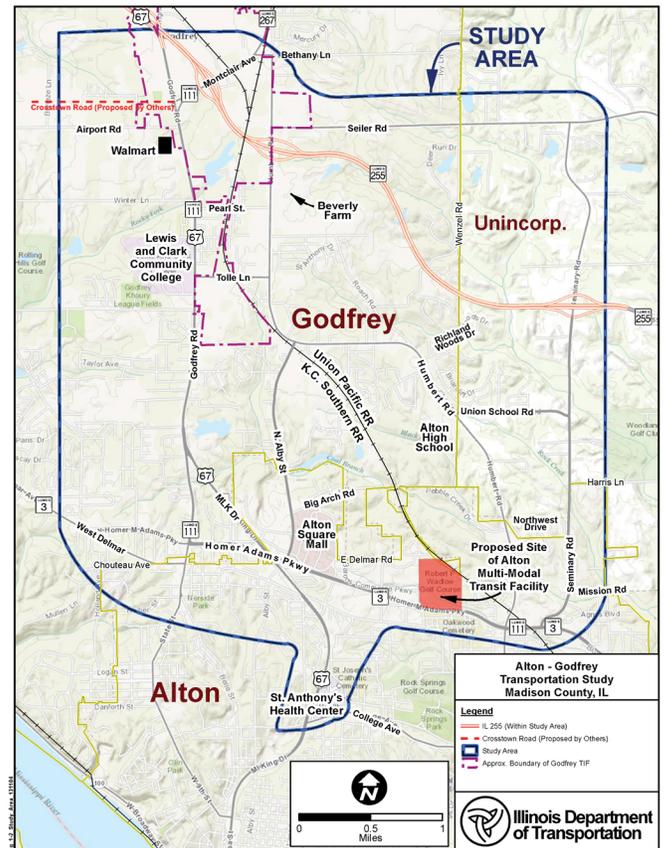
IDOT is conducting this study, which began in early 2012, to identify options that could improve transportation mobility and safety on the local roadway system between IL Route 255 and IL Route 3/111 (Homer Adams Parkway), as well as improve connections between IL Route 3/111 and US Route 67. A map of the study area is shown on this page.

Many people who live and work here would agree that travel can be difficult due to congestion and unsafe conditions in some locations. About 170,000 vehicle trips are made each day in the study area. Nearly 89% of these trips are local; 11% are "pass through" trips with origins and destinations outside the study area. With a demand for more than 150,000 local daily trips, this area has a strong need for a robust local road system.

The outcome of this study will be an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which is required for projects of this nature. The EIS will document the process of developing alternatives (see "Alternatives Development Process" on page 3 in this newsletter), the evaluation of potential environmental impacts and the public involvement program. Near the end of the study, the EIS will be available for public review and comment.

A cornerstone of the EIS is the Purpose and Need. As its name implies, the Purpose and Need explains in detail why the study is needed; the key points are summarized above. In November 2013, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approved the study's Purpose and Need. Since part of this study is federally funded, the FHWA's approval was necessary.

Your input is important to the success of this study!



Why do we need another road in this area?

The need for another road, or improvements to the existing network, will take into consideration the changes in travel patterns brought on by the completion of IL Route 255 to US Route 67 in Godfrey. The connectivity from this new highway to the existing road network (particularly the north-south traffic flow) is being analyzed with this study so that IDOT can plan to meet future needs as they develop. This study also takes into consideration a "No Build" scenario.

If a new road is found to be needed, the type of road, whether it is a two-lane local road or a five-lane major road, will be determined further in



the study. The road type will be based on traffic volume and functionality. A road's function is determined by two criteria: 1) whether the road is intended to move vehicles more efficiently; or 2) to provide better access to adjacent land uses. The project stakeholders and the public will have input in determining what type of road would best fit the context of the community at-large.

What's happened since the May 2012 Public Informational Meeting?

DOT held the May 3, 2012 Public Informational Meeting to introduce the study to the public, discuss the area's transportation system and locations of concern, and ask for input on local transportation issues that should be considered in the study. In addition, volunteers were solicited to serve as members on the study's Community Advisory Group (CAG).

The study continues to move forward. IDOT and the consultant team partners (collectively, the "study team") have been busy with study tasks that include:

- Five CAG meetings held to date
- Development of the study's Problem Statement (see "Problem Statement" box)
- Approval of the study's Purpose and Need by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Development, evaluation and refinement of conceptual corridors and alternatives
- Field work, including land surveys, stream evaluations, wetland surveys and pavement and bridge evaluations
- Ongoing public involvement

More information about these activities can be found in this Newsletter.

Community Advisory Group contributes to the process

The Community Advisory Group (CAG) is one of the study's tools for getting public input. This group of approximately 25 individuals – a broad cross-section of the Alton and Godfrey area – includes community leaders, residents, business owners, emergency responders, and other local organizations. As a liaison between IDOT and the community, the CAG helps IDOT understand the community's values and needs. CAG meetings serve as information sharing opportunities between IDOT and CAG members.



As of Summer 2014, five CAG meetings have taken place. Key activities at these meetings included:

- Completion of Context Audit by each member, to help IDOT gain an understanding of community resources and values
- Development of the study's Problem Statement
- Introduction of the alternatives development and environmental impact assessment processes
- Discussion of CAG member perspectives on concepts to address the project's purpose in the US Route 67 and IL Route 3/111 area
- Discussion of CAG member perspectives on concepts that address the project's purpose in the overall study area

Future CAG meetings will be scheduled as needed by the study team.

Problem Statement

Developed with input from the CAG, the Problem Statement summarizes the issues to be addressed by the study and serves as the backbone of the study's Purpose and Need.

"The transportation problems in the study area relate to traffic congestion, poor or mismanaged access and insufficient roadway continuity and connectivity, which contributes to delays and crashes. Traffic is often delayed by trains at the numerous at-grade rail crossings. These improvements need to consider the community's desire to preserve the character of the community, to enhance the safety of the public, to promote more pedestrian/bike facilities and to maximize the economic benefit of IL Route 255."



Alternatives Development Process

The study team is currently in the process of developing, evaluating and refining conceptual alternatives within the study area. The development of alternatives is a multi-step process, as can be seen in the adjoining graphic.

The process begins with the development of the initial conceptual corridors, which are broad bands from 500 to 1,000 feet wide. The corridors are intended to encompass a wide area for the development of a range of transportation improvements. A “fatal flaw” screening is conducted, which evaluates each corridor to determine if a characteristic or part of the corridor would render it infeasible, unable to be constructed, or economically unattainable.

Within these corridors, alternatives – narrower bands intended to represent a specific roadway improvement – are then developed. A number of factors must be considered when developing alternatives, such as adhering to engineering criteria; balancing mobility; community needs; environmental impacts; cost-effectiveness; the need for a safe roadway; and public input.

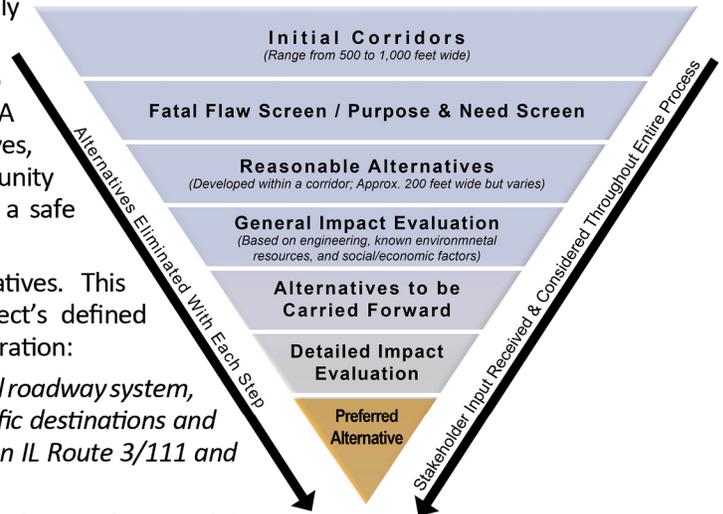
A purpose and need screening is then performed on the alternatives. This screening evaluates how well the alternatives meet the project’s defined Purpose and Need, as approved by the Federal Highway Administration:

“The purpose of the project is to make improvements to the local roadway system, to improve continuity and connectivity between its major traffic destinations and IL Route 255, as well as to provide better connections between IL Route 3/111 and US Route 67.”

Those alternatives that are not deemed feasible for further study are eliminated from further consideration. Those that remain are called reasonable alternatives.

The reasonable alternatives are then evaluated based on a range of engineering, social, economic and environmental criteria. This process allows the study team to compare the alternatives to each other based on their impacts to the community, the natural and cultural environment, and property in addition to assessing how well these alternatives meet the goals of the project. This step provides the study team with an opportunity to identify what alternatives are the most beneficial with the least amount of impacts.

This step leads to the Alternatives to be Carried Forward, for more detailed study. The alternatives and their associated impacts will be presented to the CAG and the public for their input, with the goal of identifying a preferred alternative that satisfies the study’s Purpose and Need.



Public Involvement continues – your input is valuable

Public involvement continues to be an essential part of this study. IDOT’s Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process is being utilized to engage stakeholders and the public continuously throughout the study. CSS is an approach that seeks to draw input on project decisions from a diversity of voices in the community. This input will help IDOT develop an informed solution that meets engineering requirements, addresses safety and mobility, has minimal impact on the environment, and reflects the community’s values.

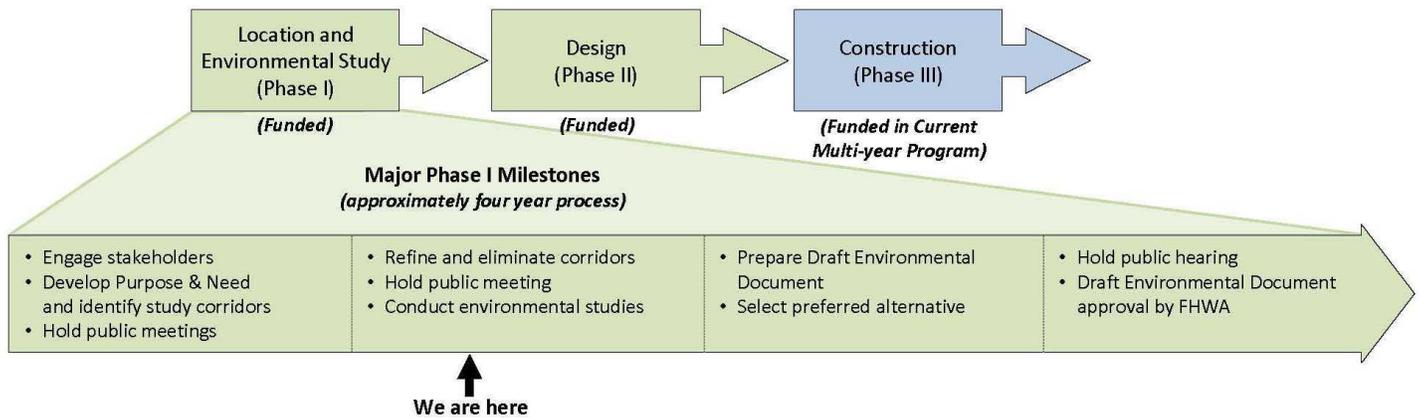
A variety of activities are being implemented to engage stakeholders and the community at large, including public informational meetings, stakeholder meetings, Community Advisory Group (CAG) meetings, study website, and newsletters such as this one.

Your input is important to the success of this study, and we encourage your participation. Visit the study’s new website, www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/Alton-Godfrey-Study, to get study information and provide feedback.

What’s Next?

Over the next several months, the project study team will:

- Schedule the next Public Informational Meeting for late Fall 2014, to bring the public up to date on the study’s progress and present the alternatives developed by the study team
- Refine the alternatives
- Continue field work, including land surveys, stream evaluations, wetland surveys and pavement and bridge evaluations
- Identify environmental considerations associated with alternatives
- Continue to engage the public and solicit comments and feedback



Have a question or need specific information?

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Get Involved and Stay Informed!

The success of this study depends on your participation and input.

Visit our project website, www.idot.illinois.gov/projects/Alton-Godfrey-Study, where you can:

- Get project updates
- Sign up for the mailing list to receive future newsletters
- Send your comments and questions to the study team