

**Illinois NEPA/404 Merger Meeting
February 8, 2018**

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

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

12th Floor – Lake Ontario Room

9 am – 12 noon (CST)

- Obama Presidential Center Mobility Improvements to Support the South Lakefront Framework Plan (60 min)
 - Information – Describe decision-making process and purpose and need overview
- Deerfield Road (IL 21 to Saunders Road), District 1, Lake County (60 min)
 - Information – range of alternatives and recap of public involvement
- Tri-County Access Project, District 1, Lake County (60 min)
 - Information – Project introduction

12 noon – 1:00 pm (CST)

LUNCH

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm (CST)

- I-80 from Ridge Road to US Route 30, District 1, Will County (60 min)
 - Concurrence – Preferred alternative
- I-55 at IL 59, District 1, Will County (60 min)
 - Concurrence – Purpose and Need

NEPA/404 Merger Meeting Summary

February 8, 2018

IDOT District 1, Cook County
Obama Presidential Center Mobility Improvements to support the South Lakefront Framework Plan
Environmental Assessment
Information – Describe decision-making process and purpose and need overview

DECISIONS:

None requested, none received.

NEXT STEPS:

The purpose and need will be presented at an off-cycle meeting in March 2018.

DISCUSSION:

This was the second presentation of the project to the NEPA/404 merger team. The purpose of this meeting was to provide project background, discuss activities since the last Merger Meeting, provide a framework for Federal actions and discuss the project schedule. The meeting was led by John Sadler (Sadler) and Nate Roseberry (Roseberry) of CDOT. 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 Illinois Department of Transportation with the Federal Highway Administration as the Lead Agency.
- 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, 56th Street on the north and 67th Street on the south.
- UPARR Grants – The city of Chicago received for Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) funds for Jackson Park in 1980 and 1981, mostly to plant trees. The grants were administered by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (now transferred to National Park Service). They were intended to improve or expand recreation facilities and programs to economically hard-pressed communities specifically with demonstrated deficiencies in access to neighborhood recreation opportunities.
- South Lakefront Framework Plan – In 1999, the Chicago Park District prepared a planning study outlining framework for improvements in Jackson Park, named the 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 is 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 respond to changes in the area, the park, and public comment. The update also incorporates the Obama Presidential Center (OPC) and associated roadway closures and improvements.
- Existing Roadway Network – Existing roadways within Jackson Park include Lake Shore Drive, 57th Drive, Cornell Drive, Hayes Drive, Marquette Drive, Stony Island Avenue, Richards Drive, Midway Plaisance.
- Existing Conditions – Information related to existing traffic and bicycle/trail networks was presented.
- Roadway Closures Proposed in the South Lakefront Framework Plan – Cornell Drive is proposed to be closed between 59th Street and Hayes Drive along with a northbound segment from 65th Street to 67th Street. Marquette Drive is proposed to be closed between Stony Island Avenue and Richards Drive. The eastbound Midway Plaisance is proposed to be closed between Stony Island Avenue and Cornell Drive.
- Public Engagement – A number of outreach meetings have been held including multiple public meetings as well as more than 20 stakeholder/aldermanic meetings.
- Section 106 – The Consulting Party Kick Off meeting was held in December 2017 with more than 150 attendees either in person or on the phone. Discussion centered on the historic architecture/landscape APE boundary and historic resources to include in the study. In regard to Section 106 studies, all field work is complete and summary reports are being prepared.
- Federal Actions – Two Federal Actions are being undertaken.
 - National Park Service (NPS)
 - Determination if conversion of non-recreational use of parkland under Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) occurs and approval of conversion
 - Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
 - Approval of eligibility of funding under Federal-aid Highway Program for roadway improvements due to roadway closures

As suggested by FHWA and NPS, the City of Chicago plans to prepare two independent Environmental Assessment documents, one for NPS and one for FHWA.

- It is anticipated that the following action steps will be taken:
 - City of Chicago: As the selected host for OPC, City authorizes the construction of the campus in Jackson Park
 - National Park Service: As UPARR funds were used in Jackson Park, NPS makes determination on conversions related to OPC site and road closures
 - City of Chicago: Authorizes the closure of roadways in Jackson Park to support the OPC site and South Lakefront Framework Plan
 - Federal Highway Administration: As the City desires eligibility for federal funds for roadway improvements, FHWA approval is required for proposed traffic mitigation measures required due to all road closures
- It is anticipated the Purpose and Need for each agency will include the following points:
 - NPS - Potential conversion of UPARR designated parkland from recreational to non-recreational use. Proposal for the OPC site to enhance Jackson Park and benefit surrounding community.
 - FHWA - Accommodate changes in travel patterns resulting from roadway closures.

- Improve bicyclist and pedestrian access and circulation.
- Anticipated Project Schedule
 - February 2018 – Introduction of Purpose and Need Documents
 - March 2018 – Purpose and Need Concurrence
 - April 2018 – Alternatives to be Carried Forward Concurrence
 - May 2018 – Preferred Alternative Concurrence
 - Public Hearing (FHWA) – December 2018
 - Environmental Approvals (FHWA) – April 2019

After the presentation, the following discussion occurred:

EPA (Peloso) asked how much advance notice would be given for meetings and review times. FHWA (Fuller) stated that the intent is to provide 30 day notices but may ask for slightly less. The next 404/Merger Meeting is anticipated to occur the week of March 12th. The draft Purpose & Need document will be available within the next two weeks.

USFWS (Cirton) asked if preparing one NEPA document should be considered. FHWA (Fuller) stated that two documents are necessary because approval of the NPS action needs to occur prior to the FHWA action.

IDNR-SHPO (Liebowitz) questioned when the ISAS archaeological report will be available. IDOT (Koldehoff) stated it is being finalized now. No deposits were found to yield new or important findings.

USEPA (Westlake) stated he was pleased that the OPC parking garage has been relocated from west of Stony Island Avenue onto the OPC site.

**Sign-in Sheet
NEPA-404 Merger Meeting
February 8, 2018**

**District 1 - Obama Presidential Center Mobility Improvements to Support the South Lakefront Framework Plan (Cook Co)
Information - project update**

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**IDOT District 1, Lake County
Deerfield Road (IL 21 to Saunders Road)
Environmental Assessment
Information – range of alternatives and recap of public involvement activities**

DECISIONS:

No concurrence points were requested. All resource agencies agreed that the Alternatives Carried Forward and Preferred Alternative concurrence points can be requested concurrently.

NEXT STEPS:

Alternatives Carried Forward and Preferred Alternative Concurrence will be sought in June 2018. The preliminary preferred alternative will be shown at Stakeholder Involvement Group (SIG) Meeting #4 and the second Public Information Meeting, anticipated in Summary 2018. The Environmental Assessment and Engineering Reports are anticipated to be presented in late 2018 or early 2019 at SIG Meeting #5 and a Public Hearing.

DISCUSSION:

This was the fourth 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 and Emily Anderson 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, meeting agenda, project location map, environmental resources exhibit, average daily traffic and turning movements exhibit, range of alternatives typical sections, alternatives summary location map, comparative evaluation table for the Deerfield Road Range of Alternatives, and the Milwaukee Avenue Intersection Alternatives Transportation Analysis. Project related material was provided at the meeting and included:

- Informational packet
- PowerPoint presentation slides
- Alternatives Development Summary Location Map
- Range of Alternatives Typical Sections
- Range of Alternatives Comparative Evaluation

Project Location & Meeting Objective

The project location was briefly reviewed and meeting objective covered.

The Deerfield Road corridor has two distinctive sections:

- Section A (Milwaukee Avenue to the Des Plaines River) – All developed and

predominantly commercial land use with higher volume access points.

- Section B (Des Plaines River to Saunders/Riverwoods Road) – Fully built out large lot residential with a high density of low volume access points and several natural areas.

The objective of the meeting is to present the range of alternative and evaluation results for Deerfield Road Section B and the identification of a preliminary preferred alternative, a 3-lane urban roadway cross section (i.e. Alternative 3).

Project Update

A project update was made covering the prior NEPA/404 Merger Meeting (September 2017), recent stakeholder/agency coordination, and third Stakeholder Involvement Group (SIG) meeting. A recap of the prior NEPA/404 Merger Meeting (September 2017) was provided, which was an information only presentation regarding environmental surveys and range of alternatives development.

Recent stakeholder coordination included the Village of Buffalo Grove and the Woodman's Developer regarding their site development at the northwest quadrant and permit improvements to the Milwaukee Avenue intersection. Coordination also occurred with the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission regarding the Herrmann Wildflower Nature Preserve Buffer, and they were also added to the project's SIG. A number of other coordination meetings have been held which include:

- Two meetings with the Federal Highway Administration and IDOT in October 2017 and January 2018, to discuss the environmental components of the project and the alternative development process and identification of the preliminary preferred alternative.
- Two meetings with IDOT to discuss the overall project development progress and the Milwaukee Avenue intersection.
- A meeting with the Village of Riverwoods to update them on the project development, range of alternatives development/evaluation, and the identification of the preliminary preferred alternative.
- A meeting with the Riverwoods Preservation Council, a local group of residents interested in preserving the ecological heritage of the Riverwoods community, to discuss their questions on the purpose and need and provide an update on the alternatives development, evaluation, and identification of a preliminary preferred alternative.

A summary of the third SIG meeting was provided, which was held on January 25, 2018. 21 out of our 25 SIG members attend along with an additional 21 other public attendees. The objective of this meeting was to present the range of alternatives and evaluation results for Deerfield Road Section B, and the identification of the preliminary preferred alternative. The meeting consisted of a formal PowerPoint presentation with an open house following. 8 written comment were received during the comment period following the SIG meeting. Overall, there is general support for the preliminary preferred alternative of the 3-lane roadway section with curb and gutter and improvement at the Milwaukee Avenue intersection. The fourth SIG meeting is planned for Summer 2018 to present the preliminary preferred alternative design and fifth SIG meeting is planned for late 2018/early 2019 to

preview the public hearing.

Range of Alternatives – Development Approach

The range of alternatives development, evaluation, and results were presented. The overall range of alternatives develop approach consisted of separating the Deerfield Road corridor into two distinct sections, which both have unique needs. Section A includes intersection improvements at Milwaukee Avenue and corridor improvements to Deerfield Road from Milwaukee Avenue to the Des Plaines River. Section B includes intersection improvements at Portwine Road and Saunders/Riverwoods Road, and corridor improvements to Deerfield Road from the Des Plaines River to Saunders/Riverwoods Road intersection. Through the transportation analysis, it was clear each section had unique and distinct transportation needs. Filling in two gaps in the multi-use path network are included in all alternatives. The bridge over the Des Plaines River will be widened to a 3-lane section at a minimum and further hydraulic study is required.

Range of Alternatives – Section A & Milwaukee Avenue Intersection

An update on the Milwaukee Avenue intersection and Section A was provided. The design of Section A is predominantly driven by improvements at the Milwaukee Avenue intersection. The Deerfield Road corridor alternative does not have a significant effect on the Milwaukee Avenue intersection alternatives as the change in projected traffic is minimal between the corridor build alternatives (i.e. No-Build, 3-lane, 4-lane, 5-lane).

All Milwaukee Avenue intersection alternatives assume the permit intersection improvements the Woodman's Developer is making to the intersection, which consists of a second left turn lane on Milwaukee (northbound/southbound) and a second eastbound through lane on Deerfield Road. IDOT-BDE asked if there was an approved Traffic Impact Study (TIS) for the Woodman's development. CBBEL responded that there is an approved TIS for both the NW and SW developments, and the study has been approved by both IDOT and LCDOT. The 2040 projected traffic volumes and peak hour site generated traffic were incorporated into this Phase I study.

A total of 11 intersection alternatives were evaluated. The transportation modeling indicated that a capacity improvement is needed on Milwaukee Avenue (i.e. third through lane) from north of Busch Parkway to Lake Cook Road, a distance of approximately 1.5 miles. An add-lanes improvement to Milwaukee Avenue was evaluated as part of the intersection alternatives, and was determined to be outside the scope of this project. A minimum of a 5-lane section is needed on Deerfield Road at the intersection, which would extend through Section A where it would transition to a 3-Lane section at the Des Plaines River bridge. A maximum of 8-lanes at the Milwaukee Avenue intersection was studied.

The project team has identified a preliminary preferred alternative for the Milwaukee Avenue intersection and Section A, which consists of adding northbound and westbound right turn lanes, a third westbound through lane, and dual left turn lanes on the westbound and eastbound approaches on Deerfield Road, with Deerfield Road east of the intersection (i.e. Section A) as a 5-lane section transition to a 3-lane section at the Des Plaines River bridge. IDOT coordination and review is ongoing and concurrence on the preliminary preferred alternative is anticipated this spring.

Range of Alternatives – Section B & Saunders/Riverwoods Road Intersection

A description of the Section B range of alternatives, evaluation, and identification of the preliminary preferred alternative was provided. Five (5) alternatives were evaluated for Section B, and Alternative 3, a 3-lane with curb and gutter, surfaced as the preliminary preferred alternative based on the evaluation table results. The east terminus intersection, Saunders/Riverwoods Road, had four alternatives evaluated. With all legs at the intersection already being a minimum of five lanes, minimal improvements were investigated which consisted of various auxiliary lane combinations. The preliminary preferred intersection alternative identified includes adding a northbound right turn lane.

The Section B range of alternatives were presented and typical sections discussed:

- Alternative 1 is a 2-Lane with shoulder and ditch, resulting in about a 100-foot proposed ROW.
- Alternative 2 is a 3-Lane with shoulder and ditch, resulting in about a 110-foot proposed ROW.
- Alternative 3 is a 3-Lane with curb and gutter, resulting in about a 90-foot proposed ROW.
- Alternative 4 is a 4-Lane with curb and gutter, resulting in about a 100-foot proposed ROW.
- Alternative 5 is a 5-Lane with curb and gutter, resulting in about a 110-foot proposed ROW.

Generally, offsite water flowing from northwest to southwest, so a drainage ditch is conservatively still shown on the north side of the three curb and gutter alternatives to capture offsite flow. A multi-use path will be included in all alternatives and sidewalk is current being evaluated, but implementation is contingent on a local agency sponsor per Lake County non-motorized policy.

There were several alternatives that were considered and dismissed early on during the range of alternatives development, a 2-Lane with curb and gutter and also grade separation at the Milwaukee Avenue intersection. The 2-Lane with curb and gutter was dismissed as it would require 8-foot shoulders and therefore have a pavement width of only two feet less than the 3-Lane with curb and gutter alternative. For Section B, there is a density of 30 access points per mile and a center turn lane is a more effective use of the pavement area than shoulders, as a center turn lane improves safety, mobility, and operations. A 2-lane with shoulder and ditch was evaluated as Alternative 1. A grade separation alternative was dismissed due to excessive socio-economic impacts and fitting in with local agency comprehensive plans.

Five alternatives carried forward for further evaluation and results summarized in a comparative evaluation table. Across the top are the scenarios studied for the comparative evaluation starting with existing conditions, then existing conditions incorporating the Woodman's development traffic volumes and Milwaukee Avenue intersection permit improvements (anticipated 2018 construction). The gray vertical band separates existing conditions from the 2040 traffic projections. First, the 2040 No-Build scenario, which also incorporates the Woodman's traffic volumes and intersection improvements, then the five alternatives. Down the rows are the evaluation criteria studied including transportation performance, mobility, non-motorized accommodations, safety, environmental resources, socio-economics, and a concept level cost estimate.

The project team presented the key takeaways for each evaluation criteria. The area under the brown band on the evaluation table describes the transportation performance derived from the Synchro traffic modeling. The Woodman's permit improvements at the Milwaukee Avenue intersection includes adding a second eastbound thru lane and maintaining the existing exclusive right turn lane as well as adding a second northbound and southbound left turn lane. The effect of this improvement on the intersection, as shown in the evaluation table, addresses the existing AM traffic delay by reducing the total eastbound travel time from Milwaukee Avenue to Saunders/Riverwoods Road from 23 minutes to 6 minutes. The existing PM delay is slightly improved from 38 minutes to 27.5 minutes, but excessive queues and delays remain.

To evaluate the Section B Alternatives, a minimum base improvement was used for Section A and the termini intersections, which includes a 5-Lane roadway section for Section A, an additional northbound and westbound right turn lane at Milwaukee Avenue intersection, and no improvements at the Saunders/Riverwoods intersection. A separate intersection alternatives evaluation was conducted at the Milwaukee Avenue intersection and Saunders/Riverwoods intersection. The design for Section A is dictated by the Milwaukee Avenue intersection alternative. The transportation analysis for all alternatives showed significant improvement to the PM westbound total travel time. For the preliminary preferred alternative (Alternative 3), the PM westbound total travel time improves from almost 36 minutes to a little under 12 minutes. There is not a discernible transportation benefit to Alternative 4 and 5, which include two eastbound/westbound through lanes, over Alternative 3, which has one eastbound/westbound through lane, however these alternatives cost about 30%-50% more, respectively. Additionally, Alternatives 4 and 5 have about a 20% higher delay at the Milwaukee Avenue intersection and have a 12% increase in Deerfield Road Average Daily Traffic (ADT) as compared to Alternative 3. All build alternatives address the transportation Purpose and Need objectives, with Alternative 3 having the best overall transportation performance.

The area under the purple band describes the vehicular mobility derived from the Synchro traffic modeling. This evaluates the ease of ingress/egress from local side-streets or driveways. Mobility was evaluated by counting 8 second gaps between vehicles for a car to make a left-hand turn onto Deerfield Road. All alternatives also have improved mobility over the 2040 No-Build, which has zero acceptable gaps during the peak PM hour. This improves to over 30 gaps per hour for all alternatives. AM peak hour gaps per hour remains consistent with gaps in the 50 to 70 range. All build alternatives address the mobility Purpose and Need objectives, with Alternatives 4 and 5 having slightly better mobility during the AM peak hour.

Another key takeaway regarding mobility is there is 30 access points per mile within Section B. From IDOT design guidance, a center turn lane is warranted based on the existing density of access points, which will reduce left turning vehicles conflict with through traffic. Alternatives 1 and 4 do not include a center turn lane. It should be noted that the traffic model does not factor in any residential driveways, and therefore is not accounted for within the transportation travel time or mobility measures of effectiveness.

The area under the pink band shows the safety analysis associated with each alternative, which was evaluated using the Illinois Highway Safety Design Manual crash prediction tool. The No-Build and 2-lane have a 5% increase in predicted injury crashes/year over

existing conditions. The 3- (Alternatives 2 and 3), 4- (Alternative 4), and 5-lane (Alternative 5) show a significant reduction in the predicted injury crashes/year with the 3-lane having the greatest reduction in injury crashes/year over 50%. Alternative 1 does not meet the safety Purpose and Need objective, with the other alternatives meeting the safety objectives, with Alternative 2 and 3 performing better than Alternatives 4 and 5.

The area under the green band shows the environmental resources impacts and the area under the gray band shows the socio-economic impacts. The Alternative 3 footprint is approximately 90 feet wide versus the Alternative 2 footprint is approximately 110 feet wide. The 20 additional feet results in about 75% greater private property impacts. While Alternative 2 may provide more community context and character based on stakeholder feedback desiring a more rural feel, this alternative was dismissed as a result of the additional impacts to environmental resources and private property. The Alternative 1 footprint is larger than the Alternative 3 footprint (100 feet vs 90 feet) which leads directly to an increase in environmental and socio-economic impacts. The Alternative 4 footprint is about 100 feet and the Alternative 5 footprint is about 110 feet as compared to the Alternative 3 90-foot footprint. As previously described, the wider footprint directly correlates to higher environmental and property impacts. Generally, Alternative 1 and Alternative 4 have similar footprints and impacts, and Alternative 2 and Alternative 5 have similar footprints and impacts. The main exception to similar impacts is that Alternative 4 and 5 have the greatest amount of added pavement area which will result in higher detention requirements. Open space to provide detention is very limited in this corridor.

Cost was evaluated for each alternative, with Alternatives 1-, 2-, and 3- have similar costs in the \$23 to \$28 million-dollar range, while Alternatives 4- and 5- are in the \$32 to \$38 million-dollar range.

In conclusion, Alternative 3, 3-Lane with Curb & Gutter clearly surfaced as the preliminary preferred alternative for Section B because it provides:

- Best overall transportation performance improvement
- Good mobility improvement
- Greatest safety improvement
- Smallest roadway footprint
- Lowest environmental and socio-economic impacts
- Lower cost alternative

There were no objections raised regarding the Section B Range of Alternatives or the Preliminary Preferred Alternative. There was discussion on granting concurrence for Alternatives Carried Forward, however, it was decided that more information is needed for Section A, which was not presented in detail during the meeting.

Next Steps

A review of the next steps was provided. After discussion, the resource agencies agreed that substantial progress has been made with the Range of Alternatives and Development, and that the Alternatives Carried Forward and Preferred Alternative Concurrence Points can be requested at the June 2018 NEPA/404 Merger Meeting.

Questions/Comments:

- USEPA asked if a grade separation at Milwaukee Avenue was considered. CBBEL noted that it was considered to do the high volume on both roadways, however it was dismissed early on due to the prohibitive cost and impacts associated with a grade separation as well as stakeholder feedback.
- USEPA asked what was happening to the Des Plaines River bridge. CBBEL noted it would likely be a 3-lane section across the bridge to match the preliminary preferred alternative, however it was not known yet the extent of bridge improvements (i.e.; widening only or complete reconstruction, etc.). An existing separate bike path bridge is offset south from the roadway, and would not be impacted as part of any bridge improvements as a widening of Deerfield Road was anticipated when determining the lateral offset from the existing Deerfield Road bridge.
- USACE asked whether concurrence points would be separate for Section A and Section B. The project team indicated that we would pursue the concurrence points for Section A and Section B together. The project team has identified the preliminary preferred alternative for Section A and is going through a review/approval process with IDOT since the Milwaukee Avenue intersection is under their jurisdiction.

**Sign-in Sheet
NEPA-404 Merger Meeting
February 8, 2018**

**District 1 - Deerfield Road (IL 21 to Saunders Road) - (Lake County)
Information: range of alternatives and recap of public involvement**

Name	Agency	e-mail address	Participation Location
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**IDOT District 1, Lake County
Tri-County Access Project
Environmental Impact Statement
Information – Project introduction**

DECISIONS:

None requested, none received.

NEXT STEPS:

Information updates at upcoming merger meetings.

DISCUSSION:

An “information-only” presentation of the Tri-County Access (TCA) Project was provided at the NEPA/404 merger meeting on February 8, 2018 in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agencies’ offices in Chicago. The TCA Project Lead Agencies are the Illinois Tollway (project sponsor and delivery lead) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) in collaboration with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The meeting started with introductions of attendees in the room and on the phone. The Project Consultant Team led by Lidia Pilecky (Program Manager) and Jeff Frantz (Environmental Lead) of CH2M (now Jacobs) then provided an overview of the TCA Project. The agenda was as follows:

- Project Background
- Project Goals
- Project Alternatives
- Environmental Analysis & Coordination
- Stakeholder Involvement
- Project Schedule

Materials were also made available to attendees in advance of the meeting including: the PowerPoint presentation; the project introduction memorandum which included the project area map, alternatives development process diagram, and anticipated Project schedule; and the draft Timeframes Agreement.

Presentation Summary

Project Background

The project area encompasses approximately 850 square miles in Lake County, northern Cook County, and eastern McHenry County, as well as small portions of DuPage and Kane Counties

in Illinois. It additionally includes approximately 175 square miles in Kenosha County and a small portion of Walworth County in Wisconsin. Over the last several decades, the area has experienced rapid population growth and economic development, yet the region's roads and infrastructure have not undergone commensurate improvements to support this growth. The growing and worsening congestion in the region requires a conclusive decision on an appropriate solution.

As early as the 1960s, regional transportation plans have focused on the need for enhanced transportation in the project area. Prior studies have evaluated transportation issues in the study area and considered a variety of potential solutions, but have not resulted in a decision. The TCA project represents a "fresh look," but the issues and objectives identified through past and current transportation initiatives in the area will be acknowledged and considered as appropriate, specifically from the Lake County Transportation Improvement Program (LCTIP) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) from 2001, the Blue Ribbon Advisory Council (BRAC) report from 2012, and the most recent Feasibility Analysis from 2015.

Project Goals

The goals of the TCA Project include the following:

- The examination multimodal set of alternatives (roadway – IDOT, Tollway, and local; transit; and active transportation);
- A decision on a preferred alternative informed by data and technical analyses, as well as stakeholder interests;
- A flagship transportation project for the future that improves the quality of life for area residents and encourages economic growth and job creation;
- Strong NEPA documentation to support decision; and
- A clear implementation and financing plan.

Project Alternatives

Travel demand modeling for the project is underway in coordination with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). Alternatives will be developed and screened in two major phases – the initial "System Alternatives" and then the "Build Alternatives". The System Alternatives will be focused on identifying separate components – which may be on existing or new alignment – that can be improved to address the transportation needs of the project area. The subsequent Build Alternatives will be based on specific corridor locations and more detailed analysis.

Environmental Analysis & Coordination

A EIS is anticipated for the project and the project will follow the NEPA/404 process. The LCTIP Draft EIS will be incorporated by reference where applicable and both the System and Build Alternatives evaluation will be documented. The System Alternatives (or the initial range of alternatives) will be screened based on published data, augmented by windshield surveys and modeling where appropriate. The Build Alternatives (or alternatives to be carried forward) will

be evaluated based on traditional environmental field studies for screening.

Stakeholder Involvement

Public outreach and stakeholder involvement for the project will begin in the first part of 2018 and continue throughout the planning process. Meetings will provide outreach opportunities for stakeholders (i.e., agency coordination meetings, small group meetings, Public Meeting, etc.) and project-related communications (i.e., project website, fact sheets, social media, etc.) will provide up-to-date project information. A Stakeholder Participation Group (SPG) is being formed to allow communities, agencies and interest groups to provide input on behalf of their organization – over 130 members are anticipated. Invitations to the SPG will be distributed in early March 2018 with meetings planned in March, April, July and December of 2018.

Project Schedule

The basic timeline of major milestones for the project is as follows:

- 2018 - System Alternatives development and screening
- 2019 – Build Alternatives refinement and evaluation
- 2020 – Draft EIS; identification of Preferred Alternative
- 2021 – Final EIS and Record of Decision

Questions and Comments

The following discussion and comments were offered:

- The project will follow the NEPA/404 Merger process and in addition to concurrence point presentations, the Project Team would also like to provide informational updates at the meetings as the project moves forward. The group agreed with this approach.
- Resource agencies will be notified of and invited to attend public involvement events, including upcoming SPG meetings. The first meeting is being held March 21, 2018; more details on the logistics will be provided.
- Question (Liz Pelloso, USEPA) – Are the daily trips within Lake County or do they extend into Chicago?
 - Response – Both. The 1.73 million daily vehicle trips experienced in Lake County, as identified in the LCTIP Draft EIS, is based on trips starting and ending within the county and trips that leave, enter or pass through the county.
- Question (Liz Pelloso, USEPA) – Will the project fact sheets be provided as newsletters?
 - Response – Yes, project fact sheets (or newsletters) will be made available as part of the stakeholder involvement effort.
- Question (Liz Pelloso, USEPA) – Where will the SPG meetings be held?
 - Response – The meeting locations will rotate throughout the project area. The first meeting is being held in Round Lake on March 21, 2018.
- Question (Ken Westlake, USEPA) – Will there be involvement with Wisconsin?
 - Response – Yes. The Project Team is already working with the Southeastern Wisconsin Planning Commission (SEWRPC), in addition to the Chicago

Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) on forecast data. Other Wisconsin agencies will be involved, as appropriate, as the project moves forward.

- Question (Liz Pelloso, USEPA) – Will this be implemented as an Illinois Tollway or IDOT project?
 - Response – While the project is being led by the Illinois Tollway in close collaboration and partnership with IDOT and FHWA, the actual implementation of the project will depend on the selected alternative studied and evaluated as part of the EIS process. The alternatives analysis will include considerations for the type of roadway (i.e., toll road, state route, etc.), along with transit and active transportation components.

Sign-in Sheet
NEPA-404 Merger Meeting
February 8, 2018

Tri-County Access Project - District 1 - Lake County
Information - Project Introduction

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**IDOT District 1, Will County
I-55 at IL 59
Environmental Assessment
Concurrence – Preferred alternative**

DECISIONS:

The agencies deferred concurrence on the purpose and need because the document was not provided to them in advance of the meeting.

NEXT STEPS:

FHWA will transmit the purpose and need to the agencies and request their concurrence via e-mail.

The project team will coordinate a field review with the agencies in Spring 2018.

The alternatives to be carried forward will be presented at the June 2018 merger meeting for concurrence.

DISCUSSION:

This was the second NEPA/404 presentation of this project. The purpose of this meeting is to request and obtain concurrence for the subject project's Purpose and Need.

The consultant presented a PowerPoint presentation to the group, which included project study area and jurisdictional limits of IDOT and local agencies, summary of initial Public Information Meeting and two Community Advisory Group meetings, summary of Community Context Audit, and identification of two Need Points:

- Need Point No. 1 – Improve Mobility and Local Connectivity
- Need Point No. 2 – System Linkage

Under Need Point No. 1, further presentation was made relative to existing traffic volumes and future anticipated growth, and on operational levels of service (LOS). An ADT map with both existing and future traffic volumes (CMAP 2040 No-Build), was presented, with major growth anticipated west of I-55. Significant increases were especially identified for Mound Road from an existing ADT of 800 to a future no-build ADT of 6,000, and along Seil Road, where an existing ADT of 10,900 is projected to almost double to a volume of 20,000 daily vehicles.

Also under Need Point No. 1, was a presentation of both existing and no-build LOS. The US 52 at IL 59 and US 52 at I-55 southbound ramps currently fail as an overall intersection operations. Looking at 2040 no-build volumes, at least five intersections will have an

unacceptable LOS without network improvements, and over 30 movements at intersections will similarly have unacceptable LOS in year 2040.

Under Need Point #2, a graphic was presented noting the limited opportunities to access I-55 and also the lack of routes providing opportunity to cross I-55 without interchange access. The US 52 interchange at I-55 is the only full access interchange located between US Route 6 and US Route 30, a 9.2 mile distance (excepting the I-55 at I-80 system interchange). A partial interchange at IL 59/Seil Road is present, providing access to and from the south only. Because of very limited number of routes crossing I-55, traffic funnels to US 52, utilizing a wide array of local streets and roadways. This includes a high amount of truck traffic.

The use of these “other” routes and the overloading of US 52 were noted by many in the Project Survey and at the CAG#1, as a very real concern and issue. Many noted the completion of the IL 59/Seil Rd interchange as a high priority need, while homeowners in the subdivisions immediately west of I-55 opposed the completion of this interchange and connection for east-west travel along Seil Road.

Another system linkage desire which was noted in the project survey and at the CAG #1 is the desire and need for pedestrian and bicycle crossing accommodations over I-55.

At the conclusion of the presentation, a request for comments and questions to the Purpose and Need was offered. From the discussion, it became apparent that the Purpose and Need document did not get transmitted in advance to meeting participants. Those in attendance in the Chicago USEPA office (calling location) were provided a hard copy of the document at the meeting. FHWA stated that they would transmit an electronic copy of the revised Purpose and Need document (February 2018 version) in its entirety to all meeting participants. The document would be re-dated and would include revision to accommodate the following:

- Comments were received to materials included in the advance meeting packet. These included the request for removal of text noting “providing support for economic development”.

Review of the Purpose and Need document have been requested to be reviewed within a 30-day time frame. Comments and a disposition are to be addressed in the Purpose and Need, as required. It is anticipated that all can be addressed without further formal presentation.

Prior to the conclusion of the meeting, it was suggested that a field visit be scheduled in the spring to observe existing environmental resources.

Post Meeting Note: The Purpose and Need document received concurrence from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) on March 5, 2018 and from the Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) on March 9, 2018.

Sign-in Sheet
NEPA-404 Merger Meeting
February 8, 2018

District 1 - I-55 at IL 59 (Will County)
Concurrence - Purpose and Need

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**IDOT District 1, Will County
I-80 from Ridge Road to US Route 30
Environmental Assessment
Concurrence – Preferred alternative**

DECISIONS:

Concurrence on the preferred alternative was granted by the USACE, the US F&WS, the USEPA, and the IDNR.

NEXT STEPS:

IDOT will follow up with the US Coast Guard for their concurrence.

The Environmental Assessment for this study is anticipated to be released to the public in July.

DISCUSSION:

This was the seventh presentation for the I-80, Ridge Road to US Route 30 project. The purpose of this meeting was to seek concurrence on the Preferred Alternatives. Matt Fuller of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) facilitated the meeting and prompted self-introductions. The Illinois Department of Transportation District One representative presented the PowerPoint (PPT).

The agenda for the presentation includes reviewing the study area, the previously approved Purpose & Need Statement, a Project Update, and the presentation of the Preferred Alternative. The project study area is 16 miles 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 recently reconstructed and is a major interchange with a heavily traveled north-south highway and the US Route 30 interchange was the subject of a separate recently completed study. 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. Improving regional and local travel and access includes improving levels of service on mainline I-80, in ramp merge, diverge and weave sections and at ramp intersections with cross streets. Improving facility condition and design will address the pavement age, the outdated design, and geometric issues. Improving safety will address the high amount of rear-end and sideswipe crashes due to traffic congestion on the mainline and in merge, diverge and weave areas. NEPA concurrence on the Purpose & Need was received on March 1, 2012 and

NEPA concurrence on the Alternatives to be Carried Forward was received on February 22, 2017. A presentation on the preferred alternative for information only was provided on September 20, 2017.

Stakeholder involvement for this study has been comprised of three public meetings in 2010, 2011, and 2018 centered on corridor issues, transportation problems, and project alternatives. Six Project Working Group meetings were also held from 2010 to 2017 that included topics from the transportation issues and project goals, to the draft Problem Statement, to a toolbox of improvement alternatives and an alternatives workshop.

The Preferred Alternative for the I-80 Study was presented next, from west to east. The Study begins on the west, east of Ridge Road, just east of the Wabena Avenue overpass, and ties into a recently improved section of I-80 by IDOT District 3. Due to the age and condition of the I-80 mainline pavement, the pavement will be replaced. Moving east, there are two 2017 5% Location in the areas of the large sweeping curves between Ridge Road and I-55. To address this, we are proposing a super-elevation correction as part of the reconstruction. This section will maintain two lanes in each direction, with full width inside and outside shoulders to improve safety. The existing lanes will be shifted to the outside in this section, allowing room for a future add-lanes in the wider median area.

At the I-55 Interchange, in order to address high volume movements, the preferred alternative creates a new turbine ramp connecting southbound I-55 directly to eastbound I-80 and removes the existing loop ramp in the southwest quadrant. The new ramp combines with a rebuilt northbound to eastbound ramp to form a two-lane ramp that merges onto I-80. This would also require an auxiliary lane to Houbolt Road. Two weave areas are eliminated and traffic flow is improved on both I-55 and I-80. Safety will be improved by reducing the potential for crashes caused by traffic congestion and weaving movements. There are 0.7 acres of wetland impacts at 4 sites.

Between I-55 and Houbolt Road, an auxiliary is added resulting in 3 lanes in each direction. This results in a 20' proposed widening of the Rock Run Creek bridge that would impact approximately 0.01 acres of the creek. In all sections east of I-55, the existing lanes are shifted to the inside, and the roadway is designed to accommodate a future add-lanes to the outside. This will minimize ROW acquisition and impacts to adjacent properties and environmental features.

There is a separate locally-led funded project that proposes to construct a diverging diamond interchange at Houbolt Road and I-80 as part of a new Houbolt Road bridge over the Des Plaines River to the south. In case this I-80 project reaches construction before the proposed DDI, our preferred alternative includes adding turn lanes at the ramp intersections with Houbolt Road. This will improve safety and capacity, but will require modifications to the slope wall beneath the bridge. Construction at this interchange will also temporarily impact the Rock Run Trail, a Section 4(f) resource, that runs along the west side of Houbolt Road through the interchange. This issue is currently being coordinated with the Forest Preserve District of Will County, the owner with jurisdiction.

Between Houbolt Road and Larkin Avenue, two lanes in each direction are retained. As previously stated, the lanes are shifted to the inside to allow for a future add-lane to the outside. The bridge over the Joliet Junction Trail, which runs along an abandoned rail line, is being lowered to address slope erosion issues at the structure embankments. One wetland is impacted at this location for a total of 0.1 acre. The Joliet Junction Trail is a Section 4(f) resource. This issue is currently being coordinated with the Forest Preserve District of Will County, the owner with jurisdiction. Only temporary impacts to the trail during construction are anticipated.

At Larkin Avenue, the westbound to southbound loop ramp in the northwest quadrant is eliminated and all westbound traffic will utilize the exit ramp east of the interchange. The ramp tie-in to Larkin Avenue is shifted south and tees into Larkin Avenue with a traffic light. This will improve traffic flow at the ramp intersection and provides enough room for northbound vehicles to stack at McDonough Street. This also removes the weave sections on westbound I-80 and southbound Larkin Avenue, improving traffic flow. The eastbound auxiliary lane begins at the loop ramp in the southwest quadrant, improving a weave along I-80. 0.2 acres of wetlands are impacted from 3 sites at this interchange.

At Center Street, a $\frac{3}{4}$ -diamond with one loop ramp in the southwest quadrant is proposed. The loop ramp is required to avoid proposing a ramp in the southeast quadrant, which is the site of a quarry and previous unregulated landfill which is a special waste issue. This new configuration greatly simplifies the interchange, reduces the current 3-level interchange to 2 levels, and provides for all movements, an improvement over the existing interchange which does not provide connections between the south and west. As a result, safety and operations are greatly improved. This alternative results in one residential relocation in an area with a minority population of 34.4%.

The Refined North Alignment is the preferred alternative as it has improved geometric and safety aspects over the other alignment alternatives. It improves sight distance and design speed on the mainline. It also has improved maintenance of traffic conditions during construction in that both new bridges can be built without affecting the existing bridges. It has two commercial and 28 residential relocations (10 in area with 77.8% minority population and 18 in area with minority population of 96.7%). It has no wetland impacts. It is comprised of two four-lane bridges with full shoulders for an out-to-out crossing width for both bridges of 170' along the Des Plaines River and would have a footprint in the river (for piers and pier protection) of approximately 0.1 acre. It pushes the crossing further north and closer to the edge of the Brandon Road Lock and Dam Historic District.

A partial cloverleaf with jughandle interchange is proposed at Chicago Street. The jughandle ramp allows northbound traffic to “slip around” Chicago Street and go straight through a traffic light without requiring any turns before entering westbound I-80. This avoids the queues from cars and trucks at the north intersection from backing up into the south intersection. This improvement results in four residential relocations in an area with a minority population ranging from 70-97%.

At the Richards Street Interchange, only minor improvements to the ramps are proposed. Just west of the Richards Street interchange, the reconstructed I-80 bridge over Hickory Creek has a

115' long crossing and impacts 0.23 acres of Hickory Creek. East of Richards Street, I-80 continues as three lanes in each direction (two through lanes plus one auxiliary lane) to the Briggs Street interchange.

At Briggs Street, the interchange will be reconstructed. The south ramps of the interchange will be shifted north, to provide more distance between that intersection and the New Lenox Road intersection just to the south. East of Briggs Street, I-80 continues as two lanes in each direction to its terminus just west of the US Route 30 interchange, which was the subject of a separate IDOT study, which was complete several years ago and is just awaiting construction funding.

Environmental impacts for the Preferred Alternative were discussed. These include 33 residential and two commercial displacements in high minority areas and 13.3 acres of ROW acquisition. Two Section 4(f) trails are temporarily affected. In-stream work occurs in 3 waterways, 12 wetlands will be impacted for a total of 1.6 acres, and there will be floodplain impacts. Lastly, there is work within the Brandon Road Lock and Dam Historic District, a Section 106 resource.

The public will get an opportunity to review the Preferred Alternative for the project. IDOT will be holding the 7th Project Working Group Meeting as well as the Public Hearing later this year to present the Preferred Alternative for final comment prior to Phase I Design Approval. The Environmental Assessment for this study is anticipated to be released to the public in July.

The USEPA asked if the preferred alternative for the interchanges and the Des Plaines River alignments minimized wetland impacts. IDOT responded that it did.

Concurrence on the preferred alternative was granted by the USACE, the US F&WS, the USEPA, and the IDNR.

Sign-in Sheet
NEPA-404 Merger Meeting
February 8, 2018

District 1 - I-80 from Ridge Road to US Route 30 (Will County)
Concurrence - Preferred Alternative

Name	Agency	e-mail address	Participation Location
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