

**Illinois NEPA/404 Merger Meeting  
September 20, 2017**

**USEPA – Region 5  
77 West Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL**

**Federal Highway  
Administration  
3250 Executive Park Drive  
Springfield, IL 62703  
Training Room**

**12<sup>th</sup> Floor – Lake Ontario Room**

**10 am – 12 noon**

- Il 83/137, (IL Route 132 to east of US Highway 45), District 1, Lake County (45 min)
  - Concurrence – preferred alternative
- Deerfield Road (IL 21 to Saunders Road), District 1, Lake County (60 min)
  - Information (Project update and range of alternatives)
- I-55 at IL 59, District 1, Will County (30 min)
  - Information (Project introduction)

**12 noon – 1:30 pm**

**LUNCH**

**1:30 pm – 4:00 pm**

- I-80 from Ridge Road to US Route 30, District 1, Will County (45 min)
  - Information (Project update)
- North Lake Shore Drive from East Grand Ave to West Hollywood Ave, District 1, Cook County (60 min)
  - Information
- Chicago, Roadway Improvements to Support the Update to the South Lakefront Framework Plan.
  - Information - Potential roadway improvements in and around Jackson Park to support the update to the South Lakeshore Framework Plan, which includes the proposed Obama Presidential Center and Jackson Park Golf Course. The proposed scope of work includes roadway closures and improvements to adjacent roadways.

**Sign-in Sheet**  
**NEPA-404 Merger Meeting**  
**September 20, 2017**

**District 1 - IL 83/137 From IL Rte 132 to east of US 45 (Lake Co)**  
**Concurrence - Preferred Alternative**

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## NEPA/404 Merger Meeting Summary

September 20, 2017

**IDOT District 1, Lake County  
IL 83/137 from IL Rte 132 to east of US Hwy 45  
Environmental Assessment  
Concurrence – Preferred Alternative**

### **DECISIONS:**

Concurrence requested and received from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), and Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA). U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) were not present at the time of decision.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

Move forward with refinement of the preferred alternative, and completion of the Environmental Assessment. It is anticipated that a Community Advisory Group meeting and a Public Meeting will occur in early 2018, with a public hearing in Summer 2018.

### **DISCUSSION:**

This is the fifth presentation of the project to the NEPA/404 merger team. The project introduction was presented in September 2012. The project's Purpose and Need Statement was presented for concurrence in June 2013 (concurrence was received in July 2013). Information regarding the Alternatives to be Carried Forward was presented in June 2016, with concurrence on the Alternatives Carried Forward in September 2016. The purpose of the current presentation was to discuss concerns and receive concurrence on the Preferred Alternative. The presentation was conducted by Steve Schilke of IDOT District One.

The project began in 2012, and the Phase 1 analysis is scheduled to be complete in 2018. The project corridor was divided into three sections based on the area's adjacent land uses and development densities, as well as existing roadway characteristics: the North Section (IL 83 from IL 132 to Washington Street), the Central Section (IL 83 from Washington Street to IL 120), and the South Section (IL 137 from IL 120 to east of U.S. 45). There are two areas of omission in the project area: the IL 83/Rollins Road intersection (constructed), and the IL 120/Atkinson Road intersection (currently in Phase 2 Design).

Alternatives were developed within each of the three sections.

- A No Build Alternative will be retained throughout the EA. However, without improvements, the project corridor will have traffic volumes over roadway capacity by 2040.
- Various four-lane alternatives were studied, with various median types, lane widths, and other features. Alternatives were developed and refined to reduce impacts to or avoid

various environmental resources, such as the Rollins Savanna Forest Preserve, schools, homes, parks, and wetlands. At the Alternatives to be Carried Forward merger meeting, Soren Hall (USACE) requested that the project team investigate “hybrid” alternatives for each section of the Preferred Alternative. A hybrid alternative would combine alternatives to be least environmentally impacting and/or incorporate locally preferred options.

- North section:
  - N-1: 4-lanes with raised curb median
  - N-1A: 4-lanes with flush center turn lane
  - N-1B (Section 4(f) avoidance alternative): 4-lanes with narrow raised median
  - N-1C (Rollins Savanna Wetland Avoidance Alternative): 4-lanes with narrow raised median
  - North Section Hybrid Alternative: Combination of N-1, N-1A, N-1B
- Central section:
  - C-1: 4-lanes with barrier median
  - C-2: 4-lanes with flush center turn lane
  - C-3: 4-lanes with narrow barrier median and roundabouts
  - Central Section Hybrid Alternative: Combination of C-1 and C-2
- South section:
  - S-2: 4-lanes with 30’ depressed median
  - S-2A: 4-lanes with 30’ median and adjacent path
  - S-2B: 4-lanes with 30’ median, and path utilized through Bull Creek Subdivision
  - South Section Hybrid Alternative:
    - A rural cross section (55 mph) was studied for the South Section first. Ultimately, an urban cross section (45 mph) was recommended for part of the South Section in order to reduce the road footprint and reduce impacts to Bull Creek Subdivision.
    - Combination of Modified S-2 (with an urban cross section), S-2, S-2A, and S-2B

In all sections, the Hybrid Alternative was found to be the least impacting and/or locally preferred option. In the North Section, the combination of N-1, N-1A, and N-1B minimized wetland impacts as much as practicable while also avoiding Section 4(f) impacts at Yogi Bear Park and Rollins Savanna Forest Preserve. In the Central Section, the combination of C-1 and C-2 had fewer impacts than the C-3 roundabouts alternative; the Village of Grayslake did not support the roundabouts alternative, and wished to include sections of C-2 design (flush median) for business access. In the South Section refinement to include a portion of urban cross section (45 mph) reduced residential impacts.

Steve Schilke noted that there is a large wetland complex within the IL 120/Atkinson Road omission area. The IL 83/137 project does not currently impact this wetland complex, as it is within the omission area. However, the IL 120/Atkinson Road project is not complete. If the IL

83/137 project will ultimately be completed before the IL 120/Atkinson project, the IL 83 project will assume wetland impacts in this omission area as part of the IL 83 project area.

Two questions were received by merger agencies:

1. David Halpin (IHPA) asked for details on the historic properties that the document shows as impacted.
  - a. Jamie Bents stated that the two historic properties shown as impacted in the Preferred Alternative document are both residential properties (one property also includes a sign shop). The impact is strip right-of-way only, and does not impact structures. It is anticipated that refinements to the Preferred Alternative will avoid these right-of-way impacts.
  - b. If impacts cannot be avoided from the Preferred Alternative, impacts will be coordinated with IDOT and IHPA.
  - c. Vanessa Ruiz indicated that the project already has clearance on cultural resources.
  
2. Julie Rimbault (USACE) asked if the project stops before Bull Creek.
  - a. Steve Schilke stated the project stops before crossing Bull Creek. However, IDOT recognizes that there may be some environmental impacts from the project to the Bull Creek area, which will be studied in the EA. There is an in-progress bridge condition report for the Bull Creek bridge. If the bridge is found to need replacement, this will be included in the IL 83/137 project.

**Sign-in Sheet  
NEPA-404 Merger Meeting  
September 20, 2017**

**District 1 - Deerfield Road from IL 21 to Saunders Road (Lake County)  
Information: Project update and range of alternatives**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>e-mail address</b>	<b>Participation Location</b>
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**IDOT District 1, Lake County  
Deerfield Road (CH 11) from Milwaukee Avenue (US 45/ IL 21) to Saunders/ Riverwoods  
Road (CH 58)  
Environmental Assessment  
Information – project update and range of alternatives**

**DECISIONS:**

No concurrence was sought as the presentation was for informational purposes pertaining to Purpose and Need updates, second Stakeholder Involvement Group (SIG) meeting, environmental coordination, range of alternatives, and alternatives evaluation criteria. All resource/regulatory agencies in attendance agreed that the updates to the Purpose and Need would not require Concurrence Point #1 to be revisited (i.e., Purpose and Need concurrence remains valid).

**NEXT STEPS:**

FHWA will distribute the revised Purpose and Need document (dated September 15, 2017) to the resource and regulatory agencies for review and comment. The third SIG meeting is tentatively scheduled for November/December 2017 and will focus on seeking input on the range of alternatives, alternatives evaluation, and the alternatives to be carried forward. The second Public Information Meeting is anticipated for early 2018. Concurrence on “Alternatives Carried Forward” will be sought in February 2018 and concurrence on the “Preferred Alternative” will be sought in September 2018.

**DISCUSSION:**

This was the third presentation of the project to the NEPA/404 Merger team. Lake County Division of Transportation (LCDOT) is the lead agency for the project with Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd (CBBEL) as the lead consulting engineer. Matthew Huffman of CBBEL utilized a PowerPoint presentation to facilitate the meeting presentation and discussion.

An informational packet was distributed in advance of the meeting, and included a project information sheet, project location map, second SIG meeting summary, range of alternative typical sections, traffic projections exhibit, and draft alternative evaluation table. Project related material was provided at the meeting and included:

- Informational packet
- PowerPoint presentation slides
- Purpose and Need dated September 15, 2017
- CD with wetland delineation report (revised August 7, 2017)

A recap was provided for the June 2017 meeting, which consisted of describing the SIG input on the preliminary Purpose and Need and discussing the responses to agency comments on the Purpose and Need. Concurrence was received by all regulatory and resource agencies pending

minor comments to address following the meeting. A revised version of the Purpose and Need was provided on June 22, 2017 to IDOT and FHWA for distribution to the regulatory and resource agencies.

Further discussion on the Purpose and Need occurred at the second SIG meeting held on June 28, 2017. The SIG requested clarification on the CMAP population and employment growth projections for Riverwoods because higher percent growths (22.6% and 19.4%, respectively) were projected than anticipated for a fully built-out community. The project team coordinated with CMAP to request additional information and a Technical Memorandum was prepared to address the comments and questions on the population, employment, and travel demand projections. Additional information was added to the Purpose and Need in Section 1.2.2 Regional Growth, Section 1.2.3 Travel Demand, and Section 2.1 Capacity. The revised Purpose and Need (in “track changes”) was provided and the additional information that was reviewed in detail. No narrative from the June 22nd version of the Purpose and Need (which received concurrence from the regulatory and resource agencies) was removed or revised. USEPA asked whether any of the data within the Purpose and Need changed. CBBEL replied that no data or results changed; the latest revisions provide more detailed data and clarification. The agencies confirmed that the Purpose and Need concurrence point does not need to be revisited.

At the second SIG meeting, the range of alternatives, the alternative evaluation process, and the alternative evaluation criteria were presented and discussed via a large group workshop. General comments and input from the SIG included a desire to minimize the footprint width to minimize property and tree impacts. Therefore, a landscaped barrier median is undesirable due to the width, and some SIG members were advocates for looking at an intersection-only improvement (at Deerfield Road and Milwaukee Avenue). There were also concerns for safety and speed with alternatives that included additional lanes. Water quality concerns were raised if an urban section with curb and gutter is implemented. The next SIG meeting is planned for late 2017 with the objective to share the range of alternatives and evaluation results, and recommendation on the alternatives to be carried forward. Public Information Meeting #2 is targeted for early 2018.

The wetland delineation report has been revised with the preliminary jurisdictional determination/boundary verification (PJD/BV) completed through coordination with the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission (LCSMC) and the USACE. There is a total of 17 wetlands/waters of the US along Deerfield Road between Milwaukee Avenue and Saunders/Riverwoods Road with a high concentration near Thorngate Creek and the Des Plaines River. The USACE stated that even though a PJD/BV has been completed, their review (with respect to NEPA) will consider all wetlands/waters of the US within the corridor unless a final jurisdictional determination is submitted. CBBEL stated that the USACE (Mike Murphy) participated in the PJD/BV and that a final jurisdictional determination is not anticipated to be submitted during Phase I Engineering. If necessary, a request for a final jurisdictional determination would be submitted during Phase II Engineering.

Cultural coordination SHPO resulted in one National Register Historic Place (NHRP) historic district within the Ryerson Nature Preserve at the Des Plaines River and nine buildings that warrant NHRP consideration. The Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid survey was completed this

summer. USEPA asked what resulted from the survey. CBBEL stated that the results of the biological surveys have not been provided to the project team yet. The project team will share the results once available. CBBEL indicated that they are approaching the alternatives development with the intent to avoid, as best as possible, the Ryerson Nature Preserve and historic district, and high-quality wetland resources. It was recognized by the project team that symmetrical widening would not be appropriate for this corridor and alignment shifts will be investigated.

The range of alternatives to be studied include a rural (shoulder and ditch) 2-lane, rural 3-lane, urban (curb and gutter) 3-lane, urban 4-lane, and urban 5-lane. Additional design elements include an 8-foot wide multi-use path, opposing sidewalk for all alternatives, and 11-foot travel lanes. Intersection improvements will be investigated at the three signalized intersections. A large intersection improvement is anticipated at Milwaukee Avenue. A development project is proposed at the northwest and southwest quadrants of the Milwaukee Avenue intersection. The developer is making improvements at the Milwaukee Avenue intersection as a part of the LCDOT and IDOT permits. From the traffic modeling being conducted with our study additional through lanes are likely on Milwaukee Avenue. USEPA asked who is reviewing the development. CBBEL stated the Village of Buffalo Grove is reviewing the site plans, LCDOT will approve the access permit to Deerfield Road, and IDOT will approve the access permit to Milwaukee Avenue. Improvements at Portwine Road are dependent on the alternative, and improvements at Saunders/ Riverwood Road are anticipated to be minimal.

Traffic projections were obtained from CMAP for Deerfield Road including 2040 No-Build (20,200), 3-lane (20,600), 4-lane (23,100) and 5-lane (23,300) alternatives. There is about a 12 percent increase in projected traffic by adding a second through lane along Deerfield Road. USEPA asked why a 2-lane alternative is included in the range of alternatives if the traffic volumes require a 4-lane roadway section based on highway standards. CBBEL stated that while the traffic volumes are within the range to provide a 4-lane roadway section, a 2-lane roadway alternative is being evaluated to understand how improving the signalized intersections will improve the capacity and performance of Deerfield Road. Additionally, the SIG supports this alternative to be evaluated as an “intersection-only” improvement where Deerfield Road is rebuilt in kind and improvements are made at the intersections, specifically the Milwaukee Avenue intersection.

IDOT asked if the bike friendly shoulder being incorporated for all alternatives is a marked bike lane and if it would be safe for users. CBBEL explained that the bike friendly shoulder is currently included in the LCDOT county highway standards to provide on-road accommodations for experienced cyclists. The bike friendly shoulder is not a marked bike lane. It is anticipated that less experienced bicyclists would use the proposed off-road multi-use path.

The alternatives evaluation criteria were presented, which consists of a table to be utilized to summarize the results for the range of alternatives. This table will be used as a tool to evaluate how each alternative performs relative to one another. The main categories of the alternative evaluation criteria are transportation, mobility, safety, non-motorized, environmental resources, socio-economic, and cost.

USEPA asked when the preferred alternative would be chosen and the Environmental Assessment (EA) distributed. CBBEL stated that a preferred alternative is likely a year away with the Public Hearing proposed in late 2018. The EA would be finalized after the Public Hearing in early 2019, with a spring 2019 Phase I completion anticipated. IDOT-BDE asked if the wetland report has been submitted to Central Office. CBBEL will follow up with IDOT-BLRS to see if the report was forwarded to BDE.

**Sign-in Sheet  
NEPA-404 Merger Meeting  
September 20, 2017**

**District 1 - I-55 at IL 59 (Will County)  
Information: Project introduction**

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**IDOT District 1, Will County  
I-55 at IL 59  
Environmental Assessment  
Information – project introduction**

**DECISIONS:** No decisions were requested.

**NEXT STEPS:** Purpose and Need will be presented in February 2018.

**DISCUSSION:**

This was the first NEPA/404 presentation of this project. The purpose of this meeting is to serve as a project introduction of this Phase I Study, to present proposed project study limits, background for initiation of the project, proposed public involvement, environmental resources, and the EA Timeline. In advance of the merger meeting, document providing background information related to the project area was distributed to the agencies. IDOT is working in partnership with the City of Joliet in the development of this study.

The consultant presented a PowerPoint presentation to the group.

The project study limits include the entire area within the following bounded roadways:

- Approximately 2.5 miles, south to north, between I-80 and US 52
- Approximately 2.5 miles, west to east, between River Road and Houbolt Road

Agencies having jurisdiction over main roadways within the project study area include:

Route & Classification	Agency with Jurisdiction
I-55 (Interstate)	IDOT
I-80 (Interstate)	IDOT
US 52 (Other Principal Arterial)	IDOT
IL 59 (Strategic Regional Arterial)	IDOT
Houbolt Road (Minor Arterial)	City of Joliet
McDonough Street (Major Collector)	City of Joliet
Seil Road (Major Collector)	Village of Shorewood
Mound Road/215 <sup>th</sup> Street (Major Collector)	Village of Shorewood
County Farm Road (Local Street)	Troy Township
Rock Run Drive (Local Street)	Troy Township

**Project Background** – Prior to the initiation of this I-55 Phase I study, recent studies have been performed over the last two years on the Joliet Regional Gateway Project (JRGP). The JRGP has been presented on multiple occasions to FHWA through the Bureau of Local Roads. As part of that JRGP study, extensive traffic data collection and evaluation, crash data collection

and analysis, environmental screening and research and wetland investigations have been performed.

A key element identified in the JRPG study was the fact that within an extended 9.2 mile segment of I-55 between Mound Road (south of I-80) and US 30 (north of US 52), only one full movement interchange exists at US 52, and one partial access/movement interchange exists at IL 59 (NB from I-55/SB to I-55). Additionally, within this 9.2 mile segment, only two system links cross and connect traffic from west of I-55 to east of I-55, at Black Road and Caton Farm Road. Neither cross-road has direct access to I-55. The result of this condition is the funneling of traffic to US 52 from many regions and indirect routes in order to access I-55.

Crash data was presented for the years 2012-2014. It was noted that crash data for the year 2015 had recently been made available and will be incorporated. Within the project study area, multiple segments and intersections along US 52 have been annually classified as 5% accident locations, above the state average for their facility type. In the project study area, 5 fatalities occurred, with two of the five occurring along US 52. .

**Public Involvement** – Context Sensitive Solution (CSS) level Public Involvement is proposed to be performed within this study, which includes development of a Project Study Group and a Community Advisory Group. The Community Advisory Group is scheduled to meet six times over the course of the study period, strategically placed such that two CAG meetings will generally occur within each of the NEPA 404 Concurrence Point time frames. A minimum of four (4) 404 Merger presentations are proposed, plus one field coordination meeting during the alternatives analysis stage of the study. A project dedicated website was developed and activated early in the study and has been utilized in promotion of the first public meeting, with context audit, exhibits and presentation materials posted two weeks prior to the public meeting for advanced viewing. A total of three public meetings, plus one public hearing are to be held for this project. A summary of the first public meeting (September 14<sup>th</sup>) was presented, detailing attendance, CAG sign-up, on-site access to commenting and project survey, and recurring comments received. A description of the first CAG (scheduled for October 10, 2017) was also summarized.

Local Agency and stakeholder meetings have taken place with:

- City of Joliet
- Joliet Park District (parks and airport)
- Village of Shorewood (Roadways, facilities and parks)
- Troy Township
- Forest Preserve District of Will County

**Environmental Resources** – There are many environmental resources identified within the project study area. To date, known resources include:

- Hammel Woods Forest Preserve
- Colvin Grove/Rock Run Forest Preserve
- Joliet Junior College (Trails and Natural Areas)

- Rock Run Greenway Trail
- DuPage River Trail
- Wetlands and floodplains along the DuPage River and Rock Run
- Ten (10) municipal parks
- Wildlife habitat

Multiple guests at the first public meeting expressed sensitivity to the Joliet Jr. College (JJC) natural areas which include a 3-acre fen and prairie restoration area at the end limits of the college property.

Preliminary investigations also have identified a 1930 hangar building, located at the Joliet Regional Airport, as listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

**Project Schedule and EA Timeline** – The Project Schedule was presented and EA Timeline was previously distributed with advanced background materials. It is based on aggressive 24-month duration, and incorporates introduction and concurrence point presentations. Today’s “Information Only” Project Introduction is the first.

**Sign-in Sheet  
NEPA-404 Merger Meeting  
September 20, 2017**

**District 1 - I-80 from Ridge Road to US 30 (Will County)  
Information: Project update**

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**IDOT District 1, Will County  
I-80 from Ridge Road to US Route 30  
Environmental Assessment  
Information – project update**

**DECISIONS:**

None requested, none given.

**NEXT STEPS:**

Preferred alternative concurrence (Feb 2018)

**DISCUSSION:**

This was the sixth presentation for the I-80, Ridge Road to US Route 30 project. The purpose of this meeting was to provide an information-only presentation on the project status and the Preferred Alternative. Matt Fuller of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) facilitated the meeting and prompted self-introductions. Steve Schilke of the Illinois Department of Transportation provided a brief project introduction. IDOT's consultant HBP Illinois Partners (HBP), a joint venture comprised of HNTB, Bowman, Barrett, and Patrick Engineering, then presented the PowerPoint.

The items that were discussed during this presentation included the project study area, Purpose & Need review, project update, recent updates/refinements to the Build Alternatives, and the Preliminary Preferred Alternative. The Project Study Team is continuing with the evaluation of the Build Alternatives and it is the team's intention to come back to this group in February 2018 to seek concurrence on the Preferred Alternative.

The 16 mile project extends along I-80 from Ridge Road on the west to US Route 30 on the east. The project resides within Will, Kendall, and Grundy Counties and traverses six municipalities (City of Joliet and the Villages of Minooka, Channahon, Shorewood, Rockdale, and New Lenox). The Ridge Road interchange was reconstructed approximately 10 years ago and is a major interchange with a heavily traveled north-south highway. The US Route 30 interchange was the subject of a separate recently completed study by IDOT. As such, this project has logical termini and independent utility.

The Purpose & Need for this study is to provide an improved transportation system along Interstate 80 from Ridge Road to US Route 30. This will be accomplished by improving regional and local travel and access, improving facility condition and design, and improving safety for all users. NEPA concurrence on the Purpose & Need was given on March 1, 2012 and NEPA concurrence on the Alternatives to be Carried Forward was given on February 22, 2017. Since then, the Project Study Team has refined the Mainline Alternatives, refined the

Des Plaines River (DPR) Bridge Alignment Alternatives, and refined the Interchange Alternatives.

Upcoming stakeholder and public outreach events for the study include the 6<sup>th</sup> Project Working Group (PWG) Meeting and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Public Meeting on the Range of Alternatives in 2017. Then in 2018, with the release of the EA, the 7<sup>th</sup> PWG Meeting and the Public Hearing will be held on the Preferred Alternative.

The Project Study Team evaluated a No-Build Alternative, as well as project Build Alternatives that include mainline, bridges including the DPR Bridge, and interchange alternatives.

For the mainline alternatives, the Pavement Replacement Alternative for the I-80 mainline will be carried forward to address the pavement age and condition. The Auxiliary Lanes Alternative will also be carried forward to improve traffic flow and levels of service, as well as safety issues along the corridor. I-80 is a four-lane divided freeway with six lanes between Center and Chicago Streets. An exhibit was shown depicting the auxiliary lanes that are currently being considered as part of this project. This includes an added auxiliary lane between I-55 and Houbolt Road. This addresses geometric lane drop issues in the eastbound direction from the proposed turbine ramp at I-55 and the traffic volumes that are anticipated to be generated due to the potential Houbolt Road bridge over the DPR to the south. The existing auxiliary lane will be extended in each direction between Larkin Avenue and Center Street, where high traffic volumes were observed, as well as just east of Richards Street to Briggs Street to accommodate lane transitions. Lastly, the bridge over the DPR will be built with four lanes in each direction and all four lanes will be opened up to traffic between Center Street and Chicago Street.

With the reconstruction of I-80 including the Auxiliary Lane Alternative, and to allow for compatibility with the future addition of a through travel lane in each direction, the shifting of the pavement can be performed two ways. An exhibit was presented depicting them. The first cross-section on the exhibit showed the shift to the outside whereby the future lane will be added to inside, and the second cross-section on the exhibit depicts the shift to the inside whereby the future lane will be added to the outside. To minimize lane shifts and provide consistency for the motoring public, as well as maximize the salvageability of the current project, the plan is to proceed with shifting to the inside and closing the median from US 30 to I-55 and shifting to the outside and leaving the median open from I-55 to Ridge Road.

At the last NEPA/404 Merger Meeting, two alignment alternatives for the major crossing at the DPR were presented. Since that time, the specific boundary of the Brandon Road Lock and Dam Historic District has been defined. This district extends from the south near the Brandon Road Lock and Dam to approximately 150' north of the existing I-80 northern bridge. Based on this, and a more detailed evaluation of geometric and safety features, a third alignment alternative was developed, which is essentially a variation of the previously presented North Alignment.

The previously presented north alignment shift alternative results in 20 residential and two commercial relocations in a high minority area, including the Ozinga plant on the west bank. It impacts 0.2 acres of wetlands. The previously presented south alignment shift alternative

results in eight residential relocations in a high minority area and impacts 0.2 acres of wetlands. The wetland impact is below the existing DPR bridge along the west bank of the river.

The refined north alignment alternative is shifted approximately 300 feet north of the existing bridge and was shown to the group. It has several improved geometric and safety aspects over the previous two alignments. It improves sight distance and design speed on the mainline, improves the design speed of the loop ramp entering eastbound I-80 from Center Street, and improves maintenance of traffic conditions during construction. Environmental impacts for this alternative are different than the first two. This alternative results in 33 residential and two commercial relocations in a high minority area, however it has no wetland impacts. A comparison table of all three alignment alternatives was presented. In summary, the new alignment results in several more residential impacts and similar commercial impacts as the north alignment. It results in improved sight distance for the mainline, which improves design speed and safety. The loop ramp from Center Street to eastbound I-80 improves from curves of 20 and 25 mph to curves of 25 and 50 mph (minimum required = 30 mph). Maintenance of traffic during construction is also improved because both new bridges can be constructed completely with no impact to the two existing truss bridges. Wetland impacts are also avoided with this alignment. Finally, this alignment pushes the new bridges closer to the northern limit of the Brandon Road Lock and Dam Historic District. For these reasons, IDOT is recommending this new north alignment be included as part of the Preferred Alternative.

Interchange alternatives were discussed next. There are four interchanges that were presented at the last meeting that had multiple alternatives proposed. At I-55 one alternative was carried forward, at Larkin Avenue and Center Street, two alternatives were carried forward, and at Chicago Street, four alternatives were carried forward.

At I-55, Interchange Alternative 1 creates a road parallel to I-80 that separates eastbound traffic traveling to and from I-55 from the I-80 mainline, which is also called a collector-distributor, or C-D road. The C-D road improves traffic flow on I-80 in the eastbound weave area. The southbound to eastbound loop ramp requires two lanes, but it cannot be widened because there is not enough space to provide two lanes on the ramp and then merge both lanes onto I-80. Alternative 1 also does not address issues with the southbound weave on I-55 or the entrance and exit areas on I-80. It also impacts 0.5 acres of wetlands. Because it only addresses one of the several needs identified for the I-55 interchange, Alternative 1 was not carried forward and was previously dismissed from further study.

I-55 Interchange Alternative 2 creates a new directional turbine ramp connecting southbound I-55 directly to eastbound I-80 and removes the existing loop ramp in the southwest quadrant. The new turbine ramp combines with a rebuilt northbound to eastbound ramp to form a two-lane ramp before merging onto I-80. This requires an auxiliary lane to Houbolt Road. Alternative 2 eliminates weave areas and improves traffic flow on I-55 and I-80. Safety will be improved by reducing the potential for crashes caused by traffic congestion and weaving movements. Alternative 2 impacts 0.9 acres of wetlands and widens the bridge crossing at Rock Run Creek. This alternative was carried forward and is included as part of the Preferred Alternative.

Two Larkin Avenue alternatives were carried forward for further study. Larkin Avenue Alternative 1 shifts the westbound to northbound ramp south to increase the distance to McDonough Street. It provides acceptable operations and provides additional room for northbound vehicles to stack at McDonough Street. Furthermore, beginning the new/extended eastbound auxiliary lane on I-80 at the southbound to eastbound loop ramp improves traffic flow in the eastbound weave area. Safety will be improved by reducing the potential for congestion and weave-related crashes. Alternative 1 meets several of the identified needs and can be built within the existing right-of-way with minimal impacts (0.3 acres of wetland impacts).

Alternative 2 eliminates the westbound to southbound loop ramp in the northwest quadrant and adds left turn lanes to the westbound exit ramp, which is shifted south and intersects Larkin Avenue with a traffic signal. Like Alternative 1, Alternative 2 improves traffic flow at the ramp intersection and provides enough room for northbound vehicles to stack at McDonough Street. The southbound to eastbound ramp requires two lanes to carry expected traffic volumes in the year 2040. However, the ramp cannot be widened without substantial property impacts. Removing the westbound to southbound ramp does not fully address these needs. However, it removes the weave section on southbound Larkin Avenue, improving traffic flow. Safety will be improved by reducing the potential for congestion and weave-related crashes. Alternative 2 meets several of the identified needs and can be built within the existing right-of-way with minimal impacts (0.2 acres of wetland impacts). Therefore, it is recommended to be included as part of the Preferred Alternative.

Two of the original twelve Center Street alternatives evaluated were carried forward for further study. Both alternatives carried forward avoid any proposed ramps in the southeast quadrant due to the presence of a quarry that was then used as an unregulated landfill and is an active CERCLIS site. Both alternatives also create a full access interchange, which is an improvement over the current configuration, which provides only  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the movements (no eastbound to southbound or northbound to westbound).

Alternative 12 at Center Street is a partial cloverleaf interchange or a parclo. It includes two diamond type ramps and two loop ramps with all ramps to the west of Center Street. This alternative results in four residential relocations in an area with a minority population of 54%.

Alternative 6 at Center Street is a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -diamond with a loop ramp in the southwest quadrant. It includes three diamond type ramps and one loop ramp. This includes one ramp (westbound exit) to the east of Center Street. Alternative 6 utilizes one less loop ramp and thereby has improved safety and operations with no residential relocations compared to four for Alternative 12. Therefore, it is recommended to be included as part of the Preferred Alternative.

Four of the eight Chicago Street alternatives that were evaluated were carried forward for further study. Alternative 2 shifts Chicago Street to the east and builds a combination of standard diamond and loop ramps (a parclo). Alternative 2 improves safety by addressing traffic congestion, weaving movements and substandard features. It requires additional right-of-way (ROW) to build and has four residential relocations in an area with a minority population ranging from 70-96%, as well as affecting 190' of Hickory Creek. This alternative also has less

than desirable capacity and level-of-service.

Alternative 6 replaces the Chicago Street interchange with a Diverging Diamond Interchange, also called a DDI. Alternative 6 improves the overall capacity of the interchange, however, requires longer ramps to the east, reducing the distance between the Chicago Street and Richards Street ramps that results in weaving issues. Auxiliary lanes would help to address this. This alternative addresses traffic congestion and improves safety. It requires additional ROW to build, including two residential relocations in an area with a minority population ranging from 74-98%, and requires two new bridges over a railroad. This alternative is not as cost-effective as other alternatives with the additional bridges needed and doesn't fully address weave issues to the east.

Alternative 7 shifts Chicago Street east and builds a combination of directional, standard diamond and loop ramps. Alternative 7 creates a new northbound to westbound directional ramp to accommodate this high-volume movement. This ramp traverses under I-80 and then bridges over Chicago Street. Safety will be improved by partially addressing traffic congestion, weaving movements and substandard features. Alternative 7 requires additional ROW to build, including four residential relocations in an area with a minority population ranging from 70-96%, as well as affecting 190' of Hickory Creek. This alternative is not cost-effective as other alternatives with two new bridges needed.

Alternative 8 proposes a combination of standard diamond and loop ramps and uses a jughandle slip ramp rather than a fully directional ramp for the northbound to westbound high-volume movement. The jughandle ramp allows northbound traffic to "slip around" Chicago Street and go straight through a traffic signal without requiring any left turns before entering westbound I-80. Safety will be improved by partially addressing traffic congestion, weaving movements and substandard features in the interchange area. Alternative 8 requires additional ROW including four residential relocations in an area with a minority population ranging from 70-96%, as well as affecting 190' of Hickory Creek. This alternative strikes the ideal balance between capacity and cost and provides flexibility to accommodate reserve capacity for the northbound to westbound movement, thereby improving the performance of the entire interchange. As such, it is recommended to be included as part of the Preferred Alternative.

The recommended components of the Preferred Alternative for the I-80 study that are being put forth for the environmental agencies' consideration and input include

#### Mainline

- Pavement Replacement
- New and Extend Existing Auxiliary Lanes

#### Bridges

- Mainline Bridges (Long-Term Improvements)
- DPR Bridge Refined North Alignment

#### Interchanges

- I-55 Interchange Alternative 2

- Houbolt Road Intersection and Ramp Improvements
- Larkin Interchange Alternative 2
- Center Street Interchange Alternative 12
- Chicago Street Interchange Alternative 8
- Richards Street Ramp Improvements
- Briggs Street Interchange Improvements

Environmental impacts of the preliminarily Preferred Alternative are:

Environmental Resource Area	Preferred Alternatives (Impacts)
Social / Economic Resources	
Residential Displacements	37
Business Displacements	2
Total ROW Acquisition (acres)	12.8
Potential EJ Impacts – Minority	Y
Potential EJ Impacts - Low-Income	N
Special Lands/Section 4(f)/Section 6(f) Lands	
Section 4(f) Sites Potentially Impacted	2 Trails
Natural Resources	
T&E Species	N
Waters of the U.S.	
In-Stream Work (name - length)	Des Plaines River: 170' (2.8 ac) DuPage River: 100' (0.42 ac) Rock Run Creek: 30' (0.05 ac) Hickory Creek: 180' (0.1 ac) - 370' (0.6 ac)
Wetland Impacts (# and acres)	11 (2.3 ac)
High Quality Wetland Impacts	0
ADID Wetland Impacts	0
Floodplain Impacts	Y
Section 106 (NRHP) Properties Potentially Impacted	Brandon Road Lock and Dam Historic District

These impacts are currently being refined and will be fully presented at the next Merger Meeting in February 2018.

The public will get an opportunity to review the project alternatives. IDOT will be holding a PWG Meeting as well as a Public Meeting later this year to present the identified alternatives, the evaluation criteria, and the alternatives to be carried forward to the public prior to seeking

the resource agencies' concurrence on the preferred alternative in February 2018.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) inquired about stream impacts to the DPR for the DPR bridge alternative. IDOT responded that the preferred crossing is slightly longer than the existing crossing due to the angle of the crossing but that the same number of piers would be proposed in the river as existing. The piers will be slightly wider since the proposed bridges will be wider than the existing ones. Stream impacts will be added to the evaluation table in the presentation.

The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) asked if there were any homes being impacted in the historic district. IDOT responded that the Brandon Road Lock and Dam Historic District was located on the DPR and the limits basically extended to the river banks. As such, no homes are in this historic district. IDOT further noted that even though a previous cultural clearance had been granted for this project on 12/6/11, an Area of Potential Effect (APE) has been developed and a certified historian will be conducting the historic assessment for the Section 106 process for this major project.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) commented that they were aware of a project by the Chicago District of the USACE related to the Great Lakes Mississippi River Basin study. The study is related to the Asian Carp study and involves an engineered channel and approach as well as channel modifications along the DPR to address the complex noise issues created by water jets near the Brandon Road Lock and Dam area. This study is currently out for public comment. It was suggested that the Project Study Team seek further information from Susan Davis of the Planning Division to verify that there will be no conflicts with this I-80 project.

**Sign-in Sheet**  
**NEPA-404 Merger Meeting**  
**September 20, 2017**

**District 1 -North Lake Shore Drive from E. Grand Ave to W. Hollywood Ave (Cook County)**  
**Information: Project update**

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**IDOT District 1, Cook County  
US 41 (North Lake Shore Drive) from East Grand Ave to West Hollywood Ave  
Environmental Impact Statement  
Information – project update**

**DECISIONS:**

None.

**NEXT STEPS:**

The next Task Force meeting will take place on October 16, 2017. The meeting will focus on the Transitways and Managed Lanes alternatives and provide information on the Level 2 Screening criteria and process.

**DISCUSSION:**

This was the ninth presentation of the project to the NEPA/404 merger team. The purpose of this meeting was to provide a project update on the North Lake Shore Drive Phase 1 Study regarding the corridor-wide designs for the Context Tailored Treatment alternatives and review the Level 2 Screening process and criteria.

The meeting was led by Mary Young (Young) and Bob Andres (Andres) of Civiltech Engineering, and Pete Harmet (Harmet) of Christopher B. Burke Engineering, the project consultants.

The project consultant (Young) provided a project update since the last NEPA-404 merger meeting in September 2016. The third Public Meeting was held on July 12, 2017, and there were 262 attendees. Topics included:

- Study Background/Phase 1 Process
- Initial Range of Alternatives
- Level 1 Screening
- Context Tailored Treatment Alternatives

The project consultant also noted that the team had received over 2,400 responses to an online survey featuring questions regarding respondents' opinions on the Context Tailored Treatments alternatives, as well as their use of transportation modes on the Drive.

The project consultant (Andres) then reviewed the three Context Tailored Treatment (CTT) alternatives currently being considered by the project team. These three alternatives include: Alternative 1 - Corridor Modernization Concept, Alternative 2 - Compressed Roadway Concept, and Alternative 3 - Frontage Drive Concept. He noted that there were common

elements to all three alternatives, such as a lane drop north of Irving Park Rd., a straightened curve at Oak St., and a system of shoreline protections to prevent overtopping on the Drive. The project consultant then presented designs for each of the alternatives along three different geographic sections of the Drive—Chicago Ave. to LaSalle St.; Belmont Ave. to Irving Park Rd.; and Montrose Ave. to Lawrence Ave—noting the unique features of each.

Following this, the project consultant (Harmet) discussed the Level 2 Screening process that will be used by the team to provide a more detailed evaluation of the alternatives under consideration. He commented that several alternatives have been recommended for dismissal, including light rail transit, causeways in the lake, and submerged or underground tunnels. Part A of the Level 2 Screening process will evaluate alternatives within each of the three categories—Context Tailored Treatments, Transitways, and Managed Lanes—using category-specific criteria. (For example, all Transitways alternatives will be screened according to criteria specific to the Transitways category.) In Part B, the top alternatives within each category will be combined and screened according to an expanded set of criteria that will include additional measures, such as park space and environmental effects.

Project consultant Young explained that the project team will continue to refine the alternatives and evaluate them according to the Level 2 Screening process and criteria presented to the group. In addition, the seventh Task Force meeting will take place on October 16, 2017. This meeting will cover the Transitways and Managed Lanes alternatives, as well as the Level 2 Screening process and criteria.

EPA (Westlake) asked if the team's proposed lane reduction north of Irving Park Rd. took into account future high density development west of NLSA. Project consultant Andres replied that the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's 2040 forecasts predict a 15 to 20 percent increase in transit use, but only a minor increase in vehicular traffic in the area. The lane reduction also has an added benefit of helping to preserve green space at the northern end of the Drive.

**Sign-in Sheet**  
**NEPA-404 Merger Meeting**  
**September 20, 2017**

**District 1 - South Lakefront Framework Plan (Cook County)**  
**Information: Project introduction**

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**IDOT District 1, Cook County  
Chicago – Roadway Improvements to support the update to the South Lakefront  
Framework Plan  
Environmental Assessment  
Information – project introduction**

**DECISIONS:**

It was agreed that off-cycle meetings/reviews will be necessary to meet the project schedule.

**NEXT STEPS:**

The project consultant will develop a Purpose & Need Statement for agency review.

**DISCUSSION:**

This was the first presentation of the project to the NEPA/404 merger team. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the background and scope of the project. The meeting was led by John Sadler (Sadler) of CDOT and Mary Young (Young) of Civiltech Engineering. A summary of the information in the presentation is below:

- Project Team – The Project Team consists of the City of Chicago, the Chicago Park District, the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, Chicago Department of Transportation, and the Obama Foundation.
- Project Location – The project is located in Jackson Park on the south side of Chicago. Jackson Park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Jackson Park is bounded by Lake Shore Drive on the east, Stony Island Avenue on the west, 56<sup>th</sup> Street on the north and 67<sup>th</sup> Street on the south.
- Existing Roadway Network – Existing roadways within Jackson Park include Lake Shore Drive, 57<sup>th</sup> Drive, Cornell Drive, Hayes Drive, Marquette Drive, Stony Island Avenue, Richards Drive, Midway Plaisance.
- Lakefront Plan and South Lakefront Framework Plan – The City of Chicago previously prepared studies related to Jackson Park including the 1972 Lakefront Plan and 1999 South Lakefront Framework Plan. Many of the roadway improvements that CDOT is considering are consistent with one of the main goals of the South Lakefront Framework Plan which to revise the roadway network to improve continuity of isolated green spaces.
- Updates to the South Lakefront Framework Plan – The Chicago Park District is updating the South Lakefront Framework Plan to incorporate the Obama Presidential Center (OPC) and consolidation of the South Shore and Jackson Park golf courses and associated roadway closures and improvements.
- Roadway Closures Proposed in the South Lakefront Framework Plan – Cornell Drive is proposed to be closed between 59<sup>th</sup> Street and Hayes Drive along with a northbound segment from 65<sup>th</sup> Street to 67<sup>th</sup> Street. Marquette Drive is proposed to be closed between Stony Island Avenue and Richards Drive. The Midway Plaisance is proposed to be closed between Stony Island Avenue and Cornell Drive.

- Project Goal - To implement the roadway improvements necessary to support the South Lakefront Framework Plan Update.
- Existing Conditions – Information related to existing traffic, crashes, transit networks and bicycle/trail networks was presented.
- Transportation Improvement Concepts – Transportation improvements being considered and evaluated were presented including:
  - Reconfigure traffic flow and safety in the area where Midway Plaisance and Stony Island Avenue meet.
  - Widen South Lake Shore Drive by one southbound lane including at the 59<sup>th</sup> Street Inlet Bridge.
  - Improve Stony Island Avenue
  - Reconfigure Cornell Avenue and Stony Island between 65<sup>th</sup> and 67<sup>th</sup> Streets.
  - Construct underpasses to improve access.
  - Pedestrian, Bike and Transit Improvements.
- Anticipated Federal Reviews – A list of potential federal reviews including Section 106, Section 4(f), NEPA and involvement of oversight agencies including National Park Service (NPS), State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), IDOT, FHWA and USACE were presented.
- Potential Impacts – Potential environmental impacts include social/economic, air quality, natural resources, floodplains, special waste, special lands (Section 4(f) and Urban Park Recreation Recovery (UPARR)), cultural resources (bridges/districts/buildings; archaeological sites), noise, water quality, wetlands/waters of the US (WOUS), indirect/cumulative and permits (404 and Coast Guard).

EPA (Westlake) questioned what is the near term schedule. He stated that it will likely be necessary to have off-cycle meetings/reviews in order to meet project schedule. Civiltech (Young) stated that a timeframes agreement has been submitted for review.

The question was raised as to whom will be the lead agency for the project. CDOT (Sadler) stated that CDOT is the lead local agency and will submit a request to FHWA to serve as the lead Federal agency. FHWA (Byars) noted that they had an internal meeting and it is likely. CDOT needs to submit a formal request. The applicant for any permits would be the City (CDOT)

\* A discussion occurred regarding the inclusion of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC) as part of the project's EA. It was agreed that because the OPC is a private development being constructed entirely with private money, it would not be appropriate to include it under the purview of FHWA review.

IHPA (Leibowitz) asked when Section 106 consultation would be initiated. IDOT – CBLRS (Raffensperger) stated that they were currently reviewing the APE maps.

\* NPS (Ferguson) asked if the roads are being considered separately from the OPC. CDOT (Sadler) stated they are. A question was raised as to how the new park space be used. That has yet to be determined in the plan. It was agreed that a meeting between CDOT and NPS would be scheduled specifically to discuss next steps in regard to UPARR.

It was agreed that a meeting between CDOT and USACE would be scheduled specifically to discuss next steps in regard to the GLFER.

\* *Subsequent to the meeting, additional discussions were held regarding this topic and a meeting has been scheduled with the resource and regulatory agencies for October 5, 2017 to continue those conversations.*