



US 20 Galena Bypass Citizen's Advisory Group



MEETING MINUTES

Date: November 13, 2006 cc: All Participants
F/803/02.3460.01

Date of Meeting: October 4, 2006

Meeting Place: Ramada Inn, Galena, IL

Project: US 20 (FAP 301) Galena Bypass
IDOT Job No. D-92-025-04
Teng Project No. 02-3460-01

Subject: October 4, 2006 Citizen's Advisory
Group (C.A.G.) Meeting

PARTICIPANTS:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION/ AFFILIATION</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
Joe Mattingly (JM)	C.A.G. Member	Galena
Beth Baranski (BB)	C. A. G. Member	Galena
James Boho (JB)	C. A. G. Member	Galena
John J. Cox (JC)	C. A. G. Member	Galena
Ed DuPlessis (ED)	C. A. G. Member	Galena
Charles Fach (CF)	C. A. G. Member	Galena
Bill Fawell (BF)	C. A. G. Member	Galena
Melvin E. Gratton (MG)	C. A. G. Member	Galena
Robert J. Johnson (RJ)	C. A. G. Member	Galena
David R. Kriesant (DK)	C. A. G. Member	Galena
Bill Nybo (BN)	C. A. G. Member	Galena
Duane Olivier (DO)	C. A. G. Member	Galena
Valerie Stabenow (VS)	C. A. G. Member	Freeport

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION/ AFFILIATION</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
Masood Ahmad (MA)	IDOT Dist 2	Dixon
Mark Nardini (MN)	IDOT Dist 2	Dixon
Richard Maggi (RM)	IDOT Dist 2	Dixon
Cassandra Rodgers (CR)	IDOT Dist 2	Dixon
Steve Robery (SR)	IDOT Dist-2	Dixon
Joe Hoerner (JH)	Teng and Associates, Inc	Chicago
Mark Dvorak (MD)	Teng and Associates, Inc	Chicago
Joe Murphy (JTM)	Teng and Associates, Inc	Chicago

This meeting was held to review the May 18, 2006 Public Meeting, and discuss the “Reforestation and Prairie Mitigation Report”, landscape design concepts, wildlife crossing issues, and signage and tourism. The following is the summary of items discussed and conclusions reached:

1. Replay of Public Meeting Video Presentation at 5:30 pm
The video presentation from the Public Meeting was replayed at 5:30 pm, prior to the formal start of the meeting at 6:00 pm.
2. Introductions/Roll Call
The meeting began with a roll call of all attendees present at 6:00 pm (see participants list above).
3. Recap of Public Meeting
Joe Hoerner recapped the May 18, 2006 Public Meeting, and reiterated that the Public Meeting Summary Memorandum is available on the Galena Bypass Website.
4. Discussion / Questions of Public Meeting
CAG members were overall very pleased with the meeting and the exhibits. They were pleased that everyone at the meeting had time to express their comments and that issues related to the entire corridor were addressed in addition to issues related only to the bypass. They were pleased also that IDOT sent out additional information via mail to interested attendees. BF mentioned that there was one property owner located along the proposed alignment who did not receive notice of the public meeting by mail. BF notified the property owner by phone and they were able to attend the meeting. SR indicated that IDOT/Teng will make sure that the property owner’s information is on the current mailing list. All property owners along the alignment with ROW impacts should already be on the mailing list. It was later verified that the property owner was in fact on the mailing list. The property owner will be notified by phone to verify receipt of any future mailings.

5. Reforestation and Prairie Mitigation Presentation

JTM summarized results from the "Reforestation/Prairie Mitigation Report".

6. Reforestation and Prairie Mitigation Questions

JH read aloud comments from Chris Kirkpatrick and Jim Rachuy emailed on October 4, 2006. These comments are included in the meeting minutes by attachment, following page 7. Responses to these questions are provided below.

Chris Kirkpatrick and Jim Rachuy Questions:

1. IDOT has not yet determined how these mitigation sites will be managed in the future. IDOT will probably have a maintenance contract for the first two or three years after planting. IDOT does not have the staff to manage these sites. IDOT would be interested in having local groups become involved in future maintenance, if we can get them access to the sites. IDNR would manage any sites that we give them, but they would only be interested in acquiring sites near their property. That is why it would be beneficial to find mitigation sites adjacent to IDNR property, because they would be able to manage the sites over the long term.
2. The District proposes to plant the mitigation sites with 50 trees per acre and use balled and burlapped trees that are 1¾" in diameter. By planting fewer trees, we will be able to plant larger trees and provide predator protection around each individual tree. IDOT is especially concerned about protecting the trees from deer impacts. IDOT is proposing to plant the IDOT seed mix called "Low Profile Native Grass". This mix includes Little Bluestem, Side-Oats Grama, Prairie Dropseed, and Canada Wild Rye. This will provide cover for the areas while the trees are growing. This will make a savanna type habitat, because the trees won't be large enough to provide shade for woodland wildflower species at the beginning. Hopefully these areas will develop, through succession, into mature forests.
3. IDOT will add any species to the prairie mix that you recommend, as long as they are available commercially.
4. IDOT agrees that we should only plant species native to Northwestern Illinois. We will include Hazelnut along the roadsides. We added the flowering crab apple trees because a C.A.G. member previously requested that we plant some flowering trees as well.
5. This was not written on the slides that were issued in advance, but IDOT is planning to plant our prairie grass seed mix "Class 4 – Native Grass" on all the IDOT ROW.

Additional questions/comments included the following:

- JB stated that the standard for forest mitigation is 300 trees per acre. RM clarified that this standard is for seedlings, and that there is only a 1/3 survival rate with this size. RM stated that IDOT has extensive experience using balled and burlapped trees at 50 per acre. VS noted that this method was used near Freeport and that it worked very well. RM did not recommend planting seedlings due to the low survival rate, difficulty protecting from animals, and the additional maintenance and management that is required.
- JB suggested that a subcommittee be formed so that Jim Rachuy and Chris Kirkpatrick can be involved to further discuss these issues due to their extensive knowledge within the surrounding area and the present topic. C.A.G. Members agreed to forming a subcommittee, and agreed that IDOT, Teng and interested C.A.G members would meet in a neutral setting such as Freeport. JH will post a meeting request on the Web Forum – the meeting is anticipated to take place within the next few weeks.
- ED inquired if tree planting would begin in 2008. RM responded that it will probably be much later as the land has not yet been acquired and funding to purchase the property has not yet been obtained.
- MG inquired about soil conditions and invasive species. RM responded that soil testing was completed to determine the suitability for planting trees. With regard to invasive species, IDOT uses herbicides, hand-pulling, chain sawing and mowing, however, it is still very difficult to achieve success in eliminating all invasive species. JM stated that herbicide from previous agricultural crops leaching in soil is a concern in the mitigation area; RM concurred.

7. Landscape Concepts Presentation

JTM presented general landscape concepts.

- ED brought up the idea of planting trees for profit to be harvested. IDOT clarified that it is a requirement that forest/tree mitigation be implemented on all IDOT projects by reforestation on a “tree for tree” or “acre for acre” basis. Harvesting the trees would be counter-productive to the mitigation process. VS added that she has tried in past to sell trees from her property but had difficulty finding buyers.

8. Wildlife Crossings Presentation

MD discussed issues pertaining to wildlife crossings.

IDOT is proposing deer crossing accommodations (as per the EIS Commitments) at each of the proposed bridges (Hughlett Branch, Galena River, Stagecoach Trail and Heller Pond). Small animal crossings will be provided at various drainage culverts along the alignment as habitat dictates. IDOT and Teng are currently studying the feasibility of providing an additional deer crossing between Hughlett Branch and the Galena River.

However, there are concerns due to the required length of the crossing and the ability to design an effective crossing that will be used by the deer. This topic will be further discussed during the proposed Subcommittee Meeting.

Questions/comments included the following:

- MD stated that there will be fencing along the ROW to channel deer to the crossings.
- ED inquired as to the EIS's standards to determine crossings. CR stated that the Illinois Natural History Survey conducted a field survey of the project area and did not determine any major crossing locations.
- CR stated that existing habitat will help to determine logical locations for wildlife crossing placement; placement will be common-sense based. IDOT/Teng reiterated that there are different reports stating different recommendations and solutions for wildlife crossings. However, no single set of adopted wildlife crossing standards is currently in use.
- BF commented on existing technology of electric eye system installed on other highways that warns motorists when deer are in the area. This will be investigated further.
- Deer fencing was discussed; including horizontal fences that deter deer crossings.
- JB stressed the importance of purchasing future mitigation parcels along the US 20 alignment such as at Tapley Woods. CR commented that it is also IDOT's preference to mitigate along the selected alignment as much as possible, but that sites should be selected such that they expand existing forest habitats (such as Tapley Woods). However, based on the limited availability, some offsite mitigation may be unavoidable.

9. Signage/Tourism Presentation

JH discussed topics related to signage and tourism including standard informational signage (brown, blue and green signs), Special Town Name Signs, and the Business Logo Program. Requirements for advertising signs located outside the ROW were also discussed.

Questions/comments included the following:

- VS commented on some billboards erected on a farm field just east of the existing Freeport Bypass. MN noted that even though it is a corn field, it is actually designated as commercial, and stated that all approved signs should have green permit tags affixed to them.
- ED inquired if businesses pay for privilege to be on sign logo. MA stated that fees are assessed and the money goes to the state general funds, not roadway funds.

10. Other Topics

JH opened the floor to other topics.

- The status of the emergency entrance at Buckhill Road was questioned. SR stated that Teng has done some preliminary studies and that the next step is to coordinate with the various fire and emergency services.
- BF brought up the topic of noise/sound pollution; concern that there will be a constant din from traffic along the bypass, specifically due to traffic reverberation on the bridge over the Galena River. Others expressed concern that maintaining an open viewshed conflicts with noise abatement.
- IDOT and Teng discussed the principles of sound waves: while it is unavoidable that the sound waves will carry down the river valley to the town, the undulating terrain over 1.3 miles will aid in absorbing and diffracting the sound such that the affect should be reduced. MD stated when studying affects of noise along a highway project, noise levels above 67 decibels require further evaluation and possible need for noise walls. MD also stated that typically noise generated from new roadways has the greatest impact to concerned locations that are within 500 feet from the roadway. Teng stated it is not anticipated that this project will increase the noise levels in the town of Galena by more than 1 or 2 decibels. MN agreed to further research noise levels on similar projects and present their results to the C.A.G.
- RJ, JB and VS inquired about overlook/pull-offs. IDOT and Teng commented that previous discussions of viewsheds of downtown Galena only identified a short section near Stagecoach Trail Bridge. Any overlook off a freeway would need standard entrance and exit ramp terminal geometry which would make the geometry of the overlooks extremely long and not feasible near Stagecoach Trail. SR also stated that we must adhere to the restrictions of the R.O.W. JB recognized these limitations and suggested that this still be investigated near Buckhill Road. Teng and IDOT plan to present additional information at the next C.A.G. Meeting.
- The issue of possible project interruption due to cultural conflicts, ie. cemetery conflicts, etc. was discussed. MN stated that a total archeological survey of the proposed project corridor has been completed. The results are currently being reviewed and compared against project construction limits. It is not anticipated that the impacts will be significant and at this time no delays due to impacts to archeological resources are expected.

11. Meeting Recap

JH conducted a meeting recap.

- Reforestation/Landscape/Wildlife topics are available on the C.A.G. Forum website for members to submit additional questions/comments.
- A meeting will be scheduled with members Chris Kirkpatrick and Jim Rachuy and other C.A.G. Members interested in forming a Subcommittee on reforestation, prairie mitigation, landscaping and wildlife. The purpose of the meeting will be to

October 4, 2006 Meeting Minutes

November 13, 2006

Page 7

further discuss these topics. The meeting will be scheduled within the next few weeks. (the meeting was subsequently scheduled for October 19, 2006 at 1:30 pm at the Freeport City Hall)

- Teng and IDOT will attempt to gather reforestation/landscape/wildlife follow-up information for the next C.A.G. Meeting; also, they will continue to investigate emergency road access, noise level investigations, as well as overlook/pull-off locations.
- JH suggested that the group hold the dates of November 15 and 16 open for the next C.A.G. Meeting.

The foregoing is the writer's understanding of the matters discussed and the conclusions reached in summary form. This will become part of the project record and is the basis upon which we will proceed

Very truly yours,

TENG & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Joe Murphy

Joe Murphy
Landscape Designer